











# Give grand welcome to PM during Patna roadshow, BJP urges people of Bihar

PTI ■ PATNA

The BJP on Wednesday exhorted supporters from across Bihar to converge in the state capital on Sunday to welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi who will hold a roadshow in the city. An appeal to the effect came at a joint press conference here, addressed by former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, who is also the local MP, and Deputy Chief Minister cum state BJP president Samrat Choudhary, among others.



considered "a safe seat" for the saffron party. "Does the prime minister need to get some special visa issued by Tejashwi Yadav to come here", Prasad asked even as he hit back at the former Bihar Deputy CM for raising a fresh demand for central status to Patna University. "Tejashwi Yadav should tell us whether his father Lalu Prasad, who ruled Bihar for long and, later, became a minister in the Manmohan Singh cabinet, cared to raise these demands", said the Patna Sahib MP. He added "The people of Bihar, though, should rest assured that whatever is needed for the state will be done by us. It was during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's time that the engineering college in Patna got upgraded to NIT. Modi's tenure saw the setting up of

always been intent on giving benefits of reservations and other facilities only to castes and communities he counts on as his supporters. The prime minister is right in flagging a conspiracy to steal benefits meant for SCs, STs and OBCs", alleged Choudhary. To Tejashwi Yadav's taunt that the opposition has forced the PM to hit the streets, the Bihar BJP chief responded: "Modi is a fakir (renunciate). Tejashwi and his father have deep pockets." A question was posed to Ravi Shankar Prasad about the fresh controversy around "south Indians look like Africans" remark of Sam Pitroda, the technocrat who heads Indian Overseas Congress. Prasad replied "he is known to be an advisor to Rahul Gandhi. I can now understand why the Congress leader often ends up with his foot in the mouth. The remark betrays Sam Pitroda's ignorance about the country and desperation over the imminent defeat of his favourite party".

# Congress manifesto representing Muslim League, claims Yogi

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR (UP)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said the Congress manifesto is like a "new version of the Muslim League". Addressing the media at the Gorakhnath temple premises, Adityanath said, "This is not a 'Nyay Patra', but 'Anyay Patra' towards the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Castes and Sanatana Dharma." "A new version of the Muslim League has come. Nothing can be more shameful than the manifesto of the country's oldest political party, Congress, representing the Muslim League," he said, according to a statement issued in Lucknow. When asked about Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's accusation that the BJP promotes hatred politics, the chief minister said that instead of telling white lies, she should at least develop a habit of speaking the truth. These people won't be able to deceive the public anymore during the elections because the entire nation has come together in the vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, he added. Escalating his attack on the Congress, Adityanath said everyone knows that the grand old party has "inherited the policy of divide and rule". "In 1947, the Congress



allowed the cunning tactics of the British to succeed and divided the country. After independence, the Congress fuelled class struggles within the country based on caste, region and language due to political selfishness," Adityanath said. "Terrorism, Naxalism and separatism, all of these are contributions of the Congress," he added. "Who doesn't know what Sonia Gandhi did as the chairperson of the UPA from 2004 to 2014?" Adityanath said and added that Justice Ranganath Mishra Committee was formed to undermine OBC reservation. The chief minister said the committee even suggested allocating six per cent of the OBC reservation to the Muslims. The BJP and NDA opposed it at that time, and the Congress' plans could not materialize, he added. Adityanath further said the Congress and its allies also attempted to encroach upon the rights of SC-ST communities. During the Congress

# LS polls: EC puts Gujarat voter turnout at 59.51 per cent

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

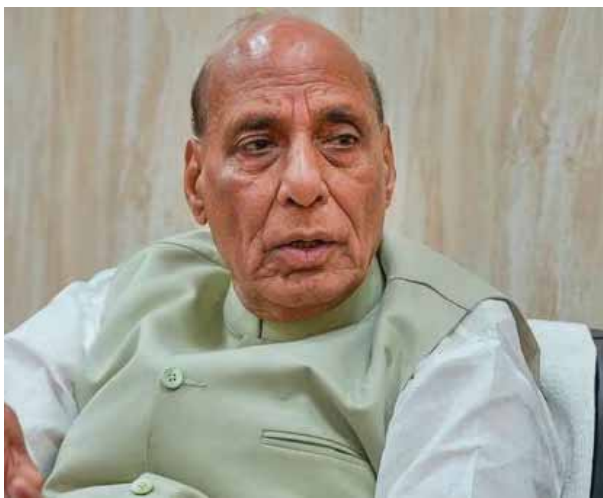
Gujarat has recorded an estimated voter turnout of 59.51 per cent in the elections to 25 Lok Sabha seats in the state, as per the data shared by the Election Commission of India on Wednesday. The final figure would be available by evening after the addition of postal ballot data, an official said. This time, the voter turnout is 4.6 per cent less compared to the 2019 general polls in the state. In 2019, the state registered a voter turnout of 64.11 per cent in polls to the 26 Lok Sabha seats. Voting was held in 25 Lok Sabha seats of Gujarat on Tuesday as the BJP recently bagged the Surat Lok Sabha seat uncontested. "Gujarat has recorded an estimated voter turnout of 59.51 per cent," said a statement by the EC. According to Gujarat's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) P Bharathi, the final voter turnout figures would be available by evening after the addition of postal ballot data. "Polling station-wise data is now being fed into the system and postal ballots are yet to be counted. "So there will be a slight increase in the final figure, not much. This 59.51 per cent turnout is almost final," said Bharathi.

# Poverty to be fully eradicated from India in next 15 years: Rajnath

PTI ■ BHAWANIPATNA (ODISHA)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday claimed that poverty would be completely eradicated from India in the next 10-15 years and this is 'Modi Ki guarantee'. Singh said this while addressing the BJP's 'Vijay Sankalp' rally here in the district headquarters town of Kalahandi. "Though Congress leaders beginning from Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru to Indira Gandhi and Manmohan Singh all have promised to

end poverty, all of them have failed. However, our Prime Minister Narendra Modi has started the process to end poverty," he said. Noting that about 25 crore people have been lifted from below the poverty line during the nine years rule of Modi, the Defence minister said that this was not the claim made by the BJP, but the report of Niti Aayog. No previous government had ever done so as Modi did in the last nine years, he claimed. Singh said: "There will be no family in India which will not have a pucca house, pipe drinking water and LPG gas



connection in the next 5 years." Recalling the Kalahandi situation, the BJP leader said that people from NGOs were coming to Kalahandi and writing articles on 'poverty tourism', as the place was known for hunger, starvation and death and poverty. However, things have undergone a massive change during the nine-year rule of the Modi government at the Centre, he said. While lauding the vocabulary skill of BJP's Kalahandi Lok Sabha candidate Malavika Devi, Singh appealed to the people of Kalahandi to vote for the

lotus symbol for proper highlighting of the local issues at the national level. Quoting former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on the expenditure of public money, Singh said: "Only 15 paise was reaching the beneficiary in the ground level if the Centre sent Rs 1 for the poor people. However, Modi's Jandhan account and direct bank transfer procedure ended the corruption and the people are getting the money sent by the Centre." Appealing the people to install a BJP government in Odisha, Singh said that the BJP government will

implement the Ayushman Bharat health scheme as soon as a saffron government is formed in Odisha. He said cutting across caste, creed and religion, all the people at the age of 70 years or above would be covered under the Ayushman Bharat scheme. "Bring BJP government in Odisha, the state will implement Ayushman Bharat immediately," he said. The Defence minister also claimed that during the Modi regime, terrorism has almost come to an end due to timely and strong action against terrorists. He,

however, said that there is a few sporadic cases of terrorism and it will completely vanish from Indian soil under the leadership of Modi. Claiming that the BJP does what it says, Singh said the Modi government has abolished Article 370, ended the triple talaq practice and installed Sri Ram Lala's statue at Ayodhya as promised earlier. He appealed to people to vote for BJP candidates contesting in Lok Sabha and Odisha Assembly polls. Lok Sabha and Assembly elections would be held simultaneously in Odisha.

# Himachal: Only three women elected to Lok Sabha till date, just two in fray this time

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Only three women have made it to the Lok Sabha from Himachal Pradesh in the past 72 years and this time, just two are in the fray. Women constitute almost 49 per cent of the total voters in the state. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Chandresh Kumari and Pratibha Singh, the three successful candidates till now belonged to royal families. Only the BJP and the BSP have nominated women candidates for the June 1 elections for the four Lok Sabha seats in the state.



reservation for women was introduced, women pradhans were elected in Mandi, Kinnaur and Kangra districts. But women were not so keen to climb the ladder to the assembly, he claimed. Moreover, the political parties also did not promote or encourage the women with humble background, he added. Political parties go all out to woo the women voters but when it comes to declaring candidates, women get few opportunities, the political experts felt. To add to it, participation of women voters surpass male voters especially in rural areas but still few women get elected, they added. A total of 56,38,422 voters - 28,79,200 male, 27,59,187 female and 35 third gender persons - are eligible to exercise their franchise for the seats of Hamirpur, Kangra, Mandi, and Shimla (SC) in the seventh and last phase of polling on June 1. Amrit Kaur, India's first health minister who hailed from the royal family of Kapurthala, was elected to Lok Sabha from Mandi constituency in 1952. Thereafter, no woman got a ticket till 1984.

However, in 1984, Chandresh Kumari from the royal family of Jodhpur who was married in Himachal Pradesh, was fielded by the Congress from Kangra and won as the party swept the election, riding on the sympathy wave following the assassination of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi. Pratibha Singh, wife of former chief minister Virbhadr Singh unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha polls in 1998. However, she won the elections in 2004 when her husband was the chief minister. In 2009, Virbhadr Singh was elected to Lok Sabha from Mandi but he quit after becoming chief minister in 2012 and his wife Pratibha Singh won the by-election in 2013. She again contested the Lok Sabha polls in 2014 but lost to Ram Swaroop of BJP, who was re-elected in 2019. But the seat fell vacant when Ram Swaroop died in March 2021 and Pratibha Singh won for the third time in the by-election held in November 2021 after the death of Virbhadr Singh. In 2014, the AAP fielded Kargil war hero Capt Vikram Batra's mother Kamal Kanta Batra from Hamirpur but she polled only 15,329 votes and lost. Even in the 68-member state assembly, the representation of women has been abysmally low and no woman was elected till 1967. Only one woman entered the assembly in 1977 and 2022. However, the highest number of seven women were elected to the state assembly in the 1998 elections. So far, eight women have been elected to Rajya Sabha from the state.

# Man live streams from poll booth in Gujarat, detained for bogus voting

PTI ■ DAHOD

A man has been detained after he live-streamed from inside a poll booth in the Dahod Lok Sabha constituency, officials said on Wednesday. The Congress has claimed that the man, Vijay Bhabhor, is the son of a local BJP leader and accused him of "insulting democracy" by going live on Instagram from the booth. The police in the state's Mahisagar district detained Bhabhor and another man after the opposition complained to the Election Commission with a copy of the video. Though Bhabhor deleted the video after it drew criticism, the clip had gone viral on social media by then.

The incident of a man relaying a video live on Instagram after going to a poll booth to cast his vote is being probed, Dahod Returning Officer Nirgude Babanrao said. "We have received the video with a complaint and an investigation is underway," he said. Of the 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat, polling was held in 25 constituencies on Tuesday in the third phase of the general elections. The BJP candidate in Surat has won unopposed. The incident happened at a polling booth at Parthampur in Mahisagar district under Dahod parliamentary constituency, Mahisagar Superintendent of Police Jaydeepsinh Jadeja said.



"We have detained two persons and action is being taken based on the FIR registered by the presiding officer under the Representative of the People Act for bogus voting," Jadeja said. He said Bhabhor went to the poll booth to cast his vote at 5.49 pm and left by 5.54 pm. In those five minutes, he went live on Instagram and also allegedly cast votes on behalf of two other electors, resorting to bogus voting, he said. Prabha Taviad is the Congress

candidate in the constituency. She is pitted against incumbent MP Javantsinh Bhabhor. Congress claimed that the person who relayed the "booth capturing" video on Instagram is the son of a local BJP leader. Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi said they have repolling at booth number 220 in Parthampur over the incident. "Son of a BJP leader at Mahisagar played with the EVM machine and abused the Election Commission by creating a live video of booth capturing and thereby insulting democracy," Doshi said. A Congress leader shared the purported video on his X handle. "BJP leader's son

Vijay Bhabhor captures the booth in Parthampur Village, Santrampur. He goes live on social media while doing the same and is seen threatening poll officials," he claimed. The video shows Bhabhor purportedly focusing the camera on EVM (Electronic Voting Machine) and VVPAAT (Voter verifiable paper audit Trail) machine and seeking five to ten minutes from a poll official even when he is asked to leave. Bhabhor purportedly also says that "only the BJP works here". His accomplice was also seen in the video. "The machine belongs to my father. Only one thing works - that is BJP," says Bhabhor before pressing a button on the EVM, as per the video. "Only Vijay Bhabhor works here," he purportedly says.

# INDIA Bloc will vanish once LS poll results are announced: Goa CM

PTI ■ PANAJI

Goa Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Pramod Sawant on Wednesday said the opposition's INDIA bloc will vanish once the results of the Lok Sabha elections are announced on June 4. He also said that some regional parties in Goa, who are constituents of the INDIA bloc, may even get merged with the Congress after the results. Talking to reporters, CM Sawant predicted that the Bharatiya Janata Party's North Goa candidate Shripad Naik will win the election by a margin of more than one lakh votes, while its South Goa nominee Pallavi Dema will bag the seat by a margin of 50,000 to 60,000 votes. "Some of the INDIA Bloc

partners in Goa who were more aggressive than the Congress may merge their party with the latter," he added. According to the Goa CM, the BJP has fought this election on the issue of development, while the Congress was trying to rake up the issues of religion and caste during its campaign in the state. "The Congress has nothing to project, hence they had to take support of the issues of caste and religion. They should have told people what they had done when they had a double-engine Government," he said, referring to the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) dispensation that was in power between 2004 and 2014.

# Priyanka campaigns for Rahul in Rae Bareilly

PTI ■ RAEBAREILY (UP)

Hitting back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his Adani-Ambani jibe, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday charged that the BJP has a nexus with industrialists and waived their loans worth Rs 16 lakh crore. She also alleged that the entire BJP machinery is engaged in spreading "lies" about Rahul Gandhi. Referring to the prime minister's remarks at a rally in Telangana that the Congress should explain to people why it has stopped raising the 'Ambani-Adani' issue as its 'Shehzada' used to do for the past five years, Priyanka Gandhi said, "Today he (Modi) is saying Rahul does not take the name

of Adani, Ambani...He does so every day. He brings their truth in front of you every day." "We say every day that they (BJP) have a nexus with industrialists. You must understand that Prime Minister Modi has waived off Rs 16 lakh crore of big billionaires. Whose money is this? This is not Modi ji's money. That is the country's money," she said at public meetings here while campaigning for her brother Rahul Gandhi from the family bastion. BJP leaders are not even talking about inflation and unemployment. They will come here and in their speeches talk about religion, caste, temples and mosques but will not talk about your real problems," she said.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## The name game

Celebrities and influencers are equally liable for misleading endorsements, says the SC

In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court has declared that celebrities and influencers are equally liable if they endorse misleading advertisements. Hearing a petition filed by the Indian Medical Association against Patanjali's advertisements, the Bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah has come down heavily on the influencers and celebrities who feature in such adverts. In the age of social media, celebrities and influencers wield considerable influence, with millions of followers taking their word as gospel truth. In many instances, the endorsements are misleading or false, leading to consumer detriment and eroding trust in advertising. The Supreme Court's ruling represents a crucial step towards ensuring transparency and accountability in advertising practices. With millions of impressionable individuals looking up to them, these personalities possess a moral obligation to exercise due diligence while endorsing products or services. The failure to do so jeopardises consumer trust. Furthermore, the court emphasised the need for stricter regulations and enforcement mechanisms to deter deceptive advertising practices. While existing laws and guidelines provide some level of protection to consumers, they often fall short in holding celebrities and influencers accountable for their actions. The apex court's ruling sends out a clear message that no individual, regardless of their fame or influence, is allowed to mislead the public for personal gains.



The ramifications of the Supreme Court's decision are far-reaching for celebrities and influencers alike. Moving forward, these individuals must exercise greater caution and diligence when entering into endorsement agreements. They are obligated to ensure that the products or services they endorse are truthful, substantiated and in compliance with advertising regulations. This heightened accountability serves as a powerful deterrent against unethical marketing practices and underscores the importance of transparency and authenticity in influencer partnerships. Of late, many film stars promote chewing pan masala under the guise of a mouth freshener. Other celebrities have promoted online gaming sites which are actually gambling sites smartly packaged as gaming sites. However, it is just the beginning and there is a long way to go before such advertising endorsements can be curbed. There have to be clear and concise guidelines (the existing ones are not enough) to stop surrogate ads. Moreover, to be fair to celebrities, they often do not know what they are promoting. Hollywood star Pierce Brosnan once featured in a chewing tobacco ad which he later said he was told was a mouth freshener. He can be given a long rope for not understanding the difference but Indian celebrities are supposed to know such underhand tactics. As celebrities and influencers navigate this evolving guideline, they must prioritise integrity and ethical conduct to maintain the trust and loyalty of their audience. This would be good for their reputation as well as for the society.

### PICTALK



A child bathes his dog in a waterbody on a hot summer day, in Jammu

PTI

## Insights into India's growing heart health crisis

Aortic stenosis with a high mortality rate is a significant cardiovascular concern. Non-surgical aortic valve replacement emerges as a game-changer

Aortic stenosis stands as one of India's most prevalent valvular heart diseases, trailing only hypertension and coronary artery disease. Its prevalence surges with age, affecting roughly one in ten individuals aged 75 or older. The condition, characterised by a narrowing of the aortic valve opening, often manifests with symptoms such as chest pain, fatigue and shortness of breath, impacting the quality of life for affected individuals.

The primary causes include degenerative valve disease, congenital bicuspid aortic valve disease and rheumatic heart disease, the latter being the leading global cause of aortic stenosis (AS), particularly among children and young adults. Despite an initially asymptomatic phase that may last for several decades, the prognosis dramatically changes once symptoms develop. Without timely intervention, such as aortic valve replacement, the average survival rate dwindles to a mere 2-3 years, elevating the risk of sudden death. The early symptoms of aortic stenosis are frequently over-



looked or misattributed to other causes. Nevertheless, recognising the significance of symptoms and promptly seeking medical attention is critical in mitigating the progression of the disease. For individuals diagnosed with aortic stenosis, heart valve replacement surgery often becomes a necessary course of action. This surgical intervention aims to repair or replace faulty heart valves, restoring proper blood flow and alleviating symptoms. According to a report by GlobalData, approximately 69,592 heart valve surgeries are conducted each year in India. The heart's proper function relies on valves, ensuring blood flows in one direction. When valves malfunction, surgery becomes necessary to repair or replace them. This may involve fixing leaflets that don't open wide enough or don't close tightly, ensuring blood flows properly through

the heart chambers and arteries. Replacement valves can be sourced from animals, human tissue, or synthetic materials. **TAVI & TAVR for AS** Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation/Replacement (TAVI/TAVR) is a groundbreaking alternative procedure to open heart surgeries. TAVI/TAVR is a minimally invasive procedure that involves inserting a new valve inside the damaged aortic valve, often without removing the old valve entirely. The procedure itself involves inserting a catheter through an artery in the groin, which is then guided to the heart. The number of patients afflicted with blocked arteries and co-morbidities like hypertension, diabetes and chronic kidney disease is increasing day after day. The ideal solution for such patients is TAVI procedure, as it offers significant benefits over traditional treatments. However, only a small percentage end up opting for it. Addressing aortic stenosis early, especially in patients with multiple co-morbidities, is crucial for improving outcomes and enhancing quality of life.

**TAVI Therapy Helps** Mrs. Patel, a 78-year-old woman, was struggling with severe degenerative aortic stenosis. Mrs. Patel's condition, made it hard for blood to flow through her heart properly. This caused her heart to work harder, leading to symptoms like chest pain and feeling breathless. Her doctor suggested a treatment called TAVI (Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation), a less invasive procedure where a new valve is placed inside the damaged one. The deployment of the valve was successful, with Mrs. Patel responding positively to the procedure. Remarkably, within just three days, Mrs. Patel was discharged from the hospital. Subsequent assessments revealed no signs of valve issues or blockages in her heart. Her journey underscores the remarkable impact of interventions like TAVI in restoring health and well-being.

*(The writer is Senior Director and Head of Interventional Cardiology at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Delhi; views are personal)*

### POLL BATTLE CONTINUES

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Poll battle enters crucial Phase III," published on May 7, this is my response. The upcoming third phase of Lok Sabha elections is poised to be a crucial battleground, with political heavyweights from both ruling and opposition parties vying for victory. The BJP, having secured a significant number of seats in the 2019 elections, faces the challenge of maintaining its dominance, especially in key States like Gujarat, Karnataka, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. With over 1,300 candidates, including a notable presence of women, contesting across 12 States and Union Territories, the electoral landscape reflects a diverse array of voices. The extensive deployment of security forces underscores the significance of ensuring a free and fair electoral process. Of particular interest are the contests in constituencies like Guna in Madhya Pradesh, where Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia seeks to reclaim lost ground and Baramati in Maharashtra, where dynastic politics adds an intriguing dimension to the electoral dynamics. As voter turnout fluctuates amidst challenging weather conditions, the outcome of this phase remains uncertain, with implications for the broader political landscape. It's a testament to the vibrancy of Indian democracy and the diverse aspirations of its citizens.

Anika Patel | Kolkata

### CORAL CRISIS

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Marine heatwave scorches pristine coral reefs of Lakshadweep," published on May 7, this is my response. As someone who reads the news daily, the plight of Lakshadweep's vibrant corals strikes a chord. It's disheartening to witness the gradual decline of such natural wonders due to prolonged marine heatwaves. Beyond the aesthetic loss, the ecosystem repercussions are immense. The warnings from scientists about coral bleaching and its cascading effects on marine life sound alarms for the delicate balance of nature.

AHEAD LIES THE CRUCIAL TASK FOR NEW DELHI TO FORMULATE AN AMBITIOUS AND PRACTICAL LONG-TERM PLAN TO COUNTER CHINA'S ADVANCEMENTS



departure from the earlier training provided by India and the United States.

Ahead lies the crucial task for New Delhi to formulate an ambitious and practical long-term plan to counter China's advancements in "new productive forces," a term coined by President Xi Jinping. This involves focusing on economic development through innovation in advanced sectors. China's aim to surpass the United States in the production of advanced science and technologies poses challenges for India as well. Therefore, India must intensify its efforts to support the United States in its global technology coalitions with allies like Japan, Australia and India, along with the CHIP Alliance, while fostering deep bilateral partnerships in emerging critical technologies. China's expanding ties in the region are evident and India needs to tread cautiously to counter its influence, as seen in the case of Nepal. The recent political shift in Nepal towards a communist Government ideologically aligned with China is concerning, especially considering China's "Debt Trap" strategy. Pakistan serves as a stark example, with China extending a massive debt of \$23 billion, a substantial portion of which is tied to the Belt and Road Initiative, Pakistan's mounting debt to China, totalling \$67.2 billion from

2000 to 2021, underscores the risks associated with this debt dependency. Despite facing economic collapse, Pakistan remains indebted to China, highlighting the potential peril of falling into a debt trap. Experts suggest that the incoming Government in Delhi may find solace in the recent normalisation of ties with Sri Lanka. A severe economic crisis in Sri Lanka had pushed it perilously close to the edge, but India stepped in with a \$4 billion economic assistance package and humanitarian aid, surpassing even the IMF's 48-month special package to stabilise the country. This move showcased India's commitment beyond traditional diplomacy and responded to the dire needs of its neighbour. It's noteworthy that China, previously involved, withdrew its support, while India's intervention has been perceived positively, reflecting a shift in Sri Lanka's outlook. Interestingly, former president, Mahinda Rajapaksa had blamed India for interfering in the Sri Lanka elections which led to his ouster in 2015. The trend continued when Gotabaya Rajapaksa, president cancelled the East Container Terminal (ECT) agreement in the Colombo airport in violation of a 2019 project contract signed amongst three partners including Japan, India and Sri Lanka. Now Sri Lanka's speaker, Mehinda Yapa

Abeywardera thanked India for saving his country from the 'blood path' hence China stands exposed in the eyes of the people of this country. India's relations with Bangladesh remain strong, exemplified by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts. During a joint event on November 23, 2023, Modi referred to India as Bangladesh's largest development partner, emphasising mutual benefits. One of the notable features of election campaigning by all parties, unlike developed nations, is the lack of debates, discussions and narratives to enlighten the people about the relevance and significance of foreign policy. The manifestoes may dwell upon foreign relations and future strategy but no effort is made to emphasise its importance in achieving the goal of joining the elite club of developed nations. India's independent stand to import crude oil from Russia, despite economic sanctions by the United States and allies owing to the Ukraine war, has demonstrated to the world that such decisions are primarily governed by keeping national interest supreme. India's strategic approach towards Maldives and Nepal needs to be flexible and innovative to counter China's growing influence effectively. *(The writer is a journalist and political analyst, views are personal)*



KS TOMAR

# Tasks for new regime in turbulent times

As the nation braces for a new Government, all eyes are on the horizon of challenges awaiting the new administration

Keeping in view the confidence of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister, Amit Shah and the BJP to cross a magic figure of "Chaar Sau Paar" nothing is certain in politics but a new regime will take shape in New Delhi after the results of general elections on June 4.

In this backdrop none can deny that the new regime is poised to confront hordes of new challenges which include giving top priority to advancements in emerging technologies, adapting to shifting geopolitical equations, the rapid rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and formulating a long-term strategy to counter China's expansionist policies and security threats in the region. These challenges are pivotal for India's aspirations to join the League of developed nations in the future.

Experts say that Indian PM, Narendra Modi's push for digital technologies which proved a boon during Covid-19 crisis for the delivery of services besides emphasising renewable energy, a mission mode to put India back on the map of semiconductors production, setting a new target in space arena and formulation of a strategy to accelerate India's capabilities in AI has helped India to position itself to give a fillip to innovate and catch up with the US and China which have been trying to master the technological revolution to be relevant in future.

Foreign policy experts highlight India's growing concerns over China's increasing influence in the region, particularly its impact on security along the Line of Control (LOC). Consequently, the new administration must focus on devising a strategic plan, possibly in collaboration with the United States, to address these concerns. China's recent tactics involve enticing India's neighbours with debt policies and offering substantial loans for projects like the ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and defence-related ventures. For instance, China signed a "military assistance" deal with the Maldives, providing non-lethal weapons and free training to Maldivian security forces, a significant

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### More allegations against Kejriwal



Apropos the news article, "LG recommends ANIA probe against Kejriwal," published on May 7, this is my response. The recent recommendation for an ANIA probe against Arvind Kejriwal by Delhi's Lieutenant Governor raises serious concerns. The accusation of receiving funding from extremist groups is alarming and demands a thorough investigation. However, the

timing, just before the Supreme Court's bail consideration and the political backdrop surrounding it raise questions of motive and agenda. The intertwined narratives of terrorism, politics and justice in this case create a complex scenario. On one hand, there's the gravity of allegations involving a banned terrorist organisation; on the other, there are claims of political conspiracy and manipulation.

As a reader, navigating through these intricate details leaves one perplexed and sceptical. The need for transparency and impartiality in the investigation is paramount to uphold the integrity of the democratic process and ensure justice prevails. However, amidst the political fervour surrounding elections, separating truth from propaganda becomes increasingly challenging.

Vihaan Singh | Ahmedabad

Moreover, the socioeconomic impact on coastal communities underscores the urgent need for action.

The Government's attention to Lakshadweep's marine ecosystems is crucial, especially considering the region's ecological and economic significance. The initiatives by CMFRI to study and develop resilience-based strategies offer hope amidst the crisis. However, collective efforts are imperative to mitigate the escalating threats and safeguard these invaluable treasures for future generations. The news serves as a reminder of our responsibility to preserve and protect our natural heritage in the face of environmental challenges.

Aaradhya Sharma | Mumbai

### EMPOWERING WOMEN

Madam — Apropos the news article, "CHHAYA: A contraceptive beyond family planning," published on May 6, this is my response. The recent approval of Centchroman, a non-hormonal contraceptive pill, signifies a significant stride in bolstering women's reproductive health rights. Branded as "Chhaya" in public health facilities and "SAHEL" in the mar-

ket, this pill offers a hormone-free alternative, expanding choices for family planning. Its versatility is commendable, catering to women regardless of age, marital status, or childbirth history. Notably, its compatibility with breastfeeding ensures maternal health without compromising lactation.

Centchroman's introduction aligns with India's commitment to reproductive rights and gender equality. By providing a safe and accessible contraceptive, the Government empowers women to make informed decisions, underscoring family planning as a human right crucial for social and economic development. However, dissemination of information remains pivotal. Comprehensive education on contraception can dispel misconceptions, enabling women to navigate their reproductive health confidently. In essence, Centchroman heralds a new era of inclusivity and empowerment, promising a future where women have agency over their bodies and futures.

Kabir Malhotra | Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## FIRST COLUMN

## PROFOUND INFLUENCE OF HABITS

Habits sculpt our lives by fostering discipline and perseverance



SAKSHI SETHI

In the words of F.M Alexander, 'People don't decide their futures. They decide their habits and their habits decide their futures.' From the moment we wake up to the moment we retire to bed, habits silently guide individual behaviours, often without even realising it. They can either propel us towards success or lead us down a path of mediocrity or failure. Habits have a profound impact on an individual's personal development and well-being. They are the fabric of daily existence, weaving through routines and decisions and ultimately, shaping the course of an individual's life. By establishing a consistent routine, an individual creates a framework within which they can operate efficiently and effectively. The individual becomes disciplined and learns self-control and perseverance... the qualities that are essential for achieving long-term goals and overcoming obstacles. Habits play a crucial role in the social sphere, shaping relationships and interactions with others. They are the invisible architects of every individual's life, decisions and ultimately, destiny. Shared habits, such as participating in team sports or volunteering in the community, foster a sense of camaraderie and belonging. Whether consciously or unconsciously, it is the habits that dictate what an individual eats, how the free time is to be spent and even which people to surround with. By understanding and intentionally cultivating positive habits, one can steer oneself towards choices that align with their goals and values. Undoubtedly, habits are the silent architects of one's actions, often operating beneath the conscious awareness yet exerting a profound influence on thoughts.



By establishing a consistent routine, one can create a framework within which they can operate efficiently and effectively. Habits indeed hold far more significance in everyone's life than one can often realise. From the moment an individual wakes up until they retire to bed, habits silently guide behaviours, often influencing outcomes far more than one can acknowledge. One of the most powerful aspects of habits is their ability to create momentum. Once a habit is established, it becomes easier to maintain and even expand upon. This momentum propels the individual to move forward, making it easier to achieve their goals and aspirations. By starting with small, achievable habits and gradually building upon them, one can harness this momentum to make positive changes in their life.

There is no denying the fact that good habits lie behind many of the positive changes while conversely, negative habits, such as procrastination, excessive screen time and unhealthy habits, hinder progress and undermine an individual's potential. Human connection is fundamental to happiness and fulfilment and this shows how habits play a crucial role in shaping one's daily experiences, behaviours and outcomes across various domains of life. It is the habits that contribute to a sense of belonging, support networks and emotional fulfillment. They encompass a wide range of actions, from simple everyday tasks to complex behaviours and thus play a significant role in shaping lives. They are not mere trivialities but powerful forces that permeate every aspect of our lives. By intentionally cultivating positive habits and breaking free from detrimental ones, one can create a life that is aligned with our values, goals and aspirations. Whether they are positive or negative, habits are and will always be an integral part of one's life. They form a crucial part of the everyday conceptual scheme used to explain normal human activity. Remember, an individual only becomes what they think they can. One cannot change the habits one does daily. The secret of an individual's success is found in their daily routine as rightly said there are no overnight transformations.

*(The writer is an educator; views are personal)*

## Rationalise regulations for e-commerce



UTTAM GUPTA

When the Government expects foreign companies to do almost everything that a retailer does, how can it deny these firms the right to sell?

Way back in 2019, Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh (DVM) an organisation of retail traders in the national capital had lodged a complaint with the Competition Commission of India (CCI) alleging anti-competitive behaviour by Amazon Seller Services (ASS) and Flipkart Internet Private Limited (FIPL). The CCI is an authority established under the Competition Act, of 2002. The Act prohibits anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates mergers, amalgamations acquisitions etc to ensure that there is no adverse effect on competition. Amazon and Flipkart are global giants operating e-commerce marketplaces in India through their subsidiaries, the ASS and the FIPL. DVM argued that ASS and FIPL had entered into exclusive sales agreements with smartphone makers to sell certain phones through a small number of preferred sellers. It also alleged that they had given preferential treatment to certain sellers by giving them higher search rankings and offering to pay for part of the discount that such sellers would offer during key sales periods such as Flipkart's Big Billion Days and Amazon's Prime Day.

On January 13, 2020, the CCI initiated an investigation under Section 26(1) of the Competition Act, 2002. Prima facie, the CCI agreed with DVM's contention and ordered a probe by the Director General (DG) - Investigation. ASS and FIPL approached the Karnataka High Court (KHC) with a plea to quash the CCI order. The KHC refused to quash it. The duo challenged the order in the Supreme Court (SC). In August 2021, the SC too dismissed their applications and ordered that "the CCI - DG will complete the probe. Now, the CCI-DG has come up with its findings.

The investigation has charged Amazon and Flipkart with violation of antitrust laws. Leveraging their substantial financial resources, they have indulged in 'predatory pricing' and forged exclusive partnerships with selective sellers. Predatory pricing is the illegal business practice of setting prices extremely low albeit by offering heavy discounts to consumers in an attempt to eliminate the competition and establish a monopoly. This has resulted in the shutdown of thousands of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It has specifically targeted Amazon for certain practices, especially with Cloutail India Pvt Ltd (a firm set up by a JV namely Prione Business Services (PBS) established by Amazon, in collaboration with an Indian entity owned by Narayan Murthy of Infosys) a "preferred" seller on Amazon's marketplace and other in-house sellers. Similarly, Flipkart has been investigated for its links to platform sellers, which contravenes new e-commerce regulations. What has led to the violations?

This can't be attributed solely to the use of financial muscle by these companies as alluded to by the CCI - DG. This has a lot to do with the rules introduced in early 2016, through which the Government allowed 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) under the so-called e-commerce marketplace model.



THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO WORKING ON A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ON FDI IN E-COMMERCE. IF IT GOES AHEAD WITH SUCH A POLICY, IT WILL BE TANTAMOUNT TO A RETROSPECTIVE CHANGE OF POLICY AND SEND A WRONG SIGNAL TO FOREIGN INVESTORS

The marketplace is a platform where vendors sell their products directly to consumers even as its owner (read: Amazon/Flipkart) merely acts as a facilitator by providing services such as booking orders, raising invoices, arranging delivery, accepting rejections etc. She can't hold inventory or undertake direct selling. The policy intent was abundantly clear. The foreign investor in the marketplace wasn't supposed to invest in the inventory model. However, the intent wasn't reflected in the Press Note (PN) issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) in the Ministry of Commerce and Industries. While drafting the fine print, a clever bureaucrat blurred the demarcation between the marketplace where 100 per cent FDI was allowed and the inventory model where it wasn't. The PN (2016) prescribed two conditions. First, the foreign entity owning marketplace cannot permit more than 25 per cent of total sales on the marketplace from one vendor or its group companies. Two, it cannot directly or indirectly influence the sale price. In the absence of specifying who that vendor should be, it made way for a company linked to the owner of the marketplace to get in. The latter could set up four companies (call them subsidiaries or JVs) and control 25 per cent of each of the total sales on the platform. Contrary to the policy intent, which prohibited foreign investors from direct selling, the fine print did just the opposite. Having allowed its entities to control almost all of the sales made on the marketplace, it

would be naive to expect that an anti-competition situation won't emerge. With such rules in place, it was a foregone conclusion that Amazon et al would have exclusive partnerships with selective sellers who - acting in concert with the former - would indulge in predatory pricing and give heavy discounts leading to the annihilation of thousands of SMEs. Following a complaint from the SMEs, on December 26, 2018, the DPIIT clarified that "the owner of the marketplace or its subsidiary or its joint venture (JV) with an Indian company can't have ownership of the seller." Further, "a seller on the platform can't source more than 25 percent of its inventory from a firm connected with the latter." Foreign investors can circumvent the first rider by having less than 50 per cent shareholding in the seller firm and arguing that they have no control (majority) over the latter. The marketplace owner can also sell his own product - albeit through its wholesale arm - on the platform. All that the wholesale arm needs to ensure is to restrict supplies to the seller within the 25 per cent threshold. The clarification/modification in the conditions through December 26, 2018, hasn't helped much in improving the situation. A few sellers, some of them still maintaining connection with the marketplace owner continue to dominate the e-commerce platform. For instance, only three dozen firms out of the 400,000 sellers on the ASS platform account for 67 per cent of sales on it. Meanwhile, in 2020, the Department of Consumer Affairs

(DCA), in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, issued the Consumer Protection (e-commerce) Rules, under Section 101 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The rules bar affiliated entities from selling on e-commerce platforms, restrict 'flash sales', and disallow sellers from using the name or brand associated with the marketplace e-commerce entities for the promotion of goods. In 2021, DCA made amendments to restrict business-to-business, or B2B, sales in e-commerce and a provision to prevent an 'abuse of dominant position' by e-commerce firms. The Government is also working on a comprehensive policy on FDI in e-commerce that will give primacy to the above rules. If it goes ahead with such a policy, it will be tantamount to a retrospective change of policy and send a wrong signal to foreign investors. The present mess owes it to the very idea of the marketplace which is flawed. When, the Government expects foreign companies to do almost everything that a retailer does viz. booking orders, raising the invoices, arranging the delivery, accepting rejections and so on, how can the former deny the latter right to sell? The way forward is to shun this idea; instead, allow 100 per cent FDI in retail. The bureaucrats had already done it but in a 'subtle' way. The Government should make it obvious and straightforward. Moreover, 100 per cent FDI should be permitted to all retailers, online or offline, big or small for a level playing field.

*(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)*

## Empowering rural women through the 'Umeed' scheme

Despite its success in empowering many women, this scheme's benefits are still not fully accessible to all in the region

In remote villages of Jammu and Kashmir, a silent revolution is underway as these regions are witnessing women coming out of their houses to explore the avenues of self-employment through the 'Umeed Scheme' - Jammu and Kashmir State Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM). This transformative initiative aims to reach out to 66% of the rural population across the erstwhile 125 blocks, linking them to sustainable livelihood opportunities and nurturing them till they come out of poverty and enjoy a decent quality of life. In December last year, Mission Director JKRLM, Indu Kanwal Chib, while sharing the JKRLM Vision



MANIMA AKHTAR

2024-30 informed that JKRLM has successfully federated 725,000 women and formed 87,000 self-help groups (SHGs) across the Union Territory of J&K. These SHGs are working in various areas such as livelihood, financial inclusion, gender and social inclusion, and other related fields. However, certain rural pockets remain unaware of this significant scheme, lacking

comprehensive knowledge to capitalise on its benefits. One such area is Baila village in Mandi Tehsil of the border district Poonch, which is located approximately 230 kilometres from Jammu city. Although the scheme has been operational in the nearby Mandi tehsil since 2016, its reach in Baila village remains limited. When asked about the 'Umeed Scheme', the response from the women of this remote village was a unanimous lack of awareness. When they were informed about the benefits of the scheme, they expressed eagerness to understand its workings, underscoring its importance for including women in the workforce and towards their economic freedom.

In this context, Matina Akhtar, an 18-year-old resident of Baila, shared her perspective: "Despite living just two kilometres away from Mandi, we remain unaware of this scheme. There is this wide gap between secluded corners of our country and the development schemes. This gap leaves us, women from remote areas, bereft of its advantages. We only learn about it when the scheme is on the verge of closure. Our remoteness is the reason why we haven't received any information about this scheme. How are we supposed to engage with it if we're in the dark?" "When I needed funds for my grocery store, I was short on cash. So, I resorted to



selling some wood from my house to procure materials. Had I known about this scheme earlier, I wouldn't have sold those timbers," lamented 37-year-old Farida Akhtar from the same village. When asked "If they have awareness about any

scheme?" resident Zareena Akhtar, aged 23, responded that within their community, the only scheme recognised is the Anganwadi Scheme (ICDS), highlighting a significant gap in knowledge and accessibility to Governmental initiatives beyond this singular program. There is also a lot of fear among the people of the village as well - both women and men. They have the fear of failure - what if they will not succeed in their endeavour? Salma Akhtar, 19, from Baila, confirms the notion. She expressed fears about potential repercussions and uncertainties associated with loan acquisition under the scheme. There is a need to dispel the

apprehensions lingering in the hearts of these women and endeavour to convey to them that this scheme is not a threat, but rather a boon. They need to be assured that this initiative can usher positive transformations into their lives. They must be made aware that this scheme is tailored specifically for women and designed to work towards their financial freedom. According to Naima Akhtar, the Cluster Head of the Umeed Scheme in Mandi Tehsil, the Government has allocated decent funding under this scheme for women to benefit from it. "I urge other women who may be unaware of this scheme to join us. Numerous individuals, both men and women,

in the Mandi Loren area have secured rewarding opportunities through this Scheme. They are sustaining their households without needing to engage in manual labor. Regrettably, the women of Baila remain oblivious to this exceptional program. Meanwhile, women from other regions are harnessing its benefits, propelling themselves up the ladder of progress. They are not only achieving financial independence but also cultivating self-reliance. This brings hope for a transformative change in the lives of the women of Baila.

*(The author is grassroots writer from Poonch, J&K; views are personal. Charkha Features)*





# Albanese dismisses China's claim blaming Aus for aircraft encounter

AP ■ MELBOURNE

China's account blaming Australia for a dangerous clash between their military aircraft in international airspace over the Yellow Sea failed to undermine Australian objections, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Wednesday.



In this undated photo provided by the Australian Defence Force, a Seahawk helicopter prepares to take off from the deck of HMAS Hobart during flying operations while on a regional presence deployment off northern Australia.

struck by a flare. Australia publicly accused China of unprofessional and unacceptable behavior, while China retorted that the Seahawk deliberately flew close to China's airspace in a "provocative move."

# Maldives minister says Chinese research ship's activity unrelated

AP ■ MALE

The Maldives government does not believe that a high-tech Chinese ship conducted any research related to the archipelagic nation despite docking in Male twice and skirting its territorial waters for three months before departing, a senior minister said on Wednesday.

unaware that the research vessel did anything related to us and I don't believe that they did," Shiyam told the news portal.

when Maldives' Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer left on his first official visit to India. Xiang Yang Hong 03, described as the most modern research vessel in the Chinese fleet, had begun its journey to the Maldives on January 14, barely 24 hours after President Mohamed Muizzu concluded his state visit to China.

# Ex-Chinese defense min emerges after long absence

Beijing (PTI): China's former defence minister Gen. Wei Fenghe whose prolonged absence from the public view sparked speculation about his fate has resurfaced, suggesting that he was politically safe, a media report said on Wednesday.



French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and his wife Peng Liyuan watch folklore dancers on Tuesday at the Tourmalet pass, in the Pyrenees mountains.

# Britain to expel Russian defense attaché over dangerous activities

AP ■ LONDON

Britain is expelling Russia's defense attaché after accusing him of being an undeclared military intelligence officer, one of several measures it is taking against Moscow for malicious activities, the government said Wednesday.

expect accusations of Russophobia, conspiracy theories and hysteria from the Russian government," Cleverly said in Parliament.

# Poland detains Russian who illegally crossed from Belarus

Warsaw (Poland)(AP):

Poland's security officials said Wednesday that a 41-year-old man from Russia had been detained and was being questioned after illegally crossing in from Russia's ally Belarus.

with someone who was carrying out tasks for Russian (secret) services," Polish media reported the man was not armed and was in civilian clothes, but was carrying a written contract with the Russian army that included participation in actions being part of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine.

# Taliban reject claims of Afghan involvement in recent attacks

Islamabad (AP):

The Taliban on Wednesday rejected claims of Afghan involvement in recent attacks in Pakistan, calling it "irresponsible and far from the reality."

# 'Split in JSP-N would not affect stability of Prachanda-led govt'

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Deputy Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal (JSP-N) Upendra Yadav on Wednesday said that he will approach the court against the "unconstitutional move" to divide his party when he was abroad as he insisted that the split would not affect the stability of the coalition government.



Upendra Yadav, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairperson of the Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal (JSP-N).

in the Madhesi party could jeopardize the survival of the government. "I talked to the Prime Minister and assured my party's continued support to the coalition government," said Yadav.

# SL looks for USD 17 billion debt reduction from restructuring

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka is looking at a reduction of approximately USD 17 billion from its overall debt burden in the ongoing debt restructuring process, Foreign Minister Ali Sabry said here on Wednesday.

declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining independence from Britain in 1948. The unprecedented financial crisis led President Ranil Wickremesinghe's predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa to quit office in 2022.

manifest in various forms, including reductions in principal amounts, interest payments, or extended repayment timelines. Such restructuring efforts hold the potential to alleviate our debt burden by USD 17 billion," Sabry said.

investors linked to sovereign bonds aim to finalise this phase by June, with a targeted completion before June 2024," the Minister added.

# Chinese warships docked in Cambodia for 5 months; not permanent, says govt

AP ■ PHNOM PENH

Cambodia's Defense Ministry insisted Wednesday that the months-long presence of two Chinese warships in a strategically important naval base that is being newly expanded with funding from Beijing does not constitute a permanent deployment of the Chinese military in the country.

lyzed by The Associated Press, confirm that the two ships remained there on Wednesday, more than five months since they initially appeared. The United States and others have long worried that the new pier at the Ream Naval Base, built with Chinese funding, could serve as a new outpost for the Chinese navy on the Gulf of Thailand, but Cambodia has said that would not happen.

Cambodia is not allowing any foreign forces to be deployed on its territory," he said. "That won't happen; that point is in our Constitution and we are fully following it."

personnel, store weapons and berth warships. The base sits adjacent to the South China Sea, where China has aggressively asserted its claim to virtually the entire strategic waterway, and also provides easy access to the Malacca Straits, a critical shipping route leading from it to the Indian Ocean.

# Russia launches attack on Ukrainian energy facilities

AP ■ KYIV

Russia launched aerial attacks on energy facilities throughout Ukraine early Wednesday, targeting seven regions with more than 50 missiles as well as drones, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.



Wednesday's attacks occurred on the day that Ukraine observes the end of European fighting in World War II. "Massive missile attack by Nazi Putin on the Day of Remembrance and Victory over Nazism in the Second World War," Zelenskyy said.







RESURGENT RCB TAKE ON ERRATIC PBKS IN BATTLE OF SURVIVAL

PTI ■ DHARAMSALA
Resurgent Royal Challengers Bengaluru will look for their fourth consecutive victory when they face an unpredictable Punjab Kings as the two sides fight for survival in the Indian Premier League, here on Thursday.



all-important 14 points mark. Having beaten PBKS earlier in the season and heading to this clash with three wins on the trot, RCB will feel more confident than the hosts.

to continue in the same vein. PBKS, on the other hand, will be low on confidence having suffered an inexplicable batting collapse against Chennai Super Kings.

RR captain Samson fined 30 per cent match fees for breaching IPL Code of Conduct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Rajasthan Royals captain Sanju Samson has been fined 30 per cent of his match fees for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his side's 20-run loss to Delhi Capitals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here.



Match Referee's decision is final and binding," the IPL said in a statement. A Level 1 offence under Article 2.8 of the IPL's Code of Conduct includes "excessive, obvious disappointment with an Umpire's decision;

We should have seen game home: Rajasthan Royals head coach Sangakkara

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Skipper Sanju Samson's departure left Rajasthan Royals in a tight spot but the team still should have won the IPL match against Delhi Capitals here, says their head coach Kumar Sangakkara.



casual mistakes, it becomes very hard. At the end of the day it's about execution." Samson was not a happy man when he left the field because there were doubts if Shai Hope, who caught him at the boundary ropes, had touched

to make a call. "It depends on replays and angles, and sometimes you think the foot's touched. But it is a difficult one for the third umpire to judge. The game was at a crucial stage, so that happens in cricket.

Jaiswal has got very good chance of breaking my records: Brian Lara

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Yashasvi Jaiswal's Test career is just nine games old but the great Brian Lara feels if there is anyone who can get close to his lofty feats, including the record 400 not out, it is the 22-year-old southpaw from India.

Table with 4 columns: क्रमांक/146/अ.क्र.जी./का.सं./2024, विद्यार्थि, इन्टर, दिनांक 08/05/2024. It lists names and details for a competition.

OTHER SPORTS

I have hit energy saving mode: Nikhat Zareen on preparations for Olympic debut

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Along-cherished Olympic debut just about three months away, two-time world champion boxer Nikhat Zareen has hit "energy-saving mode" ahead of her date with destiny.



tooth on cheat days, do grocery shopping, listen to music, it helps me stay calm. Also, I watch movies or Netflix shows. I am watching 'Heeramandi' right now, it's quite interesting," she said.

Andy Murray to return from ankle injury at Geneva Open this month

AP ■ GENEVA
Three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray is set to return from his ankle injury at the Geneva Open this month.



The former No. 1 has only played sparingly since having hip surgery in 2018 and has said he will probably retire after this summer.

Brazil bid highest for hosting 2027 Women WC

AP ■ LAUSANNE
Brazil's bid for the 2027 Women's World Cup was ranked higher than the bid submitted by Germany, Netherlands and Belgium in an evaluation report released by FIFA on Tuesday.

Sending a first Women's World Cup to South America then became a likely consequence. Based on the technical evaluation by the FIFA in-house panel, Brazil's bid was given an average score of 4.0 out of 5.

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