CITY 3

FILM OF 'DO SHEHZADE' ALREADY

REJECTED BY PEOPLE: MODI

**OPINION 6** 

AUNG SAN SUU KYI: PRISON

OR HOUSE ARREST?

**WORLD 10** 

UKRAINE CLAIMS IT SHOT DOWN

RUSSIAN STRATEGIC BOMBER

Late City Vol.160 Issue 106 \*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

**LUCKNOW, SATURDAY** APRIL 20, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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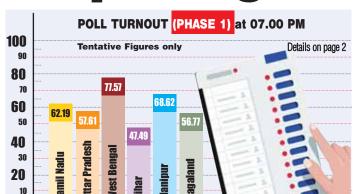
## Over 62 per cent polling in 1st phase of LS polls

n a kaleidoscope of democracy in action, voters of all ages from wheelchair-bound seniors 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

shell in Chhattisgarh left a CRPF iawan 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 machines (EVMs), threats to voters and polling agents by armed miscreants while voters in six districts of

Nagaland staved indoors following an indefinite shutdown call by an apex body of tribal organisations to press for its demand for a separate state.

eastern

Tamil Nadu recorded a voter turnout of 72.09 percent in the Lok Sabha polls with no major

damage to electronic voting cent voter turnout was recorded on The commission described the eight seats of western Uttar Pradesh. According to the Election Commission's Voter Turnout

> 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

app, 63.29 per cent voting

Rampur and 54.91 per cent in Muzaffarnagar. These seats fall in the Jat and sugarcane belt of 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.

Continued on Page 8

#### REPORTS GROUND ZERO

#### TAMIL NADU

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN** 

CHENNAI

s polling in the first phase As politing in the most partial As 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 where former Telangana 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 DMK camp sounded positive as the lowturn out is expected to make the prospectus of the party candidates smooth. The State

has 39 constituencies while

has one seat. Continued on Page 8 | Saharanpur, Kairana, Bijnor,

#### **WESTERN UTTAR PRADESH**

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT

Voter turnout of 60.25 per cent was recorded in the parliamentary eight constituencies of Western Uttar Pradesh where polling was held in first phase of Lok Sabha elections on Friday. Total turnout of voters was expected to be marginally higher after final count. The eight constituencies where polling was held on Friday included Pilibhit, Saharanpur, Kairana, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Nagina, Moradabad and Rampur. Of these,

Moradabad and Rampur are | SAUGAR SENGUPTA 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 cent per

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 Saharanpur.

Continued on Page 8 by both the Trinamool

**MAHARASHTRA** 

#### **WEST BENGAL**

There were sufficient reasons 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, stonepelting or booth capture,"

peacefully

recorded comparatively high polling rate of 77.73 percent, about 75.54 came in from many areas. percent voters voted Polling passed off near-Alipurdar whereas Jalpaiguri witnessed about amid strav incidents of violence and 79.33 percent voters complaints of booth capture exercising their franchise.

Continued on Page 8

Congress and the BJP, sources

in the ECI said adding the

witnessed a brisk polling

percentage was likely to

go beyond 82 percent

While Cooch Behar

as many voters were still

standing in the queue.

of about 77.5

percent till 5 pm.

constituencies

polling

#### **NAGALAND & MANIPUR**

PTI IMPHAL/KOHIMA

t least four Electronic At least four Lieuwere Machines were damaged at different polling conflict-hit booths in Manipur on Friday where polling was held in the first phase of Lok Sabha elections, according to sources. Meanwhile, the lone Lok Sabha seat in Nagaland recorded a voter turnout of over 50 per cent till 4 pm, the closing time for voting, on Friday, officials said. The polling began at 7 am. The polling was held, amid a call given by the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) to

abstain from voting in six districts of the region over its demand for a 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.

Under the shadow of a long-drawn 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.

Continued on Page 8

#### **BIHAR**



#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PATNA/AURANGABAD/GAYA

Around 46.32 per cent of the 75 lakh voters in four Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar exercised their 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 place at Nawada and Aurangabad, besides the reserved seats of Gaya and Jamui, where a majority of nearly 5,000 polling booths have been marked as "sensitive".

Over 49.95 per cent voters have 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.

Of the four seats, Nawada has the highest number of 20.06 lakh voters, where altogether eight candidates are in the fray though the contest is primarily between Vivek Thakur, a BJP Rajya 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 another bid to enter Parliament.

#### the neighboring Puducherry

#### 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 poll

With no untoward incident reported from anywhere, the polling passed off peacefully in Nagpur, Chandrapur, Bhandara-Gondiya, Ramtek (SC), 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

Talking to media persons after 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.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Sarsanghchalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat cast his vote at a polling booth near Reshimbagh in Nagpur.

Dr Bhagaat was among the earliest to 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 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 said. Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole exercised his franchise

along with his family members at Sukli village in Bhandara district.

Talking to media persons after he cast his vote, Patole said that the BJP-led government had "cheated" people for 10 years and they were determined to end the 10-year dictatorship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The 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. In a heart-warming sight witnessed in 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 polling station.

Continued on Page 8



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

### Google Doodle salutes Indian democracy

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

s India's much-awaited 2024 As Indias much-awaited 2024 Lok 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 Iune 1 in the country.

In the first phase, starting on Friday a total of 102 constituencies in 21 States have gone to vote, including 5

constituencies from Assam. 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 world's largest elections in which nearly one billion people are eligible to vote. "The first phase

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

posted. Stella Paul with @stellasglobe handle termed Google's move as cool" "pretty while one @virgojyoti02 found the move exciting "Let the festival of

democracy begin!!! Google doodle". Naveen Athresh, having twitter handle @naveenathresh said, "Google Doodle with our Indian elections voting to push people to vote. A nice touch."

Pritansu Priyadarsini Biswal from Bhubaneswar in Odisha too was excited at Google's innovative idea saying that, as citizens across

the country exercise their right to vote, Google Doodle stands as a virtual companion, reminding us 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

democracy lies in the power of an individual vote which decides the future of any powerful country like ours. It is a welcoming move aspect of any nation's elections. Continued on Page 8

by Google which is presently the only country with 1.4 strong population to create awareness about elections," added Dr Rahul Bhargava, a bone marrow transplant specialist and hand with only its index finger haematologist at Fortis Hospital, extended, marked by a purpleechoed Gurgaon similar sentiments.

For Sanjay Ojha, Corporate Communication head at 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

governance." A senior official from Delhi Election Office informed that the classic symbol of Indian polls will be visible everywhere — a left black indelible ink.

Devised as a method to prevent a

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

## Congress also pins hopes on 'PDA' | 'Retd health officer murdered

After witnessing the complete failure of 'ladki hoon, lad shakti hoon' in the last UP assembly elections with the party winning just two sects and its vector present two seats and its vote percentage dropping to new low of little over 2 per cent, Congress this time had adopted the 'PDA' (Pichhada, Dalit and Alpsankhyak) formula, the vote bank on which its senior alliance partner Samajwadi Party is banking to give a challenge to Bharatiya Janata

The 15 candidates announced so far by the Congress main-

With the aim of ensuring free & fair, and peaceful

Lok Sabha election, Divisional

Commissioner Roshan Jacob

conducted inspections at var-

the Upper Primary School Polling Centre in Mall and Primary School (Attari) in Malihabad tehsil.

Jacob reviewed the basic facil-

ities available at these booths to

ensure they meet the necessary standards. During the inspec-

tions, the divisional commis-

sioner assessed general infor-

mation and the toll-free num-

ber (1950) availability, electric-

ity connection, functioning of

lights and fans, availability and

cleanliness of toilets, water

supply status, provision of pure

drinking water, hand pump functionality, overall cleanli-

ness, accessibility features such as ramps, network availability,

control room numbers, distri-

bution of photo voter identity

cards, route charts, and contact numbers as per the communi-

Jacob directed SDM Rakesh

Singh to ensure that arrange-

ments at the polling stations

align with the directives of the

Emphasising the importance of

voter awareness, she urged for

special camps to be organised at polling stations to ensure that

Commission.

cation plan.

Election

party also trying to woo upper caste by giving two seats to Thakurs and Brahmins.

Interestingly, the party has given just one ticket to a woman, Dolly Sharma, from Ghaziabad. The candidates for Amethi and Rae Bareli constituencies are yet to be announced but sources say if the members of the Gandhi family opt to not contest from Uttar Pradesh, the tickets for these seats will go to a Dalit and an upper caste member. Sources said that with an eye on 'PDA', former Congress president Rahul Gandhi dur-

DC inspects polling stations

every eligible person has the

Engaging with various stake-holders including village heads,

ration dealers, cooks, teachers,

and healthcare workers, Jacob

emphasised the need to moti-

vate more people to participate

In parallel efforts, a district

administration official dis-

closed that the first randomi-

sation of electronic voting

machines (EVMs) was con-

ducted at the collectorate, with

machines allocated to various

constituencies. The process, witnessed by political parties

and the District Election Office,

involved randomising ballot

units, control units, and

VVPATs. Subsequent randomi-

sation will be conducted on

May 8 when polling stations are

in the electoral process.

opportunity to vote.

ly raised the issues of welfare of backwards, Dalits, Muslims and even went on to advocate equal representation for these communities, and his party's support to caste census so everyone gets his due.

To further attract these communities, Congress went ahead with an alliance with SP, the party which prominently raises the issues of 'PDA' to dent the prospects of the Bharatiya Janata Party. A senior Congress leader said if this experiment turned successful for the party, in future also, the two parties would

join hands in the assembly

assigned, followed by com-

missioning and dispatching of

EVMs to polling stations between May 10 and 19.

Additionally, under the SVEEP programme of the Election

Commission of India, various

initiatives are underway to

raise voter awareness. A voter

awareness campaign was organised at Nari Shiksha Niketan PG College in

Kaiserbagh where principal Sapna Verma addressed the

students and made them aware

Similar programmes were con-

ducted by sanitation workers at

SGPGI, Saraswati Vidya

Mandir Senior Secondary

School in Aliganj and the Patrakarpuram Labour Depot,

urging people to exercise their voting rights.

of their right to vote.

He claimed that transfer of votes would be a litmus test for both the parties. Going with the PDA formu-

la, Congress has given its tickets to one backward and two most backwards community members by fielding Mukesh Kumar Dhangar from Mathura, Rakesh Rathore from Sitapur and sitting party MLA Chowdhary Virendra Singh from Maharajganj.

Similarly three tickets have been given to Dalits - Sadal Prasad from Bansgaon, Shivram Balmiki from Bulandshahr and Tanuj Punia

Muslims –Imran Masood from Saharanpur and Danish Ali from Amroha – have also been fielded by the Congress. Amongst about half a dozen members from upper castes, two tickets have been given to Thakurs (Akhilesh Pratap Singh from Deoria and Ramnath Sikarwar from Fatehpur Sikri), two to Brahmins (Dolly Sharma from Ghaziabad and Alok Mishra from Kanpur), one to Vaishya community (Pradeep Jain Aditya from Jhansi), two to bhumihars (Ajay Rai from Varanasi and Ujjwal Raman

#### Singh from Allahabad). **Central Bar Association**

announces to back BJP

PNS LUCKNOW

The Central Bar Association convened a meeting of advocates in support of the BJP, attended by senior party leaders Neeraj Singh, Lucknow city president Anand Dwivedi, Central Bar Association president Arvind Kumar Kushwaha, general secretary Amresh Kumar Pal, organiser Atul Singh, and Lucknow Bar Association president Suresh Pandev.

Senior BJP leader Neeraj Singh lauded Defence Minister and Lucknow MP Rajnath Singh for his accessibility to the public, emphasising his role in orchestrating development initiatives that benefit all segments of society in Lucknow.

"Today, Lucknow stands as a testament to its remarkable progress and development proiects," he remarked, urging voters to support Rajnath Singh's re-election to ensure the continuity of the Modi government for a third term and further elevate Lucknow's status as one of the world's most beautiful cities.

Addressing the gathering, Lucknow city president Anand Dwivedi highlighted the transformative impact of the Central government's public welfare underscoring

Lucknow's pivotal role in the city's ongoing development endeavors spearheaded by Rainath.

Meanwhile, members of the Valmiki and Dhanu communities have overwhelmingly joined the BJP district unit, pledging their support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Nawal Kishore Dhanu, repre-

senting the Dhanu Samaj in Ambedkar Nagar ward, noted his dissatisfaction with the Samajwadi Party, where he previously served as the city president of the scheduled caste

category.
"We now believe in the BJP's policies, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure has been successful," he stated. Around 150 people from their community joined the BJP, visiting the residences of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and the BIP office.

Highlighting the unity between the Dhanu and Valmiki societies, Nawal Kishore mentioned their joint efforts to sup-port BJP candidate Rajnath Singh in the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency, where approximately 60,000 to 65,000 community members reside, primarily in areas such as Cantt, Lucknow Central, Ambedkar Nagar, Chowk, and Thakurganj.

## over son-in-law's illicit affair'

Meena Singh (70), a retired Health department offi-cer, was murdered due to her knowledge of an illicit rela-tionship between her son-inlaw and a tenant woman, police claimed on Friday following the arrest of Vinav Singh, Meena's son-in-law, and Sarita Dubey, his alleged mistress from Sultanpur district.

DCP, West, Durgesh Singh said that Meena resided with her daughter Shalini in Hans Khera due to strained relations with her daughter-inlaw. Despite the rift, Meena was fond of her grandson Jai Singh whom she intended to gift a land valued at Rs 50 lakh near Ansal City. According to the DCP, Vinay Singh's extramarital affair with Sarita, a former tenant in his house, led to tensions.

Vinay reportedly confessed to the crime, disclosing that Meena had informed his wife Shalini about the affair, causing discord in their marriage. Vinay (43) and Sarita Dubey police recovering a walking stick used in the murder along with CCTV DVR removed by the perpetrators.

Meena's daughter and son-inlaw discovered her lifeless body upon returning home. Initially, Meena's grandson Jay Singh was suspected and booked, based on a complaint by Shalini Singh against her nephew. A police team from Para and surveillance units uncovered evidence implicating the female tenant in Meena's murder.

The motive for the killing was linked to properties owned by Meena in Manak Nagar and Para, as well as her intention to purchase another property worth Rs 50 lakh as a gift for her grandson, which her son-in-law

opposed.
Additionally, Meena's disapproval of Vinay and Sarita's relationship further fuelled tensions. On April 14, the duo allegedly assaulted Meena with her walking stick before smothering her with a pillow, resulting in her death.

resident of Hardoi, succumbed to injuries sustained in a road accident on April 16. Pasi was injured when a speeding vehicle hit him at Nariyakhera in Mall on April 7 as he was en route to a cattle market. According to his wife Shivrani, a passerby, Pramila, noticed Pasi's grievous condition and rushed him to a private hospital in Newada. However, doctors refused treatment, citing the need for police involvement. Subsequently, Pasi was admitted to the CHC before being transferred to KGMU Trauma Centre, where he eventually passed away at approximately 11 pm. Police have launched an investigation into the inci-

In a separate incident in Mall, a youth identified as Vishal from Unchha Khera succumbed to injuries which he sustained after being struck by an e-rickshaw while returning home from work. Commuters rushed Vishal to the CHC, where he was pronounced

### Man duped of Rs 12 crore by friend on investment pretext

PNS LUCKNOW

Aman was accused of defrauding his friend of approximately Rs 12 crore under the pretext of investing in a business venture promising substantial returns, in Indira Nagar. The incident took place in 2022, but a formal complaint was lodged only on Friday.

Namit Singh, residing in Sector 11 of Indira Nagar, stated that he, along with his friends and business partners Ajay Kumar Gupta, Brijesh Kumar, and Praveen Singh, was planning to invest in the real estate sector. As per reports, Praveen pro-

posed investing in a Mumbaibased company, owned by him, his wife Neelam, and his brother Dheerendra. Between February 14, 2022, and March 29, 2022, Namit transferred a total of Rs 12.45 crore via RTGS to Praveen's bank account in various installments. Namit borrowed the funds from his business partner Ajay to facilitate the payments to Praveen. However, despite the transfer, Praveen failed to fulfil his promises and did not reimburse any funds to Namit.

After persistent requests, Praveen eventually paid Namit Rs 50 lakh, which the latter promptly passed on to Ajay. Subsequently, Praveen issued three cheques totalling Rs 8.4 crore to Ajay, but the same were dishonoured upon submission to the bank. Namit attempted to confront Praveen in Mumbai, where the latter allegedly showed him a loan sanction letter claiming to have received Rs 25 crore from a bank, intending to repay Namit. However, Praveen then ceased communication with Namit and threatened him to abandon his pursuit for repayment. Consequently, Namit lodged a police complaint, prompting an investigation into the matter.

#### Home guards to get advance payment of poll duty allowance

advance payment of duty on election duty. They will be paid 40 per cent advance payment of election duty allowances. Around 50,000 Home Guard volunteers will be deployed on election duty during the Lok Sabha elections to be conducted in seven phases in the state.

The last phase poll will be held on June 1.

**NOTICE** 

I Gyan wati devi wife of ex

serviceman no.6378807Y Naik

ravindra kumar declare that my

name and dob has been wrongly

mentioned as Gyanwati devi and

dob 25.10.1969 in the record

office papers of my husband my

correct name is GYAN WATI

and correct dob is 10.07.1974

which will be used for all

**NOTICE** 

I have changed my name from

Parveen to Huma Parveen for all

future purposes. Huma Parveen

W/O Sagir Ahmad R/O 116/936,

Roshan Nagar Rawatpur Kanpur

**NOTICE** 

I have changed my name from

Sageer Ahmad to Sagir Ahmad

for all future purposes. Sagir

Ahmad S/O Zahoor Mohammad

R/O 116/936, Roshan Nagar

**NOTICE** 

I have to changed my name from

SHIRI MISBAH to SHEERIN

AHMAD for future purpose.

Add- 12/9 P.D. TANDON

LINES

W/O

Rawatpur Kanpur Nagar

MISBAH

ROAD, CIVIL

PRAYAGRAJ.

state government was com-The Uttar Pradesh government has issued orders for ment has issued orders for personnel engaged in the electoral process.

ecision will siderable relief to the home guards tasked with election duties. This advance payment initiative aims to empower them to meet their familial obligations before undertaking their electoral responsibilities effectively.

Along with security forces, home guards also play an important role in sensitive sit-

**NOTICE** 

I have changed my name from

Mukhtar Alam Ansari to

MUKHTAR RAZA S/o Aftab

Alam R/o 493, Faithfulgani

Cantt. Kanpur for all future

**NOTICE** 

Official sources said that the uations, including general elections. Even without weapons, this force fulfills the responsibilities of external security excellently. That is why their duty is assigned in every election. This time, preparations are being made to send home guards on election duty not only in the home districts but

also in other districts. According to the provisions given in the Financial Rules Collection, the government employee or officer who withdraws the money will be responsible for its management, and if any loss occurs, the officer concerned will be held accountable. In addition, the head of the department will keep the government/ Finance department informed about the arrangement of all previously approved advances and the advances being approved now. The next advance will be proposed only after the adjustment is ensured.

#### **People not excited about** polls, claims Naresh Tikait results should be declared on the

Muzaffarnagar (PTI): Farmer leader Naresh Tikait on Friday expressed skepticism about the BIP'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 that they can perceive this in 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 third day and (new govern-ment's) oath-taking 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. People are opposing slavery by not casting their votes. "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 cheated and feel they have lost everything. Farmers are sad."

### Early detection of brain stroke symptoms is key

and seeking medical attention he chances of saving a patient's life. Dr Kamlesh S Bhaisora, from the neurosurgery department at SGPGI and convenor of a neurosurgery conference held at SGPGI, emphasised the importance of early stroke management during the conference's two sessions dedicat-

ed to stroke surgery. According to Dr Kamlesh, recognising early stroke symptoms and seeking immediate medical help can prevent longterm disability.

"If a patient recognises the early signs of stroke and seeks medical attention within the critical four to six-hour window, it can be life-saving," he stated. Delaying treatment could result in permanent disability, but early intervention, including surgery to remove blockages in brain vessels causing the stroke, can be transformative, potentially enabling bedridden individuals to regain mobility. Dr Kamlesh outlined com-

mon stroke symptoms, including facial weakness, one-sided body weakness, and speech difficulties, underscoring the need for prompt medical assessment to prevent severe consequences.

Lucknow (PNS): Identifying Lifestyle factors such as seden the symptoms of a brain stroke tary habits, diabetes, hypertension, and lack of exercise conwithin four to six hours of its tribute to stroke risk by thickonset can significantly increase ening blood vessels. He advofor daily exercise, yoga cate and weight management as preventive measures.

Despite the increasing incidence of strokes, awareness remains low, leading to delayed treatment and irreversible brain damage. Dr Kamlesh stressed the importance of educating society about the need for timely medical intervention to reverse stroke effects.

In western countries, timely medical intervention, including thrombectomy to remove brain clots within the critical window, has become standard practice, significantly improving patient outcomes. The extent of brain damage determines the severity of impact, with damage to vital brain regions resulting in more severe consequences. Stroke incidence is rising, with a notable increase among individuals aged 40-50, previously predominant in the 50-60 age group, and more prevalent among males.

Prevention, including regular brisk walks, is key to reducing stroke risk, according to Dr Kamlesh, highlighting the importance of proactive lifestyle choices in stroke prevention.

#### BSP releases 6th list of candidates

Lucknow (PNS): After the first phase of voting in the Lok Sabha elections was over, the Bahujan Samai Party released the sixth list of candidates for 11 Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttar Pradesh. The BSP has decided to field MLC Bhimrao Ambedkar from Hardoi (reserved) Lok Sabha seat. The party is fielding Mohammad Alam from Sant Kabir Nagar, Manish Singh Sachan from Fatehpur, Chaudhary Bashir (changed) from Firozabad, Mahendra Singh Yadav from Sitapur, Mohammad Mausame Alam from Maharajganj, BR Ahirwar from Misrikh (reserved), Syed Nayyaz Ali (Manju Bhai) (changed) from Varanasi, Kripashankar Saroj from Machhlishahr (reserved), Athar Ansari from Bhadohi and Jagannath Pal from Phulpur.

#### 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 pull Tug along with manning crew for Marine Operation at SPMs and inside Harbour at Paradip for a period of 07 (seven) years. stimated cost put to tender: Rs.86,35,39,812/-Vith reference to above e-tender, revised tender document has been published in the eocurement website with extension. Last dat 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

COURT NOTICE CITATION (BY ADVERTISEMENT)

(Chapter XXX, Rule-21) IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE
JURISDICTION

TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 09 OF 2024

Late Rajni Kant Tiwari Son of Late Rama Kant Tiwari Resident of HIG-20, Avas Vikas Colony, Yojana-2, Junsi, Phulpur, District Prayagraj. ..... Mahadevi Singh Tiwari. .

WHEREAS an application has been made y Mahadevi Singh Tiwari Wife of Late Rajnikant Tiwari, Resident of HIG -20, Avas Vikas Colony, Yojana-2, Junsi, Phulpur, District Prayagraj, for the probate of the will (or Letters of Administration to the estate) of Late Rajni Kant Tiwari deceased, who died at 20 HIG Awas Vikas Colony Yojna No 2 Jhunsi, Jhunsi Kohna, Phulpur Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh 211019 on 16.04.2021 AND WHEREAS, the 23rd day of May, 2024 has been fixed for hearing of the said application. THIS CITATION is ssued calling upon all persons claiming to have any interest to come and see the oceedings if they think fit before the grant of probate (or Letters of Administration) ven under my hand and the seal of the Court this 15th day of April, 2024. Vivek Tripathi Advocate Council for the

DEPUTY REGISTRAR HIGH COURT, ALLAHABAD

#### Second phase of 'Green Corridor' project to commence next month

I have changed my name from Uma Rani Bhartia to Uma Bhartia, Uma Bhartia W/o Ajay Kumar Bhartia R/O 26/103, Birhana Road, Kanpur

#### **NOTICE**

Notify that due to mistake my Mother's name wrongly written in high school and intermediate certificate marksheet and Yogmaya Bajpai. Whereas correct name of my mother is Please correct it accordingly. Aabhash Bajpai R/o shivgarh, District-Raebarely.

#### सूचना

दिनाँक 25-04-2024 पर्वान्ह 11.00 बजे उ० प्र० राज्य खाद्य एवं आवश्यक वस्त निगम लि. एच.आई.जी., एल-17, कुर्सी रोड, अलीगंज, लखनऊ में संग्रहित निष्प्रयोज्य घोषित सामग्रियों की नीलामी, सिक्योरिटी रु. 5,000/- नगद, जी. एस. टी. पंजीकरण के साथ जमा होगी । आई०पी० सिंह एण्ड

Lucknow (PNS): The fifth phase of the ongoing 'Green Corridor' project is set to commence in the second week of May. Soil samples from the proposed site were collected on Friday and sent for testing. The upcoming phase will stretch from Daligani crossing Mankameshwar Mandir), Hanuman Setu to Nishatganj, and Kukrail River, covering a distance of 11 kilometers. Lucknow

Development Authority Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi disclosed these details while briefing officers and engineers about the new phase. He mentioned that the soil testing report will be available within three to four days, affirming the site's capability to support heavy structures. Under this phase, LDA will construct two elevated roads and three bridges. totaling an investment of Rs 350 crore.

The VC assured that the project will be completed within the stipulated timeframe. It is expected to reduce travel time to the proposed Kukrail Bridge to eight minutes and to Shaheed Path within 15 minutes. Additionally, the Kukrail Bridge will be developed into an attractive tourist spot.The elevated roads will feature six lanes, while the bridges will accommodate four lanes each. The primary objective of this phase is to alleviate traffic congestion and reduce travel time for commuters who often faced prolonged delays. Once completed, the project aims to significantly enhance traffic flow efficiency, providing a time-saving solution for vehicle owners and commuters. The city has long grappled with inefficient traffic flow and persistent road congestion, particularly during peak hours. To address these challenges, an extensive five-year study was conducted jointly by the development authority, traffic police, and traffic man-agement experts. Subsequently, the 'Green Corridor' project was con-

ceptualised and launched in infighting.

#### **Two leopards** of **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve** found dead

PNS LAKHIMPUR KHERI

Two leopards have been found dead in a sugarcane field in Dhaurahra range area of Dudhwa buffer zone near Tandpurwa village of Dhaurahra tehsil, officials said on Friday. Field director, Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (DTR), Lalit Verma said the two male leopards, estimated to be two years old, were reported to have died in a territorial fighting on Thursday. The officials said puncture wounds made by the large canine of the big cats were found on the bodies of the animals.

Postmortem of the leopards was conducted at the Dhaurahra range headquarters as per the NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority) guidelines, Verma said. He added that the postmortem reports have con-cluded that the death of the two leopards was caused from

#### **CITYBRIEFS**

#### PLACEMENT DRIVE AT LUCKNOW UNIVERSITY Genpact on Friday conducted a record-breaking placement drive

at Lucknow University on Friday. The company's first list includes 27 students, who securing positions with salaries ranging from Rs 3 LPA to Rs 6 LPA. In a parallel initiative, the department of social work, in collaboration with HCL Foundation, organised a campus placement drive for the role of field development officer. Ten candidates were selected for the position, offered a package of Rs 3.5 LPA along with comprehensive health and medical benefits. The selected candidates for the position of field development officer include Sarvagya Asthana, Nitya Singh, Stella Paul, Tooba Obaid, Palak Tandon, Akiksha Singh, Riya Awasthi, Sameera Khan, Sandhaya Yadav, and Mansi Singh.

A DJ night was organised in the college in which DJ Riya performed and enthralled the audience on the second day of the annual festival being held at GCRG Group of Institutions on Friday. Earlier in the afternoon, a fashion show was organised in UDAN 5.0 in which the faculty members and students participated. Meritorious students of the institute were also honoured on the occasion. DG of the institution Prof AN Singh said: "We try to ensure such an environment in which the students can learn the art of excelling in their education as well as in other areas of life.

## Film of 'do shehzade' already | PM praises Yogi's leadership in UP rejected by people: Modi

In a blistering attack on Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday asked how can the people in UP and Bihar who claim to be 'Yaduvanshi', the leaders who reap the benefits of Yaduvansh, align themselves with those who insult Lord Shri Krishna.

Addressing a huge public meeting in Amroha, the prime minister cited his recent visit to Dwarka and said, "I went to perform rituals in Dwarka in the depths of the sea; the Congress people had said that there is nothing to be wor-shiped beneath the sea. Congress people insulted Shri Krishna, but the question arises, how can the leaders doing politics in the name of Yaduvansh in UP and Bihar align with such individuals?" Speaking on the politics of appeasement, Prime Minister Modi said, "The politics of appeasement has always engulfed western UP in riots." He added, "People will not forget the 'gunda raj' before the advent of the Bharatiya Janata Party government in UP."

Taking a veiled dig at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, the prime minister said, "Once again the shooting of a film starring 'do shehzade' is going on in UP but it has already been rejected. Every time these people seek votes on nepotism, corruption and appeasement. In their campaign, these people leave no opportunity to attack our faith. The politics of INDI Alliance even made them go against the Tigri Mela of Amroha. The Congress candidate from here has difficulty even saying 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'. Should individuals who refuse to endorse such patriotic expressions be granted entry into

Prime Minister Modi accused political parties of prioritising their vote bank over religious sentiments, alleging that both the Congress and the

Parliament?



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves to supporters during a public meeting for BJP's Lok Sabha election campaign, in Amroha on Friday

invitation to Lord Ram's consecration ceremony in Avodhva.

He criticised these parties for allegedly disregarding the sacred Pran Pratistha ceremony, insinuating their actions stemmed from a desire for electoral gain.

"These people are abusing Ram Mandir and Sanatan faith every day. Recently, a grand Surya Tilak of Lord Ram has been done on Ram Navami. Today, when the whole country is filled with the devotion of Lord Ram, the people of Samajwadi Party publicly call the devotees of Lord Ram as hypocrites," Prime Minister Modi added.

The prime minister reflected on his roots in Gujarat and his subsequent journey to Uttar Pradesh, where Kashi bestowed the role of a Member of Parliament upon him. He recounted the region's tumultuous past, marred by frequent riots and the displacement of residents, with 'House for Sale' notices becoming a common sight in many localities. He

Samajwadi Party boycotted the credited Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with curbing such lawlessness and emphasised the imperative of preventing the resurgence of such disrup-

tive forces. Highlighting the seven-year tenure of Yogi Adityanath's government, Prime Minister Modi lauded its achievements in governance, law enforcement and developmental initiatives. He expressed confidence that under Yogi's leadership, both the electoral records of 2014 and 2019 would be surpassed, heralding a new chapter in the history of Uttar Pradesh.

Prime Minister Modi urged voters to rally behind BJP candidate Kanwar Singh Tanwar and ensure his resounding victory on April 26 to secure his entry into Parliament with

record-breaking votes.
Prime Minister Modi asserted that previous administrations failed to uphold the principles of social justice for marginalised communities such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes, and instead betrayed

their aspirations

He contrasted this with his relentless efforts to realise the vision of social justice envisioned by dignitaries like Jyotiba Phule, Baba Saheb Ambedkar and Chaudhary Charan Singh.

Highlighting the historical neglect faced by Uttar Pradesh under previous regimes, Prime Minister Modi underscored the region's identification as a backward state during the tenure of the coalition governments of opposition parties.
The prime minister hailed
Amroha as a place of profound significance, noting its historical connection to Lord Shri Krishna and its vibrant cultural heritage symbolised by the resonating beats of its 'dholak'. He credited Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for elevating the stature of the 'dholak' by securing it a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, thus granting it global recognition. "Aaj Amroha mein ek hi thaap,

kamal chhap," he said. He further said, "The whole world has seen the amazing feat of Mohammed Shami (who belongs to Amroha) in the Cricket World Cup. The Central government has given the Arjuna Award to Mohammed Shami for his excellent performance in sports and Chief Minister Yogi's government has taken two steps forward and is also building a stadium for the youth here? In a comparative reflection, Prime Minister Modi urged observers to contrast the administrations of previous regimes with the transformative governance under Yogi's leadership. He termed the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as pivotal, asserting their significance in shaping the trajectory of India's future.

During the event, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, UP Minister Jaswant Singh Saini, MLC Sardar Hari Singh Dhillon, MLA Mahendra Kharagvanshi, Rajiv Tarara, Harendra Singh Tewatia, and BJP regional president Satyendra Sisodia among others were present.

### SP, BSP and Cong threats to western UP, says Yogi

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath campaigned on Amroha, in Bulandshahr and Baghpat Lok Sabha constituencies. In Amroha, Chief Minister

Yogi addressed a massive rally alongside Prime Minister Modi in support of Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Chaudhary Kanwar Singh Tanwar. In Bulandshahr, he urged voters to support BJP candidate Dr Bhola Singh. For the Baghpat seat, he rallied support for Rashtriya Lok Dal's candidate Dr Rajkumar Sangwan.

The chief minister noted that based on the voting trends observed on Friday for the first phase poll, it was evident that the people of the country were keen to re-elect the Narendra Modi government. He labeled Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress as threats to western

The chief minister targeted the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), stating that those who have compromised the country's faith and security, and hindered its development, are now yearning for each and every vote.

Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is fulfilling the aspirations of Bharat Ratna Chaudhary Charan Singh.

Addressing a public meeting in Amroha, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said, "During the partition of the country in 1947, Pakistan had more territory but less population, while now it has a population of around 23 to 24 crore, yet many people there struggle to get food. Meanwhile, under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, 80 crore people of India have been receiving free ration

for the past four years."
He further said that this reflected the picture of a changing and new India. "Now, to move forward as a developed India, a self-reliant India, and a global leader, it is important to participate in the festival of democracy, ensuring that the Modi government is entrusted



with the leadership of the country for the third time," he said.

Chief Minister Yogi emphasized that Prime Minister Modi, as the architect of the new India, is continuously making efforts to fulfill the vision of developed and selfreliant India.

While campaigning in Gajraula for the Bulandshahr Lok Sabha seat, Chief Minister Yogi stated that the BJP has introduced several slogans to preserve the country's identity, which the Congress has mocked. He added that both the SP and BSP have supported the Congress in this. "Congress, BSP and SP are the root causes of the country's issues, while the BJP offers solutions. While Congress implemented Article 370, the BIP has effectively countered terrorism by revoking it. Now, there are no more bomb blasts or terrorist activities because they know that they will face consequences along with their backers," he said. He further commented: "This

time, let those who have compromised our faith and securitv, hindered our development, treated the youth, farmers and traders unfairly, and intimidated our daughters and businessmen, yearn for each and every vote. Let them know that people will vote for those who prioritise the nation, aim for a developed India, and strive for a self-reliant India."

While addressing an election rally for the Baghpat Lok Sabha

seat in Modinagar, Ghaziabad, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath emphasised that by honouring and uplifting the 'annadata' farmers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is fulfilling the aspirations of Bharat Ratna Chaudhary Charan Singh. He highlighted that Prime Minister Modi has launched numerous schemes for farmers. the outcomes of which are evi-

dent to all.

"Whether it is the respect given to the 'annadata' through PM Kisan Samman Nidhi or the efforts to enhance India's global standing, strengthen border security, and address terrorism and Naxalism issues within the country, the achievements of Prime Minister Modi are visible to all," Chief Minister Yogi said, adding that world-class infrastructure, a 12-lane expressway, rapid rail systems and initiatives like Metro, IIT and IIM are shaping the identity of a new India.

He mentioned that the voting process for the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections is underway and the brisk pace of voting indicates that people are keen to see the Modi government return to power once again in the country. "This inclination is natural because those who honour our forefathers deserve our respect in return. For the first time, Prime Minister Modi has brought pride to Uttar Pradesh by awarding the Bharat Ratna to Chaudhary Charan Singh," he

#### Booth-level workers asked to work for Rekha Varma's win

Lucknow (PNS): Addressing a ference in Mohammadi in Dhaurahra parliamentary constituency, Urban Development and Energy Minister AK Sharma exhorted Bharatiya Janata Party workers to work for the victory of party candidate Rekha Varma in the Lok Sabha election.

The enthusiasm was palpable as Sharma expressed confidence in Varma's ability to secure a historic victory.

Acknowledging the strong roots of the BJP in Dhaurahra and Mohammadi, Sharma reminisced about the visits of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who tirelessly toured the constituency on his bicycle. He lauded the efforts of popular MP Rekha Varma, MLA Lokendra Pratap Singh, and other party members present at the event. Sharma emphasised Varma's immense contribution to the party and the region, stating that her selection as a candidate is a testament to her leadership qualities. He commended her for nurturing the BJP's presence, likening it to a sturdy banyan tree providing shade and strength to all.

Reflecting on his tenure alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi since 2002, Sharma praised the party's ethos of recognising and empowering grassroots workers, many of whom have risen to become MPs, ministers, and MLAs. He underscored the need for steadfast dedication to duties, asserting that the BJP's ideology transcends individual ambitions. Sharma outlined the achievements in various sectors, particularly in improving electricity supply and infrastructure. He highlighted ongoing initiatives to strengthen the power grid and road networks, affirming the government's commitment to development.

In a call to action, Sharma urged workers to educate voters about the benefits of government schemes such as free ration, housing, sanitation and healthcare. He emphasised the party's track record of delivering on its promises and called for unwavering support to ensure Modi's re-election as prime minister.

Lucknow (PNS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing a large crowd of supporters in Amroha on Friday, praised Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's leadership in Uttar Pradesh over the past seven years. Modi expressed confidence that under Yogi's leadership, the records of victory in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections would be surpassed. He expressed hope for an unexpected victory for the Bharatiya

Janata Party in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, attributing it to Chief Minister Yogi's commitment to good governance, law enforcement and development. The crowd shouted with chants of 'Yogi-Yogi' each time the prime minister praised Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath multiple times during his address. Recognising

Yogi's relentless efforts in curb-

ing crime in UP, Modi highlighted instances where signs reading 'houses are for sale' had become a common sight in many areas of western UP. "Yogi ji has freed us from such criminals. We must ensure that such forces do not regain strength under any circumstances," he emphasised. Prime Minister Modi remarked.

"Under Yogi ji's leadership for the past seven years, Uttar Pradesh has witnessed exem-

STATIONS

Gorakhpur

Lucknow

Valsad

Accommodation: General

**STATIONS** 

Malda Town

Barabanki

Udhna

**TRAIN NO. 07031** 

**RAIN NO. 0762** 

08:45

13:30

03:55

Anand Vihar (T) on 21.04.2024

Accommodation: Sleeper

03:45

07:15

ARR. DEP.

14:00

20:45

ARR. DEP.

Accommodation: General

Sawai Madhopur, Kota, Ratlam, Dahod, Godhra, Vadodara

09032 Gorakhpur - Valsad Unreserved Special Train

Stoppages: Basti, Gonda, Barabanki, Lucknow, Kanpur

Central, Farrukhabad, Mainpuri Jn., Shikohabad Jn., Tundla

Agra Fort, Bharatpur, Gangapur City, Sawai Madhopur, Kota

Ratlam, Dahod, Godhra, Vadodara, Bharuch, Ankleshwar

09048 Malda Town - Udhna Unreserved Special Train

Stoppages : Sahibganj Jn, Bhagalpur, Sultanganj, Munger Begusarai, Barauni Jn, Samastipur Jn, Muzaffarpur Jn, Bapudham Motihari, Narkatiaganj Jn, Gorakhpur Jn, Basti

Gonda Jn, Barabanki Jn, Aishbagh, Kanpur Central, Etawah Jn.

Tundla Jn, Agra Fort, Bayana Jn, Gangapur City, Sawai Madhopur, Kota Jn, Nagda Jn, Ratlam Jn, Godhra Jn, Vadodara

STATIONS

Secunderabad

Sirpur Kaghaznagar, Balharshah, Nagpur, Itarsi, Bhopal, Bina

STATIONS

Hazur Sahib Nanded

H. Nizamuddin

Days of Run: 07621 Ex. Hazur Sahib Nanded on every Saturday

from 20.04.2024 to 27.04.2024 and 07622 Ex. H. Nizamuddin or

Accommodation: 1stAC, AC2Tier, AC3Tier, Sleeper & General.

Stoppages: Purna, Parbhani, Selu, Partur, Jalna, Aurangabad

Manmad, Jalgaon, Bhusaval, Khandwa, Itarsi, Bhopal, Bina

Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi, Gwalior, Agra Cantt and Mathura

STATIONS

Raxaul

Moradabad

Anand Vihar (T)

Days of Run: 05583 from Raxaul on 20.04.2024 and 05584 from

Stoppages: Narkatiaganj Jn, Bagaha, Gorakhpur, Basti,

arbhanga Jn. Express Special Train (Weekly) Trips

Gonda, Sitapur, Moradabad and Ghaziabad stations.

05537/05538 Darbhanga Jn. - Daurai -

05583/05584 Raxaul - Anand Vihar (T) -

Raxaul Express Special Train

every Sunday from 21.04.2024 to 28.04.2024

- Hazur Sahib Nanded Spl. Train (Weekly)

07031/07032 Secunderabad - H. Nizamuddin - Secunderabad Special Train (Weekly)

21:33

01:00

ARR.

10:30

12:30

**TRAIN NO. 09032** 

**TRAIN NO. 09048** 

DEP.

05:00

10:40

DEP.

21:35

TRAIN NO. 07032

DEP.

ARR.

06:30

ARR.

00:35

TRAIN NO. 05584

DEP.

13:10

09:00

ARR.

05:30

13:00

Bharuch, Ankleshwar, Sayan, Surat and Udhna stations.

Days of Run: 09032 Ex. Gorakhpur on 20.04.2024.

Days of Run: 09048 Ex. Malda Town on 21.04.2024.

Jn, Bharuch Jn, Sayan and Surat stations

plary governance, law enforcement and development. Both the electoral records of 2014 and 2019 will be surpassed under his guidance. Yogi ji's government is also constructing a stadium for the youth in the region. Those familiar with the administrations of Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress should contrast it with Yogi ii's tenure. The 2024 election will shape India's future: it will determine our nation's destiny"

<b>MORE SUMMER SPECIAL TRAINS - 2</b>	09016 Bhagalpur - Valsad Special Train			
In addition to already announced Summer Sp		CTATIONS	TRAIN NO. 09016	
Trains, Railways will run following addit		STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.
Summer Special Trains as perfollowing detail	ls:-	Bhagalpur		05:00
01083/01084 Lokmanya Tilak (T) - Gorakhpur -	10000	Lucknow	00:30	00:40
Lokmanya Tilak (T) Special Train	Trips	Valsad	02:30	21.000
TRAINING 04000		Days of Run: 09016 Ex. Bit	agalpur on 20.	04.2024.

TRAIN NO. 01083 FRAIN NO. 01084 Accommodation: Sleeper STATIONS ARR. DEP. ARR. DEP. Stoppages: Sultanganj, Munger, Begusarai, Barauni, 23:50 Lokmanya Tilak (T) Samastipur, Muzaffarpur, Chakia, Bapudham Motihari, Sagauli, 00:25 Bettiah, Narkatiaganj, Gorakhpur, Basti, Gonda, Barabanki 04:20 04:30 Lucknow 19:45 19:55 ucknow, Kanpur Central, Farrukhabad, Mainpuri Jn. 09:30 Gorakhpur 15:30 Shikohabad Jn., Tundla, Agra Fort, Bharatpur, Gangapur City

Days of Run: 01083 from Lokmanya Tilak (T) on 20.04.2024 and 01084 from Gorakhpur on 22.04.2024

Accommodation: Sleeper & General Stoppages: Thane, Kalyan Jn, Nasik Road, Manmad Jn Jalgaon Jn, Bhusaval Jn, Khandwa Junction, Itarsi Jn, Bhopal Bina Jn, Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi, Orai, Kanpur Central Lucknow, Gonda Jn and Basti stations.

03/15/03/16 Malda Town - Lalkuan In - 20

Malda Town Special Train (Weekly)					
TRAIN NO. 03415		STATIONS	TRAINN	O. 03416	
ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	
	17:15	Malda Town	23:45		
06:10	06:15	Varanasi	09:40	09:45	
19:05		Lalkuan Jn.		21:05	

Sayan, Surat and Udhna stations. Days of Run: 03415 Ex. Malda Town on every Wednesday from 24.04.2024 to 26.06.2024 and 03416 Ex. Lalkuan Jn. on even Thursday from 25.04.2024 to 27.06.2024 Accommodation: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, 3 Tier Economy

Stoppages: Barharwa, Sahibganj Jn., Bhagalpur, Sultanganj Jamalpur Jn., Abhaipur, Kiul Jn., Patna Jn., Ara, Buxar, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn, Varanasi, Lucknow, Bareilly, Bareilly City

zzat Nagar and Kichha stations 02396 Anand Vihar (T) - Dhanbad Su **TRAIN NO. 02396** STATIONS ARR. Anand Vihar (T)

16:45

Days of Run: 02396 Ex. Anand Vihar (T) on 20.04.2024. Accommodation: AC2Tier&Sleeper. Stoppages: Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Jn Gomoh

Dhanbad

Parasnath, Hazaribagh Road, Koderma, Paharpur, Gaya Jn Dehri On Sone, Sasaram, Bhabua Road, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Prayagraj Jn and Kanpur Central stations

09523/09524 Okha - Delhi Sarai Rohilla - Okha Superfast Special Train (Weekly)			20 Trips		20:45	H. Nizamuddin	06:30	04:00	
TRAIN NO. 09523		STATIONS					31 Ex. Secunderabad or		
ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.			06.2024 and 07032 Ex. 123.04.2024 to 02.07.2024		uddin on
	10:00	Okha	13:50				AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Slee		eral.
10:20	V	Delhi Sarai Rohilla		13:20	Stoppages: Kazipet, Ramagundam, Manchiryal, Bella Sirpur Kaghaznagar, Balharshah, Nagpur, Itarsi, Bhopal				
12.54	North B	101V/940W1010EE1 944F1EK1	- Marcon - 1	2.0	Sirpur r	\agnaznaga	ar, Bainarsnan, Nagpur, I	tarsi, Bno	pai, Bina,

Days of Run: 09523 Ex. Okha on every Tuesday from Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi, Gwalior and Agra Cantt stations. 23.04.2024 to 25.06.2024 and 09524 Ex. Delhi Sarai Rohilla on 07621/07622 Hazur Sahib Nanded - H. Nizamuddin every Wednesday from 24.04.2024 to 26.06.2024

Accommodation: AC2Tier, 3Tier Eonomy, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Dwarka, Khambhalia, Jamnagar, Hapa, Rajkot Jn. Surendranagar, Viramgam Jn, Mahesana Jn, Unjha, Siddhpur Palanpur Jn, Abu Road, Falna, Marwar Jn., Beawar, Ajmer Kishangarh, Jaipur, Gandhi Nagar Jaipur, Dausa Jn., Bandikui, Alwar, Rewari, Gurgaon and Delhi Cantt stations.

		ochuveli - H. Nizar erfast Special Train		13 Trips
TRAIN	NO. 06071	STATIONS	TRAINN	O. 06072
ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.
	14:15	Kochuveli	07:10	ī
20:40	🔻	H. Nizamuddin		04:10

Days of Run: 06071 Ex. Kochuveli on every Friday with immediate effect upto 31.05.2024 and 06072 Ex. H. Nizamuddin TRAIN NO. 05583 on every Monday from 22.04.2024 to 03.06.2024 ARR. DEP.

Accommodation: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Kollam Jn, Kayamkulam Jn, Chengannur Tiruvalla, Kottayam, Ernakulam Town, Aluva, Thrissur Palakkad Jn, Coimbatore Jn, Tiruppur, Erode Jn, Salem Jn Jolarpettai, Katpadi Jn, Chittoor, Tirupati, Renigunta Jn, Gudur Jn, Ongole, Vijayawada Jn, Warangal, Balharshah, Nagpur, Betul, Itarsi Jn, Bhopal, Bina Jn, Virangana Lakshmibal Jhansi, Gwalior, Agra Cantt and Mathura Jn. stations.

01667/01668 Rani Kamalapati - Maa Belha Devi

Dha	Dham Pratapgarh Jn Rani Kamalapati Trij				D
TRAIN	NO. 01667	CTATIONS	TRAINN	O. 01668	T
ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	1
1	09:20	Rani Kamalapati	15:35		
20:15	20:25	Lucknow	04:50	04:55	- 19
23:45	5 M	Maa Belha Devi Dham		01:05	1
		Pratapgarh Jn.			D

Days of Run: 01667 Ex. Rani Kamalapati on every Monday fr 22.04.2024 to 24.06.2024 and 01668 Ex. Maa Belha Devi Dh Pratapgarh Jn. on every Tuesday from 23.04.2024 to 25.06.20 Accommodation: AC3 Tier.

Stoppages: Bhopal, Vidisha, Bina Jn, Lalitpur, Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi, Orai, Bhimsen, Kanpur Central, Lucknow, Raebareli Jn and Amethi stations

09044 Barauni Jn. - Bandra Terminus Unreserved Special Train **TRAIN NO. 09044** STATIONS ARR. DE Barauni Jn. 10:2 Barabanki Jn. 01:3 **Bandra Terminus** 07:05 Days of Run: 09044 Ex. Barauni Jn. on 20.04.2024.

Accommodation: General

<u>Stoppages :</u> Samastipur Jn, Muzaffarpur Jn, Bapudham Motihari, Narkatiaganj Jn, Gorakhpur Jn, Basti, Gonda Jn, Barabanki Jn, Aishbagh, Kanpur Central, Etawah Jn, Tundla Jn, Agra Fort, Bayana Jn, Gangapur City, Sawai Madhopur, Kota Jn, Nagda Jn, Ratlam Jn, Godhra Jn, Vadodara Jn, Bharuch Jn Sayan, Surat, Vapi, Boisar and Borivali stations.

For any kind of information, passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

668	TRAIN NO. 05537		CTATIONS	TRAINN	TRAIN NO. 05538		
P.	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.		
		13:15	Darbhanga Jn.	06:50			
55	04:48	04:58	Sitapur Jn.	16:10	16:20		
)5	22:30		Daurai		23:45		
rom nam 024	Sunday Accomi	.05.2024 to from 05.05. modation : ges : Sitam	537 Ex. Darbhanga Jr 29.06.2024 and 05538 2024 to 30.06.2024 AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sle archi, Bairgannia, Raxaul	Ex. Daurai eeper & Gen Jn, Narkati	on every eral. aganj Jn,		

Sitapur Jn., Shahjahanpur, Budaun, Kasganj, Hatras City

Mathura Jn., Bharatpur Jn, Bandikui Jn, Jaipur Jn., Kishangarl and Ajmer Jn stations. 08103/08104 Tatanagar Jn. - Varanasi Jn. - Tatanagar Jn. Special Train (Weekly)

ķ.	TRAIN NO. 08103		CTATIONS	TRAIN NO. 08104		
P.	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	
20		21:05	Tatanagar Jn.	22:30		
35	08:00	🔻	Varanasi Jn.	T	09:30	
	25.04.202	24 to 27.06.	Ex. Tatanagar Jn. on 2024 and 08104 Ex. V 24 to 28.06.2024			

Accommodation: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General. Stoppages: Purulia Jn, Bokaro Steel City, Netaji Subhash

Chandra Bose Jn Gomoh, Koderma, Gaya Jn., Dehri On Sone, Sasaram and Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn. stations.

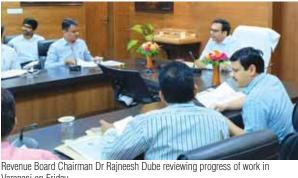


### **Expedite disposal of revenue claims: Dube**

Chairman Revenue Board UP Dr Rajneesh Dube has directed the officers to expedite the disposal of revenue claims. He also instructed to speed up e-Khatauni, share determination and Gharauni cases. At a review neeting held at Commissioner Auditorium here on Friday, Dr Dube discussed the matters of revenue promises, real time Khatauni, Khasra, Khatauni re-inspection, share determination etc.

In his tehsil wise review, the chairman expressed satisfaction on the work of Pindra Tehsil in e-Khatauni cases. While doing so, he directed Sadar tehsil to form teams by July 15 and Rajatalab to complete the works by June 15. To speed up the share determination, the District Magistrate (DM) and the SDMs concerned were directed to make a plan and speed it up. The progress of tehsil wise Gharauni report was also reviewed by Dr Dube.

During map digitization, Dr Dube was informed that all



1,283 works have been done. on which the DM was directed to hold a meeting and review. The Chairman directed to speed up e-Khatauni, share determination and Gharauni so that the minimum target can be achieved.

Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma said earlier about 44,000 revenue cases were pending in the Commissionerate Court, out of which about 17,000 cases are left, for which continuous efforts are being made to dispose them of expeditiously, in which cases older than five years are being disposed of on the basis of priority. The chairman appreciated the efforts of the DC in resolving the pending cases. DM S Rajalingam gave information about the progress of revenue collection, case disposal, e-Khatauni, Khasra and share determination at the district level before the chairman of Revenue Board. In the end, while expressing his thanks, the DC said he will ensure that all the instructions given by the chairman were followed. Additional Commissioner (Administration), Chief Revenue Officer, ADM (City), ADM (Administration),

ADM (F/R), ADM (Protocol), SDMs of Sadar, Rajatalab and from 10 big defaulters within a week. During the inspection of Pindra tehsils and others were the criminal archives, he directalso present. Earlier in the day. ed to create separate files of Arms Act, Goonda Act and Dr Dube conducted an on-site Gangster Act. While inspecting inspection of the Collectorate the Sadar Malkhana, he gave instructions to dispose of the old weapons as per the rules and ordered ADM (City) to do premises and gave necessary guidelines to the officials concerned. First of all, Dube was given a guard of honour in the Collectorate premises, after archival verification and inspecwhich he inspected the entire tion of all the weapons in the next 15 days. During the inspection of the DM Court, building. He asked the DM and others to find ways to preserve this building built in 1820 as a historical heritage. During his he reviewed the records and cases. He appreciated the work when the disposal of the cases visit, Dr Dube inspected the Copying Section, Archives was found to be good. While interacting with the represen-tatives of the Central Bar (Goods), Khatauni Archives, Criminal Archives, District Magistrate Court, ADM Association in the Rifle Club (Administration) Court, SLAO Auditorium, the chairman dis-Office, Office of Land Record cussed how to ensure speedy disposal of judicial works and revenue suits for proper Officer, Anglo Archives, Arms Office, Armory etc. He checked the registers and police station improvement in the revenue wise records of all the tehsils process. During the inspection, and matched the files related to DM S Rajalingam, ADM (City) the records. Before this, the Verma, ADM (Administration) Vipin Kumar, records of Nazarat were seen as well as the details recorded on ADM (F/R) Vandita Srivastava the service books of the and employees associated with the Collectorate were also present.

WORKSHOP: The employees in Nazarat. Dr Dube

Faculty of Dental Sciences (FDS), Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) is organising a five-day Workshop on Dental Implantology (WDI-2024) entitled 'Simple implantology for beginners to advanced workers' from Saturday. Giving details, organising chairman Prof Rajesh Bansal and secretary Prof Chandresh Jaiswara said IMS-BHU Director Prof SN Shankhwar will be the chief guest of inaugural function to be held at 9 am. They said in the workshop participants are coming from various parts of the country and they will be trained regarding various techniques to replace teeth of partial or complete edentulous edentulous patients. "Edentulism is a major health problem in developing countries like India. The prevalence of edentulism in India varies from 60 to 69% for the age group of 25 years and above; although the trend is declining due to better health awareness and services during the last few decades," they said.

CMO: NBSU playing important role
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI Office Officer Dr HC Maurya said

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that the New Born Stabilisation Unit (NBSU) is playing an important role in the treatment of medical and health problems faced by critical newborn babies. He said that NBSU facilities are available at four medical units (FRUs) of the district, including four beds in CHC Cholapur, two beds each in CHC Arajiline and CHC Gangapur (Pindara) and six beds at NBSU in Lal Bahadur Shastri District Hospital, Ramnagar. "NBSU is playing a better role in reducing Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)," the CMO said. He appealed to the public that the mother and child should stay in the hospital for at least 48 hours after delivery so that in case of any health problem, the trained doctors and staff there can provide proper treatment and make them healthy.

Deputy CMO and Nodal

tors, suction machines, laryngeal machines, drip sets, medicines, and other emergency facilities are available along with radiant warmers and photo therapy facility," he said, adding that in the last one year, 719 newborn babies have been admitted and treated successfully in NBSU operated at all the four health units, out of which 499 babies have been admitted and treated successfully in CHC Cholapur, 176 in CHC Arajiline and 44 in District Hospital Ramnagar. He said technical support is being received from UPTSU in this work. Superintendent of Cholapur CHC Dr RB Yadav said NBSU is being operated at the CHC since the year 2016. "At present, four staff nurses including two pediatricians have been deployed here. Underweight, premature (premature born) babies or those with health problems occurring after birth are being treated at NBSU," he said.

that the entire staff of NBSU is

trained. "Oxygen concentra-

### Car, shop catch fire

A car and a shop caught fire near New Victoria Mills on VIP Road under Gwaltoli police station area late on Thursday night. When the fire brigade got the information from its Lucknow headquarters it immediately rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control. The fire broke out in a gumti (kiosk)-like shop on VIP road engaged in auto parts trade. The entire goods of the shop and a car were gutted in the fire. The incident took place around 2 am on Thursday night. When the fire brigade rushed to the spot, it saw a kiosk-like shop and a car engulfed in fire and brought it under control within few minutes. FSSO Pradip Kumar Sharma said fire tenders from the Colonelgani and Latouche Road fire stations were sent to the spot. He said the entire auto

parts goods of the shop along with a car were gutted in the fire. No casualty was reported in the incident, he said.

MAN KILLED: In a dispute during consumption of liquor, a youth killed his father in Tirwa Kotwali police station area of Kannauj late on Thursday night. The kin took the injured elderly man to the medical college where he was declared dead by the doctors.

His younger son lodged an FIR against his elder brother. The police have launched raids to nail the assailant. Jaswant Verma (50) of Banshipurwa village in Tirwa Kotwali police station area lived with his four sons — Dayaram alias Sonu, Monu, Gopal and Sachin. Late on Thursday night Jaswant had an argument with his eldest son Dayaram over some petty issue when the latter slammed the former in a drunken state. On hearing the

screams of their father, all other sons and family members rushed to the spot and took him to a hospital where he was declared dead by the doctors. The police sent the body for an autopsy. Monu lodged an FIR against Dayaram. Kotwali incharge JP Gangwar said after sending the body for an autopsy, raids are on to nail the assailant and claimed that he would be arrested soon.

**BUSTED:** The Kalyanpur police have busted a gambling den and arrested 28 gamblers along with ₹4.50 lakh cash from a hotel on Thursday night. On a tip off, the police raided the spot and busted the den. During the raid, police team was led by the ADCP (West) and ACP Kalyanpur. The DCP (West) said action u/s 3/4 for operating gambling den in a closed place was being initiated against the accused. CCTV footages of the hotel are also being checked.

#### Performing arts necessary, says Sharan

directed to collect revenue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Renowned filmmaker and writer and former Director General (DG) of Doordarshan and Film and Television Institute of India Tripurari Sharan stressed the need for institutionalised form of support to sustain art forms of cinema. Delivering his second lecture on 'Institutions and Arts: Examining the Interrelationship, Sharan said performing arts is necessary for the transfer of the great tradition and it can only sustain itself with support, patronisation and enrichment from institutions. He delivered two lectures in BHU organised under the joint auspices of Malaviya Moolya Anusheelan Kendra and Inter Cultural Studies Centre.

Woman ends life

### Significant findings about genetic history of Sri Lanka's indigenous group

**T**n a landmark study published recently in the journal Mitochondrion, 10 researchers from five institutions have unveiled significant findings regarding the genetic history of the Vedda population, an indigenous group of Sri Lanka. The study, which involved a comprehensive analysis of high-resolution autosomal and mitochondrial genomes, sheds new light on the initial peopling of Sri Lanka and the ancient genetic ties between the Vedda and other populations in Asia. Key findings from the research indicate that despite the lack of close linguistic similarities, the Vedda people share a significant genetic link with the ethnic populations in India.

"Our autosomal analyses suggest a close genetic connection between the Vedda and Indian ethnic populations speaking various tongues, pointing towards a deep-rooted history that predates linguistic diversifications," stated Prof Gyaneshwer Chaubey, molecular anthropologist at the Banaras Hindu University (BHU). "The language isolate Vedda, who are among the least studied indigenous populations in Sri Lanka, have long intrigued scientists and historians alike due to their unique linguistic and cultural characteristics. This study, therefore, unravels the mysteries of their genetic origins and affinities with Indian populations," said Dr K Thangaraj, one of the senior authors of the study and

JC Bose Fellow at the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and

Molecular Biology, Hyderabad. "Maternal DNA analysis supports the existence of an ancient link, reinforcing the notion of a shared genetic heritage. The study proposes that the Vedda population has undergone genetic drift and a recent bottleneck, resulting in a unique genetic makeup with limited gene flow from neighbouring Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamil populations," said the lead author, Dr Ruwandi Ranasingh, from Colombo University, Sri

Anjana Welikala, the first author of the study, stated that this unique discovery challenges the conventional isolation-by-distance model and underscores the distinct demographic history of the Vedda. The implications of this

research are vast, offering novel perspectives on the demographic history of not only Sri Lanka but also the broader South Asian region. This study underscores the complex mosaic of human migration and genetic diversity in South Asia, revealing how the Vedda have preserved their genetic identity over millennia despite massive cultural and linguistic changes around them. These valuable insights will contribute to a better understanding of the genetic diversity in South Asia and foster a deeper appreciation for the unique cultural and genetic heritage of the Vedda people, said the

Addl ticket fee for

visiting KVT: SP

delegation meets

div commissioner

#### Murder case worked out

With the arrest of the accused, the cops of Prayagraj Police Prayagraj Commissionerate claimed to

COURT NOTICE CITATION (BY ADVERTISEMENT) (Chapter XXX, Rule-21)
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD ORIGINAL JURISDICTION TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATI

JURISDICTION TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 09 OF 2024 IN THE MATTER OF THE GOODS OF Late Rajni Kant Tiwari Son of Late Rama Kant Tiwari Resident of HIG-20, Avas Vikas Colony, Yojana-2, Junsi, Phulpur, District-

Prayagraj. ..... Mahadevi Singh Tiwari. ...Deceased. WHEREAS an application has been made by Mahadevi Singh Tiwari Wife of Late Rainikant Tiwari Resident of HIG -20 Avas Vikas Colony, Yojana-2, Junsi, Phulpur, District Prayagraj, for the probate of the will (or Letters of Administration to the estate) of Late Rajni Kant Tiwari deceased, who died at 20 HIG Awas Vikas Colony Yojna No 2 Jhunsi, Jhunsi Kohna, Phulpur, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh 211019 on 16.04.2021 AND WHEREAS, the 23rd day of May, 2024 has been fixed for hearing of the said application. THIS CITATION issued calling upon all persons claiming to have any interest to come and see the proceedings if they think fit before the grant of probate (or Letters of Administration) Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this 15th day of April, 2024. Vivek Tripathi Advocate Council for th

DEPUTY REGISTRAR

said Act read with rule 8 & 9 of the said rules.

amount & interest thereon.

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा

Bank of Baroda

Vihar, Naubasta, Near SBI Bank, Post Galla Mandi, Kanpur Nagar.

have worked out the murder of one-and-a-half-year old girl, Ranjana, who was kidnapped at night while she was asleep with her mother and murdered in Handia area of Gangapar.

She was killed by her uncle Suraj alias Lalli. To take revenge from her father. Surai tortured his daughter to death. Suraj suspected that her father was having an illicit relationship with his wife. He hatched a conspiracy to murder the girl and entered the house at night and took away Ranjana by gagging her. He threw the girl on the ground between the bushes. After this he slammed her head to the ground and hit her near the stomach with a brick. When the girl died, Suraj threw the body in the field and ran away. Within 48 hours of the incident, the police worked out the case and the accused was arrested. He has confessed his crime to the police. Mahendra Musahar of

Mandar village of Handia, does farming. On Tuesday evening he had gone for work to the neighboring village. At night, wife Rani was sleeping on the cot with Ranjana. Two other daughters — Áastha (5) and Anjali (3) also slept on the adjacent cot. When Rani Devi

Possession Notice

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda under the Securitization

and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise

of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement)

Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower & guarantor to repay the amount

The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the

borrowers/guarantors 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

The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the first charge of Bank of Baroda for

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time

Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property &

O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand Notice Date & Possession Notice Date

Borrower: M/s A.J. Polymer, Regd. Office: House No. 3/591, Awas Vikas Hanspuram. Naubasta

Kanpur Nagar, Proprietor: Shri Prabal Pratap Singh S/o Shri Arjun Singh, R/o: 3/256, EWS Awas Vikas

Colony Hanspuram, Naubasta, Kanpur Nagar and also at 424 W-2, Anand Vihar, Naubasta, Near SBI

Bank, Post Galla Mandi, Kanpur Nagar. Guarantor : Shri Arjun Singh S/o Shri Jaswant Singh, R/o

3/256, EWS Awas Vikas Colony Hanspuram, Naubasta, Kanpur Nagar and also at 424 W-2, Ananc

Property: Land and Building Builtover House No. 3/256, EWS Hanspuram, Naubasta, Kanpur Nagar in

the name of Shri Arjun Singh S/o Shri Jaswant Singh. Area: 30.69 Sq. Mtr., Bounded- North: House

Demand Notice Date: 12-12-2023 • Date of Constructive Possession: 18-04-2024

No. 3/299/6, South: 6 Mtr. Road, East: House No. 3/257, West: House No. 3/255

mentioned in the notice being with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

woke up around midnight, she found Ranjana missing and could not could not be found even after searching around. On getting information, Mahendra also came home. The family and villagers started searching for the girl and found Ranjana's body was in the field near a dry pond. DCP Abhishek Bharti reached there on getting the news about the murder and the forensic team and dog squad were also called. On the complaint of grandfather of the deceased girl, the police registered an FIR and started investigating the case. The DCP came to know that Mahendra's cousin Surai was jealous of him. Taking this clue forward, the police did more interrogation on this line. When the police contacted Suraj's wife, she said that Suraj suspected her. Bharti said Suraj became a prime suspect and was interrogated. He was sent to jail.

In another incident, Sanjay Kumar Kol (45) died when his bike hit a wall in Dasauti village under Kheri police station on Friday. On getting information the family members reached the spot. The police sent the body for the postmortem examination.

Regional Office,

Kanpur Metro Region:

Kaushalpuri, Kanpur - 12

Branch: Singhpur, Kanpur

118/330, 1st Floor, Gumti No. 5

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR woman committed suicide Aby hanging herself from the ceiling fan in Shanti Nagar locality under Banda Kotwali police station area late on Thursday afternoon. She was identified as Neelam (32). The incident took place when her three children -Akanksha (9), Ananya (7) and

Aditya (5) were playing in the adjacent room. After some time, when her husband, Suryabhan, reached home to take cheque book, he found the doors of her room locked from inside. On failing to get any response from there he called her maternal uncle Jagatpal of Katai Mill locality. As Neelam was found hanging the police was informed. The police recovered a suicide note from the spot and started a probe in the matter. Suryabhan said he was a chhole bhature vendor and had also gone to shop as usual on Thursday. Kotwali incharge Anoop Dubey said prima facie it appeared to be a case of suicide. However, suicide note was being probed and the body had been sent for autopsy, he said. The suicide note mentioned "after death of my father, I feel broken from within. Husband was not responsible for my suicide. Take of care of my children and avoid the autopsy of my body. I have no complaints against my husband". Neelam's elder sister had also committed suicide by hanging herself few years ago.

Wheat crop burnt

Friday. As a result more than 50 bighas of wheat crop was reduced to ashes in Bagholwa Majhiyari village under Kaundhiyara police station area here. Reports said farmers suddenly saw a flame rising from the field at 1 pm. Due to the strong winds, the fire started becoming fierce and seeing the magnitude of the fire, nearby farmers ran towards their fields. The farmers informed the post in-charge about the fire. Thereafter, the villagers reached the spot and tried to extinguish it. Outpost incharge Jari Vipin Kumar Verma said

#### Need to adopt ideals of epic period: Pathak

A two-day national conference was organised by the Department of History, Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kidwai Nagar, on the theme "India of the Epic Period: History, Politics, Poetry and Culture" at the college auditorium here on Friday. It was inaugurated by Principal Prof Anju Chaudhary along with other dignitaries by garlanding the statue of Goddess Saraswati and praying for Her blessings. While welcoming the guest, patron of Dayanand Shikshan Sansthan Kumkum Swarup said, "men and women have equal place in our epics, but today women are marginalised and can retain their

place by assimilating the ideas of the epic period." Prof Chaudhary presented the progress report highlight-ing the academic achievements of the college. Convenor Prof Mamta Gangwar, while introducing the topic, presented her lecture on the topic of the history of epics. She also shed light on the culture, economic, social and religious conditions of the epic period. Chief guest Prof Vinay Kumar Pathak, Vice-Chancellor, CSJM University, while describing the topic of the seminar as relevant in the present times said. "there is a great need for us to adopt the ideals of the epic period". Guest speaker Sanjay Mishra, National Ćo-Organising Secretary, History Compilation Scheme, New Delhi, said, "Our epics teach us how to live a contended life". Key speaker Prof BK Srivastava, HoD History, Dr Hari Singh Gour Central University, Sagar,

has lost power in the society. ronment. At the end of the An epic like Ramayan is an excellent example on History, Politics and Realism in which

there is a clear vision of pure politics. Today, society needs to learn from epics". Special speaker Prof Anil Kumar Mishra, convenor, Board of studies, CSJM University, said, "our epic Gita teaches us the art of living a stress free life through very simple and graceful verses". The special speaker on the occasion was Prof Rajesh Kumar Nayak, Head, Department of History, JPN University Chhapra, Bihar. The special speaker Prof Ashwini Kumar Dubey, Head, Department of Politics and Public Administration, Dr S Mishra Rehabilitation University, Lucknow, said, "epics like 'Ramayana' presents the best ideals of life. Today there is a need to upgrade our character by adopting the ideals of these epics in our life". The presidential address

was given by Kumar Ratnam, Additional Director, Higher Education Department, Gwalior. He said to stop increasing current environmental pollution, we should learn from our epics as Ramayan contains the ideals of Ramrajya as well as the important facts of nature and envi-

inaugural session, books written by Prof Mamta Gangwar, Prof Pushpa Yadav, Dr Meera Tripathi, Dr Rashmi Singh and Dr Anamika Verma were released. The guest of the first technical session was Neha Kapoor, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, Hindu College, New Delhi, and the special speaker was Dr Ratnarthu Mishra, Associate Professor. Department of Education, CSJM University. The chairperson of the second technical session was Pushpa Yaday, former head, Department of Sanskrit, MMV PG College and the special speaker was Prof Preeti Vadhwani (Sanskrit Department, Tilak College, Auraiya). In both the technical sessions, about 60 research papers were read by various participants. Prof Neeta Mishra anchored the programme and Dr Anamika Verma proposed the vote of thanks. All the college faculty, including Prof. Kalpana Srivastava, Prof Pratibha Srivastava, Prof Sangeeta Sitani, Prof Neeta Mishra, Prof Vandana Sharma, Prof Manisha Shukla, Prof Rashmi Chaturvedi, Dr Preeti Dwivedi, Dr Rashmi Singh and Dr. Saba Yunus were instrumental in making this programme suc-

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI Adelegation of Samajwadi Party (SP) met the Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma at his residence regarding additional ticket fee for visiting the Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT). Under the leadership of former city SP president Vishnu Sharma, after reaching the official residence of the DC. the delegation said that despite the protocol being in place, the devotees who worship at Vishwanath Dham will be given conditional permission to visit KVT on paying an additional slip fee of ₹300 per per-

> be fixed at Rs 100 instead of Rs 300 so that people can get relief. The SP leaders alleged that the employees doing temporary work in the temple premises do not behave properly with the devotees and due to which there is anger among the devotees. On the demand of SP leaders, the divisional commissioner had assured that soon the removal of additional slip fee will be discussed in the meeting of the temple trust.

> son. Vishnu Sharma said that

it is impractical and demand-

ed reduction of the fee in KVT

even after following the proto-

col. He said that if the fee has

to be deducted then it should

Among those who were also present in SP delegation Baldau Rana, Binod Patel, Sagun Vishwakarma, Ashish Sharma, etc.

#### said, "In the present era politics

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Wheat crop caught fire due to a short circuit on due to strong winds the fire spread in the fields.

### Sports & cultural meet inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The officer's sport and cultural meet of North Central Railway (NCR) commenced from Friday. The NCR is one of the leading Railway in sports promotion and sportspersons from NCR are representing India in many disciplines.

The sports and cultural meet was inaugurated by NCR General Manager Ravinder Goyal and Shikha Goyal President, North Central Railway Women's Welfare Organisation (NCRWWO). The general manager adminis-



tered the pledge to all participants for playing with true sportsman sprit. He observed the march past of all the teams

and declared the event open by releasing balloons. In this two day event more than 250 participants from NCR headquarters, Agra, Jhansi and Prayagraj divisions will showcase their talent in various sports and cultural events. In sports cricket, table tennis, chess, carrom, box cricket, lawn tennis etc. are being organised while an array of athletic events like 100 metres race, marathon sack race, spoon race etc. are being held in different categories to suit all age categories and gen-

MISHAP: One person

died while his companion was seriously injured in a mishap in Kohdarghat-Shahpur Khurd village on Friday. Radhika Prasad (55) of Siki village, was going for a tilak ceremony with his friend Raju. As soon as both of them reached the turn of the road a little ahead of Shahpurkhurd village, their bike slipped and a tractor coming from the opposite direction went ahead crushing Radhika Prasad. The tractor driver ran away with the vehicle. The police arrived and sent the body of the deceased for the post-mortem examination.

Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice: Rs. 24,17,793.46 + Intt. + Others Charges Present Outstanding Amount as on Dated 17-04-2024 : Rs. 24,17,793.46 + Intt. + Others Charges Date: 20-04-2024

Place: Kanpur Nagar

**Authorised Officer** 



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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv 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.
"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

"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

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 econom-

ic 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

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 R&D spending, as well as what could be achieved with more

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-sector 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

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 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.È. The date of his superan-

Popularly known as the "black cats", the federal contingency force NSG was raised in 1984. Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) chief Daljit Singh Chawdhary 2026, the order said.



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 offi-cer of Odisha cadre, is currently working as Additional Director in the IB.

She has been appointed as the of two years from the date of assumption of charge of the post or up to the date of her superannuation i.E. April 30,

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Civil services examination topper 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 the 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 and personality test (or interview) -- to select officers for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS), among others.

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 -written or main exam is of 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 marks of recommended candidates disclosed by the UPSC.

Service (IPS) officer, he hails from Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh. Srivastava completed his BTech in electrical engineering from the Indian



Civil Services topper Aditya scores 54.27 per cent in UPSC exams

Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur and also possesses an MTech degree. He had electrical engineering as his optional subject in the civil services exam.

Talcher town in Odisha's Angul district, scored 1,067 marks -- 892 in written and 175 in interview -- and 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) employee of the Indian Oil Corporation's (IOC) refineries division here.

Third rank holder Donuru Ananya Reddy, who appeared

in the exam as an economically 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

(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) Stephens College, Delhi

site. The Civil Services (pre-liminary) 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.

have been put on a reserved University.

The UPSC has put details of marks achieved by all the 1,016 candidates on its web-

### **Congress raps Centre**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

The 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, however, has obstructed the implementation 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 on the issue.

#### Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar to become new Navy Chief



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

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

government has

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 Commandingin-Chief of the Western Naval Command.

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

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 **NEW DELHI** 

Defence Research and Development (DRDO)'s Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) has handed over the first batch of the indigenous Leading Edge. 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

 $M^{
m edical}$  experts representing the public and private sector have batted for reintro-duction of Indian Medical Services (IMS), akin to Indian Administrative Service, to boost the healthcare sector infrastructure, and enhance coordination in healthcare pol-

icy 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 healthcare 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

experts. 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 noted.

Dr Sharad Kr Agarwal, the immediate past national president of ÎMA, said, implementation of IMS holds the promise of enhancing service quality through induction 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.

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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 political 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

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?

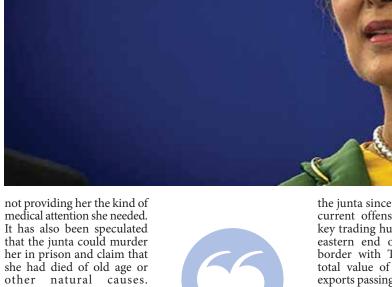


#### Concerns over Suu Kyi's whereabouts as the junta stares at defeat

he news website, *The Irrawaddy*, cites "informed sources in Naypyitaw 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 suggested 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 as 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



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 Alliance comprising the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), active in the Kokang Special Region of northern Shan State, the That the Junta's ouster, even Ta'ang National Liberation though inevitable, would take Army (TNLA), also active in a long time to come about. It the Shan State and the Arakan now seems that it would be Army (AA), based in the Rakhine State in the country's western part.

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

E EDITO

(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 special 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

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)

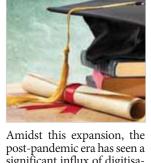
### Transformative trends in India's higher education ARITRA GHOSHAL



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-

neering, medicine and management. Today, students are increasingly drawn to interdisciplinary programs and new-age courses that promise ics of higher education to 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-

ance and adapting accredita-

ditional domains like engition and regulatory frameworks are essential to maintaining standards and credibility. These bodies must adapt to the changing dynamuphold 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

nations. 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** sharp contrast between the flawed current State



propos the news article, "Corruption and political 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 maintain integrity amidst evolving entertainment landscapes.

Rishab Vashisht | Bhopal

#### **INSIGHTS ON INDIAN JEWELRY**

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-

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 vield 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 chal-

lenges and emerge as a global exemplar of moral

governance.

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

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

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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.

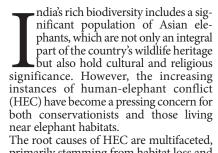
A young monk was once travelling in pursuit of happiness and truth. During his travels, he encountered a massive river that he could not cross. A short while later, he saw a senior monk on the other side of the river. He hailed him and sought assistance to cross the river to reach the other side. The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



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 ele-phant 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 km² 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 activities. 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 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 dis-placement from the Dandeli 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, MIGRATED FROM 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 land scapes. 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 in search of refuge and resources, 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.

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 increasing the likelihood and severity of conflicts. Post-project monitoring, particularly in the mining industry, is often insufficient, leading 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 conservation 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.

(The writers are former principal chief conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra; views are personal)

### 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

Pational 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 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 Pinarayi Vijayan in the wrong included hardcore CPI(M)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

lakh votes in the 2019 edition 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 way and the CPI(M) cadres members and activists who consider it as a cardinal sin.

Raja too had publicly questioned 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 to contest from Wayanad so 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 himself knows that he would

lose by a big margin but he bers of these parties that 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-

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

the CPI(M) as of date. Political pundits have been asking both parties to officially 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 outfits whose secularist cre-

dentials depend on their ties

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 silence on the CPI(M) candi-

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 election 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)

## Udhampur LS seat records 70 per cent voter turnout amid tight security

**MOHIT KANDHARI** ■ JAMMU

Udhampur-Doda Lok Sabha seat in Jammu and Kashmir Friday recorded a healthy voter turnout of about 70 percent amid tight security arrangements in the first phase of polling.
The high-profile Lok Sabha witnessed a

close contest between MoS PMO Dr Jitendra Singh and the Congress party candidate Choudhary Lal Singh.

A total number of 12 candidates were in the fray for the seat.

Democratic Progressive Azad Party candidate GM Saroori contested the Lok Sabha seat for the first time and made all efforts to make it a three-cornered contest. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and the PDP had extended support to the Congress party candidate

According to official sources, around 16.23 lakh voters including 8.45 lakh male and 7.77 lakh female voters were eligible to vote and participate in the electoral process. Over 65 percent of eligible voters (10.5 lakh) had exercised their right to franchise till 5.00 p.m.

on ground zero.

According to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, J&K 50.52 percent male and 49.3 percent female voters participated in the polling process.

Till late evening the Election Commission had not issued the final tally of the voter

Enthusiastic first-time voters, senior citizens, and women were seen lining up outside the polling booths since early morning. A newly wedded couple also visited the polling booth early Friday morning to cast their vote in Udhampur.

The couple also appealed to common vot-



ers to come out in large numbers to participate in the poll process. At several places, senior citizens including centenarians exercised their right to vote with the help of their family members. The Election Commission had made elaborate arrangements to facilitate first-time voters, physically abled citizens, and senior citi-

In the first two hours of polling, less than 10 percent voter turnout was recorded. The voter turnout picked up as the weather conditions improved during the daytime. Both candidates visited several polling booths in Kathua to ensure free and fair polls. Choudhary Lal Singh of the Congress party also exercised his right to vote in one of the polling booths in Kathua along with his wife. Interacting with the media Choudhary Lal Singh said, "I am satisfied with the healthy voter turnout in the constituency". Out of five assembly seats in the Kathua district, the Kathua assembly seat recorded 70 percent turnout while Billawar and Hiranagar assembly constituencies recorded over 65 and 69 percent voter turnout respectively. Udhampur district also recorded over 68 percent polling.

Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts also recorded over 63 percent polling. The rural and Urban pockets of the Lok Sabha constituency witnessed heavy voter

turnout. The border belt of Hiranagar in Kathua also witnessed a healthy voter turnout since morning. Reports of peaceful voting were also received from remote areas of Bani, Billawar, Basohli, Marwah, Dacchan and

### Five poll officials suspended in Kerala for allowing CPM leader help elderly cast her vote

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN KOCHI

Enthused and energised by the presence of Prakash Karat, Brinda Karat and Sitaram Yechury, the Big Three of the party, for election campaign in the State, the CPI(M) cadre is on a mission to subvert polling in many constituencies.

Five polling officials were put on suspension for dereliction of duty on Friday as the local CPI(M) leader in Kasaragod Lok Sabha constituency was shown helping a 92-year old woman voter to cast her vote. According to Election Commission of India guidelines, senior citizens above the age of 85 could vote from their homes itself and they need not take the grueling walk from home to the polling booth and back.

Devi, the nonagenarian voter in booth number 164 of Kasaragod Lok sabha constituency preferred to cast her vote making use of this facility. But on Friday, CPI(M) cadres accompanied the polling officials to show them Devi's residence. The video images showed that Ganeshan, local bigwig of the CPI(M) influencing and coercing Devi to cast her vote in favour of a person of his choice which she disagrred. The CCTV showed Devi getting upset over the demeanor of Ganesha and she reportedly complained to the Wayand district police. The district level leaders of other parties stood aghast as the CPI(M) launched its mission to usurp the votes.

The district election officer, based on the investigation he had ordered, put the five polling officials under suspension for dereliction of duty. The ECI rules state that polling agents of any political parties are prohibited from assisting voters in exercising their franchise. The DEO said that the polling officials failed in maintaining the secrecy during voting.

There were few more instances of similar incidents from the district of Kannur, a CPI(M) stronghold. M M

Hassa, the president of KPCC told reporters that th CPI(M) were past pasters in derailing and distorting the poll process to suit their convenience.

Kerala goes to the polls on 26 April but the polling officials are busy calling on the senior citizens to ensure that they could cast their vote from their homes itself. The top three CPI(M) leaders, general secretary Sitaram Yechuri, polit bureau members Prakash Karot and Brinda Karat are touring the State as part of election campaign and this has enthused the party cadre to ensure that all

votes fall in their kitty.

Interestingly, the CPI(M) cadres are famous for manipulating the polling process. T P Senkumar, the former State Police Chief, in his memoirs "My Life in Police Force" has written about how the CPI(M) leaders and activists cast fake votes during election. Two young IPS officers who were deputed for polling booth duties came across a woman casting 33 votes in a single booth while the presiding officers looed the other way. "When these IPS officers asked the presiding officer about the massive discrepancies, the former was asked to mind their business outside the booths. If you are particular that this complaint should be registered, it would be the end of your life," the presiding officer warned the ÎPS officials, writs Senkumar who was eased out of office

Uttar Pradesh's Chief Electoral Officer Navdip Rinwa said the voting figures were being tabulated and the final figures would be available in late hours of Friday/Saturday.

He said the polling was free, fair and peaceful in all eight Lok Sabha constituencies and no untoward incident was reported from anywhere except incidents of scuffles among the supporters of rival candidates in some places. He said the situation was and no complaint was immediately brought under repeated. He said the control by the police.

The CEO said no major incident of malfunctioning of intimidation of voters and electronic machines (EVMs) reported from any of the 14, voters were allowed to cast 845 polling booths spread in constituencies which went to

polls on Friday. He said 50 ballot units, 50 control units and 152 VVPAT (voter verifiable paper audit trail) machines were replaced due to malfunction. He said the polling was affected for some time and the machines were immediately replaced from the reserve machines available with

The CEO said arrangements were made for the webcasting of polling in 7,500 polling booths for keeping close watch on the polling process. He said the webcasting was watched at the district control room, by the chief electoral officer at Lucknow and the Election Commission of India

He said no major complaint about the polling process was received. He said complaints were immediately addressed complaints were of three types - EVM malfunction, voting voters being prevented from was casting their vote. He said votes without showing valid identity documents in

polling booths. The polling commenced at 7 am and concluded at 6 pm. The CEO said till 11 am, 29.84 per cent voting was reported in Saharanpur, 23.35 per cent in Moradabad, 25.89 per cent in Kairana, 26.89 per cent in Nagina, 26.94 per cent in Pilibhit, 25.50 per cent in Bijnor, 20.71 per cent in Rampur and 22.62 per cent in

Muzaffarnagar. These seats fall in the Jat and sugarcane belt of the state.

prominent Among the candidates in the fray in the first phase polls are Bharatiya Janata Party's Jitin Prasada from Pilibhit, Union minister Balyan Muzaffarnagar and Azad Party Chandrashekhar Azad from Nagina. The ruling BJP has joined hands with the Rashtriya Lok Dal, while the Samajwadi Party has allied with the Congress for the Lok Sabha elections. The Bahujan Samaj Party has decided to go

A total of 80 candidates -73 men and seven women - are contesting in the first phase

The Election Commission of were eligible to cast their votes in the first phase. To ensure security, 6,018 inspectors and inspectors, 35,750 constables and 24,992 home guard personnel, along with 60 companies of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) and 220 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) were deployed.

proudly took to social media

From Page 1

Polling in both Tamil Nadu and Puducherry were peaceful barring some routine skirmishes associated with election.

The main contest in Tamil Nadu is between the three fronts led by the DMK, the AIAMK and the BJP. K Annamalai, the young president of Tamil Nadu BJP had created a sensation across the State and the first time voters were impressed with his style of

If the BJP manages to score 25
per cent of the popular votes,
it would be a landmark event he said.

in Tamil Nadu's political history.In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP drew a blank having failed to win even a single

The AIADMK could win just on seat while the dMK-led alliance made a clean sweep by winning all the 39 seats.Kolahala Srenivaas, chief editor, Kolahala TV News Channel, is of the opinion that this time it would be entirely different. "There is a string antiincumbency wave against the DMK and AIADMK is likely to win at least six or seven seats,"

#### **MAHARASHTRA**

From Page 1

Talking to media persons after he cast his vote, Patole said that the BJP-led government had "cheated" people for 10 years and they were determined to end the 10-year dictatorship of Prime Minister Narendra "The 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 other poll-constituencies Bhandara-Chandrapur, Ramtek Gondiya, Gadchiroli-Chimur

Lakhs of people, including large numbers of first-time voters, youth, senior citizens and transgenders, exercised their voting rights.

In a heart-warming sight witnessed in 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 polling

#### NAGALAND & **MANIPUR**

after the polling process.

From Page 1

According to the sources, incidents of intimidation and firing were reported from several places in the Inner Manipur constituency where voting for the Lok Sabha polls took place on Friday.

Manipur has 'witnessed sporadic, sometimes intense, ethnic clashes since May 3 last year between the majority Meitei community and the Kukis, resulting in the loss of more than 200 lives. While the Meiteis are now concentrated in Imphal city, the Kukis have moved to the hills.

#### **Google Doodle salutes Indian...**

too was excited at Google's innovative idea saying that, as citizens across the country exercise their right to vote, Google Doodle stands as a virtual

companion, reminding us of the significance of our collective journey towards a more inclusive and democratic society." Jagdish Kaur, founder of the WILGA, an NGO

From Page 1 engaged in empowerment of Pritansu Priyadarsini Biswal from Bhubaneswar in Odisha engaged in empowerment of is a welcoming move by Google Doodle seems like a purple-black indelible ink. Google which is presently the only country with 1.4 strong commemorate the start of prevent a person from casting 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."

think the vibrancy of any democracy lies in the power of an individual vote which decides the future of any powerful country like ours. Ít

population to create awareness about elections," added Dr Rahul Bhargava, a bone marrow transplant specialist and haematologist at Fortis Hospital, Gurgaon echoed similar sentiments.

For Sanjay Ojha, Corporate Communication head at the ACME Green Solutions, it was " like a significant moment for India. The

Territories of Puducherry,

Andaman and Nicobar

Islands and Lakshadweep

completed their voting

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 governance."

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

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

### **Over 60** per cent polling...

From Page 1
He especially called upon the

young and first-time voters to vote in large numbers. "The 2024 Lok Sabha

elections commence today! As 102 seats across 21 States and UTs go to the polls, I urge all those voting in these seats to exercise their franchise in record numbers," he said in a post on X. He added, "I particularly call upon the young and first-time voters to vote in large numbers. After all, every vote counts and every voice matters!" Modi made the appeal in various Indian languages.

West Bengal, polling was marred by violence in the Cooch Behar seat. TMC and BJP workers clashed with each other and lodged 80 and 39 complaints respectively related to poll violence, voter intimidation, and assault on poll agents, sources from both parties said.

Minor EVM glitches were reported at some booths in Tamil Nadu, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Assam. A vehicle carrying an EVM partially sank into a river after water level rose suddenly, boat that was ferrying the celebratory

constituency. The driver and the polling officer of the vehicle managed to get out before water gushed into the Poll violence and allegations

polling process in Manipur, a state that has been embroiled in ethnic violence since May last year. There have been at least two incidents of gunfire close to polling stations in the valley. Manipur An altercation broke out between locals and unidentified

persons in Thongju assembly constituency under the Inner Manipur Lok Sabha seat. Incidents of EVM damage were also reported from three polling stations in East Kameng, Kurung Kumey and Upper Subansiri districts in Arunachal Pradesh.

From bustling city centres to remote villages, the polling stations witnessed a colourful convergence of voters spanning generations and backgrounds. Polling was seamless, based meticulous planning and execution by the Commission and its officials in the field. In Kurung Kumey District of Arunachal Pradesh an elderly voter opted to go cast her vote at the polling station despite having the option to vote from home. Elsewhere, a firsttime voter, Ms. Devaki, adorned in traditional attire, in Dindori, Madhya Pradesh, expressed her happiness by proudly striking a pose with her inked finger after casting washing away a mechanised her vote. Adding to the atmosphere,

Andamanese Tribe from Strait Island in South Andaman also participated of electronic voting machines being damaged marred the voters standing in long voters standing in long queues waiting for their chance to vote were seen across the polling stations as voting began simultaneously across 102 PCs at 7 AM on Friday. In Bodh Gaya in Bihar, Buddhist monks were seen posing with a smile and their fingers inked in a proud display. In Andaman and Nicobar Islands, voters belonging to the tribal communities came out in large numbers. Shompen tribe of Great Nicobar made history by casting their votes for the first time this Pooja Soni cast their vote in Rajasthan's Sikar shortly after getting married, Aseem Udhampur, and Devesh Thakur and Gangotri Thakur in Chhattisgarh's Naraynapur. facility provided to senior citizens by the commission, a 95-year-old retired Navy official went to a polling booth in Jaipur to cast his vote on a wheelchair. The world's shortest woman, Jyoti Amge, cast her vote in Nagpur in Maharashtra and appealed to

to post selfies with their inkmarked fingers. The Great elections. Dheeraj Soni and Mangotra and Vishali in Rejecting the home voting people to come out in large numbers and exercise their franchise in the elections.

According to EC, 56 villages in Bastar cast their vote in a polling booth set up in their own village for the first time in Lakhimpur newly-married voters also in a Lok Sabha Election.

Voters were seen to benefit from the medical facilities at the Model Polling station in PC-163 in Bijapur. In Chhattisgarh, 63.41 per cent voters cast their votes in the Naxal-hit Bastar Lok Sabha constituency where the CRPF jawan after the grenade accidentally went off while an officer was injured in an IED blast in another incident. As per data shared by the EC,

Rajasthan saw a voter turnout of close to 55 per cent was recorded in 12 parliamentary constituencies. 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

In the first major electoral battle in Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article the Udhampur constituency witnessed enthusiastic voters participation recorded more

than 65.08 percent voting till 7 pm, with officials saying the final turnout figures would be higher as data from remote locations and ballot papers are compiled. Arunachal Pradesh saw over

65.46 percent voters exercising their franchise, Meghalaya (70.26 percent) ,Mizoram (54.88 percent), Nagaland percent. Though the turnout was moderate in the morning

65.46

hours in north eastern states due to inclement weather, it gathered momentum with weather conditions improving.

States, Uttarakhand, Pradesh, Sikkim, Meghalaya,

process on Friday in singleincluding phase election. Andaman Nicobar recorded Arunachal 56.87 percent voters turn out; Nagaland, Mizoram, Tamil Lakshadweep 59.02 percent; Nadu and the Union Uttarakhand 53.64 percent,

#### **Poll Turnout** (Phase -1) at 07:00 PM

Tentative Figures only						
SI No.	State	No. of PCs	Total No. of Electors	Latest Updated Poll %		
1	AndamanNicobar	1	315148	56.87		
2	ArunachalPradesh	2	892694	65.46		
3	Assam	5	8647869	71.38		
4	Bihar	4	7601629	47.49		
5	Chattisgarh	1	1472207	63.41		
6	Jammu Kashmir	1	1623195	65.08		
1	Lakshwdeep	1	57784	59.02		
8	Madhya Pradesh	6	11309636	63.33		
9	Maharashtra	5	9554667	55.29		
10	Manipur	2	1544652	68.62		
11	Meghalaya	2	2226567	70.26		
12	Mizoram	1	856364	54.18		
13	Nagaland	1	1317536	56.77		
14	Puducherry	1	1023699	73.25		
15	Rajasthan	12	25315541	50.95		
16	Sikkim	1	464140	68.06		
17	Tamil Nadu	39	62333925	62.19		
18	Tripura	1	1463526	79.90		
19	Uttar Pradesh	8	14401543	57.61		
20	Uttarakhand	5	8337914	53.64		
21	WestBengal	3	5626108	77.57		
102 62.37%						

#### **WEST BENGAL**

From Page 1 The BJP had won all the three seats in 2019.

Though there was no official statement coming from the ECI till reports last came in sources said by 12 pm the Commission had received more than 100 complaints from Cooch Behar alone where more than a dozen local TMC and BJP leaders had to be hospitalized following stray incidents of Dinhata, violence at

Sitalkuchi. Bombs were recovered from various places including Dinhata but none died of bombing a senior police officer at Cooch Behar said. One of a voter was damaged in stone-throwing whereas a TMC booth president had to be hospitalized after he was beaten by alleged BJP men.

At Dabgram Fulbari in Jalpaiguri constituency BJP local MLA Sikha Chatterjee was detained following heated exchanges with the police even as the TMC men complained that she was trying to influence voters. Chatterjee however said that she had gone following complaints of booth capture. Similar incidents took place at Sitalkuchi where the local TMC supporters raised slogans after BJP MLA Baren Chandra Burman. The saffron MLA said, "I went to the area after we learnt that the TMC had captured several booths and were casting false votes," the leader however

number villagers large assembled in the area. Four persons were killed at Sitalkuchi during the 2021 State Assembly elections.

Meanwhile, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee lambasted Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for allegedly "misusing the central forces."

Complaining that the members of the State police had been made to sit idle Banerjee said, "both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister should remember that they are only leading a care-taker government which has no power ... whereas in Bengal we are leading an elected Government ... the State police is not being used and they (Centre) are misusing the central forces ... how can the central forces allow loot of votes.'

She said "I love central forces. But I oppose using them as BJP members. I want to ask the EC why central forces are being used in Cooch Behar in such a way? How do you expect a free and fair election in such a situation? It is a matter of shame that the EC become a has commission.'

Her Cabinet colleague Udayan Guha who represents Dinhata sub-division in Cooch Behar said "the BJP, and CAPF, has unleashed a reign of terror to rig the elections... in many areas they have joined hands to beat had to beat a retreat after a up our workers."





#### People not excited about polls, claims farmer leader Naresh Tikait

PTI ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP)

 $\begin{array}{cccc} F^{armer\;leader\;Naresh\;Tikait} \\ F_{on\;\;Friday\;\;expressed} \\ skepticism\;\;about\;\;the\;\;BJP's \end{array}$ 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 that they can perceive this in advance. Do they have any astrologer who has predicted that this is going to happen?" said Tikait, national president of the Phanting View Living

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. People are opposing slavery by not casting their

"The era of booth capturing has passed... Everyone is of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) while speaking to 'PTI Videos'.

Polling in eight Lok Sabha

The Spassed... 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

#### Close to 55 per cent polling recorded in 12 LS seats in Rajasthan As many as 114 candidates are in the fray in the first phase of polling that began at voter turnout of close to

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

The election authorities said 54.97 per cent of the electorate cast their votes. The final figures would be 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

7 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 Kalrai 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

the duty of every citizen of India. This strengthens democracy," the governor said later. The chief minister exercised

station of Patnik Jagatpura and expressed confidence that the NDA will win over 400 seats across the country constitutional right but also in this general election. He

> On the other hand, Pilot said people want change and this

election was going to be for change in the country.
"The BJP had a long tenure of

10 years. Now people are bored and I am convinced said people of the state were voting for 'guarantees' of Prime Minister Narendra that the Congress will win more seats than the BJP in Rajasthan. We will win across the country and the INDIA bloc will get a majority," he told reporters after casting

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

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

Elderly citizens and some newly married couples were also seen at the polling booths.

Shivani, a resident of Dampura village in Dholpur district, reached her polling booth before entering the wedlock. Dressed in bridal attire, she also took a selfie at 'selfie point' after casting her vote.

In Jaipur, a 95-year-old retired naval officer reached a polling station with his family members to vote. He said although he could have chosen the 'voting from

cast his vote at a polling

station. 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

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.

deployed to maintain peace

and law and order.

### In a first, people of Andaman vulnerable Shompen tribe vote

PTI ■ PORT BLAIR

For the first time in Andaman and Nicobar 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 farmers today are feeling cheated and feel they have lost everything. Farmers are sad."

quarters but also they posed for selfies at a designated cutout made by the Election

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.

"Other two primitive tribes like Onge 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

### Vehicle carrying EVM sinks in Assam river

PTI NORTH LAKHIMPUR

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

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,

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 suddenly 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,"

### **Shah files nomination** from Gandhinagar LS seat

#### Says election is all about giving Modi third term

**PTI** ■ GANDHINAGAR

Union Home Minister Amit 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 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



Union Home Minister and BJP candidate Amit Shah files his nomination papers for the Lok Sabha elections, in Gandhinagar, on Friday

PM Modi so that he can make India a developed country by 2047.

The Union minister said papers to Gandhinagar Modi's third term will be collector and district election crucial because his first two terms went into correcting the mistakes made by the previous Congress-led UPA government. This election is all about

about giving a third term to making Narendra Modi our

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 if we want to achieve that because the last 10 years went into filling pits (gadde) made by the previous UPA government," Shah said.
The next five years would be

used to create a strong

foundation for 'Viksit Bharat',

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, I rose from a humble booth worker to becoming a member of parliament now. People of Gandhinagar gave me their blessings whenever I 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

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

village coastal Arivank

constituency to cast their votes. that as soon as the VVPAT sources said. member of Lok VVaithilingam are l grandfather of the AIADMK engineers of BEL were called to help aged and disabled voters member of Lok VVaithilingam are l horns in the poll battle.

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.

86-year-old Krishnammal turned up at a

A visit to some of the polling stations in the rural areas

booth in the Veerampattinam

### 89 years old comes out to vote

contestant G. Tamizhvendhan, rectify the defects. family sources told media at Pink booths were the center of the booth. Voters turned up attraction. attraction. The green environment at a booth The before commencement of the polls at most of the booths, housed on the premises of the official sources said. In one of the polling stations in more-than-century-old VOC Government Boys school in the town added to the lustre of Mudaliarpet assembly constituency, the VVPAT the arrangements. The developed some snags and

elections department distributed gruel, nutritious cereals and millets and also Namassivayam and buttermilk to the 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 BIP nominee and Home Minister Puducherry

Congress president and sitting Sabha VVaithilingam are locking

#### Long queues outside polling booths in Assam

PTI GUWAHATI

ong queues were seen Loutside booths since the morning as polling was underway for constituencies in Assam in the first phase on Friday. Poling began at 7 am in

Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur and

Kaziranga seats, and 86.5 lakh voters are eligible to vote. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal of the BIP and Congress's deputy leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi were among those who cast their votes in the first hour. There were apprehensions that the weather might play a spoilsport with the entire

there was a delay of 45 minutes

in the commencement of

polling. Official sources said

Upper Assam remaining cloudy, but gradually the sky cleared up.

"It is really a good sign that people are coming out in such a large number. People's spontaneous participation will strengthen democracy," Sonowal, the BJP candidate of Dibrugarh, said after casting his vote at a polling booth in

Laxminath Bezbarua Bhawan in Chowkiding.

People are happy under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi and that is why they are coming out in large numbers, he claimed.

Gogoi voted at a polling booth in Devi Charan Barua Higher Secondary School in Iorhat town.

## 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 Aiay 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 FY24. performer amidst sluggish India's global growth trends," Seth appears

He said that similar sentiments have been echoed by various agencies who have revised

estimate closer to 8 per cent. India's proactive stance on reform and investment in sustainable growth avenues sets a benchmark for emerging economies. 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

inflation outlook appears positive with headline and core inflation trending downwards, indicating broad-based moderation in price pressures, he said.



Seth said that on the external the narrowing 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 infrastructure, computing developing indigenous AI capabilities, streamlining access to datasets, attracting AI talent, and financing AI start-

"The Mission aims to establish a robust AI ecosystem through strategic programmes and partnerships across the public and private sectors. The focus infrastructure and technology is expected to propel India to stay on the

solidify its position in the global supply chain," he said. Observing that the manufacturing sector registered double-digit growth in Q3 of 24 fiscal years, driven by a surge in investment, improved investor confidence. and strong domestic demand conditions, Seth said the year

curve of technological

innovation, consolidate and

also saw continued strong growth in services, led by noncontact-intensive services sectors. 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 totalling an amount of INR 19.78 trillion.

The volume of UPI online transactions witnessed a 54 per cent YoY growth in Q3 FY24, which can be attributed to convenience, security, 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

Stock markets rebounded from early lows to 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 rided. However, the linear rebonding 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

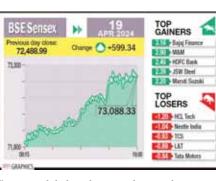
before paring its losses to end in the green. From the Sensex basket, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank, JSW Steel, Maruti, Wipro, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finserv, ICICI Bank and ITC were the major gainers. Nestle India, HCL Technologies, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Motors

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.

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

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai, and

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

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.

## Iran fires at apparent Israeli attack drones

An apparent Israeli drone attack on Iran saw troops 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 drone-and-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

the attack. The New York 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 differ-

ent anti-aircraft gun positions, and details of the video corresponded 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 civil-

ian 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' nuclear watchdog, the Dubai-based carriers Emirates International Atomic Energy and FlyDubai began diverting 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,"

target in initiary connects, 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 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 sug-gested 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 state-run SANA news agency quot-ed 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.

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

That area of Syria is directly

Meanwhile in Iraq, where a

number of Iranian-backed militias are based, residents of 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

and Gulf of Aden has declined over the threat. The apparent 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 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 and-missile assault on the countold 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 indus-trialised countries, said the United States provided the information at a Friday morn-ing 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 dronetry 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

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

The US has vetoed a resolu-Tition 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 unjustified".

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 Nations.

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

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 veto-ing 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 guaran-

"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 mem-bership 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-determination 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 UN 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 sup-port 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

Lawyers worked Friday to Lround 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 campaign.

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 arriving at the courthouse Friday, Trump complained about the gag order imposed by the judge that limits what he can publicly say about witnesses.

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 violations. The judge will hold a hearing next week on prosecu-tors' 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-govern-ment 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

hinese President Xi Jinping Chinese 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 com-(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 military'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 floods

AP DUBAI

 $T^{\text{hree people have died in}}_{\text{the United Arab Emirates}}$  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 recov-ery 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 the firm's work for German

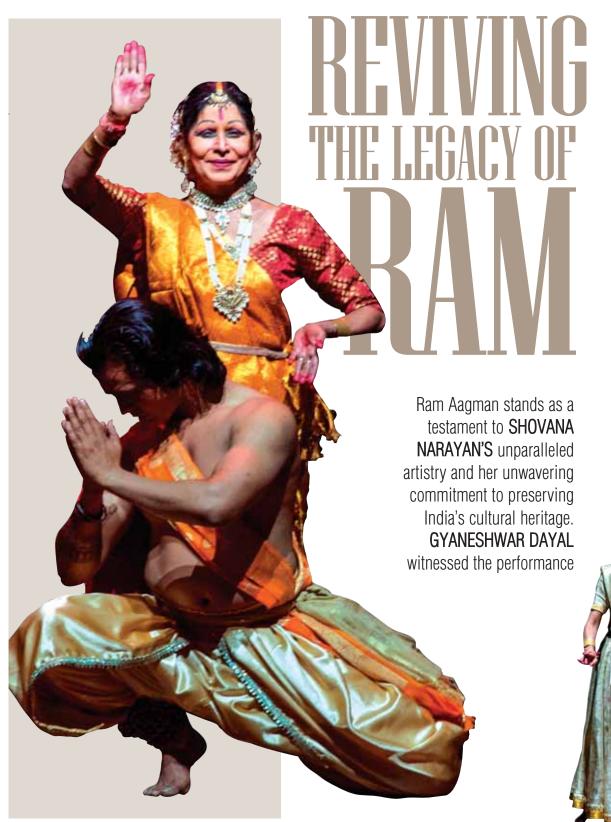
giant Siemens. Prosecutors allege a former executive with the company used entities created by Mossack Fonseca to transfer funds for bribes.

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 lawver 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



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



enowned dancer Narayan, Padmashree awardee celebrated her mesmerising performances, once again 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.

classical

'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 Meenakshi Lekhi, Sachchidanand Joshi, and Dr Sandhya Purecha, among others. Their presence underscored the significance of Narayan's contribution to the cultural landscape of

'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

> darshan. Narayan's choreography skillfully portrayed the mvriad e m o t i o n s stirred Lord Ram's arrival, from the joyous anticipation of

profound symbolism present

hand-held paintings depicting

his devotees to the impact on his family and subjects. commitment to social messaging was evident as unearthed dimensions of the Ram Katha, resonating with audiences on both intellectual emotional levels.

One of the distinctive



elements of "Ram Aagman" was its 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

## 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.

Poonam Dhillon, can you elaborate on the journey your character undertakes in the film?

rn 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 and empowerment. The film narrates my character's journey as she challenges outdated traditions for the greater good of evolving our cultural norms.

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

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 haveli. In our minds the visual of a haveli is more like a grand palace, like in Rajasthan. In reality what

How did you handle the of outdoor challenges shoots?

we faced was actually humorous.

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. Undue expectations

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



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 making waves in the art Oworld 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



as alphabets of her craft.

her creative

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 Her meticulous nature extends to

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

and *Amor Fati*.

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

does she sculpt, she also imparts

masterclasses, nurturing a new

Niyamat's sculptures are a

knowledge

generation of sculptors.

her masterpieces. Here, not only

young

The



from their styles, she strives to where she approaches sculptures as "landscapes," seeking diverse compose something unique of topography within different areas her own, blending surrealism and of the piece. Bridging artistic romanticism to create sculptures cultures, Niyamat incorporates traditional techniques in her rich in expressions and emotions. Her recent solo exhibition, Meraki, showcased 27 sculptures contemporary work seamlessly. She believes that every creation that invited viewers to must possess both technical contemplate their own journeys. excellence and artistic allure, a The title means putting your soul philosophy instilled in her during into your work which reflects the philosophy Niyamat abides by. her training at the Florence Academy of Art. This blend of She believes every sculpture of vibrant Western techniques and hers embodies a piece of her, an Indian heritage is evident in her expression of herself. This guiding principle is evident in sculptures like Atman every sculpture she

presents, imbuing them with a soulful essence. Looking Niyamat aims to persist commissioned work, hold exhibitions,

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 talent and 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.





## RAHUL, DE KOCK STEER LSG TO 8-WKT WIN OVER CSK

peners KL Rahul and Quinton de Kock, who made classy fifties on a slow pitch, produced a chasing masterclass to power Lucknow Super Giants to a comfortable eight-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings in their IPL match

here on Friday. Asked to bat first, Ravindra Jadeja came up with a solid unbeaten 57 before Moeen Ali (30 off 20) and MS Dhoni (28 off 9) went on a

to a tighting 176 for six.

In reply, Rahul (82) and De Kock (54) batted with authority during their match-winning alliance of 134, the highest partnership for any wicket at the Ekana Stadium, as LSG scored 180 for 2 in 10. for 2 in 19 overs to recover from back-to-back loss and consolidate their position in the table.

CSK, who came into the match with twin wins, on the other hand, slumped to the third man for another their third loss in this IPL.

Guilty of not capitalising on his starts, Rahul finally lived up to the expectations, smashing nine fours and three sixes in 53 balls, while De Kock overcame a scratchy start to hit five fours and a six in his 43-ball knock.

Chasing 177, Rahul was the aggressor as he played some magnificent strokes to give

LSG a flying start.

The skipper was harsh on Deepak Chahar as he pulled the pacer for a six, before slapping him for another maximum over cover. He maximum over cover. He also hit him for a four off a

maximum over deep midwicket as the powerplay yielded 54 for 0.

Rahul next sent a short-pitched ball from pacer Matheesha Pathirana over maximum and the bowler



was left further demoralised when he dropped De Kock's catch at short third man off Iadeia in the ninth over. After 10 overs, LSG were 89 for no loss.

Rahul notched up his 35th fifty with a four off Jadeja in the 11th over and then picked up another boundary to complete a 100-run opening stand with De Kock.

De Kock, who was subdued in the last three games, then reached his fifty in the 15th over with a single off Mustafizur, who removed him in the last ball.

However, Nicholas Pooran came out with all cylinders blazing, slamming Pathirana for a maximum, before sending Mustafizur on a leather hunt.

A one-handed catch from Jadeja finally ended Rahul's fabulous knock but it was too late as Pooran (23 not out) and Marcus Stoinis (8 not out) knocked off the

remaining runs. Earlier, Rahul was spot on with his bowling changes as the pacers put the CSK initially before spinner Krunal Pandya tightened the noose in the middle overs. Opener Rachin Ravindra's (0) awful run continued as

left-arm pacer Mohsin rattled his stumps, while Ruturaj Gaikwad (17) fell to Yash Thakur, who induced an outside edge from the

an outside edge from the CSK skipper.
Rahane (36), who opened the innings again, played some exquisite shots, pulling LSG debutant Matt Henry for the first six of their innings as 13 came off that over. The Mumbaikar also carted two fours off Thakur to accumulate another 13 runs in the fifth over. runs in the fifth over.

Jadeja, promoted to no. 4, picked a boundary off Henry in the next over as CSK scored 52 for 2 in the first six overs.

Owing to the slowness of the track, LSG skipper immediately introduced spinners Krunal and Bishnoi and the former struck in his second over, cleaning up Rahane.

Stoinis (1/7) justifying Rahul's decision to hand over the ball to him, striking in his first ball as the lefthanded batter sliced one up in the air.

Krunal then returned to dismiss impact player Sameer Rizvi, who paid the price for his premeditated dance down the track as CSK lost half their side with 90 on board.

Jadeja, who played some cracking sweep shots, held one end up and completed his fifty with a six off Mohsin to bring out his trademark sword-wielding celebration.

Rahul's decision to give another over to Bishnoi, however, backfired as Moeen slammed three sixes as 19 came off the 18th over before perishing.

LSG paid the price for a sloppy overrate as Dhoni slammed a four and a six off Mohsin before smashing Thakur for another maximum. He finished the innings with two more fours CSK's man-in-form Shivam as 19 came off the last over.

### Hardik Pandya fined for slow over rate against Punjab Kings

PTI ■ MULLANPUR (PUNJAB)

Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya has been fined Rs 12 lakhs for his team maintaining a slow over rate during their thrilling nine-run victory over Punjab Kings in the Indian Premier League. Mumbai Indians, thanks to Suryakumar Yadav's blazing 78 off 53 deliveries, posted a competitive 192/7 and then dismissed PBKS, despite Ashutosh Sharma's stunning 28-ball 61 and Shashank Singh's 41, for 183 in 19.1

overs. MI rose to seventh from ninth position on the points table following their third win in seven games in IPL 2024,

while PBKS dropped a spot to "Hardik Pandya, the Mumbai Indians captain, has been fined after his team maintained a slow over rate during their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 match against Punjab Kings at the PCA New International Cricket Stadium, Mullanpur on April 18," said an IPL

statement on Friday. "As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Pandya was fined Rs 12 lakhs," the statement added. Mumbai Indians next play Rajasthan Royals in Jaipur on April 22.

## RISHABH PANT SET FOR **EMOTIONAL HOMECOMING**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

n emotional homecoming awaits Rishabh Pant when he leads Delhi Capitals out at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here, hoping to halt the marauding run of Pat Cummins' Sunrisers Hyderabad on Saturday and continue the resurgence which has come to define his life both on and off the field.

The last time Pant was seen at the refurbished stadium, he needed crutches to walk but that now seems a distant memory given how remarkably well he has managed to come back both as a wicketkeeper and batter after enduring a life-threatening car accident in 2022.

Capitals have ha season so far, but a couple of impressive wins against Lucknow Super Giants and Gujarat Titans have put them back in the mix. In all, they have three wins and four defeats in seven outings so far. Placed fourth in the IPL points table, Sunrisers Hyderabad have set a different template altogether with two of the highest-ever totals of 277/3 and 287/3, which will require a lot of heart and skill to counter. Hence, 'Captain Pant' will have to use his resources with extreme caution and guile on a track which will have good bounce and carry for a change. Travis Head (235 runs) — IPL's



win the toss and opt to bat.

and all in his first two matches.

While SRH's batting has been

top-notch on belters, their

bowlers have suffered a lot on

those tracks with only skipper

Cummins (7.87) having an

been sent on a leather hunt.

foreign flavour of the season will be keen to build on his 39ball century and his partner Abhishek Sharma (211 runs) is But David Warner's knuckle no pushover either. Both have injury is a cause for concern for Pant and head coach Ricky a penchant for taking the aerial Ponting although Jake Fraser-McGurk has impressed one route during powerplay. Head and

intimidating strike rates of 199 and 197 respectively will pose a serious challenge for the pace trio of Ishant Sharma, Khaleel Ahmed and Mukesh Kumar. Adding to the threat is Heinrich Klaasen, who is also striking at 199, who is one of best finishers international cricket with propensity to hit balls out of the stadium, which gives SRH's batting a scary look.

But Kuldeep Yadav's (economy of 6.06) left-arm wrist spin could well prove to be a gamechanger and in Tristan Stubbs, Pant has got an ideal third spin option alongside Axar Patel (6.75). Pant, who is himself Army. In case Capitals have to chase, the idea would be to keep SRH down to 210-220 which would be chaseable against an attack which may not be able to hold

its own on a good batting **TEAMS (FROM):** 

for the jugular against SRH,

putting a scoreboard pressure on the rampaging Orange

TEAMS (FROM):
Delhi Capitals: Rishabh Pant (c&wk), David Warner, Abishek Porel, Ricky Bhui, Yash Dhull, Shai Hope, Prithvi Shaw, Tristan Stubbs, Kumar Kushagra (wk), Swastik Chikara, Ishant Sharma, Jhye Richardson, Rasikh Dar Salam, Vicky Ostwal Anrich Nortie Vicky Ostwal, Anrich Nortje, Mukesh Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav, Praveen Dubey, Khaleel Ahmed, Sumit Kumar, Axar Patel, Mitchell Marsh, Lalit Yadav, Jake Fraser-McGurk. Sunrisers Hyderabad: Pat Cummins (c), Abdul Samad, Abhishek Sharma, Aiden

economy rate of less than eight runs per over, which is considered good in T20. However, the seasoned duo of Markram, Marco Jansen, Rahul Tripathi, Washington Sundar, Glenn Phillips, Sanvir Singh, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Jaydev Unadkat (11.35) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mayank Bhuvneshwar Kumar (10.45), Agarwal, T. Natarajan, Anmolpreet Singh, Mayank Markande, Upendra Singh Yadav (wk), Umran Malik, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Fazalhaq have both been average while the tweakers — wrist spinner Mayank Markande (11.23) and left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed (ER 12.44) — have Farooqi, Shahbaz Ahmed, Travis Head, Jaydev Unadkat, The best option for Pant would Akash Singh, Jhathavedh Subramanyan be to open the batting and go

#### Impact Player not ideal for coaches but fans have last say: Ponting

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Impact Player rule in IPL might be hampering the growth of all-rounders but Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting said on Friday that fans should be able to decide on the future of this contentious system.

contentious system.
Ponting has never been a strong advocate of the Impact Player and the debate gained momentum after Rohit Sharma in a recent YouTube podcast said that he is not a "fan of the rule" as it hurts development of Indian allagements. development of Indian allrounders.

"Look, I think, I read some really, really interesting answers from Rohit Sharma on this yesterday. This Impact Player is taking the all-rounders out of the game a little bit," Ponting said ahead of DC's match against Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Saturday.

"You know you can play your specialist batsman down till No. 8. Pretty much. But look, I think for a coach and for the players, it's probably not ideal, but I think you know a lot of what this game tries to do is to entertain people," Ponting explained his point of view. "The T20 game is an entertainment package and it's probably better asking the spectator what they think about the impact player, because if everyone is loving

lot of the games, and the spectators like seeing it, then it should stay. "But if the spectators aren't

the fact that teams are making,

you know, 220 up to 250 in a



liking it as much, then there's no reason why I couldn't go back to the old," he added. "Warner is around 85 to 90%

David Warner, who missed the last match due to a knuckle injury, was seen batting at the nets and also hit some balls into the stands while facing throwdowns.

Ponting said he is nearly 85 to 90% fit.

"David did a fitness test on game day in which he go close. He's probably sort of 85 or 90% a couple days ago. We'd expect that there would be a little bit more improvement from him today.

"But he will have to do a lot of batting today against some fast bowling stuff to make sure that the pain is not there anymore," Ponting replied to a query from PTI.

The coach was happy with the pitch on which DC will play its first home game.

"A lot more grass on the entire square than we used to see here. You know, this is the main reason that we moved away from those couple of games at the back of WPL.

#### OTHER SPORTS

### Group condemns searches by Olympic organisers to use Al in sports security at Barcelona stadium

**AP** ■ PARIS

The director of a group that advocates for female sports fans says she and other Paris Saint-Germain supporters were subjected to "abusive" searches while entering Barcelona's stadium for a Champions League match earlier this week.

Anoush Morel, the director of Her Game Too France, told L'Equipe and RMC Sport that her breasts, buttocks and groin were touched by a female security officer during a pat-down at the Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium on Tuesday night. Other women reported similarly aggressive searches, she said.

Paris Saint-Germain won the match 4-1 and advanced to the Champions League semifinals.

In a letter Thursday, the organization condemned the practice and called on "relevant authorities" to take action. "It's unacceptable that spectators, fans and women in general were particularly targeted by



these intrusive and humiliating searches that constitute sexual aggression," the letter read.

The group said there have been similar complaints at other stadiums in Europe, usually impacting visiting fans. It called on teams, organizers of the games and stadiums to ensure their security protocols avoid the "unfair treatment" of supporters. It asks UEFA to provide answers on whether visiting fans in particular are being subjected to more aggressive

searches. A request for comment from UEFA sent on Thursday evening was not immediately answered.

organisers Olympic organisers unveiled their plans Friday to use artificial intelligence in sports, joining the global rush to capitalize on the rapidly advancing technology.
The International Olympic

Committee outlined its agenda for taking advantage of AI. Officials said it could be used to help identify promising athletes, personalize training methods and make the games fairer by improving judging.

'Today, we are making another step to ensure the uniqueness of the Olympic Games and the relevance of sport. To do this, we have to be leaders of change," IOC President Thomas Bach said at a press event at the former London Olympic Park, which hosted the Summer Games in







"We are determined to exploit the vast potential of AI in a responsible way," Bach said. The IOC revealed its AI strategy as it gears up to hold the Paris Olympics, which are set to kick off in just under 100 days. The IOC's AI plans also include using the technology to protect athletes from online harassment and to help broadcasters improve to help broadcasters improve the viewing experience for people watching from home. The IOC earns billions of dollars through the sale of broadcast rights for the games. The local organizers of the

Paris games have already sparked controversy with their plans to use artificial intelligence for security, with a video surveillance system that includes AI-powered cameras to flag potential security risks such as abandoned packages or crowd surges.

#### **Andy Murray back** on practice court Open last month.

Three-time Grand Slam L champion Andy Murray has returned to the practice court after confirming that he's not going to have surgery on his injured ankle. The 36-year-old Murray tore

ligaments in his left ankle during a match at the Miami

Murray's team said this week he's "out of the walking boot," wouldn't be having surgery, and was "hoping to start hitting again on court soon." A short video on Murray's Instagram account on Friday showed the former world No. 1

hitting forehands on an indoor



court.

**Engagement of manpower on contract:** 

Post Written test for the posts of Assistant Manager (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 will be conducted at Guwahati, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Gurugram, Hyderabad on 05-05-2024.

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