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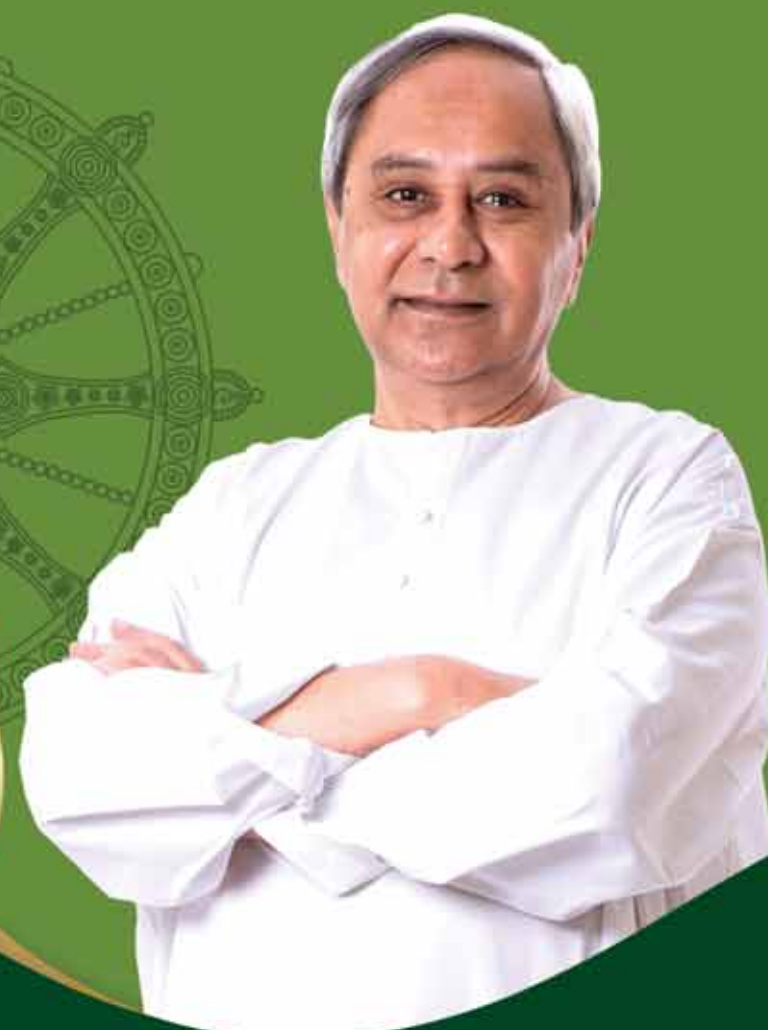
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## VISION FOR ODISHA NO 1



### PEOPLE'S MANIFESTO 2024

#### YOUTH



- FIRST STATE IN THE COUNTRY TO INTRODUCE A YOUTH BUDGET.
- 1 LAKH CRORES ALLOCATED FOR YOUTH INTERVENTIONS.
- YOUTH THEMSELVES WILL DECIDE ON A BUDGET OF ONE THOUSAND CRORES PER YEAR.
- SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNTS INCREASED TO RUPEES 14,000 FOR GIRLS AND 12,000 FOR BOYS.
- EXPANSION OF NUA-0 AND MAGIC CARD TO COVER ALL ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.
- 2 LAKH GOVERNMENT SECTOR JOBS TO BE PROVIDED FOR YOUTH.

#### URBANISATION



- DEVELOPMENT OF 4 MEGA URBAN CLUSTERS AND 20 ADDITIONAL CITIES.
- PURI WILL BE DEVELOPED INTO AN INTERNATIONAL CITY.
- EXPANSION OF BHUBANESWAR-CUTTACK METRO TO PURI AND KHORDHA.
- SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNTS INCREASED TO RUPEES 14,000 FOR GIRLS AND 12,000 FOR BOYS.
- LACMI BUS CONNECTIVITY TO ALL MAJOR TOWNS.
- AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY TO 20 CITIES.

#### INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



- FOCUS ON NEW-AGE TECHNOLOGY AND THE NEW ECONOMY WITH A SEMICONDUCTOR HUB, IT INDUSTRIES, AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.
- CONTINUE TO ATTRACT THE HIGHEST INVESTMENT IN THE STATE.
- ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS.
- DEVELOPMENT OF 100 ECO-FRIENDLY TOURISM SITES.

#### ENERGY SECURITY



- FREE ELECTRICITY UP TO 100 UNITS FOR HOUSEHOLDS.
- FREE ELECTRICITY FOR FARMERS.
- ABOUT 90% OF FAMILIES IN THE STATE WILL BENEFIT.

#### MIDDLE CLASS



- EXPANSION OF BSKY TO INCLUDE ALL ELIGIBLE URBAN FAMILIES, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTUAL AND COMMUNITY STAFF FAMILIES.
- SUBSIDIZED INTEREST ON HOUSING LOANS UP TO 20 LAKHS.
- SUBSIDIZED INTEREST ON EDUCATION LOANS UP TO 10 LAKHS
- PROVISION OF FREE ELECTRICITY TO COVER URBAN AREAS.
- AFFORDABLE TRANSPORT FOR EVERYONE.

#### WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



- SOCIAL SECURITY PENSION FOR MISSION SHAKTI WOMEN.
- LOANS OF 15 LAKH RUPEES AT 0% INTEREST.
- 20,000 CRORE RUPEES OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS TO BE PROVIDED TO MISSION SHAKTI.
- 100 CRORE RUPEES CORPUS FUND FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS.
- BSKY COVERAGE EXPANDED TO ALL GRASSROOTS WOMEN WORKERS.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY



- 1,00,000 EACH SC/ST/OBC INDIVIDUALS WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRANTS OF RUPEES 1,00,000.
- RATION CARDS FOR ALL ELIGIBLE FAMILIES.
- SANCTION OF 10 LAKHS RURAL HOUSING UNITS.

#### FARMER



- CROP LOANS UP TO 1.5 LAKHS AT 0% INTEREST.
- FREE ELECTRICITY FOR FARMERS.
- RS 15,000 SUPPORT FOR FISHERMEN AS LEAN SEASON ASSISTANCE.
- MARRIAGE ALLOWANCE OF 25,000 RUPEES FOR A FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

#### LANGUAGE, HERITAGE, AND CULTURE



- SPECIAL ALLOTMENT OF 1,000 CRORES FOR HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT.
- 100 CRORE CORPUS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT FUND OF ODIA AS A CLASSICAL LANGUAGE.
- 25 CRORE CORPUS AT SAMBALPUR UNIVERSITY FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LANGUAGE OF WESTERN ODISHA.



PRESS THE SANKHA BUTTON

ONE VOTE FOR MP



ONE VOTE FOR MLA



# Pandian throws political Sanyas challenge at Dharmendra

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
As political parties traded charges during intense campaigning for the twin elections in Odisha, Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader VK Pandian on Friday announced that he would quit politics if Naveen Patnaik fails to take oath as Chief Minister for a sixth term on June 9 with three-fourths majority.



Addressing an election rally, Pandian lashed out at Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for the saffron party's claim about forming the next government in Odisha after the ensuing elections.

Throwing a challenge to the Union Minister, Pandian asserted that Naveen would be sworn in as Chief Minister for a sixth time in a row with the BJD's three-fourths majority in the State Assembly. Naveen would be sworn in as CM on June 9 as per the schedule announced by the ruling party, he said.

from "Rajniti" (quit politics) if Naveen is unable to be sworn in as CM with 75% majority on June 9.

Asking Dharmendra Pradhan to make a similar announcement, Pandian said the formerr should also declare that he would take Sanyas from politics if his party fails to form government in the State Odisha after the polls.

As Pradhan has been making "tall claims" about the BJP coming to power by defeating BJD, he should also declare that he would quit politics if his party fails to achieve this goal, said Pandian.

# Thunderstorms to continue for next few days

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Several parts of the State are currently experiencing rainfall triggered by thunderstorm activities over the past several days. This has led to a considerable drop in the maximum temperature.

As per the weather office, thunderstorms are likely to continue in the next State in the next few days.

A cyclonic circulation lies over north Bihar and a trough runs from this cyclonic circulation to north Odisha. An-

other cyclonic circulation lies over northeast Assam and neighbourhood in the lower tropospheric levels, said the Regional Office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) here on Friday.

A Yellow warning for thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds has also been issued for several districts till the next five days.

On Saturday, thunderstorms with lightning accompanied with gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 kmph are very likely to occur

in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khordha, Nayagarh, Gajapati, Ganjam, Angul, Dhenkanal, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada and Kandhamal.

Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Baleswar, Keonjhar, Bhadrak and Kendrapada, said the IMD issuing a Yellow warning.

On Sunday, thunderstorms

with lightning accompanied with gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 kmph are very likely to occur in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khordha, Nayagarh, Gajapati, Ganjam, Koraput, Malkangiri and Rayagada.

Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Baleswar, Keonjhar and Bhadrak, said the weather office issuing a Yellow warning.

# Dinanath Pathy Kala Samman fest held



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The 4th Dinanath Pathy Kala Samman ceremony and the 2nd Dinanath Pathy Memorial Lecture were organised by the Ketaki Foundation Trust at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan here on Thursday. The event was also broadcast live on Facebook.

into the enduring legacy of Dinanath Pathy.

Padma Vibhushan Sitakant Mahapatra, a distinguished figure in the literary world, was chief guest and delivered the 2nd Dinanath Pathy Memorial Lecture. His discourse delved deep into the life and works of late Dr Pathy. Dr Mahapatra emphasised the importance of research and the promotion of Odia language and culture.

# Akshaya Tritiya marks series of auspicious starts

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Construction of Rath Yatra chariots commences

The day of Akshaya Tritiya is considered to be auspicious for any new beginnings like weddings, buying property and making investments, etc.

The popular agrarian festival was celebrated as per the age-old tradition across Odisha on Friday. The farmers across the State performed the traditional 'Akhi Muthi Anukula', the ritual of sowing seeds in their paddy fields after ploughing their lands.

As per the age-old rituals, farmers observe the festival as 'Siddhi and Suddhi Dibasa'. They wear new clothes, carry a basket of seeds and sow those in their fields. These seeds are known as offerings to Goddess Lakshmi which is believed to bring rich harvest.



**Ratha Anukula: Construction of chariots for the Trinity for this year's Rath Yatra commences at the Grand Road near the Jagannath Temple in Puri on the auspicious day of Akshaya Tritiya on Friday.**  
Photo: Ranjan Ganguly

As per the legend, the word 'Akshaya' means something that never diminishes and that is why it is believed that things that started on the day of 'Akshaya Tritiya' continue to grow and prosper. Akshaya Tritiya is also considered to be the day of the birth of Lord Parsurama, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. It is also considered the day when Ved Vyasa and Lord Ganesha started writing the Mahabharata.

From this day, the construction of the chariots for the famous Jagannath Rath Yatra in Puri begins too. Carpenters start making chariots for Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra, for the procession to be carried out on the day of the world famous Rath Yatra.

As per the popular tradition, the temple servitors will perform a special ritual at the 'Rath Khala' (chariot making yard) and bring 'Angya Mala' (garland signifying directive from the deities) seeking their command and place the same on three pieces of woods. The chief carpenters of the three chariots will symbolically touch the gold axe on the three wooden logs after which they would shape the logs for chariot making.

Akshaya Tritiya also marks the beginning of the 'Chandan Yatra' of the Holy Trinity of Srimandir in Puri. Madan Mohan, the representative idol of Lord Jagannath, along with the representative idols of Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra, Bhudevi, Sridevi and five Shivalingas known as Pancha Pandavas are taken out of the sanctum sanctorum, and placed in lav-

ishly decorated palanquins, known as 'bimanas'; and, taken in a procession to Narendra tank.

Puri Srimandir temple administration made elaborate arrangements for the festival which will last for 21 days.

PM Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and BJP National vice-president Bajjant Panda among others extended their greetings to the people of the State on the

auspicious occasion.

"Akshaya Tritiya is a very auspicious day in Odisha and for the great Odia culture. This is the day when the making of chariots begins for the Rath Yatra of Mahaprabhu Shri Jagannath. It is also closely linked with Akhi Muthi Anukula, when farmers start sowing seeds. May the blessings of Mahaprabhu Shri Jagannath always remain upon us," tweeted PM Modi.

# Gouri elected nat'l karate body member



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Karate Association of Odisha general secretary Dr Gouri Mohanty has been elected as an executive member of the National Karate Association in the Karate India elections in Dehradun.

In the executive body of

National Karate Association formed from 2024 to 2028, Gouri is the only woman member. A national champion in karate, she has also participated in national and international shooting events. The Odisha Karate Association members have congratulated Gouri for her success.

# Nothing new in BJD manifesto: Cong

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
'Ruling party has not fulfilled its promises in 24 yrs'

Even though the first-phase elections in Odisha are only a couple of days ahead, the BJD has announced its election manifesto on Thursday. But there is nothing new in the manifesto; it is only an election gimmick, said the Congress here on Friday.

In the last 24-year tenure, the BJD has presented the manifesto five times. But



whatever promises they made in the period, they have not fulfilled it. So, now, whatever promises the BJD has made, the people would not believe it, said Congress media cell chief Biswaranjan Mohanty.

In the last 10 years, the income of farmers of the State is the lowest in the country. The State Government had announced to give Rs 5,000 to the farmers under the KALLA scheme, but it is giving only Rs 2,000. Besides, it announced to irrigate 35% of the agricultural lands, but it has not been done till now. The farmers were also not given bonus as announced. Besides, there are no cold storages. More than 2 lakh government jobs out of 5 lakh are vacant. So, the BJD's 'Yuva Budget' is only a smokescreen, said Mohanty.

# Brown sugar trading In a first in State, 3 accused get 20-yr RI

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Were caught with 4kg contraband

In a first in the State, three accused were convicted for 20 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) under the NDPS Act for their involvement in brown sugar trading.

The Additional District Judge-cum-Special Judge Court-II in Bhubaneswar convicted the three accused

and sentenced them to 20 years' RI and also pay a fine of Rs 1 lakh.

The convicts were identified as Debasish Behera, Prabir Kumar Singh and Sk Kausar Ali of Baleswar district.

The trio had been arrested by the Special Task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch in 2020 when they were transporting brown sugar in a vehicle after procuring the contraband from West Bengal. As per

senior officials, the accused were intercepted near Esplanade Mall in Bhubaneswar.

During search, brown sugar weighing more than 4 kg and other incriminating materials were recovered and seized from their possession.

During trial, the court examined 13 witnesses and 79 documents exhibited by the prosecution while pronouncing the judgement.

# IRCS State unit holds World Red Cross Day AMOFOI's 1st anti-caste love marriage held on May 9, 1982

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Series of events organised

Under the guidance of Honorary Secretary Indian Red Cross Society Odisha State Branch Bibhuti Bhusan Pattnaik, the World Red Cross Day was organised with the theme "Keeping Humanity Alive" here.

The event commemorates the birth anniversary of Sir Jean Henry Dunant. On the occasion, biscuits, cake, fruits, juice, bread etc were distributed at Prativa orphanage and Ramakrushna Balashram.

On a request from the orphanage, a refrigerator was



donated to the Ramakrushna Balashram. A blood donation camp was organised in association with the Global Focus Education and Welfare Trust. Nearly about 70 units of blood were collected from the camp.

A meeting was conducted

at the premises. Youth Red Cross Officer Dr Ramesh Chandra Behera highlighted the work of Youth Red Cross and Junior Red Cross for rendering humanitarian services through empowering volunteers. Life members, JRC, YRC Counsellors and Volun-

teers expressed their experiences. A cultural programme was organised. Programme Manager ICRC Sanjukta Priyadarshini Barik coordinated the programme. Junior Red Cross Officer Laxman Swain proposed the vote of thanks.

**B RAMCHANDRA CST VOLTAIRE ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Keshav Naik of Hadi Sahi, Old Town, Bhubaneswar, was in love with Manorama Maharana, an OBC of Kunjapatna Sahi of same area. She was from a family of carpenters. Her parents were opposed to her love affairs with a Scheduled Caste boy.

They tried to change her mind. However, Manorama stood firm in her resolution to marry her lover, Keshav. This enraged her parents. She was beaten up and driven away from the house of her parents. Evening came. Her younger brother took pity on her and took her to the house of her lover in Hadi Sahi. Keshav and



Manorama eloped to Cuttack, later.

The lovers did not dare to marry in a temple for reasons of caste. They could not apply under the Special Marriage Act of 1954 in the Marriage Officer's Office at

Bhubaneswar for reasons of security and social prejudices. They, somehow, came to know about AMOFOI. A Marriage Certificate was prepared and it was on May 9, 1982 that the first AMOFOI love marriage was solemnized. Prof Bijay

Kumar Bahidar, Dept of Political Science, of BJB Evening College, Bhubaneswar, presided over the marriage function. The function was conducted in front of the then AMOFOI Office, DL-7, VSS Nagar, Bhubaneswar.

There have been numerous examples of this sort. Since May 9, 1982, AMOFOI has helped thousands of helpless young lovers to start their respective marital lives in honour and dignity. By May 7, 2024, AMOFOI has organised 10,875 casteless, priest-less, dowry-less love marriages for the good of the Indian Republic and for the welfare of mankind.

(Voltaire is general secretary, FPI)

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**OPINION 6**  
BATTLE TO SAVE  
INDIA'S BIODIVERSITY

**WORLD 8**  
UN TO VOTE ON RESOLUTION  
FOR PALESTINE RIGHTS

**MONEY 10**  
SENSEX, NIFTY REBOUND  
AS ITC, RELIANCE GAIN

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## Delhi ready for Game of Throne

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal walked out of Tihar Jail on Friday evening, hours after the Supreme Court granted him interim bail until June 1 so that he can campaign for the Lok Sabha elections. As he exited through gate number 4, Kejriwal was welcomed by a sea of AAP workers, as well as senior leaders like Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Atishi, and Saurabh Bhardwaj. His wife Sunita Kejriwal, his daughter Harshita and AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak turned up outside the jail to give him a rousing welcome with workers chanting slogans and Kejriwal waving to his supporters. As Kejriwal left from Tihar in his convoy clad in yellow T-shirts, AAP supporters danced to dhol beats and fed each other sweets at the party office here on Friday.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal addresses supporters after coming out of Tihar Jail as the Supreme Court (SC) granted him interim bail in a money laundering case, amid the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, in New Delhi, on Friday. Pioneer Photo

In a major relief to embattled Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the SC on Friday granted him interim bail in a money laundering case at the peak of the election season but barred him from visiting his office or the Delhi Secretariat and signing official files unless absolutely necessary for obtaining the Lieutenant Governor's approval. He has been asked to surrender to the prison authorities by June 2. June 1 is the last day of the seven-phase elections. The votes will be counted on June 4.

Kejriwal's release from jail, however transient, is expected to give a boost to the AAP's Lok Sabha campaign in Delhi where polling is scheduled for May 25, with its foremost leader hitting the hustings. Setting him free for 21 days after 50 days of custody in the money laundering case, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta in its eight pages order, said Kejriwal

will have to surrender and go back to jail on June 2. Kejriwal was arrested on March 21 by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the excise policy case. In his first address, Delhi Chief Minister said, "Didn't I tell you I'd be back soon? I am back." He added, "I'm fighting against dictatorship with all I have, now 140 crore of us have to do that." He also thanked the Supreme Court judges who delivered the verdict.

"Tomorrow at 11 am, we will all go to the Hanuman Mandir in Connaught Place, then there will be a Press conference at the party office at 1 pm; I request all of you to come to the Hanuman Mandir," he said. Slogans like "Jail ke taale toot gaye, Kejriwal ji choot gaye," "Modi ji ja rahe hain, Kejriwal ji aa rahe hain," and "dekho dekho kon aaya, sher aaya sher aaya" rent the air at the AAP office on office. Many supporters carried posters with slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi

written on them. The bench also directed Kejriwal to furnish bail bonds in the sum of Rs 50,000 with one surety of the like amount to the satisfaction of the jail superintendent. A wave of jubilation swept across the INDIA Bloc parties as the news spread like wildfire, with his AAP terming it a "triumph of truth." "Hanuman ji ki jai. This is the victory of democracy. It is the result of the prayers and blessings of millions of people. Many thanks to everyone," Kejriwal's wife Sunita, who was filling in for her husband during his absence from the electoral battleground, said in a post on X in Hindi. Kejriwal is the first sitting Chief Minister in India to be put behind bars. Imposing bail conditions on the embattled AAP leader, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said, "He shall not visit the Office of the Chief Minister and the Delhi Secretariat." It asked Kejriwal to not sign any official file unless absolutely necessary to obtain the Lieutenant Governor's sanction during the 21-day interim bail period. It asked Kejriwal to not sign any official file unless absolutely necessary to obtain the Lieutenant Governor's sanction during the 21-day interim bail period. "He shall be bound by the statement made on his behalf that he shall not sign official files unless it is required and necessary for obtaining clearance/ approval of the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi," the top court said.

## Storm lashes across Delhi

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A strong, gutsy storm hit the National Capital and its adjoining areas late Friday evening, enveloping the skyline with dust. Incidents of trees uprooting were also reported. As a result of the dust storm, temperatures apparently decreased, as predicted earlier in the day by the India Meteorological Department, indicating that the heatwave would soon fade. "Duststorm/ thunderstorm with rain (followed by rain) and gusty winds with speed of 50-70 km/hour occurred over and adjoining areas of entire Delhi and NCR (Loni Dehat, Hindon AF Station, Ghaziabad, Indirapuram, Chhapraula, Noida, Dadri, Greater Noida, Gurugram, Faridabad," IMD said in a statement. India's unbearable heatwave saga appears to be reaching its conclusion as the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a wet spell accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, and winds across several States, including the national Capital over the next three days. The change in weather comes just a month after April's blistering heat, which earlier prompted the authorities to issue a string of health advisories and school closures in heatwave-hit areas like Bhubaneswar in Odisha. "Heatwave is about to end from the entire country. Only in West Rajasthan and Kerala a heatwave alert has been issued. Tomorrow, the heatwave will only be present in West Rajasthan," said IMD scientist Soma Sen. She said though they have issued a yellow alert for west Rajasthan and



Kerala, impact is unlikely. "From tomorrow the heatwave will end in the country. The alert will remain only for west Rajasthan." "Strong moisture flow is coming to the country from the Bay of Bengal, due to which thunderstorm activity is increasing in the country...There will be a possibility of cloud-to-ground lightning in these thunderstorms," she said as quoted by a news agency here. Former Director General of Meteorology at IMD Dr KJ Ramesh said heatwaves have been abated and thunderstorms will develop from Southern India. Almost all the States will witness thunderstorms and natural lightning with high intensity. He explained that strong moisture flow from the Bay of Bengal is increasing thunderstorm activity in the country. Giving out thunderstorms and heavy rain warnings for some hilly States and the northeast, the weather department said strong lightning is possible.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting for Lok Sabha elections, in Hyderabad, on Friday. PTI

## Modi holds big road show in BBSR



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday evening appeared in a massive road show here with thousands of people, including BJP workers, lining up on both sides of the thoroughfare. The vehicle carrying Modi along with BJP State president Manmohan Samal and the party's Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha candidate Aparajita Sarangi began moving from the BJP

## EC lashes out at Kharge's 'biased' turnout narrative



RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI  
Both the content and intent of the letter will be a permanent blot on the reputation of an institution that can boast of luminaries like Sukumar Sen, TN Seshan, JM Lyngdoh and others," Ramesh said in a statement. EC dubbed as "aggression on vitals of live election operations" through Kharge's recent statements concerning the ongoing Lok Sabha elections 2024. The poll body termed Kharge's letter as his attempt to push a "biased narrative." In a five-page response with annexures, the poll panel rejected charges of mismanagement and delay in the release of voter turnout data and termed Kharge's allegations "unwarranted," "without facts" and "reflective of a biased and deliberate attempt to spread confusion." The commission condemned Kharge's statement in which he wondered whether the delay in releasing voter turnout data was an "attempt to doctor the final results." "Utterances from president of national political party attacking the very credibility of the electoral steps and processes can have a negative impact on voter participation and can be seen as a means to deter an elector from exercising their franchise and/or demoralising the huge number of election staff and machinery which is mainly drawn from the respective State Governments... Commission wishes you to appreciate that your comments/observations /allegations given in the aforesaid post borders on vitiating the constitutionally mandated work of ECI," Senior Principal Secretary Sumit Mukherjee in the EC wrote to Kharge in its response.

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- Master of Hospital Administration (2 years)
- Master of Public Health (2 years)
- MBA (2 years)
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- MBA in Operations & Supply Chain Management (2 years)
- MBA in Rural Management (2 years)

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KIIT (Deemed to be University) has only one permanent campus in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. It has no other campus / off campus anywhere else in the country and globe.

# Brahmapur +2 girl gang-rape BJP Mahila Morcha holds demo before SP office

**PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR**  
A large number of BJP Mahila Morcha members on Thursday held a demonstration in front of the SP office in Brahmapur over the alleged gang-rape of a Plus Two girl student in the city. The demonstrators, alleging the involvement of ruling BJD leaders in the incident, demanded to know why the three other accused have not been arrested yet. Police have arrested five accused and an attempt is being made to suppress the incident which had taken place



on May 3, they alleged. BJP State Mahila Morcha president Aiswarya Biswal said, "The incident had taken place on May 3, but the matter came to the fore on May 8. The rape victim should be given justice and all those involved must be arrested. Compensation should also be paid to the family of the victim." Brahmapur SP Sarthak Sarangi said, "The BJP leaders demanded an impartial probe into the incident. The investigation is underway on the basis of the statements of the victim recorded before the magistrate. Stern action will be taken against those involved in the incident. If any political leaders are found involved, none of them will be spared."

# In Sundargarh Youth's body found under bridge

**Murder suspected  
PNS ■ SUNDARGARH**  
A youth's body was found lying under a bridge at Jamuna Dhipa under the Brahmani Tarang police station in Sundargarh district on Thursday. The identity of the deceased was yet to be ascertained. As per reports, some locals spotted the body lying under the Snkha bridge with a stone tied around its neck. It was suspected the youth was killed somewhere and before the body was thrown into water, a stone was tied around its neck to prevent it from floating. On being informed, a team from Brahmani Tarang PS reached the spot. Then, a forensic team and a dog squad also arrived. Later, the police with the help of Fire Service personnel recovered the body and sent it for postmortem. Meanwhile, the police have circulated the photographs of the deceased in the nearby police stations to ascertain his identity.

# Can Sonali become Sonepur's 1st woman MLA?

**Tough fight on anvil as BJD, BJP, Cong, Ind gear up campaigning**  
**SRIKUMAR MAHANTA ■ SONEPUR**



While BJP, BJD and Congress have announced their nominees as Pramod Mohapatra, Niranjana Pujari and Priyabrata Sahu respectively, Independent candidate from Navnirman Krushak Sangha (NKS) on Thursday spiced up the poll battle by nominating Sonali Bishi (26) from the seat. Will Sonepur vote for a woman candidate this time? Will Niranjana of BJD be able to retain his seat? Or, will Pramod of BJP be able to upset the apple cart of BJD? If Sonali manages to woo majority of the votes of farmers of the constituency, she will not only help her wrest the seat but also create a history by becoming the first woman MLA of Sonepur.

Sonali has been campaigning from door to door in villages across the district either on foot or by public transport, depending on the distance. "My aim is to reach every village under the constituency before the campaigning ends and I have covered most so far," Sonali said, who happens to be the youngest among the contenders for the Assembly seat.

Two major parties - BJD and Congress - have won the seat once in the past elections. In 2004, Binod Patra from Congress had won from Sonepur. In 2009, after change of seat, BJD's Niranjana defeated Nabakrushna Danta (BJP) by a margin of 28,307 votes. However, there was a marked improvement in the vote share of the saffron party as it jumped from 43.12% in 2009 to 51.7% in 2014. While BJP's gain was by 18%, Congress saw a sharp decrease of 11% in its vote share. The grand old party lost almost 21.57% of its vote share in subsequent two elections in 2014 and in 2019.

The Sonepur Assembly constituency comprises Sonepur, Durguripali and Tarbha block in Subarnapur. From 2009, BJD has continuously been winning the seat. Amid the shifting political landscape, it is, however, difficult to gauge where the voters would tilt when the polling is held on May 20.

# 'BJP-BJD nexus with corporates led to people's woes'

**Cong Dhenkanal LS candidate Sashmita takes on rivals Rudra, Abinash**  
**BIJAY MISHRA ■ ANGUL**

Issues related to massive mining and industrial activities in and around Angul and Dhenkanal districts have become election planks in ongoing simultaneous elections. Most of the industries and mines are responsible for severe pollution in Angul and Dhenkanal districts and most of the people's representatives have always been taking side of the pollutant industries which has led to widespread resentment among

the people. The fly ash pollution in and around several power plants of NTPC, Nalco and Tata-Bhushan has aggrieved the people. BJD MP candidate Abinash Samal comes from a political family close to various corporate sectors with business interests. Abinash is the nephew of incumbent Dhenkanal MLA of BJD Sudhir (Nidhi) Samal. In view of several mines and industrial projects neglecting basic amenities of the affected people, Congress candidate for Dhenkanal Parliamentary constituency Er Sashmita Behera attributed the persistent woes of the residents to 'Corporate Raj'. Addressing several meetings in Dhenkanal and Angul districts, Behera accused BJD-BJP combine as responsible for the wretched conditions of NH 55, where hun-

dreds of people die every year. Behera, who is giving a top fight against the BJD and BJP candidates in Dhenkanal constituency, accused both the parties of big beneficiaries of electoral bonds, by which hundreds of crores were collected from the miners and that money is being used in the ongoing elections. Behera alleged that BJP's allocation for Adivasis in the Central Budget has also consistently fallen short of the 8.2% target set by the NITI Aayog in 2017. She said the Congress has guaranteed a legal status to the SC-ST sub-plan, which would require the Central Government to meet the 8.2% budget target. Sashmita and Abinash have entered the poll arena to take on BJP leader and former Rajya Sabha MP Rudra Narayan Pani.

In 2019, Pani was defeated by BJD candidate Mahesh Sahoo by a margin of 35,412 votes. There are seven Assembly seats under Dhenkanal Parliamentary constituency, where top fights are going on between BJD, Congress and BJP. Here, Congress has played the woman card by fielding Sashmita. Party's star campaigners Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi are likely to address meetings in Angul and Dhenkanal to boost the election prospects of the party candidates. BJD solely depends upon CM Naveen Patnaik's craze while BJP candidate Pany also solely depends upon the popularity of PM Narendra Modi and organisational support of Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

# B'swar LS, Assly seats to witness interesting fights

**As campaigning picks up pace across dist**  
**UBACHAK MOHANTY ■ BALESWAR**

Baleswar district is set for interesting contests in various constituencies including Nilgiri, Jaleswar and Bhograi Assembly seats, apart from the Parliamentary seat, in the ensuing elections. In Nilgiri, the fight is between two turncoats such as Sukanta Nayak of BJD and Santosh Khatua of BJP. Both of them have changed their sides before the elections. Nayak, a two-time MLA, returned to BJD after quitting the saffron party while Khatua, a long time as-

pirant for MLA, also returned to the BJP after quitting the BJD. Both of them fought in the last elections and Khatua lost to Nayak by a narrow margin of votes. Khatua had been longing for a ticket from BJD and waited till the announcement. He switched over to the BJP soon after the BJD named Nayak as its candidate. Akshay Acharya, a former MLA of Congress, has been fielded by the Congress this time. Similarly in Jaleswar, the fight is going to be interesting as Congress changed its nominee at the eleventh hour and gave ticket to Sudarsan Das in place of Debi Prasanna Chand, a former MLA from Congress. Aswani Patra, the incumbent MLA and Minister, has been nominated by BJD for Jaleswar

while turncoat Brajamohan Pradhan has been given ticket by the BJP after he joined the party quitting the BJD. In Bhograi, the contest is likely between Satyasiba Das and Gautambuddha Das, two scribes who secured tickets respectively from the Congress and the BJD. Another ticket aspirant and turncoat, Ashish Patra has been nominated by the BJP for the seat. Patra who was a long time Congress ticket aspirant joined the BJP as the party frustrated him. In the meanwhile, several others, including two BJP rebels, are mooting to file nomination as independent candidates in Bhograi, said sources. In the meantime, for the Baleswar Parliamentary seat while

there would be a triangular contest among Pratap Sarangi (BJP), Lekhasri Samantsingar (BJD) and Srikant Jena (Congress), Kharabela Swain, a three-time BJP MP filed his nomination as an Independent candidate. Swain was a ticket aspirant from BJP and wanted his party to field Sarangi from Nilgiri seat and let him contest from Baleswar LS seat. But after his lobby did not work, he decided to contest as an Independent. He was seen losing his temper while speaking to scribes. Lekhasri, a debutant, is also trying to register her presence aggressively and ensure her victory when other two veterans Sarangi and Jena are also trying hard to come up with flying colours.

# PHDMA's narrative-based valuation hailed at NITI Aayog conf

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
Member Secretary, Poverty and Human Development Monitoring Agency (PHDMA) Roopa Roshan Sahoo, while addressing a session of the National Conference for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (NCEML-2024) organised by the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), NITI Aayog, presented the qualitative monitoring methods adopted by the agency for impact analysis with a perspective that brings out the lived realities of people at the ground across Odisha, which include both the beneficiaries and cutting-edge functionaries.



Addressing as a panelist of the session titled "Mastering Monitoring: Insights from State-Adopted Best Practices (Unlocking Efficiency, Transparency, and Accountability for Tomorrow's Governance)", she narrated about the qualitative monitoring approach of PHDMA which puts people and their lived experiences on the forefront unlike the quantitative monitoring that quantifies the outcomes without shading any light on the impact, the initiatives have on people. Who better than PHDMA, an autonomous organisation under Planning & Convergence Department of Government of Odisha, can provide a clear and concise display of the new-age qualitative monitoring and evaluation practice in the State for assessing impact of welfare measures and shaping policies? For the last four years, PHDMA has been undertaking people-centric, narrative-based and sense-making monitoring, evaluation and documentation of multi-sectoral interventions towards poverty eradication, reducing inequalities and moving towards shared prosperity in the State. Assessing multiple inputs: "At PHDMA, we undertake collection and collation of narratives from people or households to understand im-

perfect. Well-being is not about one scheme; they are the outcome of basket of schematic interventions. No household is about one beneficiary; it is about members receiving multiple inputs. We discuss with multiple beneficiaries in a household, listen to their lived experiences with the schemes, deeply observe their surroundings, make sense of what we hear and what we observe, we visually document everything from the ground and finally collate the narratives to assess the impact. Statistics doesn't tell us this, stories do," she spoke during the panel discussion. The qualitative monitoring has given ways to assess the

good helping the machinery to do the necessary course correction. Realising that wicked problems needed complex approach to address, PHDMA has re-imagined itself to seek out solutions to issues affecting people from their own experiences. Prioritising people and their stories, PHDMA deployed techniques such as deep listening, field observation, sense-making to conduct its continuous monitoring and narrative-based evaluation across the State. "Governance initiatives impact people's lives. Prosperity is not in numbers; it's in the stories that we see and will tell," she explained. Swabhiman anchal & other

stories: She also highlighted some of the efficacious impact assessment studies undertaken by PHDMA that have spotlighted the progress of a basket of schemes and helped in reshaping policies. The Swabhiman Tales, an impact assessment study carried out at the Swabhiman Anchal, the erstwhile cutoff area in southernmost district, Malkangiri, which was notorious for being Leftwing extremist-affected, portrayed a clear picture of ongoing development works following the construction of Gurupriya Bridge and mapped the rising aspirations among the residents. Similarly, the study in Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Nuapada districts to assess the availability of services with respect to their utilities basing on the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report, brought out some unique aspects from the ground. The teams studied the indices like access to drinking water, lack of assets or supply being erratic and the narratives provided an array of perspectives which were used as policy inputs.

# INBRIEF

**OUAT CELEBRATES UNIVERSITY-LEVEL AKSHAYA TRITIYA**  
Bhubaneswar: The agrarian festival of Akshaya Tritiya was celebrated across Odisha as per the age-old tradition on Friday. The day is also performed as State-Level Farmers' Day. The Odisha University of Agriculture & Technology (OUAT), Bhubaneswar



celebrated a University-Level Akshaya Tritiya in its College of Agriculture. OUAT Vice-Chancellor Prof Pravat Kumar Roul graced the occasion as chief guest and performed the ritual of 'Akhi Muthi Anukula' and 'Bhumi Pujan' (the ceremonial act of sowing seeds in paddy fields and ploughing). He also greeted the students, faculties and scientists and wished a good harvest season and prosperity of farmers.

**UTKAL SAMMILANI HOLDS JAYADEV JAYANTI**  
Bhubaneswar: The Utkal Sammilani paid floral tributes to the statue of poet Jayadev at Jayadev Vihar here on the occasion of his birth anniversary on Friday. Utkal Sammilani general secretary and Mancheswar branch president Dillip Dashsharma presided over the function. Sammilani vice-president Surendra Mohan Mishra and Mancheswar branch vice-president Sital Chandra Mohanty said Jayadev was a great devotee of Lord Jagannath. Among others, Smmilani Mancheswar branch joint secretary Akshay Jethi, Basanti Tripathy, Maheswar Biswal and Ram Chandra Samal also spoke. Mancheswar branch secretary Gobinda Chandra Subudhi offered a vote of thanks.



**CYCLIST CRUSHED TO DEATH BY TRUCK IN BALANGIR**  
Balangir: In a hit-and-run case, a man on a bicycle was mowed to death by a speeding Hyva truck at Deogaon near NH-26 connecting Balangir with Titilagarh on Friday. The deceased was identified as Maheswar Rana of Sagarpali village in Balangir. Maheswar was on his way home when he was run over by the speeding truck. He died on the spot. Following the accident, agitated locals blocked the road and demanded compensation for the bereaved family. Police reached the spot and pacified them.

**WEBCASTING IN 703 CENTRES OF GANJAM**  
Chhatrapur: On May 13, Ganjam district is going to witness election in Brahmapur Lok Sabha seat and five Assembly seats including Chhatrapur, Gopalpur, Chikiti and Brahmapur. The district administration is keeping a close watch to maintain law and order situation in these areas. For this, webcasting will be done in 703 polling booths of different areas to curb any violation of election rules. By the webcasting, election officials and observers can directly monitor smooth conduct of the election process.

**B'SWAR MANCH COMPLETES 500TH WEEKLY SWACHH DRIVE**  
Baleswar: The members of the Nagarik Manch, Gopalpur in Baleswar district, who joined the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) drive on October 2, 2014 performing weekly two hours of cleaning and awareness programme every week, completed their 500th weekly mission on Sunday last. In the programme, they cleaned Gopalpur CHC of Bahanaga Block from 5.30 am to 7.30 am and later participated in an awareness campaign in the local market. Sudarshan Mohapatra, Abhiram Sahu, Ch KK Das, Maheswar Senapati and Haris Jena led the campaign in presence of Dr Himanshu Puhan, Mamata Behera and Anadi Mandal of the hospital. 65 members participated in total. Hospital authorities praised the selfless service of the volunteers.



**DABUR GLUCOSE LAUNCHES 'ENERGIZE INDIA'**  
Bhubaneswar: Dabur Glucose, an instant energy drink from the House of Dabur, on Thursday announced the launch of a mega campaign 'Energize India' to promote young sporting talents and drive awareness about the importance of energy and stamina among young athletes in major sports academies across India. As part of the campaign, Dabur Glucose conducted a special awareness session on energy and stamina management at the SOA University in Bhubaneswar, featuring renowned doctors and experts in the field.



**VIWENTIAA 2024: INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY AT KLH**  
Bhubaneswar: KLH Bachupally campus of KL Deemed to be University organised its inaugural VIWENTIAA 2024, the annual techno-cultural extravaganza with resounding success, showcasing the vibrant culture of innovation and creativity among students recently. Over two days, the event brought together over 400 students from different colleges, who immersed themselves in a whirlwind of activities ranging from technical workshops and expos to hackathons and coding battles.



**DISH TV LAUNCHES 'DISH TV SMART+'**  
Bhubaneswar: Dish TV has taken an initiative to redefine the entertainment experience in India. The leading DTH provider in a first-of-its-kind move has announced its groundbreaking proposition 'Dish TV Smart+'. This launch marks a pioneering milestone in the industry, providing customers' access to TV and OTT content on any screen anywhere without any additional cost.



# Opposition welcomes SC order granting interim bail to Kejriwal

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Opposition leaders on Friday welcomed the interim bail given to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the Supreme Court, saying the “fight to save democracy” will now be with more intensity. Congress leader Pawan Khera hoped former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren also gets due justice. “We welcome the intervention by the Supreme Court in granting bail to Arvind Kejriwal... We also hope that the prime minister gets enough time after June 4, when he becomes the former prime minister of India, to introspect sitting in Sabarmati Ashram the kind of politics he has indulged in,” he said.

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee also welcomed the Supreme Court order, saying “I am very happy to see that Shri Arvind Kejriwal has got interim bail. It will be very helpful in the context of the current elections.” Sharad Pawar, who heads the NCP (SP), said the country remains steadfast in the pursuit of democracy. “I welcome the interim bail order granted to the chief minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal by the SC. India remains steadfast in the pursuit of democracy,” Pawar wrote on X. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi called it a “big win” for Kejriwal. “And big win for Arvind Kejriwal ji as SC steps in to grant him interim bail. The bid to silence the



opposition by BJP is backfiring on them. We Won't be silenced, won't bend, won't give in come what may. Bharat is watching, India is winning! Jai Hind!” she wrote on X. Another Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray said justice and relief to Kejriwal against the “dictatorial regime” in the country was a huge sign of winds of change. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said they will now fight the battle to save democracy with more intensity. “In a post on X, he said, “Thanks to the Supreme Court... Now we will fight the battle to save democracy with more intensity... Arvind Kejriwal is not a person but a thought... And now will take this thought forward with greater momentum.”

The AAP leaders in Punjab also hailed the Supreme Court decision to grant interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, saying truth always triumphs. Punjab Cabinet Minister Chetan Singh Jauramajra thanked the apex court for granting interim bail to the AAP supremo. “Truth always triumphs,” said Jauramajra. Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said he was grateful to the top court for upholding justice. “Today's interim bail order for Arvind Kejriwal by Hon'ble Supreme Court reaffirms the honesty and integrity of the AAP. Grateful to the judiciary for upholding justice. Arvind Ji's presence among us will give all of us energy and vigour to fight

and win,” said Cheema in a post on X. Another minister Balbir Singh said with Kejriwal getting interim bail, a wave of happiness has spread among party workers. “Millions of prayers have been answered. I thank the Supreme Court,” said Singh as he accused the BJP of trying to suppress the truth. “But the truth has won,” the health minister said. Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court granted interim bail to Kejriwal till June 1 to campaign in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. The Delhi chief minister was arrested in a case relating to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and execution of the Delhi government's now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-22.

# Jaishankar slams Canada for backing Khalistanis

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

By allowing political space to Khalistani separatist elements, the Canadian government is sending a message that its vote bank is “more powerful” than its rule of law, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said. In an exclusive interview to PTI late Thursday, Jaishankar said India respects and practices freedom of speech, but that does not equate with freedom to threaten foreign diplomats, extend support to separatism or allow political space to elements advocating violence. The external affairs minister also wondered how people with dubious backgrounds are being allowed to enter and live in Canada, referring to Khalistani supporters among the Sikh migrants from Punjab. “In any rules-based society, you would imagine that you would check people's background, how they came, what passport they carried etc,” he said. “If you have people whose presence there is itself on very dubious documents, what does it say about you? It actually says that your vote bank is more



powerful than your rule of law,” the minister said. The Indian diaspora in Canada is about 1.8 million strong and there are another one million Non Resident Indians residing in the country. The Indian diaspora, mostly of Sikh ethnicity, is considered an influential bloc in Canada's politics. Ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of the “potential” involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar. New Delhi rejected Trudeau's

charges as “absurd”. India has been maintaining that the main issue has been that of Canada giving space to pro-Khalistani elements operating from Canadian soil with impunity. “It is not so much a question of running out of options. What we have seen to our regret has been the direction of Canadian politics where separatists and extremist forces, many of whom openly advocate violence, have been given political space in that country,” Jaishankar said. “And there are people in positions of prominence today in Canadian politics who actual-

ly espouse that kind of separatism and extremism,” he said. His remarks came in response to a question on how India plans to deal with challenges emanating from Canada and whether the options for New Delhi are running out. “We cannot for the good relations overlook that,” he said during the freewheeling interview at PTI's headquarters. Jaishankar said Canada's response to India's concerns has been that it has freedom of speech. “Whenever we have taken this up with the Canadians... It is not a new issue... It has been going on almost for 10 years and they keep saying, oh ‘we have freedom of speech.’” “We also have freedom of speech in our country. But freedom of speech does not mean freedom to threaten foreign diplomats, freedom of speech does not mean the kind of positions and the kind of activities which people in Canada are doing which does harm to our country because of its support for separatism,” Jaishankar said. “And freedom of speech does not mean this kind of space which is also given to people of

# Sanjay Bhalla assumes charge as CoP of Indian Navy

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla on Friday here assumed charge as Chief of Personnel (CoP) of Indian Navy. He was commissioned in the Indian Navy in 1989. In a career spanning 35 years, he has held a number of specialist, staff and operational appointments, both afloat and ashore, navy said. After completing his Specialisation Course in Communication and Electronic Warfare, Bhalla served as a specialist onboard several frontline warships. He subsequently had the privilege of holding challenging, fulfilling and eventful Commands at sea, which include, INS Nishank, INS Taragiri, INS Beas and the coveted appointment of Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet (FOCEF). During his tenure as FOCEF, he was the Officer in Tactical Command for the prestigious President's Fleet Review (PFR - 22) and the Sea Phase of



Indian Navy's flagship multinational exercise MILAN - 22, that witnessed an unprecedented participation from friendly foreign countries. Ashore, he has held important staff appointments at the Naval Headquarters including Assistant Chief of Personnel (Human Resource Development); headed Officers training at Naval Academy, and has held a diplomatic assignment overseas. Prior to assuming charge as the COP, he was the Chief

of Staff of the Western Naval Command. An alumnus of Royal College of Defence Studies, London, Naval War College and Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, his educational accomplishments include M Phil (Defence & Strategic Studies), Masters in International Security and Strategic Studies from the Kings College, London, M.Sc (Defence & Strategic Studies), Madras University and M.Sc (Telecom) from CUSAT.

# Nearly 12 per cent Indian kids have not received double dose vaccination for measles: Research

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Nearly 12 per cent of eligible children in India have not received any recommended double-dose vaccination for measles, highlighting a significant gap in measles vaccination coverage among the beneficiaries. This deficiency is particularly pronounced in northeastern states like Nagaland, where the share of zero-dose cases is as high as 26 per cent. In contrast, Tamil Nadu was found to report the lowest at 4.6 per cent. Researchers from the Union Health Ministry and Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in Varanasi investigated previously overlooked critical aspects of measles vaccination, focusing on zero-doses, partially vaccinated, and those fully immunised. They analysed data of over 43,000 children aged 2-3 years, collected through the National Family Health Survey 2019-21 (NFHS-5). The team found that close to 30 per cent of the eligible children have received only one measles-containing vaccine (MCV1), while about 60 per cent have been fully immunised (MCV2). The findings are published in the journal Vaccine. In 2017, India adopted the National Strategic Plan for Achieving and Sustaining Measles and Rubella Elimination. The researchers acknowledged that disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic heightened the risk of measles in vulnerable populations. While immunisation programmes were eventually resumed in a phased manner, measles zero-dose children pose a significant obstacle to achieving goals of eliminating the acute and highly contagious viral disease, the researchers said. Occurring primarily in children, symptoms can include high fever, cough, runny nose and a rash all over the body.

Being vaccinated is the best way to avoid getting sick and spreading the disease, according to the World Health Organization. The analysis also revealed huge inter-district variations, according to the researchers. They found that in Uttar Pradesh, while Prayagraj and Banda districts were found to have about 34 per cent and 32 per cent of these cases, respectively, Hapur and Etawah have 2.6 per cent and 2.1 per cent of zero-dose cases. The researchers said Arunachal Pradesh was another such example, where the West Siang district had the greatest share with almost 50 per cent of eligible children receiving no dose of the vaccination, while the Lower Dibang Valley district had only 2.8 per cent of such cases. Socio-demographic factors were analysed to influence the measles vaccination status of children, with those born later in the family being less likely to have received no dose. Low levels of wealth and mother's education too were found to increase the odds of children not receiving any dose of the vaccination. “Socioeconomic factors play a significant role in measles transmission, with individuals from lower socioeconomic classes experiencing higher attack rates resulting in outbreaks,” the authors wrote. The findings underscored the need for tailored strategies, especially within districts displaying close to 10 per cent variability in zero-dose cases, the researchers said. “The identification of a notable percentage (11.5 per cent) of children receiving zero-doses signals a concerning gap in immunisation coverage,” the authors wrote and pointed out that, this “highlights the importance of last mile effort and application of big push theory in terms of more frequent rounds of campaigns mode vaccine delivery for the target of 95 per cent vaccine coverage for population-level immunity.”

# ICMAI seeks inclusion of Cost Accountants as auditors within Cooperative Societies Act

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

The Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICMAI) has sought inclusion of Cost Accountants as auditors within specific sections of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002. The proposal aims at enhancing the effectiveness of cooperative societies in India. In response to this proposal, Dr Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Secretary Cooperation, assured the ICMAI delegation of giving thorough consideration to their proposal. Additionally, he also expressed his willingness to explore collaborative initiatives between



the Ministry and the Institute, indicating openness to cooperation and partnership in this endeavor.

This assurance from Dr Bhutani came during an event where he unveiled the inaugural edition of the Quarterly

Journal of the Cooperative Development Board (CDB) of the ICMAI. The event, organized by ICMAI in col-

laboration with the National Council for Cooperative Training (NCCT), also saw the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two entities. Dr Bhutani commended the collaborative efforts of ICMAI and NCCT, recognizing them as proactive think tanks and valuable knowledge repositories. He, along with Mohan Kumar Mishra, Secretary of NCCT, signed the first copy of the journal, highlighting the commitment of both organizations to the growth and development of the cooperative sector in India. During the event, ICMAI and NCCT officials briefed Dr. Bhutani on their strategic roadmap, which encompassed

four key pillars aimed at supporting the government's efforts in advancing the cooperative sector. According to the ICMAI officials, it is advocating for Cost Accountants to be recognized as auditors under two specific sections of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002. These are Section 72(1) under which Cost Accountants could potentially be appointed as auditors for such societies, allowing them to conduct audits and assess the financial performance and compliance of these organizations while Section 77(1) may relate to the appointment of special auditors for specific purposes or circumstances, such as investigations or special reports.

# NGO moves SC asking EC to upload LS voter turnout data on website

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

An NGO has moved the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the Election Commission (ECI) to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data in “absolute figures” on its website within 48 hours of conclusion of polling for each phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.



The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has filed an interim application in its 2019 PIL seeking directions to the poll panel that “scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded)” of all polling stations be uploaded immediately after the polls. “Direct the Election Commission to provide tabulated polling station-wise data in absolute figures of the number of votes polled as recorded in Form 17C Part-I after each phase of polling in the ongoing 2024 Lok Sabha elections and also a tabulation of constituency-wise figures of voter turnout in absolute numbers in the on-going 2024 Lok Sabha elections,” the NGO said. It said the plea was filed to ensure that the democratic process is not subverted by electoral irregular-

ities. “The voter turnout data for the first two phases of the ongoing 2024 Lok Sabha elections published by ECI on April 30 has been published after 11 days of the first phase of polling held on April 19 and 4 days after second phase of polling held on April 26. “The data as published by the ECI in its press release dated April 30, 2024 shows a sharp increase (by about 5-6%) as compared to the initial percentages announced by ECI as of 7 pm on the day of polling,” the plea said. The petition said the “inordinate” delay in the release of final voter turnout data, coupled with the unusually high revision of over 5 per cent in the poll panel's press note of April 30, 2024 has raised con-

cerns and public suspicion regarding the correctness of the said data. The non-release of absolute number of votes polled, coupled with the “unreasonable delay” in release of votes polled data, has led to apprehensions in the mind of the electorate about the sharp increase between initial data and data released on April 30, it said. “These apprehensions must be addressed and put to rest. That in order to uphold the voter's confidence it is necessary that the ECI be directed to disclose on its website scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded) of all polling stations which contains the authenticated figures for votes polled, within 48 hours of the close of polling,” it said.

# Inter Services Organisations Act notified through gazette notification: Defence Ministry



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

The Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Act has been notified through a gazette notification to be enforced with effect from Friday, defence ministry said. In order to bolster effective command, control and efficient functioning of Inter-Services Organisations (ISOs), the bill was passed by both the Houses of Parliament during the Monsoon Session of 2023. The Bill received the assent of the President on August 15,

2023, officials said. The Act empowers Commanders-in-Chief and Officers-in-Command of ISOs to exercise control over Service personnel, serving under them, for effective maintenance of discipline and administration, without disturbing the unique service conditions of each individual Service. With the notification, the Act will empower the Heads of ISOs and pave the way for expeditious disposal of cases, avoid multiple proceedings and will be a step towards greater integration and jointness among the Armed Forces personnel.

# Coast Guard inks MoU with Hindalco

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Hindalco Industries has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here for the manufacturing and supply of indigenous marine-grade aluminium to Indian public and private shipyards for the construction of ships. Giving details here on Friday, defence ministry officials said the MoU inked on Thursday will also provide benefits such as quarterly pricing, priority in supplies and turnover discount. The ICG fleet is presently operating 67 ships with aluminium hull with capability of operating in shallow waters. To further boost coastal security, it has planned to induct more such vessels where the indigenously manufactured marine-grade aluminium will be utilised. The MoU was signed by Deputy Director General (Materiel & Maintenance), ICG IG HK Sharma and CEO, Downstream Aluminium Business, Hindalco Nilesh Koul in the presence of senior officials of the ICG.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Testing times

Stakes could not be higher in Haryana's political chess, with the outcome remaining anybody's guess

The recent developments in Haryana's political circles have again brought to the fore the intricacies of coalition dynamics. The Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), a key player in the State's politics, has decided to align with the Congress in demanding a floor test for the BJP-led Government in the Haryana Assembly. This comes on the heels of the withdrawal of support by three Independent MLAs to the ruling coalition, turning it into minority with 44 legislators in the House of 90. The Congress, buoyed by the latest developments and perhaps sensing an opportunity to tip the scales in its favour, has seized upon this moment to mount pressure on the BJP Government. However, in the backdrop of this high-stakes political manoeuvring, the JJP finds itself grappling with internal discord. Reports have emerged suggesting that three of its MLAs held clandestine meetings with former Chief Minister ML Khattar, raising eyebrows and fuelling speculation about potential defections. The apparent



dissonance within the JJP underscores the complex interplay of interests and ambitions that often characterises coalition politics. For a party like the JJP, which emerged as a key player following the fractured mandate in the last State elections, maintaining cohesion within its ranks while balancing competing demands from its coalition partners is no easy feat. To jog the memory, it was in Haryana that 'Aaya Ram Gaya Ram' culture started, which continues unabated. The outcome of this internal tug-of-war will not only shape the immediate political landscape in Haryana but also have far-reaching implications for the State's future.

As alliances shift and allegiances waver, the only constant is the relentless pursuit of power and the drive to stay one step ahead of the competition. With the House strength being 90 members, a political party needs the support of 46 MLAs to cross the halfway mark and form a Government. After the withdrawal of support by three Independents, the BJP is short of two MLAs to continue in the Government. The BJP now has 40 MLAs, besides the support of a lone Haryana Lokhit Party legislator and at least three Independents (earlier, it had six Independents in support), which brings to a total of 44 in the House. For the BJP, it is a double whammy, all this is happening days ahead of the Lok Sabha polls to the 10 Haryana seats on May 25. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP won seven of these seats in Haryana with a 35 per cent vote share. In 2019, the BJP won all 10 seats with a 58 per cent vote share. In the current situation, however, it might be a Herculean task. JJP's Dushyant Chautala has mounted pressure on the Nayab Singh Saini Government for a floor test, which he is likely to get the Chair's nod for. If the JJP breaks, it would give the BJP the much-needed elbow room but what is certain for now is that it is time for horse trading in Haryana.

### PICTALK



A herd of elephants grazes near a village at Boko, in Kamrup district of Assam

# Battle to save India's biodiversity



KAVIN KUMAR KANDASAMY

India's rich biodiversity is under severe threat due to climate change, as recent studies warn of potential economic losses and irreversible ecological damage

India, a land of diverse climates and rich ecosystems, is a global treasure trove of biodiversity. From the majestic Himalayan ranges to the vibrant coastal reefs, our country's biodiversity sustains countless life forms and plays a crucial role in regulating ecosystems. It's not just a vital resource for human sustenance, providing food, water, shelter and medicine, but also a critical indicator of our planet's health, a testament to our rich heritage and a responsibility we all share.

However, the delicate balance of India's biodiversity is now facing unprecedented threats from climate change. Recent studies warn that India may lose a staggering 35 per cent of its GDP by the year 2100 due to climate change, highlighting the deep interconnection between the nation's prosperity and its natural heritage. Rampant deforestation and habitat degradation, particularly in regions like the Western Ghats, are pushing carbon sinks towards becoming sources, exacerbating the climate crisis. The time for action is now.

#### Impact of Climate Change: A Looming Crisis

The repercussions of climate change are becoming quite evident in altering ecological balance, extreme weather events and increasing health risks. In an era marked by escalating environmental challenges, the climate crisis demands urgent and concerted action. According to a [i]United Nations' InterGovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, climate change is imperilling human well-being and planetary health, focusing strongly on interactions between climate, biodiversity and human society. The report suggests that the rise in extreme weather conditions has led to some irreversible impacts as natural and human systems are pushed beyond their ability to adapt.

Not only this, a report by the Reserve Bank of India highlights how climate change poses challenges for monetary policy, with frequent weather shocks threatening economic growth and stability. Moreover, a recent



study predicts that climate change could cut global income by up to 19 per cent in the next 25 years, with the most vulnerable countries suffering the most severe impacts.

To overcome these challenges, India has embarked on a journey to mitigate climate change and safeguard its biodiversity. With the G20 presidency last year, India has positioned itself as the voice of the Global South to lead the way in climate action and leveraged this positioning to drive impactful outcomes in various realms related to climate action. Tackling deforestation, reducing emissions and restoring ecosystems are key strategies. With over 26 per cent of the country grappling with expanding drought conditions, urgent measures are being taken to build resilience against environmental degradation.

**Pioneering Climate Action** Tamil Nadu, a coastal State in the heart of southern India, is emerging as a beacon of hope and leading the charge in climate change efforts. The State has become a forerunner in climate action by announcing three major missions, name-



INDIA'S BIODIVERSITY, A VITAL RESOURCE AND INDICATOR OF PLANETARY HEALTH, FACES UNPRECEDENTED THREATS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE, NECESSITATING URGENT ACTION TO MITIGATE IMPACTS AND SAFEGUARD ITS RICH NATURAL HERITAGE

ly Climate Change; Biodiversity Conservation and Greening; and Wetlands. Through initiatives like the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity and Greening Project (TBGP), the State aims to achieve a 33 per cent forest and tree cover by 2031. With approximately \$90 million in investments, Tamil Nadu's Climate Change Mission, Green Tamil Nadu Mission and Tamil Nadu Wetlands Mission demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development and ecosystem restoration.

#### Driving Solutions:

Addressing the climate crisis necessitates collaborative efforts from all stakeholders. Supported by startups and Government interventions, public-private partnerships are essential to drive innovation and scale climate solutions. Startups are pivotal in developing innovative technologies that reduce carbon footprints while contributing to economic growth. International collaboration, exemplified by agreements like the Paris Agreement, provides a framework for collective action on a global scale. India's leadership in renewable energy, particularly through

initiatives like the International Solar Alliance (ISA), underscores its commitment to driving sustainable development and fostering a harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. As India addresses the intertwined challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, the steps taken today will shape the legacy for future generations.

This demands reflection, unity and action to come up with sustainable solutions. In this crucial sustainability battle, India's role extends beyond its borders, contributing significantly to global biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation efforts. The recent Supreme Court ruling recognising the right against climate change as a fundamental right under Article 14 and Article 21 underscores India's steadfast commitment to climate action and environmental protection. This offers prospects for the Government, corporations and climate action companies to come together and work towards a sustainable future.

*(The writer is the CEO of ProClima; their views are personal)*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### EVOLUTION OF MONETARY POLICY

Madam — This refers to the article, 'Evolution of monetary policy,' which was published on 8 May 2024. Even before India got freedom the Congress formed a committee to suggest the type of economic policy free India should adopt. The committee analysed and said the key infrastructure sector should be under the Public sector to help the investors with raw materials, power, transport and communication at a very economical cost. This helps domestic ventures to produce more. None of the rich in India had so much reserve to invest in big projects and returns from such projects take some years. When Rajiv came to power he availed a small loan from the World Bank to develop mainly the telecom sector accepting the condition to open our door slightly for foreign goods to be marketed here. Though the country went bankrupt between 1980-1990, it is to be noted that the assets of the top richest families swelled from Rs 8000 CR to Rs 40,000 Cr during the same period. So irrespective of parties the interests of the rich are well cared for and produced more than 200 billionaires in a short span under the present regime. This course continues and will go on to enrich the rich, the cost of the due share of the unprivileged section.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

### MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENTS

Madam — Apropos the editorial 'The Name Game' published on 9th May, this is my response. There are guidelines issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs called 'Endorsements know-hows' for celebrities, influencers and virtual influencers on social media platforms. The guidelines specify that celebrities must not endorse any product or service they have not personally used or experienced. Further, they are advised to be 'diligent' before endorsing any product or service i.e. extremely careful by analysing the pros and cons of it to save the health and money of lakhs of their followers. some of them blindly accept and adopt what they say. An

### War of words over industrialists



Apropos, 'Modi questions Rahul's silence on Ambani, Adani,' The Pioneer, May 9, this is my response. The phenomenal industrialists Ambani and Adani have become fodder for the political parties between the ruling and opposition groups in our country. They have been pilloried by Rahul Gandhi, alleging Modi helped them grow. In contrast, this time Modi turned the tables

example of carelessly endorsing a harmful product is 'pan masala' that too on a sports channel during the live telecast of a cricket match watched by millions of youngsters, highly prone to its habit-forming usage. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has reiterated the above guidelines. The Government needs to punish the celebrities indulging in misleading promotions under the Consumer Protection Act by a jail term, not mere fines to instil responsibility in them as advocated by the Court.

O Prasada Rao | Hyderabad

### FOOTBALL IS NUMBER ONE

Madam — Though top football-playing nations are restricted to Europe, Latin America and African countries, the beautiful game's popularity is unmatched in non-football-playing nations as well. The game is a universal language, to say so and has nicely flowered over the decades through champion players of diverse socio-economic milieus gathering together for a common cause: regale the fans with skill and perseverance. No surprise, the lovely game is viewed as a promoter of uni-

versal peace despite the onfield acrimony. The exhilaration of great players will captivate fans forever. No game evokes such intense emotions that emanate after every goal is scored. Parallely, administrators and countries worldwide have displayed mostly unambiguous references towards the game. Now, in a huge honour to football, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has adopted a resolution proclaiming May 25 as 'World Football Day'. May 25 marks the 100th anniversary of the first ever Football tournament. As aptly described by a diplomat at the UNGA, football is the "number one game played and followed across the globe". Additionally, as the resolution Stated, football creates a space for international cooperation. World Football Day is intended to encourage global peace, overall development and women and empowerment of women and girls.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

Madam — The exhilaration of great players will captivate fans forever.

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Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Use of lighting in Indian architecture

Lighting greatly enhances India's architectural heritage, turning historic landmarks into captivating spectacles

India's architectural heritage reflects a blend of history, culture and tradition. In bustling urban environments, our heritage monuments stand as timeless witnesses to our rich past. However, these architectural marvels often fade into the background amidst the vibrant city scenes. Yet, through the strategic application of lighting, these structures are brought to life, captivating the imagination and enhancing their charm after dusk.

### Enhancing Historical Significance Through Lighting

Carefully designed external lighting has the power to breathe new life into heritage landmarks, illuminating their intricate details and historical significance. technology, renowned for its energy efficiency and controllability, offers a unique opportunity to showcase these monuments in a manner that respects their heritage while captivating modern audiences. By leveraging lighting solutions, cities across India are revitalizing their architectural treasures, ensuring they remain bea-



Roomi Gate, Lucknow: As a symbol of Lucknow's rich Mughal heritage, Roomi Gate exudes grandeur and historical significance.

### Transforming Indian Architectural Landscape with Lighting

From the majestic Sun Temple in Konark to the iconic Roomi Gate in Lucknow, lighting has transformed India's architectural scene, infusing these structures with renewed splendour and magnificence.

### Sun Temple, Modhera:

Nestled in the heart of Gujarat, the Sun Temple stands as a testament to ancient craftsmanship and architectural ingenuity. Through the application of dynamic lighting, the temple's intricate carvings and majestic outlines are brought to life after sunset. Visitors are mesmerized as the tem-

ple emerges as a radiant spectacle, inviting them to embark on a journey through time and history.

**Roomi Gate, Lucknow:** As a symbol of Lucknow's rich Mughal heritage, Roomi Gate exudes grandeur and historical significance. Dynamic lighting accentuates the gate's intricate motifs and architectural features, casting a mesmerizing glow that captivates spectators. Illuminated against the night sky, Roomi Gate symbolizes the city's cultural legacy, inviting locals and tourists alike to marvel at its beauty.

**Gujarat Bhawan:** Nestled in the heart of New Delhi, Gujarat Bhawan serves as a cultural hub representing the vibrant heritage of Gujarat. Through the integration of dynamic lighting, the Bhawan transforms, becoming a luminous tribute that honours the State's rich traditions. The interplay of light accentuates its distinctive features, creating a captivating visual narrative for visitors and passersby.

**Signature Bridge:** The Delhi Government's decision to illuminate the entire structure of the Signature Bridge



ABHIJIT VAISH

underscores the city's commitment to enhancing its architectural landmarks. Towering above the city's skyline, the bridge now glows at night, offering a spectacular view to visitors and residents alike.

Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram International Airport, Ayodhya: This architectural marvel, features dynamic lighting that complements its unique design inspired by the Nagara style of temple architecture. Blending modern facilities with rich cultural heritage, the airport offers a captivating experience for travellers and visitors.

Lighting greatly enhances India's architectural heritage, turning historic landmarks into captivating spectacles. Embracing this technology allows cities to showcase their cultural legacy and create vibrant public spaces, enriching the lives of residents and visitors. As India progresses, lighting signifies innovation, guiding towards a brighter future for its architectural landscape.

*(The author is the executive director at Instapower Ltd, views are personal)*



## FIRST COLUMN TRAITS OF A SUCCESSFUL PERSON

He dares to defy convention and breathe life into audacious ideas



RAVI VALLURI

There is a part of us that will not let us be content until we become all that we are capable of being. Life is not about resting on our past achievements and laurels and residing in our comfort zone. It is an adventure from being ordinary to extraordinary. One's current situation may be good, but if a greater opportunity presents itself, one must be open to expanding. This does not mean you are to run away or violate your integrity.

Muscles stay strong and flexible only by use and stretching and so does our mind. The challenge is the way of the universe and showing us the path that the bigger we assume that form and shape. We should bless our dreams and our desires to identify the opportunity that is lurking as there would be several chances arising around the corner. We need the courage and humility to ask the Universe to provide such opportunities, leave behind all our limitations and step forward to live life as magnificent and gigantic as ordained by the Universe. Successful people stretch their hands and take up responsibility which empowers them to enter uncharted territories. This increases the level of their prana/chi, attention span and nature of work, adding a new dimension to the personality. Successful people are never straight-jacketed in their approach and revel in taking risks. Only risk-takers become game-changers.

Rahul Bajaj's sons Rajiv and Sanjiv embarked upon a fascinating idea to salvage the scrap of the decommissioned INS Vikrant to manufacture scooters. It was an innovative idea, utilizing scrap in a novel manner. While the bottom line of the exercise may be to generate profit, the unattainable thought is audacious. Therefore, successful entrepreneurs never kill an idea. An ingenious idea can be a platform for a radical discovery.



An awesome idea is breathtaking and amazing, stunning and awe-inspiring. When the idea germinates, something stupendous takes place. Think big and do not listen to people who tell you it can't be done. "Life is too short to think small", writes Tim Ferriss. The Universe listens to our deepest thoughts. If the thought is positive, we are blessed with positive results.

The cardinal principle in life is to ensure that we receive and circulate only positive thoughts. We should ensure that we are surrounded by efficacious people. Keep shouldering responsibility and ensure that we possess a YES MIND. Successful enterprises ensure that their workforce performs in harmony and synergy while working in teams. The Universe believes in the Laws of Attraction, the Laws of Abundance, the Laws of Gratefulness and the Laws of Spiralling Effect. All this gets transformed into what Darren Hardy calls the Compound Effect. Next, we ought to always feel blessed and have faith that a superior power is guiding us in our endeavours. There is a superior intelligence that is always creating wonderful opportunities for us and these should be grabbed and seized with humility.

A triumphant individual hinges his belief on the thought that the Divine will take care of everything and by simply reposing faith in that Superior Power. Successful People work on these principles where the football swerves like a parabola and enters the net and we are numbed, giving a standing ovation. That is the miracle performed. Choose to call it the power of the Almighty or the architecture of the Universe. But this works on the premise of the power of positive thinking and becoming successful.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

# Precision agriculture: Key to food security



PARAG ACHARYA

The future of Indian agriculture hinges on a blend of tradition and innovation. Precision agriculture offers a crucial pathway to sustainably feed 1.7 billion people

India's population is projected to reach approximately 1.7 billion by 2050. It would be a significant challenge for Indian agriculture to meet the food demands of such a vast population amidst the emerging challenges of climate change. Additionally, the sector faces issues such as an ageing farmer population. Younger generations are increasingly veering away from taking over the family agricultural farm, choosing other, more lucrative and less labour-intensive career paths over agriculture. To address these challenges, the adoption of modern farming techniques like precision farming and digital smart agriculture becomes imperative to ensure sustainable food production and the future prosperity of Indian agriculture.

A recent parliamentary panel has emphasized the importance of promoting agricultural mechanization, particularly for small and marginal farmers and has advocated for the integration of tiny robots and Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Indian farm operations to address the challenges posed by fragmented land holdings. Furthermore, the panel recommended the establishment of a 'National Institute of Agricultural Robotics and Artificial Intelligence' to ensure that India remains at the forefront of agricultural development both domestically and internationally. On August 23, 2022, regarding Farm Mechanization, the Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education revealed that India's mechanisation level stands at 47 per cent, trailing China (59.5 per cent), Brazil (75 per cent) and the US (95 per cent). The level of mechanisation varies greatly by region inside India too. Northern States boast higher rates (70-80 per cent), driven by fertile land, labour decline and State backing. Southern and eastern States lag (35-45 per cent) due to fragmented land holdings. North-eastern States struggle due to terrain, equipment costs and socio-economic factors.

Certainly, agriculture has evolved steadily from a traditional, labour-intensive model to a sophisticated, technology-driven system. Key milestones include the establishment of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK). The development of high-yielding, cost-effective, disease/pest-resistant and climate-resilient varieties and technologies across crops, horticulture, animal husbandry and fisheries sciences by ICAR has significantly bolstered production and productivity. However, while acknowledging these strides, it's imperative to recognize that the pace of progress must match the urgency of our times.

Throughout history, people have always sought easier, faster and more efficient ways to get things done. This pursuit has sparked a technological revolution that merges age-old farming practices with cutting-edge innovations like the Internet of Things (IoT) known as Ag-IoT. It is a huge change in farming that could shake up how we grow, manage and protect our food. Its solutions are not merely about efficiency; they are about empowering farmers to achieve greater time efficiency, productivity and precision in their daily tasks. It's like having a super smart assistant that can take care of land, animals, crops and farms without needing humans to do everything. People also call it precision agriculture, smart agriculture, or digital agriculture.



THE INTERNET OF THINGS IS A HUGE CHANGE IN FARMING THAT COULD SHAKE UP HOW WE GROW, MANAGE AND PROTECT OUR FOOD. ITS SOLUTIONS ARE NOT MERELY ABOUT EFFICIENCY; THEY ARE ABOUT EMPOWERING FARMERS TO ACHIEVE GREATER TIME EFFICIENCY, PRODUCTIVITY AND PRECISION IN THEIR DAILY TASKS

It is like a big step forward in farming because it uses data to make decisions, making everything more efficient and productive. Through Ag-IoT, the very pulse of plant and animal needs can be sensed. The farmers can keep an eye on the soil all the time, control watering systems from afar and even check on the health of their animals without being right there. It's super handy because it can predict how much crops will grow accurately. In every aspect, Ag-IoT stands poised to revolutionize the landscape of crop management, insect and pest surveillance, food warehousing, livestock care, disease monitoring, dairy operations, supply chain logistics and beyond.

The evolution of drone technology has opened up boundless possibilities in the realm of crop assessment and monitoring. One such pioneering initiative, the NaMo Drone Didi Initiative, stands as a beacon of empowerment for rural women. In a momentous gesture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally handed over 1000 drones to 1000 Nammo Drone Didis across 10 locations nationwide at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in Pusa, New Delhi. These drones will help them do things like check on crops, spray fertilizers and plant seeds. Prime Minister Modi's announcement of the 'Drone Didi' yojana 2023-24 further underscores the Government's dedication to leveraging technology for the betterment of society. Significant financial allocations during 2020-21 and 2021-22, by the Indian Government including INR 1756.3 crores and INR 2422.7 crores respectively to States for the integration of cutting-edge technologies

like drones, artificial intelligence, blockchain, remote sensing and GIS into agriculture and INR 7302.50 crores and INR 7908.18 crores were made in the same periods to ICAR for R&D, further demonstrate the Government's dedication to modernizing agriculture.

Technological strides like RFID tags (radio frequency identification) and systems like NLIS (National Livestock Identification Scheme) and INAPH (Information Network for Animal Productivity & Health) have propelled Precision Dairy Farming.

With swift electronic scanning and data integration, farmers can efficiently manage cow health, productivity and records, marking a significant shift in the dairy industry towards precision and efficiency. Meanwhile, in the aquaculture industry, companies like Aquaconnect and Shrimpbbox are leveraging technology to revolutionise shrimp farming. Aquaconnect employs artificial intelligence and satellite sensing technologies to monitor farm performance and provide advice to shrimp and fish farmers, predominantly small to medium-scale operations. Shrimpbbox, on the other hand, specializes in shrimp farming in colder climates and landlocked areas, boasting impressive productivity with minimal water usage and without antibiotics. Cropin Technology, based in Bengaluru, has developed Aksara, an open-source microlanguage model tailored for climate-smart farming.

In India, the World Economic Forum's AI for Agriculture Innovation (AI4AI) initiative, led by C4IR India, is revolutionizing farm-

ing through AI. The 'Saagu Baagu' pilot in Telangana's Khammam district, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Digital Green, exemplifies this success. With over 7,000 farmers benefiting, chilli yields surged by 21 per cent, pesticide use decreased by 9 per cent, fertilizer usage dropped by 5 per cent and unit prices improved by 8 per cent. Consequently, farmers doubled their earnings, with incomes rising by over INR 66,000 per acre per crop cycle. Overall, AI interventions at 175 farms in India have boosted crop yields by 30 per cent, as per the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

In conclusion, the future of Indian agriculture hinges on a blend of tradition and innovation. With a burgeoning population and dwindling resources, precision agriculture offers a crucial pathway to sustainably feed 1.7 billion people. If established, the 'National Institute of Agricultural Robotics and Artificial Intelligence' would catapult Indian agriculture into unprecedented realms of excellence. The benefits of farm mechanization must permeate every corner of our nation, bridging divides and fostering inclusivity. We cannot afford to overlook those who are marginalized by the digital divide, particularly our small-scale farmers. As we look towards the future, let us remain committed to nurturing a vibrant, tech-enabled agrarian ecosystem that empowers farmers, preserves natural resources and ensures food security for generations to come.

(The writer is a scientist, at Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar; their views are personal)

# Revisiting Rohith Vemula's death after eight years

As the dust settles, revelations by the Telangana Police shed new light on Vemula's untimely death

Rohith Vemula (26), a PhD scholar at the University of Hyderabad was found dead in his hostel room on 17 January 2016. Had he lived for another fortnight, he would have celebrated his 27th birthday on January 30. But he was called back by the Maker as it is said that He prefers the favourite ones to join Him ahead of others.



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

The untimely demise of Vemula opened a Pandora's Box all over India. Opposition parties led by the Congress staged a nationwide protest and agitation blaming the Narendra Modi Government at the Centre for the death of this young man. The CPI(M)'s frontal organization SFI called for education bundh the next day and

demanding the resignation of Smriti Irani, the then union minister for human resources development and Bandaru Dattatreya, a minister of State from the council of ministers blaming the duo for the death of Rohith Vemula. Poets affiliated with the CPI(M) and other Left organizations wrote poems and short stories based on the life and times of Vemula. The fact that Vemula belonged to the Harijan com-

munity added to their ire and this was discernible from the power of the words with which they blamed the "communal and fascist" Government at the Centre. Many articles and features that appeared in regional newspapers and satellite TV channels blamed the doorstep of Smriti Irani for Rohith Vemula's suicide. A major political outfit promoted by the all-powerful minority community had declared a solatium of Rs 25 lakh to the family of Vemula within days of his unfortunate death. Though it is more than eight years since he bade farewell to this world, his mother or brother has not been given the promised amount. When Radhika, the mother of Rohith

Vemula contacted the leadership of the said party, they feigned ignorance about the amount and the matter was given a silent burial. More than eight years after the suicide of Vemula, the Telangana Police which was entrusted with the probe of finding out matters that led Vemula to resort to the extreme measure concluded that Rohith Vemula was neither a member of the Harijan community nor any Other Backward Community (OBC) student as he had claimed. The fear that the university was likely to detect the truth behind his caste status which would put an end to his political aspirations had made him take the drastic step, said the police report. The unanswered question in



the whole episode is why the investigating officers failed to track the phone calls made by Vemula during the last few days of his life. This would have thrown more light on the reasons behind the suicide of the research scholar. Many of his colleagues attribute a failed love affair as the cause behind his suicide.

Months before he committed suicide, Vemula had led a demonstration under the auspices of the Ambedkar Students Association on the University Campus to protest the death penalty awarded to Yakub Memon, one of the prime accused in the Mumbai serial blasts of 1993 which claimed 260 lives. There were reports that the soft-spoken Vemula and his friends had bashed up a member of the rival union and the victim needed hospitalisation. Moreover, there were charges against the University of Hyderabad for non-payment of a monthly scholarship of Rs 25,000 to Vemula though the university authorities denied the allegation. Rohith Vemula was neither the first Harijan student in the

University of Hyderabad or any other universities in India who have committed suicide. Rajini Anand, an engineering college student in Kerala had jumped to death in 2004 following the callous approach of the ruling Congress-led Government in the State towards her plea for financial assistance to pay college fees. Sometime last year, a CPI(M) member of Rajya Sabha asked the Government of India to furnish the number of Harijan students who had committed suicide in the country since 2014. The MP's innuendo was that no Harijan students had committed suicide in the country before the swearing-in of Modi as Prime Minister. The kind of fire from the

opposition faced by Smriti Irani was unprecedented and strange. The Rohith Vemula affair cost her the office of the HRD ministry and she was relegated to minister of textiles Opposition party leaders have all the right to criticize the Government and ministers for errors and omissions. But it should be restricted to the carelessness and irresponsibility of the concerned minister. For eight years, this young lady was crucified by her political rivals. Had they taken a little bit of time and gone through the releases issued by the Government of India, they would not have dared to throw mud at Smriti. (The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)





Ukraine says Russia is trying to break through its defences

Ukraine rushed reinforcements to its northeastern Kharkiv region to hold off a Russian attempt to breach local defences, authorities said, a tactical switch by Moscow that Ukrainian officials have been expecting for weeks as the war stretches into its third year.



Ukraine had previously said it was aware that Russia was assembling thousands of troops along the northeastern border, close to the Kharkiv and Sumy regions. While the Kremlin's forces launched their most recent ground offensive in eastern Ukraine, Ukrainian intelligence officials said they expected the Kremlin's forces to attack in the northeast, too.

Pak to seek rollover of \$12 bn debt to meet budget targets

Pakistan has decided to seek a rollover of around USD 12 billion debt from key allies like China in the 2024-25 fiscal year to meet a whopping USD 23 billion worth of gap in its external financing as the federal government aims to achieve budget targets before the expected arrival of an IMF team to the cash-strapped country.

Pak's maiden lunar orbiter sends first images

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's maiden lunar orbiter sent the first images of the sun and the moon, days after it was launched as part of China's moon mission, it was announced on Friday.

Putin reappoints his PM, a low-profile technocrat

Russian President Vladimir Putin reappointed Mikhail Mishustin as the country's prime minister on Friday, a widely anticipated move to keep on a technocrat who has maintained a low political profile.



Vladimir Putin takes oath as Russian president during an inauguration ceremony in the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow, Russia

power, but the procedure is widely seen as pro forma given Kremlin control over the body. Most Cabinet members are expected to keep their jobs, but it was not clear if Shoigu, the defence minister, would be among them after last month's arrest of his top associate, Timur Ivanov.

Bushra Bibi's right to life violated in sub-jail: HC

A Pakistani high court has concluded that the state transgressed the right to life of former premier Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi by confining her at her private residence designated as a sub-jail and depriving her of interaction with other prisoners, a media report said on Friday.

The module was designed by Islamabad's Institute of Space Technology (IST) in collaboration with China's Shanghai University (SJTU) and Suparco. It carries two optical cameras to capture the lunar surface.

Top Philippine security official seeks Chinese diplomats' expulsion

Top Philippine security official demanded Friday the immediate expulsion of Chinese diplomats allegedly behind a reported leak of a phone conversation between one of the diplomats and a Filipino admiral about South China Sea disputes that have strained diplomatic ties.

and dissemination of disinformation, misinformation, and mal-information - now releasing spurious transcripts or recordings of purported conversations between officials of the host country - should not be allowed to pass unsanctioned or without serious penalty," Ano said.

PR exec departs Baidu after comments glorifying overwork draw backlash

Thursday that Qu had left her position at Baidu, citing unnamed sources. Internal systems showed Qu is no longer with the firm, according to a Baidu employee who asked not to be named as they were not authorized to provide that information to media.

many inappropriate (things said) in the video that caused external misunderstandings about the company's values and corporate culture, causing serious harm. I sincerely apologise."

Iranians vote in parl runoff election

Iranians voted on Friday in a runoff election for the country's parliament after hard-line politicians dominated March balloting. People in 22 constituencies across the country will elect 45 representatives from a pool of 90 candidates, 15 of whom are considered moderate.

confidence in the face of facts and evidence and have reached the point where they are frustrated and have no bottom line. "China solemnly demands that the Philippines ensures that Chinese diplomats can perform their duties, stops infringement and provocation and does not deny the facts, act indiscreetly or hurt itself by its own actions," he said.

Iran's parliament plays a secondary role in governing the country. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has the final say in all important state matters. State TV showed Khamenei

voting on Friday immediately after the polls opened. He urged people to vote and said the runoff election was as important as the main one. In the March election, hard-liners won 200 out of 245 seats, with more moderate candidates taking the other 45.

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# ON BOARD THE DILLI-AWADH EXPRESS

There is little to complain if the ancient gastronomic delights from the bustling streets of Dilli 6 intersect with the regal fare of Lucknow's Awadhi Chowk, right in the heart of modern Delhi. It is a rare symphony, says **SHOBORI GANGULI**

For ages, food critics and connoisseurs have engaged in passionate discourses on how the royal Mughlai cuisine of Dilli stands out in sharp contrast to its regal Awadhi counterpart in Lucknow, a debate that rages on. While both define North India's rich culinary heritage and both spill out of the ancient quarters of royal kitchens to occupy modern-day street food outlets of these two historic cities, it takes a magician to synchronise the two.

**With Chapter 4 of Farage:** Northern Meanders, Chef Anuj Kapoor, Director of Culinary at Radisson Blu Hotel in Greater Noida, delivers this impossible magic of harmony with precision. From the bustling chaos of Old Delhi's streets to the serene ambience of Awadh's royal courts, Chef Kapoor employs his nostalgia of childhood and college years spent in Lucknow and his enviable professional experience in Old Delhi's Mughlai lanes and bylanes to curate an innovative six-course meal, meticulous attention paid to each spice and ingredient.

The meal started off with a fiery welcome shot of *Tikha Mango*, the salt and chili rimmed glass of *aam panna* a welcome relief in Delhi's sizzling May heat. The *Amuse Bouche* gently opened the gates to *Dilli 6 ki Nagori, Methde Aloo, Kachalu*, a delectable offering of a *golgappa* sized *puri* with filling. A real taste of Delhi is incomplete without some wholesome *Chaat*. So Chef Kapoor had a platter ready with *Kulle ki Chaat* served with a not-too-sour *Kanji* with a jalapeno and *Ram Laddoo* skewer.

The *Nakkhas Masala Panko Soft Shell Crab Aragula* and *Orange* was a



CHEF ANUJ KAPOOR

tantalsing appetizer on offer. Unfortunately, for Delhi, seafood meanders its way into kitchens through freezers, compromising its freshness. While the taste of the crab and the crispiness of the batter worked well on the palate, it is my personal observation that deep fried Indian food, North to South, East to West, is difficult to master in large kitchens. They tend to get fried and re-fried, leaving that slight hint of used oil. These are best left to home kitchens or road side eateries. The vegetarian option of *Ambi, Hari Mirch Ganderi Paneer Tinka* may perhaps have been a better choice. That said, the Entrée opened the floodgates of gastronomic indulgence. The *Gosh ki Galawat* served atop a *Biscooti Roti* that Chef Kapoor had quite obviously paid personal attention to, was an amazingly innovative combination. The taste lingered on long after the meal was over. For the vegetarians there was, of

course, the *Chakundar ki Galawat*.

This was followed by the main course in which Chef Kapoor refined and redefined the decadent *Nalli Nihari* to a level of sophistication difficult to match. The *Chowk ka Nalli Nihari Wellington* indeed transported one to an epicurean heaven. A clear winner, this masterpiece blended the iconic Wellington-style pastry with the refined flavours of pulled *Nalli Nihari* mutton. This innovative dish symbolised Chef Kapoor's unique gift of framing culinary history in a contemporary context. There was *Jumbo Prawn Khorma* on offer alongside the vegetarian *Aminabad Masala Portobello, Gucchi, Qar-e-Pukhtan*.



Chef Kapoor has a signature inaugural, informal talk before laying out the table for his patrons. At the beginning of each Farage, he talks about the inspiration informing the menu, of how Dilli 6 is better known for its vegetarian fare considering the Old City has a fair share of vegetarian traders and merchants, and similar such priceless nuggets of culinary history. I left the venue with the taste of an extremely flavourful and aromatic *Chowk ki Gilouri*, transporting me to the bylanes of Lucknow that I remember only too well.

**FACTSHEET**

**Farage Chapter 4: Northern Meanders**  
**Venue:** *Satin, Radisson Blu, Greater Noida*  
**Date:** *May 10th & May 11th, 2024*

## Padharo Mhare Desh



The ongoing Rangeelo Rajasthan food festival at the Crowne Plaza in Delhi takes its guests on an exotic culinary odyssey, writes **SHOBORI GANGULI**

Rajasthan never ceases to inspire. Be it the food, the clothes, the colours, the mesmerizing deserts, the people, its music, this region's appeal is immortal and forever irresistible. Little wonder then that the majestic Rangeelo Rajasthan food festival at Crowne Plaza's Infinity in the heart of Delhi has drawn well-deserved attention.

Showcasing Rajasthan's regal culinary heritage, *Panch Rang Panch Nagar* is the leitmotif of the festival that draws inspiration from the diverse palates and cuisines of the five towns of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Udaipur, and Bikaner. We are told that the chefs engaged in this epic effort have journeyed to the royal kitchens spread across Rajasthan to collate secret recipes and traditions while bringing in local cooks to ensure the authenticity of regional flavours.

In order to remain faithful to the festival's thematic emphasis, the venue has been draped in the architectural hues of the five chosen cities, where guests can effortlessly surrender to the rustic charm and authenticity of village-style piping hot *Jowar, Bajra* and *Bejar rotis* prepared by local women, travelling straight out of their earthen *chulhas* to the plate.

Playing the perfect host, Executive Chef Roushan Sharma is quick to bring in some local starters like the *kachodi kadhi* and *samosa kadhi*, the crispy fried goodies gently crushed into a warm bowl of silk smooth gravy. This came with a sharp and tangy garlic and *kutty mirch* chutney and fiery *Mirchi ke Tapore*. Clearly, Ghee is the real star of a traditional Rajasthani food

spread so there was no dearth of this cooking medium in the dishes that arrived at the table.

Sharing his experience of travelling to Rajasthan for the curation of the festival's menu, Chef Sharma says, "Our culinary expedition to Rajasthan was a blend of royalty and authenticity. Spending a day with Thakur Kunal Singh Sa graciously unravelled the secrets of royal recipes, while our interactions with local villagers added depth to our



culinary pool that has its origins in the arid and resource-starved agrarian ecosystem of the region for centuries. Indeed, each element of the menu was an eye-opening vehicle of transport to Rajasthan's culinary heartland.

Now, a bit about the décor. Painstakingly set up to recreate the rustic charm and village-style dining experience of *Padharo Mhare Desh* one could opt to dine under the stars (not recommended in this May heat) or enjoy the interiors with live folk performances, including vibrant *Kathputli* puppetry and a spirited *Ghoda Gadi*. The venue has even recreated the vibrant energy of a traditional *Rangrez Bazaar*, complete with stalls offering local handicrafts and entertainment.

Pankaj Gupta, the Area General Manager, underscored the significance of such an experience amid the dynamic culinary landscape today: "In a world where dining options abound, we believe in offering our guests more than just a meal. The Rangeelo Rajasthan Food Extravaganza is not merely a culinary event; it's a journey of discovery and delight, where every dish and every performance tell a story of Rajasthan's rich heritage and culture." And indeed, it does.

**FACT SHEET**

**Venue:** *Infinity, Crowne Plaza Delhi*  
**Date:** *May 3rd to May 12th, 2024*  
**Time:** *7:00 PM to 11:00 PM*  
**Price:** *Rs 2599 plus taxes per person*  
**Contact:** *8860605588, 8860634435*

# What's cooking this weekend!

## Lucknow meets Hyderabad at Westin



The Westin Gurgaon is hosting a 10-day culinary pop up, with Kangan from The Westin Mumbai Garden City from May 17th till May 26th, 2024. Showcasing Kangan's convergence of the regal flavours of Lucknow and the fiery essence of Hyderabad, Guest Chef Mohammad Shaheed Qureshi from Kangan and Multi Property Executive Chef Amit Dash would be at the helm of this pop-up. The pop-up promises a gastronomic journey celebrating Lucknowi and Hyderabadi flavours. Kangan is a contemporary interpretation of rustic Indian flavours mainly from the North-West Frontier region of Peshawar. Being showcased at The Westin's all-day dining restaurant, Seasonal Tastes, the pop-up menu at Kangan explores progressive ideas in Indian cuisine while maintaining the traditional culinary integrity of signature dishes.



Chef Mohammad Shaheed Qureshi

From traditional kebabs to rich *biryanis*, the spread brings out many undiscovered facets with its unique use of time tested ingredients transformed by eclectic combinations and modern presentations. For instance, the *Sikanderi Raan, Banno kebabs, Khaliyas, Kormas, Niharis, and Gacche Gosht ki Biryani*. Chef Dash says, "Hosting pop-up events has transformed our business, boosting revenue and enhancing guest experiences. Diversifying our offerings and



collaborating with renowned restaurants have attracted new audiences, bolstering our position in the hospitality industry," adding that "Experimentation with cuisines, chefs, and concepts has showcased our adaptability and innovation, keeping us ahead of trends and reinforcing our reputation. From a business perspective, these pop-ups have allowed us to expand our offerings which aligns with the exploratory culinary demands of our patrons. This strategic approach has led to increased profitability and recognition, highlighting the importance of collaboration and innovation in hospitality."

**Venue:** *Seasonal Tastes, The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi*  
**Date:** *May 17th - May, 2024, for dinner buffet everyday; Sunday brunches on 18th and 25th May 25th respectively.*

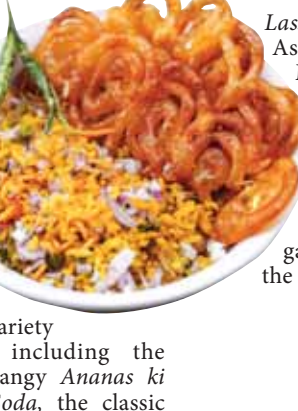


## Indori Zyaka at Crowne Plaza, New Delhi

Edesia, the renowned global cuisine restaurant at Crowne Plaza New Delhi will showcase an unprecedented culinary extravaganza through the exquisite flavours of Malwa Cuisine from Indore. This unprecedented food festival promises to unravel the hidden treasures of Indore's culinary heritage, offering a delectable array of dishes. From May 10th to May 19th, 2024, guests are invited to indulge in an unparalleled dining experience as Edesia unveils a plethora of culinary delights, carefully curated to exemplify the essence of Indore's gastronomy. On offer will be an assortment of mouthwatering delicacies, including the iconic *Poha Jalebi*, irresistible *Indori Shikanji, flavourful Bhutte ki Kees*, comforting *Sabudana Khichdi*, crispy Baked *Samosa*, savoury *Moong Dal Bhajiyas*, and the quintessential *Pani Puri* served with six unique types of water. Other highlights include *Chole Tikki*, succulent *Kadak Nath*, aromatic *Khassi ka Meat*, fragrant *Subz Methi Pulao*, hearty *Sev Tamatar ki Subji*, decadent *Mawa Bati*, traditional *Lancha*, and baked *Kalakand*. The culinary journey will conclude on a sweet note,



with the divine flavours of *Aam Ras*, creamy *Shrikhand*, and wholesome *Dal Bafra*. To complement this gastronomic odyssey, beverages have been meticulously crafted to elevate the buffet experience. Guests can quench their thirst with a variety of invigorating drinks, including the revitalizing *Shikanji*, the tangy *Ananas ki Panna*, the unique *Anti Soda*, the classic



*Lassi*, and the refreshing *Kairi Pana*. As Shuvendu Banerjee, General Manager of Crowne Plaza puts it, "This festival is a celebration of culinary diversity and a testament to our commitment to offering unparalleled dining experiences. We invite food enthusiasts to join us on this gastronomic journey as we explore the vibrant flavours of Indore." **Venue:** *Edesia at Crowne Plaza, New Delhi Okhla.*  
**Date:** *May 10th - 19th, 2024*  
**Time:** *7:00 PM - 11:00 PM*  
**Price:** *Rs 2,799 plus taxes*



# KKR TARGET PLAYOFF BERTH AT HOME

PTI ■ KOLKATA

In red-hot form, two-time former champions Kolkata Knight Riders will look to seal an IPL playoff berth for the first time in three years when they take on the struggling Mumbai Indians in their final home match of the season, here on Saturday.

## MI SEEK TO SALVAGE PRIDE



Narine keeps churning out high scores match after match with been phenomenal. With one century and three fifties, the Trinidadian has also been their leading run-getter, amassing 461 runs at a strike-rate of 183.66.

rounder has failed to cross 10 in his last six innings. Pandya would be desperate to strike form given that it would be crucial to India's chances in the T20 World Cup next month

### TEAMS (FROM):

**Kolkata Knight Riders:** Shreyas Iyer (c), KS Bharat (wk), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Rinku Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Sherfane Rutherford, Manish Pandey, Andre Russell, Nitish Rana, Venkatesh Iyer, Anukul Roy, Ramandeep Singh, Varun Chakravarthy, Sunil Narine, Vaibhav Arora, Chetan Sakariya, Harshit Rana, Suyash Sharma, Mitchell Starc, Dushmantha Chameera, Sakib Hussain, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Gus Atkinson, Allah Ghazanfar and Phil Salt.



## The Big Cricket League to promote local talent

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Promising to transform the landscape of Indian cricket, the Big Cricket League (BCL) was officially launched here recently at an event with an aim to bridge the gap between established cricketers and aspiring local talents.

PTI ■ BENGALURU

# Virat Kohli should open in T20 WC: Ganguly

Former Indian captain Sourav Ganguly on Friday said the Indian team management should make Virat Kohli open in next month's T20 World Cup to exploit the star batter's rich vein of form in the ongoing Indian Premier League.

India's lone triumph in the T20 World Cup came in 2007, the inaugural edition held in South Africa. "This is an excellent squad. I think they have picked the best possible squad. Apart from batting depth, bowling looks excellent."

said there's no time to settle down in modern T20s. You just have to hit, and that's the way it is going to be," said Ganguly.



Virat Kohli (left) and Sourav Ganguly (right) during a discussion.

Jasprit Bumrah. Amidst the general ruins of bowlers, Bumrah stood tall, grabbing 18 wickets from 12 matches and his economy rate of 6.20 is the best among regular bowlers.

will always be Test matches. "Look, quality players will be successful in all formats of the game. Look at Virat Kohli... the best players will adjust to all formats," he added.

### OTHER SPORTS

## Rafael Nadal shows he is not quite ready for retirement in a comeback win at Italian Open

AP ■ ROME

For a brief stretch on Thursday, Rafael Nadal looked every bit of a weary 37-year-old player nearing retirement.



able to push my body to the limit that I need to push to feel myself ready for what's coming. "I am not talking only about Roland Garros. I am talking about the next match. I need to lose this fear," Nadal said.

During the third set, Nadal managed to win a point after he fell to the red clay, quickly getting up to resume the rally and then producing a delicate drop-shot winner.

## Gukesh storms back, Pragg moves to joint third; Carlsen takes lead



PTI ■ WARSAW

World Championship challenger D Gukesh bounced back from a sedate start to defeat compatriot R Praggnanandhaa and Germany's Vincent Keymer before holding world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen and his position worsened as Praggnanandhaa launched a King side attack by advancing his pawns.

getting close to a winning position Praggnanandhaa could not keep his nerves and let Gukesh come back strongly. In the next round,

Praggnanandhaa was on target with some difficult moves to grind down Giri in just 21 moves out of an irregular Queen pawn game.

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**

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I, SANGRAM KESHARI SWAIN S/O SANKARSAN SWAIN R/O Sub-Plot-3 Plot-No.516/1748 Swarnpur Patia Phase-2 Bhubaneswar kalarahanga Khorda Odisha-751024 have changed my minor son's name ADVAITA SWAIN alias ADAVAT SAYUJYA JONAS SWAIN to ADVAITA SWAIN aged-8-Years.

PD(425)A

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**FINAL AUCTION CUM SALE NOTICE FOR GOLD ORNAMENTS**

The borrower(s) (whose details are provided in the table herein below), in particular, and the public, in general, are hereby informed that the below mentioned accounts are overdue, and the borrowers/account holders have not responded/complied with the communication, and notice sent by HDB Financial Services Limited (the "Company") requesting the borrower to clear his/her/their dues as per the documents in respect of the below mentioned loan signed/accepted by the borrower(s) (such documents, collectively "loan agreement") and therefore defaulted in terms thereof. The Company has in exercise of its rights as a pledgee, decided to enforce the pledge and therefore hold a public auction of the gold ornaments pledged to the company as security for the loan for the purpose of selling the same and realizing/recovering the dues owned by the borrower(s) to the company. The auction will be conducted on/after 16-05-2024 at the below mentioned local branch of HDB Financial Services Limited from 11.00 am onwards on the date and branches mentioned in the below table:-

Loan No	Customer Name	Date of Loan	Overdue Amount ₹	Branch Name
33536312	Banadev Nayak	19-04-2023	19006	Bhubaneswar
33576070	Banadev Nayak	19-04-2023	25525	Bhubaneswar
34133453	Saroj Kumar Samal	08-05-2023	20743	Bhubaneswar
34211709	Saroj Kumar Samal	08-05-2023	15986	Bhubaneswar
37260796	Rajesh Kumar Nath	29-07-2023	23007	Bhubaneswar
38440760	Kuntala Das	05-09-2023	8288	Jajpur-Road
38906509	Sukanta Majhi	11-09-2023	24447	Jajpur-Road
42088399	Bansa Mohapatra	23-11-2023	93734	Bhubaneswar-Samaratarpur
42174960	Mahendra Kumar Acharya	25-11-2023	8207	Bhubaneswar-Samaratarpur
42577629	Shradhanjali Bisoi	06-12-2023	39069	Bhubaneswar-Samaratarpur
42667133	Ashok Kumar Sahoo	08-12-2023	6502	Bhubaneswar-Samaratarpur
42400540	Kumar Sekhharan	01-12-2023	9760	Bhubaneswar-Samaratarpur

The auction shall be conducted on an "AS IS WHERE" and "AS IS WHAT IT" basis and the Company is not making and shall not make any representation or warranties as regards the quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments. It shall be the sole and absolute responsibility of the potential purchaser to verify, examine and satisfy themselves about the quality, purity, caratage, weight or valuation of the said gold ornaments prior to placing their bid and for such purpose it shall be open to potential purchasers to examine, at their sole cost and expense, and at the address set out herein above, the gold ornaments whether with or without expert advice 45 minutes prior to the time stipulated for the conduct of the auction. All the bid shall be subjected to such minimum reserve price as the company may deem fit to fix in this regards. The auction process and sale (if any) pursuant to such auction shall be subjected to such further terms and condition as the company may at sole discretion deem fit to impose.

If the borrower(s) mentioned above pays the amount due to the Company in terms of the loan agreement in his individual loan account in full before the auction as mentioned above, the pledged ornaments securing the said loan may be withdrawn from the said auction without further notice. Please note that it is the absolute discretionary power of the undersigned authorized officer of the company, either to postpone or to cancel the auction proceeding without prior notice and without assigning any reason thereof and to reject any or all the bids or offer without assigning any reason for the same.

Place : ORISSA  
Date : 11-05-2024

Authorised Officer  
(HDB Financial Services Ltd)