OPINION 6

AUNG SAN SUU KYI: PRISON

OR HOUSE ARREST?

WORLD 8

UKRAINE CLAIMS IT SHOT DOWN

RUSSIAN STRATEGIC BOMBER

MONEY 10

STOCK MARKETS STAGE

STRONG REBOUND

DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA Late City Vol.18 Issue 108 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

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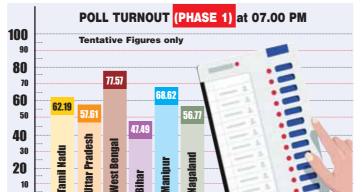
Over 62 per cent polling in 1st phase of LS polls

n a kaleidoscope of democracy in action, voters of all ages — from wheelchair-bound seniors to newlyweds and Great Andamanese Tribe from Strait Island in South Andaman to the world's shortest woman cast their vote on Friday with an estimated 62.37 per cent turnout recorded till 6 pm in the first phase of Lok

Sabha elections. It covered 102 seats across 21 States and Union territories amid sporadic incidents of violence in West Bengal while an accidental

explosion of a grenade launcher shell in Chhattisgarh left a CRPF jawan dead. The highest voter turnout on the first day of polling under Phase 1 of the Lok Sabha elections was recorded in Tripura at 79.90 percent, followed by West Bengal at 77.57 percent and Assam at 71.38 percent, with Bihar witnessing the lowest turnout at 47.49 percent till 7 pm. According to officials, the prevailing heatwave condition in Bihar could be a possible reason for the low voter turnout.

In strife-torn Manipur, around 68. 62 per cent polling was recorded



amid incidents of shooting, untoward incidents while 58 per damage to electronic voting cent voter turnout was recorded on damage to electronic voting machines (EVMs), threats to voters and polling agents by armed miscreants while voters in six districts of Nagaland stayed indoors

following an indefinite shutdown call by an apex body of tribal organisations to press for its demand for a separate state. Tamil Nadu recorded a voter

WEST BENGAL

turnout of 72.09 percent in the Lok polls with no major

three

recorded

percent voters voted at

Alipurdar whereas Jalpaiguri

witnessed about 79.33 percent

voters

franchise.

exercising

comparatively high polling rate of 77.73

percent, about 75.54

their

eight seats of western Uttar Pradesh. According to the Election Commission's Voter Turnout

app, 63.29 per cent voting reported Saharanpur, 57.83 per cent in Moradabad, 60.39 per cent in Kairana, 59.17 per cent in Nagina, 60.23 per cent in Pilibhit, 54.68 per cent in Bijnor, 52.42 per cent in Rampur and 54.91 per cent in Muzaffarnagar. These seats fall in

the Jat and sugarcane belt of the

The commission described the turnout as "high", noting that voting remained "largely peaceful". In the first phase of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the voter turnout was recorded at 69.43 per cent. Some of the constituencies were different then and the total number of seats which went to polls were 91.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged voters to exercise their franchise in record numbers as the seven-phase Lok Sabha polls started with polling being held in 102 constituencies.

GROUND ZERO THE PIONEER REPORTS FROM

TAMIL NADU

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

As polling in the first phase of the general election concluded by Friday 6 pm, Tamil Nadu registered a voter turn-out of 63 .2 per cent till 5 pm, according to the Election Commission of India. Final figures would be released by 8 pm, said the ECI officials. Dharmapuri registered 73.51 per cent while Krishnagiri recorded 64.24 per cent (figures recorded till 5 pm). Chennai Central, from Telangana where former Governor Dr Tamilissai Sounderarajan was contesting

recorded 41.47 per cent till 3 pm, according to Satyabrata Sahoo, chief electoral officer. Latha Ravishankar, a BJP activist in Chennai

Central. disappointment written all over her face as voters failed to make it to the polling booths despite lot of cajoling by her and other volunteers. But the DMK camp

sounded positive as the lowturn out is expected to make the prospectus of the party candidates smooth. State has The

constituencies while the neighboring Puducherry has one seat.

WESTERN UTTAR PRADESH

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT LUCKNOW

Voter turnout of 57.54 per cent was recorded till 5 pm in all eight parliamentary constituencies of Western Uttar Pradesh where polling was held in first phase of Lok Sabha elections on Friday. Total turnout of voters expected to be marginally above 60 per

The eight constituencies where polling was held on Friday included Pilibhit, Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Kairana, Bijnor, Nagina, Moradabad and Rampur. Of these,

Saharanpur, Kairana, Bijnor, Moradabad and Rampur are

general constituencies.

Over 25 per cent turnout was recorded till 11 am, and it rose to an average of 37 per cent till 1 pm. By 3 pm over 47.44 per cent voters had cast their votes in the eight constituencies.

The voter turnout

was 54.68 per cent in Bijnor, 58.68 per cent in Kairana, 57.65 per cent in Moradabad, 54.91 per cent in Muzaffarnagar, 58.05 per cent in Nagina, 60.23 per cent in Pilibhit, 52.42 per cent in Rampur and 63.29 per cent in Cabarragar Saharanpur.

SAUGAR SENGUPTA

KOLKATA

There were sufficient Treasons for the Election Commission of India to heave a big sigh of relief as the first round of elections for Bengal's three parliamentary constituencies of Cooch Behar, Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri passed off without any loss of life though reports of "stray incidents of clashes, stone-pelting or booth capture," came in from many

Polling passed off nearpeacefully amid stray incidents of violence and complaints of booth capture

by both the Trinamool Congress and the BJP, sources

in the ECI said adding the t least four Electronic At least 1001 Least Were Machines were constituencies witnessed a brisk polling of about damaged at different polling conflict-hit booths in Manipur on Friday where polling was held in the first 77.5 percent till 5 pm. The polling percentage was likely to go beyond 82 percent as phase of Lok Sabha elections, according to many voters were still standing in the queue.
While Cooch Behar

Lok Sabha seat in Nagaland recorded a voter turnout of over 50 per cent till 4 pm, The polling began at 7 am.

separate State. People in the six districts. which have over four lakh votes spread over 738 polling stations, remained indoors in solidarity with the ENPO. long-drawn

Organisation (ENPO) to

abstain from voting in six

districts of the region

over its demand for a



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Around 46.32 per cent of the 75 lakh voters in four Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar exercised their place at Nawada and Aurangabad, "sensitive"

exercised their franchise in Aurangabad Lok Sabha constituency, 48.54 per cent in Gaya, 47.09 per cent in Jamui and 40.20 per cent in Nawada till 5 pm, officials said.

where altogether eight candidates are in the fray though the contest is primarily between Vivek Thakur, a BIP Rajva Sabha MP seeking entry into the Lok Sabha, and RJD's Shravan Kushwaha. Gaya has 18.18 lakh voters, but the highest number of 14 candidates. Here, former chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi, an NDA ally, who is just a few months shy of turning 80, is making yet

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

More than 55 per cent of total 95,54 lakh voters exercised their franchise in five constituencies that went to polls in the first phase of Lok Sabha polls eastern Maharashtra on Friday, with the naxalite-infested Gadchiroli-Chimur accounting for a maximum of 65 per cent polling.

cent.

With no untoward incident reported from anywhere, the polling passed off Bhandara-Gondiya, Ramtek Gadchiroli-Chimur constituencies, as voters turned out in

large numbers braving harsh temperatures. As per the polling percentages put out by the Chief Election Officer, Maharashtra at 5 pm, an average of

54.85 per cent of the total electorate in five poll-bound constituencies cast their votes. The final poll percentages (as of 5.30 pm) were expected only after 9.30 pm. The average final polling percentage in the five constituencies may be anywhere from 57 to 60 per cent. In Nagpur where the two-time sitting MP and Union Minister Nitin

Gadkari is taking on Congress Vikas Thakre, there was a relatively lowest turnout of 47.11 per cent of voters. The polling percentage might have either touched or barely crossed 50 per cent when the polling ended at 5.30 pm.

In contrast, the Maoist-infested Gadchiroli-Chimur recorded the highest poll percentage of 64.95, while the voter turn-outs reported from three other Lok Sabha constituencies where the elections were held were: Bhandara-Gondiya-56.87 per cent, Chandrapur-55.11 per cent and Ramtek-52.38 per cent.

Nitin Gadkari, his wife Kanchan and other family members voted at a



polling station near their residence in

exercising his franchise, Gadkari expressed that the ruling BJP will cross a winning tally of 400 seats in the country, while he would win the polls from Nagpur by a margin of more than 5 lakh votes

"We are also targeting a record voting turnout this time, from 54 per cent in 2019 to 75 per cent in 2024. I appeal to all the people to step out and exercise their right to vote, and celebrate the greatest festival of democracy," Gadkari said.

Sarsanghchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat cast his vote at a polling booth near Reshimbagh in Nagpur.

arrive at a polling station and waited for nearly 15 minutes before the polling started, entered to cast his vote and emerged soon thereafter, displaying his inked left-hand forefinger with pride. "I have forefinger with pride. performed my personal duty for the day and I call upon all the people to cast their vote since as citizens it is our right as well as a duty," Dr Bhagwat Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole exercised his franchise along with his family members at

his vote, Patole said that the BIP-led government had "cheated" people for 10 years and they were determined to end the 10-year dictatorship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. people of Vidarbha have always stood firmly behind the Congress. We are receiving great support from the people this time as well. I am confident that we will win all the five Lok Sabha seats that went to poll today," he said. Barring Nagpur where voter turn-out

was the lowest, there was considerable enthusiasm among voters in four poll-constituencies Chandrapur, Bhandara-Gondiya, Ramtek (SC), Gadchiroli-Chimur (ST). Lakhs of people, including large numbers of first-time voters, youth, senior citizens and transgenders, exercised their voting rights.

Gadchiroli-Chimur constituency, nine handicapped senior citizens were brought in a 'rath yatra' by people, accompanied by a brass band playing on the roads, to cast their votes at a

NAGALAND & MANIPUR

PTI IMPHAL/KOHIMA

sources.

Meanwhile, the lone the closing time for voting, on Friday, officials said. The polling was held, amid a call given by the Eastern People's Nagaland

Under the shadow of a ethnic conflict, Manipur was set to go to polls on Friday for the two constituencies — Inner and Outer Manipur. Polling is also scheduled in some areas of the Outer Manipur constituency in phase 2 on April 26.

BIHAR



PATNA/AURANGABAD/GAYA

franchise till 5 pm on Friday, officials said. The polling began at 7 am and went on till 6 pm, a senior election official said. The voters will decide the fate of 38 candidates in these four seats. Tight security arrangements were in besides the reserved seats of Gava and Jamui, where a majority of nearly 5,000 polling booths have been marked as

Over 49.95 per cent voters have

Of the four seats, Nawada has the highest number of 20.06 lakh voters,

MAHARASHTRA



Talking to media persons after

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

Dr Bhagaat was among the earliest to

Sukli village in Bhandara district. Talking to media persons after he cast

In a heart-warming sight witnessed in polling station.



An eldery woman along with others waits to cast votes for the first phase of Lok Sabha polls, in Sivasagar, Assam, on

oodle salutes Indian Google

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

another bid to enter Parliament.

s India's much-awaited 2024 ALok Sabha elections' first phase unfolded on Friday, Google's iconic Doodle joined the country's democratic journey by featuring the iconic ink mark on the index finger, a hallmark of Indian democracy.

A click on the Google Doodle takes the users, from across the globe, to witness the monumental scale of India's vibrant democratic process being held in the seven phases from April 19 to June 1 in the country.

In the first phase, starting on Friday a total of 102 world's largest elections in which constituencies in 21 States have nearly one billion people are gone to vote, including 5 eligible to vote. "The first phase

constituencies from Phase 2 of the polls will be held next week on April 26, and 89 constituencies in 13 States will be voting, including five Assam constituencies.

Social media platforms were already buzzing with excitement as users shared the Doodle online and expressed their thoughts on significant moment. @RT_India_news posted on X, "Google Doodle Salutes Indian Elections - Democracy's Biggest Dance. Friday's illustration depicts a hand with the index finger marked with ink, symbolising the start of the



of India's 2024 Lok Sabha elections is currently underway, with significant participation multiple regions," it posted.

Stella Paul with @stellasglobe handle termed Google's move as "pretty cool" while one @virgojyoti02 found the move exciting "Let the festival of idea saying that, as citizens across like ours. It is a welcoming move

doodle". Naveen Athresh, having twitter handle @naveenathresh said, "Google Doodle with our Indian elections voting to push people to vote. A nice touch. Pritansu Privadarsini Biswal from Bhubaneswar in Odisha too

was excited at Google's innovative

of the significance of our collective journey towards a more inclusive and democratic society." Jagdish Kaur, founder of the WILGA, an NGO engaged in empowerment of women shared that, "Through this Doodle, Google aims to educate people about the importance of voting and to highlight the significance of democracy. This also shows how our democracy has become stronger every passing year." 'I think the vibrancy of any

the country exercise their right to

vote, Google Doodle stands as a

virtual companion, reminding us

democracy lies in the power of an individual vote which decides the future of any powerful country only country with 1.4 strong population to create awareness about elections," added Dr Rahul Bhargava, a bone marrow transplant specialist haematologist at Fortis Hospital, Gurgaon echoed similar sentiments. For Sanjay Ojha, Corporate Communication head at the

by Google which is presently the

ACME Green Solutions, it was like a significant moment for India. The Google Doodle seems like a thoughtful way to commemorate the start of such an important event. It's great to hear about the high level of participation in the elections. The democratic process is a vital

aspect of any nation's

senior official from Delhi Election Office informed that the classic symbol of Indian polls will be visible everywhere hand with only its index finger extended, marked by a purpleblack indelible ink.

Devised as a method to prevent a

governance."

person from casting more than one vote, to preserve the principle of "one man, one vote", the ink manufactured by Mysore Paints and Varnish Ltd, a Karnataka Government Undertaking has been used in Indian elections for decades. The ink manufactured in India has also travelled to other parts of the world to be used in other elections.



BJP thanks voters, party confident of resounding victory

The Bharatiya Janata Party State president Mahendra Bhatt thanked the voters for participating in the Lok Sabha election on Friday. Expressing satisfaction at the efforts of the party workers, he expressed confidence that votes were cast overwhelmingly in favour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Pursuing the policy of 'Pehle Matdan Fir Jalpan', Bhatt cast his vote at a polling booth in his Brahmanthala village in the morning. In a statement released to the media, he said that the party has received feedback from its workers in all the 11,729 polling booths in the State. "Accepting the Modi Pranam received through the party workers, the voters have shown their

determination to re-elect PM Modi to a third term with their votes. The enthusiasm of the voters clearly shows that they want to move forward on the decisive journey to make India developed under PM Modi's leadership. The manner in which the voters exercised their franchise, we are confident that the BJP will win all the five seats in Uttarakhand while the Modi Parivar will cross the 400 mark," the BJP State president said.

Rejecting the allegations levelled by the opposition, Bhatt said that the allegations are baseless and a result of the certain defeat which the opposition is expecting. He said, "The people have now understood the opposition's attempts for many

years to blame the EVMs. police administration and Election Commission for their defeat. They never find any defects when they win an election, which they term as a victory of democracy. Whenever the BIP wins, they blame it on defects in the electoral process and state that democracy is in danger. In reality, as across the nation, in Uttarakhand too most of the senior leaders had refused to contest the election considering the Modi wave. Out of those who contested the election as a formality, most are anxious about not forfeiting their deposit considering the trend of the voting. By levelling baseless allegations, the Congress is simply preparing the grounds for its defeat," Bhatt

Cong accuses BJP of seeking votes in the name of Ram temple

The Congress party has ■ submitted a complaint to the Election Commission of India (ECI) in which it has accused the ruling BJP of seeking votes in the name of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

In a complaint submitted to the Chief Election Commissioner of India the member of the Congress State election committee Amarjeet Singh said on April 19, when

the polling was in progress in Uttarakhand, the BJP in its official social media accounts carried the pictures of Lord Ram in Ayodhya to appeal to the people to vote for the BJP candidates. Singh also submitted the screenshots of the BJP's posts on social media in which the pictures of Lord Ram were used with messages 'Modi's guarantees, today truth and future's guarantee' and "Aapke ek vote ki

takat, ek bar fir Modi sarkar" (power of your one vote and once again Modi government). Singh said that the BJP is consistently using religion in the ongoing LS elections which is a violation of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) enforced in the State in view of the elections. He demanded that action should be taken against the BJP for MCC violations.

Police register FIR against Congress spokesperson for alleged MCC violations

The police filed an FIR against the chief spokesperson of Uttarakhand Congress Garima Mehra Dasauni late on Thursday on charges of violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). The officials said that the convenor of the BJP IT cell Ajit Negi gave a written complaint to the police late on

Thursday that Dasauni posted a picture of the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on her Facebook page along with false and objectionable statements with the aim to tarnish his image and defame him just a day before the polling on The complainant stated that the post was meant to mislead people just a few

hours before the elections against the guidelines of MCC. The officials said that the police registered the FIR against Dasauni under various relevant sections including MCC violations after the complaint. The police are investigating the matter and will act further in the matter accordingly, they added.

PwDs vote hoping new government will work for their upliftment

(PwDs) said that they cast their vote in the Lok Sabha election on Friday hoping the new government will work for their upliftment by prioritising and addressing the issues of the disabled community that often remain neglected Many opined that the government mostly sees PwDs as a sad case and fails to go beyond providing them ration and pensions. A 26- year-old woman Sakshi Verma said, "We strive to live a normal life on a daily basis and expect the government to put some extra effort into providing good education besides affordable and accessible health insurance. There are few policies to ensure a family can easily find good schools in every district for their special child. Many have to compromise with the quality of education due to a lack of good options. The government should treat our education as important as that of

others." A man named Nandan who was accompanied by his father to a polling booth in Rajpur said that the government should strictly focus on making all public and private spaces, products and services accessible for disabled people. "Many of us struggle to enter various restaurants, clothing stores and grocery stores because they do not have PwD friendly arrangements.

This might not be considered a big issue by people with no disability but it is a big deal for us. A person should be able to buy his or her own groceries or clothes but I cannot do it because commercial bodies consider it an additional inconvenience to make suitable arrangements for the entry and movement of a wheelchair on their premises," Nandan said. Agreeing with this statement, first-time voter Mrinali said that these basic facilities should be the norm

disability still has to plead and ask the government to ensure they get these bare minimum facilities. A 28year-old man Abhay Gusain said that he expects the new government to provide at least five per cent reservation to PwDs in elections so that they can be a part of the government. "The representation from the PwD community is important in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections to ensure the government is more empathetic towards our issues. I think that no strong representa-tion from the PwD community is one of the reasons we still need to ask the government to provide us with basic facilities," he said. A disabled woman Revti Singh said that the new government should also establish a sports infrastructure for

First-time voters exercise franchise with enthusiasm

PNS DEHRADUN

Displaying enthusiasm for the democratic process, many first-time voters flocked to polling booths in Dehradun on Friday to cast their votes in the Lok Sabha elections. With 1,45,220 new voters registered in Uttarakhand during this election, the young voters cast their votes for their better future and development. During the early hours of the morning, many polling booths witnessed a significant turnout of firsttime voters. College student and first-time voter Priyanka Kumari said that she had already planned to visit the polling booth early in the morning once the voting commenced. She expressed

her hopes that the elected candidate would prioritise youth development initiatives like reservation systems, bolstering education and enhancing employment opportunities.

Another first-time voter Sandeep Chauhan expressed a mix of nerves and excitement about taking part in the democratic process. In addition, he mentioned feeling a strong sense of responsibility and empowerment when casting his vote, understanding the impact his voice could have on shaping the nation. He further stressed the importance of the issue of un-

employment being addressed

by political parties postelection results.

para-athletes in the State.

Meanwhile, it was also observed that some firsttime voters were unaware of the issues that should be addressed by the parties after the election. Manisha Verma said, "I am voting for the first time and my main aim is to understand how voting is conducted and what an electronic voting machine looks like." She further said that she is not aware of current issues and the past work of political parties. She cast her vote purely out of excitement to play a role in selecting the government.

Congress claims to have won support of U'khand's people in all 5 seats

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand Congress has claimed that the people of the State have voted for a change in all the five Lok Sabha constituencies of the State. The Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara said that the trends show that the Congress candidates received an enthusiastic support of people in all the five LS seats of the State. He claimed that the Congress party is set to sweep all the seats in the State. Mahara said that the people have voted to the Congress party for an inclusive and sustainable development in the country. The leader of opposition (LoP) in

the State assembly, Yashpal Arya said that the people have voted in favour of the Congress party. He said that it is clear that the people want a change. Arya also expressed confidence that the Congress will win all the seats in the State. The vice president of Ut-Congress tarakhand Suryakant Dhasmana said that the people have voted for change. He said that the Ankita Bhandari murder case, Agnipath scheme and increasing unemployment has affected the voting in the state and people have voted for the Congress party.

Congress leaders take part in voting for LS polls

PNS DEHRADUN

All the senior leaders of the Congress party in the State exercised their franchise in Lok Sabha elections on Friday. The vice president of State Congress Mathur Dutt Joshi said that the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara voted in the bank building Ranikhet while Leader of Opposition (LoP) Yashpal Arya cast his vote at Adarsh upper primary school, Chhadayal Suyal, Haldwani. Former chief minister Har ish Rawat voted at ITI, Majra in Dehradun. The former PCC president Pritam Singh and his family members cast vote in his village Banad in Chakrata, Dehradun on the day. The Congress candidate from Garhwal, Ganeshi Godiyal voted at his native Bhatkot booth in Pauri.

Voters in remote village abstain from voting in protest

R esidents of the remote Gadhai village in Chamoli district abstained from voting in the Lok Sabha election on Friday. The residents of this village in Joshimath block have been demanding a road to the village for many years now. With their demand no being fulfilled so far, the villagers boycotted the parliamentary election. There are 575 voters in this village located in a landslide affected area. They had announced earlier that they would boycott the election in protest.

Revised Notice / Release

The general public is informed that, applications are invited on general application form for the recruitment of Lifetime Members for the General Assembly in Ambawati Doon Valley Inter College, Panditwari. Dehradun. The fixed fee for Lifetime membership is Rs 5100/- (Rupees five thousand one hundred only) Interested persons should submit their application form along with a bank draft of Rs 5100/- (payable to the name of "Prabandhak Koshadhyaksh, Ambawati Doon Valley Inter College Panditwari" in the Manager's office within fifteen days of the notice release date. Preference will be given to people who have passion for the school. The final authority to grant membership will be that of the Management Executive Committee.

President/Manager Ambawati Doon Valley Inter College Panditwari Dehradun

TATA CAPITAL HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

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DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13 (2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("Act") read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("Rules").

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited (TCHFL) under the Act and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Rules already issued detailed Demand Notice dated below under Section 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) (all singularly or together referred to "Obligors")/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) listed nereunder, to pay the amount mentioned in the respective Demand Notice, within 60 days from the date of the respective Notice, as per details given below. Copies of the said Notices are served by Registered Post A.D. and are available with the undersigned, and the said Obligor(s)/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s), may, if they so desire, collect the respective copy from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours n connection with the above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Obligor(s) Legal Heir(s)/ Legal Representative(s) to pay to TCHFL, within 60 days from the date of the respective Notice/s, the amount indicated herein below against their respective names, together with further interest as detailed below from the respective dates mentioned below in column (d) till the date of payment and/or realisation, read with the loan agreement and other documents / writings, if any, executed by the said Obligor(s), As security for due repayment of the loan, the following Secured Asset(s) have been mortgaged to TCHFL by the said Obligor(s) respectively.

Loan Account No.	Name of Obligor(s)/ Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s)	Total Outstanding Dues (Rs.)	Date of Demand Notice & Date of NPA
10380998	Mr. Satbir Inder Singh (Borrower), Mr. Gurminder Singh & Mrs. Jaspreet Kaur (Co-borrower)	As on 12/04/2024, an amount of Rs. 20,27,944/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Twenty Seven Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Four Only)	12-04-2024 04-04-2024

Description of the Secured Assets/ Immovable Properties/Mortgaged Properties: All Piece & Parcels of Immovable Property Admeasuring 0.0151 Hectare i.e. 151 Sq. Mtrs. Comprised in Khatoni No. 1647, Khasra No. 749, 757, 758, Situated at Mauja Garhi, Pargana Pachwadoon, District Dehradun - 248001 (Uttarakhand). with all commo amenities under sale deed, with all common amenities under sale deed.

Boundaries: East - Passage 10 Ft. Wide (Side 50' - 9"), West - Property of Sh. Satendra Singh (Side 50' - 9"), North - Property of Sh. Ravinder Singh (Side 31'), South - Property of Sh. Sanjay Khatri (Side 32'-2").

*with further interest, additional Interest at the rate as more particularly stated in respective Demand Notices dated mentioned above, incidental expenses, costs charges etc incurred till the date of payment and/or realization. If the said Obligor(s) shall fail to make payment to TCHFL as aforesaid, then TCHFL shall proceed agains the above Secured Asset(s)/ Immovable Property (ies) under Section 13(4) of the said Act and the applicable Rules entirely at the risk of the said Obligor(s)/Legal

Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) as to the costs and consequences The said Obligor(s)/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) are prohibited under the said Act to transfer the aforesaid Secured Asset(s)/Immovable Property(ies), whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of TCHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the Act or Rules made thereunder shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act. Date: 20.04.2024 Sd/-Authorised Office

Newlyweds & aged voters display enthusiasm on polling day

 ${\tt PNS} = {\tt HALDWANI/UTTARKASHI}$

Voting in the Lok Sabha election on Friday saw enthusiastic participation of both young and old voters in different parts of the State. There were several instances of young couples coming to the booth to vote either just before or soon after getting married while aged voters also took the effort to cast their votes despite various issues. A newly married couple reached the polling booth in Lalkuan area of Nainital-Udham Singh Nagar parliamentary constituency where the wife cast her vote. The duo was married late on Thursday night and came to cast their votes early the next day. Hailing from Gailiya village, Gayatri Chandola currently works in Bengaluru and got married to Bengaluru resident Ravi Shankar Tripathi late on Thursday night. She came to

the polling booth before departing for Bengaluru to cast her vote. In the Gangolihat area of Pithoragarh district, Bhupendra first cast his vote before his wedding procession departed for Haldwani for his marriage. Similar instances were reported in various parts of the State including Uttarkashi and Pauri districts, among others, where either both or one of the bride and groom

cast their votes taking time out from their wedding programmes. The elderly voters also exhibited determination to cast their votes. In Uttarkashi district, 97-yearold Sher Das reached the polling booth in a doli (palanquin) to cast his vote. Das is currently living with his children in Brahmakhal area. He



suffers from mobility issues but reached the polling booth in his Malna village in Yamunotri Assembly constituency to cast his vote. The doli was provided to him by the administration. The aged voter was also garlanded for his enthusiasm and determi-

Minority community seeks development, employment and sense of security from new Govt

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Despite the efforts of political parties to capitalise on differences during the Lok Sabha election, members of the minority community in Uttarakhand voted on Friday seeking the development of underprivileged families, employment opportunities and a sense of security in their community. This was stated by several people belonging to the minority community who voted in Dehradun on Friday. A graduate student Mohammad Altaf said that unemployment is one of the main

issues in the State among educated and uneducated classes of all the communities and the new government should adopt practical approaches to tackle it. A school teacher Anam Abbasi said that many children of the community, especially girls, remain deprived of basic education. "I voted expecting the new government to raise awareness among families to send their children to schools for a better future," she added. Businessman Imran Sheikh said, "We witnessed great disturbance in harmony between the minority community and the majority community in certain parts of the State in the past two years. The whole scenario like the so-called love Jihad cases disturbed the innocent people who were never part of such things. I hope the new government and our representative will at least try to not propagate these issues for political gains and treat us like normal citizens. I seek a safe space for our community in the State

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The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Kiran Panchal (Borrower), Rakesh Kumar Panchal (Co-Borrower), LHDEH00001336394.	2179 Khata No 704 Khasra No 2179/2 Mauja Arcadia Grant Pargana Centraldoon Dehradun Khasra No 2179/2 1 Dehradun- 248001. Bounded By- North: Land Of Side Measuring 20 Ft, South: 20 Ft Wide Road Side Measuring 15 Ft, East: Land Of Oth Side Measuring 46 Ft, West: Land Of Oth Side Measuring 37 Ft. Date of Possession- 16-Apr-24	10-04-2023 Rs. 28,33,352/-	Dehradu B
2.	Kiran Panchal (Borrower), Rakesh Kumar Panchal (Co-Borrower), LHDEH00001336504.	2179 Khata No 704 Khasra No 2179/2 Mauja Arcadia Grant Pargana Centraldoon Dehradun Khasra No 2179/2 1 Dehradun- 248001. Bounded By- North: Land Of Side Measuring 20 Ft, South: 20 Ft Wide Road Side Measuring 15 Ft, East: Land Of Oth Side Measuring 46 Ft, West: Land Of Oth Side Measuring 37 Ft. Date of Possession- 16-Apr-24	10-04-2023 Rs. 97,278/-	Dehradu B
3.	Salman. (Borrower), Farida. (Co-Borrower), Khurshi. (Co-Borrower), Usmaan. (Co-Borrower), LHHWR00001485519.	7 Plot No 7 Khasra No 1483 Situated In Gyatri Vihar Village Jwlapur Pargana Jwalapur Tehsil And Distt Haridwar 7 Haridwar Uttaranchal 249132 (Ref. LAN No. LHHWR00001485519). Bounded By- North: 16 Ft Wide Road 22 Ft, South: Land Of Others Person 22 Ft, East: Plot No.8/37.5 Ft, West: Plot No.6 Vikash 37.5 Ft. Date of Possession- 16-Apr-24	12-12-2023 Rs. 47,155.06/-	Haridwa B
4.	Salman. (Borrower), Khurshi. (Co-Borrower), Usmaan. (Co-Borrower), Farida. (Co-Borrower), LHHWR00001485520.	7 Plot No 7 Khasra No 1483 Situated In Gyatri Vihar Village Jwlapur Pargana Jwalapur Tehsil And Distt Haridwar 7 Haridwar Uttaranchal 249132 (Ref. LAN No. LHHWR00001485520). Bounded By- North: 16 Ft Wide Road 22 Ft, South: Land Of Others Person 22 Ft, East: Plot No.8/37.5 Ft, West: Plot No.6 Vikash 37.5 Ft. Date of Possession-16-Apr-24	12-12-2023 Rs. 10,32,597/-	Haridwa B
5.	Rekha Lamba (Borrower), Rahul Lamba (Co-Borrower), LHDEH00001454239.	594 Flat Situated At Ground Floor Bearing Khata Khatauni No 314 Fasli Year 1422-1427 Khasra No 594 Min Gujrada Maansingh Pargana Parwadun Dehradun Dehradun Uttarakhand 248013 (Ref. Lan No. LHDEH00001454239). Bounded By-North: Property Of Other, South: Property Of Other, East: Property Of Ashish Mohan Gupta, West: Land Of Other And Passage. Date Of Possession- 16-Apr-24	11-01-2024 Rs. 21,63,771.32/-	Dehradu B
6.	Rekha Lamba (Borrower), Rahul Lamba (Co-Borrower), LHDEH00001454564.	594 Flat Situated At Ground Floor Bearing Khata Khatauni No 314 Fasli Year 1422-1427 Khasra No 594 Min Gujrada Maansingh Pargana Parwadun Dehradun Dehradun Uttarakhand 248013 (Ref. Lan No. LHDEH00001454564). Bounded By- North: Property Of Other, South: Property Of Other, East: Property Of Ashish Mohan Gupta, West: Land Of Other And Passage. Date Of Possession- 16-Apr-24		Dehradu B
7.	Mohd Shanawaz Ansari (Borrower), Najma. (Co-Borrower), LHDEH00001509474.	Khata No 1061 Fasli Year 1422-1427 Khasra No 989 Cha Mauja Adhoiwala Pargana Parwadoon Dehradun Dehradun- Dehradun Uttarakhand 248001 (Ref. Lan No. LHDEH00001509474). Bounded By- North: 15 Ft Wide Road, South: Property Of Shri Rajesh Jain/, East: Property Of Other/30 Ft, West: Property Of Other/30 Ft. Date of Possession- 16-Apr-24	23-01-2024 Rs. 73,673/-	Dehradu B
8.	Shanawaz Ansari (Borrower), Nazma. (Co-Borrower), LHDEH00001509371.	Khata No 1061 Fasli Year 1422-1427 Khasra No 989 Cha Mauja Adhoiwala Pargana Parwadoon Dehradun Dehradun - Dehradun Uttarakhand 248001 (Ref. Lan No. LHDEH00001509371). Bounded By- North: 15 Ft Wide Road, South: Property Of Shri Rajesh Jain/, East: Property Of Other/30 Ft, West: Property Of Other/30 Ft. Date of Possession- 16-Apr-24	23-01-2024 Rs. 20,11,456/-	Dehradu B

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per

the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. Date: April 20, 2024

Authorized Officer

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For Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited



53.56 per cent voter turnout reported in U'khand

PNS DEHRADUN

Polling was held in a peaceful manner in all the five Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttarakhand on Friday. Barring a couple of incidents where the polling was disturbed for some time the voting was held peacefully in the

The State reported a total 53.56 per cent voter turnout in the five LS constituencies after the end of the polling at 5 PM. The figure is likely to be revised as data of many polling booths will be added to it later. However, experts believe that the revised voter turnout figure is likely to remain at 55- 57 per cent which is much less than the 61.50 per cent turnout reported in the LS elections of 2019. The tentative data of EC shows that 59.36 per the State. At many polling cent turnout was reported in Nainital-Udham Singh Nagar



Tehri and 48.79 per cent in Garhwal constituency.

The polling started at 7 AM on a high note in all the stations people were seen standing in queues in the constituency, 59.01 per cent early part of the day to cast in Haridwar, 44.43 per cent their vote. The complaints of in Almora, 51.01 per cent in malfunctioning of the parts of the State. He said that

Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were reported in many polling stations. The additional chief electoral officer (ACEO) Vijay Kumar Jogdande said that complaints of malfunctioning of 35 Control Units (CUs) were reported by officials while 40 Ballot Units (BUs) reported-

ly malfunctioned in different

malfunctioning was reported during the mock voting trials conducted before the start of the voting process. The faulty EVMs were replaced by authorities where necessary. In the first two hours, 10.54 per voters exercised their franchise which increased to 24.83 per cent till 11 AM. Till 1 PM 37.33 voter turnout was reported that was higher than the 36 per cent turnout till the time in the LS elections of 2019.

After 1 PM the enthusiasm of voters of the State became subdued and at many places the polling stations appeared deserted. At 3 PM 45.62 per cent turnout was reported by the authorities. In the evening also the polling failed to pick up pace.

Low voter turnout candidates anxious

PNS DEHRADUN

The low voter turnout in turnout was reported this time as compared to 48.55 ■ Uttarakhand has dashed the hopes of the Election Commission which had taken a target of 75 per cent voter turnout for the Lok Sabha elections-2024.

The less than expected turnout has also baffled the political parties which have now started the micro level analysis of the voter turnout. The data of the EC shows that barring Champawat district, the voting percentage in all the districts of the State has decreased in comparison to the LS elections of 2019.

In Uttarkashi 52.3 per cent turnout was reported which is much less than 60.43 per cent reported in 2019. Similarly 49.36 and 54.02 per cent turnout was reported in Chamoli and Rudraprayag districts respectively. In Tehri district only 40.93 per cent

time as compared to 48.55 per cent in 2019. In Dehradun district 53.78 per cent turnout was reported which is less than the 59.78 per cent turnout reported in 2019. In Haridwar district 61.34 per cent turnout was reported which is 10 per cent less than 2019. In Pauri district

46.42 per cent turnout was

reported.

The turnout in Pithoragarh and Bageshwar was 52.01 and 57.19 per cent respectively. The data court has been about the second of further shows that Almora reported only 40.87 per cent turnout while 47.81 per cent turnout was reported here in 2019. In Nainital and Udham Singh Nagar districts 56.02 and 61.5 per cent voter turnout was reported on Friday while in 2019, 63.15 and 67.77 per cent turnout respectively was reported in these districts.

| Fate of 55 candidates makes political parties, in 5 LS constituencies sealed in EVMs

PNS DEHRADUN

With the end of voting, the fate of 55 candidates in the fray in all the five Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttarakhand was sealed in the EVMs on Friday. The counting of the votes will be held on June 4 and till then the EVMs will be kept under strict vigil in the counting centres. In Tehri LS constituency 11 candidates are in the fray. However there is a direct battle between Mala Rajya

Laxmi Shah of BJP and Jot Singh Gunsola of Congress in the constituen-

Independent candidate Bobby Panwar tried to make the contest three cornered in Tehri.

In Garhwal LS constituency the national media in charge of BJP Anil Baluni is locked in an interesting battle with Ganesh

Godiyal of Congress party. In Haridwar LS constituency, BJP has fielded former chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat while Virendra Singh Rawat who is son of former CM Harish Rawat is contesting on Congress party ticket. Nainital- Udham Singh Nagar constituency, the Union minister of State Ajay Bhatt is seeking election for the second consecutive term. He is chal-



lenged by Prakash Joshi of Congress party. In Almora Ajay Tamta of BJP and Pradeep Tamta of Congress party are in

People of Uttarakhand voted for strong government: Dhami

PNS DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Pushkar their homes to vote. He Singh Dhami exercised requested that the youth, his franchise at Nagra Terai especially first time voters, polling station in his native give their contribution in Khatima town of Udham shaping the future of the Singh Nagar district on nation by exercising the Friday morning. Like an power of vote. The CM said ordinary citizen the CM that there is enthusiasm waited for his turn to vote among the people. He while standing in a queue. expressed confidence that a After casting his vote CM strong and stable govern-Dhami ate a sweet (Jalebi) to ment will be formed after



Matdan Fir Jalpan'. Dhami day the CM visited many

give the message of 'Pehle the elections. Later in the appealed to people to participate in the festival of democracy by coming out of day the CM Visited Harry polling stations in Khatima where he met the BJP workers and encouraged them.

Police act against two for disturbing voting process

Old man breaks EVM, demands ballot paper for voting

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

 $T^{\text{he police took action}}_{\text{against two people in two separate districts for disturbing}} \text{ nel on site brought him outside.} \\ \text{The man continued to shout loudly that the voting should}$ the voting process in the Lok Sabha election on Friday. In the Jwalapur area of Haridwar district, a senior citizen broke the electronic voting machine (EVM) when his demand to cast his vote by ballot paper was not met. According to the offi-

The man continued to shout loudly that the voting should have been conducted through ballot papers. The police detained him for interrogation, the officials added. Besides this, the police also took a young man into custody from the Kunda area in Udham Singh Nagar district for upload-



cials, when the man entered booth number 126 of polling station Jwalapur Inter College in the afternoon, he reportedly sought to cast his vote through a ballot paper. The officials there told him that it was not possible and requested him to cast his vote by EVM while assuring that his vote will remain undisclosed and secure till the vote counting. However, the man continued his demand and vented his anger by picking up the EVM and throwing it on the floor, officials said. This created chaos at the booth

ing a video in which he showed the EVM inside the polling booth. He also showed himself casting his vote from inside the polling booth against the law. His video soon went viral on social media and the police soon started receiving complaints about him. Taking cognisance of the post, the police brought the man to the police station to inquire. The Udham Singh Nagar senior superin-tendent of police Manjunath TC said that the video was soon deleted from Facebook and the police will take further action after which the police personas per the rules.



@ 8126562778, 8218336268 @ stjohnsntl@gmail.com बच्चों को उत्कृष्ट शिक्षा दे रहा सेंट जॉन्स स्कूल

Above High Court Mallital, Nainital, Uttarakhand



सेंट जॉन्स स्कूल की शुरुआत श्रीमती एच.सी. द्वारा वर्ष 1982 में एक प्लेस्कूल के रूप में की गई थी। थॉमस और श्री जेई डेक्न्हा। वर्ष 1989 में इसे श्रीमती ई थॉमस और श्री एस.ए.थॉमस द्वारा अधिग्रहित कर लिया गया, जिन्होंने कक्षा 8 तक अतिरिक्त कक्षाएं जोड़ी। अब यह श्रीमती विनीता रावत के रूप में वर्तमान प्राचार्य के साथ एक प्रतिष्ठान है। इस विद्यालय का वातावरण नन्हे मुन्ने बर्च्यों के लिए नगर में विशेष स्थान रखता है। अंग्रेजी माध्यम से

संचालित सेंट जॉन्स स्कूल बेहतर ढंग से बच्चों के चहुमुखी विकास में जुटा हुआ है। अनिवार्य विषयों के अलावा अतिरिक्त विषय भी चला रहा है। जिसके चलते इस विद्यालय के प्रति नगर में लोगों का विश्वास गहराता जा रहा है। कक्षा आठवीं तक

नगर का अग्रणी स्कूल सनवाल



उत्कृष्ट शिक्षा व कुशल प्रबंधन के चलते यह विद्यालय कक्षा 12वीं तक जा पहुचा है। वर्ष 1952 में सनवाल स्कूल की स्थापना एंजेलिना ग्रेस सनवाल द्वारा की गई थी। लिहाजा सनवाल स्कूल अपने उद्देश्य की पूर्ति करता हुआ 71 साल का सफर तय करने में न केवल कामयाब हुआ है, बल्कि हजारों बच्चों का भविष्य संवारने में अपनी

महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा चुका है। सीबीएससी बोर्ड से संबद्ध सनवाल स्कूल अंग्रेजी माध्यम से संचालित किया जा रहा है। वर्तमान में प्रबंध निदेशक गौरव सनवाल विद्यालय का कुशल प्रबंधन का दायित्व निभा रहे हैं, जबिक ए इमेन्युअल प्रधानाचार्य के पद पर बेहतर शिक्षण कार्य रही हैं। वह कहती हैं कि विद्यालय को आगे ले जाने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध हैं और आधुनिक शिक्षा के साथ बच्चों का भविष्य संवारने हेतु दायित्व निभा रही हैं।

सफलता का पथ पर अग्रसर सेंट नेवियर



सेंट जेवियर्स स्कूल नगर के उन स्कूलों में है, जिसे ऐतिहासिक स्कूलों के समकक्ष्य शिक्षा देनी है, जो करीब डेढ़ सौ सालों से शिक्षा जगत में मजबूत स्तंभ के रूप में खड़े हैं। मगर गौर करने वाली बात यह है कि सेंट जेवियर्स शिक्षा के सभी मापदंड के साथ निरंतर प्रगति के पथ पर

अग्रसर है। लिहाजा सफलता के बल पर यह शिक्षण संस्थान 32 साल का सफर तय कर चुका है। विद्यालय प्रधानाचार्य नईम अली खान का कहना है कि गुरुकुल रूपी इस विद्यालय को आगे ले जाने में अपना दायित्व निमा रहे हैं। अंग्रेजी माध्यम से विद्यालय का संचालन किया जाता है। कक्षा एक से बारहवीं तक आवासीय व दिवसीय विद्यालय है। जिसमें खानपान समेत आधुनिक रहन सहन व तमाम अत्याधुनिक सुविधाएं उपलब्ध हैं।

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शारारिक विकास के लिए प्रत्येक सुविधाएं विद्यालय में उपलब्ध हैं, जबकि अनुभवी शिक्षकों द्वारा बच्चों का पठन पाठन कार्य किया जाता है। जिसके चलते यह विद्यालय निरंतर विकास के पथ पर अग्रसर है। प्रधानाचार्य दीपा बिष्ट के नेतत्व में विद्यालय का संचालन किया जा रहा है। उनका कहना है कि बच्चों के प्रति अथक रनेह के कारण नन्हें मुन्ने बच्चों का भविष्य संवारने में कई वर्षों से समर्पितरूप से अपनी जिम्मेदारी निभा रही हैं।

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Education Society, Redg. 88/20

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Your votes safe, EVMS 100 per cent safe: CEC to voters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Election Kumar on Friday dismissed apprehensions about Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and assured people that their vote was safe and secure.

Kumar asserted that the EVMs were 100 per cent safe as a large number of safeguards - technological, administrative and process-oriented - were in place.

^{te}It is a settled issue. It is 100 per cent safe. It has been raised in the honourable court also. We are awaiting judgment, nothing can happen to the machines. Every stage political parties and their candidates are involved. Mock polls are done," he said to questions on doubts

the EVMs "There are a large number of safeguards, technological, administrative, and processoriented. Just enjoy the voting. This is a time to enjoy the voting, not doubt anything," the CEC said.

"Enjoy your voting, your vote is safe, secure and will be recorded as you vote," Kumar

The first phase of the Lok Sabha elections got underway across 102 constituencies in 21



states and union territories on

'We are getting reports from the field that even if rains are happening, people are really coming out in large numbers. Women, youth, old age people... everyone is rushing towards the polling stations. It is really a delightful situation to see that people are dancing to the tune of democracy," Kumar

He said the Election Commission has used technology to a great extent to ensure better voter turnout by reaching out to the youth and women voters by mapping parliamentary constituencies where voting has been traditionally less.
"A turn out plan was made

depending on the local context. Lots of celebrities were roped in, a number of organisations

have worked with us - petrol

pumps, banks, post offices in

the outreach program," Kumar

We are very hopeful that people will come out to vote. It is our appeal, please join in this festival of democracy.. Youth, women, transgender, PwD, all geographies...It is your right, your duty, your responsibility, your pride," the CEC said.

Kumar, along with fellow Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and S S Sandhu, was monitoring the progress of the election process from the control room set up at the Election Commission headquarters here.

India ready to take next step towards becoming science powerhouse: Journal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Science journal 'Nature' has said India along with being an economic power is also more than ready to take the next step towards becoming a science powerhouse, as it called for a rise in the country's research and development spending, especially from the private sector.

The prestigious British weekly said in its editorial headlined "How India can become a science powerhouse" cited researchers to highlight that basic research has been neglected by successive governments and that a thriving research system needs much greater autonomy.

Along with being an economic power, India is also more than ready to take the next step towards becoming a science powerhouse. This is not yet a given, but it can happen," it

"In this editorial, we discuss a third aspect: how to bridge the funding gap. One thing India's government can do is to boost science spending by encouraging businesses to contribute more, as is the case for other leading economies. If policymakers and industrialists can get this right, an opportunity to put rocket boosters under the country's impressive scientific achievements is there for the



taking," the journal said. The editorial noted that in 2021-22, according to government data, India had the world's third-largest pharmaceutical industry by volume and was the leading supplier of affordable medicines and generic drugs, some of which were "crucial" to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic world-

Last year, India became the fourth country ever to achieve a soft landing on the Moon and the first to land near the lunar south pole, it said, adding that the country also has the world's largest constellation of remotesensing satellites.

The magazine said India is among the world's most prolific countries in terms of research output after the United States and China.

From 2014 to 2021, the number of universities increased from 760 to 1,113. In the past decade, seven more Indian

Civil Services topper Aditya scores 54.27 per cent in UPSC exams

Institutes of Technology have been established, raising the total to 23. In the same period, two new Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research were also established. "Now consider that these gains were achieved by a nation that spent just 0.64 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on research and development (R&D) during 2020-21," it said. Whichever political formation is elected to power in the ongoing polls, it must consider how to increase the country's

money, it said. Nature said around 60 per cent of India's research spending can be traced to central and state governments and universities, and around 40 per cent to the private sector. In comparable nations, there is often much more private-sec-

could be achieved with more

tor funding.
"In 2022, the private sector contributed, on average, 74 per cent of OECD nations' R&D spending and 66 per cent of such funding for the 27 members of the European Union. India today has many global companies in construction, information technology, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and more. They could be contributing a lot more to the nation's research -- both in terms of funding researchers

and also infrastructure," it said.

On voting day Rahul urges voters to open Mohabbat ki Dukaan



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

As polling began in the first phase of the Lok Sabha polls on Friday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi urged voters to strengthen democracy and open 'Mohabbat ki Dukaan' in every corner of the country by defeating hatred.

"Today is the first phase of voting! Remember, each and every vote of yours is going to decide the future of India's democracy and its generations," Rahul Gandhi said in a post in Hindi

'Go out and strengthen democracy by applying the balm of your vote on the wounds inflicted on the soul of the country in the last 10 years," he said. Open 'Mohabbat Ki Dukaan' in every

corner of the country by defeating hatred, the Congress leader added. Rahul Gandhi also shared a graphic of the key Congress guarantees to the people, including the right to apprenticeship, a legal guarantee of MSP and a nationwide caste census.

The 2024 Lok Sabha polls kicked off Friday with polling being held for the first phase scheduled in 102 seats spread across 21 states and Union territories. Among those in the fray are Union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Sarbanada Sonowal and Bhupendra Yadav, Gaurav Gogoi of the Congress, the DMK's Kanimozhi and K Annamalai of the BJP.

Assembly elections in Arunachal Pradesh (60 seats) and Sikkim (32 seats) are also being held simultaneously.

1992 batch IPS officer Nalin Prabhat appointed NSG chief

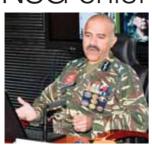
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $S^{\text{enior Indian Police Service}}_{\text{(IPS) officer Nalin Prabhat}}$ has been appointed as the chief of National Security Guard (NSG), the country's counterterrorism force, according to a Personnel Ministry order. Prabhat, a 1992 IPS officer of

Andhra Pradesh cadre, is presently working as Additional Director General in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The Appointments Committee

of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment as the Director General, NSG for a period up to August 31, 2028 i.E. The date of his superannuation, the order said.

Popularly known as the "black cats", the federal contingency Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)



was holding the additional charge of the NSG.

The ACC has also approved appointment of Sapna Tewari as the Special Director in the Intelligence Bureau (IB). Tewari, a 1992 batch IPS officer of Odisha cadre, is currently working as Additional Director

She has been appointed as the Special Director, IB for a tenure of two years from the date of assumption of charge of the superannuation i.E. April 30, chief Daljit Singh Chawdhary 2026, the order said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

ivil services examination Ctopper Aditya Srivastava scored 54.27 per cent in the prestigious exam conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), according to the detailed marks of the recommended candidates released by the Commission on Friday. Following closely behind is Animesh Pradhan, who scored 52.69 per cent in Civil Services Examination 2023.

As many as 1,016 candidates - 664 men and 352 women have qualified in the examination, results of which were announced on Tuesday. The civil services examination

is conducted annually by the Union Public Service Commission(UPSC) in three stages -- preliminary, main and personality test (or interview) -- to select officers for Service (IFS) and Indian

Police Service (IPS), among

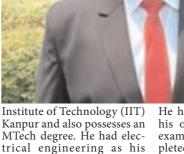
The preliminary examination consists of two objective type (multiple choice) question papers of 400 marks. This stage is meant to serve as

a screening test only, and the marks obtained in it by the candidates, who are declared qualified for admission to the main examination, are not counted for determining their final order of merit. The merit is determined out of the total of 2,025 marks --

1,750 marks and the interview is of 275. Srivastava (27) got a total of 1,099 marks -- 899 in the written and 200 in the personality test, according to the

written or main exam is of

marks of recommended candidates disclosed by the A trainee Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, he hails from Lucknow in Uttar



Kanpur and also possesses an MTech degree. He had electrical engineering as his optional subject in the civil services exam.

Pradhan (24), resident of Talcher town in Odisha's Angul district, scored 1,067 Service (IAS), Indian Foreign ed his BTech in electrical 175 in interview -- and engineering from the Indian secured the second rank.

He had chosen sociology as his optional subject in the examination. Pradhan completed his BTech in computer science from the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela and is currently an employee of the Indian Oil Corporation's (IOC) refiner-Third rank holder Donuru

Ananya Reddy, who appeared

cally weaker section candidate, got 1,065 marks (52.59 per cent) -- 875 in the main and 190 in the interview -- and fourth rank holder P K Sidharth Ramkumar scored 1,059 marks (52.29 per cent) 874 in written and 185 in the interview. Reddy (22), who has a BA

in the exam as an economi-

(Hons) in geography from Miranda House, Delhi University, had anthropology as her optional subject. She hails from Mahabubnagar in Telangana. Ramkumar (27) has a bache-

lor's degree in architecture from the College of Architecture in Trivandrum. Ruhani got the fifth rank with a total of 1,049 marks (51.8 per cent) -- 856 in written and 193 in the interview. She completed her BA (Hons) in economics from St Stephens College, Delhi University.

marks achieved by all the 1,016 candidates on its web-

site. The Civil Services (preliminary) Exam 2023 was conducted on May 28. A total of 10,16,850 candidates applied, of which 5,92,141 appeared in the examination. As many as 14,624 candidates qualified for the written (main) examination, which was held in September.

"A total of 2,855 candidates qualified for the personality test of the examination," the UPSC said.

Of these, 1,016 candidates were finally recommended for different government services. The government had reported 1,143 vacancies --180 in IAS, 37 in IPS, 200 in IPS, 613 posts in different central Group A services and 113 in Group B services -- to be filled through the civil services examination 2023, the UPSC said.

As many as 240 candidates have been put on a reserved list, it said, adding that the mended candidates has been

Congress raps Centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

¬he Congress charged Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday with protecting those responsible for the paper-leak and recruitment "scams" in Madhya Pradesh and asked him why the crime rate against Dalits is "increasing" in the state. Congress general secretary

Jairam Ramesh hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre ahead of Modi's rally in Damoh in Madhya Pradesh. "Today's questions for PM Modi as he heads to MP: Who is the PM protecting in MP's paper leak and recruitment scams? Why has the BJP let down Adivasis in Forest Rights Act implementation? MP has the highest crime rate against Dalits. Why is it increasing?' Ramesh asked in a post on X. Elaborating on what he said were details of "jumlas" (rhetoric), the Congress leader said the government might have changed the name of the Employees Selection Board in Madhya Pradesh but nobody has forgotten the notorious Vyapam "scam" that rocked the state 10 years ago.

Since then, allegations of rigging have cropped up in the recruitment of nursing staff, school teachers, constables and agriculture development officers, but all that the BJP government has done is deny and subvert, he alleged.

"Just last year, allegations broke out of a scam in the patwari recruitment examination. Seven of ten toppers in the examination came from the same exam centre in Gwalior which is owned by a BJP MLA.



"A few years earlier, in 2021, three tests — for agriculture extension officers, senior agriculture officers and nursing staff - were cancelled when the evidence of foul play became too obvious to ignore," Ramesh said.

He said a probe subsequently found out that the papers for the exams were leaked by a private company that was already implicated in the Vyapam "scam"." Who is the PM protecting in these scams? What is PM Modi doing to ensure that our youth never face such injustice again?" the former Union minister asked. In 2006, the Congress passed the revolutionary Forest Rights Act (FRA) that granted the Adivasi and forest-dwelling communities legal rights to manage their forests, and economically benefit from the forest produce they collect, he pointed out.

"The BJP government, how-ever, has obstructed the imple-mentation of the FRA, depriving millions of Adivasis of its benefits. Only 47 per cent (2,94,877 claims) of the 6,27,513 individual claims filed have been granted, and land titles distributed cover only 10 per cent (5,931 sq. km) of the 57,948 sq. Km eligible

for community rights, Ramesh alleged.

Why have the successive BJP governments in Madhya Pradesh failed to provide the Adivasi communities their rights, he asked.

Citing data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the Congress leader pointed out that Madhya Pradesh has the highest crime rate against Dalits in the country.

"In 2021 (the latest year for which data is available), the crime rate against SCs was 63.6 as compared to the national average of 25.3. The state also recorded high crime rates against Dalits in 2019 and 2020 — 46.7 and 60.8 against the national averages of 22.8 and 25 respectively. It is disgusting and shameful that the rate of crimes against Dalits has actually increased year-onyear," he said.

The BJP has been in power in MP for more than two decades now. Why is it that Dalits have to increasingly fear for their safety? Does PM Modi feel no shame for the countless atrocities that Dalits have endured under his watch?" Ramesh asked and said the prime minister should break his silence

Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar to become new Navy Chief



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi will be the new Navy Chief by the end of this month succeeding incumbent Admiral R Hari Kumar. Admiral Kumar will retire from service on April

Tripathi is currently serving as Vice Chief of the Naval Staff. government has "The

appointed Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, presently serving as Vice Chief of the Naval Staff as the next Chief of the Naval Staff with effect from the afternoon of April 30," the defence ministry said.Born on May 15, 1964, Vice Admiral Tripathi was commissioned into the executive branch of the Indian Navy on July 1, 1985.A communication and electronic warfare specialist, he has had a long and distinguished service spanning nearly 30 years. Prior to taking over as Vice Chief of Navy, he had served

as Flag Officer Commanding-

in-Chief of the Western Naval Command.

Tripathi has served in a variety of command, staff and instructional appointments. He has commanded INS

He has also held various important operational and staff appointments which include Fleet Operations Officer of the Western Fleet, Director of Naval Operations, Principal Director Network Centric Operations and Principal Director of Naval Plans at New Delhi.

As Rear Admiral, he served as Flag Officer Commanding of the Eastern Fleet. He also served as Commandant of the prestigious Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala.

An alumnus of the Sainik School, Rewa and National Defence Academy(NDA) Khadakwasla, Vice Admiral Tripathi has undergone courses at the Naval War College, Goa and Naval War College USA. He is a recipient of the Ati Vishist Seva Medal (AVSM) and Nau Sena Medal

DRDO hands over indigenous actuators, air brake modules to HAL



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)'s Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) has handed over the first batch of the indigenous Leading Edge Actuators and Airbrake Control Module to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), marking a significant leap towards self-reliance in aeronautical technologies, defence ministry said here on Friday. Giving details, officials said Hindustan Aeronautics Limited(HAL), Lucknow has already made preparations for the production of these units for the current 83 LCA Tejas Mk1A order. The Secondary Flight Control

of LCA-Tejas, comprising Leading Edge Slats and Airbrakes, now boasts state-ofthe-art Servo-Valve based electro-hydraulic servo actuators and control modules. These high pressure, redundant servo actuators and control module, characterised by astute design, precision manufacturing, assembly, and testing, represent a culmination of ADA's relentless pursuit of indigenous technological prowess.

Medical experts for reintroduction of Indian **Medical Services**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Medical experts representing the public and private sector have batted for reintroduction of Indian Medical Services (IMS), akin to Indian Administrative Service, to boost the healthcare sector infrastructure, and enhance coordination in healthcare policy formulation.

Led by the Think Change Forum (TCF), a think tank, the experts submitted a five-point agenda to the government to roll-out the IMS following discussion at a recently held panel discussion titled 'Is it time for India to resurrect Indian Medical Services?'

The deliberation highlighted the imperative of strengthening the public healthcare system and emphasised the pivotal role that IMS can play in achieving this objective.
The IMS will help bring the

sheen and trust back to public health sector which has been lost to private sector; help stop brain drain from public medical services by attracting and retaining the best medical talent; allow for superior health-care outcomes with better managed facilities and processes, as no longer generalists will be managing the specialists, said the experts.

Overall, the healthcare infrastructure is fractured and falls short of providing quality and effective healthcare at scale. These shortcomings primarily stem from inefficient bureaucratic management rather than lack of skills among healthcare

professionals, noted the

Dr Rajesh Gupta, Additional Director, Pulmonology and Critical Care, Fortis Healthcare, Noida, said, "The majority of the Indian public relies on the private sector for healthcare services, with 60 per cent of inpatient admissions (IPDs) and 80 per cent of outpatient visits (OPDs) occurring in private facilities."

The second point highlighted challenges in staffing the public healthcare system with skilled doctors. Lack of incentives for these highly educated professionals to work under generalist administrators has resulted in brain drain, they

Dr Sharad Kr Agarwal, the immediate past national president of IMA, said, "The implementation of IMS holds the promise of enhancing service quality through induc-tion of skilled doctors and addressing the persistent doctor shortage, especially in rural areas. Crucial to its success is equipping the cadre with ample facilities and resources comparable to those provided to IAS or IPS officers."

"This will ensure that doctors are incentivized to join IMS, drawn by a clear career trajectory and motivated to serve communities, even in remote areas," he said.

It was also felt that the IMS will be able to enable seamless coordination and cooperation between the central and state health departments, for improved national healthcare policies for the country.

Modi takes dig at Rahul, Akhilesh

PM says film of do shehzade already rejected by people

PTI ■ AMROHA (UP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a veiled dig at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday, saying the shooting of the film "do shehzade ki jodi" is on but it has already been rejected by people.
"Every time these people seek

votes from the people of Uttar Pradesh, they carry a basket of dynasty, corruption and appeasement. They do not leave any chance to attack our faith," Modi said, addressing a

rally here. In a veiled attack on Gandhi and Yadav, he said, "The shooting of the film 'do shehzade ki jodi (a pair of princes)' is going on. But their film has already been rejected by people."

Hitting out at Danish Ali, the Congress candidate from Amroha, Modi alleged that he has objections in saying "Bharat Mata ki jai".

"Will a person, who cannot accept Bharat Mata ki jai, look

good in the Indian Parliament? Should such a person be allowed entry into the Indian Parliament?" he asked the gathering.

Slamming the opposition, the prime minister said, "The SP and the Congress declined the invitation for the Ram temple's consecration ceremony in Ayodhya. People hankering for vote banks refused the invitation for the ceremony. Instead, look at those who fought the Babri Masjid case in the Supreme Court but still participated in the consecration ceremony.

after losing the case.' Iqbal Ansari, a litigant in the Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, attended the consecration ceremony of the Ram temple on January 22.

the consecration ceremony

"They are not satisfied even after refusing the invitation, so they abuse the Ram temple and Sanatan Dharma. The SP, for its vote bank, calls Ram 'pakhandi' (hypocrites). Those in the INDIA opposition bloc hate Sanatan Dharma," Modi said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a public meeting for the Lok Sabha elections, at Gajraula in Amroha, on Friday

The prime minister alleged that when he went under the sea to offer prayers in Gujarat's Dwarka, where Lord Krishna

had gone from Amroha, "the prince of the Congress said there is nothing to pray under the sea. They are rejecting our

faith only for their vote banks". Hitting out at Akhilesh Yadav

as well as Bihar's Deputy Chief in Uttar Pradesh, the leader

Minister Tejashwi Yadav, Modi said, "Those in Bihar, Minister who say they are Yaduvanshi, who takes the benefits of being Yaduvanshi, I want to ask them, how can they sit with a party that insults Lord Krishna? How can you have an

agreement with them?"
He criticised the Congress, SP
and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) governments in Uttar Pradesh in the past for allegedly ignoring farmers and said those growing sugarcane were given Rs 500 crore annually during the SP's rule, whereas the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government gave

Party (BJP) government gave Rs 1,500 crore to them.
Blaming vote-bank politics for communal riots, Modi said, "This vote-bank politics burnt western Uttar Pradesh in the fire of riots. The people of Uttar Pradesh can never forget that era of Goonda Raj. People had to migrate and leave their houses behind. "In several western Uttar Pradesh neighbourhoods, posters with 'makan bikau hai' (house for sale) written on

(house for sale) written on those were put up. But, Yogiji (Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath) got rid of criminals for your safety. We

must ensure that these forces are not strengthened again in any manner.

The prime Minister accused the previous governments of

cheating the Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities in the name of social justice, and said he is working towards achieving the dream of social reformers Jyotiba Phule, B R Ambedkar and Chaudhary Charan Singh.

"The previous governments have only cheated the people of the SC, ST and OBC communities in the name of social justice. Modi is working day and night to achieve the social justice dream of Jyotiba Phule, Ambedkar and (former prime minister) Chaudhary Charan Singh," he said. The prime minister addressed the rally as polling was underway in eight western Uttar Pradesh constituencies in the first phase of the Lok Sabha polls. Amroha will go to polls in the second phase on April 26. The counting of votes will be taken

up on June 4. The prime minister began his speech with an appeal to

people to vote.
"I appeal to everyone to exercise their right to vote given by the Constitution," he said while emphasising that youngsters should especially go out and vote to secure their future and that of the country.



People not excited about polls, claims farmer leader Naresh Tikait

PTI ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP)

Farmer leader Naresh Tikait on Friday expressed skepticism about the BJP's claim of the NDA crossing the 400-mark and claimed "there is no excitement among people" about the polls.

"If they are saying 400, then what is the need for them to contest elections? It is special advance. Do they have any astrologer who has predicted that this is going to happen?" said Tikait, national president of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) while speaking to 'PTI Videos'.

Polling in eight Lok Sabha constituencies of western Uttar Pradesh, including Muzaffarnagar, are underway on Friday in the first phase.

"People express their feelings through their votes. However, the voting is slow, and it will be like this till evening. There is no excitement among people, they are disillusioned now. Also, elections are being held in several phases... Elections should be held in a single

phase and the results should be declared on the third day and (new government's) oathtaking in the next four-five days," he suggested.

"There is an Emergency-like situation in the country. These are the talks among the public," Tikait further said.

People of this area don't like slavery. There might be some region, state or seat that likes slavery by not casting their

"The era of booth capturing has passed... Everyone is complaining about the machine, then why are the polls not being conducted through ballot papers? 90-95 per cent people are against the machine (EVM). It is a machine and can be tempered

with," Tikait claimed. Talking about payment to sugarcane farmers, Tikait said, "They show the payment as a favour. Are they giving it for free? Have we not given them our sugarcane produce? The farmers today are feeling

Close to 55 per cent polling recorded in 12 LS seats in Rajasthan

A voter turnout of close to 55 per cent was recorded in 12 parliamentary constituencies of Rajasthan where polling was held in the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections on Friday. elections on Friday.
The election authorities said

54.97 per cent of the electorate cast their votes. The final figures would be released later.

released later. The highest voter turnout of 62.93 per cent was recorded in the Ganganagar Lok Sabha seat while Jhunjhunu saw the lowest turnout of 47.98 per cent, it said. Jaipur recorded a poll percentage of 61.23. The voting percentage in Bikaner was 52.53, Churu 61.05, Sikar 55.06, Jaipur Rural 54.44, Alwar 55.82, Dausa 49.57, Bharatpur 50.97 and Nagaur 56.89.

are in the fray in the first phase of polling that began at am in the state and ended at 6 pm. There are 25 Lok Sabha seats in Rajasthan and the remaining 13 will go to poll in the second phase on April

Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra, Chief Minister Mishra, Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, former deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot and other leaders cast their votes in the initial hours. Mishra and his wife Satyawati Mishra cast their votes at a polling booth in C Scheme. "Voting is not only a

constitutional right but also the duty of every citizen of India. This strengthens democracy," the governor

The chief minister exercised



and expressed confidence that the NDA will win over 400 seats across the country in this general election. He said people of the state were voting for 'guarantees' of Prime Minister Narendra

people want change and this told reporters after casting

change in the country.

The BJP had a long tenure of 10 years. Now people are bored and I am convinced that the Congress will win more seats than the BJP in Rajasthan. We will win across the country and the INDIA On the other hand, Pilot said bloc will get a majority," he

Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari also cast her vote in this phase.

newly married couples were also seen at the polling booths.

booth before entering the wedlock. Dressed in bridal attire, she also took a selfie at a 'selfie point' after casting her vote.

polling station with his family members to vote. He said although he could have chosen the 'voting from home' option, he preferred to cast his vote at a polling station.

Former BJP state president Satish Poonia cast his vote at a polling booth in Rani Sati Nagar in Jaipur during the

day. Elderly citizens and some

Shivani, a resident of Dampura village in Dholpur district, reached her polling

In Jaipur, a 95-year-old retired naval officer reached a

Newlywed Rohit and Sonia Chaudhary went to a polling station in Jaipur' Purani Basti

to cast their votes. They got married on Thursday night. Rajasthan Director General of Police Utkal Ranjan Sahoo said tight security arrangements have been made for free, fair and peaceful voting. The Rajasthan Police, along with companies of the Central Armed Forces and Home Guard personnel, has been deployed to maintain peace and law and order.

According to Chief Electoral Officer Praveen Gupta, a total of 2.54 crore people are eligible to vote in the first phase and around 23,000 polling booths have been set up in this phase.

In a first, people of Andaman | Vehicle carrying EVM vulnerable Shompen tribe vote

PTI ■ PORT BLAIR

 $F_{\rm Andaman~and~Nicobar}^{\rm or~the~first~time~in}$ Islands, seven members of the Shompen tribe, a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTGs) of Great Nicobar Islands on Friday exercised their voting rights for the lone Lok Sabha seat in the union territory, an official said.

Not only Shompen tribe members exercised their voting rights at polling station 411 named as 'Shompen Hut' built inside the forest staff quarters but also they posed cheated and feel they have lost everything. Farmers are sad." for selfies at a designated cut-

Commission of India, which

reads - "I vote for sure". The Shompen tribes were assisted in their language by an interpreter known as 'Mathiyas' (a Nicobari tribal vouth).

Speaking to PTI, Chief Electoral Officer, B S Jaglan said, "This is for the first time a total of seven members of Shompen tribe exercised their voting rights. Earlier, we have given them training about EVMs and VVPATs through a trainer. It's good to see that they came out of the jungle and voted for the first time. As per the 2011 census the population of the Shompen



was 229. Onge

"Other two primitive tribes and Great Andamanese too exercised their voting rights like in 2019 Lok Sabha election but seven Shompen did it for the first time out of 98 Shompen voters," the CEO said.

An election official said nearly 91 per cent of voting

happened at Dugong Creek (little Andaman tehsil of South Andaman district) where Onge primate tribes live exclusively (it is a reserved forest area). "Out of 68 Onge, 62 of them voted including 35 male and 27 female," Returning Officer, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arjun Sharma said. Similarly, 100 per cent voting happened at Strait Island which is an exclusively restricted area for the Great Andamanese tribe. "Out of 39 Great Andamanese, all 39 Great Andamanese exercised their voting rights," Sharma

sinks in Assam river **PTI** ■ NORTH LAKHIMPUR (ASSAM)

An SUV carrying an electronic voting machine partially sank into a river after water level rose suddenly washing away a mechanised boat that was ferrying the vehicle in Assam's Lakhimpur constituency on Friday, officials

said. The driver and the polling officer of the vehicle managed to get out before water gushed into the vehicle, an official

said. It was on its way to Amarpur area in Sadiya to replace an EVM after a technical glitch

was detected in it as polling

Polling picks up in Puducherry,

89 years old comes out to vote

commenced in the morning, the official said. A quick response team sta-

tioned at Sadiya dispatched the SUV with the EVM, accompanied by the driver and an official.

'As the vehicle was being carried by a mechanised boat across the Deopani river, its water level and current sudden-ly increased. The boat sank under the force of the water, and the vehicle also partially

sank," the official said. "A State Disaster Response Force team was called in to pull the vehicle out of the water. The EVM, meant for replacement, was damaged in the accident,' he added.

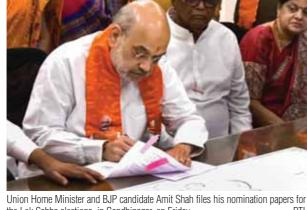
Shah files nomination from Gandhinagar LS

Says election is all about giving Modi third term

PTI ■ GANDHINAGAR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday submitted his nomination papers for the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat from where he is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate and said the general election is all about giving a third term to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Shah was accompanied by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel when he submitted the nomination papers to Gandhinagar collector and district election officer M K Dave in the state capital at exactly 12.39 pm, considered as 'Vijay Muhurat'. Talking to reporters, Shah said this general election is all about giving a third term to



the Lok Sabha elections, in Gandhinagar, on Friday

PM Modi so that he can make India a developed country by

The Union minister said Modi's third term will be crucial because his first two terms went into correcting the mistakes made by the previous Congress-led UPA government.

This election is all about

if we want to achieve that by the previous UPA government," Shah said.
The next five years would be

PM for the third time. Modiji has resolved to turn India into a developed country by 2047 and number one in all sectors The next five years are crucial because the last 10 years went into filling pits (gadde) made

making Narendra Modi our used to create a strong

foundation for 'Viksit Bharat' he said. Thanking the BJP for renominating him from the

seat once represented by stalwarts Atal Bihari Vajpayee and LK Advani, Shah said the seat holds significance also because PM Modi is a registered voter from here. "I have been associated with this seat for the last 30 years. Before becoming an MP, I was an MLA from assembly segments that fall under this seat. Thanks to your love, l rose from a humble booth worker to becoming a member of parliament now. People of Gandhinagar gave me their blessings whenever l sought their votes," he said. Developmental works of more than Rs 22,000 crore were undertaken in the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat in the last five years, he said. Shah, a former BJP president, won from the Gandhinagar constituency by a margin of more than 5 lakh votes in the 2019 general elections.

PTI ■ PUDUCHERRY

Polling picked up momentum in Puducherry through the morning as the union territory gets set to elect their lone representative to the Lok Sabha, on Friday.

A visit to some of the polling stations in the rural areas brought to the fore a mixed picture of voter turnout, which was mediocre in some places and high in others. Kothandapani (89) along with

86-year-old Krishnammal turned up at a booth in the Veerampattinam coastal village Ariyankuppam Assembly constituency to cast their votes. Kothandapani grandfather of the AIADMK

contestant G. Tamizhvendhan, family sources told media at the booth. Voters turned up before commencement of the polls at most of the booths,

official sources said. In one of the polling stations in Mudaliarpet assembly constituency, the VVPAT developed some snags and there was a delay of 45 minutes in the commencement of polling. Official sources said that as soon as the VVPAT developed technical snags, the engineers of BEL were called to

rectify the defects. Pink booths were the center of attraction. The green environment at a booth housed on the premises of the more-than-century-old VOC Government Boys school in the town added to the lustre of the arrangements.

elections department distributed gruel, nutritious cereals and millets and also buttermilk to the voters, sources said.

Volunteers were deployed to help aged and disabled voters

to approach the booth without difficulties. Police also took care of the senior citizens and helped them get into the booth to cast their votes. Puducherry recorded 28.10 percent polling till 11 a.M.

There are 26 aspirants in the fray in this seat. The BJP nominee and Home Minister Puducherry

Namassivayam and the Congress president and sitting member of Lok Sabha VVaithilingam are locking horns in the poll battle.

Long queues outside polling booths in Assam

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Long queues were seen coutside booths since the morning as polling was underway for constituencies in Assam in were among those who cast the first phase on Friday. their votes in the first hour. Poling began at 7 am in Dibrugarh. There were apprehensions

voters are eligible to vote. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal of the BJP and Congress's deputy leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi

Kaziranga seats, and 86.5 lakh

people are coming out in such a large number. People's spontaneous participation will strengthen democracy,' Sonowal, the BJP candidate of Dibrugarh, Jorhat, that the weather might play a Dibrugarh, said after casting Lakhimpur, Sonitpur and spoilsport with the entire his vote at a polling booth in

Upper Assam remaining cloudy, but gradually the sky cleared up.
"It is really a good sign that

coming out in large numbers,

Laxminath Bezbarua Bhawan in Chowkiding. People are happy under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi and that is why they are

he claimed. Gogoi voted at a polling booth in Devi Charan Barua

Higher Secondary School in Jorhat town.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Theatre of the absurd

The ever-falling state of polity touches a new low, trivialising life for political gains

■ n the realm of politics, where governance and public welfare should reign supreme, a disturbing trend has emerged — the trivialisation of human life for the sake of politlical benefits. Recent events surrounding Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal exemplify this worrying trend, where his health crisis has become a point of one-upmanship and is being used to serve narrow political narratives rather than addressing the genuine concerns of his health. The case took a curious turn when the Enforcement Directorate (ED) claimed that Kejriwal intentionally indulged in a high-sugar diet to fabricate grounds for bail. Kejriwal's colleague Atishi has countered this assertion, alleging a conspiracy to deny the jailed Chief Minister access to essential insulin and home-cooked food, potentially putting his life at risk. Both claims, while patently opposite, underscore a distressing reality — the callous politicisation of a health crisis. In the theatre of politics, where power dynamics often overshadows ethical considerations, the sanctity of human life



seems to have been direly neglected. The focus has shifted from genuine concern for an individual's wellbeing to exploiting their vulnerabilities for partisan gains. Such a narrative not only reflects poorly on the integrity of political discourse but also raises profound questions about the moral compass of those entrusted with governance.

The ED's assertion of Kejriwal deliberately manipulating his health for legal advantage is a damning indictment of the extent to which political opponents are willing to go to discredit their adversaries. It underscores a culture where the personal struggles of individuals are weaponised for political advantage. Conversely,

Atishi's allegations of a plot to endanger Kejriwal's life highlight the dangerous consequences of unchecked political rhetoric. Accusations of attempted murder, if unsubstantiated, not only sow seeds of distrust but also trivialise the gravity of such heinous crimes. At its core, the Kejriwal saga underscores a broader crisis within the polity — the prioritisation of political expediency over human dignity. In the relentless pursuit of power and influence, the inherent value of human life is often sacrificed at the altar of partisan interests. This erosion of empathy and decency not only corrodes the fabric of democracy but also threatens the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. Without delving into the merits of the case or passing judgment on who is truthful, Kejriwal, like everyone else, must be given the best treatment at the moment, even if the illness is selfinflicted. To reclaim the integrity of polity, it is imperative for political actors to realign their priorities with the values of compassion, integrity and accountability. The welfare of individuals should never be subjugated to the exigencies of political gamesmanship. Instead, leaders must demonstrate a commitment to upholding the dignity and wellbeing of every citizen, irrespective of their political affiliations. The Kejriwal saga serves as a sobering reminder of the perils of allowing politics to trump humanity.



School students with their faces and hands painted as part of voter awareness campaign pose for photos, in Jammu PTI

Aung San Suu Kyi: Prison or house arrest?



Concerns over Suu Kyi's whereabouts as the junta stares at defeat

he news website, *The Irrawaddy*, cites "informed sources in Naypyitaw and Yangon" as saying that Aung San Suu Kyi (78), the emblem of the Myanmar's struggle for democracy and Win Mint (72), incarcerated president of the country's democraticallyelected Government ousted by the coup on February 1, 2021, remain in prison. This, indeed, is likely to be the case given the high level of credibility that the website enjoys. It would be instructive to read what it has to say in this connection. The ball, so to say, was set rolling late on the afternoon of April 16 when a pro-regime media outlet said that both had been moved to a new location. It was followed by the regime's spokesman, Major-General Zaw Min Tun telling the Burmese services of VOA and the BBC: "Not only Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Win Myint but also some [other] older prisoners were given necessary care since the weather is extremely hot." However, he did not say that Suu Kyi had been moved to a new location. When media outlets pressed him for further information, he did not provide any details. Despite this and the absence of any photographic or other evidence showing their having been moved to house arrest, both local and international and news agencies carried stories saying that it was the case That this is not so is further sug-

gested by Aung San Suu Kyi's son, Kim Aris, who to told Kay Burley of Sky News during a breakfast interview, "They are saying house arrest. She only has one house and she's not there." Given the utterly unsavoury reputations that the junta and news outlets which act as its mouthpieces enjoy, the confusion may, in all likelihood, have been deliberately created by both acting in tandem. If this, indeed, is the case, what purpose was sought to have been achieved? The most plausible answer would be that it was to show that the junta cared. Why suddenly?

It has been known for some time that Aung San Suu Kyi was very ill in prison and the junta was not providing her the kind of medical attention she needed. It has also been speculated that the junta could murder her in prison and claim that she had died of old age or other natural causes. Whatever it is, it would serve the generals well to create the impression that it was not their fault if something untoward happened to her. The other reason could be differences within the junta, a section of which wants to do a deal with her to end the civil war they are losing and another would hear nothing

The Sit-Tat (which and not Tatmadaw, is the real name for Myanmar Army), is now facing defeat at a none-to-distant future. It has been suffering one major reverse after another since the opposition Three Brotherhood Alliance (henceforth Alliance) launched its current offensive, codenamed Operation 1027, on October 27, 2023. The latest, the loss of Myawaddy, an important border town, on April 11, 2024, to the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and Karen National Army, is clearly the most devastating blow suffered by



THE JUNTA IS

REPORTEDLY PREPARING TO LAUNCH A COUNTER OFFENSIVE. WHETHER IT MATERIALISES AND, IF IT DOES, WITH WHAT SUCCESS, REMAINS TO BE the junta since the Alliance's current offensive began. A key trading hub close to the eastern end of Myanmar's border with Thailand—the total value of imports and exports passing though it has been valued at \$ 1 billion in 2023—it is also regarded as Myanmar's opening to South-East Asian countries.

The Junta is reportedly preparing to launch a counter offensive. Whether it materialises and, if it does, with what success, remains to be seen. But even if it is successful and the Sit-Tat is able to retain the town after regaining it, the event is unlikely to be a turning point in the civil war which is going overwhelming in favour of the Alliancecomprising the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), active in the Kokang Special Region of northern Shan State, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), also active in the Shan State and the Arakan Army (AA), based in the Rakhine State in the country's

Acting in close cooperation opposition National Unity Government's military arm, the People's Defence Force

western part.

(PDF) and other ethnic armies like the KNLA and

At the time of writing, the AA

has brought almost the entire Rakhine State under its control. By early April, it had captured some 170 junta camps and posts, several larger bases, battalion headquarters and training facilities. It seized the important town of Paletwa on January 15, 2024. Kyaukphyu, where China is developing a port and a spe-cial economic zone spread over 1,600 hectares, is about to fall. The AA is pressing hard on Sittwe, an important port town, after seizing control of the small towns around it and cutting off access to it through road and waterways. India shifted its staff from its consulate there to Yangon earlier in April, 2024.

Initially, one had thought that the Junta's ouster, even though inevitable, would take a long time to come about. It now seems that it would be defenestrated much sooner than one had thought. India must bear this in mind.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

THE EDITOR

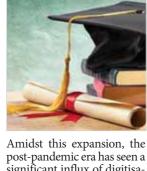
Transformative trends in India's higher education ARITRA GHOSHAL



The surge in EdTech presents opportunities for democratising education but also highlights challenges such as the digital divide and ensuring quality

ndia's higher education landscape is undergoing a **⊥**transformative shift. With initiatives like the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, skill development programs by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and the encouragement of 100 per cent FDI in education, the landscape is ripe for innovation and investment. Additionally, UGC's push for setting up international campuses in India and the Ministry of Education's focus on global learning is reshaping our educational framework

The market size of the Indian higher education system was estimated at around \$40 billion in 2023, growing at a CAGR of 15 per cent. With over 1,200 universities, 49,400 colleges and 12,600 standalone institutions, India hosts one of the largest higher education ecosystems in the world. Catering to more than 50 million students — a number expected to grow substantially in the next five years these institutions are crucial in achieving an enhanced Gross Enrollment Ratio and improving the skill set of our future workforce.



significant influx of digitisation in learning, with universities offering online programs and various platforms providing a broad spectrum courses online. Considering our current infrastructure and the expected demand, it is essential for the country to further explore online learning and skill development opportunities. Aligning these opportunities with the next 10-year growth plan is crucial for preparing a skilled workforce that enhances graduate employa-

However, the selection of courses among students has also seen a paradigm shift. India is moving beyond tra- ance and adapting accredita-

ditional domains like engineering, medicine and management. Today, students are increasingly drawn to interdisciplinary programs and new-age courses that promise quicker skill acquisition and certification. There is a significant opportunity for institutions to expand their offerings in these certification/degree courses where students can learn new skills in less dura-

The surge in EdTech has been transformative and represents a key area ripe for investment and innovation. By providing everything from career guidance to student counselling digitally, these platforms have democratised access to education, ensuring that students from all regions have better career opportunities. Yet, realising the full potential of these advancements requires overcoming significant challenges. Addressing the digital divide, ensuring equitable access to technology and improving internet connectivity, especially in underserved areas, are critical. Moreover, as the field rapidly diversifies,

strengthening quality assur-

tion and regulatory frameworks are essential to maintaining standards and credibility. These bodies must adapt to the changing dynamics of higher education to uphold academic integrity and student outcomes.

The Ministry of Education's current focus on the internationalization of higher education in India is set to have profound effects, not only on educational practices but also on the broader economy and society. This strategic emphasis will enable transnational education and student/faculty exchanges, thereby building a globally competent workforce and fostering knowledge exchange between

As we look ahead, the future of higher education in India is not just about scaling up but also about smart scaling. By embracing these trends and addressing inherent challenges, we can ensure that the sector not only expands but also elevates, providing every student with a world-class education and global oppor-

(The writer is the founder and director of OneStep Global; views are personal)

BJP'S STRATEGIC MANIFESTO

Madam — Apropos the news article, "A Vision for India's Global Leadership", published on April 19, this is my response. The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) manifesto signals a shift towards a policy-centric approach, departing from traditional electoral strategies. By highlighting achievements and projecting a vision for India's future, it aims to secure votes based on governance rather than populist promises. The absence of significant Pakistan-centric rhetoric suggests a nuanced understanding of foreign policy priorities, focusing instead on global engagement and regional stability.

Prime Minister Modi's emphasis on "Neighbour First" and "Act East" policies reflects a proactive stance in regional diplomacy, enhancing India's influence and fostering solidarity among neighbouring nations. The manifesto's commitment to global advocacy for the Global South underscores India's aspirations for a leadership role in international affairs. However, challenges persist, particularly in integrating India into global supply chains and enhancing the rupee's acceptability. Yet, the manifesto's articulation of strategic goals and pledges for collaboration within the Indo-Pacific region portrays a coherent vision for India's role in the evolving geopolitical landscape.

Sneha Gupta | Delhi

OTT LANGUAGE DEBATE

ity's normalisation.

Madam — Apropos the news article, "How justified is abusive language on OTT?", published on April 19, this is my response. India's OTT platforms have reshaped entertainment, offering diverse content but facing criticism for excessive profanity. The Supreme Court's recent ruling defends free speech, sparking debates on cultural integrity. Profanity may enhance realism yet risks societal norms, especially impacting youth. While OTT isn't solely responsible, it amplifies existing trends. Education reforms emphasise cultural values, conflicting with profan-

Political quagmire



propos the news article, "Corruption and Apolitical defections: A telltale sign of democratic decay", published on April 19, this is my response. The article delves into the unsettling reality of political manoeuvring, where corruption probes seem to act as a revolving door for politicians, raising questions about the integrity of the system. It draws a

Despite honouring women in tradition, derogatory language persists, undermining societal respect. Education institutions oppose abuse, but OTT exposure challenges efforts. A balanced approach is crucial, fostering dialogue on artistic freedom versus cultural preservation. OTT's influence demands responsible content creation, respect for diverse audiences and societal values. Ultimately, societal progress intertwines with cultural preservation, demanding nuanced solutions to

tainment landscapes. Rishab Vashisht | Bhopal

INSIGHTS ON INDIAN JEWELRY

maintain integrity amidst evolving enter-

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Heritage Indian jewellery dazzles the world", published on April 19, this is my response. Dr Alka Raghuvanshi's posthumously published masterpiece, 'Rendezvous with Traditional Indian Jewellery," transcends the boundaries of a mere book. It's a heartfelt journey delving into the soul of India's cultural heritage, where artistry intertwines with pro-

sharp contrast between the flawed current State of affairs and the ideal governance system envisioned in ancient scriptures like Manusmriti. The Manusmriti's principles, though controversial, present a compelling blueprint for a more righteous governance model, emphasising a partyless system, voter recall rights and alignment with moral principles. The chasm between this ideal and the existing political landscape is vast, highlighting the urgent need for reform.

While achieving perfection may be a distant goal, even partial adoption of Manusmriti's principles could yield significant improvements, reducing electoral malpractice, corruption and divisive politics. As the nation awaits potential reforms under the Modi Government, India, with its rich spiritual heritage, can transcend its current challenges and emerge as a global exemplar of moral

Ishaan Shukhi | Ludhiana

found symbolism. The meticulous attention to detail reveals a rich tapestry of craftsmanship, history and significance. The book's thematic chapters unravel the evolution and diversity of Indian jewellery, from the majestic influences of the Mughal era to the intricate designs of

It showcases stunning visuals and explores the deep symbolism ingrained in each piece, reflecting social, religious and cultural narratives. Moreover, it sheds light on the craftsmanship and techniques passed down through generations, preserving the essence of traditional jewellery-making. Regional variations highlight the unique aesthetics across India, celebrating its diverse cultural tapestry. This book is a captivating ode to India's cherished art form, offering insights for enthusiasts, historians and admirers alike, encapsulating the beauty and legacy of Indian jewellery.

Lavanya Sharma | Lucknow

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FIRST COLUMN MIND, THE KEY TO **HIDDEN FORTUNE**

True wealth lies not in material possessions but in the freedom of mind



RAVI VALLURI

nce upon a time lived a woman. She was struck with an unexpected tragedy as her husband passed away untimely. The lady was now left with only one son and precious jewellery. Since she was hounded by creditors to repay the debts accrued by her husband, she conjured a trick to hide the wealth.

In sheer desperation to keep the jewellery safe from creditors, the lady wrapped the precious wealth in a piece of cloth and hid it under a tree. The mother and son lived in an impoverished State. Her mind was always disturbed by the fact that she did not share this piece of vital information with her only son. As it turned out, she carried this secret to the

Consequently, the son inherited plenty of debt, a barren hut and a cot. The son had to work hard for sustenance and to repay the ever-rising liabilities. He toiled hard to survive and regretted his misfortune. 'Property is not the sacred right. When a rich man becomes poor it is a misfortune, it is not a moral evil. When a poor man becomes destitute, it is a moral evil, teeming with consequences and is injurious to society and morality,' opined Lord Acton. Indeed, the impoverishment of the poor is heart-wrenching.

One day while cutting the branches of a tree, he stumbled upon the jewellery. Dumbfounded and stupefied, the strapping youngster hid the bijouterie in a pit he dug in the hut, petrified that the creditors would appropriate the wealth. He too committed the cardinal mistake of not sharing the secret with his wife and carried it to his grave. The mother and son were not mindful and wakeful enough to be in the Present Moment and remained prisoners of their past and future



Two Buddhist monks were once discussing a flag flapping in the wind. While one felt it was the wind moving, the other conjectured it was the flag fluttering. The imbroglio could not be resolved and they sought the intervention of a Zen Master. The master impassively said, 'It is the MIND that moves, neither the flag nor the wind."

Humans need freedom from their past and future to be in the present. And being in the NOW or present is true enlightenment and mindfulness. The past is full of sorrows and regrets while the future brims with anxieties and worries and humans are caged in that mindset, thereby postponing their happiness quotient. To appreciate true happiness and joy, the human mind should not vacillate between the past and the future but remain in the PRESENT.

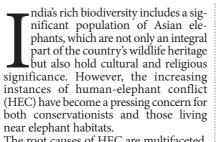
A young monk was once travelling in pursuit of happiness and truth. During his travels, he encountered a massive river that he could not cross. A short while later, he saw a senior monk on the other side of the river. He hailed him and sought assistance to cross the river to reach the other side. The senior monk pondered and replied, 'You are already on the other

This fact can be appreciated only when the mind is centred. Breathing techniques such as Sudarshan Kriya, Pranayama, Yoga, Meditation and Vipassana all help in dissolving the mind so that it becomes centred. 'True happiness is not possible without freedom. We have to learn the habit of being free. We do not allow our past, the future, our projects, or our fear to get hold of us. We are free. Every step is free. Every step is nourishment. Every step is healing. Every step is joy,' says Thich Nhat

(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)

Human-elephant conflict: The way out

To ensure the protection of these majestic creatures, it is imperative to revisit and revise legislative frameworks with a focus on ecological sustainability



The root causes of HEC are multifaceted, primarily stemming from habitat loss and fragmentation due to human activities. As India's population expands, so does the need for land for agricultural and developmental activities. This expansion often leads to encroachment into elephant territories, resulting in the destruction or fragmentation of their natural habitats. Consequently, elephants are forced to venture closer to human habitations in search of food and space. Mining activities, in particular, lead to deforestation and habitat degradation, disrupting elephant migratory routes and undermining the scope and health of elephant habitats. Similarly, urbanisation and infrastructure development often intersect with elephant corridors, pushing these gentle giants into unfamiliar and potentially dangerous territories. Climate change is another significant factor in this conflict. Changes in climate patterns can affect the availability and distribution of food and water sources in elephant habitats. Extreme weather events like droughts, floods and high temperatures can force elephants to migrate in search of these resources, often bringing them into conflict with humans. The current State of HEC in India is alarming. Over 500 humans are killed annually in encounters with elephants and more than 100 elephants lose their lives due to human-related activities, including poaching for ivory, poisoning, electrocution and collisions with trains. Train collisions are the second-highest cause of unnatural elephant deaths in the country, following accidental electrocution. Over the past decade, train collisions have claimed the lives of more than 200 elephants.

As mega-herbivores, elephants consume up to 150 kilograms of forage and drink up to 190 litres of water per day. This necessitates a large foraging area, typically spanning 100-1,000 km for a family herd, to provide a diverse diet of grasses, shrubs and fruits. However, navigating large areas to find sufficient food and water becomes a challenge when these areas overlap with human activ ities. This often results in crop raiding, property damage, and, in some tragic instances, human casualties. These incidents, unfortunately, lead to retaliatory actions from humans that can be fatal for these majestic creatures, further intensifying their fear and mistrust of humans. Farmers, particularly those with limited resources struggle to cope with crop losses. This hardship breeds resentment towards elephants, undermining conservation efforts and trapping both humans and elephants in a cycle of violence.

Since 2019, there have been over 1500 human fatalities reported due to elephant attacks. In 2023-24 alone, Odisha reported 149 elephant deaths due to HEC. Mineral-rich districts like Dhenkanal, Angul, Keonjhar and Sundargarh have been hit the hardest, with Dhenkanal alone witnessing 130 elephants and 227 human deaths over the last decade.

In August 2023, three elephants were electrocuted at the Rani Tea EState near Guwahati due to low-hanging high-voltage



WESTERN MAHARASHTRA, A REGION NOT **TRADITIONALLY** KNOWN FOR **ELEPHANT** HABITATION, SAW A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN 2002 WHEN ELEPHANTS MIGRATED FROM KARNATAKA. THIS **MOVEMENT WAS**

LARGELY ATTRIBUTED TO THEIR DISPLACEMENT FROM THE DANDELI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, A PLACE THEY HAD **INHABITED** COMFORTABLY

UNTIL 1990

wires. This was not an isolated incident; back in October 2021, sagging power lines near the Dihing-Patkai National Park claimed the lives of another three elephants. The situation worsened in October 2022, when within a single week, 11 elephants across Assam lost their lives to human-related hazards including electrocution, crop poisoning and train collisions.

Western Maharashtra, a region not traditionally known for elephant habitation, saw a significant change in 2002 when elephants migrated from Karnataka. This movement was largely attributed to their displacement from the Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary, a place they had Wildlife Sanctuary, a place they had inhabited comfortably until 1990. The construction of the Kali hydroelectric project is believed to have been the catalyst for their relocation to the districts of Kolhapur and Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, leading to notable incidents of crop raiding. A similar pattern emerged in 2022 when a herd of 22 elephants trekked from Chhattisgarh to Maharashtra, settling in the lush forests along the Wain-Ganga, Pranhita and Dina river basins. This migration has been linked to increased human encroachment, the construction of two canals in Odisha and mining disturbances in their traditional corridors.

The Wayanad region, a vital watershed for Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, is currently facing a multitude of environmental challenges such as deforestation, irresponsible tourism and unscientific development. Such activities are posing a significant threat to the ecological balance of the region, endangering the lives of both humans and wildlife. Wayanad plays a critical role in maintaining regional biodiversity. However, ongoing habitat degradation in this region could potentially intensify the water crisis in the Kaveri basin and escalate the HEC, which has tragically led to 41 fatalities already. Similarly, in the northeastern States of Assam and West Bengal, expanding tea plantations and human settlements have encroached on elephants' traditional grounds, leading to frequent HEC incidents.

Addressing HEC requires a multi-

pronged approach that balances the needs of wildlife conservation with the socio-economic realities of human populations living near elephant habitats. This includes securing and restoring elephant corridors to ensure safe passage for elephants between different habitats, thereby reducing the likelihood of them entering human-dominated landscapes. Recognising this need, the Indian Government has launched an ambitious initiative known as Project Elephant. This program focuses on enhancing elephant habitats by creating a network of reserves, corridors and protected areas. To address the common issue of crop raiding in human-elephant interactions, the project employs innovative technologies such as early warning systems and elephant-proof barriers. It also implements various strategies like durable and solar-powered electric fences and biological deterrents including bio-fencing with cacti, beehive fences and chilli smoke to deter elephants.

Enhancing the natural food supply within forests is another essential strategy for preventing elephants from entering human territories. This involves improving water conservation, regenerating forests by replanting and nurturing native trees and plants, implementing fire protection and removing invasive species. Programs focused on ecotourism and livelihood diversification not only engage local communities in conservation but also provide them with sustainable economic alternatives. Success stories from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong landscape underscore the effectiveness of community-led conservation endeavours, strategic land-use planning, trans-border collaboration and habitat restoration in diminishing conflict incidents. Kerala has also taken a bold initiative to relocate people from forest regions and reforest agricultural lands, despite the central Government's refusal to fund this Rs. 620 crore project. The State's declaration of HEC as a State-specific disaster and the involvement of the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority in

conflict management, are significant steps towards addressing this complex issue.

BKP SINHA

ARVIND JHA

Statutory support is fundamental in the conservation efforts addressing the HEC. Elephants, listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List, are protected under the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. Recent amendments to the Forest

Conservation Act of 1980 have raised concerns regarding their impact on elephant reserves and corridors, particularly within the 100 km strip of India's boundary where the majority of these reserves and corridors are located. These changes could potentially worsen the fragmentation and degradation of these vital habitats, thereby intensifying the HEC. The Forest Rights Act of 2006, while well-intentioned in empowering forest-dwelling communities, has also had unintended consequences. Its implementation has sometimes resulted in further encroachments and habitat fragmentation, which can force elephants to venture into new areas in search of refuge and resources, increasing the likelihood and severity of conflicts. Post-project monitoring, particularly in the mining industry, is often insufficient, lead ing to a neglect of wildlife protection measures that were stipulated during the project's approval. This oversight can result in significant harm to elephant populations and their habitats, undermining conser-

vation efforts. As we move forward, let us remember that our fates are intertwined with those of the elephants and all wildlife. Their survival is our survival. Their well-being reflects the health of our planet and their continued existence enriches our world in ways that cannot be quantified. It's high time we recognise our role and act responsibly, ensuring a future where humans and wildlife coexist harmoniously, each playing their part in maintaining the balance of our shared ecosystem.

> chief conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra; views are personal)

(The writers are former principal

Rahul Gandhi holds on to Wayanad despite speculation

The decision comes as a strategic move, influenced by a variety of factors, including local dynamics and broader political alliances in Kerala

¬ven as the Indian National Congress was burning midnight oil about the Lok Sabha constituency from where Rahul Gandhi would contest this time, The Pioneer has reported that the scion of the Nehru-Gandhi clan would not leave Wayanad from where he was elected with a mammoth majority of four lakh votes in the 2019 edition of the General Election. The report was prepared after speaking to a cross-section of the electorate in the Wayanad constituency who were unanimous in their opinion that Rahul Gandhi should contest

from Wayanad itself. Those who reacted to the queries posed to them included hardcore CPI(M) members and activists who



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

made it known that Rahul should register a much bigger majority than that of the 2019 poll because the opponent happened to be Annie Raja of the CPI and K Surendran of the BJP. Annie, the spouse of D Raja, CPI's national general secretary, had rubbed Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in the wrong way and the CPI(M) cadres

tioned the capability of Vijayan and this made the CPI(M) activists furious. Had the Congress or BJP leaders criticized Vijayan, they would not have bothered but the CPI had crossed the Lakshman Rekha (it could be Stalinist Rekha since the comrades do not accept Ramayana). The CPI(M) comrades would certainly teach Annie Raja a lesson or two in the art of politics. The truth is that the CPI(M) leaders wanted Rahul Gandhi

Raja too had publicly ques-

that the CPI would lose one seat for sure. The decision to field Surendran, the Kerala State president of the BJP, was made much later. Surendran consider it as a cardinal sin. himself knows that he would

to contest from Wayanad so

has to kowtow the party line. The information coming out of the BJP office is that he may be given a gubernatorial position even if he loses the security deposit. There are no suitable candidates in Kerala BJP to challenge the supremacy of Rahul Gandhi and the Congress. The question being asked by Wayand voters is that how many people remember the names of the 2019 challengers to Rahul What is interesting is that the

animosity between the CPI(M) and Congress has come down drastically with Gandhi filing the nomination from Wayanad. Though the Congress leaders lambast the CPI(M), it is just a façade to convince the hardcore mem-

lose by a big margin but he bers of these parties that the CPI(M) as of date. there is no alliance between them. But what the people of the State see in TV channels and newspapers is the video images and pictures of Sitaram Yechury and D Raja hugging and kissing Rahul Gandhi while in Tripura former CPI(M) Chief Minister Manik Sarkar openly campaigning for the Congress party's candidates.

Kerala is the only State where they act as if they are rivals and enemies. By the next election, one can see the Congress and the CPI(M) fighting it together in Kerala against the BJP-led front provided the Hindutva party leadership throws out all the rotten eggs from its basket). There is no difference between the Congress and outfits whose secularist cre-silence on the CPI(M) candi-

Political pundits have been asking both parties to offi-cially legalize the ties so that the entire secular parties could be arrayed under the flag of the Congress across the country against the "communal and fascist" forces. The secular parties include the Muslim League! In Marxist parlance, they say that whoever aligns with the CPI(M) is secular while the BJP is "communal and fascist". The CPI(M) does not have any issues in accepting the former NDA constituents as allies once they call off the marriage of convenience with the BJP. Telugu Desam of Andhra Pradesh, BJD of Orissa, BSP and JD(U) are

some of the major political

dentials depend on their ties

with the BJP. The press meeting addressed by A K Antony, the Bheeshma Pitamah of the Congress on 9 April 2024 at Thiruvananthapuram was an indicator of how political marriages take place in Kerala. While Antony was cursing his son Anil Antony who is contesting from Pathanamthitta as a BJP candidate and asking the electorate to ensure the defeat of his son, he was waxing eloquence on Anto Antony, the Congress candidate who is pitted against Anil. The former defence minister lambasted the BJP as anti-nationals, communalists and dicta-

But what stood out was his

dates. Antony's ties with the CPI(M) are infamous as he had sailed with the Marxists for almost two years during 1980-1983.

The CPI(M) and the Congress-led by Antony fought the 1980 general elec-tion together and ruled Kerala for almost two years. The Congress faction was pushed out of the LDF by the CPI(M) which demolished the offices of the Congress across the State with the police looking the other way. It is not without any reason political pundits say that politics make strange persons into bedfellows. Do we need more proof than A K Antony?

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

Iran fires at apparent Israeli attack drones

n apparent Israeli drone An apparent fire air defenses at a major air base and a nuclear site early on Friday morning near the central city of Isfahan, an assault coming in retaliation for Tehran's unprecedented droneand-missile assault on the country. No Iranian official directly acknowledged the possibility that Israel attacked, and the Israeli military did not respond to a request for comment. However, tensions have been high since the Saturday assault on Israel amid its war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip and its own strikes targeting Iran in

Speaking at the G7 meeting in Capri, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said the US received "last-minute" information from Israel about the attack on Isfahan.

United States officials declined to comment as of early Friday, but American broadcast networks quoting unnamed US officials said Israel carried out Times quoted anonymous Israeli officials claiming the assault, which came on Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's 85th birthday. Israeli politicians also made comments hinting that the country had launched an

Air defense batteries fired in several provinces over reports of drones being in the air, state television reported. Iranian army commander Gen. Abdolrahim Mousavi said crews targeted several flying objects. "The explosion this morning in the sky of Isfahan was related to the shooting of air defense systems at a suspicious object that did not cause any damage," Mousavi said. Others suggested the drones may be so-called quadcopters four rotor, small drones

that are commercially available. Authorities said air defenses fired at a major air base in Isfahan, which long has been home to Iran's fleet of American-made F-14 Tomcats - purchased before the 1979

Tasnim also published a video from one of its reporters, who said he was in the southeastern Zerdenjan area of Isfahan, near its "nuclear energy mountain." The footage showed two different anti-aircraft gun positions, and details of the video corre-

sponded with known features of the site of Iran's Uranium Conversion Facility at Isfahan. 'At 4:45, we heard gunshots. There was nothing going on," he said. "It was the air defense these guys that you're watching, and over there too.

The facility at Isfahan operates three small Chinese-supplied research reactors, as well as handling fuel production and other activities for Iran's civilian nuclear program.

Isfahan also is home to sites associated with Iran's nuclear program, including its underground Natanz enrichment site, which has been repeatedly targeted by suspected Israeli sabotage attacks.

State television described all atomic sites in the area as "fully safe." The United Nations'

Agency, also said "there is no damage to Iran's nuclear sites' after the incident.

The IAEA "continues to call for extreme restraint from everybody and reiterates that nuclear facilities should never be a target in military conflicts," the agency said.

Iran's nuclear program has rapidly advanced to producing enriched uranium at nearly weapons-grade levels since the collapse of its atomic deal with world powers after then-President Donald Trump withdrew America from the accord in 2018.

While Iran insists its program is for peaceful purposes, Western nations and the IAEA say Tehran operated a secret military weapons program until 2003. The IAEA has warned that Iran now holds enough enriched uranium to build several nuclear weapons if it chose to do so - though the US intelligence community maintains Tehran is not actively seeking the bomb.

and FlyDubai began diverting around western Iran about 4:30 a.m. local time. They offered no explanation, though local warnings to aviators suggested the airspace may have been closed.

Iran then grounded commercial flights in Tehran and across areas of its western and central regions. Iran later restored normal flight service, authorities said. Around the time of the incident in Iran, Syria's staterun SANA news agency quoted a military statement saying Israel carried out a missile strike targeting an air defense unit in its south and causing material damage. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the strike hit a military radar for government forces. It was not clear if there casualties, Observatory said. That area of Syria is directly

west of Isfahan, some 1,500 kilometers (930 miles) away, and east of Israel.

nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy and FlyDubai began diverting militias are based, residents of over the threat. The apparent Baghdad reported hearing sounds of explosions, but the source of the noise was not immediately clear.

The incident Friday in Iran also sparked concerns about the conflict again escalating across the seas of the Middle East, which have been seeing attacks by the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels of Yemen on shipping over the war in Gaza. The British military's United

Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center warned ships in the region that they could see increased drone activity in the skies. "There are currently no indications commercial vessels are the intended target," it wrote. The Houthis have launched at least 53 attacks on shipping, seized one vessel and sank another since November, according to the US Maritime Administration. Houthi attacks have dropped in recent weeks as the rebels have been targeted by a US-led airstrike campaign in Yemen and as shipping through the Red Sea

attack also briefly spooked energy markets, sending benchmark Brent crude above USD 90 before it fell again in trading Friday. However, Iranian state-run media sought to downplay the incident after the fact, airing footage of an otherwise-peaceful Isfahan morning. That could be intentional, particularly after Iranian officials for days have been threatening to retaliate for any Israeli retaliatory attack on the nation.

"As long as Iran continues to deny the attack and deflect attention from it and no further hits are seen, there is space for both sides to climb down the escalation ladder for now," said Sanam Vakil, the director of the Middle East and North Africa program at Chatham House. (AP) Associated Press journalists Nasser Karimi, Mehdi Fattahi and Amir Vahdat in Tehran, Iran; Bassem Mroue in Beirut: and Nicole Winfield in Capri, Italy; contributed to this

Man detained after police op at Iranian consulate

Paris (AP): Police said Friday they detained a man at the Iranian consulate in Paris after responding to a report of a suspicious man possibly carrying a grenade and explosives vest, but did they did not immediately confirm finding any weapons.A Paris police official told The Associated Press that officers were verifying the man's identity and trying to determine whether he had weapons. The official was speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to be publicly named under police policy.

The official said the man was spotted around 11 a.m. (0900 GMT) on Friday and that police launched a special operation as soon as they were alerted. The man's motives were not immediately clear. No explosions have been reported, the official said.

Images on French television and social media showed police surrounding the build-

Israel warned US about drone attack on Iran, Italian foreign min says at G7

Capri (AP): The United States told the Group of Seven foreign ministers on Friday that it received "last minute" information from Israel about a drone action in Iran, Italy's foreign minister said.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, who chaired the meeting of ministers of industrialised countries, said the United States provided the information at a Friday morning session that was changed at the last minute to address the suspected attack.

Tajani said the US informed the G7 ministers that it had been "informed at the last minute" by Israel about the drones. "But there was no sharing of the attack by the US. It was a mere information

Early Friday, Iran fired air defences at a major air base and a nuclear site near the central city of Isfahan after spotting drones, part of an apparent Israeli attack in retaliation for Tehran's unprecedented droneand-missile assault on the coun try last weekend.

In a communique following the three-day meeting, the ministers urged the parties "to prevent further escalation."

The statement pledged support for Israel's security and condemned "in the strongest terms" what the foreign ministers described as Iran's "unprecedented attack against Israel of April 13-14, which Israel defeated with the help of its partners, as well as the seizure of the Portuguese-flagged vessel MSC Aries in the Strait of Hormuz.

'We stand ready to adopt further sanctions or take other measures, now and in response to further destabilising initiatives," the document read.

The group also warned Iran against transferring ballistic missiles and related technology to Russia. On the war in Gaza the group called on Hamas to release hostages and reminded Israel to respect international and humanitarian law.

US vetoes Palestinian bid to gain statehood at UN PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

The US has vetoed a resolution in the UN Security Council on the latest Palestinian bid to be granted full membership of the United Nations, an outcome lauded by Israel but criticised by Palestine as "unfair, immoral, and unjus-

The 15-nation Council voted on a draft resolution Thursday that would have recommended to the 193-member UN General Assembly "that the State of Palestine be admitted to membership in the United

The resolution got 12 votes in its favour, with Switzerland and the UK abstaining and the US casting its veto.

To be adopted, the draft resolution required at least nine Council members voting in its favour, with no vetoes by any of its five permanent members China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Palestinian attempts for recognition as a full member state began in 2011. Palestine is currently a non-member

observer state, a status that was granted in November 2012 by the UN General Assembly.

This status allows Palestine to participate in proceedings of the world body but it cannot vote on resolutions. The only other non-member Observer State at the UN is the Holy See, representing the Vatican.

Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz praised the US for vetoing what he called a "shameful proposal.

The proposal to recognise a Palestinian state, more than 6 months after the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust and after the sexual crimes and other atrocities committed by Hamas terrorists was a reward for terrorism", Katz wrote on X, after the US

US Ambassador Robert Wood. Alternative Representative for Special Political Affairs, said in the explanation of the vote at the Security Council meeting on Palestinian membership that Washington continues to strongly support a two-state

"It remains the US view that the most expeditious path

toward statehood for the Palestinian people is through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority with the support of the United States and other partners," he said.

This vote does not reflect opposition to Palestinian statehood, but instead is an acknowledgement that it will only come from direct negotiations between the parties."

Wood said there are "unresolved questions" as to whether Palestine meets the criteria to be considered a State.

'We have long called on the Palestinian Authority to undertake necessary reforms to help establish the attributes of readiness for statehood and note that Hamas - a terrorist organisation - is currently exerting power and influence in Gaza, an integral part of the state envisioned in this resolution," he said, adding that "For these reasons, the United States voted "no" on this Security Council resolution." Wood noted that since the

October 7 attacks last year against Israel by Hamas, US President Joe Biden has been

clear that sustainable peace in the region can only be achieved through a two-state solution, with Israel's security guaranteed. "There is no other path that

guarantees Israel's security and future as a democratic Jewish state. There is no other path that guarantees Palestinians can live in peace and with dignity in a state of their own. And there is no other path that leads to regional integration between Israel and all its Arab neighbours, including Saudi

Arabia," he said. The Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas, sharply criticised the US veto, saying that it was "unfair, immoral, and unjustified, and defies the will of the international community, which strongly supports the State of Palestine obtaining full membership in the United Nations." Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, said that "our right to self-determination has never once been subject to bargaining or negotiation. "Our right to self-determina-

tion is a natural right, a historic

right, a legal right. A right to live in our homeland Palestine as an independent state that is free and that is sovereign. Our right to self-determination is inalienable...," he said.

Getting emotional and choking up as he made the remarks, Mansour said that a majority of the Council members "have risen to the level of this historic moment" and have stood "on the side of justice, freedom and

He asserted that Palestine's admission as a full member of the UN is an "investment in peace." On April 2, 2024, Palestine again sent a letter to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres requesting that its application for full UN membership be considered

For a State to be granted full UN membership, its application must be approved both by the Security Council and the General Assembly, where a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting is required for the State to be admitted as a full member. Earlier in the day, Guterres, in his remarks to a Council meeting on the Middle East, warned that the region is on a "knife

edge". "Recent escalations make it even more important to support good-faith efforts to find lasting peace between Israel and a fully independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian

state," Guterres said. "Failure to make progress towards a two-state solution will only increase volatility and risk for hundreds of millions of people across the region, who will continue to live under the constant threat of violence," he said.

The UN, citing the Ministry of Health in Gaza, said that between October 7 last year and April 17, at least 33,899 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza and 76,664 Palestinians injured.

Over 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, including 33 children, have been killed in Israel, the vast majority on October 7. As of April 17, Israeli authorities estimate that 133 Israelis and foreign nationals remain captive in Gaza, including fatalities whose bodies are

Jury selection could be nearing close in Trump's hush money trial

AP ■ NEW YORK

awyers worked Friday to Lawyers worked 1112, round out the panel of 12 jurors and six alternates who will hear Donald Trump's hush money trial, as the former president railed against a gag order that has prosecutors seeking to hold him in contempt of court.

After a jury of 12 New Yorkers was seated Thursday, lawyers turned their attention to picking alternates who can vow to set aside their personal views and judge the presumptive Republican presidential nominee.

Thursday's proceedings demonstrated unpredictability in the jury selection process of such a high-profile case, with two jurors who had been seated a day earlier being dismissed from the panel.

The judge has suggested that opening statements could begin as early as Monday, before prosecutors begin laying out their case alleging a scheme to cover up negative



Former President Donald Trump holds up news clippings as he speaks following his trial at Manhattan criminal court in New York on Thursday

stories Trump feared would hurt his 2016 presidential

The trial will place Trump in a Manhattan courtroom for weeks, forcing him to juggle his dual role as criminal defendant and political candidate against the backdrop of his hotly contested race against President Joe Biden. It will feature salacious and unflattering testimony his opponent will no doubt seize on to try to paint

Trump as unfit to return as

commander in chief. After

about the gag order imposed by the judge that limits what he can publicly say about wit-

He has lashed out on social media about the judge, prosecutors and likely witnesses, prompting the district attorneys to seek sanctions for possible gag order viola-tions. The judge will hold a hearing next week on prosecutors' request to hold Trump in contempt.

"The gag order has to come off. People are allowed to speak about me, and I have a gag order," Trump said. After a new group of potential jurors was brought into the courtroom, one woman who said she didn't believe she could be "completely fair" was excused. Judge Juan M. Merchan is also expected to hold a hearing Friday to consider a request from prosecutors to bring up Trump's prior legal entanglements if he takes the stand in the hush money case.

Attack blamed on IS militants kills 22 people in central Syria

Beirut (AP): An attack on progovernment fighters by suspected members of the Islamic State group in central Syria killed 22 pro-government fighters, an opposition war monitor and pro-government media report-

ed on Friday. Gunmen attacked a bus carrying members of the Quds Brigade, a government and Russian-backed faction of mostly Palestinian fighters in Syria, near the town of Sukhna late Thursday night. Sukhna was once an IS stronghold. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but both the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based opposition war monitor, and the pro-government radio station Sham FM said IS was behind the attack. Both the Observatory and Sham FM said 22 fighters were killed. Sham FM said they were all Quds Brigade gunmen, while the Observatory said the majority belonged to the group.

Xi Jingping launches Information Support Force for military

PTI ■ BEIJING

hinese President Xi Jinping On Friday launched an Information Support Force, a new wing of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which he said will be a "strategic branch" and a "key pillar" of the army. Xi, who also heads the Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high command of the Chinese military, besides heading the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Presidency, said that the establishment of the information support force is a major decision made by the CPC and the CMC in light of the overall need of building a strong military. After presenting a flag to the force at its establishment ceremony in Beijing, Xi, 71, stressed that the information support force is a new, strategic branch of the military and a key pillar in coordinating the construction and application of the network information system.

It will play a crucial role in advancing the Chinese mili-tary's high-quality development and competitiveness in modern warfare, state-run Xinhua news agency quoted

him as saying. He ordered the force to resolutely obey the ruling Communist Party's command and make sure it stays absolutely loyal, pure and reliable. Xi urged the force to integrate deeply into the Chinese military's joint operation system, carry out information support operations in a precise and effective manner, and facilitate military operations in various directions and fields. He also urged efforts to build a network information system that fulfils the requirements of modern warfare and features the Chinese military's own characteristics, as well as efforts to accelerate the development of integrated combat capabilities more effectively.

3 dead in UAE floods

AP ■ DUBAI

Three people have died in the United Arab Emirates as a result of heavy flooding caused by record-setting rains this week, officials said Friday.

A statement by the

Philippine's Department of Migrant Workers said two women suffocated inside their vehicle during the flooding, while a man died when his

vehicle fell into a sinkhole. The exact number of deaths caused by the storm is not yet known as UAE officials have not released any

information. The UAE, a hereditarily ruled, autocratic nation on the Arabian Peninsula, typically sees little rainfall in its arid desert climate. However, a massive storm forecasters had been warning about for days blew through the country's seven sheikhdoms.

By the end of Tuesday, more than 142 millimeters (5.59 inches) of rainfall had soaked Dubai over 24 hours. An average year sees 94.7 millimeters (3.73 inches) of rain at Dubai International Airport. Other areas of the country saw even more precipitation.

Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel, hoped to be back on a normal schedule within 24 hours, its CEO told The Associated Press late Thursday. On Friday, longhaul carrier Emirates said on the social platform X that it would again halt local checkin for passengers traveling on its flights until early Saturday to "support operations recovery from the recent bad weather at our Dubai hub." Low-cost carrier FlyDubai also saw some disruptions. Meanwhile, intense floods also struck neighboring Oman in recent days. On Thursday, authorities raised the death toll from those storms to at least 21 killed.

Trial underway for Panama Papers case

AP ■ PANAMA CITY

Eight years after 11 million leaked secret financial documents revealed how some of the world's richest people hide their wealth, more than two dozen defendants are on trial in Panama for their alleged roles. The repercussions of the leaks

were far-ranging, prompting the resignation of the prime minister of Iceland and bringing scrutiny to the then-leaders of Argentina and Ukraine, Chinese politicians and Russian President Vladimir Putin, among others. But those on trial now for alleged money laundering are principally the leaders and associates of the now defunct Panamanian boutique law firm that helped set up the shell companies used to obscure those really behind them. The leaders of that firm, Jürgen Mossack and Ramón Fonseca, are among those on Panamanian prosecutors allege that Mossack, Fonseca and their associates created a web of offshore companies that used complex transactions to hide money linked to illicit activities in the "car wash" corruption scandal of Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht. In December 2016, Odebrecht

pleaded guilty in US federal court to a charge related to its use of shell companies to disguise hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes paid in countries around the world to win public contracts.According Panamanian prosecutors, the

Mossack Fonseca firm created 44 shell companies, 31 of which opened accounts in Panama to hide money linked to the Brazilian scandal. The judge on the case, Baloisa Marquinez, last year decided to also merge the Odebrecht-related charges to prosecutors' allegations about

giant Siemens. Prosecutors allege a former executive with the company used entities created by Mossack Fonseca to transfer funds for bribes. A Siemens spokesperson

declined to comment, noting that it is not a party to the Panama case and that it involves former Siemens employees in their private capacity.
The 71-year-old Fonseca has

not been present for the trial, because his lawyer said he is hospitalised. But he had previously said his firm did not control how their clients used the shell companies the firm created for them. Its role was simply the creation and sale of the companies. Mossack, a 76-year-old lawyer originally from Germany, said in a statement "we categorically reject that we have committed any crime, not Mossack Fonseca nor the subsidiaries ... and we hope that can be proved in the the firm's work for German trial.



Treasurer Jim Chalmers of Australia, from left, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland of Canada, and Finance Minister Nicola Willis of New Zealand, pose for a photograph after a Five Eyes Finance Ministers meeting at the Treasury Department, on Thursday in Washington

Envoy says US determined to Ukraine claims it shot down monitor North Korean nukes

The United States and its allies are discussing options "both inside and outside the UN system" to create a new mechanism for monitoring North Korea over its nuclear weapons programme, the American ambassador to the United Nations said on Wednesday.

Russia last month vetoed a UN resolution in a move that effectively abolished monitoring by UN experts of Security Council sanctions against North Korea, which prompted Western accu-sations that Moscow was acting to shield its arms purchases from North Korea to fuel its war in Ukraine.

"I look forward to engaging with both the Republic of Korea and Japan, but likeminded (countries) as well, on trying to develop options both inside the UN as well as outside the UN. The point here is that we cannot allow the work that the panel of experts were doing to lapse," US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told a news conference in Seoul, using the formal name for South Korea.

Thomas-Greenfield didn't provide specific details about US discussions with allies and other partners, including whether an alternative monitoring regime would more likely be established through the UN General Assembly or with an independent entity outside of the UN

Thomas-Greenfield met with South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul on Monday and they discussed unspecified "next steps to ensure a continuation of independent and accurate reporting" of North Korea's illicit weapons development activities, according to

Thomas-Greenfield said it was



sions in the Middle East. When

asked about the Palestinian

Authority's request to have full

UN membership, she said a

UN resolution in support of

that request would not contribute to finding a two-state

solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"President Biden has said cat-

egorically that we support a two-state solution for address-

ing the situation in the Middle

East, where Palestinians will

have a state of their own and

Israel is secure in their state,

and we are working on the

ground to get to that place as quickly as possible," she said.

"We do not see that doing a resolution in the Security Council

will necessarily get us to a place

where we can find a ... two-state

solution moving forward," she

added. Tensions on the Korean

Peninsula are at their highest

point in years, as North Korean

leader Kim Jong Un has accel-

erated his weapons demonstra-

tions and issued provocative threats of nuclear conflict

clear that Russia and China, which abstained from voting on the UN resolution vetoed by Moscow, will continue to try to block international efforts to maintain monitoring of UN sanctions against North Korea. She criticised Russia for violating those sanctions with its alleged arms purchases from North Korea, and China for protecting the North from protecting the North from being held accountable.

Moscow and Beijing have thwarted US-led efforts to tighten UN sanctions on North Korea over its ramped-up ballistic missile testing since 2022, underscoring a divide between permanent Security Council members that deepened over Russia's war on Ukraine.

"I don't expect that they will cooperate or agree with any efforts that we make to find another path, but that is not going to stop us from finding that path moving forward," Thomas-Greenfield said.

Thomas-Greenfield also briefly addressed questions about ten-

The United States, South Korea and Japan have responded by expanding their combined military exercises and sharpening their nuclear deterrence strategies built around strategic US

In a telephone conversation on Wednesday, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida agreed to further strengthen three-way cooperation with Washington to counter North Korean threats and other regional challenges amid "deepening uncertain-ties in the international situa-

tion", Yoon's office said. The Security Council imposed sanctions after North Korea's first nuclear test explosion in 2006 and tightened them over the years in a total of 10 resolutions seeking — so far unsuccessfully — to cut funds and curb its nuclear and missile programmes. The last sanctions resolution was adopted by the council in December 2017.

The Security Council established a committee to monitor sanctions, and the mandate for its panel of experts to investigate violations had been renewed for 14 years until last

month. Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia told the Security Council before last month's vote that Western nations are trying to "strangle" North Korea and that sanctions are losing their "relevance" in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the North. In its most recent report circulated last month the panel of experts said it is investigating 58 suspected North Korean cyberattacks between 2017 and 2023 valued at approximately USD 3 billion, with the money reportedly being used to help fund its weapons development.

Russian strategic bomber

Ukraine's air force claimed Friday it shot down a Russian strategic bomber, but Moscow officials said the plane crashed in a sparsely populated area due to a malfunction after a combat mission. Neither claim could be independently verified. Previous Ukrainian claims of shooting down Russian war-planes during their more than two-year war have met with silence or denials from Moscow.

Meanwhile, Russian missiles struck cities in the central Dnipro region of Ukraine, killing eight people, including a 14-year-old girl and 8-year-old boy, and injuring 28, local officials said.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy repeated Kyiv offi-cials' almost daily appeals for more Western air defense systems, again drawing a parallel with how Israel blunted a recent Iranian attack.

Missile and drone attacks can be thwarted, he wrote on social platform X: "This has been demonstrated in the skies over the Middle East, and it should

also work in Europe." Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba added: "Children must not be killed in airstrikes in modern Europe.'

Russia's air force is vastly more powerful than Ukraine's, but sophisticated missile systems provided by Kyiv's Western partners are a major threat to Russian aviation as the Kremlin's forces slowly push forward along the around 1,000-kilometre front line in what has become a grinding war of attrition. Ukrainian officials say they expect a major Russian offensive in the summer. Ukraine said the air force and military intelligence cooperated to bring down the Tu-22M3 bomber

EU official von der Leyen visits Finland-Russia border to assess security situation

after visiting the border in

Lappeenranta with Finnish

Prime Minister Petteri Orpo.

"We should be more Finnish

Von der Leyen and Orpo flew in a Finnish helicopter over the

landscape of forests and towns

on the border. In a statement

issued after the visit, Orpo said that "the spring's warmer weather increases the risk of

Russia helping people illegally try to get to Finland via the land border ... outside the border

crossing points." Most of the migrants hail from

the Middle East and Africa. The

vast majority of them have

sought asylum in Finland, a member of the EU and NATO

with a population of 5.6 million. Finland joined NATO in April

2023, ending decades of neu-

trality after the country's defeat

by the Soviet Union in World

War II. In March, Sweden also

became a member of the trans-Atlantic alliance. The move

dealt a major blow to Putin, with a historic realignment of Europe's post-Cold War secu-

rity landscape triggered by Moscow's full-scale invasion

when it comes to security."

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

The head of the European Union's executive branch said on Friday that Finland's decision to close its border crossings with Russia over a surge in migrants was a security matter for the whole 27member bloc to consider.

Commission European President Ursula von der Leyen made the remarks during a trip to the frontier, visiting a part of the border located in the Arctic. "We all know how (Russian President Vladimir) Putin and his allies instrumentalize migrants to test our defenses and to try to destabilize us," von der Leyen said. "Now Putin is focusing on Finland, and this is no doubt in response to your firm support of Ukraine and your accession to NATO." On April 4, Finland decided to extend the closure of its border

crossing points with Russia "until further notice" because of what the government says is a high risk of organized migration being orchestrated by Moscow. Finland's government has closed eight of its nine checkpoints with Russia. The only one that remains open is dedicated to rail travel only, and cargo trains mainly run

through it. Finland shares a 1,340-kilometer (832-mile) land border with Russia, running mostly through thick forests in the south, and to the rugged landscape in the Arctic north. "This is not just about the security of Finland, but it is about the security of the European Union. We are in this together," von der Leven said

with anti-aircraft missiles. Russia commonly uses the bomber to fire Kh-22 cruise missiles at Ukrainian targets

from inside its own airspace. The plane can also carry nuclear warheads. The Russian defense ministry said the warplane crashed "in a deserted area" in the southern region of Stavropol, hun-

dreds of kilometers (miles) from the Ukrainian border. Three crew members were rescued after ejecting from the aircraft, and the search for a fourth is taking place, according to the ministry. But Stavropol Gov. Vladimir Vladimirov said one of the rescued pilots died.

On Christmas Eve, Ukraine claimed to have shot down two Russian fighter jets. In January the Ukrainian air force said it shot down a Russian early warning and control plane and a key command center aircraft that relays information to troops on the ground, in what appeared to be a signif-icant blow for the Kremlin's forces. The next month forces. The next month, Ukraine said it knocked out another early warning and control plane.

Also in January, Moscow accused Kyiv of shooting down a Russian military transport plane that was carrying Ukrainian POWs who were headed for a prisoner swap. Russian forces overnight conducted a combined aerial attack with the use of 22 missiles of various types and 14 Shahed drones during the night, the Ukrainian air force said. All the drones and 15 of the missiles were intercepted, it said. The attack hit urban areas as well as train infrastructure in the Dnipro region, Ukraine's National Railway Operator said. Among those killed in the strikes was employee Oksana Storozhenko, the mother of two

teenage sons, it said.

More people evacuated after dramatic eruption of Indonesian volcano

More people living near an erupting volcano on Indonesia's Sulawesi Island were evacuated on Friday due to the dangers of spreading ash, falling rocks, hot volcanic clouds and the possibility of a tsunami. An international airport in Manado city, which is located less than 100 kilometers 52 miles) from the erupting Mount Ruang, is still temporarily closed as volcanic ash was spewed into the air.

Satellite imagery from the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency showed that the ash has spread to the west, northwest, northeast and southeast, covering Manado and North Minahasa, according to a statement from Indonesia's Transportation Ministry.

"We are still monitoring developments in the eruption of Mount Ruang and coordinating with relevant stakeholders ... to anticipate the necessary actions to ensure flight safety, security and comfort," said Ambar Śuryoko, head of the regional airport authority More than 11,000 people were

told to leave their homes and at least 1,000 have done so. A joint

team from the local authorities is still combing the villages surrounding the volcano and evacuating the residents to safer areas by boat.

Officials worry that part of the volcano could collapse into the sea and cause a tsunami, as happened in an eruption there in 1871 eruption. Houses, roads and other buildings in the affected areas were covered by roofs were also broken by the materials spewed from the eruption. Mount Ruang saw at least five large eruptions Wednesday, causing the Centre for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation to issue its highest level of alert. People were ordered to stay at least 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from the 725-metre (2,378-foot) mountain. The observation from the agency on Friday said that white smoke is rising from the main crater with medium to thick intensity. Tagulandang Island, east of the volcano, could be at risk if a collapse occurred. Its residents were among those being told to evacuate. Indonesia's National Disaster Mitigation Agency said residents will be relocated to Manado, a journey of six hours by boat.

IMF MD says China has to define growth strategies for the future

Observing that China has the benefit of a particular set of policies over the last decades for its export-oriented growth, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has said that the time has come for Beijing to look at domestic sources for growth, opening up more opportunities for the market.

per cent in the first quarter, making a stronger-thanexpected start to the year even as the downturn of its property market continued while the domestic demand remained subdued. The GDP grew 5.3 per cent year on year to 29.63 trillion yuan (about USD 4.17 trillion) in the first three months of 2024, data from the National Bureau of Statistics

showed on Tuesday. 'China is the fork in the road. Why? Because China has to define growth strategies for the future. China has the benefit of a particular set of policies over the last decades, export-oriented growth, but the time has come to look at domestic sources for growth, opening up more opportunities for the market to lift up these prospects," Georgieva said.

The IMF sees three important opportunities for China, she said. Number one, to shift the economy more towards domestic consumption. It is actually in line with what China is aspiring to, the dual circulation economy. It would take giving consumers more confidence and offering them more services, and more things to buy. "We know that the healthcare services in China can expand quite significantly

that getting the social safety nets to work more effectively would give people an opportunity to save a bit less, to spend a bit more," she said. "Secondly, we see the reforms in China that have served the country well continuing to be needed, reforms of state-owned enterprises opening up for a more competitive environment.

In the years ahead, that can help Ćhina grow more," Georgieva said. Last but not least, there are some problems right now, and how they are solved will have implications for China's growth, she observed. "The most obvious example is the property sector. People in China rely on their homeownership as a way of saving. When prices there—as savings go down, when prices of real estate go down, that affects consumer confidence. and deflation risks coming So clearing up the problems in down," he said. So clearing up the problems in the sector more resolutely would certainly help China, she said.

"We see China making some important decisions around greening their growth pattern. Again, the more China does for lifting up domestic consumption, the better," the IMF Managing Director said. At a separate news conference,

Asia and Pacific Department, told reporters that on the macroeconomic aspects. China's economy is experiencing weak domestic demand. This emanates from two fac-

tors: the continued weakness in the real estate sector and the legacies of the pandemic. So in that context, the IMF has

advocated for two things. One is policies that would help address the problem in the property sector and other than that, trying to boost consumption demand by improving social safety nets in the case of China and again, improving the pension system in a fiscally prudent way and investing in people, education, and health. 'So that's as far as once on the domestic demand side if you pursue these policies, you will see domestic demand rising

China provides wide-ranging support to priority sectors. This includes preferential access to credit research funds and incentives for certain firms, particularly in the areas of strategic manufacturing and science and technology. "In terms of what China can do, on the first issue of misallocation of resources, we have talked tant to address SOE reform quite urgently, scaling back of industrial policies, which provide implicit or explicit guarantees for SOEs. So in other words, try to make it have to ensure competitive neutrality between SOEs and the private sector so that there's no misallocation of resources doesn't happen," Srinivasan said.

That's one thing. And again, we also said that SOE reforms, some SOEs are clearly unprofitable. And the more support you provide, you keep them in business for longer than they should be. So that's something which we've called for in terms of SOE reforms. And so those are the policies which we're advocating for China both to address, to address the issue of what you talked about as overproduction," he added.

Teenager charged with terror in stabbings of bishop and priest at Sydney church

Christian clerics during a Sydney church service has been charged by police with terrorism offenses.

nected religious motivation and that the boy travelled up to 90 minutes from his home to the Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Sydney's western suburbs.

The teen spoke in Arabic about the Prophet Prophet Muhammad being insulted after he stabbed Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel and the Rev. Isaac Royel during Monday night's Assyrian Orthodox service. He was later overpowered by parishioners, sustaining severe hand injuries. 'Yesterday investigators attended a medical facility to interview the alleged offender where he was charged with committing a terrorist act," Federal said Police Commissioner Reece Kershaw at a press conference

on Friday in Sydney. The offense carries a maximum penalty of imprisonment for life. The matter was heard at a Sydney children's court on Friday. The juvenile, who is not being named, did not appear via video link from his hospital bed and did not apply for bail at the brief

hearing. The teen has a history of knife-related offenses and had seen three psychologists and a school counsellor, and had an appointment to see a psychiatrist, his lawyer said during Friday's court hearing. The boy's family had previously said the 16-year-old

Svdnev (AP): A 16-year-old shown no signs of being radiboy accused of stabbing two calised. The 16-year-old's lawyer, Greg Scragg, said the boy had a "long history of behaviour" consistent with a mental illness or intellectual disability.

Authorities said the stabbing The magistrate made a recomwas declared a terrorist act mendation for the boy to have a because of the teenager's sus- mental health assessment while custody at a children's detention centre once released from the hospital, until his next court hearing on June 14.

A crowd of up to 600 people converged on the church after the attack, some demanding that police hand over the boy. Hours of rioting led to 51 police officers being injured.

Sydney mosques also received firebomb threats.

The bishop released an audio statement on Thursday saying that he was "doing fine, recovering very quickly" and that he forgave his attacker. He also used his statement to call for calm after the attack, which was Australia's second high-profile knife attack in a week, after a man stabbed six people to death at a busy Sydney shopping centre on Saturday before he was fatally shot. Regarding the church attack, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said, "Clearly this was a terrorism event", and it had been disappointing to see the riots that followed.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY

MARINE DEPARTMENT
No.-MD/ACCTS/WK/R-18/2023-415 Date: 16.04.2024
e-Tender Call Notice (e-TCN) No.
MD/ACCTS/WK/R-18/2023/161 dtd.07/02/2024

Name of the Work: Hiring of 01 No.60 ton Bollard

US ambassador to UN visits Nagasaki A-bomb museum

AP ■ TOKYO

The American envoy to the United Nations called Friday for countries armed with atomic weapons to pursue nuclear disarmament as she visited the atomic bomb museum in Nagasaki, Japan.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, who became the first US cabinet member to visit Nagasaki, stressed the importance of dialogue and diplomacy amid a growing nuclear threat in the region. "We must continue to work together to create an environment for nuclear disarmament. We must continue to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons in every corner of the world," she said after a tour of the

atomic bomb museum. "For those of us who already have those weapons, we must pursue arms control. We can and must work to ensure that Nagasaki is the last place to ever experience the horror of nuclear



Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, right, shake hands during a meeting on Friday

weapons," she added, standing in front of colourful hanging origami cranes, a symbol of peace. The United States dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, destroying the city and killing 140,000 people. A second attack three days later on Nagasaki killed 70,000 more people. Japan surrendered on August 15, ending World War II and its near-

ly half-century of aggression in Asia. Nagasaki Gov. Kengo Oishi said in a statement that he believed Thomas-Greenfield's visit and her first-person experience at the museum "will be a strong message in promoting momentum of nuclear disarmament for the international society at a time the world faces a severe environment surrounding atomic weapons?

Five Japanese escape unhurt in Karachi suicide bombing

PTI ■ KARACHI/PESHAWAR

Pive Japanese nationals had a lucky escape when their vehicle was targeted by militants in a suicide attack here in Pakistan's Sindh province on Friday, police said.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) East Azfar Mahesar said the terrorists on a motorbike attempted to hit the van of the Japanese nationals near Murtaza Chorangi in Landhi.

"All five Japanese remained safe. However, the private security guard with them was injured," he said. "The Japanese nationals were on the way to the Export Processing Zone from their residence in Zamzama, Clifton," he said.

Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) DIG Asif Aijaz Shaikh told Dawn News that the Japanese nationals were travelling in a van along with two security guards when two terrorists tried to hit the van. The security guards killed one terrorist while another blew himself up in an attempt to get close to the van, the official said.

"All five Japanese nationals are safe," DIG Shaikh said. "No one has claimed responsibility so far," the DIG said, adding that the vehicle carrying the Japanese nationals was bullet-proof.

Meanwhile, with the death of two more persons, the toll in Thursday's ambush on a government vehicle in Pakistan's restive Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province rose to seven, police said on Friday. The deceased include five officials and two passer-byes, including a fouryear-old girl and a man.

The officials from Customs Intelligence were on routine duty on Quetta Road in Dera Ismail Khan district in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province when unknown gunmen opened fire at their vehicle, police said. On Thursday, police said five people, including a girl

child, were killed in the attack. The killers fled from the scene before police from Draban Police Station rushed to the area. Chief Minister of the province Ali Amin Gandapur strongly condemned the attack and directed the police to arrest the attackers.

On Wednesday, Pakistani security forces killed seven terrorists trying to infiltrate the country's border with Afghanistan in the same province. There has been an uptick in ter-

ror incidents across Pakistan, especially in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province over the last two years since the Taliban-led dispensation took over the control of Afghanistan. Pakistan has consistently asked the Taliban-led interim Afghan government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border and deny the use of Afghan soil by terrorists for perpetrating acts of terror ism against Pakistan.

might have "anger management and behavioral issues" and a "short fuse", but had

pull Tug along with manning crew for Marine Operation at SPMs and inside Harbour at Paradip for a period of 07 (seven) years. Estimated cost put to tender: Rs.86,35,39,812/-With reference to above e-tender, revised tender document has been published in the e-procurement website with extension. Last date & time of submission of bids through on-line bidding is 17:00 Hours on dt. 07/05/2024. Technical Bids shall be opened at 16:00 hours on dt.08/05/2024. For details, please log on to the Website: https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app Sd/- Deputy Conservator, Paradip Port Authority PPA/PR-01/2024-2025 dtd.18.04.2024



Engagement of manpower on contract:

(Mechanical/Metallurgy), Assistant Manager (Electrical/Electronics), Assistant Manager (Civil) and Assistant Manager (IT/CS) advertised vide VC No 132/24-135/24 will be conducted on 05-05-2024. Last date for submission of application has been extended to 29-04-2024.

Written test for the posts of Assistant Manager

Written test will be conducted at Guwahati, Kolkata, Mumbai Chennai, Bangalore, Gurugram, Hyderabad on 05-05-2024.

India standout performer amidst sluggish global growth: IEA Secretary

espite a challenging global scenario, India's economy has shown robust growth over the past year backed by sustained consumption and investment demand, a top Indian official told members of a World Bank committee here.

The GDP growth estimate for the fiscal, which has been revised upwards from 7.3 per cent to 7.6 per cent in the second advance estimates, highlights the enduring strength and resilience of the Indian economy, India's Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said while addressing the Development Committee meeting here on Thursday.

"India grew above 8 per cent for three consecutive quarters of FY24, reaffirming its position as a standout performer amidst sluggish global growth trends," Seth

He said that similar sentiments have been echoed by various agencies who have revised India's fiscal 24 growth

India's proactive stance on reform and investment in sustainable growth avenues sets a benchmark for emerging

The Indian delegation at the annual Spring Meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank is being represented at the official level this time. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is not attending the annual gathering of global financial leaders due to the ongoing Lok Sabha elections

Seth told the Development Committee that India's thrust on capex continued to crowd in private investment resulting in enhanced Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) at constant prices registering a growth above 10 per cent in FY24.

inflation outlook India's appears positive with headline and core inflation trending downwards, indicating a broad-based moderation in price pressures, he said. Seth said that on the external



merchandise trade deficit and the rising net services receipts are expected to improve the current account balance in fiscal 2024.

To catalyse and democratise the Artificial Intelligence (AI) innovation ecosystem in the country, the Centre has approved the "India AI Mission" with a budget outlay of INR 103 billion for building computing infrastructure, developing indigenous AI capabilities, streamlining access to datasets, attracting AI talent, and financing AI starta robust AI ecosystem through strategic programmes and partnerships across the public and private sectors. The focus

infrastructure technology is expected to propel India to stay on the of technological innovation, consolidate and solidify its position in the global supply chain," he said. Öbserving

manufacturing sector registered double-digit growth in Q3 of 24 fiscal years, driven by a surge in investment, improved investor confidence, ups. and strong domestic demand "The Mission aims to establish conditions, Seth said the year growth in services, led by noncontact-intensive

Emphasising that India has the highest digital transactions globally with a share of 46 per cent of global real-time transactions in 2022, Seth noted that the monthly transactions for March 2024 stood at 13.44 billion to talong an amount of INR 19.78

The volume of UPI online transactions witnessed a 54 per cent YoY growth in Q3 FY24, which can be attributed to convenience, increased financial flexibility, and avenues in ease of

spending for consumers, he

"Today this increased mobile connectivity and its linkage with the bank accounts has become an integral part of India's inclusive economic growth story with consumers, small traders, vendors, and vulnerable populations from the lowest rung of the society, being the key beneficiaries," he

Stock markets stage strong rebound

PTI ■ MUMBAI

 $S_{\rm close}$ markets rebounded from early lows to $S_{\rm close}$ higher on Friday, snapping the four-day losing streak on heavy value buying in banking and auto shares

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 599.34 points or 0.83 per cent to settle at 73,088.33. The index opened lower and tanked further 672.53 points or 0.92 per cent to hit a low of 71,816.46 in early trade. However, the index rebounded in the second half on value-buying in banking shares. The NSE Nifty jumped 151.15 points or 0.69 per cent to close at 22,147. The broader index dropped to a low of 21,777.65 in early trade before paring its losses to end in the green.

From the Sensex basket, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank, JSW Steel, Maruti, Wipro, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finserv, ICICI Bank and ITC were the major gainers. Nestle India, HCL Technologies, Larsen &

Toubro, Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Motors and Infosys were among the laggards. Infosys declined nearly 1 per cent after the company's revenue growth guidance for FY25

failed to meet market expectations. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Hong Kong settled in the negative territory. European markets were trading in the red. Wall Street ended mostly lower on Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.55 per cent to USD 87.62 a barrel. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded

equities worth Rs 4,260.33 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

"Despite global weakness, Indian markets staged a strong recovery driven by large-cap stocks, buoyed by the expectation of limited prospects



of escalation following Israel's action against Iran. However, fragility persists with elevated oil prices, posing inflation risks," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. "Nifty reversed a four-day losing streak to end higher," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities. In the broader market, the

BSE midcap gauge declined 0.39 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.04 per cent. Among the indices, bankex jumped 1.02 per cent and metal climbed 0.85 per cent. Financial services (0.83 per cent), consumer durables (0.78 per cent) and commodities (0.54 per cent) also gained. IT, telecommunication, utilities, realty and teck were among the laggards.
On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark

declined 1,156.57 points or 1.55 per cent and the Nifty dipped 372.4 points or 1.65 per cent. Meanwhile, the 2024 Lok Sabha polls kicked off on Friday with the beginning of polling for the first phase. The BSE benchmark tanked 454.69 points or 0.62 per cent to settle at 72,488.99 on Thursday. The NSE Nifty declined 152.05 points or 0.69 per cent to 21,995.85.



Nestle shares continue to decline; mcap erodes by ₹10,610.55 crore in two days

PTI NEW DELHI

Shares of Nestle India to decline on Friday, ending the day over 1 per cent lower, amid reports that the global FMCG major sold infant milk products with more sugar content in less developed countries

The stock declined 3.53 per cent to Rs 2,375.75 during the day on the BSE. It later ended at Rs 2,437.10 a share, down 1.04 per cent.

On the NSE, shares of the company dipped 2.13 per cent to Rs 2,410 during the day. The stock ended at Rs 2,430 apiece,

On Thursday, shares of Nestle India had declined over 3 per In two days, the company's

market capitalisation (mcap) got eroded by Rs 10,610.55 crore to Rs 2,34,974.74 crore. Nestle India on Thursday said it has reduced added sugar on baby food products in India by up to 30 per cent, depending on variants, over the past five years, amid reports that the global FMCG major sold

products with more sugar

content in less developed

According to findings by Swiss NGO, Public Eye and International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), Nestle sold baby products with higher sugar content in less developed South Asian countries, including India, Africa and Latin American nations as compared to markets in Europe

When reached out for comments, a company spokesperson said, "Reduction of added sugars is a priority for Nestle India. Over the past 5 years, we have already reduced added sugars by up to 30 per variant."

The spokesperson further said, "We regularly review our portfolio and continue to innovate and reformulate our products to further reduce the level of added sugars, without compromising on nutrition, quality, safety, and taste.'

Nestle India asserted that its "infant cereal products are manufactured to ensure the appropriate delivery of nutritional requirements such as protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, iron etc. For early childhood".

Strong growth momentum provides RBI policy space to focus on price stability: Das

The strong growth momentum and the GDP projections for 2024-25 give the RBI a policy space to unwaveringly focus on price stability, Governor Shaktikanta Das stressed while voting for a status quo in the interest rate earlier this month. The Reserve Bank had

maintained status-quo on the benchmark lending rate (repo) at 6.5 per cent since February on concerns over 2023 on concerns creatinflation after the three-day meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) earlier this month.

MUTUAL FUND

HDFC AMC Q4

profit soars 44 pc

HDFC Asset Management Company (AMC) on Friday reported a 44 per cent jump in profit after tax at Rs

541.1 crore in three months

In comparison, the company posted a profit after tax (PAT)

of Rs 376.1 crore in the year-

ago period, the fund house said

in a regulatory filing to the

The firm's total income surged

by 33 per cent Year-on-Year

(YoY) to Rs 851 crore in the

quarter under review from Rs

Additionally, the company's

expenses grew 18 per cent YoY

to Rs 172 crore in the fourth

March 2024 as against Rs 4.5 lakh crore a year earlier.

For the full financial year 2023-

24 (FY24), the fund house's

manager for HDFC Mutual

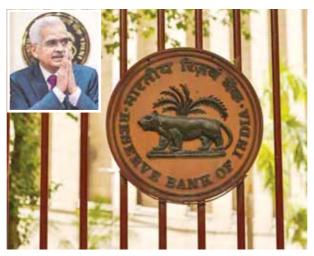
quarter ended March 2024. The company's average asset under management (AAUM) stood at Rs 6.13 lakh crore as of

to ₹541 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ended March 2024.

stock exchanges



The central bank on Friday released the minutes of the meeting.

The gains in disinflation achieved over last two years have to be preserved and taken forward towards aligning the headline inflation to the 4 per cent target on a durable basis," he said, according to the

Five of the six MPC members had voted for the status quo in the policy rate.

MPC member Jayanth R however, had advocated a reduction in the repo rate by 25 basis points as "high interest rates entail a growth sacrifice".



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold and silver prices Soared to fresh record high levels on Friday with the precious metal breaching Rs 74,000 per 10 grams mark here on bullish global trends.

According to HDFC Securities, gold price jumped Rs 400 to hit its lifetime high of Rs 74,100 per 10 grams in Delhi. It had closed at Rs 73,700 per 10 grams on Thursday.

Similarly, silver prices rose by Rs 100 to hit a new peak of Rs 86,600 per kg.

the Delhi markets are trading at a record high of Rs 74,100 per 10 grams, up by Rs 400 amid a positive trend in the overseas markets," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the overseas markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,390 per ounce, up by USD 15 from the previous close.

Gold in the global market surged near a record high in the Asian trading hours on Friday, following reports that Israel had struck targets on Iranian soil, days after Iran had launched an attack on Israel in retaliation for a raid on its

consulate in Syria.

This has increased the possibility of a larger regional conflict that would support higher gold prices.

Additionally, silver was quoted higher at USD 28.29 per ounce. In the previous close, it had finished at USD 28.25 per

According to market analysts,

a string of reports, including US inflation data which has remained hotter than forecast this year, have pushed the top US Federal Reserve officials to say recently they could hold That's a letdown after the Fed earlier had signalled three cuts to interest rates could be possible this year. But Fed officials have been adamant they want to be sure inflation is heading down toward their 2 per cent target before lowering the Fed's main interest rate from its highest level since

"Gold prices are expected to react to news developments related to both geopolitical tensions and updates on interest rates from the Federal Reserve," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

BUSINESS BRIEF



VITEEE-2024 KICKS OFF AT VIT AP UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

The Vellore Institute of Technology Engineering Entrance Examination (VITEEE)-2024 has officially begun today at the VIT-AP campus in Amaravati. The computer-based entrance exam, conducted annually, aims to facilitate admissions to B.Tech programs offered at VIT's campuses in Vellore, Chennai, Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh), and Bhopal Sharing his insights on VITEEE 2024 Dr. S.V. Kota Reddy -Vice-Chancellor highlighted that the entrance examination will continue at various exam centres until April 30, 2024. Candidates hailing from 125 cities across the nation and 6 cities abroad will participate in the online entrance examination. The results are tentatively set to be available on May 3, 2024, on www.vit.ac.in. Dr. Jagadish Chandra, Registrar, said that the examination is conducted in three sessions daily, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m., and 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

INDUSTRY, ACADEMIA MEET AND EXHIBITION TODAY

The Department of Architecture, Zakir Husain College of Engineering and Technology (ZHCET), Aligarh Muslim University is organising an Industry-Academia Meet and Exhibition on April 20, 2024, to bring together the professionals, academicians and students for interaction and exchange of ideas. AMU Vice Chancellor is the chief patron and Prof Mirza Salim Beg, Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Technology and Prof MM Sufyan Beg, Principal, ZHCET are the co-patrons. The talks will be focused on the present scenario in building design and construction practices and the eminent speakers are Prof Manoj Mathur, SPA, New Delhi; Prof Rajat Ray, Ex-Dean, Guru Govind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi; Dr. Arun Kapur, Amity School of Architecture, Lucknow and also Honorary Architect, Gunjan and Associates, Lucknow; Architect Gaurav Gupta, De:Cape Studio, Lucknow; Architect Manish Kr Sahai, Sahai Architects, Aligarh; Architect Hemlata Singh, White Fox Designs LLP, New Delhi and Architect Udit Gaurav, Green Building Consultant, Greater Noida

Hyundai Motor India rolls out Grameen Mahotsav aspirations but also identify that with good monsoon,

AIndia has expanded its 'Grameen Mahotsav' initiative to 16 new locations across the country, after the success of its inaugural event held in Gujarat this month. The 'Grameen Mahotsav' initiative aims to further strengthen HMIL's connection to rural India with specially curated events and product displays including live music, folk dance, and regional talent shows among others.

It also serves as a platform for Hyundai to delve into the vast potential of rural markets. By closely engaging with communities and discerning market trends, HMIL aims to not only cater to evolving

and welcome new customers, increasing income levels and statement on Friday. The inaugural 'Grameen

Mahotsay' event was held successfully in Mahemdavad, Gujarat. Now, Hyundai Motor India looks forward to extending its reach and impact across rural landscapes.

"Our sustained efforts towards bolstering rural connect are bearing great fruits and Hyundai Motor India has witnessed a remarkable growth in rural markets in the financial year 2023-24. We sold 1.15 lakh vehicles in rural India last year, a growth of 11 per cent over 2022-23," Hyundai Motor India Ltd. COO Tarun Garg said. "We are confident

from contribution rural markets will further increase,' he said. Hyundai Motor said nearly 40 per cent of sales and service networks were in rural areas. HMIL is committed to fostering strong bonds with rural communities.

With initiatives like Grameen Mahotsay, we hope to nurture our customers in every part of the country and also understand the market trends to fulfill their expectations. As we continue to innovate and engage with rural consumers, we are confident in our ability to contribute to the inclusive development of the country," Garg added.

Infosys shares decline nearly per cent after Q4 earnings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 S_1 hares of Infosys on Friday ended nearly S_1 per cent lower after the company's revenue growth guidance for FY25 failed

to meet market expectations.

The stock fell 2.87 per cent to Rs 1,379.70 during the day on the BSE. It finally ended at Rs 1,411.60 apiece, lower by 0.63 per On the NSE, it declined 2.85 per cent to Rs

637.8 crore in the January-March quarter of the financial year 2022-23 (FY23). 1,378.75 in intra-day trade. Shares of the company ended at Rs 1,411.95 each, down 0.51 per cent.

The company's market capitalisation (mcap) declined by Rs 3,655.37 crore to Rs



5,85,936,45 crore. In volume terms, 8.65 lakh shares of the

company were traded on the BSE and over 206.04 lakh shares on the NSE during the IT company Infosys on Thursday said its

consolidated profit jumped 30 per cent to Rs 7,969 crore in the March 2024 quarter. The company posted a profit of Rs 6,128 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing.

The consolidated revenue of Infosys

during the quarter increased 1.3 per cent to Rs 37,923 crore from Rs 37,441 crore in

the same quarter a year ago. The company expects a revenue growth of 1-3 per cent in constant currency for FY25 and an operating margin of 20-22 per cent. The growth projection is lower compared to the outlook of between 4 per cent and 7

er cent for FY24. Infosys guided for 1-3 per cent constant currency revenue growth for FY25, missing expectations," as per a report by JM Financial Institutional Securities.

CAG signs pact with SAI Bulgaria to enhance international collaboration

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has signed an agreement with SAI Bulgaria, the PAT surged by 37 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,946 crore and total income rose 27 per cent YoY to Rs 3,162.5 crore. HDFC AMC is an investment Bulgarian National Audit Office, in Sofia, in a bid to fos-Fund, one of the leading ter international cooperation. mutual funds in the country. Shares of HDFC AMC settled The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), inked 1.73 per cent lower at Rs 3,707.15 apiece on the BSE. by the two Supreme audit insti-

tutions, aims to enhance collab-

oration and the exchange of expertise in the field of auditthe CAG said in a statement. Through the MoU, a platform will be established for the exchange of knowledge and training programs, and mutual assistance in conducting audits, it said.

Girish Chandra Murmu, the he said

The MoU signing ceremony was attended by Goritsa Grancharova - Kozhareva, Acting President of the Bulgarian National Audit

the broader implications of the MoU, stating it will also help cementing the ties that already exist between the two



Dubai flights PTI NEW DELHI

ir India on Friday said it Ahas cancelled flights to and from Dubai due to continued operational disruptions at the airport in the Gulf city.

Passengers of Air India who have booked the flights for travel till April 21 will be offered a one-time waiver on rescheduling and full refunds for cancellation.

An Air India spokesperson said the airline has cancelled the flights to and from Dubai due to continued operational disruptions at the Dubai airport.
"We are doing our best to get

affected customers on their way by re-accommodating them on flights as soon as operations resume," the spokesperson said in a

Dubai airport operations have been hit by unprecedented rains and floods.

CAG of India, expressed coning between the two nations, fidence in the partnership and said the MoU will further strengthen bilateral coopera-

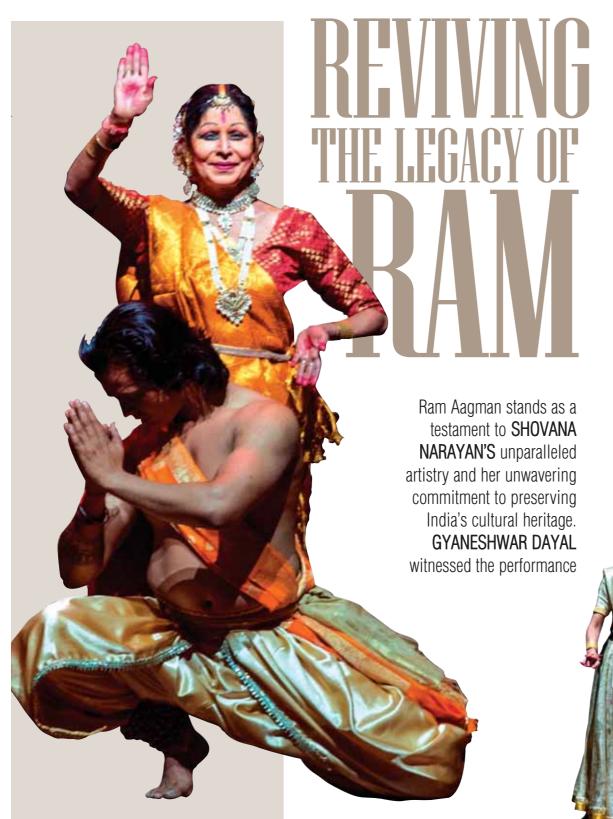
experience amongst auditing professionals and technical teams through collaboration in

ment to energize our capacity development initiatives and exchange of knowledge and information between our SAIs,"

'We look forward to working closely with you and assure you of our support and commit-

Murmu further highlighted

statement.



classical enowned dancer Shovana Narayan, Padmashree awardee celebrated her mesmerising performances, once captivated audiences with her scintillating dance production "Ram Aagman." Held on the auspicious occasion of Chaitra Navratri, this spectacle, presented at the Kamani Auditorium in New Delhi, was a testament to Narayan's dedication to preserving and promoting Indian classical dance forms

'Ram Aagman,' choreographed and directed by Narayan herself along with Lalita Narayan, delved into the timeless tale of Lord Ram, from his birth to Sita's disappearance into the earth. With a team of 19 skilled dancers from her repertory ASAVARI, Narayan masterfully brought to life lesser-known incidents from Ram's life, offering a fresh perspective on the epic narrative. The event was graced by esteemed personalities such as Sangita Saxena, Meenakshi Lekhi, Dr Sachchidanand Joshi, and Dr Sandhya Purecha, among others. Their presence underscored the significance of Narayan's contribution to the cultural landscape of India.

'Ram Aagman' was not just a dance performance; it was a rich tapestry of cultural exploration. Through insightful talks by Lady Kishwar Desai and Dr. Alka Pande, the production seamlessly integrated cultural geography and visual arts, shedding light on the influence of Sri Ram's journey in Punjab and the

> depicting his darshan. Narayan's choreography skillfully portrayed the myriad emotions stirred bv Lord Ram's arrival, from the joyous anticipation of his devotees to the impact on his family and subjects. Her commitment to social messaging was evident as she unearthed new dimensions of the Ram Katha, resonating with audiences on both intellectual emotional levels.

profound symbolism present

in hand-held paintings

One of the distinctive "Ram elements of Aagman" was homage to Goddess





Durga, emphasizing the celebration of divine femininity and her pivotal role in the universe. Narayan's reverence for tradition, coupled with her innovative approach, breathed new life into this timeless tale, making it relevant for contemporary audiences.

The success of 'Ram Aagman' owes much to the collective efforts of the talented team behind the scenes. From the soul-stirring music composed by Pt. Jwala Prasad, Pt. Madho Prasad, and Dinesh Parihar to the meticulous lighting by Milind Srivastava, every aspect contributed to the immersive experience.

Narayan's dedication to her art form is evident in every aspect of "Ram

Aagman." Through her evocative choreography and profound storytelling, she continues to inspire audiences and keep the rich heritage of Indian classical dance alive. As she eloquently puts it, "The absence or the presence of 'Ramatva' became evident through various emotions portrayed, offering food for thought to the audiences."

'Ram Aagman' stands as a testament to Shovana Narayan's unparalleled artistry and her unwavering commitment to preserving India's cultural heritage. With each graceful movement, she not only honours the legacy of Lord Ram but also enriches the cultural tapestry of our

Tradition, Transformation, Empowerment

Poonam Dhillon returns in Ek Kori Prem Katha alongside newcomer Khanak Budhiraja, a film that tackles the sensitive subject of the Kori tradition. In this conversation with SAKSHI PRIYA the film's cast dwells on the gravity of sensitive social issues and the challenge of questioning outdated traditions.

your character undertakes in the film?

n Ek Kori Prem Katha, my character embodies the acceptance of the Kori tradition, deeply rooted in her family, village, and society, which she embraces without a question. The story progresses with a newlywed girl who enters a family, deeply in love with the son. Initially happy with the union, tensions arise in the family when the daughter-in-law refuses to participate in the Kori tradition, leading to shock and hostility where my character begins to gauge the unjust nature of the tradition and the need to refuse the perpetuation of such practices. This marks a transformation in my character, as she starts to support her daughter-in-law in opposing the Kori tradition. Together, they stand up against this outdated tradition in their powerful journey of change

How did you prepare to play a character with a different perspective than your own?

and empowerment. The film narrates my character's

journey as she challenges outdated traditions for the

greater good of evolving our cultural norms.

Well, every time I play a character, it is different, and 99 per cent of the time she is not the real me. So, I always start with the physical attributes of the character, how she dresses, talks and walks, and slip into the role from the

director's, and the writer's, point of view. How did you feel working with Raj Babbar in this film? Working with Raj Babbar after so many years felt really good. Today, I feel our communication is much better. As an actor and a person, he is great, and at this stage in life it feels good to talk to him. I must admit, I didn't even

have his phone but now we are far more comfortable and enjoy working together. Were there any humorous moments during the shoot? Our shooting location was actually quite funny, or perhaps the set itself was, I'm not entirely sure, but I think we had our funny and sad moments. We were told that we would be shooting in a *haveli*, (a large bungalow) but when we reached the location we were surprised because in villages, they refer to old houses as

like in Rajasthan. In reality what we faced was actually humorous. How did you handle the of outdoor challenges shoots?

haveli. In our minds the visual of a

haveli is more like a grand palace,

Outdoor shoots come with their own set challenges and difficulties. If we think everything should be according to our expectations and perfect that is impossible. expectations

Poonam Dhillon, can you elaborate on the journey make you unhappy which disturbs the whole unit. So, one adapts and adjusts.

> Khanak Budhiraja, what drew you to the role of Sabhayata, the challenges you faced in bringing her story to life, given the gravity of the film's subject?

I am an introvert and feminine by nature and I am not a sportsperson. So playing Sabhayata was a very challenging task. Like Poonam said, 99 per cent of the time you do not find a role which you relate to, thereby the challenges. Apart from learning how to ride a bus and drive a bike, my character had to be bold on-screen. In our society we still fight shy of issues like virginity. I am happy that at the outset of my career, I could play such a

Khanak, as a newcomer, what did you learn while filming?

I think filming everyday on the sets is in itself a learning process. We prepare ourselves for something which is poles apart from the scenes we actually shoot. As my first film, I was nervous, wondering about the surprise element in every scene. It took time, but I got used to it.

Khanak, your character fights against a regressive tradition. How did you prepare for the role of Sabhayata? I researched, and met two victims in Rajasthan,

> although they were initially not forthcoming about their experiences. I did manage a conversation with one of them. It is unfortunate to see that girls continue to bear such atrocities in a society which speaks of gender inequality. Our film is about the change that is unfolding. Is there an artist in this industry who influences you? I think Priyanka Chopra and Parineeti Chopra who was my senior in school. I am really inspired by both of them. Their journey is truly motivational. I will try my best to keep moving Chinmay Purohit (Director), what do

you hope audience will take away from this film? I hope the audience will understand the depth of the subject and plot, and they will take away the learning that we should not treat women like we do and what needs to be done.

Sculpting

Inspired by Beethoven and her Indian roots, Niyamat Mehta, all of 23, has already carved a niche in art history, says SAKSHI PRIYA

culptor Niyamat Mehta is Smaking waves in the art world with sculptures that blend traditional techniques and contemporary themes. Inspired by Beethoven and her Indian roots, her work resonates with deep historical and cultural significance. At the Venice Biennale, she became the youngest artist to showcase her talent, drawing global acclaim. Her first solo exhibit, Meraki, featured 27 sculptures inviting viewers to contemplate their own journeys.

At a tender age of 23, Niyamat has already etched her name in the annals of art history, hailed by Firenze Yes Please as the 'Emerging Artist to Invest In 2023. Her artistic journey began at the prestigious Venice Biennale, where she became the youngest artist to exhibit at the renowned Palazzo Albrizzi, sharing space with luminaries like Anish Kapoor, Simone Leigh, and Célestin Faustin.

Niyamat's journey is a testament to the harmonious blend of diverse influences and traditions. Being the youngest artist at the Venice Biennale was not just a milestone but a transformative moment that shaped her artistic vision. Exhibiting at Palazzo Albrizi was both encouraging and overwhelming, with the rich history and heritage of the venue enhancing her experience. The sculptor draws inspiration from Beethoven's 'String Quartets' that unveils a deep connection between music and visual art.

Niyamat listens to Western classical while sculpting to stay in the creative flow and translate intangible energy into tangible texture in her sculptures. This is a systematic process that begins with clarifying what she wants to create and why. Her Indian heritage is a fundamental part of her identity, influencing her sculptures and artistic vision.



Niyamat believes that the diversity of preferences, dislikes, and opinions across various regions enriches the world, making her work inherently fascinating. When collaborating with collectors, she strives to find a balance between her artistic vision and their desires, creating something meaningful together. Mehta's training in "drawing in space" and the sight-size method is not just a technical foundation but the essence of her artistic expression. She views these techniques as languages that serve as alphabets of her craft.

Her meticulous nature extends to her creative

where she approaches sculptures as "landscapes," seeking diverse topography within different areas of the piece. Bridging artistic cultures, Niyamat incorporates traditional techniques in her contemporary work seamlessly. She believes that every creation must possess both technical excellence and artistic allure, a philosophy instilled in her during her training at the Florence Academy of Art. This blend of vibrant Western techniques and Indian heritage is evident in her sculptures like Atman and Amor Fati.

The young sculptor operates from her private studio, Atelier Della Firenze, located in New Delhi. Her studio is more than just a workspace; it is a sanctuary. With an atmosphere akin to heaven, it provides the perfect backdrop for her masterpieces. Here, not only does she sculpt, she also imparts her knowledge masterclasses, nurturing a new generation of sculptors.

Niyamat's sculptures are a testament to her creativity and attention to detail. Her sculptures, particularly the Dali series, are

inspired by artists like Salvador Dali and

Auguste Rodin. Drawing from their styles, she strives to compose something unique of her own, blending surrealism and romanticism to create sculptures rich in expressions and emotions. Her recent solo exhibition, Meraki, showcased 27 sculptures that invited viewers to contemplate their own journeys. The title means putting your soul into your work which reflects the philosophy Niyamat abides by. She believes every sculpture of hers embodies a piece of her, an expression of herself. This

> sculpture presents, imbuing them with a soulful essence. Looking ahead, Niyamat aims to persist with

guiding principle is

evident in every

c o m m i s s i o n e d work, hold solo exhibitions, and ensure that her sculptures find their way into the collections of art

collectors who truly value her artistry. She wants the next generation of sculptors to approach this career without fear, embrace commissioned work, participate in exhibitions, and serve as their own most discerning critics. Niyamat is a shining example of and passion, talent

notwithstanding an artist's age. Her exhibitions are not just displays of art but experiences that transcend words. Each sculpture tells a story, inviting viewers to immerse themselves in her world of creativity. A hidden artist with immense talent, the world deserves to know and appreciate her work. In a world where creativity knows no bounds, Niyamat Mehta stands out as a beacon of artistic excellence, her sculptures showcasing her talent, passion, and dedication.

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शेरवुड कालेज की देश में अलग पहचान

शेरवुड कालेज शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में इस विद्यालय का नाम देश के नामचिन विद्यालयों में शामिल है। यह विद्यालय बच्चों का भविष्य संवारता हुआ आ रहा है। विद्यालय पूर्ण रूप से आवासीय है जिसमें बच्चों के भोजन व रहने तथा अन्य समस्त सुविधायें विद्यालय में मौजूद है।

पठन-पाठन कार्य अनुभवी शिक्षकों द्वारा किया जाता है। बच्चों के बेहतर भविष्य बनाने के लिये वह सभी

सुविधार्ये विद्यालय में मौजूद है जो वर्तमान में जरूरत के हिसाब से आवश्यक होती है। अंग्रेजी माध्यम से यह विद्यालय कक्षा 3 से लेकर कक्षा 12वीं तक संचालित किया जाता है। वर्तमान में प्रधनाचार्य अमनदीप संधू विद्यालय का संचालन कर रहे है। अमन दीप शन्धु कुशलता पूर्वक विद्यालय का संचालन कर रहे हैं।

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छात्राओं का भविष्य संवार रहा एमएल साह बाल विद्या मंदिर



अंग्रेजी माध्यम से संचालित यह विद्यालय नगर के विद्यालयों में खास स्थान रखता है। देश के विभिन्न प्रांतों की छात्राएं इस विद्यालय में शिक्षारत हैं। यह विद्यालय आवासीय के स्तथ दिवसीय है, जो शिक्षा के तमाम मापदंबीं की पूर्ति करता है और कई दशकों से शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में अपना दायित्व निभा रहा है। हजारों छत्राए इस विद्यालय से अध्ययन कर अपना

भविष्य संवार चुकी है। यह विद्यालय तमाम सुख सुविधाओं से सुसन्जित है। अनुभवी शिक्षिकाएं बच्चों की मनोस्थित को समझते हुए, उन्हें शिक्षा देती हैं। विद्यालय में बच्चों के शारारिक विकास के लिए खेलकृद की समस्त सुविधाएं उपलब्ध हैं। तमाम सुविधाओं से सुसन्जित यह विद्यालय निरंतर प्रगति के पथ पर अग्रसर है और बोर्ड परीक्षा में शत प्रतिशत रिजल्ट देता आ रहा है। विद्यालय का संचालन कर रही प्रधानाचार्य अनुपमा साह कहती हैं कि यह विद्यालय भविष्य में भी अपना दायित्व बखबी निभाता रहेगा। प्रबंधक विनय साह के निर्देशन में विद्यालय निरन्तर प्रगति की ओर अग्रसर है।

SCHOOLS IN NAINITAL: IN QUEST OF MULTIFACETED EXCELLENCE

OPEN



the past few years and the Internet has played a pivotal role. If we talk about the educational institutions spread over the captivating lake district of Nainital, they were considered benchmarks of quality and futuristic education earlier and even today they occupy the premier position in terms of academic excellence not just in

The residential schools in Nainital, in particular, stand in a

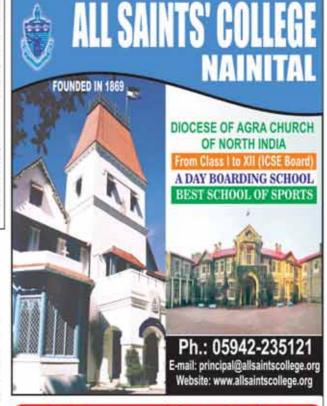
the country but across the world.

e peer, so to say. Truth to tell, there more, these institutions continue acade is hardly any state in India from to churn out students who later c where students do not come to occupy prime posts in key environme receive education here. Not just services across the world. Dozens students from India but those of renowned actors who stand tall from foreign countries also study in the world of cinema have undergone as institutions which offer Further, the alumni of these comprehensive education and nurturing environment. It hardly needs mentioning that many of of the Indian Army. Plus, a the Nainital-based schools are number of politicians, more than 150 years old. Over the academicians, literatures and years, the ranking of the schools here has been included in the topnotch ten schools at the national loved alma mater. level- a glorious tradition that continues undimmed till date,

It is thus no wonder that adorned with state of the art facilities, consummate faculty. comprehensive curriculum and a string of co-curricular activities, these schools beckon students of the global standard. class by themselves; without from across the world. What is

in these schools, given their fame received education in Nainital. institutions keep holding top positions in all the three branches business leaders proudly recall their days in Nainital and their

> These schools affiliated to multiple boards, including ICSE and CBSE, are shaping the future of the children. Most of the schools are run in English medium and the quality of living of the residential schools is truly



छागाओं की विशेष पहचान बनाने में इतिहास रचा है ऑलसेंट्स कालेज ने



ऑलसेंट्स कालेज का गौरवमय इतिहास ब्रिटिश काल से रहा है। इस विद्यालय से हजारों बच्चे शिक्षा प्राप्त कर देश-विदेश में अपना भविष्य सवार चुके हैं। इस विद्यालय में वैश्विक स्तर पर शिक्षा प्रदान की जाती है। वर्तमान में प्रधानाचार्य किरन जरमाया क्शलतापूर्वक इस विद्यालय का संचालन कर रही है। अंग्रेजी माध्यम से संचालित इस

विद्यालय की स्थापना 1869 में हुई थी तब से लेकर आज तक यह विद्यालय निरंतर प्रगति की ओर अग्रसर है। देश विदेश के बच्चे इस विद्यालय में अध्ययन करने आते हैं। इस विद्यालय से पढ़कर कई ऐसी हस्तियां हैं जो देश और दनिया में अपना नाम रौशन कर रही है। इस विद्यालय में शिक्षा प्राप्त कर कई छात्राएं विश्व स्तर पर कीर्तिमान स्थापित कर चुकी हैं। श्रीमती किरन जरमाया कहती है कि शिक्षा के मापदंड को ध्यान में रखकर वह गुणवत्ता युक्त शिक्षा प्रदान कर रही है जिसे भविष्य में भी जारी रखेंगी।

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कक्षा पांचवी तक अंग्रेजी माध्यम से संचालित यह विद्यालय नगर में नन्हे मुन्ने बच्चों की पहली पसंद बन गया है। स्कूल का वातावरण बच्चों को खुब भाता है। पढ़ाई का स्तर उच्च स्तरीय है। अनुभवी शिक्षिकाएं बच्चों की मनोस्थिति को समझते हुए, उन्हे शिक्षा देती हैं। विद्यालय में बच्चों के शारारिक विकास के लिए खेलकूद की समस्त सुविधाएं उपलब्ध हैं। तमाम सुविधाओं से सुसज्जित यह विद्यालय

निरंतर प्रगति के पथ पर अग्रसर है। विद्यालय का संचालन कर रही प्रधानाचार्य

आशा आर्या कहती हैं कि उनका जीवन बच्चों का भविष्य संवारने के लिए समर्पित है।

बोर्डिंग स्कूल की मिशाल बना पाईन क्रस्टे



पाईन क्रस्ट स्कूल ने शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में एक अनूठी शुरूआत की है। यह विद्यालय बच्चों के भविष्य को उज्जवल बनाने एवं सर्वागीण विकास हेतु प्रयासरत है। यह विद्यालय आवासीय है जिसमें बच्चों के भोजन व रहने तथा अन्य समस्त सुविधायें विद्यालय में मौजूद है।

पठन-पाठन कार्य अनुभवी शिक्षकों द्वारा किया जा रहा है। बच्चों के बेहतर भविष्य बनाने के लिये वह सभी सुविधायें विद्यालय में मौजूद है

जो वर्तमान में जरूरत के हिसाब से आवश्यक होती हैं। अंग्रेजी माध्यम से यह विद्यालय कक्षा नर्सरी से लेकर कक्षा 8वीं तक संचालित किया रहा है। प्रबन्धक संतोश कुमार विद्यालय का संचालन कर रहे हैं।

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माध्यम से संचालित नगर के अग्रणी विद्यालयों में स्थान रखता है और अनुभवी शिक्षकों द्वारा बच्चों का भविष्य संवारने में जुटा हुआ है। विद्यालय प्रबंधन की विशेषता है कि बेहद कम शुल्क में बच्चों को उत्कृष्ट शिक्षा प्रदान कर, शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में अपना दायित्व बखुबी निभाता आ रहा है। तल्लीताल क्षेत्र में झील के समीप विद्यालय का वातावरण शिक्षा के माकूल है। विद्यालय प्रबंधक नीलम दानी कहती है कि उनका प्रयास विद्यार्थियों को उत्तम शिक्षा प्रदान कर बेहतर भविष्य बनाना है। भविष्य में भी उनका प्रयास जारी रहेगा। प्रधानाचार्य वीना मैसी कहती हैं कि वह वैश्विक शिक्षा को ध्यान में रखते हुए



आधुनिक शिक्षा प्रदान करने में जुटी हुई हैं।

देश के अग्रणी स्कूलों में सुमार बिड़ला विद्या मंदिर



देश में बिड़ला विद्या मंदिर अग्रणी पब्लिक स्कूलों में अपना अलग नाम व मुकाम हासिल किया है। जिसके फलस्वरूप यह विद्यालय अपना एक अलग स्थान कायम किए हुए है। सीबीएसई से संबंद यह विद्यालय पूर्ण रूप से आवासीय है। अंग्रेजी माध्यम से संचालित नगर के सर्वाधिक ऊंचाई वाले नैसर्गिक वातावरण में स्थित है। यह विद्यालय प्रधानाचार्य अनिल शर्मा के कुशल नेतृत्व में संचालित किया जा रहा है। देश-विदेश के कई हिस्सों से

सैकड़ों की संख्या में छात्र वर्तमान में अध्ययनस्त हैं। श्री शर्मा कहते हैं कि वर्तमान परिवेश को ध्यान में रखकर बच्चों का भविष्य उज्जवल बनाने के साथ उन्हें एक अच्छा इंसान बनाने का प्रयास रहता है। जिसे ध्यान में रखकर विद्यालय में अनिवार्य विषयों के अलावा तमाम प्रतिस्पधाओं में भी छात्रों को निपूर्ण बनाया जाता है। विद्यालय का इतिहास है कि बोर्ड परिक्षाफल शत-प्रतिशत रहा है। जिसे भविष्य में भी कायम रखा जायेगा।

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- Excellent Board results over the decades, backed by a learning environment which is augmented by an experienced faculty, modern teaching pedagogy, personalised care and wellequipped science, robotics and IT labs.
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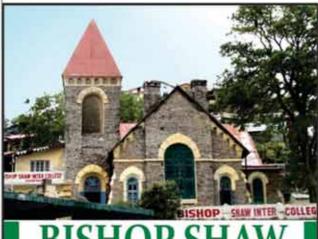
प्रवेश देना शुरू कर दिया है। नि:संदेह इस स्कूल ने अल्प समय में सफलता की सीढ़ियां तय कर शिक्षा की दिशा में नवीन आयाम स्थापित करने का सफल प्रयास किया है। जिसका प्रतिफल है कि विद्यालय में दी जा रही उत्कृष्ठ शिक्षा व कुशल संचालन को लेकर देश की कई संस्थाओं द्वारा सम्मानित किया जा चुका है। 🛮 जिसके परिणामस्वरूप यह विद्यालय नगर व राज्य में

लोंगव्यू पब्लिक स्कूल ने छात्राओं को भी इस सत्र से

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अपना प्रमुख स्थान हासिल करने में कामयाब हुआ है। अंग्रेजी माध्यम से संचालित लौंगव्यू पब्लिक स्कूल दसवीं कक्षा तक विद्यालय का संचालन कर रहा है। विद्यालय में आधुनिक शिक्षा के साथ भावी शिक्षा को ध्यान में रखते हुए पठन पाठन कार्य किया जाता है। प्रधानाचार्य बीसी त्रिपाठी कहते हैं कि वैश्विक शिक्षा को ध्यान में रखते हुए विद्यालय का संचालन कर रहे हैं। जिसका लाभ विद्यार्थियों को मिलता है। जिसके बल पर विद्यालय प्रगति की ओर निरन्तर अग्रसर है।

छात्राओं के लिये खोले लैंगव्यू पब्लिक स्कूल ने द्वार



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बिशप शॉ इंटर कॉलेज उत्तराखंड बोर्ड से सम्बद्ध अंग्रेजी