

OPINION 6HISTORIC LEGAL BATTLE
UNFOLDS OVER GYANVAPI**WORLD 8**CLUSTER OF QUAKE
RATTLE TAIWAN**MONEY 10**MARKETS CLIMB FOR 3RD DAY
ON FIRM GLOBAL CUES

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12 SPORTS

Modi takes Hanuman Chalisa dig at Congress



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated by BJP leaders during a public meeting for Lok Sabha elections in Tonk district Rajasthan on Tuesday

it could not fulfil its intention," Modi claimed.

"In 2011, the Congress tried to implement it throughout the country. They played a game of snatching away the rights given to SC, ST and OBC and giving them to others for vote bank politics. The Congress did this deliberately and without caring about the Constitution and B R Ambedkar," he said. Modi alleged when the BJP Government in Karnataka got an opportunity, the first thing it did was to abolish the Muslim quota which was created by snatching it from ST and SC. The Prime Minister said the constitutional limit for reservation was ending in 2020 and he had extended the reservation of Dalit and tribals for another 10 years. The Congress and INDIA Bloc, Modi said, were peeved after he exposed their vote bank and appeasement politics in his recent address in Rajasthan's Banswara.

Attacking the Congress, Modi said, "Even listening to Hanuman Chalisa becomes crime under Congress rule" and referred to an incident in Congress-ruled Karnataka where a shopkeeper was beaten up for listening to Hanuman Chalisa. He said during the Congress rule in Rajasthan, those who pelted stones on Ram Navmi procession were given protection and restrictions were imposed on such procession. However, after the formation of the BJP Government in the State, no one has the courage to question faith.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAIPUR/RAIPUR/NEW DELHI

In his two different election rallies on Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi continued his attack on the Congress, addressing the current controversy over wealth redistribution, a dispute over forced Constitution in Goa, and alleging that the grand old party never allows the recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and the celebration of Ram Navmi within the Congress-ruled States. In his Rajasthan tour, Modi said the Congress tried to extend

reservation on the basis of religion and give it to Muslims, and once again accused the party of hatching a "deep conspiracy" to snatch people's wealth and distribute it among "select" people. Modi also charged that it is difficult to follow one's faith under the Congress and that even listening to Hanuman Chalisa becomes crime under that party's rule. His remarks come on a day when the country is celebrating Hanuman Jayanti.

Addressing an election rally in Tonk, the Prime Minister said as soon as the Congress formed the Government at the Centre in 2004, one of its first task was to reduce the SC/ST reservation in Andhra Pradesh and give it to Muslims. "Modi is giving you a guarantee with an open heart that reservation for Dalits and backward tribals will neither end nor will it be allowed to be divided in the name of religion," he said. Amid a row over his 'redistribution of wealth'

remarks, the Prime Minister again charged that the Congress will snatch people's wealth and distribute it to select people. Modi said the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had given a speech in which he had said that Muslims have the first right on the resources of the country. "There was a pilot project which the Congress wanted to try in the entire country. Between 2004 and 2010, the Congress tried to implement Muslim reservation in Andhra Pradesh four times but due to legal hurdles and the awareness of the Supreme Court,

Gusty winds swept the national Capital as parts of Delhi received light rain on Tuesday, bringing respite to people
Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

Asia worst hit by disasters in 2023: WMO report

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Last year, Asia faced the most disasters in the world as 79 events associated with extreme weather, climate, and water-related hazards, affecting over nine million people in the region and claiming over 2,000 lives, a new report by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has said. Thus, underscoring the urgent need for concerted action to mitigate impacts of climate change and protect our planet for future generations. The report 'State of the Climate in Asia 2023' which was released on Tuesday on 'World Earth Day' noted that Asia has warmed faster than the global average and the warming trend has nearly doubled since the 1961-1990 period. The accelerating rate of key climate change indicators such as surface temperatures, glacier retreat and sea level rise will have major consequences for Asia, its economy and ecosystems, the report warned. In India alone, severe heatwaves in April and June resulted in about 110

reported fatalities due to heatstroke in 2023, said the report adding in August, some States in India experienced a record-high monthly mean temperature, as well as an unprecedented rainfall deficit for the month.

Continued on Page 2

Delhi hit by freak weather

NEW DELHI: Strong winds and rains that lashed the national Capital on Tuesday provided much-needed relief for Delhiites, offering respite from the scorching hot weather. The sudden atmospheric change brought down the temperature, even as the weather officials have predicted no heat wave conditions for the next seven days. The Met office has forecast partly cloudy sky with light rain/thunderstorm with hail and squall on Wednesday.



DGCA directs airlines to let kids sit with parents

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has asked airlines to ensure children below the age of 12 are seated with at least one of their parents or guardians who are travelling on the same PNR. The directive comes against the backdrop of instances of children below the age of 12 years were not seated along with their parents or guardians during flights. "Airlines shall ensure that children up to the age of 12 years are allocated seats with at least one of their parents/guardians, who are travelling on the same PNR and a record of the same shall be maintained," the DGCA said. In this regard, the DGCA has revised the Air Transport Circular titled, 'unbundle of services and fees by scheduled airlines' as per which, some services like zero baggage, preferential seating, meals/snack/drink charges, charges for carriage of musical instruments etc. have been allowed. "Such unbundled services are provided on 'opt-in' basis by airlines and are not mandatory in nature. There is also a provision for auto seat assignment to the passengers who have not selected any seat for web check-in before scheduled departure.

Kejriwal given insulin in Tihar jail



SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was administered a "low dose" of insulin on Tuesday in Tihar jail after his blood sugar level spiked. Meanwhile, a Rouse Avenue court on Tuesday extended the judicial custody of Kejriwal and BRS leader K Kavitha in a money laundering case related to the alleged excise scam till May 7. "Kejriwal was given two units of low dose insulin on Monday evening on the advice of AIIMS doctors," a Tihar official said. His blood sugar level reading was found to be 217 around 7 pm, following which the doctors at Tihar looking after him decided to give him the insulin, the official said. The AIIMS specialists, during a video conference with the Chief Minister on April 20, had advised the Tihar doctors that insulin could be given to him if his sugar level crosses a certain

level, officials added. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) welcomed this news received on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti and said the development was the result of the blessings of the deity. Delhi Cabinet minister Atishi said in a post on X in Hindi, "Jai Bajrang Bali! Good news received on Hanuman Jayanti. Tihar administration finally gave insulin to Arvind Kejriwal. This is the result of the blessings of Hanuman ji and the struggle of the people of Delhi. Even in this time of struggle, the blessings of Bajrang Bali remain on all of us." Meanwhile, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva alleged that the AAP leaders "only political hope" was to "create public sympathy" over the health of Kejriwal in view of the Lok Sabha elections. "No doubt Arvind Kejriwal is a diabetic but his sugar is under control in jail as he didn't raise demand for insulin in the video consultation with the doctors of AIIMS," he said. Rebuking the charges, the CM, in a letter to the jail administration, said he has raised the issue of insulin for 10 days, every day, multiple times. Delhi Cabinet Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj who participated in an event in his constituency to celebrate Hanuman Jayanti. A person dressed as Lord Hanuman was carrying vials of insulin with Bharadwaj carrying a mace ('gada') as they travelled in the area atop a vehicle. Vials of insulin were stuck on the mace.

UNCONDITIONAL PUBLIC APOLOGY

In wake of on going matter before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India (Writ Petition C. No. 645/2022), we in our individual capacity as well as on behalf of the Company, unconditionally apologise for the non-compliance or disobedience of directions/orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

We unconditionally extend the apology for holding meeting/press conference dated 22.11.2023. We earnestly apologize for the mistake made in publishing our advertisements and it is our whole-hearted commitment that such errors will not be repeated. We undertake to abide by directions and instructions of the Hon'ble Court with due care and utmost sincerity. We undertake to uphold the majesty of the court and comply with applicable laws and directions of the Hon'ble Court of law/relevant authorities.

Sincerely,

**Patanjali Ayurved Limited,
Acharya Balkrishna,
Swami Ramdev,
Haridwar, Uttarakhand**

Two Christian sects not with BJP

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

With hardly four days to go for the Lok Sabha election in Kerala, two prominent Christian sects have come out against the BJP-led NDA Government at the Centre. On Monday, Joseph Mar Gregorios, the head of the Jacobite Church, declared that the followers of his sect would vote en masse for candidates fielded by the CPI(M)-led LDF. "The LDF Government in Kerala have always supported and helped the Church. The CPI(M) has stood with the demands of the Church and hence we are obliged and bound to help them by electing the LDF candidates," said the Jacobite Church. But he was evasive when asked about the Congress candidate Benni Behanan, the



Congress candidate and a member of the Jacobite Church who is pitted against two Hindu candidates fielded by the CPI(M) and the NDA at Chhakkudi constituency. "Let the believers take their own decision after studying the ground realities.

The interests of the Church should prevail," said Gregorios. He also said the Jacobite Church has a lot of issues regarding the control of Churches and it is the CPI(M) that had always stood with the sect. Meanwhile, the Latin Catholic Church, a dominant

section along coastal Kerala declared that it would never support the BJP. The Kerala Region Latin Catholic Council, the apex decision making body of the sect declared on Monday that the Central Government has subverted the missionary works (proselytisation, evangelisation and indoctrination) by holding back the funds meant for the Latin Catholic Church. Even after assuring that the funds meant for the Church would not be held back, the Central Government has withheld two more accounts and this has made missionary works impossible. The training of young pastors and priests too have been stuck because of the delay in releasing the funds," said the KRLCC in a release issued on Monday.



BJP gains momentum in Khunti as Arjun Munda files nomination

PNS ■ Jamshedpur

In a significant moment in the political landscape of Khunti, Union Minister Arjun Munda filed his nomination for the Khunti Lok Sabha seat. Amidst the auspicious aura of blessings sought from Maa Durga and Bhole Baba, Munda's candidacy resonated deeply with the public, drawing a massive crowd of supporters and party workers. The vibrant display of solidarity underscored the growing momentum behind the BJP in the region.

The atmosphere was charged with enthusiasm as hundreds of party workers and senior leaders from Jamshedpur rallied behind Munda, reaffirming their commitment to the BJP's cause. Among them stood senior party leader and former party spokesperson Amarpreet Singh Kale, whose presence further galvanized the spirits of the attendees.

In an address to the gathering, Kale lauded Munda not only as an astute politician but also as an exemplary human being, endearing him to the hearts of the people



Arjun Munda Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Khunti Lok Sabha candidate Arjun Munda, State BJP President Babulal Marandi, AJSU Party Chief Sudesh Mahto along with others during a road show after filing his nomination papers for Khunti Lok Sabha election 2024 in Khunti on Tuesday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

of Khunti. He emphasized the deep-rooted affection and trust that the public holds for Munda, expressing confidence that the compassionate and diligent citizens of Khunti would once again extend their unwavering support and blessings to him. Beyond the local context, Kale shed light on the broader national sentiment, highlighting the prevailing faith and reverence towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He articulated the widespread belief among countrymen that under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India is destined to emerge as a developed nation, brimming with happiness, peace, and prosperity.

The event served as a testament to the growing influence and appeal of the BJP in Khunti, with Munda's nomination symbolizing a beacon of hope and progress for the constituents. As the election season unfolds, all eyes are on Khunti, where the winds of change blow in favor of the BJP, propelled by the collective aspirations for a brighter future under the leadership of Arjun Munda and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Prowatch Revolutionizes Smartwatch Market with Debut of Prowatch ZN and Prowatch VN

PNS ■ Ranchi

Prowatch, a sub-brand of Lava International, proudly announces its entry into the smartwatch arena with the unveiling of two models: Prowatch ZN and Prowatch VN.

Prowatch ZN: Elevating Performance and Style Prowatch ZN sets a new standard in the smartwatch industry with its revolutionary features and unmatched performance. Boasting a segment-first CORNING® GORILLA® GLASS 3 protection and a high-accuracy PPG sensor for continuous heart rate monitoring, this marvel of engineering is designed to empower users in their pursuit of a healthier lifestyle. With a starting price of just Rs. 2,599, Prowatch ZN delivers advanced features, comprising a sleek circular dial with a practical rotating crown, a vivid 1.43-inch AMOLED display boasting a resolution of 466*466, comprehensive health tracking capabilities, an extensive array of over 110 sports modes, 150 customizable watch faces, seamless smart notifications, rapid charging for continuous usage, and a sturdy metallic build ensuring durability for daily wear.

XITE College students gain practical insights during industrial visit



PNS ■ Jamshedpur

Students from the Department of Economics at XITE College, Gambaria, had a remarkable opportunity to bridge

their academic knowledge with real-world industrial operations during an educational visit to Bhalotia Auto Products Pvt. Ltd., located in the bustling Adityapur Industrial Area.

Accompanied by esteemed faculty member Dr. Radha Mahali, the final year students were hosted by the company's diligent team including N. Saran, Purchasing & Storing Manager and Ashwini Kumar, Technical Manager. The visit centered around an in-depth tour and presentation of the manufacturing processes involved in the production of brake drums, a critical component in automotive manufacturing.

The visit was meticulously organized to provide the students with a comprehensive look at the various stages of the brake drum production process, including:

- Sand Preparation, Mixing and Moulding: Initial steps involving the preparation and casting of moulds.
- Melting and Pouring: The use of an induction furnace to melt materials and the techniques of molten metal handling.
- Cooling and Knock-Out: Critical cooling times and methods for removing excess material. Shot

Blasting and Machining: Advanced cleaning processes and precise machining for product refinement. Balancing, Painting and Packing: The final stages of production ensure quality and market readiness.

Saran provided valuable insights into the complexities of managing industrial operations, emphasizing the importance of efficiency and quality control in the competitive auto manufacturing sector.

This visit forms part of XITE College's commitment to provide its students with practical experiences that complement their rigorous academic curriculum. "Such industrial visits are crucial in helping our students understand the practical challenges and innovations in the manufacturing industry," said Dr. Radha Mahali. It bridges the gap between classroom theory and practical business operations, preparing our students to be industry-ready.

Loyola School observes World Earth Day

PNS ■ Jamshedpur

Loyola School's students commemorated World Earth Day with deep dedication and a sense of responsibility. The day commenced with a special assembly, featuring a prayer where students vowed to safeguard the planet Earth.

The event included a captivating presentation by students, shedding light on the urgency of combating climate change and advocating various methods of environmental conservation. A poignant dance performance further underscored the imperative for collective action in preserving our ecosystem and mitigating the impacts of global warming.

Father Vinod Fernandes, Principal of Loyola School, commended the



students for their initiatives. In his address, he emphasized the universal significance of Earth Day, stressing the school's commitment to the Tarumitra project aimed at instilling environmental awareness among students.

Additionally, the occasion served as a tribute to ten distinguished alumni who graciously volunteered their time to conduct classes for students, facilitating continuity in education amidst teacher absences due to board paper evaluations.

First 4G BTS commissioned in Jharkhand

PNS ■ Ranchi

BSNL, a leading national level mobile service provider, is ready to serve various areas of the country with 4G built with completely indigenous technology. In this series, the first 4G BTS in Jharkhand circle was also commissioned on 22.04.2024 in Kuchu, a remote village of Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand, by Chief General Manager Sanjay Kumar in the presence of circle head of TCS and TEJAS, in which 40 Mbps speed was found. This 4G BTS has been manufactured by the indigenous company TCS. On this occasion, other senior officials PGM CFA Ashish Kumar Das, PGM CM Ramashray Prasad, GM BA Umesh Prasad Sah, GM EB Vijay Kumar Maurya were present. Another BTS has been commissioned under 4G Saturation Project in Koolmara village of Musabani block of Jamshedpur on Tuesday. This indigenous 4G BTS was inaugurated by Vijay Kumar, General Manager, Jamshedpur.



BSNL has so far constructed 633 towers under the 4G Saturation Project which is spread in remote areas in every corner of the state where even today there is no signal of any operator. All these towers will be started sequentially. Apart from this, BSNL will upgrade its 2G/3G service to 4G on all towers. A target has been set to make 400 BTSs operational with 4G service by the month of May. BSNL Jharkhand circle has always been ready to provide better service to the people of the state.

In the successful commissioning of 4G BTS, Vidyabhushan Deputy General Manager, Rameshwar Prasad Mahato Deputy General Manager, Rakesh Kumar Assistant General Manager, Ramesh Kumar Assistant General Manager, Uttam Kumar Sub Divisional Engineer, Nikhil Kumar Singh Sub Divisional Engineer and the team of Ranchi and Jamshedpur played an important role.

Three sentenced to 4-yr jail under Arms Act in Garhwa

Nityanand Dubey ■ Garhwa

The court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Garhwa Kumar Vipul sentenced four year imprisonment to three accused, on Tuesday. Court also imposed a fine of Rs. 10 thousand to each accused under Arms Act. The three persons sentenced to imprisonment were identified as Ravi Tiwari, Atul Dhar Dubey and Anjan Dhar Dubey of Hasker village under Garhwa Police Station.

According to the FIR lodged in Garhwa police station, a police team was on patrol on the morning of 28 June 2023. In the same sequence, a robbery took place near Pachpadwa village and a cordon was laid to catch the robbers. In the same sequence, on the information of the villagers, the police tried to stop a black Scorpio car coming from Korwadhi. But on seeing the police, three people sitting in the car started running. Police ran and caught one of them. While two people were successful in escaping by taking advantage of the

forest and bushes. On asking the name and address of the arrested person, he told his name as Ravi Tiwari. During the search, a loaded magazine and a country-made pistol were recovered from his left waist. On removing the magazine, five rounds of live cartridges were recovered from it and 80 notes of Rs 500 were recovered from Ravi's pocket. During the search, another loaded country-made pistol was recovered in a black plastic from the rear seat of the car. When asked about this, Ravi did not give a satisfactory answer. He told the names of the two people who ran away as Atul Dhar Dubey and Anjan Dhar Dubey. On the basis of his confession statement, those people were also accused and Ravi Tiwari was sent to judicial custody. Later, the other two accused were also arrested and sent to jail. After this, the police conducted an investigation and submitted a charge sheet against these accused under section 394 IPC. Charges were framed against the accused and the evidence of witnesses was presented in the court by the prosecution.

7 candidates file nomination papers from Lohardaga on the 5th day

BJP's Sameer Oraon, independent Chamra Linda to file nomination on 24th.

VINOD PRASAD ■ Lohardaga

On Tuesday, the fifth day of the Lohardaga nomination process, three candidates for the Lohardaga Lok Sabha constituency reserved for Scheduled Castes attended the room of Gumla Returning Officer Karan Satyarthi and filed their nomination forms. Which includes Bharat Adivasi Party candidate Marianus Tigga, independent candidate Pawan Tigga, independent candidate Shania Oraon. Whereas today another candidate has purchased the nomination paper. Whereas four candidates had filed their nomination forms on Monday, April 22 by presenting themselves in the room of Returning Officer Karan Satyarthi. These include CPI's Mahendra Oraon, Partner Party's Mani Munda, Independent Stephen Kindo Jar People's Party of India



(Democratic)'s Bihari Bhagat. First, CPI's Mahendra Oraon had come to file nomination with his supporters. All the supporters and party workers were holding the red flag of their party in their hands and were walking shouting slogans. All the party workers were stopped on the way to the Collectorate near the court. The administration deployed barricades and police here. Representatives of the administration deployed on the spot said that only five people including the candidate will be able to go ahead for nomination. The second nomination was filed by partner party candidate Mani Munda. At the third position, independent candidate Stephen Kindo had come to file his nomination. His supporters had come to file their nominations, playing drums and shouting slogans. On the other hand, the fourth nomination paper was filed by People's Party of India (Democratic) candidate Bihari Bhagat. All the candidates reached the office room of Returning Officer Karan Satyarthi and filed their nomination papers. According to the information, seven candidates have filed their nomination papers from Lohardaga Lok Sabha constituency. Whereas so far 15 people have purchased nomination papers from Lohardaga Lok Sabha constituency. It was told that BJP candidate Sameer Oraon, MLA Chamra Linda will file their nomination papers on 24th.

Joba Majhi files nomination papers for Singhbhum Lok Sabha Seat



PNS ■ Jamshedpur

In a significant development for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections, Joba Majhi, the joint candidate nominated by the INDIA Bloc, officially entered the electoral fray by filing nomination papers for the Singhbhum Lok Sabha constituency. The event, held in the vibrant presence of Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren

and Kalpana Soren, wife of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader and former CM Hemant Soren, garnered immense attention and enthusiasm from supporters and onlookers alike. Joba Majhi's candidature, backed by the collaborative efforts of the INDIA Bloc, signifies a united front aimed at addressing the diverse needs and aspirations of the constituency. With a strong emphasis on

Elephants create ruckus kill man in Lohardaga

PNS ■ Lohardaga

A herd of wild elephants has once again wreaked havoc in Kudu. On Monday late night around 10:30 pm, a person was crushed to death by wild elephants in Chandra village of Kakargarh Panchayat of the block. The deceased has been identified as Mahavir Oraon (35 years), son of Shukra Oraon, resident of Chandalaso village of the block area. According to the information, at around 10:30 pm on Monday night, villagers in Badmada Itara village received information about a herd of 20 to 25 wild elephants coming towards the village. After receiving the information, the villagers united with torches, bombs and firecrackers and set out to drive away the elephants. Meanwhile, Mahavir Oraon, who was irrigating his field near the dam located on the border of Badmara and Chandalaso villages, also

went to drive away the elephant. Then the villagers and the herd of elephants came face to face near Mahavir Bhagat's crusher. Seeing the elephants in front, people ran here and there in panic to save their lives while Mahavir fell on the ground and was crushed to death by the elephants. Shortly after the accident, the villagers took Mahavir to Kudu Community Health Centre, where the doctors declared him dead after examination. Apart from his wife, the deceased has four children. Lohardaga Deputy Commissioner Dr Waghmare Prasad Krishna immediately took cognizance of the incident, after which a compensation of Rs 25,000 was given to the wife of the deceased by DFO Lohardaga as temporary relief. After this accident, the villagers of the area are angry with the working style of the Forest Department.

Former Maoist cum ex-MP Kameshwar Baitha files nomination

PNS ■ DALTONGANJ

Former Maoist cum former MP Kameshwar Baitha today filed his nomination paper. He described himself as a BSP candidate. It was in 2007 that Baitha had contested his first Lok Sabha election on the BSP ticket. It was a mid term election in 2007. He had given a very tough fight to the RJD candidate Ghuran Ram in 2007 who had finally won this lok sabha seat defeating Baitha by just 20, 000 votes or so. In the general election in 2009 Baitha crossed the floor and joined the JMM. He contested the 2009 Lok Sabha election on the JMM ticket and routed his rival Ghuran Ram of the RJD by around 23, 000 votes. Baitha thus became the first former naxal to become lok sabha member in India. He got rave reviews. Many saw in him the light of new democracy then. He was hailed as a harbinger of



hope. Many believed then that there would be more such former naxals joining electoral politics. But nothing like that happened. Baitha too flew high in the air. Baitha had little over 11 percent of the vote share in the 2009 victory of him. Come 2014 and Baitha again switched to another political party. He joined the TMC of Mamta Banerjee. This election proved disastrous. He polled less than 40,000 votes. In 2014 lok sabha election Baitha's poll share slumped over to little over 2 percent from little over 11 percent that he had in 2009 lok sabha election that he had won. The wise Baitha did not contest the 2019 Lok Sabha election. He has filed his nomination paper today after 10 years of sitting, watching and roaming around the constituency politically in Palamu.

BJP develops society and country, INDI Alliance family: Rajnath Singh

'Migration and displacement of tribals is the contribution of Congress'



Arjun Munda Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Khunti Lok Sabha candidate Arjun Munda and State BJP President Babul Marandi during a road show after filling his nomination papers for Khunti Lok Sabha election 2024 in Khunti on Tuesday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

PNS : RANCHI

Union Defense Minister Rajnath Singh participated in the nomination of Lok Sabha candidate and Union Minister Arjun Munda in Khunti on Tuesday and addressed a huge public meeting organized there. During this, he fiercely attacked the constituent parties of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Congress and Indi Alliance. He said that the Indi Alliance wants to gain support by creating fear among

the people. BJP wants their support through love, affection and respect. Politics cannot be done for long by lying and throwing dust in the eyes of the public. The people at Indi Alliance are doing the same thing. Singh said that after the formation of Jharkhand, BJP had three CMs. None of them were tainted with corruption. A CM of Jharkhand is a guest of the government. For the first time I had heard of a CM going missing for one and a half days. He was also

from Jharkhand. The Union Home Minister said that the people of Indi Alliance do politics for the family. They do not make society and country. BJP does politics to build society and country. The PM has dedicated his entire life to the people of the country. He still works 18 hours a day. It is because of PM Modi that India is being celebrated all over the world today. India's respect in the world has increased. Singh said that the



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addresses public meeting in Khunti Lok Sabha on Tuesday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

Bharatiya Janata Party has done the work of honouring Bhagwan Birsa Munda. Prime Minister Modi did the work of bringing Jharkhand into limelight. He heard the voices of people living on the last rung of society. A separate Tribal Welfare Ministry was created in the government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Its budget has increased manifold during the tenure of PM Modi. He said that during the tenure of the BJP government, 25 crore people have come out of the poverty line. The Home Minister said that Congress wants to conduct a survey of people's property. It says that minorities have the first right on the country's resources. Bharatiya Janata Party does

not discriminate between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. All sections are getting the benefits of Central Government schemes equally. Everyone is also getting 5 kg free rice. He appealed to make Arjun Munda win by more than three lakh votes. Former Chief Minister and State President of BJP Babul Marandi said that the people are watching the condition of Jharkhand. Hemant Soren has looted everything in the state. His crime is recorded in the ED charge sheet. Prime Minister Modi talks about developed India. These people are working to develop their home and family. In the formation of Jharkhand, BJP was in government for 13 out



Arjun Munda Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare files his nomination papers for Lok Sabha poll in presence of State BJP President Babul Marandi, BJP senior leader Kariya Munda and AJSU party Chief Sudesh Mahto in Kunti on Tuesday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

of 23 years. Till date, no tribal land has been looted during the tenure of BJP. These people allege that if BJP comes to power, they will snatch the land. Spread false propaganda. He appealed to the people to take a pledge that Arjun Munda will be elected from Khunti. Union Minister and NDA candidate from Khunti Arjun Munda said that BJP government will be formed at the Center on the strength of the people. It will be a tribute to the sacrifice of Lord Birsa

Munda. Till date, Narendra Modi is the only Prime Minister in history who came to the land of Birsa Munda. BJP knows how to respect martyrs. People should pledge that on this occasion they will send 14 lotus flowers from Jharkhand to Delhi. AJSU chief and former Deputy Chief Minister Sudesh Mahto said that this election is to choose a leader for the country. The people of Khunti will also elect such a leader who will work with Prime Minister Modi ji. At present

there is no alternative to Prime Minister Modi. NDA candidate Arjun Munda has to be sent from Khunti after winning with a record number of votes. On this occasion, Lok Sabha in-charge Ravindra Rai, Karmaveer Singh, Vimala Pradhan, Satyanarayan Singh, Rakesh Prasad, MP Vidut Varan Mahato, MLA Neelkanth Singh Munda, Koch Munda, Ramchandra Chandravansi, Chandrashekhar Gupta and others were present.

BJP trying to snatch rights of tribals, we will not bow down: Kalpana Soren

CM Champai Soren along with senior leaders attend Joba Majhi's nomination

PNS : RANCHI

Former CM Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana Soren Murmu today said that the BJP wants to suppress the voice of tribals and snatch their rights, but the people of the tribal community are brave enough to thwart such an attempt. Addressing a public meeting in Chaibasa on the occasion of nomination filing of JMM candidate from Singhbhum Kalpana said that in the land of Singhbhum people are like lions. They don't bow before anyone. They neither bowed before the British nor before the dictatorial government.



"They want to end reservation. Would you choose such people? Will you elect such people who do not talk about your rights and entitlements in Parliament? A big program took place in Ranchi. Popular leader Arvind Kejriwal, who was doing public welfare work, was also put in jail. The people sitting at the center want to suppress you. They think you are insects. Will you tolerate it?," asked Kalpana.

"We have to uproot BJP which wants to snatch away the rights and privileges of the tribal people. You saw what happened in Manipur. They talk about tribals but when their massacre took place, the BJP leaders did not set foot there. This is their tribal love. There are a lot of catchphrases but you have to see who thinks about the interest of Jharkhand. When the proposal was made to include the language in the 8th Schedule as soon as the government is formed in the state, the Home Ministry said that it will think later. They rejected the Ho language. They also rejected the Sarna religious code," she

said. "Joba Majhi is one among you. Her tenure has been excellent. You have to strengthen them. If she wins, Guruji and Hemant Soren will become stronger. India Alliance government will be formed at the center. The sloganers are raising slogans. Who started Sarvajan Pension, BJP people will say that it was started by the



JMM candidate for Singhbhum Lok Sabha Joba Majhi files her nomination papers in presence of Chief Minister Champai Soren and JMM leader Kalpana Soren in Singhbhum on Tuesday. PNS

Centre. But it is the responsibility of you to go to the village and tell the people that Hemant Soren has given pension to everyone," she said. JMM candidate from Singhbhum, former minister and MLA Joba Majhi filed her nomination on Tuesday. During this time, Kalpana Soren, Chief Minister Champai Soren, many MLAs including Rajya Sabha MP Mahua Maji, Minister Deepak Barua, Central General Secretary of JMM were present. CM Champai Soren while addressing the gathering said that the people's turnout for this election has proved that our victory will be certain in the first phase of elections. We had not allowed BJP to

open its account in Kolhan in the last assembly. This time also we will win 14 seats. We did a lot for the development of Jharkhand. BJP never thinks about tribal interests. It doesn't think about the welfare of the natives. It doesn't think about the welfare of Dalits. They don't have an issue. They have been doing jumlabazi since 2014 till date. This time too there is a promise of guarantee. But, we don't know what the guarantee is. BJP betrayed the public in Jharkhand. Our government gave the scheme in the remote area of the forest. It gave benefits to every family. Pension given to the people after the age of 50 years.

Champai said that BJP relaxed the forest rights law. It does not respect the village head. We have fought for water, jungle and land for years. Manki Munda was relaxed in the double engine government. Our government is giving Manki Munda scholarship. A playground was built in the name of Poto Ho. He said that there are elections not only in Jharkhand but across the country. On one side is the party of the capitalists. On the other hand, there is a party of poor Dalits, tribals and minorities. In 2019, the government was formed under the leadership of Hemant Soren with absolute majority. Since then, BJP has been continuously trying to topple the government. During this period, Hemant Soren kept making welfare schemes. The tribals continued working for the welfare of the natives. Appointments to government posts also continued.

BJP conspired and put Hemant Soren in jail and is still plotting and trying to change the Constitution. Our rights and entitlements are contained in it. Efforts are being made to relax them. Today, Hemant is in jail so I had to come among you. I have brought his message to you. You have to make him win to get your rights secured.

JPSC releases results in record 35 days

PNS : RANCHI

Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) has released the Preliminary Test result of Combined Civil Services Competitive Examination-2023 in just 35 days which is a record. The result was released late Monday evening. A total of 7011 candidates have been successful in the examination.



A total of 1159 female candidates were successful in this examination. Under horizontal reservation, 16 candidates from primitive tribe, 60 from sports quota, 62 from

Controllor of Examinations, Asim Kispotta played a role in the publication of the result. The Preliminary Test was held on March 17 for 342 posts. 3,20,661 candidates had appeared in it. For the fixed posts, 15 times that is 5130 candidates were to be selected in the main examination, but due to similar marks of many candidates, the number reached 7011. The main examination can be held on 22, 23, 24 June. The Commission has released the PT result in a record time of 35 days. It is noteworthy that the Commission had taken the PT examination on March 17.

JHALSA takes cognizance in Morabadi road accident

PNS : RANCHI

Jharkhand High Court (HC), Judge and acting chairman of Jharkhand Legal Service Authority (JHALSA), Sujit Narayan Prasad has taken cognizance of the road accident that took place late Monday night near Morabadi under Lalpur police station area. The High Court Judge has given instructions to District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) for proper treatment of the people injured in this accident. After this, DLSA Secretary, Rakesh Ranjan and Ranchi Civil Court Judge, Kamlesh Behera went to RIMS late in the night and met the injured and directed the RIMS management to provide better medical facilities to the injured.

information about the incident was received, the police reached the spot and seized the car. According to eyewitnesses, the car hit many people from Museum Chowk in Morhabadi to the residence of former Chief Minister Shibu Soren. Local people said that the uncontrolled car stopped near Shibu Soren's residence after hitting an electric pole, crushing the woman. After the accident, the people traveling in the car including the driver left the vehicle and ran away. The police have seized the car. The car is said to belong to a lawyer.

An uncontrolled car crushed a woman near the residence of JMM President, Shibu Soren in Morhabadi, Ranchi on Monday night. The woman died on the spot. Six other people were injured after being hit by the car. As soon as the



SCS celebrates World Book Day



World book day was celebrated in Surendranath Centenary School on 23rd April 2024 to promote the enjoyment of books and reading. The literary club of the school in collaboration with the Community Outreach club organised a book donation campaign under the project RAHAT, where the students of classes I to V donated books to the needy ones. The students also made bookmarks and designed the cover page of their favourite book. In the senior wing the students of class VIII participated in a program titled 'Meet the Author' and got an opportunity to interact with a student of class X whose book 'Strings of a Mind' was recently released. The students of class X participated in a book review session and lively discussion.

LSAT—India™ 2024 registration window open till 2 May

NEW DELHI : The LSAT—India™ May registration window is now open and will be accepting registrations until 2 May 2024. Designed by world leaders in law school admissions, the Law School Admission Council (LSAC), and delivered by Pearson VUE, the LSAT—India™ is one of the leading law school entrance examinations for prospective candidates seeking to secure a place at institutions across India. Eighteen institutions across the country accept LSAT—India™ exam scores, informed Deepu Krishna, Head Admissions and Outreach, BITS Law School.

Loo alert in many districts of State

PNS : RANCHI

The Meteorological Centre has forecast loo in Jharkhand for four days from April 24. This will impact many districts of the state. An alert has been issued regarding this. The information was given by the Ranchi Meteorological Center on 23 April.



A woman covers herself to get protection from scorching sun on a hot summer day in Ranchi on Tuesday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

According to the Meteorological Center, there is no possibility of any major change in the maximum temperature during the next 24 hours in the state. After this, it is likely to gradually increase by three to five degrees Celsius in the next four days. According to the Centre, heat wave conditions may be seen at isolated places in East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum and Seraikela Kharsawan districts on April 24 and 25. On April 28, heat wave conditions can be seen at some places in East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum,

Seraikela Kharsawan, Bokaro, Dhanbad, Jamtara, Dumka, Pakur Godda, Sahibganj districts. On April 27, heat wave may prevail at isolated places in East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Seraikela Kharsawan, Bokaro, Dhanbad, Deoghar, Jamtara, Dumka, Pakur, Godda and Sahibganj districts. It has been advised to avoid going out in the sun between 12 noon and 3 pm and drink enough water. Further it has been asked to wear light, light-coloured, breathable cotton clothing and use protective glasses, umbrella/hat or slippers while going out in the sun.

Ranchi Police seize 3950 kilograms of Doda

PNS : RANCHI

Ranchi Police has seized 3950 kilograms of Doda being sent from Ranchi to Rajasthan. The market value of the seized Doda is around Rs 6 crore.



On the basis of secret information received by Ranchi Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Chandan Kumar Sinha, the police team has caught a truck loaded with Doda near Huvaghatu School of Namkum police station area. The Police have also arrested truck owner cum driver Harpal Singh. The SSP gave this information in a press conference on Tuesday. During the press briefing Sinha said that on Monday night information was received that Doda was being loaded in a truck and being sent to Rajasthan. "This information was given to the rural

SP. Taking immediate action on the information; the Rural SP formed a team. The team raided and seized a truck laden with 3950 kg of doda from near Huvaghatu School and also arrested one person. The arrested person has been identified as Harpal Singh, a resident of Haryana. Along with being the truck owner, he is also the truck driver. DSP One and Namkum police station team and other officials were present in the formed team," he added.

Modi has never done politics on basis of religion: Rajnath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has never done politics on the basis of religion or by dividing the society and stressed that his predecessor Dr Manmohan Singh had in 2006 talked about extending reservation for the Muslims.

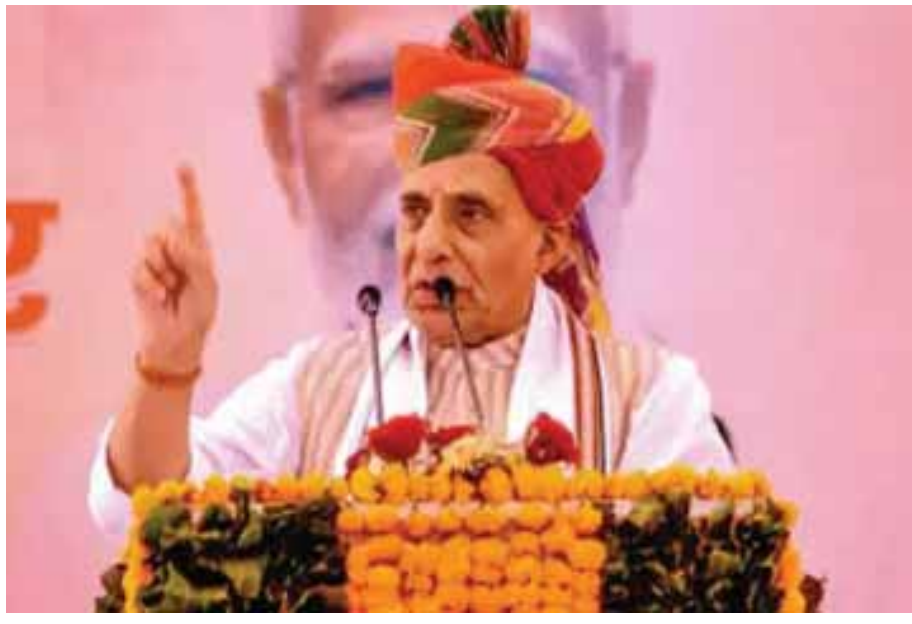
The defence minister made the remarks at an election rally in Greater Noida in support of BJP's Gautam Buddh Nagar Lok Sabha candidate Mahesh Sharma.

Prime Minister Modi on Sunday suggested that if the Congress comes to power, it would redistribute wealth of people to the Muslims and cited Dr Singh's remark that the

minority community had the first claim on the country's resources.

Addressing a rally in Rajasthan's Banswara, Modi also alleged the Congress plans to give people's hard-earned money and valuables to "infiltrators" and "those who have more children".

Addressing a gathering at Bisahda village in Greater Noida, the defence minister attacked the opposition for creating a ruckus at this time and trying to put a question mark on Prime Minister Modi. "Sisters and brothers, it's not that I know the prime minister from today. We have had very good relations for a long time. He has never done politics of Hindu, Muslim and Christian. Our prime minister never thought of doing politics by



dividing the society," Singh said.

"He (Modi) said at one place that Congress has said in its manifesto that we will get the properties surveyed. If it is said in the manifesto then why should people have any objection to it. What do you want to do by getting the properties surveyed? Do you want to distribute the country's resources equally? What do you want to do?" he asked.

The veteran BJP leader also asked the Congress to clear its position on the matter. "Dr Manmohan Singh ji was the prime minister of India. I respect Dr Manmohan Singh ji even today, I have respect for him, brothers and sisters. Dr Manmohan Singh himself in the meeting of the National Defence Council at the Vigyan

Bhawan on December 9, 2006, had said that if anyone has the first right on the property of this country, it is the minority and especially he had said that it belongs to the Muslims," Rajnath said. "Sisters and brothers, whatever property and whatever resources there are in this country, everyone should have equal rights, he had said this, we did not say this. Now when the prime minister said this, these people created an uproar over it," he added.

Rajnath said the Congress-led government had in the past formed several commissions, which had recommended in their report that out of the 27 per cent reservation for the OBCs, 6 per cent should be for the Muslims and 2 per cent should be for the minorities. "We did not make this com-

mission," he added.

Escalating his attack on the Congress, Rajnath said, "It did not stop at this. If someone from the Scheduled Caste converts, he should be given reservation despite the change of religion. Not only this, they (Congress) also ended the reservation of SC-ST in Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University."

"These people have formed the government by dividing the country equally on the basis of Hindu and Muslim," he alleged. The senior BJP leader stressed that his party does not want to make the country by dividing it on the basis of caste, creed, religion, Hindu, Muslim or Christian, but wants to make India a great country of the world by keeping everyone together.

Government focussing on research, learning and innovation in big way: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said his government is focusing on research, learning and innovation in a big way, a day after QS president Nunzio Quacquarelli lauded the performance improvement in Indian universities.

Indian universities demonstrated the highest performance improvement among all the G20 nations this year, a significant 14 per cent year-on-year improvement in their average ranking, Quacquarelli said in a social media post.

Tagging his post, Modi said on X, "This is encouraging to see! Our Government is focussing on research, learning and innovation in a big way. In the coming times, this emphasis will deepen even



further, thus benefitting our Yuva Shakti."

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) was the highest ranked university in India in the coveted rankings announced earlier this month by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), the London-based higher education analytics firm. The

university was ranked at 20th position globally for development studies.

IIM-Ahmedabad figured among the top 25 institutions globally for business and management studies while IIM-Bangalore and IIM-Calcutta were among the top 50.

India, Oman review collaboration in combating illegal activities at sea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Oman on Tuesday there reviewed their collaboration in combating transnational illegal activities at sea and promote regional cooperation during the fifth Annual High-Level Meeting between the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and the Royal Oman Police Coast Guard (ROPCG).

Giving details, officials said this meeting follows the institutionalized mechanism as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ICG and OPCG.

A delegation from the Royal Oman Police Coast Guard led by Colonel Abdul Aziz Mohammed Ali Al Jabri, Assistant Officer Commanding, ROPCG



arrived in New Delhi on Monday to participate in the meeting. The high-level discussions were led by Director General Coast Guard Rakesh Pal.

The meeting focused on bolstering bilateral engagements through capacity-building programme, cross ship's visit, implementation of Sea Rider programme, establishing professional linkages between pollution reporting centers and other collaborative arrangements.

Both sides expressed their commitment to enhancing mutual cooperation in addressing maritime challenges, thereby strengthening the maritime safety and security framework in the region.

A meeting between the Royal Oman Police Coast Guard delegation and representatives from Society of Indian Defence Manufacturer (SIDM) is also planned on Wednesday here to acquaint with India's shipbuilding capabilities under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

The 5th Annual ICG-ROPCG High-Level Meeting underscores the commitment of both the Coast Guards to jointly address maritime challenges and foster regional cooperation, ultimately contributing to the safety and security of the maritime domain in the region.

UGC warns public against fake online programmes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has warned the public against fake online programmes with abbreviations similar to recognised degree nomenclature, officials said, flagging a particular "10-day MBA" course.

"Some individuals or organisations are offering online programmes and courses with abbreviated forms similar to the higher education system's recognised degree programmes. One such programme to which the attention of the commission has been drawn is a '10 Days MBA,'" University Grants Commission (UGC) Secretary Manish Joshi said. "The nomenclature of a degree, including its abbreviated form, duration and entry

qualification, is specified by the UGC, with the previous approval of the central government, through the publication of a notification in the official gazette," he added.

The UGC secretary clarified that only a university, established or incorporated by or under a central act, provincial act or state act, or an institution deemed to be a university or an institution specifically empowered by an act of Parliament, has the right to confer a degree.

"Higher education institutions are also required to obtain approval from the UGC to offer any online degree programme in terms of the UGC regulations. A list of recognised HEIs (higher education institutions) to offer online programmes and of permitted online programmes available on deb.Ugc.Ac.In," Joshi said.

BJP rolling back pro people measures in Rajasthan: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday said its previous government in Rajasthan introduced schemes that provided crucial protection to vulnerable populations of the state and asked why the current BJP dispensation is "rolling back" those "pro-people" measures.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh posed questions to Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of his election rally in Tonk-Sawai Madhopur.

"Questions for the PM as he heads to Tonk-Sawai Madhopur today: Why is the BJP scaling back INC's pro-people schemes? How much corruption has the BJP committed in the ERCP? How long will families displaced by the Isarda Dam be denied compensation by the BJP?" Ramesh said in a post on X.

Elaborating on what he said were "jumla details", Ramesh said when the Congress party was in power in Rajasthan, it passed a series of "visionary" laws that would meaningfully improve the quality of life of thousands in the state.

"The Rajasthan Minimum Guaranteed Income Act, the addition of 25 extra days for MGNREGA (Rural) over and above the sanctioned 100 days, the Indira Gandhi Shahari Rojgar Yojana Act which guaranteed 100 days of employment to families residing in urban areas, the Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare Act), and the Right to Health Act which provided universal health coverage - all these schemes provided crucial protections to vulnerable populations in the state," he said.

"Instead of these acts being implemented, we are now seeing a breakdown of governance since the BJP came to power in December 2023," Ramesh said.

At least 15.5 lakh pensioners in Rajasthan have stopped receiving their pensions since January this year due to "verification" issues, he claimed.

The government also attempted to reduce the health coverage from Rs 25 lakh under the Congress' Chiranjeevi Yojana to just Rs 5 lakh under the BJP's



Ayushman Bharat, Ramesh alleged.

"In their vindictiveness, why is the BJP government rolling back the INC's pro-people schemes?" he said.

Ramesh said, BJP leader and Rajasthan Agriculture Minister Kirodi Lal Meena has "accused his own government of corruption" in connection with the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP).

"He (Meena) alleged that the Water Resources Department and the ERCP Commission have colluded with a Delhi-based company to scam the government of Rs 35 crore.

"According to a letter that Meena wrote to the Rajasthan CM, land worth Rs 50 crore was sold to the Delhi company for just Rs 9 crore, and Rs 35 crore was pocketed by government officials. He also alleged irregularities in the auction of land located near the Alwar main road for the ERCP project," Ramesh said.

"One can only imagine how deeply corrupt the BJP has become for its own leaders to now be crying foul. Are they just following the example of the PM and his Rs 4 lakh crore Chanda Do Dhandha Lo model of corruption?" the Congress leader said.

Ramesh said the Isarda Dam is now 75 per cent complete but the BJP government is yet to rehabilitate and resettle the 37 villages that were submerged by the dam.

"Farmers from Tonk and Sawai Madhopur have now submitted hundreds of representations to the government demanding fair compensation but all their efforts have been in vain.

"The leader of the Kisan Mahasabha highlighted that compensation had not been determined by the district collector as per law, physical verifications were never conducted, and the farmers have not been adequately compensated for their immovable properties," Ramesh said.

Mechanical bull riding very risky for kids: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The popularity of mechanical bull riding at places like amusement parks and corporate events is on the rise in India too. But with this fun activity comes some serious risks, especially for kids. A study by health experts at Loma Linda University Children's Health has shown just how alarming these risks are, revealing that kids are getting hurt way too often when riding mechanical bulls.

They're getting hurt so much that experts are calling for stricter safety rules and regulations to make sure everyone stays safe while having fun.

Titled "Mechanical Bull Injuries in Pediatric Patients: A Call for Safety Regulations,"

highlights the urgent need for enhanced safety measures and regulations.

The findings are published in the journal Children's Health Care and revealed that mechanical bull riding poses a significant risk to children, with traumatic brain injuries being the most common outcome.

"Mechanical bulls, even when advertised as 'children friendly' are far from safe and are a real public health concern," said Martin G. Rosenthal, MD, assistant professor of surgery at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital (LUCH) and corresponding author of the study.

LUCH has identified up to 35 cases over seven years, each resulting in severe injuries. Over 65% of these cases



involved severe brain injuries, and more than half of all children required immediate surgical intervention. "Our study, one of the largest examining mechanical bull riding injuries

in children, reveals that most injuries occur at private events where mechanical bulls are rented from vendors," said Sina Asaadi, MD, MBA, a research fellow and lead author of the

study. "This suggests that the actual number of injuries may be higher than reported, indicating potential underreporting." Long-term consequences of brain injuries include memory issues, severe headaches, nausea, seizures, and possible learning disabilities, to name a few.

Rehabilitation for these patients is intensive, involving physical, occupational, and speech therapies, sometimes extending over months and years.

"Several other studies from southern California have reported similar findings and there appears to be a proclivity of these injuries occurring in our own backyard," said Rosenthal.

The machine replicates the sensation of riding a bull and is designed to dismount the

rider, although most are thrown off to land on inflatable or padded flooring. Mechanical bull riding is typically reserved for adults; however, there are modified versions of the machine for children.

Yet another study, 'No more bull: pediatric head injuries as a result of mechanical bull rides,' says that mechanical bulls have an inherent risk of high-force trauma. "We reviewed a series of pediatric patients who suffered head injuries/skull fractures caused by mechanical bull riding, many of which required surgical intervention. We recommend the introduction of increased safety measures and better age guidelines to restrict children from riding these machines," said the authors of the study.

Army Chief outlines Indian Army efforts towards self reliance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Army Chief General Manoj Pande on Tuesday here outlined the Indian army's efforts towards self-reliance in enhancing its military capabilities and underscored the significance of comprehensive national power in a country's growth.

Making this assertion at All India Management Association's National Leadership Conclave, he said while economic strength serves as the foundation of growth, military prowess is essential for safeguarding national interests.

He underlined the evolving geopolitical landscape characterized by rapid changes and geopolitical power plays, reaffirming the relevance of hard power in ensuring national security.

Stressing upon the Indian Army's role as a deterrent against conflict and its preparedness to respond to threats across the spectrum of conflict, the Army chief highlighted the importance of self-reliance in defence.

He cited the disruptions in the global supply chain during the pandemic and the lessons drawn from ongoing conflicts, emphasizing the imperative for India to reduce its



dependency on external sources for defence requirements.

In pursuit of self-reliance and modernization, General Pande outlined the Indian Army's transformation initiatives, which encompass force restructuring, modernization, improvement of systems and processes, human resource management, and promotion of jointness and integration with sister services.

He emphasized the need to embrace disruptive technologies and foster an indigenous defence-industry ecosystem to achieve self-reliance.

The Indian Army's vision for the future involves transforming into a modern, agile, and technology-enabled force

Ministry seeks report on spice bans by Singapore, Hong Kong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the Singapore and Hong Kong red flagged four spices products manufactured by the Indian firms MDH and Everest recalling them from the market, the Union Commerce Ministry has directed Indian embassies in both the countries to send a detailed report in the matter.

In a statement posted on its website on April 5, the Hong Kong's food regulatory authority, Centre for Food Safety (CFS), said that three spice products of MDH — Madras Curry Powder (spice blend for Madras Curry), Sambhar Masala (Mixed Masala Powder), and Curry Powder (Mixed Masala Powder) — along with Everest's Fish Curry Masala contain "a pesticide, ethylene oxide".

Recalls have been initiated, and the CFS has instructed vendors to cease sales and remove affected products from shelves. Meanwhile, the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) has ordered a recall of Everest's Fish Curry Masala for similar reasons, as per reports.

capable of deterring and winning wars across various domains of operation.

He highlighted the importance of absorbing and indigenousizing critical technologies to bridge the gap between imported and indigenous defence systems.

General Manoj Pande reiterated the Indian Army's commitment to "Swadeshikaran Se Sashaktikaran" (empowerment through indigenization) and called for collective efforts from all stakeholders to strengthen India's defence capabilities.

He also called for the need for a partnership approach between the defence industry and the armed forces to realize India's vision of self-reliance in defence.

Former Vice President Naidu calls for end to freebies in elections

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Former Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday said the "frequent" party-hopping by political leaders was a "disturbing trend" and called for strengthening the anti-defection law.

Speaking at a function at his residence here after receiving the Padma Vibhushan award on Monday evening by President Droupadi Murmu at a function at Rashtrapati Bhawan.

"Defections are being encouraged. We should strengthen the anti-defection law," he asserted.

"Now, the worry is that there is a fall in the standards in public life. In political parties, people often change their parties. The latest trend is people are in one party in the morning and join another party in the evening and then they criticise your leader and say things left and right. Some of them are

favoured with tickets also.

"This is a very disturbing trend and people should avoid it. People should work at parties and prove their credentials. If anybody wants to change parties, one should resign from the post given by that party and then only join another party. One can understand making accusations, but what is happening is not accusing but abusing," Naidu said.

He said another unhealthy trend is that people are making promises left and right, without considering where the money will come from, as there is no money.

"Political parties must come out with a manifesto and secondly, should come out with schemes supported by the financial health of the state and third, how they are going to mobilise resources and then whatever they want to spend," the former vice president said.

He wondered how it was possible to give everything for free as "money does not come from trees". But then some of the leaders and parties are making promises left and right even when the financial health of the state is weak, he observed.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Weather vagaries

It is as bad as predicted: Extreme events of 2023 were triggered by a much warmer climate

The year past us was characterised by a slew of extreme weather events. Now, a new study has shed light on a disquieting correlation: Many of these occurrences were in line with predictions of a warmer world due to climate change. The study, by a team of atmospheric scientists, analysed the unprecedented frequency and intensity of extreme weather phenomena across the globe in 2023: From devastating wildfires to record-breaking heatwaves, and from erratic precipitation patterns leading to floods and droughts to powerful tropical storms. One of the key findings is the undeniable alignment between these extreme events and the long-standing predictions made by climate scientists. As greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, Earth's climate system is being pushed to its limits. While it has long been established that a warming climate exacerbates the intensity and frequency of such events, the empirical evidence underscores the urgency of addressing climate change mitigation. Also, the ramifications of these events extend far beyond environmental concerns, encompassing socio-economic, humanitarian and geopolitical dimensions. Vulnerable communities bear most of the brunt, and disruption of essential infrastructure and supply chains amplifies the challenges. In the face of these sobering revelations, concerted action is imperative to mitigate the impacts of climate change. This entails not only reducing greenhouse gas emissions through transitioning to renewable energy sources and implementing sustainable land-use practices, but also investing in adaptation strategies to cope with the unavoidable effects of a changing climate.



One such initiative is the issuance of tailored advisories by meteorological agencies to assist farmers in mitigating the impacts of climate variability on agricultural productivity. In this regard, the IMD has taken proactive steps, leveraging advanced forecasting techniques and agronomic expertise. By harnessing data-driven insights and employing localised approaches, these advisories offer valuable guidance to farmers regarding optimal planting schedules, irrigation management, pest and disease control and crop selection. The IMD's initiative exemplifies the importance of integrating scientific knowledge with practical solutions to address the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change. By empowering farmers with actionable information and tools, such initiatives not only enhance agricultural resilience but also contribute to sustainable livelihoods and food security. As we navigate the complexities of a changing climate and its far-reaching implications, collaboration and innovation emerge as indispensable pillars for building a more resilient and sustainable future. By heeding the warnings conveyed by atmospheric science studies and embracing proactive measures at local, national and global levels, we can strive for a world where the impacts of extreme weather events are mitigated, and communities are empowered to thrive in harmony with nature.

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PICTALK



Devotees arrive at Jakhu temple to offer prayers on the occasion of 'Hanuman Jayanti', in Shimla

PTI

The rising power of nano influencers

Unlike their macro and celebrity counterparts, they embody the authenticity of everyday people, fostering genuine connections with their audience

In the ever-changing world of social media marketing, nano influencers are becoming a significant presence, giving brands a different way to connect with consumers that focuses on being genuine and establishing personal relationships. Nano influencers, who usually have between 1,000 and 10,000 followers, provide a unique mix of community-focused influence and relatability that sets them apart from larger accounts like macro and celebrity influencers. Nano influencers are similar to regular people — they are our friends, family and colleagues who share their lives and interests on social media without the polished image usually seen in professional influencer marketing. This authentic form of influence relies on real connections and trust, characteristics that are becoming more important in a crowded marketplace filled with advertisements and endorsements from celebrities. Authenticity and Engagement is at the core of Nano Influencers. Nano influencers are successful because of their gen-



uine relationships with their followers, who see them as peers rather than distant celebrities. This authenticity makes their product recommendations more effective and trustworthy. By leveraging personal connections, nano influencers can have a significant impact on their audience. Why are Brands Leaning Towards Nano Influencers? Smaller brands are starting to see the benefits of working with nano influencers for a few reasons. To start, nano influencers tend to have much higher engagement rates compared to influencers with bigger audiences. This shows that nano influencers have real and personal relationships with their followers. On top of that, collaborating with nano influencers is usually more affordable, which means brands can get more out of their marketing bud-

gets while still connecting with their target audience. The Pros 1. Hyper-Targeted Marketing: Small-scale influencers typically concentrate on particular niches, enabling brands to reach individuals with specific interests, resulting in more impactful marketing initiatives. 2. Cost-Effectiveness: With reduced hopes for payment, companies have the opportunity to collaborate with numerous nano influencers using the same amount of money they would typically spend on just one macro or celebrity influencer. 3. Higher Quality of Engagement: Nano influencers tend to spark more genuine engagement, resulting in increased levels of interaction such as comments, likes and shares. 4. Authentic Product Endorsements: Recommendations from nano influencers hold the same weight as recommendations from friends and can greatly influence buying choices. 5. Increased Brand Visibility and Community Building: Nano influencers play a cru-

cial role in connecting brands with tightly-knit communities, increasing brand exposure and building a strong sense of connection with potential customers. The Challenges Although there are many benefits to working with nano influencers, there are also some challenges to consider. It is important to find influencers who truly connect with the brand's values and message. Additionally, brands will need to deal with the logistics of working with a larger group of influencers to reach their target audience effectively. Brands are always looking for more genuine ways to connect with consumers and nano influencers are becoming a popular choice. These influencers focus on building real relationships and trust with their followers, creating a more authentic connection. This approach is resonating with consumers who are growing tired of traditional advertising and celebrity endorsements. (The writer is the founder and CEO of iCubesWire; views are personal)



SAHIL CHOPRA

Historic legal battle unfolds over Gyanvapi



PRAFULL GORADIA

Amidst the legal wrangling, a deeper narrative emerges, one of contested ownership, religious desecration and the enduring scars of history

The legal hearings, whether in the court at Varanasi or the Supreme Court, over the past many months regarding the worship at Gyan Vapi, carry ethical interest. The statures of the lawyers of both sides in these courts appear to be comparable. It has occurred to neither lawyers nor laymen that one side argues in defence of their clients' rights of worship; the puja in the tehekhan, whereas the opposing side also has argued that they have been the owners of the edifice in question. Also, it has not occurred to the judges, leaders and clients; in fact, no one else that the property is an acquisition by dacoity; i.e., loot in whatever sense. There was no mosque in that vicinity at all, until 17th century Mughal emperor Aurangzeb via a firman (a royal decree) had the Kashi Vishwanath Temple destroyed, except for the western side, which still unmistakably bears the evidence of the structure being originally a temple, in the form of its carved walls. The fervent followers of the Mughal emperor are not embarrassed that the Hindu devotees of Kashi Vishwanath since the mid-17th century and even in independent India, have to worship in a small temple, because of lack of any more space. For over three centuries then, an illegitimate structure stands, welcoming the followers of Aurangzeb's bigoted ideology. The judges in this case should soon begin trials. It should be declared that this is a trial over a place of worship that was robbed and desecrated, not a dispute between two equals. The law of adverse possession cannot apply here. "The Europeans should clearly understand that this spirit of Mohammedanism is unchangeable and that, if by any mischance, India should again come into the possession of men of this creed, all the churches and colleges and all the Mission institutions, would not be worth a week's purchase". So wrote Reverend Mathew Atmore Sherring, an English official. The Muslims did not harm the Christians of British India. But he was so upset at the vandalism he saw in Banaras that he could not help speaking out.



Reverend Sherring was a devout, maybe slightly bigoted evangelist member of the London Missionary Society, dead against idol worship. And yet he said it would not be difficult to find twenty temples in all Banaras of the age of Aurangzeb (1658-1707). This is the case throughout the whole of northern India. His description of the desecration of temples by the thousand and their blatant conversion into mosques, mausoleums, dargahs, palaces or pleasure houses has to be seen to be believed. In his view, if there is one thing about the Mohammedan period that Hindus remember better than another, it is the insulting pride of the Muslims (sic), the outrages that they perpetrated upon Hindu religious convictions and the extensive spoliation of their temples and shrines. "When we endeavour to ascertain what the Mohammedans have left to the Hindus of their ancient buildings in Banaras, we are startled at the result of our investigations. Although the city is strewn with temples, it is unlikely that there are many which are old". Reverend Sherring continued, that the diminutive size



HERRING WRITES THAT JUST AS MUSLIMS YEARN TO VISIT MECCA AND CHRISTIANS YEARN TO VISIT JERUSALEM, THE HINDU HEART GOES OUT TO BANARAS. IF THE HINDUS REFER TO ANY ONE CITY AS THEIR HOLIEST, IT IS BANARAS

of nearly all the temples in India — except for the south — that exist is another testimony to the stringency of the Mohammedan rule. It seems clear that Mughal emperors forbade the Hindus to build spacious temples and forced them to erect only small structures, of the size of cages, for their idols and those of no pretensions to beauty. The consequence is that the Hindus of the present day, blindly following the example of their predecessors of two centuries ago, commonly build their religious edifices of the same dwarfish size as formerly. These observations speak volumes about the trauma that the Hindu psyche has suffered as a result of the impact of Islam. Sherring writes that just as Muslims yearn to visit Mecca and the Christians, Jerusalem, the Hindu heart goes out to Banaras. If the Hindus refer to any one city as their holiest, it is Banaras. Aurangzeb tried to change its name to 'Muhammadabad'. The temple of Bisheshwar, regarded as the god of all gods, was systematically demolished by Aurangzeb during the 17th century. The new temple was built at the behest of Rani

Ahilyabai Holkar long after Aurangzeb's desecration. As already explained, all the temples built during the Mohammedan rule in Banaras had to be diminutive in size. It transpires that the demolition of temples was inspired not only by a hatred for idolatry or greed for loot but also by a desire to humiliate the Hindus. Or, else, how does one explain that the masjid built by Aurangzeb is bang next to the Gyan Vapi or the well of knowledge? Sherring has also referred to Al Baruni, an important source of Indian history of the medieval period. He came to India with Mahmud of Ghazni. Although Sherring casts doubts on Al Baruni's contention, nevertheless, he mentions that Ghazni reached as far as Banaras during his ninth incursion into India. In 1194 AD, Shahabuddin, better known as Muhammad Ghori, after defeating the Kannauj monarch, Jaichand, marched to Banaras where he is reported to have destroyed a thousand Hindu temples. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

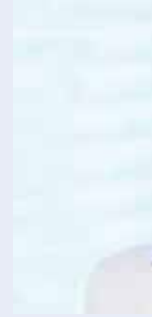
WEATHER WOES

Madam — Apropos the news article, "India grapples with erratic weather", published on April 22, this is my response. The recent weather fluctuations across India present a stark reminder of our vulnerability to nature's whims. While Delhi anticipates relief from the scorching heat, Odisha and Himachal Pradesh face contrasting challenges. Odisha grapples with a relentless heatwave, prompting necessary precautions, including school closures. Conversely, Himachal Pradesh reels under heavy rain and snow, causing infrastructure havoc. These extreme conditions underscore the urgency of climate resilience measures. Moreover, the IMD's forecast of above — normal monsoon rainfall signifies hope amid uncertainties. However, the spectre of increasing extreme weather events, as highlighted by recent research, casts a shadow over the future. Regions like the Indus and Ganges plains are particularly at risk, threatening millions of lives. This serves as a clarion call for proactive measures, from robust disaster management strategies to sustainable practices. As citizens, it's imperative to heed warnings, adapt to changing climates and advocate for broader environmental stewardship to mitigate future crises. **Rahul Kapoor | Delhi**

POWER PRICING PREDICAMENT

Madam — Apropos the news article, "With power freebies, debt comes calling", published on April 22, this is my response. RK Singh's stance on power pricing echoes a common-sense truth: electricity isn't free. His call for States to bear the financial burden of free power initiatives highlights a critical issue plaguing the sector. The practice of offering free electricity distorts the market, undermines the financial health of distribution companies and ultimately hampers economic growth. The complex dynamics of tariff setting, with subsidies for certain consumer segments, exacerbates the problem. While political parties may win favour with vot-

Kejriwal's health report



Apropos the news article, "Kejriwal stopped taking insulin months back: Tihar", published on April 21, this is my response. The revelations about Arvind Kejriwal's health present a perplexing narrative. On one hand, the Tihar jail administration claims he ceased insulin under a Telangana doctor's advice, contradict-

ing his court Statements. The tug-of-war between AAP and BJP adds political spice. Amidst allegations of a "conspiracy," one wonders about the truth's cloak. If Kejriwal indeed stopped insulin, was it wise? The report's assertion of no alarming sugar levels suggests a balanced picture, yet doubts linger. The stringent dietary restrictions, though, raise eyebrows. Are they necessary or punitive? The bureaucratic tangle over hospital referrals muddles clarity. Amidst these complexities, Kejriwal's medical saga becomes a microcosm of larger political battles. As a concerned citizen, one hopes for transparency and genuine concern for his health above political theatrics. The saga demands more than just a casual glance; it beckons scrutiny and empathy amidst the whirlpool of accusations and counterclaims. **Aisha Khan | Chennai**

ers through such measures, the long-term repercussions are dire. Delays and partial reimbursements only deepen the financial woes of discoms, leading to a vicious cycle of debt and inefficiency. The solution lies in structural reforms, freeing discoms from undue State control and allowing market forces to determine pricing. Direct financial support to targeted beneficiaries would ensure transparency and sustainability. Such reforms are essential for fostering a resilient and competitive electricity sector, benefiting both consumers and the economy at large. **Vivek Rao | Mumbai**

MENTAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Brain Wellness", published on April 22, this is my response. The staggering statistics on childhood development and the economic ramifications underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions. The formation of the National Task Force on Brain Health, spearheaded by esteemed professionals, marks a significant step towards bridging critical health-

care gaps. Dr RK Dhamija's insights illuminate the task force's holistic approach, emphasising inclusive healthcare from grassroots to tertiary levels. The task force's focus on equitable access and awareness aligns with global initiatives, acknowledging the profound impact of neurological disorders on society. By evaluating existing infrastructure and policies, the panel aims to catalyse transformative change, recognising the intertwined complexities of brain health and socioeconomic factors. India's healthcare landscape mirrors global challenges, with disparities magnified in rural areas. The task force's mandate to submit actionable recommendations reflects a commitment to prompt action. However, sustained efforts beyond policy formulation are crucial to translating vision into tangible improvements, ensuring every individual has access to quality brain healthcare. **Natasha Reddy | Vijayawada**

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FIRST COLUMN

THE MYSTERIES OF AFTERLIFE

The Upanishads offer profound insights into the enigmatic realm of the afterlife



SWAMI CHARANASHRIT

The Upanishads, ancient philosophical texts that form the foundation of Hinduism, offer profound insights into the nature of existence, consciousness and the ultimate reality. Among the myriad themes they explore, the concept of the afterlife occupies a significant place. Delving into the Upanishadic thoughts on the afterlife unveils a tapestry of ideas, reflecting deep contemplation on the nature of existence beyond the mortal realm.

The Transient and the Eternal: Central to the Upanishadic understanding of the afterlife is the distinction between the transient, ephemeral aspects of existence and the eternal, unchanging essence of the self (Atman). These texts assert that the physical body is subject to birth and death, bound by the cycles of samsara (the cycle of birth, death and rebirth), while the Atman transcends these cycles, being eternal and indestructible.

The Doctrine of Karma: Integral to the Upanishadic worldview is the doctrine of karma, which holds that every action, thought and intention produces consequences that shape one's future experiences. According to this doctrine, the quality of one's actions determines the nature of their existence in this life and beyond. The Upanishads emphasise that the consequences of karma extend beyond the confines of a single lifetime, influencing the soul's journey through successive rebirths.

The Journey of the Soul: The Upanishads envision the soul's journey through samsara as a process of spiritual evolution aimed at realising its true nature and attaining liberation (moksha) from the cycle of birth and death. This journey is characterised by the accumulation of karma, which propels the soul through various life experiences and incarnations. Each lifetime presents opportunities for growth, learning and self-realisation, ultimately leading the soul closer to its divine source.



The Concept of Rebirth: Rebirth, or reincarnation, is a fundamental tenet of the Upanishadic philosophy. It is believed that the soul undergoes multiple births, inhabiting different bodies and experiencing diverse life circumstances based on its past actions. The Upanishads describe the process of rebirth as governed by the law of karma, wherein individuals are born into specific situations that reflect the consequences of their previous deeds. Liberation from the cycle of rebirth is attained when the soul transcends its attachment to worldly desires and realises its essential unity with the divine.

The Ultimate Goal: Moksha: At the heart of the Upanishadic teachings on the afterlife lies the concept of moksha, or spiritual liberation. Moksha represents the culmination of the soul's journey, wherein it breaks free from the cycle of samsara and merges with the ultimate reality, known as Brahman. Achieving moksha involves transcending the ego, relinquishing attachments and realising the eternal truth of one's identity as Atman, identical to Brahman. In this state of liberation, the soul experiences eternal bliss, beyond the confines of time, space and individual identity. **Conclusion:** The Upanishads offer profound insights into the nature of the afterlife, presenting a holistic worldview that encompasses the transient nature of earthly existence and the eternal essence of the self. Through the exploration of concepts such as karma, rebirth and moksha, these ancient texts provide a framework for understanding the soul's journey beyond mortality and its quest for spiritual realisation. Ultimately, the Upanishads invite us to contemplate the deeper mysteries of life and death, guiding us towards the realisation of our divine nature and the attainment of ultimate liberation.

(Writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

A timeless inspiration for India's reform agenda

Amidst the jubilant celebrations of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the legacy of Jyotirao Phule, a pioneer in social reform, resonates deeply



RENU PANDEY



India has had a rich treasure of social reformers who contributed immensely to bringing about change in the lives of the people, especially the subaltern class. Jyotirao Phule is one of them who was born in Maharashtra on 11th April and is remembered as a social reformer, author and activist. Though he was born in the 19th century his ideas are still relevant in the 21st century. Throughout his life, he worked tirelessly to bring change in the lives of deprived groups, especially women, Shudras and Dalits. He was a visionary par excellence who realised very early that for a nation to progress, the marginalised groups need to be given due recognition.

As Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is being celebrated, it is high time to take a pause and introspect as to what initiative has been undertaken to realise the dream of reformers like Phule. In recent years, the Government has initiated a series of welfare measures like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Balika Samridhhi Yojana, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan etc. and a series of direct benefit transfer schemes meant for the poorer segment of the population. These schemes are the furtherance of Phule's ideas as he visualised long back that these groups/communities needed to be made self-reliant. He cudgelled his brain to find the solution to remove the inequalities based on caste, class, gender and religion from society. He understood very early in life that people were kept in the dark and they had been dragged into following the vacuous customs and norms without adequate understanding. He envisioned the furtherance of everyone's rights through social empowerment. Phule's philosophy was conceptualised against the backdrop of the polity and society in pre-colonial Maharashtra, which was in a deteriorated state. His critique of the Brahminic religion, scriptures and theories, the founding of



PHULE REVAMPED THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY AND MARRIAGE SYSTEM AND REFUTED THE HACKNEYED VIEWS ON THE PRESCRIBED TYPECAST ROLES OF MAN AND WOMAN. HE SUPPORTED CONTRACT MARRIAGE AS, FOR HIM, MARRIAGE IS NOT A HOLY SACRAMENT BUT A HOLY CONTRACT

Satyashodhak Samaj (truth-seeking society) for the upliftment of the downtrodden to the 'new moral community' and his radical writings which pioneered a reformation movement in Hindu society deserve special attention. He gave the people a voice and a vehicle by establishing the Satyashodhak Samaj which was the first of its kind for social empowerment. It promoted caste equality and was devoted to securing social justice and human rights of low-caste people. Throughout his life, he fought to emancipate women from the clutches of rigid patriarchal order and found education as a tool to address such evils. He rejected the system of regressive hierarchy which engineered divisions and schism among the oppressed Hindus.

Undoubtedly, the action against all age — long traditions was the result of the hard work, grit, determination and tenacity of Phule. Phule's dour expression and laconic persona had a long-lasting effect on people's minds. It is palpable that Phule in his writings had discussed the eclectic range of ideas and concerns about the socio-cultural milieu additionally, giving the solution of establishing an alternative model of Hindu Social order, which was earlier brimmed with hierarchies and pluralities. He engineered the strategy to free society from myriad inequalities, with elan and consequently, influencing the upcoming reformers in the offing. Phule revamped the traditional family and marriage system and refuted the hackneyed views on the prescribed typecast roles of man and

woman. He supported contract marriage as for him; marriage is not a holy sacrament but a holy contract. Additionally, he also rejected the priesthood system. He was far ahead of his time as he opened an orphanage for helpless widows who got pregnant. He left an indelible impression in the field of women's education as he found it a 'remedial whipcord' for 'nauseating wrong done to the women'. He insisted on compulsory and free primary education and persuaded the British Government to make education compulsory till the age of 12 years. He was also the pioneer of the language formula in schools which was ultimately adopted by the Indian Government after independence. He opined that mother tongue (local language); Hindi and English were the three languages that every person should know. He also suggested that schools should provide education based on vocational skills. He believed that such a course would attract students and help them in gaining employment.

To maintain the high quality of education, he thought that the curriculum of primary education should meet the needs and requirements of society. The same is also emphasised in the New Education Policy, 2020. Even the United Nations has advocated inclusive, equitable and quality education which Phule emphasised long back. His ideas and thoughts will remain relevant in the 21st century as he always believed in establishing an egalitarian social order which is the core of any substantive democracy.

The same is being emphasised by the Government through its various welfare policies. It would be a befitting tribute to him if his ideas of inclusion of those who are at the periphery like women; and marginalised groups were given adequate attention. As seats are reserved for women from Panchayat to Lok Sabha still they are lagging far behind men in terms of their representation. To put it succinctly, it can be said that mainstreaming the periphery should be the motto of Government and by doing so it can fulfill the dream of Mahatma Phule.

Phule's establishment of the Satyashodhak Samaj provided a platform for social empowerment and caste equality. His advocacy for women's education and rejection of regressive customs reshaped societal norms. Phule's foresight extended to educational reforms, advocating for vocational training and multilingual education, ideas that resonate with modern policies like the New Education Policy, 2020. In today's pursuit of an egalitarian society, Phule's principles remain indispensable. Prioritising the inclusion of marginalised groups, especially women, aligns with his vision of social justice. As we honor Phule's legacy, let us commit to mainstreaming the periphery, ensuring that every citizen's voice is heard and valued. In doing so, we honor the spirit of Mahatma Phule and pave the way for a truly inclusive society.

(The writer is Assistant Professor in Department of History Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University; views are personal)

Jallianwala Bagh: A turning point in India's freedom struggle

The aftermath of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre not only claimed the lives of over 1,000 innocents but also ignited a fervent spirit of resistance

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre or the Amritsar massacre, a peaceful socio-political gathering of the native population dealt with a violent administrative response on 13th April 1919 by the then British Government killing above 1000 children, women and men firing 1650 gunshots, received strong criticism and gave the Indian freedom movement a clear direction for complete freedom from the foreign rule. The incident underlined the secular and all-inclusive character of the freedom movement. While in other parts of India, there were religious conflicts, in Amritsar the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs had decided to celebrate their religious days (eid ul-fitter on April 01, Ram Nowmi on April 08 and



SUKHDEV SINGH

Baisakhi on April 13) together to communicate the message of united freedom struggle against the foreign rule. The dead bodies of those, including Hindus, killed by the police while they were protesting against the arrest and deportation of the two local leaders Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satyapal to some unknown place, according to the local narratives, were kept in the Khairuddin mosque

before their final funeral rites. Earlier on the occasion of Ram Nowmi on April 9, 1919, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims drank water using the same tumbler. These events caused fear among the British rulers. In the background of what happened on April 13, 1919, was the rising unrest among the people caused by the post-world-war inflation, heavy taxes and other repressive policies of the British Indian Government. During the world war between 1914 and 1917, though the British forces were supported by the British-India Government and principalities, the Gadhries in Punjab had planned a mutiny by the Indian soldiers serving in the British Indian Army for February 1915 on the lines of

1857 mutiny, opposing the colonial Government anti-people policies which due to weak planning could not succeed. Yet, given a strong and colonial-Government atmosphere in Punjab and Bengal, in particular and in India, in general, on ardent advocacy by the then Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, Michael O'Dwyer, the British India Government passed a 'Defence of India Act 1915' curtailing the civil and political liberties. In 1918, suspecting revolt with support from Russian Bolsheviks, the Government appointed a committee headed by Sidney Rowlett to assess the German and Bolshevik links to the militant movement in India, especially in Punjab and Bengal. On the committee's recommendation, the

Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, popularly called the Rowlett Act, was passed on 21st March 1919 further limiting civil liberties and granting special powers to the Government enabling up to 2 years' detention of purported political agitators without trial. Breaching their promise for post-war political reforms in exchange for India's resources the Government hurriedly passed the Act, ignoring opposition by the Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council, who all resigned in protest. Muhammad Ali Jinnah wrote to the Viceroy: "I, therefore, as a protest against the passing of the Bill and the manner in which it was passed tender my resignation ... a Government that passes or sanctions such

a law in times of peace forfeits its claim to be called a civilised Government". The Act, seen as a betrayal, enraged the Indian leaders and citizens. Mahatma Gandhi gave a call for Satyagraha against the Rowlett Act urging for a peaceful participation in Hartals (strikes), economic boycott and non-cooperation. The anti-Rowlett Act sentiment was so strong in the whole country, especially in Punjab, that in response to the Satyagraha call on April 6 "practically the whole of Lahore was on the streets". Following the events on April 9 and the detention of the local leaders Dr Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satyapal on April 10, 1919, a large crowd gathered to demand the release of Dr Satyapal and Dr Kitchlew. In

the protest, 20-25 Indian and four British were killed while others were injured. The atmosphere in Amritsar was so tense that on April 11, Marcella Sherwood, an elderly English missionary was attacked by an angry mob in the Kucha Kurrichhan. Although she was rescued by some residents in the same street, enraged at the assault, Brigadier General R.E.H. Dyer, ordered every Indian passing through the street to crawl its length on his hands and knees as a punishment. He also authorised the indiscriminate public whipping of locals. The local leaders of the freedom movement, in a meeting held on April 12 at the Hindu College, planned a peaceful public protest gathering on April 13, the day of Baisakhi, in Jallian Wala Bagh

spread over 6-7 acres of vacant land surrounded by residential buildings. By April 13, most parts of Punjab under put under martial law. Civil liberties were curtailed and the assembly of more than four people was banned. The orders of banning public meetings and gatherings were not being widely and properly communicated. After celebrating Baisakhi many people relaxed in the Bagh, waiting to join the peaceful protest against the arrest and deportation of Dr. Satya Pal and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew. Rest as they say is history.

(The writer is retired professor of Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar and member, governing council, INTACH, New Delhi; views are personal)

Serie A title, second star and derby Inter takes it all with win over Milan

AP ■ MILAN

Winning the derby ended up being the cherry on top of a special night for Inter Milan. Holding off AC Milan 2-1 on Monday clinched for Inter the Serie A title that had been sign-posted for weeks, and earned a coveted second star on its jersey for winning a 20th Italian league title, breaking a tie with its fierce city rival.

"I told the guys, We find ourselves in a situation that's never happened before," Inter captain Lautaro Martinez said. "We needed to take advantage of this opportunity, because look around, the entire stadium is ours now."

Not even the pouring rain could dampen the spirits of the Nerazzurri and their fans. Francesco Acerbi and Marcus Thuram scored and, although Fikayo Tomori's late goal for AC Milan threatened to delay the celebrations, Inter held on for the win that stretched its lead to an insurmountable 17 points over second-placed Milan, with five rounds remaining.

At the final whistle, a beaming Lautaro and teammate Federico Dimarco climbed onto the top of the goal frame at San Siro. Flares and fireworks were set off in the stands, and the Inter players danced raucously in front of their fans. A banner was unfurled saying in Italian: "Repeat it to the Madonnina, who are the champions and who the crybabies." The Madonnina is the statue on top of Milan cathedral that overlooks the city, and which



the derby is named after. After winning eight other trophies, Simone Inzaghi claimed his first league title as a coach.

"Winning the league with five matches left - more or less won with nine matches left, today making it mathematically certain - in a derby, with Milan the home team, that is something that will remain with us," Inzaghi said.

"Everyone gave their very valuable contribution so that we could reach goals like this."

A star is awarded for every 10 Serie A titles. Only Juventus has won more, with a record 36 and thus three stars on its jersey.

Despite the rain, the stars aligned for Inter to wrap up Serie A, another star and the Derby della Madonnina on one night at San Siro, the stadium both teams share. Inter was technically the away team and only one end of the stadium was reserved for its black-and-blue-clad support. Inter had won the past five derbies, including both legs of the Champions League

semifinal last year and a 5-1 humiliation of Milan earlier this season in Serie A. And the Nerazzurri went in front in the 18th minute when Benjamin Pavard nodded on Federico Dimarco's corner for an unmarked Acerbi to head in from close range.

Lautaro should have doubled Inter's lead seven minutes later when he was also left woefully unmarked but the league's top goal-scorer inexplicably fired over the bar from point-blank range. Milan seemed to draw confidence from that miss

and Rafael Leão had a great chance to level following a rapid run on the counterattack from Tomori, but he fired straight at Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer. It was end-to-end action and Milan captain Davide Calabria also forced a great save from Sommer at the end of the first half.

But clinching the crown seemed inevitable less than four minutes after the restart when Thuram ran onto a long Alessandro Bastoni ball over the top and feinted around his

along the edge of the area and drill into the near bottom corner.

The finale became tense when Milan pulled one back 10 minutes from time. Sommer did brilliantly to parry Mattia Gabbia's header onto his post but Tomori nodded in the rebound. Tomori grabbed the ball and gestured frantically to teammates as he raced back to the center circle, desperate to get the equalizer that would prevent Inter from securing the title.

As tempers flared, a scuffle broke out in stoppage time

and Milan's Théo Hernandez and Inter defender Denzel Dumfries were sent off. Calabria was also shown a red card five minutes later following another scuffle.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RACE

Bologna consolidated fourth place with a 3-1 win at Roma to inflict Daniele De Rossi's second league defeat as coach of the capital club.

Bologna moved seven points above fifth-placed Roma and eight above Atalanta - both of which have a game in hand.

Spanish women among top Laureus winners and Djokovic is world sportsman of the year

Madrid, Apr 23 (AP) Spain's first Women's World Cup triumph last year earned two more major plaudits at the Laureus World Sports Awards on Monday.

Spain was chosen world team of the year for 2023 and midfielder Aitana Bonmati was picked as the best sportswoman.

Novak Djokovic received the sportsman of the year at the ceremony in Madrid, and American gymnast Simone Biles was given the comeback of the year award.

Real Madrid forward Jude Bellingham earned the breakthrough prize, and Rafael Nadal won the sport for good award thanks to his foundation.

The Spanish women's World Cup breakthrough last August in New Zealand and Australia was tarnished in the following weeks because of an unwanted kiss of forward Jenni Hermoso by

then-federation president Luis Rubiales after the final. Laureus rewarded Spain as the first all-female team to win the team award.

Before the World Cup, Bonmati also helped Barcelona win a second Women's Champions League. She's the first female soccer player to win the Laureus, after also receiving the Ballon d'Or and FIFA best player award.

"I want to thank all my teammates and the staff of my club and national team who have helped me a lot, and because of them I am here today," Bonmati said.

Djokovic won his record-equalling fifth Laureus sportsman award - tying Roger Federer - after titles at the Australian Open, French Open and U.S. Open to reach a record 24 Grand Slam singles triumphs. NFL great Tom Brady presented Djokovic the award.

Biles made a record-breaking return to competition last year when she won four gold medals at the world championships, including a record sixth all-around title.

Nadal's foundation was rewarded for helping more than 1,000 vulnerable young people in Spain and India, according to Laureus.

Teenager Arisa Trew won the action sports person award after becoming the first female skateboarder to land a 720 in competition.

Dutch wheelchair player Diede de Groot was selected as the sportsperson of the year with a disability after winning her third straight calendar tennis Grand Slam.



Sreeja surpasses Manika as India number one TT player

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

CWG mixed doubles champion Sreeja Akula on Tuesday became the top-ranked Indian woman table tennis player after rising to career-high rank of 38 in latest ITTF Chart, replacing Manika Batra.

Sreeja climbed a spot while Manika who had been India's number one TT player for a while now, slipped two places to 39 in the latest update.

The 25-year-old Sreeja has enjoyed a good run this year, winning the WTT Feeder Corpus Christi and WTT Feeder Beirut titles in January and March respectively besides reaching the quarterfinal of the WTT Star Contender in Goa.

Sreeja had won the mixed doubles gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games

alongside veteran Sharath Kamal.

Yashaswini Ghorpade and Archana Kamath held on to their 99th and 100th spot in the rankings.

Sharath continues to be the top-ranked male player, occupying the 37 spot in the rankings while G Sathiyam and Manav Thakar have interchanged places to be 60th and 61st respectively.

National champion Harmreet Desai, who was the top ranked Indian a couple of months ago, descent continues as he dropped to the 64th spot. India has already qualified for the team events at the Paris Olympics.

Two singles entries in men's and women's singles will be decided by the Table Tennis Federation of India by May 16 after considering the world rankings at the time.

ISL final to be played at home ground



PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian Super League (ISL) on Tuesday said that the 2023-24 season final, scheduled on May 4, will be played at the home ground of the higher-ranked team in the league among the finalists.

Mohun Bagan pipped Mumbai City FC in a thriller on April 15 to win the League shield, with FC Goa finishing third.

Kolkata, Mumbai and Goa are therefore in contention to host the ISL final. Tickets for the match will go on sale once the venue is confirmed.

Odisha FC and FC Goa emerged victorious in their knockout matches against Kerala Blasters FC and Chennaiyin FC respectively, securing their places in the ISL 2023-24 semi-finals.

The semi-final action kicks off with Mohun Bagan Super Giant facing Odisha FC in Bhubaneswar on April 23. The following day, on April 24, Mumbai City FC will clash with FC Goa in the first leg of their semi-final matchup in Goa.

Shotgun shooter permitted to compete in national trials despite not meeting criteria

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The national shooting federation, which is fighting a court battle to uphold its selection criteria in the ongoing trials for Paris Olympics, seems to have bent the rules for one marksman recently, allowing him to participate despite lower-than-requisite scores.

Trap marksman Karan missed the National Rifles Association of India's (NRAI) criteria for shotgun selection trials by two points but was allowed to compete, while several others, who shot identical scores during last year's National Championships, were not considered.

A letter issued by NRAI in November announcing "Selection Trials as per Shotgun Selection Criteria 2024 & Olympic Selection Criteria 2024 for Shotgun event" states that shooters with a score of 110 in senior men's trap during the 66th National Championship (October-November, 2023) were eligible for the exercise held between December, 2023 and March 2024.

Karan, an Army marksman, shot 108 in the National Championships but his was the only recommendation accepted by the NRAI, while the same exception was not made for a dozen more shooters, who shot identical



scores. The shooter competed in a series of four selection trials and is currently ranked 15th, thus failing to make the national squad.

NRAI secretary Rajiv Bhatia told PTI that since Karan is a "budding" shooter and his "recommendation had come from the Army", an exception was made for him.

"We did give an exception as he is a budding, good shooter. There was a difference of just two points and he has been shooting good scores. That's why we introduced him in the trials for selecting the teams for World Cups, World Championships, everything (including Olympics)," said Bhatia.

"We cannot simply go by the rule book (lakeer ke fiker nahin ban sakte). There was a recommendation from the Army to allow him (for national trials) because he had shot very well at the National Games (in Goa).

Karan, representing Services Sports Control Board, was the first to be eliminated in the trap finals at the National Games in Goa, finishing sixth. The NRAI, ironically, is locked in a legal battle with some Olympic aspirants in the Delhi High Court, where it is insisting that no more than top five shooters in rifle and pistol would be allowed in the ongoing trials.

The process has come under criticism from no less than former national coach and legendary pistol shooter Jaspal Rana, who has said that the federation is not following international norms.

Asked why the trials were not opened for marksmen who shot identical scores at the Nationals, Bhatia said, "I think we allowed him under a special criteria because of his previous scores." Bhatia added that giving an exception in trials didn't mean he was selected in the national squad for

international competitions like the World Cups and World Championships.

"So, was he selected for the World Cups? No, we just gave him an opportunity," he said.

"Every state recommends shooters to be included (in trials), and we go by the merit. A marksman can shoot a bad score in a competition. One day you can shoot a bad score." Asked what NRAI would have done had he topped the trials, Bhatia said, "If somebody is performing, then why not (name him in the Olympic squad). How can we not consider him (for Olympics if he had performed)? Aim is to select the best athlete."

"But he is not going for any competition. As on today, he is nowhere in the national ranking. I think his ranking is very low (after the trials). But if he had beaten the field, he would have been (in contention)."

He added that an exception had also been made for the shooter to promote shotgun shooting as it is not as popular as pistol and rifle.

"Shotgun, we have to promote as (the numbers are very less) compared to pistol rifle and other categories... It was a recommendation of the Army Marksmanship Unit, which is an affiliate unit of the NRAI. "It was only one case, we did not open it for everybody. Just one time exce



Man City vs Man United FA Cup final time confirmed

AP ■ LONDON

The FA Cup final between Manchester City and Manchester United will kick off at the traditional time of 3 PM (14.00 GMT) on May 25, the Football Association said Tuesday.

In a repeat of last year's final, holder City will play rival United at Wembley Stadium.

The FA said the kick-off time had been agreed with both clubs, the local authority, safety advisory group and broadcasters.

It is the second straight year that the final will start at 3 PM. In recent years, it has had an early evening time slot.

City beat Chelsea 1-0 on Saturday to secure its place in the final.

Meanwhile, United needed penalties to overcome second-tier Coventry on Sunday after blowing a 3-0 lead to draw 3-3 through extra time.

Olympic gold medallist Gray hopes to be part of US 3x3 team in Paris Games

AP ■ SPRINGFIELD (US)

Alisha Gray is glad to be back playing 3x3 for USA Basketball with an eye towards being a member of the team at the Paris Olympics this summer.

She's the only player returning from the foursome that took home the gold at the Tokyo Games three years ago. That was the inaugural appearance of the sport at the Olympics.

"To be the first team to do it and it being the first time in the Olympics, it was amazing," Gray said.

"It's great to be back and get back into the groove of things."

Gray was one of eight players selected from the 15-person training camp over the weekend to participate in a 3x3 tournament in Springfield, Massachusetts at The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. She's on a team with Dearica



Hull began her 3x3 career in 2016 and also medalled in the sport in 2022 and 2023.

The Americans will eventually choose the four player roster for Paris. Two of the players must be in top 10 for points accumulated for the U.S. The other two players on the team either have to also be in the top 10 or have played in at least one official FIBA 3x3 competition between January 1, 2023 and June 24, 2024.

National team coach Jennifer Rizzotti said that the selection committee will have a tough job picking the four players to compete in Paris.

"What makes it hard is there are also some women who have committed to this game for four years," she said.

"They've earned the points for the US and earned the points for themselves. They've done all the groundwork and laid the

foundation for us to be able play in the Olympics and not all of them will get to go. We tried to find a way to make them know that they are part of the process and you try to keep them here as long as you can."

The 3x3 game is played on a half court with a 12-second shot clock and the winner is the first team to score 21 points or to be leading at the end of a 10-minute period. Baskets inside the arc are worth one point and shots outside it are worth two.

Rizzotti said USA Basketball had a 3x3 camp last May that featured a lot of the college players who were playing the game for the first time. She's seen a lot of growth from them. "It's impressive to see in a short amount of time and limited repetitions of playing that they've picked things up," she said.

"Made us really have a competitive camp in a way that I wasn't really expecting.

