

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

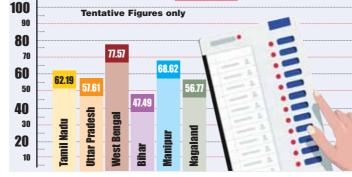
## RAJESH KUMAR MEW DELHI

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

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

explosion of a grenade launcher shell in Chhattisgarh left a CRPF jawan dead. The highest voter turnout on the first day of polling under Phase 1 of the Lok Sabha elections was recorded in Tripura at 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 POLL TURNOUT (PHASE 1) at 07.00 PM



amid incidents of shooting, damage cent voter turnout was recorded on The commission described the to electronic voting machines eight seats of western Uttar turnout as "high", noting that to electronic voting machines (EVMs), threats to voters and polling agents by armed

miscreants while voters in six districts of eastern Nagaland stayed indoors following an indefinite shutdown call by an apex body of tribal organisations to press for its demand for a separate state. Tamil Nadu recorded a

voter turnout of 72.09 percent in the Lok Sabha polls with no major untoward incidents while 58 per State.

Pradesh. According to the Election Commission's Voter Turnout

app, 63.29 per cent voting reported in was Saharanpur, 57.83 per cent in Moradabad, 60.39 per cent in Kairana, 59.17 per cent in Nagina, 60.23 per cent in Pilibhit, 54.68 per cent in Bijnor, 52.42 per cent in Rampur and 54.91 per cent in

PTI IMPHAL/KOHIMA

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.

#### THE PIONEER REPORTS FROM GROUND ZERO

## **TAMIL NADU**

## PTI CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu recorded a voter turnout of 72.09 per cent in the Lok Sabha polls held in a single phase on Friday with no major untoward incidents. About 1.3 lakh police personnel and 190 companies of Central Armed Police forces were deployed for free and fair polls in 68,321 polling stations, that were manned by 3,32,233 election personnel in 39 Lok Sabha constituencies across the state.

In 2019 LS polls, Tamil Nadu registered 72.44 per cent argumentative in nature. polling.

# The lone Puducherry Lok Sabha seat recorded 77.86 per cent polling, according to the

union territory election authorities. The fight is between **BJP's** А Namassivayam and Congress MP V Vaithilingam, seeking a successive term.

voting. Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer Satyabrata Sahoo said the polling process was held peacefully across the State barring some very minor incidents, that were

# **WESTERN UTTAR PRADESH**

Saharanpur, Kairana, Bijnor, Moradabad and Rampur are VIRENDRA NATH BHATT general constituencies. Over 25 Voter turnout of 57.54 per cent was recorded till 5 pm per cent turnout was recorded till 11 am, and it rose to an in all eight parliamentary average of 37 per cent till 1 pm. By 3 pm over 47.44 per cent voters had cast constituencies of Western Uttar Pradesh where polling their votes in the eight was held in first phase of Lok Sabha constituencies. The voter turnout was on 54.68 per cent in Bijnor, 58.68 per

Total turnout of voters was expected to be marginally above 60 per cent.

LUCKNOW

elections

Friday.

The eight constituencies where cent in Muzaffarnagar, 58.05 polling was held on Friday included Pilibhit, Saharanpur, Kairana, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Nagina, Moradabad and Rampur. Of these, in Saharanpur.

# WEST BENGAL

here were

I 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

"stray

any loss of life though

incidents of clashes,

stone-pelting or booth capture," came in from

Polling passed off near- at peacefully amid stray Jal

by both the Trinamool

reports of

many areas.

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA** KOLKATA Congress and the BJP, sources in the ECI said adding the sufficient

three constituencies witnessed a brisk polling of about 77.5 percent till 5 pm. The polling percentage was likely to go beyond 82 percent as many voters were still standing in the queue.

While Cooch Behar recorded comparatively high polling rate of 77.73 percent, about 75.54

percent voters voted Alipurdar whereas peacefully amid stray Jalpai incidents of violence and 79.33 Jalpaiguri witnessed about incidents of violence and 79.33 percent vo complaints of booth capture exercising their franchise. voters

# **NAGALAND & MANIPUR**

At least four Electronic Voting Machines were damaged at different polling booths in conflict-hit 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 People's Nagaland

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

Organisation (ENPO) to

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

REPOR

BIHAR



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PATNA/AURANGABAD/GAYA

Avoters 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.

#### TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

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

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



cent in Kairana,

57.65 per cent in Moradabad, 54.91 per

per cent in Nagina, 60.23 per

cent in Pilibhit, 52.42 per cent

in Rampur and 63.29 per cent

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 Nagpur.

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.

Naveen Athresh,

twitter

handle

"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.

**Democracy wins in Maoist** bastion Bastar with high turnout



Voters are lined up at a remote polling booth in interior of Bastar Lok Sabha seat on Friday to exercise their franchise

#### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IAGDALPUR

The democracy-loving people of the Bastar Lok Sabha constituency in Chhattisgarh defied a

Maoist diktat on Friday and turned up in large numbers at 1,961 polling booths, mostly located in jungles, to exercise their franchise to elect a representative to the Indian parliament. Reena Babasaheb Kangale, the Chief Electoral Officer in Chhattisgarh, estimated 67.56 percent voting based on initial data she received by late evening. A final figure could go up to 68-69 percent once voting figures are compiled by Sunday.

Women voters began lining up in large numbers at the booths even before the start of the polling. Bastar has 7,71,679 women voters, outnumbering the 7,00,476 males.

The Election Commission threw a tight security blanket in Bastar by deploying some 60,000 paramilitary and Chhattisgarh Police

country with 1.4 strong

population to create awareness about elections," added Dr

personnel. Drones hovered in the sky in most violence-prone pockets to keep a watch on Naxalites who have traditionally called for election boycott.

Bastar has track record of witnessing Maoist violence during election day since the late 1980s. On Friday too, a CRPF constable, Devendra Kumar, was martyred in Bijapur while an Assistant Commandant of the CRPF's 62nd battalion, Manu HC, was injured as he accidentally put his left leg on an IÉD planted by suspected Maoists. Chhattisgarh's ruling BJP candidate Mahesh Kashyap is locked in a direct fight with Congress nominee Kawasi Lakhma. Deepak Baij of the Congress had won the Bastar seat in 2019. Bastar was among the 102 Lok Sabha seats that went to polls on Friday across the country's 21 states in the first phase of the elections that will see six more rounds. The final phase of the polling is scheduled on June 1 and the millions of votes will be counted on June 4.

# **Google Doodle salutes Indian democracy**

#### ARCHANA JYOTI NEW DELHI

s India's much-awaited A<sup>s</sup> 110 A Sabha elections' first phase unfolded on Friday, Google's iconic Doodle joined the country's democratic journey by featuring the iconic ink mark on the index finger, a hallmark of Indian democracy. A click on the Google Doodle takes the users, from across the globe, to witness the monumental scale of India's vibrant democratic process being held in the seven phases from April 19 to June 1 in the country.

In the first phase, starting on Friday a total of 102 Friday's illustration depicts a hand with the index finger constituencies in 21 States have marked with ink, symbolising the start of the world's largest gone to vote, including 5 constituencies from Assam. elections in which nearly one billion people are eligible to Phase 2 of the polls will be held vote. "The first phase of India's 2024 Lok Sabha elections is next week on April 26, and 89 constituencies in 13 States will be voting, including five Assam currently underway, with significant participation across constituencies. Social media platforms were multiple regions," it posted. Stella Paul with @stellasglobe already buzzing with excitement as users shared the Doodle online and expressed their

handle termed Google's move as "pretty cool" while one thoughts on this significant moment. @RT\_India\_news posted on X, "Google Doodle @virgojyoti02 found the move exciting "Let the festival of democracy begin!!! Google Salutes Indian Elections doodle". Democracy's Biggest Dance. having

@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 democracy lies in the power of Doodle, Google aims to educate an individual vote which people about the importance of voting and to highlight the decides the future of any powerful country like ours. It is significance of democracy. This a welcoming move by Google also shows how our democracy which is presently the only

has become stronger every passing year. "I think the vibrancy of any

Rahul Bhargava, a bone marrow transplant specialist and haematologist at Fortis Hospital, echoed 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 aspect of any nation's governance."

A senior official from Delhi

the classic symbol of Indian polls will be visible everywhere a left hand with only its index finger extended, marked by a purple-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, Karnataka Government Undertaking has been used in Indian elections for decades. The ink manufactured in India has also travelled to other parts of the world to be used in other elections.

Election Office informed that



# India set to export BrahMos missiles to Philippines: Modi

#### STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

uring his election rally in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that India is set to export BrahMos missiles to the Philippines. He said, "Now we are also exporting BrahMos missiles. The first batch of this missile is going to the Philippines today. I congratulate all my countrymen on this." India is set to deliver the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines on Friday. This comes two years after inking a \$375 million deal to supply the weapon systems with the Southeast Ásian country. India on April 19 delivered BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines. The two coun-tries had signed a deal worth

\$375 million in 2022. An Indian Air Force's C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft landed at Clark Airbase in the Philippines today morning with the first batch of Made-in-India BrahMos missiles.

In January 2022, India sealed a deal with the Philippines to supply three batteries of the missile. This was the first export of the BrahMos missile by India. A few other countries including Argentina have also shown interest in procuring BrahMos missiles from India. BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd, an India-Russian joint venture, produces supersonic cruise missiles that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft, or land platforms. BrahMos missile flies at a speed of 2.8 Mach or almost three times the speed of sound. Modi today addressed a huge

public meeting organized in Damoh, Madhya Pradesh on Friday and appealed to the people of Madhya Pradesh to vote with a huge majority in every seat of the state this time. State BJP President and Khajuraho Lok Sabha candi-

date Mr. Vishnu Dutt Sharma and Damoh Lok Sabha candidate Mr. Rahul Lodhi and other senior leaders were present on the stage in the program.

Modi underlined the important achievements of the BJP government in the last 10 years and once again formed the Bharatiya Janata Party gov-ernment with a huge majority in the country and fiercely targeted the Indian alliance and the Congress, accusing them of being anti-Sanatan and corrupt.

The Prime Minister said that

agricultural and commer-

cial purposes in Bhopal

the 2024 Lok Sabha elections are not just to elect MPs, but to ensure the future of the country's future generations. This election is to make India a big power in the world in the

coming 5 years. When there is an atmosphere of war in the world, it is necessary to have a strong gov-ernment in India working on a war footing. Only the Bharatiya Janata Party government with absolute majority can do this work.

In the last 10 years, the coun try has seen that a stable government can work efficiently even in adverse circumstances. There was an outcry in the whole world during the Corona period, but the strong BJP government of the coun-try brought Indians back to the country safely from all over the world. The BJP government

provided free ration to crores of Indians and also administered vaccine doses to protect against Corona.

Today there is such a strong and stable government in the country, which neither fears anyone nor bows down before anvone. Bharatiya Janata Party, working on the principle of Nation First, has taken many important decisions in the interest of the country.

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People stand in a queue to cast their votes during the first phase of voting for Lok Sabha election, in Chhindwara, Madhva Pradesh on Friday Pioneer photo

## Tube well digging banned in Bhopal till June 30 Temperature crosses 40 degree in 19 cities of Madhya Pradesh

degrees in Jabalpur,

**Damoh and Rewa** 

the mercury also crossed 41

Khajuraho, Khargone, Satna,

Narmadapuram, Shivpuri,

**STAFF REPORTER** BHOPAL

**◄**he Bhopal district administration has banned the tube well mining (boring) till June 30. Now people will not be able to dig new tube wells. The order has been implemented with immediate effect. In view of the falling groundwater level, Collector Kaushlendra Vikram Singh has taken this decision.

Under Section 6 (1) of the Madhya Pradesh Drinking Water Preservation Act, a ban has been imposed on mining of non-government and private tube wells in the entire district till June 30, 2024.

Collector Singh said, tube wells and boring machines will neither enter nor mine tube wells in the district this. without the permission of the concerned SDM.

Machines passing through public roads will be

exempted.

district. Due to this, the Collector Singh said, the concerned SDM and police water level of drinking water sources and tube wells is falling rapidly. Keeping in view the situaofficers have the right to seize such boring machines tion of drinking water criwhich enter restricted places in the district illesis in the entire district in gally, or attempt to mine or the coming summer due to bore tube wells, and regisfalling ground water level, ter an FIR in the concerned it is necessary to impose a police station area. will be. ban on digging of new private tube wells for purpos-According to the order, there is a provision to punes other than drinking ish the violation with a fine water in the entire district of Rs 2,000 or imprisonunder the Madhya Pradesh ment up to two years or Drinking Wat Preservation Act 1986. Water both. This order will not The Collector said, after examining the situation of apply to tube well excavation done under governdrinking water crisis, it was revealed that if a ban ment schemes. Tube well mining work can be done under the work plan by is not imposed on mining PHE. There will be no of private tube wells in the need for permission in district, then a situation of serious drinking water crisis may arise in the district during summers.

Ground water sources are being over-exploited for

# STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

midst the scorching heat in Madhya Pradesh, there was a period of thunderstorm and rain on Friday. The day temperature crossed 40 degrees in 19 cities of the state including Khandwa and Malajkhand while, it rained in Shajapur in the evening. The weather also changed in Ujjain, Agar, Rajgarh, Guna and Vidisha. Malajkhand and Khandwa remained the hottest. The temperature here remained at 42 degrees. According to the Meteorological Department, the mercury

also crossed 41 degrees in

Jabalpur, Narmadapuram,

Shivpuri, Khajuraho,

Khargone, Satna, Damoh and Rewa. Betul, Seoni,

Narsinghpur, Guna, Sagar, Gwalior and Ujjain will Umaria and Naugaon also get drenched. Earlier, on Thursday, for recorded temperatures of 40 degrees or more. It is the first time in the season, expected to rain for the next 3 days from April 21. Met has issued alert of

there was intense heat in the state. Was the hottest stream. Naugaon, Guna, stormy winds and thunder Shivpuri and Dhar were storms in Dhar, Ujjain, the hottest. The tempera-Indore, Agar-Malwa, Rajgarh, Guna, Asok ture here remained more According to the Meteorological Department, Western more than 40 degrees in Disturbance is becoming Betul, Sagar, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Indore, Khargone, Satna, Shajapur, active in the next two days. Which will have an impact

Ratlam, Khajuraho and Narmadapuram. In the next two days rainfall would be witnessed in Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur, Barwani, Khargone, Burhanpur, Khandwa, Harda, Dewas, Sehore, Raisen, Vidisha, Narmadapuram, Betul, Pandhurna, Chhindwara, Narsinghpur, Sagar, Damoh, Katni, Mandla, Balaghat and Dindori districts.

Many rainfall records were broken in April. About two and a half inches of rain fell in Bhopal. At the than 41 degrees. Dhar recorded the highest of 41.4 degrees Celsius. The also been made that it temperature remained rained for 11 consecutive days in April. There has been continuous rain in the state from April 7 to April 17. Now the state will in the state. Due to this, Damoh, Ujjain, Rewa, get drenched again from Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur, Mandla, Malajkhand, April 21.



Garg appoointed Chief

Advisor to Agrawal

nation 02

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

adhya Pradesh Agarwal Mahasabha State President D.P. goyal has appointed Senior social worker and Chairman of Shree Ram Advertising Agency Sunil Garg as the Chief Advisor

to the Mahasabha. His tenure will last till Garg's presidential term. Goyal has urged all the members of the Mahasabha that if they have any important social problem, they should contact Sunil Garg.

# Workshop on ISN Evidence Synthesis and Meta-Analysis

## STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

Nagar districts.

two-day workshop on ISN evidence synthesis A ISN evidence symmetry and meta-analysis was inaugurated today by Prof. (Dr) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, who emphasized the paramount importance of evidence-based medicine in the current medical landscape. In his address, Prof Singh underscored the critical role

of systematic reviews and meta-analysis in advancing medical research and clinical practice. "Systematic reviews and meta-analysis offer a structured approach to dis-till and synthesize disparate



research in this domain, rec- for healthcare professionals ognizing it as pivotal for to leverage these method-

expressed gratitude for the unwavering support and motivation provided by Prof. (Dr) Ajai Singh, which will catalyze increased research activities within the institution.

The workshop is organized by department of Pediatrics, AIIMS Bhopal in association with International Society of Nephrology.

In the ever-evolving landscape of medicine, evidence synthesis and meta-analysis have emerged as indispensable tools for healthcare professionals seeking to navigate the vast expanse of medical literature and distill rigorous evidence to inform clinical decision-making. Delegates from different parts of the country including AIIMS Bhopal and various medical colleges across the state are participating, reflecting a collective commitment to advancing medical research and practice.





research findings, empow-ering healthcare professionals to deliver optimal patient care grounded in the best available evidence" he added. Prof Singh also highlighted the commitment of the research cell at AIIMS

ennancing nealthcare outcomes.

Joining the inaugural session virtually, Prof. (Dr) Meenu Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Rishikesh, emphasized the evolving significance of systematic reviews and meta-analysis over the past two decades.

ologies effectively in their practice, aligning with contemporary medical advancements. Prior to the inauguration, Prof. (Dr) Shikha Malik, in her welcoming address, unveiled plans for new courses to be initiated soon within the pediatric department. She

#### Collector imposes fine of Rs 2 lakh Models United Nations best way each on 16 pvt schools in Ujjain Indorel: Models United Nations

# PNS UJJAIN

**▼**jjain district Collector Neeraj Kumar Singh has taken major action against 16 private schools of the district for violating orders under Section 144 issued by the Madhya Pradesh Government Education Department and school operations. A fine of Rs 2 lakh each has been imposed on these 16 private schools. The directors/ principals of private schools will deposit the amount through challan in the treasury within seven days and ensure that the receipt is given to the office of the District Education Officer.

Collector Neeraj Kumar Singh has issued orders, under which, as per the instructions of the Collector, surprise inspection of private schools was conducted by the flying squads formed. During inspection, various shortcomings were found in private schools. On the basis of the report presented by the flying squad, a show cause notice letter was issued to the directors/principals of private schools through the District Education Officer, in response to which the directors/principals of private schools were presented.

The response submitted was reviewed/examined by the District Committee. Since the response after testing was not found completely satisfactory, the District Committee has imposed a penalty of Rs 2 lakh each on the directors/principals of 16 private schools in the district.

Among the private schools on which a penalty of Rs 2 lakh each has been imposed on Gyan Sagar Academy Dewas Road Ujjain, Gyan Global Academy Chintaman Road Ujjain, St. Mary's Convent H. S School Dewas Road, Christ School Jyoti Convent Malanwasa, Nirmala Convent Haase School Prem Nagar Dewas Road, St. Paul Convent High School Panchkroshi Marg Agar Road, Oxford Junior College Ujjain, St. Thomas School Panwasa Maxi Road, Carmel Convent Chakkamed Tehsil Ghatiya, St. Thomas Haase School Badnagar, Master Mind International School Tarana, Dinah Convent School Tarana, Jeendatta Institute of Education Narayana Tehsil Mahidpur, MPS Academy Mahidpur, Imperial International School Khachrod and St. Martin's School Badnagar.

is the best way to understand the activities of the United Nations. India's opinion is now given due importance on any issue in the United Nations, said Indore Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the three-day Prestige Model United Nations organized by Prestige Institute of Management and Research here

on Friday. Bhargav said there are many programmes to understand the UN, but the Kashmir issue is the most important to understand the United Nations. Describing the abrogation of Article 370 from Kashmir as a significant event, he said that the biggest change that came after its abrogation was the freedom to hoist the tricolor anywhere in Kashmir, which could not have been imagined before 2019. Social worker Mala Singh Thakur said that India not only talks about 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' but also practices it. While every country considers other countries as business, India considers every country as a family, she said, asking students to work towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals as set by the United Nations. Senior advocate

Pankaj Wadhavani also expressed his views on this occasion.

# Tiger movement witnessed in front of Jagran Lake City University

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

liger movement has been witnessed outside the gate of Jagran Lake City University locat-ed in Chandanpura, Bhopal. The video of Tiger roaming was made by people traveling in cars. The tiger crossing the road went towards the forest within some time.

After Tiger's movement, Bagh Mitra has also accused the department of negligence. Tiger friend Rashid Noor said, there are many tigers in Chandanpura. Despite this, wedding parties are orga-nized in club-restaurants here, which is not good for wild animals including tigers. There is also a complaint regarding this. So that, the animal clubrestaurant is closed.

Forest department officials say that this tiger is the off-spring of T-123. The four cubs of this tigress have now become adults and are creating their own territory. Their movement has been seen in the past also. Search has been going on for four days in search of

## **Tiger friend Rashid Noor** said, there are many tigers in Chandanpura. Despite this, wedding parties are organized in clubrestaurants here

leopard in Bhoj (Open) University campus, but it has not been seen. In such Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and BJP candidate from Vidisha constituency Shivraj Singh Chouhan files his nomination papers for the Lok Sabha election, in Raisen, Madhya Pradesh on Friday. Pioneer pl a situation, there is a pos-sibility that he went towards the forest from Poster, painting competition organised at IGRMS the path behind the campus.

leopard was not seen.

Despite this, as a precaution, families living on campus have been advised to stay in their homes. In such a situation, they are not leaving the house in the dark. Let us tell you that leopard movement was seen in the campus on Monday night. He was roaming around the staff quarters. After this the

night at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalay (IGRMS) witnessed a significant event on Friday as a Poster/ Painting Competition highlighting the importance of swachhta (cleanliness) and health was organized at 10:00 AM in the

Sangrahalay premises. A total of 16 students representing 4 different schools participated in the competition, show-

Bhopal: The cleanliness fortcasing their creativity and under- artwork, depicting various standing of the themes of cleanliness and its impact on health. The competition aimed to raise awareness among the youth about the crucial link between cleanliness and overall wellbeing, emphasizing the impor-tance of maintaining a clean environment for personal and public health. Participants were encouraged to express their ideas

and perspectives through their

aspects of cleanliness, hygiene practices, and their significance in promoting good health.

Pioneer nhoto

The event provided a platform for young minds to creatively engage with the concept of swachhta and its broader implications on individual and community health, fostering a sense of responsibility towards maintaining cleanliness in their surroundings.

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# RAIPUR | SATURDAY | APRIL 20, 2024

# chhattisgarh 03

# **Glimpses from Bastar Lok Sabha constituency**



1. Elderly women after casting vote in the Bastar Lok Sabha constituency on Friday.

2. Helicopters were used to ferry the polling team to remote and difficult terrains

3. A view of a 'Sangawari' (all women personnel polling booth) at Degalras in Dantewada region of Bastar

4. Polling team submitting EVMs after the end of polling.

# **Cong, BJP both claim** victory in Bastar battle

#### STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

 $B_{\rm Chhattisgarh^{\prime}s\ ruling\ BJP}^{\rm oth}$ claimed victory after the Bastar Lok Sabha seat went to the polls at the start of staggered parliamentary elections in India.

Finance Minister O.P. Choudhary told reporters that the process of wiping out the Congress had begun with Bastar.

"The people of Bastar have voted for ballot rather than bullet," Choudhary said, in an obvious reference to Bastar's reputation as a bastion of Maoists who called for an election boycott.

Choudhary said that before elimination of Naxalism, the Congress



would have to be ended. People of Bastar have supported the development plank of the BJP, he added. The Congress said the

incomplete promises. Asserting that there was anti incumbency against the people of Bastar had voted Modi government, Baij said

government and the people

are fed up with

a wave of change was PCC chief Deepak Baij witnessed in Bastar. The BJP government said there was tremendous fans communal hatred and anger against the Modi

"The people of **Bastar have voted** for ballot rather than bullet," Choudhary said, in an obvious reference to **Bastar's reputation** as a bastion of Maoists who called for an election boycott.

has exploited youths and farmers. That was why the Congress has a better chance to succeed in the Lok Sabha polls, he said.

# Voting held for first time in Maoist-hub Chandameta

#### STAFF REPORTER JAGDALPUR

 $P_{\rm Friday}^{\rm olling \ took}$  place on after independence in 1947 in the once Maoist stronghold of Chandameta village in elections for the Bastar Lok Sabha seat in Chhattisgarh. Once a Red bastion,

Chandameta was previously known as an impregnable fortress of the Maoists. The voting took place amid a tight security cover.

As many as 325 persons including 163 men and 162 women voters were eligible to exercise their franchise in the village between 7 am and 3 pm.

Chandemeta village was among 102 villages for which officers had set up polling



booths for the first time in the general elections in the

Batsar Lok Sabha seat. A voting turnout of 63.41 Bastar.

percent was recorded in

'Fit Rajnandgaon, Fit Voters' |Rs 30L ex-gratia for dead |Role of diet & exercise held for voter awareness

for them.



STAFF REPORTER RAJNANDGAON

Awere held in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district on Friday under the theme 'Fit Rajnandgaon, Fit Voters' to inspire the electorate ahead of the April 26 Lok Sabha elections.

Rajandgaon will see polling along with Kanker and Mahasamund in the second phase of the general elections.

This was organized under the SVEEP programme with the help of AYUSH and Agriculture departments.

People of all age groups fiercely competed in bushball, theraband, hurdle jump, zumba, musical dance, aerobics and other activities.

Officials of the AYUSH department distributed health drinks and those of the Agriculture department distributed fruits to the participants.



STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

 $T^{
m he}_{
m Commission}$  Election Chhattisgarh sanctioned ex-gratia compensation of Rs 30 lakh to a CRPF

trooper killed and Rs

15 lakh to an injured CRPF personnel during the Lok Sabha elections in Bastar on Friday.

A total of Rs 30 lakh will be provided to the kin of Constable Devendra Kumar who was critically injured by an Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL) shell explosion near the Galgam polling station.

He succumbed to his injuries while being transported to Raipur.

CRPF Assistant Commandant Manu H.C. was injured by an IED in the Chihka area of Bijapur district. He was airlifted to Raipur and is undergoing treatment. He will be provided a compensation of Rs 15 lakh.

Polling was conducted for the first phase of the general elections in the Naxalite-affected Bastar constituency.

# Showers likely in Chhattisgarh

#### STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

There may be some respite from the scorching heat stinging most parts of Chhattisgarh as the India Meteorology Department (IMD) predicted thunderstorm, light showers and gusty wind in some parts of the state on Saturday.

On Friday, the weather was dry in the state. A heat wave was recorded in one or two places in Raipur and Bastar. The

maximum temperature was 44.8 degrees Celsius at ARG Dongargarh in Rajnandgaon. The maximum temperature in Raipur was 42.8 degrees Celsius, which was one degree more than normal. The Raipur centre of IMD had predicted that the weather will change in the state from Saturday.

This will push down the



maximum temperature in on Friday. the coming days. Along with The Raipur, the weather temperature of Raipur was 3 remained dry across the state degrees more than normal

and the minimum temperature 25.7 maximum was degrees, which was 1 degree more than normal.

# in managing diabetes

### AGENCIES

After the food habits of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal stirred up a debate as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) revealed the details of his high glycaemic index diet this week, the lifestyle disease, which results from a combination of genetic and lifestyle factors, is a complex one and diet -- along with daily exercise -- plays a key

role in its management. A proper healthy and nutritional diet can help aptly manage the incurable condition, which if ignored, can affect nearly all organs. Uncontrolled diabetes

can lead to multiple complications ranging from kidney problems -- failure, and dialysis, transplantation,

blindness, amputation, heart attacks, strokes, dementia, nerve problems, and gangrene. The condition can also affect sexual health and

cause infertility, among others.

Organisation (WHO) defines diabetes as a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin (blood glucose regulating hormone), or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces.

Both raised glucose levels, called hyperglycaemia, and low glucose levels, called hypoglycemia, can lead to serious damage to many of the body's systems, especially the nerves and blood vessels.

Globally, diabetes affects



diabetics

While it is important to

eat a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables,

controlling portion size and carbohydrate levels is key

for diabetic patients. Food items can also be classified

based on their glycaemic index (GI) levels. GI is a

value assigned to foods, especially those rich in carbohydrates, and

determines how quickly the foods can spike blood glucose levels in the

glucose levels in the body. High-GI food can cause a rapid spike in blood glucose levels, followed by a swift decline. These high-GI

foods raise the demand for insulin, leading to the risk of

developing Type-2 diabetes

and worsening in diabetes patients. On the other hand, low-GI food helps prevent

diabetes, as well as its complications like heart

disease, obesity, and cancer.

which primarily includes

plant-based foods can

Researchers at Harvard

more than 50 crore people, according to a study published in the journal The Lancet. It projects the number to more than double to 130 crore people

in the next three decades. In India, a whopping 10.1 crore people suffer from diabetes, while 13.6 crore are pre-diabetic, reveals data from the Indian Council of Research (ICMR). Medical

Research (ICMR). According to top diabetologist Dr V. Mohan, chairman of Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre, "diet, high calories, weight, increase in obesity are the major drivers, and there is a small genetic factor, which makes Indians a little bit makes Indians a little bit

more prone". He also blames rising consumption of junk food --known to be rich in salt and sugar --, no exercise, disturbed sleep patterns, rising pollution levels, adulteration of food, and their contamination with pesticides behind the diabetes epidemic in the country.

Diet management in

T.H. Chan School of Public Health, in a recent study, revealed that consuming a low-carbohydrate diet

significantly lower the risk of premature death among

people with diabetes. Dr Sudhir Kumar, a neurologist at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, says "carbohydrate restriction" is

key. "This can be achieved by avoiding or restricting sugar, jaggery, honey, etc. Sugar-sweetened beverages (soft drinks, packed fruit juices) and sweets should be avoided," he said while stressing the need to minimise "intake of rice, roti, idli, dosa, potatoes, and fruits".

Can diabetic patients eat fruits, and drink tea, and coffee?

The concern has been that fruits contain sugar. However, most fruits have low to medium GI, compared to other carbohydrate-containing foods like white on wholemeal bread.

Acclaimed celebrity nutritionist Rujuta Diwekar says that "when it comes to local, seasonal fruits, the truth invariably lies beyond the fear of calories, sugar, and weight gain".

She also vouches for mangoes, known to be rich in antioxidants, fibre as well as Vitamin C, over "green tea, oats, pills" for better nutrients.

But can the same be applied to a person with diabetes? Contrary to popular myth, mangoes do not have a high glycemic index. According to Rujuta, "mangoes are not only safe for diabetics, but they are also, in fact, recommended for people with diabetes because of their rich profile of nutrients. They are rich in phytonutrients, antioxidants, and fibre".

What is diabetes? The World Health ganisation (WHO)



# nation 04

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

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

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

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

"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 raised on the EVMs

"There are a large number of

safeguards, technological, administrative, and processoriented. Just enjoy the voting. This is a time to enjoy the voting, not doubt anything," the CEC said.

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

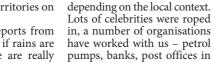
The first phase of the Lok Sabha elections got underway across 102 constituencies in 21



states and union territories on

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

said.



headquarters here.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

prestigious exam conducted

Commission (UPSC), accord-

ing to the detailed marks of

the recommended candidates

released by the Commission

on Friday. Following closely behind is Animesh Pradhan,

Civil

Examination 2023.

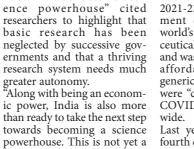
the

NEW DELHI

the outreach program," Kumar said We are very hopeful that people will come out to vote. It is our appeal, please join in this festival of democracy.. Youth,

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



given, but it can happen," it said. "In this editorial, we discuss a third aspect: how to bridge the

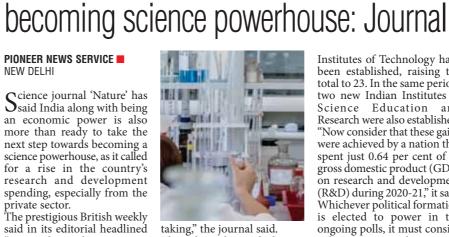
"How India can become a sci-

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

private sector.

women, transgender, PwD, all funding gap. One thing India's geographies...It is your right, your duty, your responsibility, your pride," the CEC said. government can do is to boost science spending by encouraging businesses to contribute Kumar, along with fellow more, as is the case for other Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and S S leading economies. If policy-Sandhu, was monitoring the makers and industrialists can progress of the election process get this right, an opportunity to from the control room set up put rocket boosters under the at the Election Commission country's impressive scientific achievements is there for the



India ready to take next step towards

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 num-

ber of universities increased from 760 to 1,113. In the past decade, seven more Indian

Institutes of Technology have been established, raising the total to 23. In the same period, two new Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research were also established. "Now consider that these gains were achieved by a nation that spent just 0.64 per cent of its 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, pharmaceuti-cals and more. They could be contributing a lot more to the nation's research -- both in terms of funding researchers and also infrastructure," it said.

# On voting day Rahul urges voters to open Mohabbat ki Dukaan



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

A s 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 on 'X'.

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

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

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

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

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

"A total of 2,855 candidates

qualified for the personality

test of the examination," the

Of these, 1,016 candidates

were finally recommended

for different government ser-

vices.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,

As many as 240 candidates

have been put on a reserved

the UPSC said.

was held in September.

UPSC said.

# 1992 batch IPS officer Nalin Prabhat appointed NSG chief

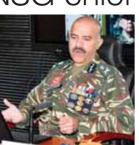
### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NFW DFI HI

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

Prabhat, a 1992 IPS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre, is presently working as Additional Director General in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

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

nuation, the order said. Popularly known as the "black cats", the federal contingency 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

is conducted annually by the Union Public Service Commission(UPSC) in three in the IB. She has been appointed as the Special Director, IB for a tenure stages -- preliminary, main of two years from the date of and personality test (or interassumption of charge of the view) -- to select officers for post or up superannuation i.E. April 30,

Police Service (IPS), among others.

The preliminary examination vivil services examination consists of two objective type Ctopper Aditya Srivastava (multiple choice) question papers of 400 marks. scored 54.27 per cent in the

This stage is meant to serve as by the Union Public Service 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

who scored 52.69 per cent in of the total of 2,025 marks --Services written or main exam is of 1,750 marks and the interview As many as 1,016 candidates - 664 men and 352 women is of 275.

have qualified in the exam-Srivastava (27) got a total of 1,099 marks -- 899 in the ination, results of which were announced on Tuesday. The civil services examination written and 200 in the personality test, according to the marks of recommended candidates disclosed by the UPSC.

A trainee Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, he hails from Lucknow in Uttar



Civil Services topper Aditya scores 54.27 per cent in UPSC exams

He had chosen sociology as Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur and also possesses an his optional subject in the examination. Pradhan com-pleted his BTech in comput-MTech degree. He had electrical engineering as his optional subject in the civil services exam.

er science from the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Pradhan (24), resident of Rourkela and is currently an employee of the Indian Oil Corporation's (IOC) refiner-Talcher town in Odisha's Angul district, scored 1,067 892 in written and

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 bachelor'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 writ-ten and 193 in the interview. She completed her BA (Hons) in economics from St Stephens College, Delhi

list, it said, adding that the University. UPSC candidature marks achieved by all the 1,016 candidates on its web-

Medical experts for

**Medical Services** 

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

reintroduction of Indian

their final order of merit. The merit is determined out

he Indian Administrative Service (IFS) and Indian

Service (IAS), Indian Foreign ed his BTech in electrical 175 in interview -- and engineering from the Indian secured the second rank.

Third rank holder Donuru Ananya Reddy, who appeared mended candidates has been kept provisional.

# **Congress raps Centre**

#### PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

¬he Congress charged Terime 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.



Ramesh alleged.

rights, he asked.

Why have the successive BJP

governments in Madhya

Pradesh failed to provide the

Adivasi communities their

Citing data compiled by the

"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 National Crime Records found out that the papers for Bureau (NCRB), the Congress the exams were leaked by a leader pointed out that private company that was Madhya Pradesh has the highalready implicated in the est crime rate against Dalits in Vyapam "scam"."Who is the the country. PM protecting in these scams? "In 2021 (the latest year for What is PM Modi doing to which data is available), the ensure that our youth never crime rate against SCs was 63.6 as compared to the national face such injustice again?" the average of 25.3. The state also former Union minister asked. In 2006, the Congress passed recorded high crime rates the revolutionary Forest Rights against Dalits in 2019 and Act (FRA) that granted the 2020 – 46.7 and 60.8 against the national averages of 22.8 and 25 respectively. It is dis-gusting and shameful that the Adivasi and forest-dwelling communities legal rights to manage their forests, and ecorate of crimes against Dalits has actually increased year-onnomically benefit from the forest produce they collect, he pointed out. year," he said.

"The BJP government, how-ever, has obstructed the imple-mentation of the FRA, depriv-MP for more than two decades now. Why is it that Dalits have ing millions of Adivasis of its to increasingly fear for their benefits. Only 47 per cent (2,94,877 claims) of the 6,27,513 individual claims safety? Does PM Modi feel no shame for the countless atrocities that Dalits have endured filed have been granted, and land titles distributed cover under his watch?" Ramesh asked and said the prime minonly 10 per cent (5,931 sq. km) ister should break his silence of the 57,948 sq. Km eligible on the issue.

to become new Navy Chief

Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

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

Tripathi is currently serving as Vice Chief of the Naval Staff.

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

in-Chief of the Western Naval Command. Tripathi has served in a vari-

ety 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 cours-es 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 (NM).

DRDO hands over indigenous actuators, air brake modules to HAL



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

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

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

professionals, noted the experts.

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

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

The deliberation highlighted the imperative of strengthening the public healthcare system and emphasised the pivotal role that IMS can play in

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

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

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 pres-ident of IMA, said, "The implementation of IMS holds the promise of enhancing service quality through induc-tion of skilled doctors and addressing the persistent doctor shortage, especially in rural areas. Crucial to its success is equipping the cadre with ample facilities and resources comparable to those provided to

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

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



# Modi takes dig at Rahul, Akhilesh

# PM says film of do shehzade already rejected by people

temple's

bhakts

for its vote bank, calls Ram

'pakhandi'

PTI JAIPUR

released later.

56.89.

## PTI AMROHA (UP)

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

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

rally here. In a veiled attack on Gandhi after losing the case.' and Yadav, he said, "The shooting of the film 'do shehzade ki jodi (a pair of Ram Masjid case, attended the consecration ceremony of the princes)' is going on. But their film has already been rejected Ram temple on January 22. "They are not satisfied even after refusing the invitation, so they abuse the Ram temple and Sanatan Dharma. The SP,

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

(hypocrites). Those in the INDIA opposition bloc hate Sanatan Dharma," Modi said. "Will a person, who cannot accept Bharat Mata ki jai, look



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

had gone from Amroha, "the The prime minister alleged that when he went under the prince of the Congress said there is nothing to pray under sea to offer prayers in Gujarat's Dwarka, where Lord Krishna the sea. They are rejecting our

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

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

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

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

(house for sale) written on those were put up. But, Yogiji (Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath) got rid of criminals for your safety. We must ensure that these forces are not strengthened again in any manner.

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

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

go out and vote to secure their future and that of the country.

up on June 4. The prime minister began his speech with an appeal to people to vote. "I appeal to everyone to exercise their right to vote given by the Constitution," he said while emphasising that youngsters should especially

The prime Minister accused the previous governments of



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

PTI MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP)

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

<sup>\*</sup>If they are saying 400, then what is the need for them to contest elections? It is special is in can perceive advance. Do they have any astrologer who has predicted votes 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 farmers today are feeling 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) 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 People are opposing erv

As many as 114 candidates are in the fray in the first phase of polling that began at A voter turnout of close to 55 per cent was recorded in 12 parliamentary constituencies of Rajasthan where polling was held in the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections on Friday 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 elections on Friday. The election authorities said

Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra, Chief Minister Mishra, Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, former 54.97 per cent of the electorate cast their votes. The final figures would be 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.

released later. The highest voter turnout of 62.93 per cent was recorded in the Ganganagar Lok Sabha seat while Jhunjhunu saw the lowest turnout of 47.98 per cent, it said. Jaipur recorded a poll percentage of 61.23. The voting percentage in Bikaner was 52.53, Churu 61.05, Sikar 55.06, Jaipur Rural 54.44, Alwar 55.82, Dausa 49.57, Bharatpur 50.97 and Nagaur 56.89. "Voting is not only a constitutional right but also the duty of every citizen of India. This strengthens democracy," the governor said later.

The chief minister exercised his franchise at a polling



change in the country. that the Congress will win more seats than the BJP in Rajasthan. We will win across

On the other hand, Pilot said bloc will get a majority," he people want change and this told reporters after casting

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

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

day. 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 The BJP had a long tenure of attire, she also took a selfie at a 'selfie point' after casting 10 years. Now people are 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

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

home' option, he preferred to 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 deployed to maintain peace and law and order.

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

sinks in Assam river

station of Patnik Jagatpura election was going to be for and expressed confidence that the NDA will win over 400 seats across the country in this general election. He said people of the state were

voting for 'guarantees' of Prime Minister Narendra Modi

slavery by not casting their

"The era of booth capturing has passed... Everyone is complaining about the machine, then why are the polls not being conducted through ballot papers? 90-95 per cent people are against the machine (EVM). It is a machine and can be tempered with," Tikait claimed. Talking about payment to sugarcane farmers, Tikait said, "They show the payment as a favour. Are they giving it for free? Have we not given them our sugarcane produce? The

PTI PORT BLAIR

 $F_{\rm Andaman}^{\rm or \ the \ first \ time \ in} \ {\rm Nicobar}$ 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 quarters but also they posed cheated and feel they have lost everything. Farmers are sad." for selfies at a designated cut-out 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 youth).

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



"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 (ASSAM) (little Andaman tehsil of An SUV carrying an elec-tronic voting machine par-South Andaman district) where Onge primate tribes live exclusively (it is a tially sank into a river after

reserved forest area). "Out of water level rose suddenly wash-68 Onge, 62 of them voted ing away a mechanised boat including 35 male and 27 female," Returning Officer, that was ferrying the vehicle in Assam's Lakhimpur constituency on Friday, officials Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arjun Sharma said. said. The driver and the polling Similarly, 100 per cent voting happened at Strait Island officer of the vehicle managed which is an exclusively restricted area for the Great Andamanese tribe, "Out of 39 said. Great Andamanese, all 39 Great Andamanese exercised their voting rights," Sharma was detected in it as polling said.

bored and I am convinced

the country and the INDIA

PTI NORTH LAKHIMPUR

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

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

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

to get out before water gushed sank," the official said. "A State Disaster Response into the vehicle, an official Force team was called in to pull the vehicle out of the water. The It was on its way to Amarpur EVM, meant for replacement, area in Sadiya to replace an EVM after a technical glitch was damaged in the accident,'

he added.

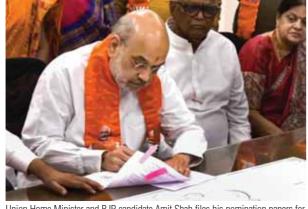
# **Shah files nomination** from Gandhinagar LS seat

# Says election is all about giving Modi third term

#### PTI GANDHINAGAR

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

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



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

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

PM Modi so that he can make India a developed country by 2047 The Union minister said Modi's third term will be crucial because his first two terms went into correcting the mistakes made by the previous Congress-led UPA

by the previous UPA government," Shah said. The next five years would be government. This election is all about making Narendra Modi our used to create a strong

foundation for 'Viksit Bharat' he said.

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

2019 general elections.

# PTI PUDUCHERRY

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

A visit to some of the polling stations in the rural areas brought to the fore a mixed picture of voter turnout, which was mediocre in some places and high in others. Kothandapani (89) along with 86-year-old his wife Krishnammal turned up at a booth in the Veerampattinam coastal village in Ariyankuppam Assembly constituency to cast their votes. Kothandapani is the

# Polling picks up in Puducherry, 89 years old comes out to vote

contestant G. Tamizhvendhan, family sources told media at the booth. Voters turned up before commencement of the polls at most of the booths, official sources said. In one of the polling stations in Mudaliarpet assembly constituency, the VVPAT developed some snags and there was a delay of 45 minutes in the commencement of polling. Official sources said that as soon as the VVPAT developed technical snags, the engineers of BEL were called to

rectify the defects. Pink booths were the center of attraction. The green environment at a booth housed on the premises of the more-than-century-old VOC Government Boys school in till 11 a.M. the town added to the lustre of the arrangements. The elections department distributed gruel, nutritious of cereals and millets and also buttermilk to the voters, sources said.

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

There are 26 aspirants in the fray in this seat. The BJP nominee and Home Minister Puducherry Namassivayam and the Congress president and sitting member of Lok Sabha VVaithilingam are locking horns in the poll battle.

Volunteers were deployed to help aged and disabled voters

Long queues outside polling booths in Assam

### PTI GUWAHATI

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

voters are eligible to vote. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal of the BJP and Congress's deputy leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi were among those who cast their votes in the first hour. There were apprehensions Dibrugarh, Jorhat, that the weather might play a Dibrugarh, said after casting Lakhimpur, Sonitpur and spoilsport with the entire his vote at a polling booth in

Kaziranga seats, and 86.5 lakh

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 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 Jorhat town.

# grandfather of the AIADMK

🕋 RAIPUR | SATURDAY | APRIL 20, 2024

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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 dovernance.

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.



# Aung San Suu Kyi: Prison or house arrest?



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

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

That this is not so is further 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 confu-sion may, in all likelihood, have been deliberately created by both acting in tandem. If this, indeed, is the case, what purpose was sought to have been achieved? The most plausible answer would be that it was to not providing her the kind of medical attention she needed. It has also been speculated that the junta could murder her in prison and claim that she had died of old age or other natural causes. Whatever it is, it would serve the generals well to create the impression that it was not their fault if something untoward happened to her. The other reason could be differences within the junta, a section of which wants to do a deal with her to end the civil war they are losing and another would hear nothing

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

of it.



THE JUNTA IS REPORTEDLY PREPARING TO LAUNCH A COUNTER OFFENSIVE. WHETHER IT MATERIALISES AND, IF IT DOES, WITH

WHAT SUCCESS, **REMAINS TO BE** SEEN

the junta since the Alliance's current offensive began. A key trading hub close to the eastern end of Myanmar's border with Thailand-the total value of imports and exports passing though it has been valued at \$ 1 billion in 2023-it is also regarded as Myanmar's opening to South-East Asian countries.

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

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

earlier in April, 2024. Initially, one had thought that the Junta's ouster, even though inevitable, would take a long time to come about. It now seems that it would be defenestrated much sooner than one had thought. India must bear this in mind. (The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

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

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

Rakhine State in the country's

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

# 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 Ltransformative 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.



post-pandemic era has seen a been transformative and repsignificant influx of digitisaresents a key area ripe for tion in learning, with univerinvestment and innovation. sities offering online pro-By providing everything from grams and various platforms career guidance to student counselling digitally, these providing a broad spectrum platforms have democratised courses online. Considering our current access to education, ensuring infrastructure and the expectthat students from all regions ed demand, it is essential for have better career opportunithe country to further explore ties. Yet, realising the full online learning and skill potential of these advancedevelopment opportunities. ments requires overcoming Aligning these opportunities significant challenges. Addressing the digital divide, ensuring equitable access to technology and improving with the next 10-year growth plan is crucial for preparing a skilled workforce that enhances graduate employainternet connectivity, espebility. cially in underserved areas, are critical. Moreover, as the However, the selection of

field rapidly diversifies, courses among students has strengthening quality assuralso seen a paradigm shift. India is moving beyond tra- ance and adapting accredita-

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

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

knowledge exchange between

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 opportunities.

(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**

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 profanity's normalisation.

# CORRUPTION

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

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

# **Political quagmire**

THE EDITOR

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

While achieving perfection may be a distant goal, even partial adoption of Manusmriti's principles could 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 challenges 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 South India.

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

Lavanya Sharma | Lucknow

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# **FIRSTCOLUMN** 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 grave.

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 side' 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 Hanh.

# Human-elephant conflict: The way out



ARVIND JHA

analys s 07

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

ndia's rich biodiversity includes a sig-nificant population of Asian elephants, which are not only an integral part of the country's wildlife heritage but also hold cultural and religious significance. However, the increasing instances of human-elephant conflict (HEC) have become a pressing concern for both conservationists and those living near elephant habitats.

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

As mega-herbivores, elephants consume up to 150 kilograms of forage and drink up to 190 litres of water per day. This necessitates a large foraging area, typically spanning 100-1,000 km for a family herd, to provide a diverse diet of grasses, shrubs and fruits. However, navigating large areas to find sufficient food and water becomes a challenge when these areas overlap with human activ ities. This often results in crop raiding, property damage, and, in some tragic instances, human casualties. These incidents, unfortunately, lead to retaliatory actions from humans that can be fatal for these majestic creatures, further intensifying their fear and mistrust of humans. Farmers, particularly those with limited resources struggle to cope with crop losses. This hardship breeds resentment towards elephants, undermining conservation efforts and trapping both humans and elephants in a cycle of violence. Since 2019, there have been over 1500 human fatalities reported due to elephant attacks. In 2023-24 alone, Odisha reported 149 elephant deaths due to HEC. Mineral-rich districts like Dhenkanal, Angul, Keonjhar and Sundargarh have been hit the hardest, with Dhenkanal alone witnessing 130 elephants and 227 human deaths over the last decade.



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 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, lead-ing to notable incidents of crop raiding. A similar pattern emerged in 2022 when a herd of 22 elephants trekked from Chhattisgarh to Maharashtra, settling in the lush forests along the Wain-Ganga, Pranhita and Dina river basins. This migration has been linked to increased human encroachment, the construction of two canals in

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MAHARASHTRA, A

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

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

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

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

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

(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)

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

Odisha and mining disturbances in their traditional corridors.

MOVEMENT WAS The Wayanad region, a vital watershed for Karnataka and Tamil LARGELY Nadu, is currently facing a multitude of environmental challenges such as ATTRIBUTED TO deforestation, irresponsible tourism THEIR and unscientific development. Such activities are posing a significant threat to the ecological balance of DISPLACEMENT the region, endangering the lives of FROM THE both humans and wildlife. Wayanad DANDELI plays a critical role in maintaining regional biodiversity. However, WILDLIFE ongoing habitat degradation in this region could potentially intensify the SANCTUARY, A water crisis in the Kaveri basin and PLACE THEY HAD escalate the HEC, which has tragically led to 41 fatalities already. INHABITED Similarly, in the northeastern States of Assam and West Bengal, expand-ing tea plantations and human set-COMFORTABLY tlements have encroached on ele-**UNTIL 1990** phants' traditional grounds, leading to frequent HEC incidents.

Addressing HEC requires a multi-

# Rahul Gandhi holds on to Wayanad despite speculation

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

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

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



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

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

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  $CPI(\dot{M})$ 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 consider it as a cardinal sin. himself knows that he would

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 Gandhi

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

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

election, one can see the Congress and the CPI(M) fighting it together in Kerala against the BJP-led front provided the Hindutva party leadership throws out all the rotten eggs from its basket). There is no difference

Political pundits have been asking both parties to offi-cially legalize the ties so that the entire secular parties could be arrayed under the flag of the Congress across the country against the "com-munal 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 between the Congress and outfits whose secularist cre-silence on the CPI(M) candi-

dentials depend on their ties

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

But what stood out was his

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

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

(The writer is special corre-spondent with The Pioneer; *views are personal)* 



# Iran fires at apparent Israeli attack drones

#### AP DUBAI

n apparent Israeli drone Aattack 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 droneand-missile assault on the country. No Iranian official directly acknowledged the possibility that Israel attacked, and the Israeli military did not respond to a request for comment. However, tensions have been high since the Saturday assault on Israel amid its war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip and its own strikes targeting Iran in Syria

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

Capri (AP): The United States

told the Group of Seven foreign

ministers on Friday that it

received "last minute" informa-

tion from Israel about a drone

action in Iran, Italy's foreign

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

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

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 drone-

Early Friday, Iran fired air

Tajani said the US informed

minister said.

suspected attack.

information

Israel warned US about

foreign min says at G7

the attack. The New York Times quoted anonymous Israeli officials claiming the assault, which came on Iranian Supreme Leader Avatollah Ali Khamenei's 85th birthday. Israeli politicians also made comments hinting that the country had launched an attack

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

and-missile assault on the coun

isters urged the parties "to pre-

port for Israel's security and con-

demned "in the strongest terms"

what the foreign ministers

described as Iran's "unprece-

dented attack against Israel of

April 13-14, which Israel defeat

ed with the help of its partners,

as well as the seizure of the

Portuguese-flagged vessel MSC

Aries in the Strait of Hormuz.

further sanctions or take other

measures, now and in response

to further destabilising initia-

The group also warned Iran

tives," the document read.

'We stand ready to adopt

The statement pledged sup-

vent further escalation."

try last weekend.

Islamic Revolution.

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

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

atomic sites in the area as "fully safe." The United Nations'

nuclear watchdog, the Dubai-based carriers Emirates number of Iranian-backed and Gulf of Aden has declined International Atomic Energy and FlyDubai began diverting militias are based, residents of over the threat. The apparent Agency, also said "there is no damage to Iran's nuclear sites' after the incident.

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

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

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

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

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

Observatory said. That area of Syria is directly west of Isfahan, some 1,500 kilometers (930 miles) away, and east of Israel. Meanwhile in Iraq, where a

Baghdad reported hearing sounds of explosions, but the source of the noise was not immediately clear.

attack also briefly spooked

energy markets, sending

benchmark Brent crude above

USD 90 before it fell again in

trading Friday. However,

Iranian state-run media sought

to downplay the incident after

the fact, airing footage of an otherwise-peaceful Isfahan

morning. That could be inten-tional, particularly after Iranian officials for days have been

threatening to retaliate for any

Israeli retaliatory attack on the

"As long as Iran continues to

deny the attack and deflect

Getting emotional and choking up as he made the remarks, Mansour said th

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

Antonio Guterres requesting that its application for full UN

membership be considered

For a State to be granted full UN membership, its applica-

tion 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.

work information system.

It will play a crucial role in

advancing the Chinese mili-tary's high-quality develop-

ment and competitiveness in

modern warfare, state-run

Xinhua news agency quoted

olutely obey the ruling

Communist Party's command

and make sure it stays absolute-

ly loyal, pure and reliable. Xi

urged the force to integrate

deeply into the Chinese mili-

tary'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.

He ordered the force to res-

him as saying.

Secretary-General

nation.

report.

hope?

UN

again.

Xi Jingping launches

Information Support

Force for military

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

# Man detained after police op at Iranian consulate

world 08

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. attention from it and no further The official said the man hits are seen, there is space for both sides to climb down the was spotted around 11 a.m. (0900 GMT) on Friday and that escalation ladder for now," said Sanam Vakil, the director of the police launched a special operation as soon as they were alert-Middle East and North Africa program at Chatham House. ed. The man's motives were not (AP) Associated Press journalimmediately clear. No exploists Nasser Karimi, Mehdi Fattahi and Amir Vahdat in sions have been reported, the official said. Tehran, Iran; Bassem Mroue in

Images on French televi-Beirut: and Nicole Winfield in sion and social media showed Capri, Italy; contributed to this police surrounding the build-

# US vetoes Palestinian bid to gain statehood at UN drone attack on Iran, Italian

# PTI UNITED NATIONS

The US has vetoed a resolu-tion in the UN Security Council on the latest Palestinian bid to be granted full membership of the United In a communique following Nations, an outcome lauded by the three-day meeting, the min-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 casting its veto.

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

against transferring ballistic missiles and related technology United Kingdom and the to Russia. On the war in Gaza United States. Palestinian attempts for recogthe group called on Hamas to release hostages and reminded nition as a full member state Israel to respect international began in 2011. Palestine is currently a non-member and humanitarian law.

observer state, a status that was granted in November 2012 by

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

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

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

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 solution.

"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

be considered a State. 'We have long called on the Palestinian Authority to under-

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

Wood noted that since the October 7 attacks last year against Israel by Hamas, US President Joe Biden has been

Attack blamed

on IS militants

clear that sustainable peace in right, a legal right. A right to live in our homeland Palestine the region can only be achieved as an independent state that is through a two-state solution, with Israel's security guaranfree and that is sovereign. Our right to self-determination is inalienable...," he said. teed.

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

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

ing or negotiation. "Our right to self-determina-Earlier in the day, Guterres, in tion is a natural right, a historic his remarks to a Council meeting on the Middle East, warned that the region is on a "knife edge".

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

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

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

Over 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, including 33 chil-dren, 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 withheld.

3 dead

in UAE

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

AP NEW YORK

kills 22 people arriving at the courthouse

# Palestine meets the criteria to take necessary reforms to help

Council resolution."

awyers worked Friday to Lound 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 unpredictabili ty 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

date against the backdrop of stories Trump feared would his hotly contested race against hurt his 2016 presidential campaign. President Joe Biden. It will fea-The trial will place Trump in a Manhattan courtroom

trial at Manhattan criminal court in New York on Thursday

ture salacious and unflattering testimony his opponent will no for weeks, forcing him to jugdoubt seize on to try to paint gle his dual role as criminal defendant and political candi-Trump as unfit to return as commander in chief. After

Former President Donald Trump holds up news clippings as he speaks following his

about the gag order imposed by the judge that limits what he can publicly say about witnesses He has lashed out on

AP/PTI

social media about the judge, prosecutors and likely witnesses, prompting the district attorneys to seek sanctions for possible gag order viola-tions. The judge will hold a hearing next week on 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 entangle-ments if he takes the stand in the hush money case.

# in central Syria

Beirut (AP): An attack on pro government 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 reported on Friday.

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

## PTI BEIJING

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

# floods

AP DUBAI

Three people have died in the United Arab Emirates as a result of heavy flooding caused by record-setting rains this week, officials said Friday. A statement by the Philippine's Department of Migrant Workers said two women suffocated inside their vehicle during the flooding, while a man died when his

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

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

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

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

# Trial underway for Panama Papers case

#### AP PANAMA CITY

Eight years after 11 million Eleaked 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 trial.

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 to 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 trial.

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

A Siemens spokesperson declined to comment, noting that it is not a party to the Panama case and that it involves former Siemens employees in

their private capacity. The 71-year-old Fonseca has not been present for the trial, because his lawyer said he is hospitalised. But he had previously said his firm did not control how their clients used the shell companies the firm created for them. Its role was simply the creation and sale of the companies. Mossack, a 76-year-old lawyer originally from Germany, said in a statement "we categorically reject that we have committed any crime, not Mossack Fonseca nor the subsidiaries ... and we hope that can be proved in the



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



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

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

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

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

vide specific details about US discussions with allies and other partners, including whether an alternative monitoring regime would more like-ly be established through the UN General Assembly or with an independent entity outside of the UN

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

Thomas-Greenfield said it was



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

protecting the North from being held accountable. Moscow and Beijing have thwarted US-led efforts to tighten UN sanctions on North Korea over its ramped-up ballistic missile testing since 2022, underscoring a divide between permanent Security Council members that deepened over

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



where we can find a ... two-state solution moving forward," she added. Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years, as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has accelerated his weapons demonstrations and issued provocative threats of nuclear conflict

addressed questions about ten-

#### against rivals

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

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

tion", Yoon's office said. The Security Council imposed sanctions after North Korea's first nuclear test explosion in 2006 and tightened them over the years in a total of 10 resolutions seeking — so far unsuccessfully — to cut funds and curb its nuclear and missile programmes. The last sanctions resolution was adopted by the council in December 2017. The Security Council established a committee to monitor sanctions, and the mandate for its panel of experts to investigate violations had been renewed for 14 years until last month.

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

### AP 📕 KYIV

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

two-year war have met with silence or denials from Moscow. Meanwhile, Russian missiles struck cities in the central Dnipro region of Ukraine,

killing eight people, including a 14-year-old girl and 8-year-old boy, and injuring 28, local officials said.

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

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

also work in Europe." Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba added: "Children must not be killed in airstrikes in modern Europe. Russia's air force is vastly more

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

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

Russian strategic bomber

## AP COPENHAGEN

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

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

extend the closure of its border crossing points with Russia "until further notice" because of what the government says is a high risk of organized migration being orchestrated by Moscow. Finland's government has closed eight of its nine checkpoints with Russia. The only one that remains open is dedicated to rail travel only, and cargo trains mainly run through it. Finland shares a 1,340-kilome-

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

with anti-aircraft missiles. Russia commonly uses the bomber to fire Kh-22 cruise missiles at Ukrainian targets missiles at Ortainian targets from inside its own airspace. The plane can also carry nuclear warheads. The Russian defense ministry

world 09

said the warplane crashed "in a deserted area" in the southern region of Stavropol, hundreds of kilometers (miles) from the Ukrainian border. Three crew members were

rescued after ejecting from the aircraft, and the search for a fourth is taking place, accord-ing to the ministry. But Stavropol Gov. Vladimir Vladimirov said one of the res-cued pilots died.

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

Also in January, Moscow accused Kyiv of shooting down a Russian military transport plane that was carrying Ukrainian POWs who were

the Middle East and Africa. The headed for a prisoner swap. Russian forces overnight con-ducted a combined aerial attack vast majority of them have sought asylum in Finland, a member of the EU and NATO with the use of 22 missiles of various types and 14 Shahed drones during the night, the Ukrainian air force said. All the drones and 15 of the missiles were intercepted, it said. The with a population of 5.6 million. Finland joined NATO in April 2023, ending decades of neutrality after the country's defeat by the Soviet Union in World War II. In March, Sweden also attack hit urban areas as well as became a member of the trans-Atlantic alliance. The move train infrastructure in the Dnipro region, Ukraine's National Railway Operator said. Among those killed in the dealt a major blow to Putin, with a historic realignment of Europe's post-Cold War security landscape triggered by Moscow's full-scale invasion strikes was employee Oksana Storozhenko, the mother of two teenage sons, it said.

# More people evacuated after dramatic eruption of Indonesian volcano

#### AP MANADO

More people living near an erupting volcano on Indonesia's Sulawesi Island were evacuated on Friday due to the dangers of spreading ash, falling rocks, hot volcanic clouds and the possibility of a tsunami. An international airport in Manado city, which is located less than 100 kilometers 52 miles) from the erupting Mount Ruang, is still temporarily closed as volcanic ash was spewed into the air. Satellite imagery from the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency showed that the ash has spread to the west, northwest, northeast and southeast, covering Manado and North Minahasa, according to a statement from Indonesia's Transportation Ministry. "We are still monitoring developments in the eruption of Mount Ruang and coordinating with relevant stakeholders ... to anticipate the necessary actions to ensure flight safety, securi-ty and comfort," said Ambar Śuryoko, head of the regional airport authority

team from the local authorities

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

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

#### PTI WASHINGTON

asked about the Palestinian

Authority's request to have full

UN membership, she said a

UN resolution in support of

that request would not con-tribute to finding a two-state

solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"President Biden has said cat-

ing the situation in the Middle

Observing that China has the benefit of a particular set of policies over the last decades for its export-oriented growth, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has said that the time has come for Beijing to look at domestic sources for growth, opening up more opportunities for the market. conomy per cent in the first quarter, making a stronger-thanexpected start to the year even as the downturn of its property market continued while the domestic demand remained subdued. The GDP grew 5.3 per cent year on year to 29.63 trillion yuan (about USD 4.17 trillion) in the first three months of 2024, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed on Tuesday. 'China is the fork in the road. Why? Because China has to define growth strategies for the future. China has the benefit of a particular set of policies over the last decades, export-oriented growth, but the time has come to look at domestic sources for growth, opening up more opportunities for the market to lift up these

affects consumer confidence. and deflation risks coming So clearing up the problems in down," he said. So clearing up the problems in the sector more resolutely would certainly help China, she said.

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

At a separate news conference, a Srinivasan, Director IMF Asia and Pacific Department, told reporters that on the macroeconomic aspects. China's economy is experiencing weak domestic demand. This emanates from two factors: the continued weakness in the real estate sector and the legacies of the pandemic. So in that context, the IMF has advocated for two things. One is policies that would help address the problem in the property sector and other than that, trying to boost consump-tion demand by improving social safety nets in the case of China and again, improving the pension system in a fiscally prudent way and investing in people, education, and health. 'So that's as far as once on the domestic demand side if you pursue these policies, you will see domestic demand rising

China provides wide-ranging support to priority sectors. This includes preferential access to credit research funds and incentives for certain firms, particularly in the areas of strategic manufacturing and science and technology. "In terms of what China can do, on the first issue of misallocation of resources, we have talked out the fact that it is impor

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

Svdnev (AP): A 16-year-old shown no signs of being radiboy accused of stabbing two calised. The 16-year-old's lawyer, Christian clerics during a Sydney church service has been charged by police with terrorism offenses.

Greg Scragg, said the boy had a "long history of behaviour" consistent with a mental illness or intellectual disability. Authorities said the stabbing The magistrate made a recom-

was declared a terrorist act mendation for the boy to have a because of the teenager's sus- mental health assessment while in custody He will enter i

attack, some demanding that

police hand over the boy. Hours

of rioting led to 51 police officers

Sydney mosques also received

The bishop released an audio

statement on Thursday saying

that he was "doing fine, recover-

ing very quickly" and that he for-

gave his attacker. He also used his

statement to call for calm after

the attack, which was Australia's

second high-profile knife attack

in a week, after a man stabbed six

people to death at a busy Sydney

being injured.

firebomb threats.





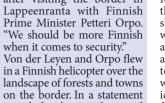
issued after the visit, Orpo said that "the spring's warmer weather increases the risk of

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

crossing points." Most of the migrants hail from

of Ukraine.





More than 11,000 people were told to leave their homes and at least 1,000 have done so. A joint quite significantly now that getting the social safety nets to work more effectively would give people an opportunity to save a bit less, to spend a bit more," she said.

The IMF sees three important

opportunities for China, she

said. Number one, to shift the

economy more towards domes-

tic consumption. It is actually

in line with what China is

aspiring to, the dual circulation

economy. It would take giving

consumers more confidence

and offering them more ser-

vices, and more things to buy.

"We know that the healthcare

services in China can expand

"Secondly, we see the reforms in China that have served the country well continuing to be needed, reforms of state-owned enterprises opening up for a more competitive environment. In the years ahead, that can help Ćhina grow more," Georgieva said. Last but not least, there are some problems right now, and how they are solved will have implications for China's growth, she observed. "The most obvious example is the property sector. People in China rely on their homeownership as a way of saving. When prices there—as savings go down, when prices of real estate go down, that tant to address SOE reform quite urgently, scaling back of industrial policies, which provide implicit or explicit guaran-tees for SOEs. So in other words, try to make it have to ensure competitive neutrality between SOEs and the private sector so that there's no misallocation of resources doesn't happen," Srinivasan said.

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

pected religious motivation custody at a children's detention and that the boy travelled up to 90 minutes from his home centre once released from the hospital, until his next court to the Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Sydney's hearing on June 14. A crowd of up to 600 people conwestern suburbs. verged on the church after the

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

Kershaw at a press conference shopping centre on Saturday on Friday in Sydney. before he was fatally shot. Regarding the church attack, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said, "Clearly this was The offense carries a maximum penalty of imprisonment for life. The matter was heard at a Sydney children's a terrorism event", and it had court on Friday. The juvenile, been disappointing to see the riots that followed.

who is not being named, did not appear via video link from his hospital bed and did not apply for bail at the brief hearing.

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

8 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. Estimated cost put to tender: **Rs.86,35,39,812/**-With reference to above e-tender, revised tende document has been published in the e-procurement website with extension. Last datu & time of submission of bids through on-ling 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

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# US ambassador to UN visits **Five Japanese escape unhurt** in Karachi suicide bombing Nagasaki A-bomb museum security guards killed one ter-

## AP TOKYO

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

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

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



US Ambassador to United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield, left, and Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, right, shake hands during a meeting on Friday

weapons," she added, standing in ly half-century of aggression in front of colourful hanging origa-mi cranes, a symbol of peace. Ásia. Nagasaki Gov. Kengo Oishi said in a statement that he The United States dropped the believed Thomas-Greenfield's world's first atomic bomb on visit and her first-person expe-Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, rience at the museum "will be a destroying the city and killing strong message in promoting momentum of nuclear disarma-140,000 people. A second attack three days later on Nagasaki killed 70,000 more people. Japan ment for the international society at a time the world faces a surrendered on August 15, endsevere environment surround ing World War II and its nearing atomic weapons?

#### PTI KARACHI/PESHAWAR

 $F^{\mathrm{ive}}$  Japanese nationals had a lucky escape when their vehicle was targeted by militants in a suicide attack here in Pakistan's Sindh province on Friday, police said.

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

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

Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) DIG Asif Aijaz Shaikh told Dawn News that the Japanese nationals were travelling in a van along with two security guards when two terrorists tried to hit the van. The

rorist while another blew himself up in an attempt to get close to the van, the official said. "All five Japanese nationals are safe," DIG Shaikh said. "No one has claimed responsibility so far," the DIG said, adding that the vehicle carrying the Japanese nationals was bullet-proof. Meanwhile, with the death of

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

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

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

On Wednesday, Pakistani security forces killed seven terrorists trying to infiltrate the country's border with Afghanistan in the

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

# money 10

# India standout performer amidst sluggish global growth: IEA Secretary

# PTI WASHINGTON

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.

RAIPUR | SATURDAY | APRIL 20. 2024

The GDP growth estimate for the fiscal, which has been revised upwards from 7.3 per cent to 7.6 per cent in the second advance estimates, highlights the enduring strength and resilience of the Indian economy, India's Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said while addressing the Development Committee meeting here on Thursday. "India grew above 8 per cent

for three consecutive quarters of FY24, reaffirming its position as a standout performer amidst sluggish global growth trends," Šeth said.

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

estimate closer to 8 per cent India's proactive stance on reform and investment in sustainable growth avenues

the pioneer

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 FY24.

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

Seth said that on the external front, the



on

curve

a robust AI ecosystem through

strategic programmes and

partnerships across the public

and private sectors. The focus

technology is expected to

propel India to stay on the

innovation, consolidate and

solidify its position in the

that

of

and

the

technological

infrastructure

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

To catalyse and democratise the Artificial Intelligence (AI) innovation ecosystem in the country, the Centre has approved the "India AI Mission" with a budget outlay of INR 103 billion for building computing developing indigenous AI capabilities, access to datasets, attracting AI talent, and financing AI start-

narrowing

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 said.

"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 said

# 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 second half on value-buying in banking shares. The NSE Nifty jumped 151.15 points or 0.69 per cent to close at 22,147. The broader index dropped to a low of 21,777.65 in early trade before paring its losses to end in the green.

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

and Infosys were among the laggards. Infosys declined nearly 1 per cent after the company's revenue growth guidance for FY25 failed to meet market expectations.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Hong Kong settled in the negative territory. European markets were trading in the red. Wall Street ended mostly lower on Thursday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.55

per cent to USD 87.62 a barrel. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded

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

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



of escalation following Israel's action against Iran. However, fragility persists with elevated oil prices, posing inflation risks," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

"Nifty reversed a four-day losing streak to end higher," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.39 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.04 per cent.

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

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



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

countries.

# PTI NEW DELHI

 $S_{\text{continued to decline on}}^{\text{hares of Nestle India}}$ Friday, ending the day over 1 per cent lower, amid reports that the global FMCG major sold infant milk products with more sugar content in less developed countries

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

company dipped 2.13 per cent to Rs 2,410 during the day. The stock ended at Rs 2,430 apiece, cent cent. On Thursday, shares of Nestle India had declined over 3 per cent. In two days, the company's market capitalisation (mcap) got eroded by Rs 10,610.55 crore to Rs 2,34,974.74 crore. Nestle India on Thursday said it has reduced added sugar on baby food products in India by up to 30 per cent, depending on variants, over the past five years, amid reports that the global FMCG major sold products with more sugar content in less developed

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

# PTI MUMBAI

The strong growth momentum and the GDP projections for 2024-25 give the RBI a policy space to unwaveringly focus on price stability, Governor Shaktikanta Das stressed while voting for a

2023 on concerns over 2023 on concerns ore inflation after the three-day meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

countries, including India, Africa and Latin American nations as compared to markets in Europe When reached out for comments, a company spokesperson said, "Reduction

countries. According to findings by Swiss NGO, Public Eye and International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), Nestle sold baby products with higher sugar content in less developed South Asian earlier this month.

of added sugars is a priority for Nestle India. Over the past 5 **HDFC** years, we have already reduced added sugars by up to 30 per lepending

# The central bank on Friday released the minutes of the meeting. The gains in disinflation achieved over last two years have to be preserved and taken

minutes.

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

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

uto-maker Hyundai Motor

and welcome new customers, increasing income levels and otor India said in a AIndia has expanded its 'Grameen Mahotsav' initiative statement on Friday. The inaugural 'Grameen contribution to 16 new locations across the Mahotsav' event was held successfully in Mahemdavad, country, after the success of its inaugural event held in Gujarat Gujarat. Now, Hyundai Motor India looks forward to this month. The 'Grameen Mahotsav' initiative aims to extending its reach and impact across rural landscapes. further strengthen HMIL's "Our sustained efforts towards connection to rural India with specially curated events and bolstering rural connect are bearing great fruits and Hyundai Motor India has product displays including live music, folk dance, and regional witnessed a remarkable growth talent shows among others. It also serves as a platform for Hyundai to delve into the vast in rural markets in the financial year 2023-24. We sold 1.15 lakh vehicles in rural India potential of rural markets. By last year, a growth of 11 per cent over 2022-23," Hyundai closely engaging with communities and discerning Motor India Ltd. COO Tarun Garg said. "We are confident market trends, HMIL aims to not only cater to evolving

forward towards aligning the headline inflation to the 4 per cent target on a durable basis," he said, according to the

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

MPC member Jayanth R

## PTI NEW DELHI consulate in Syria. This has increased the Gold and silver prices soared to fresh record high levels on Friday with the possibility of a larger regional conflict that would support precious metal breaching Rs

According to HDFC Securities, gold price jumped Rs 400 to hit its lifetime high of Rs 74,100 per 10 grams in Delhi. It had closed at Rs 73,700 per 10 grams on Thursday. Similarly, silver prices rose by Rs 100 to hit a new peak of Rs 86,600 per kg. "Snot o

According to market analysts, a string of reports, including US inflation data which has remained hotter than forecast this year, have pushed the top US Federal Reserve officials to say recently they could hold interest rates high or a while That's a letdown after the Fed earlier had signalled three cuts to interest rates could be possible this year. But Fed officials have been adamant they want to be sure inflation is heading down toward their 2 per cent target before lowering the Fed's main interest rate from its highest level since 2001



# Gold jumps ₹400 to breach ₹74k mark, silver hits fresh peak

higher gold prices. Additionally, silver was quoted higher at USD 28.29 per ounce. 74,000 per 10 grams mark here on bullish global trends. In the previous close, it had finished at USD 28.25 per

ounce.

status quo in the interest rate earlier this month. The Reserve Bank had maintained status-quo on the benchmark lending rate (repo) at 6.5 per cent since February



variant." The spokesperson further said, "We regularly review our portfolio and continue to innovate and reformulate our

compromising on nutrition, quality, safety, and taste.'

# **SUSINESS BRIEF**



#### VITEEE-2024 KICKS OFF AT VIT AP UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

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

#### INDUSTRY, ACADEMIA MEET AND EXHIBITION TODAY

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

products to further reduce the level of added sugars, without

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

# HDFC AMC Q4 profit soars 44 pc to ₹541 crore

MUTUAL FUND

## PTI NEW DELHI

HCompany (AMC) on Friday reported a 44 per cent jump in profit after tax at Rs 541.1 crore in three months ended March 2024.

In comparison, the company posted a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 376.1 crore in the yearago period, the fund house said in a regulatory filing to the

stock exchanges The firm's total income surged by 33 per cent Year-on-Year (YoY) to Rs 851 crore in the quarter under review from Rs 637.8 crore in the January-March quarter of the financial year 2022-23 (FY23).

Additionally, the company's expenses grew 18 per cent YoY to Rs 172 crore in the fourth

quarter ended March 2024. The company's average asset under management (AAUM) stood at Rs 6.13 lakh crore as of March 2024 as against Rs 4.5 lakh crore a year earlier. For the full financial year 2023-24 (FY24), the fund house's PAT surged by 37 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,946 crore and total income rose 27 per cent YoY to Rs 3,162.5 crore. HDFC AMC is an investment manager for HDFC Mutual Fund, one of the leading mutual funds in the country. Shares of HDFC AMC settled

1.73 per cent lower at Rs 3,707.15 apiece on the BSE.

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

nfrastructure the

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

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

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

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

# Infosys shares decline nearly per cent after Q4 earnings

#### PTI NEW DELHI

 $S_1^{\rm hares} {\rm of \ Infosys \ on \ Friday \ ended \ nearly} \\ S_1^{\rm per \ cent \ lower \ after \ the \ company's \ revenue \ growth \ guidance \ for \ FY25 \ failed$ 

to meet market expectations. The stock fell 2.87 per cent to Rs 1,379.70 during the day on the BSE. It finally ended at Rs 1,411.60 apiece, lower by 0.63 per cent

On the NSE, it declined 2.85 per cent to Rs 1,378.75 in intra-day trade. Shares of the company ended at Rs 1,411.95 each, down 0.51 per cent.

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



5.85.936.45 crore.

In volume terms, 8.65 lakh shares of the company were traded on the BSE and over 206.04 lakh shares on the NSE during the day

IT company Infosys on Thursday said its consolidated profit jumped 30 per cent to Rs 7,969 crore in the March 2024 quarter. The company posted a profit of Rs 6,128 crore in the year-ago period, according to

during the quarter increased 1.3 per cent to Rs 37,923 crore from Rs 37,441 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

The company expects a revenue growth of 1-3 per cent in constant currency for FY25 and an operating margin of 20-22 per cent. The growth projection is lower compared to the outlook of between 4 per cent and 7 er cent for FY24.

currency revenue growth for FY25, missing expectations," as per a report by JM Financial Institutional Securities.

a regulatory filing. The consolidated revenue of Infosys

<sup>†</sup>Infosys guided for 1-3 per cent constant

CAG signs pact with SAI Bulgaria to enhance international collaboration

### PTI NEW DELHI

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has signed an agree-ment with SAI Bulgaria, the Bulgarian National Audit Office, in Sofia, in a bid to foster international cooperation. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), inked by the two Supreme audit institutions, aims to enhance collab-

oration and the exchange of expertise in the field of auditing between the two nations, the CAG said in a statement. Through the MoU, a platform will be established for the exchange of knowledge and experience amongst auditing professionals and technical teams through collaboration in training programs, and mutual assistance in conducting

audits, it said.

Girish Chandra Murmu, the CAG of India, expressed confidence in the partnership and said the MoU will further strengthen bilateral cooperation.

'We look forward to working closely with you and assure you of our support and commitment to energize our capacity development initiatives and exchange of knowledge and information between our SAIs,"

he said

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

Office. Murmu further highlighted the broader implications of the MoU, stating it will also help cementing the ties that already exist between the two nations.

Air India cancels

Dubai flights PTI NEW DELHI

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

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

An Air India spokesperson said the airline has cancelled the flights to and from Dubai due to continued operational disruptions at the Dubai

airport. "We are doing our best to get affected customers on their way by re-accommodating them on flights as soon as operations resume," the spokesperson said in a

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



# <u>ne pioneer</u>





# 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 make you unhappy which disturbs the whole unit. So, your character undertakes in the film? n Ek Kori Prem Katha, my character embodies the acceptance of the Kori tradition, deeply rooted in her family, village, and society, which she embraces without a question. The story progresses with a newlywed girl who enters a family, deeply in love with the son. Initially happy with the union, tensions arise in the family when the daughter-in-law refuses to participate in the Kori tradition, leading to shock and hostility where my character begins to gauge the unjust nature of the tradition and the need to refuse the perpetuation of such practices. This marks a transformation in my character, as she starts to support her daughter-in-law in opposing the Kori tradition. Together, they stand up against this outdated tradition in their powerful journey of change and empowerment. The film narrates my character's journey as she challenges outdated traditions for the greater good of evolving our cultural norms.

one adapts and adjusts.

classical enowned dancer Shovana 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

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

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

profound symbolism present in hand-held paintings depicting his darshan.

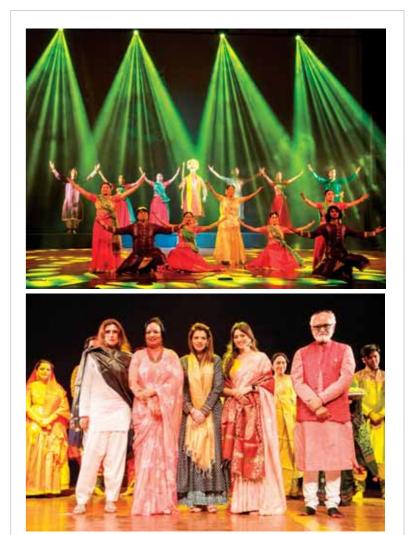
Narayan's choreography s k i l l f u l l y portrayed the m y r i a d emotions stirred bv Lord Ram's arrival, from the joyous anticipation of his devotees to the impact on his family and subjects. Her commitment to social messaging was evident as she unearthed new dimensions of the Ram Katha, resonating with audiences on both

intellectual emotional levels. One of the distinctive "Ram elements of Aagman" was its homage to Goddess

and



Inspired by Beethoven and her Indian roots,



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

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

is evident in every aspect of "Ram

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

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



#### 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 we faced was actually humorous.

#### How did you handle the of outdoor challenges shoots?

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

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

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

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

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

#### Khanak, your character fights against a regressive tradition. How did you prepare for the role of Sabhayata?

0

I researched, and met two victims in Rajasthan, although they were initially not forthcoming about their experiences. I did manage a conversation with one of them. It is unfortunate to see that girls continue to bear such atrocities in a society which speaks of gender inequality. Our film is about the change that is unfolding.

Is there an artist in this industry who influences you?

I think Priyanka Chopra and Parineeti Chopra who was my senior in school. I am really inspired by both of them. Their journey is truly motivational. I will try my best to keep moving ahead.

> Chinmay Purohit (Director), what do you hope the 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.

# Niyamat Mehta, all of 23, has already carved a niche in art history, says SAKSHI PRIYA

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

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

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

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

The sculptor operates from her private studio, Della

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

her creative

process,

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

in New

sanctuary. With an atmosphere

akin to heaven, it provides the

perfect backdrop for her

masterpieces. Here, not only does

she sculpt, she also imparts her

masterclasses, nurturing a new

Niyamat's sculptures are a

testament to her creativity and

attention to detail. Her sculptures,

particularly the Dali series, are

inspired by artists like

Salvador Dali and

generation of sculptors.

Delhi. Her studio is

more than just a

workspace; it is a

located

knowledge

The title means putting your soul into your work which reflects the philosophy Niyamat abides by. She believes every sculpture of hers embodies a piece of her, an expression of herself. This guiding principle is evident in every Atelier Firenze,

through

essence. Looking ahead, Niyamat aims to persist with commissioned work, hold solo

sculpture

presents, imbuing

them with a soulful

she

Auguste Rodin. Drawing from

their styles, she strives to compose

something unique of her own,

blending surrealism and

romanticism to create sculptures

rich in expressions and emotions.

Her recent solo exhibition,

Meraki, showcased 27 sculptures

that invited viewers to

contemplate their own journeys.

exhibitions, and ensure that her sculptures find their way into the collections of art collectors who truly value her artistry. She wants the next generation of sculptors to approach this career without fear, embrace commissioned work, participate in exhibitions, and serve as their own most discerning critics.

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

diversity of preferences, dislikes, and opinions across various

Niyamat believes that the

# sports 12

he pioneer RAIPUR | SATURDAY | APRIL 20, 2024

PREMIER LEAGUE

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

foreign flavour of the season -

will be keen to build on his 39-

ball century and his partner Abhishek Sharma (211 runs) is

no pushover either. Both have

a penchant for taking the aerial

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 finishers

international cricket with

propensity to hit balls out of

the stadium, which gives SRH's

But Kuldeep Yadav's (economy

of 6.06) left-arm wrist spin

could well prove to be a game-changer and in Tristan Stubbs,

Pant has got an ideal third spin

option alongside Axar Patel

(6.75). Pant, who is himself

best

batting a scary look.

the

Abhishek's

in

route during powerplay. Head and Abh

# ISHABH PANT SET FOR EMOTIONAL HOMECOMING

8 8

8-8

## PTI NEW DELHI

emotional homecoming awaits A 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 had a mixed

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



getting back to the top of his which may not be able to hold game, wouldn't mind if he can its own on a good batting win the toss and opt to bat. track.

But David Warner's knuckle injury is a cause for concern for Pant and head coach Ricky Ponting although Jake Fraser-McGurk has impressed one 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 economy rate of less than eight runs per over, which is considered good in T20.

However, the seasoned duo of Jaydev Unadkat (11.35) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (10.45) have both been average while the tweakers - wrist spinner Mayank Markande (11.23) and left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed (ER 12.44) — have been sent on a leather hunt. The best option for Pant would be to open the batting and go for the jugular against SRH, putting a scoreboard pressure on the rampaging Orange 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

**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 Nortje,

Mukesh Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav, Praveen Dubey, Khaleel Ahmed, Sumit Kumar, Axar Patel, Mitchell Marsh, Lalit Yaday, Jake Fraser-McGurk. Sunrisers Hyderabad: Pat Cummins (c), Abdul Samad, Abhishek Sharma, Aiden Markram, Marco Jansen, Rahul Tripathi, Washington Sundar, Glenn Phillips, Sanvir Singh, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mayank Agarwal, T. Natarajan, Anmolpreet Singh, Mayank Markande, Upendra Singh Yadav (wk), Umran Malik, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Shahbaz Ahmed, Travis Head, Jaydev Unadkat, Akash Singh, Jhathavedh Subramanyan



# Hardik Pandya fined for slow over rate against Punjab Kings

PTI MULLANPUR (PUNJAB)

ninth after their fifth defeat. "Hardik Pandya, the Mumbai Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya has been Indians captain, has been his team fined

# It was my dream to play sweep shot against Bumrah: Ashutosh

## PTI MULLANPUR (PUNJAB)

**D**<sup>unjab</sup> Kings' batting Ashutosh **r** sensation Sharma said he lived a "dream' when he swept "world's best fast bowler" Jasprit Bumrah during his team's IPL clash against Mumbai Indians here. The 25-year-old Ashutosh put the Bumrah-led Mumbai Indians' bowling to sword here Thursday when he hammered seven sixes and two fours to make 61 off a mere 28 balls, a knock which brought PBKS back from the brink after an early collapse. PBKS were 17/4 inside the powerplay but courtesy the stunning fightback from Ashutosh and Shashank Singh (41), they were able to get close to MI's 193-run target before

losing by nine runs. It was in the 13th over of Puniah's chase y rhen Ashutosh



for the team," he said. Ashutosh credited former India player and coach Sanjay Bangar, head of cricket development at PBKS, for his improvement this season. "Sanjay sir told me that I am not a slogger and that I can play pro ret shots. It was a small statement but carried a huge meaning for me. I am only following it - I am not a hard-hitter, I am playing proper cricketing shots and that is what has changed my game," Ashutosh

**IDFC FIRST Bank Limited** 

Registered Office: KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai - 600031

ile Capital First Limited a

CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792

said

"Back home, I was working with my coach Amay Khurasiya who had told me that the longer you stay on the pitch, the more your team has a chance of winning," he added.

The right-handed batter, who just wanted to be really clear tactically what we want made

# 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 He gave me a chance, and also Ricky Ponting said on Friday that fans should be able to decide on the future of this contentious system.

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

"Winning and losing are part of the game. How you are "Look, I think, I read some really interesting really, 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 "He really brought it to us. We

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 the fact that teams are making, you know, 220 up to 250 in a lot of the games, and the spectators like seeing it, then it should stay.

No. 8. Pretty much. But look, I think for a coach and for the

'But if the spectators aren't 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%

fit" David Warner, who missed the last match due to a knuckle

the entire Punjab team which showed belief in me. Our head coach Trevor Bayliss, Ashish (Tuli) paaji, Shikhar (Dhawan) paaji, everyone believed in me, so it was for all of them," he added. Punjab slumped to their fifth defeat in seven matches as well as to the ninth spot in the points table, but Ashutosh said

playing is something that matters and we are playing well as a team. If we will play well, we will win," he said. Mumbai Indians' pacer Gerald Coetzee conceded his side was tense after Ashutosh's stunning onslaught.

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,

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 ÎPL statement on Friday. "As it was his team's first offence of the season under

while PBKS dropped a spot to

the IPI's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Pandya was fined Rs 12 lakhs," the statement added.

**OTHER SPORTS** 

Group condemns searches by

Mumbai Indians next play Rajasthan Royals in Jaipur on April 22.

got down low on his front to convert an attempted yorker from Bumrah into a full toss and smack it for a six over backward square leg. "It was my dream to hit a sweep shot against Bumrah. I was practising for that shot but it came against the best bowler in the world - it is a part of the

game," Ashutosh told the media here after the match. Ashutosh said he was confident of taking Punjab over the line.

"I had belief in myself that I would be able to win the game

PBKS dugout after the completing his fifty, said the celebrations were meant for his team management. 'That celebration was for our Sanjay (Bangar) sir, I have

been working a lot with him all tactical discussions," he and I keep asking him added.

do. We executed really well to him in the back end to shut it down and win the game," the South African bowler said.

questions," Ashutosh said

his side has been playing well.

"But it was tense, as I think everyone saw. But it was just

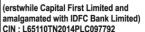
Bank

**IDFC FIRST** 



Authorised Signatory

## **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited**





Registered Office: KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai-600031. TEL: +91 44 4564 4000 | FAX: +91 44 4564 4022.



Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited) 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 dated 18.11.2023 calling upon the borrower, co-borrowers and guarantors 1. Aman Raj Diwakar, 2. Santoshi Diwakar to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 5,57,289.57/- (Rupees Five Lac Fifty Seven Thousand Two Hundred Eighty Nine And Fifty Seven Paise Only) as on 18.11.2023 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Demand notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrow and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub – section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 on this **12<sup>th</sup> day of April 2024**.

The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of THE IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited) for an amount of Rs. 5,57,289.57/- (Rupees Five Lac Fifty Seven Thousand Two Hundred Eighty Nine And Fifty Seven Paise Only) and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub - Section (8) Of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets

#### Description of the Immovable properties.

All That Piece And Parcel Of Property Area 1000 Sq. Ft. Situated At Part Of Khasra garh, P.H. No. 11, R.N.M.- Nawagarh, Tehsil- Nawagarh outh Sd/ficer ited

| 495557, And Bounded As: East: Na  | ahar & Rasta, West: Khet, North: Gaukaran, South: |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Hitesh                            | Sd/-  |
|                                   | Authorised Officer                                |
| Date: 12 <sup>th</sup> April 2024 | IDFC FIRST Bank Limited                           |
| Place: Champa                     | (erstwhile Capital First Limited and              |

amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)

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.

match earlier this week. Paris Saint-Germain won the answered. Anoush Morel, the director

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 4-1 and advanced to Champions League the 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"

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

security at Barcelona stadium Acco Numl 67457 40025 69339 102107 & 57080 64444 38649 of The Bor dealing amalg from the

Date : 12 & 13-04-2024

Place : Chhattisgarh

#### Tel: +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax : +91 44 4564 4022 APPENDIX IV [Rule 8(1)] **POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)**

with IDFC Bank Limited)

Whereas the undersigned being the authorized officer of IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamat with IDFC Bank Limited) 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) of the said Act read with [rule 3] of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued a demand notices calling upon the Borrower/ Co-borrowers and Guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the demand notice appended below within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice together with further interest and other charges from th date of demand notice till payment/realization.

The Borrower/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/ Co-Borrowers Guarantors and public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under sub-section (4) of Section 13 of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 or

| Loan<br>Account<br>Number | Borrower/s/<br>Co-borrower/s &<br>Guarantors Name   | Description of<br>The Mortgaged Properties  | Demand Notice |                             | Date and                             |
|---------------------------|---|---|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                           |   |   | Date          | Outstanding<br>Amount (Rs.) | Type of<br>Possession<br>Taken       |
| 67457265                  | 1. Davraj Khute,<br>2. Sonam Khute  | All That Piece And Parcel Of Residential House On<br>Aabadi Land Part Of Khasra No. 381, Plot No 04,<br>Admeasuring 343 Sq. Mtr., Mouja Chaitra, Old Ph No. 09<br>New Ph No 11 Ric Fingeshwar Tah Rajim Dist.<br>Gariyaband, Raipur, Chattisgarh-493992, And, Bounded<br>As: East : House Of Naresh & Kejai, West : House Of<br>Rajesh & Panna, North : Badi Of Kartik , South :<br>House Of Punam & Gali | 12-08-2023    | Rs.<br>5,16,128.36 /-       | 13-04-2024<br>Symbolic<br>Possession |
| 40025387<br>&<br>69339839 | 1. Hemlal Barle,<br>2. Gaind Ram<br>Barle,<br>3. Himani Barle,<br>4. Sumitra Bai<br>Barle | All That Piece And Parcel Of Land Area 0.02 Hec.<br>(2152.782 Sq. Ft.), Land Bearing Old Khasra. No. 430,<br>New Khasra. No.430/2, Situated At Gram: Sendar, Old P.<br>H. No. 19, New P.H. No. 11, R.I.C & Tehsil: Rajim, Tehsil<br>Rajim, District-Gariyaband, Chhastlisgarh – 493992, And<br>Bounded As: East: Land Of Ganesheya, West : Gali,<br>North: Land Of Manglu, South: Rambharosa              | 18-11-2023    | Rs.<br>9,66,457.56/-        | 13-04-2024<br>Symbolic<br>Possession |
| &                         | 1. Haripriya<br>Manikpuri,<br>2. Ishwar Das<br>Manikpuri                                  | All That Piece And Parcel Of Property Area 0.010 Hec.<br>(1076.391 Sq. Ft.), Situated At Kh. No. 1146/2, Village:<br>Kasdol, P. H.No. 09, R.N.M & Tehsil: Kasdol, District:<br>Balodabazar Bhatapara, Chhatisgarh - 493335, And Bounded<br>As : East : Gali & House Of Rajendra, West : House Of<br>Vyas, North : House Of Jawahar, South : Gali  | 18.11.2023    | Rs.<br>7,84,232.86/-        | 13-04-2024<br>Symbolic<br>Possession |
| 64444326<br>&<br>38649098 | 1. Markandeshwer<br>Pradhan,<br>2. Shweta Sahu  | All That Piece And Parcel Of Property / Land Old Khasra<br>No. 1238/1 (Part), New Khasra No. 1238/3, Area 0.04<br>Hectare, Situated At Village: Pounsra, P.H.No. 29, R. N.<br>M - Basna, Tehsil: Basna, District : Mahasamund,<br>Chhattisgarh-493554, And Bounded As : East : Land Of<br>Monupwani, West : Land Of Seller, North : Road<br>South: Land Of Sugriv   | 25.11.2023    | Rs.<br>29,22,129.29/-       | 12-04-2024<br>Symbolic<br>Possession |

**IDFC FIRST Bank Limited** (erstwhile Capital First Limited ated with **IDFC Bank Limite** 

| First Limited and          | No. 5850/1, Village: Naway<br>Ward No. 15, Nagar Pancha<br>495557, And Bounded As: E<br>Hitesh |
|----------------------------|--|
| Sd/-<br>Authorised Officer |  |

oan Account No: 65698726