

**WORLD 5**

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**MONEY 6**

MEASURES IN PLACE TO MEET PEAK POWER DEMAND: GOVT

**SPORT 8**

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## KEJRIWAL SPIRIT BACK IN DELHI

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Filled with energy and high political spirit ever since he walked out from Tihar Jail on Saturday, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal while addressing his enthused party workers launched a scathing attack at the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of crushing his and other Opposition parties. Kejriwal, who has launched his Lok Sabha campaign for the May 25 Delhi schedule, alleged that the BJP is on a mission to bring about dictatorship in the country. Besides the "one nation, one leader" jibe, the AAP convenor also accused the BJP of shielding corrupt leaders and asked them if they would live up to the rule of retirement at the age of 75 that was brought about by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Kejriwal further claimed that the Prime Minister wants Amit Shah to succeed in his acknowledgement that the party is set to retain power for a third straight term. At the same time Kejriwal also asserted the BJP will not return to power and said the INDIA Bloc will form the Government on June 4. "In the last 20 hours after release from jail, I talked to poll experts and people and got to know the BJP is not going to form the Government. The AAP will be part of the Government at the Centre. We will get full Statehood for Delhi and it shall have a people's Governor, not a man from Gujarat," he said, while adding that according to his assessment that the BJP is not getting more than 220-230 seats.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal addresses a press conference Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

Earlier in the morning, Kejriwal along with his wife Sunita and Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann offered prayers at the Hanuman temple in central Delhi's Connaught Place. Hours after the visit, the Chief Minister posted on X about his temple visit. Reciting a verse from Hanuman Chalisa, "Sab sukh lahe tumhari sarna, tum rakshak kahu ko darr na", he said in the post in Hindi, "Reached the ancient Hanuman temple in Connaught Place and received the blessings of Hanuman ji. I prayed to Mahadev in Shiva temple and worshiped Shanidev

Maharaj. I prayed to God for happiness and prosperity of the country and to give strength to free the country from dictatorship. God bless everyone." "The BJP sent four of our top leaders to jail - Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh and Satyendar Jain. This was an attempt by them to crush us. PM Modi wants to crush the AAP because he knows that we can bring about a bright future for the country. All Opposition leaders including West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

Stalin, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and RJD leader Tejashvi Yadav, will be in jail if BJP wins Lok Sabha polls," Kejriwal said addressing media, a first after his release on bail in the multi crore liquor scam. Kejriwal claimed that PM Modi has not spared his own party's popular leader and will remove Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath from his post if the saffron party wins again. "Modi ji has a very dangerous plan - the plan of One Nation One Leader. He doesn't want anyone else to be popular. If they win the Lok Sabha polls, they will change the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in two months. They have tried to crush all the popular leaders in their party. Look at Vasundhara Raje and Shivraj Singh Chauhan. I am sure that Yogi Adityanath is the next," he added. Party workers and supporters gathered in big numbers to welcome Kejriwal after he was granted an interim bail by the Supreme Court till June 1. A supporter was seen standing on the tree at the office with the picture of Bhagat Singh and a copy of the Constitution of India shouting the slogan "Jail k tale toot gaye, Kejriwal choot gaye". Many others adorned party flags and t-shirts that has "I am also Kejriwal" written on them. This was Kejriwal's first such presser following his release from jail after 50 days. Further, he said that the reason why he did not resign from Chief Minister's post was because he didn't want to give in to the 'dirty politics' of BJP.

## Stars power Phase IV polls

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

From cricketer Yusuf Pathan to Akhilesh Yadav and Asaduddin Owaisi to Shatrughan Sinha, five Union Ministers, two World Cup winning cricketers and two Tollywood stars are among the 1,717 candidates for the 96 Lok Sabha constituencies spread across 10 States and one Union Territory to contest in the phase 4, for which campaigning ended on Saturday. The polling will be held on May 13. With the completion of each phase, political leaders, including the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, are turning up the heat with all kinds of rhetoric, communal charges, slandering of rivals, and much more. Political barbs like racist slur on Indian people, Pakistan's atom bomb to Balakot strike to Pulwama attack and "humara siddhant hai, hum ghar me ghus ke mareng" (It is our principle to take the attack home), to "Rambhaktis in every street", and "15 seconds the brothers would not know from where they came and where they went", dominated during the fourth phase of campaigning. The stakes are high for the BJP and its allies in the fourth phase polling. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP leaders raised the issues of racist slur on Indian people by Indian Overseas Congress president Sam Pitroda, Pakistan's atom bomb by Mani Shankar Aiyer, "ghar mein ghus kar mareng" during the poll campaign and tried to corner the grand old party saying the Congress tries to instil fear in their own countrymen. In previous rallies, the Prime Minister launched scathing attacks against the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, claiming that he may have some "deal" with "Adani-Ambani".

### LOK SABHA ELECTION PHASE IV SEATS

2024 LS voting concludes for States marked in red on May 13

STATES	NO. OF SEATS	CONSTITUENCY
ANDHRA PRADESH	25	Araku (ST), Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Anakapalle, Kakinada, Amalapuram (SC), Rajahmundry, Narsapuram, Eluru, Machilipatnam, Vijayawada, Guntur, Narasaraopet, Bapatla (SC), Ongole, Nandyal, Kurnool, Nellore, Thirupathi (SC), Rajampet, Chittoor (SC), Anantapur, Hindupur, Kadapa.
Bihar	5	Darbhanga, Ujjainpur, Samastipur (SC), Begusarai, Munger
Jammu & Kashmir	1	Srinagar
MADHYA PRADESH	8	Devas, Ujjain, Mandsour, Ratlam, Dhar, Indore, Khargone (ST), Khandwa
Maharashtra	11	Nandurbar (SC), Jalgaon, Raver, Jalna, Aurangabad, Maval, Pune, Shirur, Ahmednagar, Shirdi, Beed
Odisha	4	Kalahandi, Nabarangpur (ST), Berhampur, Koraput (ST)
TELANGANA	17	Adilabad (ST), Peddapalle (SC), Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Zahirabad, Medak, Malkajigiri, Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Chevella, Mahbubnagar, Nalgonda, Nagarkurnool (SC), Bhongir, Warangal (SC), Mahbubabad (ST), Khammam
Uttar Pradesh	13	Shahjahanpur, Kheri, Dhaurahra, Sitapur, Hardoi, Misrikh, Unnao, Farrukhabad, Etawah, Kannauj, Kanpur, Akbarpur, Bahraich (SC)
West Bengal	8	Baharampur, Krishnanagar, Ranaghat, Bardhaman Purba, Bardhaman -Durgapur, Asansol, Bolpur, Birbhum
Jharkhand	4	Singhbhum (ST), Khunti (SC), Lohardaga (ST), Palamau (SC)



## Dust storm, gusty winds claim two lives in Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

At least two people were killed and 23 injured in storm-related incidents as strong winds uprooted trees, electricity poles and led to portions of walls collapsing across Delhi. Power was also disrupted in many areas as the dust storm swept the national Capital late Friday night. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has advised people to stay indoors, close windows and doors and avoid travel if possible. Take safe shelters, do not take shelter under trees and do not lean against concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls, the IMD said predicting strong wind/hail which may damage plantation, horticulture and standing crops. Hail may injure people and cattle at open places, it said. Nine flights were also diverted at the Delhi airport late Friday evening due to bad weather, an official said. Rain and thunderstorms were witnessed in many areas of Rajasthan as well due to the impact of a western disturbance during the last 24 hours, the local weather office said on Saturday. Thunderstorm activities are likely to continue till May 14, due to which the maximum temperature may fall in most parts. In west Delhi's Vikasपुरi, a person on a two-wheeler died after a branch of a tree fell on him near Janakpuri flyover. Police said the branch was removed with the help of cranes and the victim, Jaiprakash, was rushed to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival. A car was also damaged in the incident but its occupants were unhurt, a police officer said. In the other incident, a labourer got trapped under a tree which fell on him near IB Block at KN Katju Marg around 11 PM. Hariom was taken to a nearby hospital but the doctors said he was already dead. The police officer said in this incident also a car was damaged but its occupants were safe.

## Pandian invites Modi to Naveen's swearing-in on June 9



PNS ■ BARGARH/ SUNDARGARH:

BJD leader and 5T Chairman VK Pandian on Saturday extended an invite to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the swearing-in ceremony of Naveen Patnaik as the Chief Minister for a sixth consecutive term on May 9. "Naveenbabu will win a three-fourths majority and take oath between 1.30 am and 1 pm with the blessings of Lord Jagannath and people of Odisha. We would want you to attend the event and announce a special package for the State and also increase the coal royalty," he said while addressing election meetings in Bargarh and Sundargarh districts. Pandian said the BJP would be able to achieve its 400-Paar target if it can give four guarantees. "We need assurance that that the Centre would bring petrol, diesel, kerosene and LGP prices back to the 2014 level and a commitment on job opportunities. People of Odisha are looking at you to fulfil these. For the rest, there is Naveenbabu, who is taking care of health of its citizens through the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), transformation of schools under the 5T initiatives and ensuring cheap mode of transport through the LAccmI scheme and empowering women through Mission Shakti," he said while questioning the "unfulfilled" two-crore job promise of the BJP. The BJD leader said that the BJP has

been beating drums about a double-engine government and Ayushman India, whose budget is Rs 6,000 crore for the entire country while the BJD government is spending Rs 300 crore alone every month under BSKY in Odisha. He also questioned Modi on the number of banks the Central Government has opened in Odisha. "It would have taken them 30 years to cover the entire State, which is why the Odisha Government decided to open banks in every village. Why the coastal highway has not been built in the last 10 years? We are tired of asking for a revision in coal royalty. Odisha would have got Rs 5 lakh crore more if the royalty had been paid. The Centre, instead, has taken Rs 80 crore from Odisha under green energy cess. Cuttack-Sambalpur road is the worst road in India. A Union Minister also belongs to the region; despite that, he has not ensured completion of the work on this stretch in these 10 years," he said at a rally in Biramitrapur. In contrast, the State Government has built the Biju Expressway in three years, he said. Pandian said the BJP triggered riots in Kandhamal and peace is back in the region thanks to the CM. "Modi is talking about making Odisha the number 1 State. Was he successful in making Gujarat the No. 1 State during his terms as CM there? He spoke about malnutrition in Odisha. I would like to state some facts about Gujarat where 40% children are malnourished compared to 29% in Odisha. All schools in Odisha have digital boards whereas in Gujarat, students are still being taught on blackboard. Gujarat is also grappling with the problem of per capita debt, which is much more than Odisha," he said. Pandian said the BJD's free electricity promise has given electric shock to the Opposition. "Free electricity promise for nearly 90% of people will come into effect from June 9 after the oath-taking ceremony," he asserted. He also challenged the BJP to declare its CM candidate for Odisha. "The BJP is afraid that the moment it names a candidate, its expected tally will drop by 10%. The task to make Odisha the number State in the country should be left to the number 1 CM Naveen Patnaik, he said.

DSPL-05

### PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HEATSTROKE DURING POLL

Elderly, sick persons & pregnant women are more prone to heat stroke

#### SYMPTOMS OF HEATSTROKE

Severe sweating    Reeling, nausea and vomiting    Severe thirst    Muscle cramp    Fainting / Fits

#### PRECAUTIONS

Prefer cool hours of morning/afternoon for going outside    Drink enough water before going outdoors    Use light colour loose cotton dress, umbrella & foot wear    Avoid physical labour / long walking under sun    Take rest in shade periodically

#### HEATSTROKE TREATMENT

Shift the patient to an open and cool place, give ORS/salt-sugar solution/plain water    Remove clothing as far as practicable    Provide head bath and cold sponging    Keep the patient under AC or fan    If condition does not improve, shift to hospital

Health & Family Welfare Department, Odisha

OIPR-1000313/0001/2425

Facebook.com/HFWDOdisha @HFWDOdisha http://www.health.odisha.gov.in

# 'Paid Period Leave' Odisha girl raises voice at UN on paid leave during periods

Ranjeeta gets overwhelming response from delegates

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Though creating awareness among women about their monthly cycle is still considered a taboo subject in many parts of the country, an Odia girl has gone a step forward by raising her voice about paid leave during periods at the Civil Society Conference 2024 of the United Nations.



sue - 'Paid Period Leave' that she raised in the special forum. "I am working for 'Paid Period Leave' for all women employees. I request everyone here to support 'Paid Period Leave' for women employees. If 'period leave' is implemented, women employees will get support during their menstruation while on duty. It's a request that if you support the issue, it will help many women employees all over the world," said Ranjeeta at the conference amid huge applause from delegates across the globe.

"One of the most underreported reasons is discomfort from being on the ground while menstruating. I have encountered in numerous cases where women workers suffered during their periods while at work due to lack of access to proper toilets, restrooms and many more," said Ranjeeta. Earlier, Ranjeeta had launched an online campaign urging the Union Labour Ministry to implement paid monthly period leave for all women workers in India.

"According to Article 15 (3) and Article 42 of the Constitution, the state shall create special provisions for women providing just and humane conditions for work. There should be no shame or stigma attached to requesting a period leave. A monthly menstrual cycle paid leave, if passed, will provide a healthier working environment for all workers who menstruate. I demand respect for me and all women workers because we are the backbone of our economy," said Ranjeeta.

# BJP to form double-engine govt in Odisha: Modi



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Amidst the ongoing tussle between the BJP and the BJD to grab power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended a series of public meetings at different locations in Odisha on Saturday. The meetings were organised as part of the BJP's 'Vijay Sankalp Samavesh' for the 2024 elections.

Modi set a narrative for the Odisha unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to accomplish its mission of coming to power for the first time in the State. However, the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is also trying hard to stop a saffron surge in Odisha.

Earlier, Modi after a massive road show in Bhubaneswar on Friday had claimed that he has developed a deep connection with the people of Odisha despite the language barrier. His road show in Bhubaneswar is going to be a "turning point" in the life of the State, said he. While addressing a massive gathering in Kandhamal on Saturday, Modi reiterated that the BJP would form a double-engine government in Odisha for the first time. "In Odisha, the election is important for development and Viksit Bharat vision. One vote here will ensure a double-engine government and, for the first time, a double-engine government in Odisha. I appeal to people to vote for BJP candidates and send all its 21 Lok Sabha candidates to the Parliament," said Modi.

# 'Give me 5 yrs to make Odisha No. 1'

Appeals Modi in Bargarh

RAKESH JOSHI ■ BARGARH

Odisha is going to witness a historic moment on June 10 when a son of the soil would become the Chief Minister of the State. All Bargarh residents are cordially invited to attend this momentous occasion, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a public meeting in Bargarh on Saturday.

omment. Thanks to the people of Odisha for their overwhelming support, Modi said.

He pledged to work even harder to make Odisha a developed State. He also stressed how significant Lord Jagannath is for Odisha culture. He appealed to the people to give the BJP a term of five years to make Odisha the number one State in the country.

He also lashed out at the State Government and said that even after ruling the State for 24 years, the BJD has failed to lift Odisha out of poverty. Sambalpur MP candidate Dharmendra Pradhan, Bargarh MP candidate Pradeep Purohit and the party's MLA candidates of different segments were present.

# I-T Dept raids real estate company in city



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Officials of the Income Tax Department conducted simultaneous raids at the offices of real estate company Stalwart Project Pvt Limited in Bhubaneswar on Saturday. The raids were carried out at its offices in Saheed Nagar and Shailashree Vihar. Though the reason behind the raids was not yet confirmed by official sources, it was suspected to be a case of tax evasion. Besides, it was not clear how much money and what documents were seized even as the raids were underway till the last report came in. Sources said the owner of the company Sarat Sahoo is a close aide of an influential leader. Apart from that leader,

Sahoo has been in the limelight in the past for his connections with several other prominent leaders of a political party. It was alleged that he used to finance that particular political party. As per reports, the IT sleuths were interrogating the builder. Though Sahoo was contacted over phone, he did not pick up the call, according to a report.

This raid came two days after the IT Department seized around Rs 2 crore during a raid on a businessman's house in Bhubaneswar. The house and printing press of the businessman named Ranjit Jain at Budheshwari Colony in the Laxmisagar area was raided. Moreover, GST officials had earlier raided the printing press.

# Servitor joins tone after Modi rakes up Ratna Bhandar safety

Demands unlocking of treasure trove SOON

SAROJ KUMAR MISHRA ■ PURI

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday raised doubts over safety of the Ratna Bhandar of the Jagannath Temple, Puri during his poll rally in Kandhamal, Jagannath Swain Mohapatra, a prominent Daitapati, joined his tone de-

manding unlocking of the treasure trove soon. Mohapatra told a local channel that the Ratna Bhandar should be reopened as the room is not safe from rainwater. He said he has raised the issue several times since the water is leaking into the room during rain. Asked whether he thinks the jewellery stored in the Ratna Bhandar are safe, he said he still doubts the rainwater might have damaged them. Asked about the missing keys, he advised the shrine ad-

ministration to unlock it and make an inventory to clear the suspicion.

In the meantime, a buzz gripped the pilgrim city here after Modi raked up the safety of the Ratna Bhandar by targeting the State Government, especially Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, following the missing of the original keys. From tea stalls to clubs, the issue was a talking point and everybody had the same doubt that some jewellery might have gone missing for which the Government has been

avoiding to unlock the room. Worthwhile to mention here that, The Pioneer had published an interview of Ganesh Mekap, the hereditary custodian of the Ratna Bhandar on August 30 last year. Mekap had expressed his disagreement on supporting the unlocking of the Ratna Bhandar by saying that any attempt to reopen would give rise to unrest and anger in the temple. Even, he had gone on to say that there would be flow of blood, if the Ratna Bhandar was unlocked.

# In State Rs 6.87 cr seized till May 6 before polls

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The enforcement agencies have seized around Rs 6.87 crore in cash till May 6 during checking in different parts of the State ahead of the elections.

The IT Department has seized Rs 26 lakh of a businessman from Paradip from the Bhubaneswar airport. The businessman has failed to provide any document or satisfactory reply for the purpose of carrying such a huge amount of cash with him.

Odisha Police, Income Tax Department, Excise Department and GST officials have intensified checking and raids across the State as per the Election Commission of India's (EIC) direction.

The IT Department seized over Rs 4.5 crore from a Bhubaneswar-based media house, engaged in flex printing. Its owner was unable to give any information about the source of the seized money. The Sonepur police had seized Rs 55 lakh on April 7 and handed over the money to IT Department after it failed to identify its owner.

A total of Rs 6.87 crore has been seized between March 1 and May 6. While Rs 2 crore has been returned following submission of valid documents, over Rs 4 crore has been kept in government trea-

# Sofia comes, sees and conquers at Barabati-Cuttack

PNS ■ CUTTACK

She is the director of Metro Group and has completed Executive General Management Program from IIM, Bangalore and Leadership course from Leadership Management International, USA. A next-generation entrepreneur, she is responsible for multiple aspects of the business including operations, management, marketing and overall growth. A corporate communication expert, she serves as the president of Bhubaneswar CREDAI for the years 2023-25. Besides being the CWW East Zone Coordinator at CREDAI from 2022 to 2025, she holds co-chair at CII-Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) Bhubaneswar Chapter and membership in CII, IWN Odisha. She also played an important role in organising India's First Women's Business Mela at Bhubaneswar in 2022, which was a huge success. She is Sofia Firdous, an il-



lustrious daughter of noted Congress leader Mohammed Moquim, and has landed on the 2024 electoral fray as a candidate for the Cuttack-Barabati constituency from the Congress bandwagon. Sofia comes, sees and conquers the hearts of the denizens of the millennium city when crowds follow her like a swarm of locusts wherever she goes on her campaign. She has identified a plethora of issues for the Cuttack city, which she says, has long being neglected by the leaders of ruling dispensation. She gave Petanala upgradation as a glaring example, which needs to be com-

pleted on a war footing. There is so much of waterlogging in the city that the citizens are cut off from the rest of the world during rainy season. She demands that the five box drains must be completed so as to save the city and precious human lives from vicious tentacles of death and devastation during rainy season. She says that a lot of works like putting slabs on the drain, restoring road connectivity in the city are of paramount importance to the dwellers. Besides, establishment of a big community hall at Cuttack CDA, a state-of-the-art library and a filigree hub are also on her agenda to be completed once she is elected by the electorate, she told the media. Beautification of the city by undertaking underground cable works, allocating space for pedestrians, construction of eco-friendly buildings, providing the city with an envelope of greeneries are also on the top of her agenda, she said. She is also

determined to declare Cuttack as a heritage city like Hyderabad and Pune.

Expressing her concern for the Kathajodi water body, which remains dry and parched almost round the year, construction of a barrage downstream would make the river a perennial reservoir, thereby the climate of the Cuttack city would be protected, she opined. On the hole, she is committed to fulfilling the unfulfilled works of her father Mohammed Moquim if she is elected.

It is pertinent to mention here that Sofia came to the picture after her father was caught in a cumbersome legal battle going on at Supreme Court. She is the unanimous choice by leaders of the Congress party starting from ground zero level including its rank and file to be an ideal substitute for her father believed by the masses of the Cuttack city who who repose their confidence in her leadership.

# In city Mystery shrouds bargirl's death

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A young woman was found hanging under mysterious circumstances in her rented accommodation in the Badagada area in the capital city on Saturday. The deceased was identified as Sulochana Das (22) of Tirtol in Jagatsinghpur district. The Commissionerate police began a probe into the in-

cident based on the complaint of the victim's family to find out whether it was a case of suicide or murder.

Sulochana was engaged as a bar girl in the city and was staying in the rented house along with a male friend.

The male friend had informed Sulochana's sister about the incident over phone. But later, he went absconding.

# SAI Int'l students join electoral awareness drive

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a dynamic showcase of civic responsibility and active citizenship, students of SAI International Residential School (SIRS) took center stage at an Electoral Awareness Programme hosted by the Odisha State Election Office on Friday.



Facilitated by Chief Electoral Officer Nikunja Bihari Dhal, the event served as a platform for 32 Class XI and XII students to delve into the nuances of democratic processes. Themed "The Election - the Festival of Democracy," the programme aimed to cultivate a robust understanding of voter motivation and awareness strategies among the students' active participation and insightful queries, particularly regarding Form No-6 and the operational efficiency of the Election Commission. Additional Chief Electoral Officer N Thirumala Naik and ACEO Satrugna

Kar led discussions on voting challenges, sparking innovative suggestions from the enthusiastic participants for enhancing online voting solutions. Deputy CEO Padmaja Dash and Deputy CEO Anamika Singh also present in the meeting.

Emphasizing the importance of fostering voting engagement, officials highlighted the significance of the students' role in shaping India's democratic fabric, especially in addressing gender disparities in voter turnout observed in Odisha. Chairperson, SAI International, Dr Silpi Sahoo said, "As educators, it's our duty to empower students with the knowledge and understanding of democratic principles. Engaging in electoral awareness programmes not only equips them with essential civic skills but also instills in them a profound sense of responsibility towards shaping a vibrant democracy."

# 1st-phase polling: Female voters outnumber male

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Nikunja Bihari Dhal on Saturday said the number of female voters is more than male voters as per the voters' list in four Parliamentary constituencies going to polls in the first phase in the State on Monday.



Stating that home voting has been facilitated for the PWDs and elderly citizens, he said, "We have already completed home voting in four Parliamentary constituencies. So far, more than 3,280 senior citizens and PWDs in 28 Assembly segments under the four Parliamentary constituencies have voted in home voting." He further said voter facilitation centres have been

opened for voting by polling personnel. More than 23,000 voters on election duty have exercised their franchise in these facilitation centres, he informed. "For the Defence and Services personnel, we have already sent 6,296 postal ballots electronically to enable them to exercise their franchise," he said.

Security of the voters, polling officials and police personnel deployed during polling is one of the priority areas of the Election Commission of India, he said. "We have deployed 104 companies of Central Armed Police Forces to ensure law and order during voting. We are confident that polling will be conducted peacefully and smoothly," Dhal said.

"All arrangements have been made to provide a happy experience to the voters. I appeal to all voters of the four Parliamentary constituencies to come out in large numbers on May 13 and exercise their democratic right," he added. Notably, polling will be conducted in four Lok Sabha constituencies of Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Koraput and Brahmapur in the first phase.

# Modi slams Naveen at Balangir poll meeting

**Dubs CM as anti-farmer**  
PNS ■ BALANGIR

Odisha is one of the richest States in the country in terms of natural resources, but the people are battling poverty and forced to migrate to other places in search of livelihoods. It is time to save Odisha, Odia Asmita (pride) and future of children of the State, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a public meeting in Balangir district on Saturday. The BJP government has

taken steps to honour Odisha's heroes, freedom fighters, artists and reeled off names of those who have awarded with Padma Awards, said Modi. Asking people to ask a question to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik when he visits the region for campaigning, Modi said, "Ask him on my behalf that as he is contesting from Kantabanji, can he name 10 villages? I am sure that he would not be able to name even 10 villages without seeing a paper despite being CM for so many years. The BJP government

cheated the farmers, especially the paddy farmers who are not getting an MSP of Rs 2,100 and forced to sell their produce at Rs 1,600. A large quantity is being taken away in the name of Katni-Chatni. Hence, the Odisha BJP has announced to procure paddy at Rs 3,100 per quintal and make payment within 48 hours," said Modi. Reiterating that June 4 is the "expiry date" of the BJD, Modi invited people of the swearing in ceremony of the BJP Chief Minister in Bhubaneswar on June 10.

# In Sambalpur BJD protests BJP defacing walls with false promises



PNS ■ SAMBALPUR  
BJD leaders in Sambalpur on Saturday met Collector and Election Returning Officer Akshay Sunil Agrawal and demanded stringent action against the BJP district unit for

violating the model code of conduct by painting private walls without owners' consent. In a letter submitted to the Collector, the BJD leaders said that the saffron party is making false promises to the people through wall writings/

paintings made at numerous locations across the district. Enclosing a picture of the wall paintings along with the letter, they alleged that the party was defacing public and private walls besides trying to fool people by making promises not mentioned in its election manifesto. "Doing such things without the permission of the private owners in cases of private properties is completely illegal," the party said, adding that this is in violation of the model code of conduct prescribed by Election Commission of India.

## INBRIEF

### NGO DISTRIBUTES UMBRELLAS, BUTTER MILK IN BRAHMAMPUR

Brahmapur: Members of social organisation San and Neel Foundation distributed butter milk and umbrellas to needy people at different strategic locations of Brahmapur for the last 15 days to



combat the heat wave prevailing in the State. The foundation, on the eve of Akshaya Tritiya on Friday also distributed cold water and umbrella to thousands of people, particularly beggars and vendors sitting on footpaths under scorching heat to maintain their livelihood. Foundation president Lion P Dharma Rao and volunteer Kiran Patra coordinated the event. Locals hailed the efforts made by the organisation for undertaking such humanitarian work.

### SUPRIYA +3 COMMERCE TOPPER

Brahmapur: The Final Year undergraduate result of the Berhampur University was published on May 7 in which S Supriya Reddy has topped the merit list. A final year student of Plus Three Commerce of Gopalpur College, she has secured the highest total marks with SGPA of 9.9 under the Berhampur University. The Governing Body president, Principal and faculty members of Commerce Department and all other staff members of the college have congratulated her for the success, said Commerce Department HOD Prof Manoj Pattnaik.



### BLOOD DONATION CAMP HELD BY UTKAL ALUMINA

Rayagada: The Utkal Alumina International Limited (UAIL) organised a blood donation camp at the Baphlimali Mines premises in Rayagada district as part of its CSR initiatives. The camp was conducted for the first time and a total of 101 units of blood were collected from the donors. Vijay Chauhan, head of Baphlimali Mines of UAIL, and Niharika Sahoo, head of CSR, led the efforts of the team in conducting the event, ensur-



ing its success and smooth operation. Chauhan expressed his gratitude to all the donors and volunteers who contributed to making the event a success.

# 2 Ganjam guys qualify CDS

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

Two of the 197 candidates, who qualified on the basis of the results of the Combined Defence Services Examination (II), 2023 conducted by the Union Public Service Commission in September, 2023 and SSB interviews held by the Services Selection Board of the Ministry of Defence for admission to the 157th (DE) Course of IMA (Indian Military Academy), INA (Indian Naval Academy), AFA (Air Force Academy) are from Ganjam district.



lic Service Commission and Service Selection Board in September 2023. Spandan cleared written examination of UPSC-CDS twice. Not being deterred by the failure in 1st SSB interview of Army at the last stage he pursued again and got selected in the 2nd SSB interview. Now AIR 42, he will join 157-DE Course at Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun. "I feel happy and proud that I will serve my country in the frontline. I am proud of my parents who encouraged and guided me to achieve my ambition" said Spandan. He studied in Convent School, Brahmapur up to class 10th, in DAV School, Unit 8 Bhubaneswar up to 12th and completed his B tech in IIIT Bhubaneswar.

Spandan Dash, son of an ex-military man, Lalitendu Dash, Warrant Officer (retd) scored AIR 42. "He always wanted to be like his father, so he pursued for CDS instead of going for any other job after his B.Tech," said Anjali Dash, mother of Spandan. Combined Defence Services Examination, which is considered to be the most sought after job after ICS was conducted by the Union Pub-

# Campaigning reaches feverish pitch Dharmendra, Pranab join Sital Sasthi ritual 'Thal Utha'

**Wish welfare of farmers on Akshaya Tritiya**  
NIMAI CHARAN SAHU ■ SAMBALPUR

The auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya saw poll contestants turn to farmers on Friday. While Union Minister and BJP's Sambalpur Lok Sabha nominee Dharmendra Pradhan was seen sowing seeds and feeding cows, his rival contestant from BJD Pranab Prakash Das ploughed land to mark the occasion and impress voters. The festival turned out to be an occasion to attract farmer voters towards them. The Union Minister at Saplaharaa village of Hirakud sowed rice seeds. Wishing all the farmers in the country on the occasion, Pradhan said, "Odisha is primarily an agrarian State. May our State become number one in the coming days! May farmers' land produce enormous crops! May Odia people's lives be filled with happiness! I pray to Lord Jagannath and Goddess Samaleswari."



The Minister joined a rally organised by the party where he requested women, seniors, and youths to vote for the BJP for the third term of PM Narendra Modi and a BJP Government in Odisha. He worshipped cows at the Hari Om Goshala. Meanwhile, BJD heavy-weight candidate Das also marked the occasion at Dhurropani village in the Lapanga area of Rengali. Wearing a turban and a towel on one side of the shoulder, Pranab made a genuine effort to woo farmer

voters. In traditional farmer attire, he reached the paddy field and began his day by ploughing land and sowing seeds. "May there be adequate rain this year, with God's grace! A farmer feeds the whole world. Therefore, the State Government is always on the front to do anything for their betterment," he said. Amid their bitter campaigning, the BJP and BJD contestants were seen displaying a rare bonhomie at a religious event. Both heavy-weights took part in the "Thal

Utha' ceremony ahead of Sital Sasthi, which marks the selection of groom Devi Parvati's parents for the Sital Sasthi event scheduled for June 10. The Union Minister took part in the Thal Utha ceremony at Nandapada Shiva Temple before reaching Jhauapada Shiva Temple, where BJD candidate Pranab was also seen to be present. They both were sitting opposite to each other during the ceremony. At the end, Dharmendra and Pranab touched the holy plate.

# Hundreds join Paradip Cong MLA candidate's rally



**As he files nomination papers**  
PNS ■ PARADIP

Niranjan Nayak, the Congress MLA candidate for the Paradip Assembly seat, led a magnificent procession from the Sri Jagannath Temple in Paradip to the Jagatsinghpur District Collector's office, where he submitted his nomination papers. The procession, characterized by its grandeur and fervour, traversed through the city, with Nayak actively engaging with the public, seeking their support and votes for the upcoming elections. The overwhelming support and enthusiasm displayed by the people of Paradip bolstered the morale of Congress workers, who were elated by the spirited participation in the

nomination procession. Nayak was accompanied by hundreds of Congress members and supporters, including prominent figures like Kedar Biswal, Anil Sahu, Saroj Sahu, and Vinod Pradhan. The procession was organized under the leadership of Councillor of Ward No. 4 in the Paradip Municipality Kedar Nath Jena. Additionally, a procession led by the president of the Kalinga Mahila Maha Sangh, Manorama Khatua, saw the active participation of hundreds of women workers, further showcasing the widespread support for Nayak's candidacy. Notable figures such as Kamala Ojha, Dharitri Samal, and Kaushalya Mohanty Major also participated in the procession on behalf of Women's Congress, highlighting the inclusive and diverse support base of Nayak's candidacy.

# Bandar Mazdoor Sangh office-bearers elected

**During union's annual conference in Paradip**  
PNS ■ PARADIP

The annual conference of the Bharatiya Bandar Mazdoor Sangh (BBMS) took place at the union office premises at Paradip, on Monday. BBMS, Paradip president Rakesh Kumar Pattnaik presided. Chandrakant Annaji Dhumal graced the occasion as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the conference. District in-charge, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh Basant Sahoo, national president of Bharatiya Port and Dock Mazdoor Mahasangh and general secretary of BBMS, Paradip Srikant Ray, national general secretary Suresh Patil and treasurer of Bharatiya Port and Dock Mazdoor Mahasangh Sudhir Gharaat were present as guests of honor. They shed light on BBMS's initiatives for



the welfare of port employees and contractual DLR workers. The programme was coordinated by BBMS VP Bhabendra Dash along with other members. The newly elected office bearers for the year 2024 were announced during the event. According to the declaration, Rakesh Kumar Pattnaik was re-elected as the president, with Pradeep Kumar Ray serving as the working presi-

dent. Other elected officials include vice presidents Bhabendra Das, Bikash Chandra Sahu, Deepak Kumar Mohapatra, Ranjit Kumar Mallick, Smriti Ranjan Tripathi, and Ramakant Nayak. Srikant Ray was appointed as the general secretary, with Sarada Prasanna Das and Debiprasanna Majhi as assistant secretaries. Sameer Kumar Mohapatra and Biswajit Mohapatra were

named organising secretaries, while Babul Behera, Pabitra Prasad Singh, Pabitra Kumar Mallick, Manash Ranjan Palo, Bikram Kumar Routray, and Sanjajita Routray were assigned roles as secretaries. Kirti Chandra Dash and Biranchi Narayan Mohapatra were appointed treasurers, and Somanath Swain, Mitran Tarai, Bikram Parida, among others were nominated as Executive Body members.

# Paradip farmers' assn celebrates Akshaya Tritiya



**Observes traditional rituals**  
PNS ■ PARADIP

The Paradip Port Land Losers Farmers' Association, led by prominent labor leader Santosh Kumar Pattnaik, celebrated the Akshaya Tritiya at the union office here on Friday. Traditional rituals were observed, including recitation of prayers and the offering of Akshi Muthi. A public meeting was convened on the auspicious occasion, with union president Chinmay Das presiding over the proceedings. General secretary Mihir Kant Sahu and joint secretary Trilok Nath

Samantaraya were also present. Speaking on the occasion, president Das emphasized the significance of Akshaya Tritiya and stressed the importance of commemorating the day. Discussions revolved around the challenges faced by agriculture and farmers in contemporary society, particularly addressing the plight of farmers who have lost their land due to industrial establishments such as the Paradip Port and other industrial developments. Plans were outlined for various programmes and initiatives to address the issues in the coming days. The meeting was attended by hundreds of farmers.

# Triangular fight on cards Cong, BJD, BJP all confident of victory in Jeypore

NISHAN PATNAIK ■ KORAPUT

Political fervour in Jeypore Assembly constituency under Koraput Lok Sabha seat is heating up, with the major parties such as Congress, BJP and BJD intensifying their campaigns ahead of the polls on May 13. The otherwise quiet streets of Jeypore are now adorned with vibrant posters, banners and flags, amplifying the election atmosphere. Jeypore, the lone unreserved constituency under the Koraput Lok Sabha seat in south Odisha, has witnessed a see-saw battle between the Congress and the BJD over the years. Traditionally, a Congress stronghold, it was claimed

by the BJD's Rabi Narayan Nanda in 2000. In 2014 and 2019, the seat returned to Congress with the election of its candidate Tara Prasad Bahinipati. Confident of a hat trick, Bahinipati emphasized the development works undertaken, during his tenure, promising a continuation of progress and peace in the constituency. "In past 10 years, Jeypore has witnessed a surge in development activities. Among them are the Jeypore airport, university status to Vikram Dev College, integrated sports complex, 300-bed district headquarters hospital, etc," said Bahinipati. More importantly people have lived in peace, he added.

He expressed optimism about retaining the seat. BJD's Indira Nanda, wife of Rabi Narayan Nanda, who had lost to Bahinipati in 2014 and 2019, still remains a strong contender despite previous defeats. She criticized Bahinipati's leadership, accusing him of leaving Jeypore in a state of stagnation. "The BJD is poised to reclaim the constituency, banking on promises of renewed development and responsive governance," Indira said, adding the development works which Bahinipati is talking off are the work done by the BJD led Naveen Patnaik Government. Under the leadership Naveen and ST Chairman VK Pandiyani, BJD has executed

massive development work in Jeypore constituency and we are hopeful of a win this time too." Goutam Samantaray of BJP exuded confidence in the BJP's strengthened position and vowed to address the grievances of the people. "Our organisational strength has increased manifold compared to 2019 and both the BJD and Congress have neglected the peoples problem in the area. We are confident of winning at Jeypore," said Samantaray. While Independent candidate Pritish Patnaik, grandson of former Minister Raghunath Pattnaik seems to play a vital role in 2024 election.

# 'Address concerns of working street kids in manifestoes'

**Activists urge political parties**  
RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

Several street and working children, including child labourers, here have lamented that not a single political party has planned any programme to address their needs and concerns in their poll manifestoes. They have asked leaders to focus on the underprivileged children to meet their survival, development and protection requirements. According to sources, hundreds of child labourers, working and street children are living in the coastal dis-

tricts. "The working and street children contribute a huge portion of the State's workforce; however, during more than seven and a half decades of democracy, these ill-fated children have been consistently neglected," lamented social activist Sagar Jena. The reason behind this is that they cannot directly influence the vote bank of the parties for which none of the political leaders consider their issues seriously. But one should remember that they are the future of the country, added Jena. Several NGO and social activists of the district, who are working for the particular mass in these parts, are going to give

a memorandum by appealing to the leaders, who are in the poll fray this time, to consider working children's concerns. Though education has been made a fundamental right, the quality of education in schools has to be improved rather than good buildings with all existing facilities, the activists said. It is a known fact that in many primary schools, teachers bunk their classes and during exams openly dictate the answers to cover their failure to teach the syllabus. The social activists urged the leaders of different political parties to sensitise local communities to be vigilant to any discrimi-

nation and ill-treatment against domestic workers. Moreover, the street and working children should not be denied the right to education, recreation and health facilities. No child below the age of 14 should be employed as domestic help and there should be some regulations for the agencies instrumental in getting children from villages and placing them as domestic help in cities, they said. Alleviating harassment and torture meted out to children by the police under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000, the activists wanted leaders to amend it to make it more child-friendly.

# BJP questions Rahul knowledge, standing to debate against Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday made light of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's readiness for a debate with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it questioned his knowledge of issues and his standing, noting that he is neither the president of his party nor the leader of the Opposition. Making this assertion in a news conference here BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi also took a swipe at Rahul Gandhi over his claim that the Opposition INDIA bloc will win the Lok Sabha polls, saying someone who could not file his nomination from Amethi is speaking about forming government at the Centre. "Phenomenon thy name is Rahul Gandhi," he said mockingly. Trivedi asked that in what capacity Rahul is looking to debate with Modi as he is merely an MP of his party. In the Congress, one MP heads a yatra while its leaders in both the Houses of Parliament stand behind him. While Mallikarjun Kharge is its president, Rahul's posters are visible, he said, jeering at the opposition party.



Some prominent citizens, including a former Supreme Court judge, had recently written to Modi and Rahul, urging them to engage in a public debate on the Lok Sabha elections. The former Congress president said he was ready for such a debate and claimed that the prime minister would not agree to it. Targeting Rahul, Trivedi told reporters that he recently dragged the issue of upper castes and Dalit representation while speaking about IITs, which, the BJP leader said, were set up by Jawaharlal Nehru in collaboration with different foreign countries. Whether one can debate with him can be understood with the level of his knowledge on

leader alleged that Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole had insulted President Droupadi Murmu, who comes from a tribal community, with his comments that the Ram mandir will be purified once the opposition comes to power. Patole had accused Modi of violating religious protocol in the temple's inauguration. Trivedi said his comments have come soon after Murmu has visited the temple. It is a deep insult of Murmu and has brought forth the malice the Congress has for the deprived community, he alleged. With Patole referring to the critical remarks of some Shankaracharyas about the inauguration ceremony, Trivedi said all religious leaders drawn from across the country had supported the demand for a Ram temple at a "Dharam Sansad" in 1989 and that one of the persons chosen for the "shilanyas" ceremony was a Dalit. The Congress opposed these developments, he added. It is organisations with similar ideological bent as the BJP which worked to promote and preserve the culture and traditions of the disadvantaged communities, Trivedi said.

# EC responded to my letter to INDIA Block, ignored my complaints: Kharge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday said it is surprising that the Election Commission (EC) chose to respond to a letter he wrote to INDIA Bloc leaders but ignored several other complaints he raised directly to it. In a letter addressed to the CEC and other election commissioners, he said the poll panel is showing no urgency in dealing with "blatantly communal and casteist" statements being made by leaders of the ruling party and this is puzzling. In response to the letter written by Kharge to INDIA bloc leaders expressing concerns over EC's delay in releasing voter turnout figures for first two phases of polls, the Commission had on Friday called it an attempt to push a biased narrative under the guise of seeking clarifications. Kharge, in his response, said it was an open letter clearly addressed to the alliance partners and not to the Commission. "It is surprising that the Election Commission of India



wanted to respond to this letter while ignoring several other complaints given directly to it. I have certain misgivings about the language of the letter, but I will not press on that issue as I understand the pressures they are working under," Kharge said in his letter sent to the EC on Saturday. He said the EC letter on the one hand says the Commission respects citizens' right to ask questions and on the other hand, "threatens citizens in the form of an

advise to exercise caution". The Congress chief also said he is puzzled by the need to write that the Commission is "not legally bound to publish any voter turnout data at aggregate level of a constituency or state", even though it is factual. The Election Commission in its statement had dubbed Kharge's letter an "aggression on the vitals of live conduct of elections". In a five-page response with a series of annexures, the poll panel rejected charges of mismanagement and delay in the release of voter turnout data in the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections and termed Kharge's allegations "unwarranted", "without facts" and "reflective of a biased and deliberate attempt to spread confusion". In his letter to INDIA bloc leaders, Kharge had said "apart from the delay, the voter turnout data released by the Commission does not mention crucial yet related figures, such as the votes polled in each parliamentary constituency and in the respective assembly constituencies". He also said if the voter turnout data was published within 24 hours of voting along with the crucial figures, then people would have known if the increase of "5 per cent" had been witnessed across constituencies or only in constituencies where the ruling regime had not performed well in the 2019 elections. Opposition leaders had also met the EC top brass on Friday and raised the issue of voter turnout figures and the complaints given by them on various incidents of model code violation by ruling party leaders.

# Congress has soft approach towards terrorism: Sitharaman

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday attacked the Congress, saying the approach of the party towards terrorism has been "soft". "You saw it during the ten years of UPA rule led by the Congress how terror attacks were tolerated... Proper response was not given," the senior BJP leader here said. "They believed in sending dossiers to Pakistan to the extent that you will recall that handlers of the Mumbai attack are still not punished," she said after an interaction with youths from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana here. "So, the attitude and approach of the Congress party towards terror has always been weak and soft," Sitharaman said. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the Congress of not taking swift action after the 26/11 terror attacks over fears that their "vote bank" will shift. He also said the people of Jammu and Kashmir have



struggled for decades because of the Congress' "weak mindset". "India will never forget the times when the country used to suffer frequent terrorist attacks and the Congress leaders would sit with the perpetrators of terrorism," he said. During her interaction with youths, Sitharaman answered various questions including on her journey to the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and how she could not complete her PhD as she took up a job overseas. She also talked about the

# BJP will win all four LS seats in Himachal: Thakur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ SHIMLA/NEW DELHI

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Saturday said the BJP will hit a four and six in Himachal Pradesh by winning all the four Lok Sabha seats and bypolls in six Assembly constituencies in the State. Thakur, the BJP candidate from Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat, said that people were happy with the performance of the BJP led government at the Centre and wanted to make Narendra Modi the prime minister for the third term. "We constructed the Ram Mandir, the Congress says it will build a mosque. The opposition parties said that they would crush Sanatan and equated it with HIV Aids and malaria," Thakur said addressing a huge gathering at Gandhi Chowk in Hamirpur. "Like the Mughals and Britishers came and left, the Congress is also going. Sanatan tha, sanatan hai and sanatan rahega," he added. Thakur said the Congress says Pakistan has nuclear bomb, but the truth is that Islamabad is struggling for



food as the grand old party is struggling for votes. "We defeated Pakistan in 1965, 1971 and the Kargil war and if Pakistan would raise eye on India we will not take time to raise it to the ground," said Thakur and dubbed the Congress as Pakistan stating that it would be defeated again. They say that Pakistan is "not wearing bangles" and let me tell you that our sisters who wear bangles and carry AK-47 rifles have the guts to

kill infiltrators," he added. Thakur said the BJP never changed its ideology and kept its promise. The BJP leader said the people of the country ousted the "corrupt" Congress in 2014 and made a tea seller Narendra Modi the country's prime minister. Launching a scathing attack on the Congress government in the state, Thakur said that 15 months have passed but Rs 1,500 per month as promised by the party on the eve of the last assembly polls has neither been deposited in the banks of the women nor it will be deposited and accused it of cheating the public. He asked the youth whether they got five lakh jobs as promised or not and whether the Congress government bought milk for Rs 100 per litre and cow dung for Rs 2 per kg or not. Thakur, the BJP candidate from Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat, said the love of his people is his earning of 20 years. Former chief ministers Prem Kumar Dhumal and Jai Ram Thakur shared the stage with Thakur along with state BJP chief Rajeev Bindal and state party in-charge Saudan Singh. Jai Ram Thakur, the Leader of Opposition, said that the results would be announced on June 4 but the people have already expected Modi as the prime minister and Anurag Thakur will win from Hamirpur with a margin of over five lakhs. Bindal exhorted the party workers to go to every household to ensure the BJP's victory. Earlier, Anurag Thakur took out a massive roadshow 'Vijay Sankalp Yatra' in Hamirpur district and said the enthusiasm of the people clearly suggests that they have made up their mind to vote for the BJP. Thakur, a four time MP from Hamirpur, started his programme in the early morning hours and visited the Kuldevi -Awahdevi temple to seek blessings for himself and the party. He also took blessings from his parents. He took out the roadshow in an open jeep from Awahdevi to Hamirpur. He also offered prayers at the Shiva temple where hundreds of local party leaders and workers were present. The BJP flags, banners and hoardings were seen all around the town. Carrying placards and photos of Thakur in their hands, the BJP workers and supporters raised slogans in support of the minister and the party. Thousands of men, women and youngsters from Una, Bilaspur, Mandi and Kangra districts also joined the procession. The procession was so large that commuters faced difficulty crossing through Hamirpur town. The roadshow was organized a day after a show of strength by the Congress after its candidate Satpal Raizada filed his nomination papers from the Hamirpur seat on Friday.

# CDS stresses need for expediting jointness process



Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan has stressed the need for expediting the jointness process to create multi domain response capable Indian armed forces. He made this assertion during the two-day "Parivartan Chintan II" held here on May 09 - 10. The event was attended by the officers from the three Services Headquarters, Department of Military Affairs, Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff and members of various sub-committees of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), mandated to oversee the initiatives undertaken to and generate novel ideas to give impetus to the ongoing process of the teraterisation. The CDS initiated the 'Chintan' on both days by addressing various committees. He

emphasized the need for expediting the progress of the initiatives as these were to pave the way to teraterisation and hence creation of a Multi Domain Response capable Indian Armed Forces. General Chauhan expressed confidence that such brainstorming would help the Armed Forces evolve into a theaterized force capable of Multi-Domain Operations and strengthen the resolve and capability to safeguard our territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Various COSC Sub-Committees gave an update on the progress of initiatives considered imperative for Jointness and Integration. There was active deliberation on the vital reforms critical towards the fruition of the goals envisioned to achieve the desired "Joint & Integrated" end state towards transformation.

# India to host Bharat Parv at 77th Cannes Film Festival for first time

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India for the first time will host a 'Bharat Parv' at the 77th Cannes Film Festival for eminent dignitaries and delegates from around the world to showcase the myriad creative opportunities in the country. At the prestigious film gala, a delegation consisting representatives from central and state governments as well as members of the industry will showcase India's creative economy in Marche du Films through a series of significant initiatives, the Information and Broadcasting ministry said on Friday. It will be for the first time that the country will host a "Bharat Parv" at the Cannes Film Festival to engage with film celebrities, filmmakers, directors, producers, buyers and sales agents from across the world and showcase the creative opportunities and a rich bank of creative talent. The official poster and trailer of the 55th India International Film Festival (IFFI), to be held in Goa on November 20 to 28, will also be unveiled at the Bharat Parv, the release stated. At the Bharat Parv, the delegation will also see the release of the "Save the Date" for the first edition of the World Audio-Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES), which will take place alongside the 55th IFFI. The Bharat Pavilion, which serves as a platform for the Indian film community to



engage in various activities, at the 77th Cannes Film Festival at 108 village International Riviera will be inaugurated on May 15 in the presence of eminent celebrities. The Pavilion will be organized by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) as industry partner. A 'Bharat Stall' will be put in the Marche du Cannes through the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The Bharat Pavilion has been designed by the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. It is christened as 'The Sutradhara' for depicting this year's theme of "Create in India". At the internationally recognised festival, several Indian movies and productions will be showcased. The highlight will be filmmaker Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light", which has been selected in the Competition section, where it will vie for the top

prize Palme d'Or. British-Indian filmmaker Sandhya Suri's "Santosh" will be showcased at the 77th edition under the Un Certain Regard section. "Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know", a short film by the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) students, has been shortlisted in the La Cinef Competitive section. Karan Kandhari's "Sister Midnight" will be screened in Directors' Fortnight and Maisam Ali's compelling "In Retreat" in L'Acid. A restored version of veteran filmmaker Shyam Benegal's 1976 film "Manthan" will be screened under Cannes Classics, a section created 20 years ago which features celebrations, restored prints and documentaries. National Award-winning cinematographer Santosh Sivan will be the recipient of the prestigious Pierre Angenieux tribute at the festival, where he will also deliver a masterclass, becoming the first Indian to be recognised with the honour.

# Sharp pain, numbness may signal nerve damage condition: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Feeling sharp, pricking pain and numbness in your hands and feet may signal a nerve damage condition, according to a study. The condition known as neuropathy can lead to falls, infection and even amputation. The findings, published in the journal Neurology, showed that even after being very common, it often goes underdiagnosed. Conducted by researchers from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, US, the study aimed to elucidate the prevalence of neuropathy and its associated risk factors, particularly in individuals with diabetes, a known risk factor for the condition. The research involved 169 participants, half of whom had diabetes. Among this group, a staggering 73% were diagnosed with neuropathy. What's more alarming is that 75% of those diagnosed had not been previously identified with the condition, underscoring the likelihood of underdiagnosis in clinical settings. One of the key findings of the study was the significant association between neuropathy and metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome, characterized by excess abdominal fat and other risk factors such as hypertension, elevated triglycerides, diabetes, and low levels

of HDL (good) cholesterol, was found to increase the risk of neuropathy more than four-fold. This highlights the intricate interplay between metabolic health and nerve function, emphasizing the need for comprehensive management of metabolic risk factors to mitigate neuropathic complications. The implications of neuropathy are profound, extending beyond mere discomfort to potentially life-threatening consequences. Individuals with neuropathy face an elevated risk of falls, infections, and even limb amputation, underscoring the urgency of early detection and intervention. Melissa A. Elafros, one of the researchers involved in the study, emphasized the critical importance of identifying and treating neuropathy promptly to prevent these adverse outcomes and improve patients' quality of life. In summary, the study underscores the pervasive nature of neuropathy, its underdiagnosis in clinical practice, and its significant association with metabolic syndrome. By elucidating these connections, the research highlights the imperative for proactive screening, comprehensive management of metabolic risk factors, and early intervention to mitigate the debilitating effects of neuropathy and enhance patient outcomes.

# Media associations ask ECI to hold press conference after every phase



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Media associations demanded on Saturday that the Election Commission (EC) hold press conferences after every voting phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. Media associations Press Club of India, Indian Women Press Corps, Press Association, Foreign Correspondents Club and Delhi Union of Journalists also asked the poll authority to release the entire election data, including the absolute number of votes cast in each phase and percentage of voting, by the next day of the polling date. "It should be noted that at press conferences, the journalists get their doubts and confusions, if any, cleared which helps them report and write error-free copy for their readers," the media associations said in a joint statement. They noted that till the 2019 general election, it was normal practice for the EC to hold press conferences after each phase of voting.

# Flash floods kill hundreds, injure many in Afghanistan, Taliban says

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

Flash floods from seasonal rains in Afghanistan have killed hundreds of people and injured a "substantial number," a Taliban official said Saturday, without giving exact figures.

The floods hit mostly the northern region of the country. The province of Baghlan bore the brunt of the deluges Friday with officials preliminary reporting at least 50 people dead and properties destroyed in multiple districts.

In neighbouring Takhar province, state-owned media outlets reported the floods killing at least 20 people. Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief spokesman for the Taliban government posted on social media platform X on Saturday, saying that "hundreds... have succumbed to these calamitous floods, while a substantial number have sustained injuries."

Mujahid underscored the provinces of Badakhshan, Baghlan, Ghor and Herat as the worst hit. He added that "the extensive devastation" has



resulted in "significant financial losses." He also said the government had ordered all available resources mobilized to rescue people, transport the injured and recover the bodies of the deceased.

The Taliban defence ministry said in a statement Saturday that the country's air force has already begun evacuating people in Baghlan and has so far

# Israel orders new evacuations in Rafah

AP ■ RAFAH

Israel ordered new evacuations in Gaza's southern city of Rafah on Saturday, forcing tens of thousands more people to move as it prepares to expand its operation and adding that it is also moving into an area in northern Gaza where Hamas has regrouped.

Israel has now evacuated the eastern third of Rafah, pushing the operation to the edges of the heavily populated central area, although Israel's move into the city has so far been short of the full-scale invasion

that it planned.

The order comes in the face of heavy international opposition and criticism. US President Joe Biden has already said he will not provide offensive weapons to Israel for Rafah, and on Friday the US said there was "reasonable" evidence that Israel had breached international law protecting civilians in the way it conducted its war against Hamas — the strongest statement that the Biden administration has yet made on the matter.

The United Nations and other agencies have warned for weeks

that an Israeli assault on Rafah, which borders Egypt near the main aid entry points, would cripple humanitarian operations and cause a disastrous surge in civilian casualties.

More than 1.4 million Palestinians — half of Gaza's population — have been sheltering in Rafah, most after fleeing Israel's offensives elsewhere. Considered the last refuge in the strip, the evacuations are forcing people to return north where areas are devastated by previous Israeli attacks. Aid agencies estimate that 110,000 had done so before

Saturday's order that adds a further 40,000 to that number. People have been displaced multiple times and there are few places left in the embattled strip to move to. Those fleeing fighting earlier this week erected new tent camps in the city of Khan Younis — which was half destroyed in an earlier Israeli offensive — and the city of Deir al-Balah, straining infrastructure.

Georgios Petropoulos, an official with the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Rafah, said humanitarian workers had no sup-

plies to help them set up in new locations. "We simply have no tents, we have no blankets, no bedding, none of the items that you would expect a population on the move to be able to get from the humanitarian system," he said.

Israeli troops have captured the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing with Egypt, forcing it to shut down. Rafah was the main point of entry for fuel. The World Food Program has warned that it will run out of food for distribution in southern Gaza by Saturday, Petropoulos said.

# Russian offensive in Kharkiv forces about 1700 civilians to evacuate

AP ■ KYIV

Renewed ground assault on Ukraine's northeast, killing and injuring several and forcing more than 1,700 civilians to evacuate from the Kharkiv region, local officials said on Saturday.

Artillery, mortar, and aerial bombardments hit more than 30 different towns and villages, leaving at least three people dead and five others injured, said Kharkiv governor, Oleh Syniehubov.

Ukraine rushed reinforcements to the Kharkiv region on Friday to hold off a Russian attempt to breach local defences, authorities said. Russian forces stepped up their bombardment of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, in late March. Friday's attack signalled a tactical switch in the war by Moscow that Ukrainian officials had been expecting for weeks. Russian military bloggers said the assault could mark the start of a Russian attempt to carve out a "buffer

zone" that President Vladimir Putin vowed to create earlier this year to halt frequent Ukrainian attacks on Belgorod and other Russian border regions. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed on Friday evening that Russian forces were expanding their operations. He also called on the country's Western allies to ensure that promised deliveries of military aid would swiftly reach the country's frontlines. "It is critical that partners support our warriors

and Ukrainian resilience with timely deliveries. Truly timely ones," he said in a video statement on X. "A package that truly helps is the actual delivery of weapons to Ukraine, rather than just the announcement of a package."

The Kremlin's forces have repeatedly sought to exploit Ukraine's shortages of ammunition and manpower as the flow of Western military aid to Kyiv has tapered off in recent months, with promised new support still yet to arrive. Ukraine previous-

ly said it was aware that Russia was assembling thousands of troops along the northeastern border, close to the Kharkiv and Sumy regions. Intelligence officials also said they had expected an attack there though Russia's most recent ground offensive had been focused on parts of eastern Ukraine farther south. While Russia's gains in the region have so far been limited, analysts at the US think tank Institute of the Study of War (ISW) described them Friday as "tactically significant."

# Pak President Zardari gets immunity in two corruption cases

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday received immunity from prosecution as a head of state in two cases of alleged corruption.

The Park Lane and Toshakhana cases were filed against him by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), the national anti-corruption watchdog. Islamabad-based Accountability Court Judge Nasir Javed Rana was hearing the cases.

The Express Tribune reported

that Zardari, 68, had sought immunity in the two cases and the judge issued a written decision on the president's petition and halted all proceedings against him.

Zaradi, co-chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was elected in March as the 14th President of Pakistan for five years.

The judge noted that the president sought immunity under Article 248 (2) of the Constitution, following which no case can be registered or action taken against the peti-

tioner.

The prosecution did not object to the president's plea, hence it was approved and case proceedings were halted until the end of Zardari's tenure as president of Pakistan, according to the written order.

The Park Lane case accused Zardari of influencing relevant authorities during his tenure as the president during his first term from 2008 to 2013 allegedly obtaining loans for his front companies and allegedly causing a loss of Rs 3.77 billion to the country.

Office of the Superintending Engineer  
3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh  
Email : sepwdpth@rediffmail.com

Letter No. : 2181 / 208C(Yata'D)-03/2024 Dated : 10/05/2024

### National Competitive E-Tender Notice

The Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of "Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand" for following works. All other information will be available online from date 15-05-2024 at 5.00 PM onward on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Earnest Money (in Lac)	Cost of Tender (in Rs.)	Validity of Tender (day)	Period of Completion (months)	Contractor's Category of Registration
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Upgradation work of Circuit House Building located in Champawat.	10.50	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	09	Category 'A' and above for Building works, in any state Govt./Govt. of India /Govt. undertaking.

PPGCL  
Regd Office: Shatabdi Bhawan, B12 & 13, Sector 4, Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301  
Plant Address: PO- Lohgara, Tehsil-Bara, Prayagraj(Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh-212107  
Phone : +91-120-6102000/6102009 CIN: U40101UP2007PLC032835

### NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited invites expression of interest (EOI) from eligible vendors for "Procurement of NDC Annual Overhauling Spares" for 3x660 MW Thermal Power Plant at Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited, Bara, Dist. Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India

Details of pre-qualification requirements, bid security, purchasing of tender document etc. may be downloaded using the URL- <https://www.ppgcl.co.in/tenders.php> Eligible vendors willing to participate may submit their expression of interest along with the tender fee for issue of bid document latest by 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.

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PPGCL  
Regd Office: Shatabdi Bhawan, B12 & 13, Sector 4, Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301  
Plant Address: PO- Lohgara, Tehsil-Bara, Prayagraj(Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh-212107  
Phone : +91-120-6102000/6102009 CIN: U40101UP2007PLC032835

### NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited invites expression of interest (EOI) from eligible vendors for "Supply, erection and commissioning of Self-Cleaning strainer (02 set) along with control panel" for 3x660 MW Thermal Power Plant at Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited, Bara, Dist. Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India

Details of pre-qualification requirements, bid security, purchasing of tender document etc. may be downloaded using the URL- <https://www.ppgcl.co.in/tenders.php> Eligible vendors willing to participate may submit their expression of interest along with the tender fee for issue of bid document latest by 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.

पंजाब एण्ड सिंध बैंक  
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Gurugram-122003 Ph.- 0124-4843537

**E-AUCTION**  
(Sale through E-Auction only)

**SALE NOTICE (SALE THROUGH E-AUCTION ONLY)**

Sale of immovable properties mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 (No.54 of 2002). Whereas, the Authorized Officers of PUNJAB & SIND BANK has taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 in the following loan account/s with our Branch with a right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for realization of Bank's dues. The sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the website: <https://www.bankeauctions.com>.

**SCHEDULE OF SALE OF THE SECURED ASSETS**

S.No.	Name of the Borrower/ Bank Branch	Demand Notice Date & Outstanding amount mentioned therein	Description of property along with name of mortgagor (Owner of property)	Status of possession (Physical or Symbolic)	Reserve Price/EMD/Bid Incremental Amount	EMD Submission Account Details (deposit through RTGS/NEFT)	Property Inspection Date & Time	The Last Date of EMD & E-Auction Date	Name & Contact N. of Authorized Officer
1.	Ushma and sanjay kumar Sector 31 Gurugram	02.08.2023 Rs.6216148.68	All Part and parcel of the immovable property bearing House No 670/28, Measuring 100 Sq. yards, Part of Khasra No. 882 Gali No 13 New Jyoti Park, Gurugram	Physical	Rs.7350000.00 Rs.7350000.00 Rs.735000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 11:00 - 11.30 AM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
2.	Ushma, sanjay kumar & RPM Aircon Sector 31 Gurugram	02.08.2023 Rs.5752457.00	All Part and parcel of the immovable property bearing House No 675/28, Measuring 100 Sq. yards, Gali No 13 Jyoti Park, Gurugram	Symbolic	Rs.7200000.00 Rs.7200000.00 Rs.720000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 11:30 - 12:00 PM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
3.	Sunita Sharma and Subhash Chander Sharma Sector 31 Gurugram	01.06.2023 Rs.1917561.36	All Part and parcel of the immovable property House No 263, Measuring 50 Sq. Yards Part of Khasra No. 8/7,26,15/19,17/4/2,123,1234,316,317 Situated at Gali No 6, Surat Nagar-II, Village- Dhawanpur, Tehsil- Kadipur, Near Bharat Communication, Gurgaon	Symbolic	Rs.2850000.00 Rs.2850000.00 Rs.285000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 12:00-12:30 PM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
4.	Padma Bista Sehgal & Bharat Deep Sehgal Gurudwara road Gurugram	04/02/2023 Rs.3143739.49	All part and parcel of built up second floor without roof rights out of built up property bearing no. 68,69 and 70, Land area measuring 100.00 sq.yds out of khasra no. 78/14, situated in the area of village Hastal and colony known as OM Vihar Extension Phase-3 Uttam Nagar, New Delhi	Symbolic	Rs.3400000.00/ Rs.3400000.00/ Rs.340000.00/	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 12:30-01:00 PM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
5.	Gulshan Kumar and Geeta Rani	03/03/2023 Rs.734952.00	All the part and parcel of the immovable property bearing House No. 273 A, khasra no.814-15 Krishna colony Gurgaon, Haryana-122001	Symbolic	Rs.4000000.00/ Rs.4000000.00/ Rs.400000.00/	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 01:00 - 01:30 PM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
6.	Jawahar Singh NO 5 NIT Faridabad	08.05.2023 Rs.641362.79	All the part and parcel of the mortgaged property bearing part of plot no 183, Measuring 51 Sq. Yards, Comprised in Rect No. 14/10/2, Mauza Gaunchi, tehsil-Ballabhgarh, disit-Faridabad	Symbolic	Rs.1900000.00 Rs.1900000.00 Rs.190000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 10:00 - 10:30 AM	SH. ROHIT BASWALA (Chief Manager); Mobile No-8607925026 Email id-ROHIT.BASWALA@PSB.CO.IN
7.	Lalita Sehgal and M/s pragya Beauty Parlour Ajronda Faridabad	07.12.2018 Rs.4503677.00	Front side First Floor Without Roof/ Terrace Rights of Build up property bearing No A-20 Area measuring 75 Sq. Yards with one car parking space in common parking area at still. Out of khasra no 945, 946, 956 to 960, situated in the area of village Nawada Colony known as OM vihar, A- Block, Uttam Nagar on Najafgarh road, New Delhi-110059	Physical	RS.3000000.00 RS.3000000.00 RS.300000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 10:00 -10:30 AM	Smt. Suman Sharma (Chief Manager) Mobile: 9899748099 Email Id:A0121@psb.co.in
8.	Shamu & Beena/ Sector 31/, Gurugram	22.06.2022/ Rs.15,76,965.17	All Part and parcel of the immovable property bearing House No 72, Measuring 58 Sq. yards comprising khasra no 88,278,179 Surat Nagar within MC area of Gurgaon	Symbolic	Rs.3100000.00 Rs.3100000.00 Rs.310000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 10:00-10:30 AM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
9.	Sh. Rajan Kumar/ Manesar	15.06.2023/ Rs.1549338.04	Residential House No. 1890/29, part of khasra no. 4669/4096/308, Gali No.17, Near Dhanuka Factory, Surat Nagar Phase-1, Gurgaon	Symbolic	Rs.3500000.00 Rs.3500000.00 Rs.350000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 10:30-11:00 AM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in

**Terms & Conditions:-**

- The e-auction is being held on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS".
- Auction sale/bidding shall only be done through "Online Electronic Mode" through Bank's approved service provider M/s C1 India Pvt. Ltd. (Tel. +91-124-4302020/21, 7291981124 / 1125 / 1126, M: +91-9813887931, Email-Delhi@c1india.com) at the web portal <https://www.bankeauctions.com>. E-auction tender document containing online e-auction bid form, declaration, general terms & conditions of online auction sale are available at portal site. This notice is also to be treated as sale notice to Borrowers and Guarantors under Rule 8 (6) Security Interest (enforcement) Rule, 2002
- The e-auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the Bank. The property is being sold with all the existing & future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the Bank. The Authorized Officer/Secured Creditor shall not be possible in any way for any third party claims/rights/dues. However, the intending bidder should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of properties put on auction and claims/rights/dues affecting the property.
- The successful bidder shall have to deposit 25% of the bid amount immediately including the earnest amount already deposited. The remaining 75% of the bid amount be deposit within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale.
- In case of default in depositing 25% of bid amount & balance 75% of the prescribed amount within the time limit as mentioned at point no. 4, the amount already deposited will be forfeited and secured asset will be resold.
- As per Income Tax Rule, TDS @rate of 1% of Auction price is payable by the successful auction purchaser, wherever applicable.

The sale shall be subject to rules/conditions prescribed under the securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of security Interest Act, 2002.

The other terms and conditions of the e-auction are published in the websites- 1. <https://www.bankeauctions.com>, 2. <https://punjabandsindbank.co.in>

Date- 12.05.2024 Place- GURGAON Authorized Officer Punjab & Sind Bank

# Measures in place to meet peak power demand in May, June: Government

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has taken adequate measures to meet the estimated 235 GW peak power demand in May and 240 GW in June, according to an official statement. "With various measures, we have been able to successfully meet the peak evening power demand of 224 GW during April 2024," the Ministry of Power on Friday.

The power demand is projected to peak at 235 GW during the day-time and 225 GW during evening hours for May and 240 GW during day-time and 235 GW during evening hours for June 2024, it said in the statement. The power ministry has estimated around 260 GW of peak demand during this summer season. Elaborating on the measures, the ministry said section 11 directions have been issued



to gas-based power plants besides coal-based units to make full capacity available for electricity generation. The optimisation of hydropower generation has made available an additional 4 GW for meeting the demand during May and June. Further, the shifting of planned maintenance and minimisation of partial and forced outages of thermal power plants have made available another 5 GW for

the summer season, the ministry said. Besides, power generated from wind is expected to increase by 4 GW to 5 GW during May and June. "With these measures in place and the current generation trend...It is expected that the power demand would be adequately met both during the day and during night hours in the summer months of May and June 2024," the statement said.

# Union Bank of India Q4 net profit rises 18 per cent on lower provisions

PTI ■ MUMBAI

State-owned Union Bank of India on Saturday reported an 18.36 per cent growth in its consolidated net profit for the March quarter to Rs 3,328 crore, helped by lower provisions. For the fiscal 2023-24, the lender reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 13,797 crore against Rs 8,512 crore in the year-ago period. In the quarter under review, its standalone net profit increased to Rs 3,311 crore from Rs 2,782 crore a year ago.



The core net interest income grew 14.38 per cent to Rs 9,437 crore on an 11.7 per cent growth in advances and widening of net interest margin to 3.10 per cent from 2.97 per cent in the year-ago period. Its managing director and chief executive A Manimekhalai told reporters that for FY25, it is aiming for a credit growth of 11-13 per cent and deposit growth to be between 9-11 per cent compared to 9.3 per cent in FY24.

It, however, expects a fall in NIMs to 2.8-3 per cent, she said, adding that the targets will be reviewed midway through the year. The non-interest income declined by over 10 per cent to Rs 4,707 crore, primarily due to halving of recoveries from written off accounts. For FY25, the bank is targeting the overall recoveries to come at Rs 16,000 crore against over Rs 18,000 crore in FY24. The overall provisions declined to Rs 3,222 crore from Rs 4,041 crore in the year-ago period. The fresh slippages increased to Rs 3,202 crore from the Rs 2,687 crore a year ago, but the final stock of gross NPAs was lower because of help coming in on recoveries, upgradation and write-offs. The bank's gross NPA ratio declined to 4.76 per cent against 7.53 per cent in the year-ago period, and Manimekhalai said it will be

targeting to close FY25 with the number under 4 per cent. The RBI's newly introduced proposals on the project finance front will not have a big impact on the bank's financials, she said, adding that the position will be "manageable" even if the draft is implemented in the present form. She said about 28 per cent of the corporate loan book is project finance loans at present, of which 68 per cent is to projects that have been completed. Also, the RBI is proposing for a phased implementation of the provisioning requirements, which will be of help. The bank has an overall pipeline of over Rs 40,000 crore, which will ensure that the credit growth aims are met, she said, adding that there is demand from sectors like data centres, real estate, steel and renewables. When asked about the tech initiatives, Manimekhalai said it is revamping its mobile app at present, and exuded confidence about not being impacted by any challenges on the technology front. The overall capital adequacy of the bank stood at 16.97 per cent, with the core buffer at 13.65 per cent. Manimekhalai said the bank will not need any new fund infusion unless there is a huge private capex improvement, which ups the demand. The bank plans to open 250-300 branches in FY25, she said.

# Eicher Motors Q4 PAT rises 18 per cent to ₹1,070 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Eicher Motors on Saturday reported an 18 per cent increase in consolidated profit after tax to Rs 1,070 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2024, driven by higher sales. The company posted a profit after tax of Rs 906 crore in the same period last year. Its total revenue rose 12 per cent to Rs 4,256 crore in the January-March quarter of FY24 compared to Rs 3,804 crore in the corresponding quarter of 2022-23, Eicher



Motors said in a statement. Royal Enfield, the two-wheeler division of the company, recorded sales of 2,27,925 motorcycles in the fourth quarter, up 6 per cent from 2,14,685 units in the year-ago period.

For fiscal 2024, the company reported a 37 per cent rise in PAT to Rs 4,001 crore against Rs 2,914 crore for FY23. The company's revenue from operations grew 14.5 per cent to Rs 16,536 crore from Rs 14,442 crore recorded in FY23. During the last fiscal, Royal Enfield's registered sales rose 9 per cent to 9,12,732 units from 8,34,895 units in 2022-23. The company said its board recommended a final dividend aggregating to Rs 1,396.41 crore at Rs 51 per share for the financial year ended March 31, 2024.

# Air India appoints SIA Engineering as partner to develop maintenance facilities

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Air India on Saturday announced it has appointed SIA Engineering Company Limited as its strategic partner for the development of its base maintenance facilities here. As part of the partnership, Air India will work closely with SIA Engineering Company Limited (SIAEC) on the planning, construction, development and operationalisation of its base maintenance facilities here, they said. In a statement, Air India said,

"Projected to be ready in 2026, the facilities will comprise both wide-body and narrow-body hangars, including associated repair shops, to support the growing Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) needs of the aircraft fleet in Air India Group." "The collaboration with SIA Engineering Company will not only help Air India become more self-reliant for the maintenance of its own fleet but it also reiterates our commitment to strengthen India's aviation infrastructure by boosting the growth of the

country's MRO industry," Campbell Wilson, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Air India, said. Air India had earlier announced setting up a state-of-the-art Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) facilities at Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru (operated by Bangalore International Airport Ltd) starting with aircraft maintenance through the development of wide-body and narrow-body aircraft hangars for all checks.

# Property brokerage firm InvestoXpert revenue up 56 per cent in FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Real estate brokerage firm InvestoXpert's revenue rose 56 per cent in the last fiscal to Rs 56 crore as it facilitated sales of properties valued more than Rs 2,000 crore on strong housing demand. Its revenue stood at Rs 36 crore in 2022-23. In a statement, Noida-based InvestoXpert said the company facilitated sales amounting to Rs 2,050 crore during the last fiscal, up 95 per cent year-on-year. The better performance in sales translated into robust revenue growth, it added. Vishal Raheja, Founder & MD of InvestoXpert said, "This achievement underscores our commitment to excellence and innovation in the real estate sector. As we look ahead, we are confident in our ability to continue this upward trajectory, with ambitious targets set for the upcoming financial year". He said the demand for luxury homes has risen significantly. Raheja said the second and fourth quarters collectively accounted for almost 70 per cent of the business, underscoring the seasonal variations in the real estate market.

# Khanij Bidesh India may acquire lithium asset in Australia this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) hopes to acquire a lithium block in Australia this year, a top official said on Saturday. KABIL, a joint venture of three PSUs to scout for mineral assets overseas, has been working in Australia for the last year, Mines secretary V L Kantha Rao said. "KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd) has the responsibility to look at other countries. We have to increase our efforts in

Australia. We will have to ensure that during this financial year, we target one more asset," Rao said at the inauguration of the registered office of KABIL here. KABIL is owned by three public sector undertakings -- National Aluminium Company Ltd (Nalco), Hindustan Copper Ltd (HCL) and Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Ltd (MECL). "I am hoping that it should be Australia because we have been working (there) for the last year," he explained.



But unlike Argentina, Australia would be a bit costly so the paid-up capital of KABIL will have to be increased. KABIL has a paid-up capital of Rs 100 crore at present. "We are authorised to go up to Rs 500 crore and I think we have approval of up to Rs 200 crore," he explained. Rao further said that target has been set to begin mining in the lithium blocks in Argentina in another two to three years. Lithium is the most

important mineral for the energy transition, a fundamental component of lithium-ion batteries, which power electric vehicles and battery energy storage systems. The government had earlier said that India would pump in about Rs 200 crore to explore and develop five lithium mines in Argentina. Argentina is part of the 'lithium triangle' along with Chile and Bolivia with more than half of the world's total lithium resources.

# PropEquity FY24 profit up 10 per cent to ₹12 crore in FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

PE Analytics Ltd, which runs real estate data platform PropEquity, has reported 10 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 11.67 crore for the last fiscal year on better income. Its net profit stood at Rs 10.6 crore in the preceding year. According to a regulatory filing on Friday, total income grew 37 per cent to Rs 44.17 crore last fiscal from Rs 32.3 crore in 2022-23. Samir Jasuja, Founder and CEO of PropEquity, said, "We have done reasonably well in FY 2024, with 10.4 per cent

growth in our profits before tax (PBT) compared to the preceding financial year. Our overall revenues also continue to rise by 37 per cent to Rs 44.1 crore." He said the valuation business vertical has performed well as revenue grew by 106 per cent since the last financial year. "We are adding new verticals in the valuation business which are auto valuations and plant and machinery valuations in FY 24-25 which will help us grow our business manifold," he said. Jasuja said the company is setting up a new firm in the Middle East in partnership

with local partners to launch its services. Along with this, he said the company would be launching two more verticals -- B2C project monitoring and developer asset management -- to boost revenue. PropEquity is an online provider of analytics, data and deal flows covering the Indian real estate industry. The company tracks over 1,73,000 projects of 57,500 developers across 44 cities in India on a real time basis. Its search platform generates analysis for all verticals under residential, commercial and retail sectors.

# India's cotton exports may rise 27 per cent in 2023-24 season: CAI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Cotton Association of India (CAI) on Saturday estimated cotton exports to rise about 27 per cent to 28 lakh bales during 2023-24 crop year ending September. In 2022-23 crop season (October-September), cotton exports were at 22 lakh bales, CAI said. One bale is equal to 170 kilogram. "The demand for Indian cotton went up as the prices ruled 8-10 per cent lower than the international prices during December 2023 till March 2024. Our cotton is mainly exported to countries like Bangladesh, China and

Vietnam," CAI President Atul Ganatra told PTI. Meanwhile, CAI pegged the cotton production for 2023-24 at 309.70 lakh bales, same as estimated in the previous month. The production is however expected to be lower than the previous season's 318.90 lakh bales. The total cotton supply till end of April 2024 is estimated at 315.86 lakh bales, which consists of pressing at 281.96 lakh bales, import of 5 lakh bales and the opening stock of 28.90 lakh bales. The estimated cotton consumption till April 2024 is 192.50 lakh bales while export is pegged at 21.50 lakh bales.

# Jaipur based entrepreneur features on Fortune's 40 Under 40 list

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Jaipur-based entrepreneur Yogesh Chaudhary, the director of Jaipur Rugs, has been included in the list of emerging leaders from India by Fortune, a statement said. Chaudhary has been included in the '40 Under 40' list, an annual list of influential young individuals under the age of 40 who changed the

course of business and economy in India. Isha Ambani, Director, Reliance Retail, Harshad Reddy, Director, Apollo Hospitals, and Akash Ambani, Chairman, Reliance Jio Infocomm, are the other young entrepreneurs who have featured on the list. Chaudhary joined the family business at 19 to assist his father, Nand Kishore

Chaudhary. He said that in 2016, Jaipur Rugs forayed into retail and now sells in more than 90 countries. "The company collaborates with designers such as Shantanu Garg and Gauri Khan. The artisanal rugs are a result of 40,000 artisans in 600 villages, out of which 80 per cent are females," he said in a release here.

# Zydus gets USFDA nod to market generic arthritis drug in US

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Zydus Lifesciences on Saturday said it has received approval from the US health regulator to market a generic medication for arthritis and other conditions in the American market. The company has received final approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) to market Dexamethasone



tablets (1mg), the drug maker said in a statement. Dexamethasone is used to treat conditions like arthritis, blood/hormone disorders, allergic reactions, skin diseases, eye problems, breathing problems, bowel disorders, cancer and immune system disorders. As per IQVIA data, Dexamethasone tablets had an annual sales of USD 1.8 million in the US.

# D2C fashion brand Powerlook aims ₹300 crore GMV this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fashion brand Powerlook looks to hit a gross merchandise value (GMV) of Rs 300 crore this financial year, clocking a more than twofold growth over the last year, a top official of the company said on Saturday. The fashion brand which markets products mainly on

leading ecommerce platforms like Myntra and Flipkart recorded a GMV of Rs 130 crore in the last financial year. GMV refers to the total value of products or merchandise sold over a certain period through a customer-to-customer exchange site. The brand also has a stronghold in the offline



market with good operating revenue, Powerlook said in a statement. Powerlook co-founder Raghav Pawar said that the brand's focus is on customer satisfaction and delivering products on time. "By prioritizing quality products and personalized shopping experiences, the brand continuously

endeavours to exceed customer expectations," he added. The men's fashion brand has maintained 35-40 per cent growth quarter-on-quarter last year, Pawar said. It witnessed a 30 per cent quarterly increase in sales and revenue. Powerlook's focused marketing campaigns,

strategic collaborations with renowned influencers, and a dynamic pricing strategy and customer retention policy have propelled growth, Pawar said. Thw brand has leveraged social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to engage with its audience and cultivate a robust online presence.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### BSES GETS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AWARD

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) has been conferred the prestigious "Women Empowerment" award at the 17th Star of the Industry Awards for its impactful community outreach programs. The award was adjudicated by a distinguished jury. BRPL's CSR initiatives have positively impacted lakhs of beneficiaries, with over 50% being women. These programs focus on empowering women across various areas like healthcare, education, skill development and sanitation BSES conducts various CSR programs across its licensed areas (South, West, East & Central Delhi), including vocational training, self-defense training for women, scholarships to students, setting-up mini science centres, Water ATMs, manufacturing and distribution of sanitary napkins.



### ANTI BRIBERY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATION



Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Maharatna CPSU under Ministry of Power, Govt. of India, has been awarded Anti-Bribery Management System (ABMS) IS/ISO 37001 certification by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in a program held on May 8, 2024 at POWERGRID Corporate Centre, Gurugram. The ABMS Certificate was handed over by Lalthan Pari, Director, Management System Certification (Central), BIS to Dharmendra Kumar Madan, Chief Vigilance Officer, POWERGRID in the august presence of Ajay Tewari, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power, Govt. of India, R K Tyagi, CMD, Abhay Choudhary, Director (Projects), G. Ravisankar, Director (Finance), Dr. Yatindra Dwivedi, Director (Personnel), Shri Ashish Tripathi, Chief Vigilance Officer, BIS, Anish Anand, Dy. CVO, POWERGRID and senior officers of POWERGRID and BIS.

### YASHODA KAUSHAMBI HOLDS PROGRAMME TO ENHANCE INDIA, AFRICA COLLABORATION

Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital-Kaushambi, in association with FICCI, organised a momentous event at Taj Maan Singh, as it hosted a gathering of distinguished Heads of Missions and Diplomats from African nations. The focus of the event was the burgeoning sector of Medical Value Travel (MVT) and its potential to foster stronger ties between India and Africa in the healthcare domain. The event was graced by Dr. PN Arora, CMD and Dr. Upasana Arora, MD of Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital, who shed light on the significance of Medical Value Travel and its implications for international patients. The event also witnessed the special felicitation of guests by Mr. P.N. Arora, welcoming the participation of countries such as Mauritius, South Africa, Kenya, Algeria, Uganda, Madagascar, Ethiopia, and many other African nations.

# Mbappé confirms he will leave PSG ahead of move to Real Madrid

AP ■ PARIS

Kylian Mbappé confirmed what the soccer world was long expecting to hear, announcing that he is leaving Paris Saint-Germain ahead of a widely expected move to Real Madrid. Mbappé said on X on Friday that his final home game for PSG will be on Sunday against Toulouse.

"I never thought it would be this difficult to leave my country," he said in the video post.

"I think I needed this, a new challenge after seven years."

An emotional-looking Mbappé gulped and paused for breath as he addressed PSG's fans.

"It's a club I will keep in my mind for my entire life. I will tell everybody I had the chance to play here."

He added, "You will stay in my heart forever," then winked and raised a thumb.

According to sports daily L'Equipe, Mbappé went to meet and dine with PSG ultras known as CUP (Paris Ultras Collective) shortly after making his announcement. They were set to discuss tributes to him at Parc des Princes on Sunday night.

After that game, French champion PSG has league games to follow at Nice and Metz. He is once more the French league top scorer, with 26 goals.

The 25-year-old Mbappé now captains France and won the World Cup in 2018, becoming the second teenager, after Pelé, to score in a World Cup final. He top-scored at the 2022 World Cup, including a rare hat trick in the final.

Mbappé joined PSG in 2017 from Monaco in a deal worth 180 million euros (USD 194 million). He is expected to be bought by 14-time Champions League winner Real Madrid.

In 2021, PSG turned down a bid of 180 million euros from Madrid for Mbappé. He renewed his contract with PSG but didn't take up the option for an extra year. Earlier this year, he told PSG he's leaving at the end of the season.

On Friday, he confirmed it.

"I wanted to announce to you all that it's my last year (season) with Paris Saint-Germain. I will not extend (my contract) and the adventure will come to an end in a few weeks," he said.

"First of all, I want to thank my teammates, all the teammates I had, all the coaches: Unai Emery, Thomas Tuchel,



Mauricio Pochettino, Christophe Galtier and Luis Enrique."

He has 255 goals for PSG, many of them featuring his trademark move: Sprinting down the left wing, cutting inside a wrong-footed defender and curling the ball into the right corner with speed and precision.

While his prolific output helped to deliver six league titles in seven years, it also often masked glaring deficiencies that were exposed at the highest level in the Champions League.

On Tuesday night, he trudged off the field when PSG went out of the semifinals of the Champions League after losing to Borussia Dortmund 1-0 in each leg.

Mbappé's departure will end the superstar era at PSG.

He arrived at the club along with Neymar, who cost a world record 222 million euros (USD 239 million). PSG was also a stop for Zlatan Ibrahimovic (156 goals for the club), Edinson Cavani (200 goals for PSG) and Lionel Messi (won his seventh of eight Ballon d'Ors).

None could win the Champions League with PSG, which has spent more than 2

billion euros (USD 2.15 billion) in transfer fees and paid massive wages. The fact Mbappé played under so many coaches also underlined the club's cash-rich Qatari owner QSI, which took over the club in June 2011.

Mbappé starred for Monaco as an 18-year-old sensation when it reached the semifinals of the Champions League seven years ago. PSG beat Madrid to his signature then, but things seem to have come full circle, and he will leave as a free transfer.

By the time Madrid likely signs him, the Spanish powerhouse may have clinched a record-extending 15th Champions League title.

Madrid plays Dortmund in the final on June 1 at Wembley, one week after Mbappé's last ever game for PSG in the French Cup final against Lyon. It wasn't the way he hoped to bow out of French club soccer.

But joining a massive club like Madrid surely gives him a better shot at winning the Ballon d'Or he so craves.

PSG has to find a new leader. After Mbappé wears the No. 7 jersey for the last time, PSG will face a huge rebuilding task without him.



## Neeraj Chopra vows to win next DL meeting after finishing close second in Doha

PTI ■ DOHA

Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra vowed to go one step ahead in the next Diamond League meeting after finishing a close second during the Doha leg here.

Chopra finished second at the Doha Diamond League as his big final effort of 88.36m fell short by just two centimeters of Jakub Vadlejch's winning effort on Friday night.

The 26-year-old Chopra trailed the veteran Czech — who won the title with his third throw of 88.38m — throughout the competition.

Chopra, taking part in his first competition of the season, made a last ditch effort but the Indian superstar failed to defend the title.

Two-time world champion Anderson Peters took the third sport with a throw measuring 86.62m.

"The most important competition for me this year is Paris Olympics, but Diamond League meetings are

important too. This was the opener for me this season, I finished second with a narrow two centimetre margin but next time I will try to draw far and try to win," Chopra said.

The next Diamond League meeting which has men's javelin as a discipline will be held in Paris on July 7.

Chopra also thanked the Indian diaspora in Qatar for supporting him.

"The support I am getting from the Indian people here in Qatar is always amazing, there aren't words enough for me to thank them for their support.

"Maybe in some years the Indian will throw really far! I feel really proud that I am an Indian."

At each DL meeting, athletes are awarded 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1 points for ranking first to eighth respectively.

The top six javelin throwers will compete in the Diamond League Finals in Brussels on September 13-14 and the winner will lift the DL champion's trophy.

## Strong technical training will help India get good results in Paris: archery coach Kim Hyung Tak

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After sealing a historic World Cup gold recently, the Indian archers, who are undergoing "strong technical training," can land a maiden Olympic gold medal in Paris, reckoned renowned coach and mentor Kim Hyung Tak.

Dhiraj Bommadevara is the lone Indian to seal the Paris 2024 quota place for India in archery so far.

"The Indian recurve team is undergoing very strong technical training. This will definitely help get good results in the Olympics," Kim said after conducting a coaches' seminar at the Sports Authority of India's National Centre of Excellence in Sonapat.

"By keeping this consistency in training and preparation, I think it is very much possible to get a medal in Paris," he added.

The Indian recurve archers are striving for a team quota in the final qualification tournament to be held in Antalya, Turkey from June 14 to 17.

The hopes are quite high after the Indian team of Bommadevara, Tarundeep Rai and Pravin Jadhav shocked reigning Olympic champions South Korea to clinch a World Cup gold after 14 years in Shanghai on April 28.

Kim, who also supervised a two-day national team preparatory camp at Sonapat, said the constant training has helped the side raise its standards.

"The average level of the team has got a notch higher because of the talented men's and women's recurve team here.



"The frequent coaching camps by SAI and Archery Association of India too are contributing to the cause," said Kim, who led the Korean women's recurve team to its first Olympic gold at the Los Angeles Games in 1984.

Giving an insight into the training programme at SAI, Kim said the synergy between different departments has given the archers a fresh momentum.

"Since I've come here, I've seen more high level and detailed training provided to the archers. The training programmes, which use a lot of technology, are also very well-crafted.

"The coaches are continuously mentoring the archers on managing training schedules to training times. The

psychology team is also working around the clock and good mentoring is being provided as a whole," he said.

Kim, who has the experience of working with over 500 archers from across 30 nations, said the senior Indian archers have been lending a helping hand to the budding stars.

"There are many young archers. The experienced heads like Deepika (Kumari) and Tarundeep are guiding them. This helps a lot in team building and this is very important in the build-up to the Paris Games," noted Kim, who had a special session with three-time Olympian Deepika, who is trying to punch her ticket to Paris riding on some strong performances after motherhood.

Djokovic says he's "fine" after

being hit on the head by a water bottle

Rome, (AP) Novak Djokovic said he was "fine" after accidentally getting knocked on the head by a water bottle after a win at the Italian Open. A man was leaning over the railing to hand Djokovic a notebook for a signature and an aluminum-type water bottle fell out of his backpack and hit the top-ranked player on the top of his head on Friday.

"Thank you for the messages of concern. This was an accident and I am fine resting at the hotel with an ice pack," Djokovic posted on X.

"See you all on Sunday."

After getting hit, Djokovic placed both of his hands on his head and then curled up on the ground as a security guard shielded him. Then he was

helped down the tunnel into the locker room.

Djokovic had a bump on his head and he was checked by doctors, tournament organizers said. He did not hold his usual post-match news conference.

"While leaving center court after his match, Novak Djokovic was hit on the head by a water bottle while signing autographs. He received medical attention and has already left the Foro Italico to return to his hotel. His condition is not a cause for concern," organisers said in a statement.

Djokovic had a bit of blood on his head but did not require stitches, Italian Tennis Federation spokesman Alessandro Catapano said.

"He was upset, but he seems OK," Catapano said.

"We're also very upset about what happened and we are trying to figure out who it was and understand the dynamics. The police came and asked for information but the person who did it had already left," Catapano added.

"We're going through all of the video and camera angles to see if we can determine what exactly happened."

The incident occurred shortly after Djokovic's 6-3 6-1 win over French qualifier Corentin Moutet in his opening match. The 24-time Grand Slam champion was returning after nearly a month off. Djokovic has a day off before his next scheduled match at the clay-court tournament on Sunday.

The 36-year-old Serb is preparing to defend his title at the French Open, which starts May 26.

## Minor stakeholder Thierry Henry on hand to see Como promoted to Serie A

AP ■ COMO (ITALY)

Thierry Henry was in the stadium to see his investment in Como pay off when the Italian second-tier club won promotion to Serie A.

Como, coached by Henry's former Arsenal teammate Cesc Fabregas, drew with Cosenza 1-1 on Friday to clinch second place in Serie B and end a 21-year absence from the top tier. Leader Parma already sealed promotion.

Henry, the France great who will coach its men's under-23 team at the Paris Olympics, bought a stake two years ago in Como, which plays in a picturesque lakeside stadium about 50 kilometers (30 miles) north of Milan.

Como could replace Frosinone in Serie A after the latter lost to Serie A champion Inter Milan 5-0.

With two weeks of the season remaining, six teams are still hoping to avoid joining Salernitana in the second tier. Frosinone is 16th on the 20-team table, two points above the relegation zone. It has two games left, while teams above and below it have three. The result ended Frosinone's six-game unbeaten run.

Davide Frattesi scored Italy's first-half opener and Marko Arnautovic made it 2-0 after an hour. Canadian midfielder Tajon Buchanan got the third with his first goal for the club.

Lautaro Martinez's left-foot shot was his 24th goal of the league.

## Two time defending champ Stricker takes second round lead at Regions Tradition over Ernie Els

AP ■ BIRMINGHAM (US)

Two-time defending champion Steve Stricker birdied the final two holes for a 7-under 65 and a one-shot lead over Ernie Els after the second round of the Regions Tradition, the first of five PGA Tour Champions majors.

Stricker, who has won three of the last four times at Greystone, had four birdies and a pair of bogeys over the first six holes before overtaking Els at the end on Friday.

A six-time winner last year, he's seeking his first this season and got his wish of being in the final group for what he predicted "should be a fun weekend." Stricker said he's not dwelling on the chance for a three-peat. "I enjoy it here. I feel good going around here," he said.

"I'm just trying to, you know, that old cliché of just taking one shot, one hole at a time kind of thing. So continue that with (Saturday)." A World Golf Hall of Famer, Els shot a 68 in the second round. He was part of a six-way tie for first upon Round 1's completion earlier in the day after play was halted because of bad weather on Thursday.

Els had four birdies and still hasn't had a bogey over the first 36 holes to stay up with Stricker.

"Steve Stricker is obviously the king around here at the moment," Els said. "He's won three or four times. He's got the tournament record so probably playing with him (Saturday) so I need to keep the pace up with Steve and try and make him work hard for this one. He's always got a lot of momentum on this course, but at least we're heading in a good direction."



Steve Flesch, who had one bogey, moved to 10 under with a birdie on 18 for a 69. He is a four-time winner on the 50-and-over circuit but hasn't finished better than 25th in seven events this year. "I tried to be patient with how the year has been going on, but the golf hasn't been as bad as maybe where I am on the Schwab Cup list indicates," said Flesch, who came in ranked 65th.

"So maybe this will be a nice kickstart for me to get my year going a little bit, but I'm just I'm just glad I've kind of played two decent rounds and heading into the weekend with a chance."

Charlie Wi and Pdraig Harrington were 9 under. Wi shot a 69, making two bogeys on par 5s but closing on No. 18 with his fifth birdie of the round. The South Korean has two runner-up finishes but no victories in 33 PGA Tour Champions events.

Harrington had a more up and down day, overcoming four bogeys for a 70.

## Bhaker, Bhanwala stay on course for top finish at Olympic Selection Trials

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Olympian Manu Bhaker and Anish Bhanwala stayed on course for a top finish at the Olympic Selection Trials (OST) for rifle/pistol, shooting solid scores in qualification rounds of their respective events here on Saturday.

Taking aim at the M.P.State Shooting Academy range, Anish topped the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol event with a score of 587, while Manu came third in the women's 25m pistol shooting 585 to maintain the top rank among the five shooters in each event.

The finals are scheduled for Sunday where there are crucial podium points to be won by the five qualified shooters.

In the women's pistol, Rhythm Sangwan, after having two ordinary outings by her standards in Delhi, bounced back with a top score of 586, while Simranpreet Kaur Brar continued an inspired run to pip Manu to second on inner 10s with a 585. Esha Singh



(579) was fourth while Abhidnya Ashok Patil (575) was fifth.

This means that whatever happens in the finals, Manu would go into the fourth trial with at least a four-point cushion over her nearest competitor.

The fight for the second spot is currently very tight between Esha, Rhythm and Simranpreet. Bhanwala too is assured of a two-point cushion over her nearest challenger in the men's RFP.

Vijayveer Sidhu and Bhavesh Shekhawat are in a close fight for second with the former edging it currently, with Adarsh and Ankur seemingly looking out of it.

## Anderson to retire after Lord's Test against West Indies

PTI ■ LONDON

Legendary pacer James Anderson on Saturday announced that the first Test against the West Indies this summer will be his final appearance for England, bringing down the curtains on an illustrious career spanning over 20 years.

Regarded as one of the greatest bowlers of all times, the 41-year-old is England's leading wicket-takers and is one of only three bowlers to take over 700 Test scalps.

"Hi everyone. Just a note to say that the first Test of the summer at Lord's will be my last Test," Anderson wrote on his Instagram.

"It's been an incredible 20 years representing my country, playing the game I've loved since I was a kid. I'm going to miss walking out for England so much.

"But I know the time is right to step aside and let others realise their dreams just like I got to, because there is no greater feeling," he added.



Anderson's announcement comes after England red-ball coach Brendon McCullum conveyed to the seamer that they are looking at the future, with an eye on the Ashes 2025-26 in Australia.

Anderson made his Test debut back in 2003 and has since claimed a remarkable 700 wickets in 187 Test matches. He currently ranks third on the all-time list of Test wicket-takers, trailing behind spinners Muttiah Muralitharan of Sri Lanka and Australia's Shane Warne.

However, whether Anderson will continue playing for his county side Lancashire remains unclear.

"I couldn't have done it without the love and support of Daniella, Lola, Ruby and my parents. A huge thank you to them. Also, thank you to the players and coaches who have made this the best job in the world."

"Thank you to everyone who has supported me over the years, it's always meant a lot, even if my face often doesn't show it. See you at the Test, Go well Jimmy x," Anderson wrote.

England are set to play a three-Test series against the West Indies, starting with the opener at Lord's on July 10.



# In form RCB eye fifth win in a row against Pant-less DC

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Pushed into a tight corner, Royal Challengers Bengaluru rose above their frailties to notch four wins on the trot to stay alive in the race to play-offs, but Delhi Capitals even sans their suspended skipper Rishabh Pant offer them a different challenge in the IPL match here on Sunday.

Pant was suspended for one match and handed a fine of Rs 30 lakh for maintaining slow over rate against Rajasthan Royals at Delhi on May 7.

It was DC's third offence of the season; hence the suspension came in vogue immediately leading to Pant missing the match against RCB.

While the absence of Pant will certainly give RCB an edge, they can't get themselves lulled into a comfort zone.

In the run-up to this match, RCB defeated Gujarat Titans twice, Punjab Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad once

each. While the victory over SRH was valiant, RCB did not face much challenge from the floundering Titans and Kings. But the Capitals are a team unlike any other as they have oscillated between brilliant and ordinary in the span of a few days.

On April 27, the Pant-led side posted a hefty 257/4 in their 10-run win over Mumbai Indians and on April 29, they made a lowly 153/9 while capitulating against Kolkata Knight Riders.

The RCB, currently seventh with 10 points from 12 matches, will desperately hope not to run into that brilliant Capitals as a defeat can undo their good work in the last four matches.

But their confidence will be high, courtesy strong and consistent batting effort led by talisman Virat Kohli.

Kohli is the leading run-getter in this IPL with 634 runs but, more importantly, those runs

have come at a brisk rate of 153, giving RCB early momentum while setting or chasing targets.

Along with Kohli, additional runs from skipper Faf du Plessis, Rajat Patidar, Cameron Green and Dinesh Karthik have provided their bowlers, who have responded to the call splendidly, with a cushion.

The transformation of RCB bowlers in the last four matches have been nothing short of remarkable.

Mohammed Siraj has found his mojo after a 10-day break, and he has received excellent backing from fellow pacer Yash Dayal and left-arm spinner Swapnil Singh.

After the match against PBKS, the overall run-rate of Siraj (9.4) and Dayal (9) have gone under 10 for the first time this season, not a mean feat in a tournament where runs were scored at a breakneck pace.

Their skills will be tested first by Jack Fraser-McGurk, who has teed off to make 309 runs



from seven matches at an impressive strike-rate of 235.87.

McGurk took the opener's slot once David Warner - 167 runs from 7 matches at a strike rate

of 135 - had to sit out with an injury, and he has not made the absence of the veteran felt even once.

His opening partner Abhishek Porel too has made runs at 157

strike rate, though the DC management will be happier to see him adding more consistency to his game.

Pant and Tristan Stubbs too have been among runs made at

a fair clip but now without the skipper the DC middle-order will further lean on Stubbs for momentum.

But in the bowling department, DC will feel that they might have a slight edge. Spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel have been thrifty while sharing 24 wickets among them as they have maintained economy rates of 8.2 and 7.3 respectively - gold dust while others have gone above 10.

Their combined eight overs will have a massive say in the match, as the wrist-spinner and his left-arm comrade will have to contain the free-flowing RCB batters in the middle phase.

If pacers Khaleel Ahmed (14 wickets, 9.68) and Mukesh Kumar (15 wickets, 10.94) can inflict some blows upfront, DC can hope to contain the home side.

**TEAMS (FROM):**  
**Royal Challengers Bengaluru:** Faf du Plessis (c),

Glenn Maxwell, Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar, Anuj Rawat, Dinesh Karthik (wk), Suyash Prabhudessai, Will Jacks, Mahipal Lomror, Karn Sharma, Manoj Bhandage, Mayank Dagar, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Akash Deep, Mohammed Siraj, Reece Topley, Himanshu Sharma, Rajan Kumar, Cameron Green, Alzarri Joseph, Yash Dayal, Tom Curran, Lockie Ferguson, Swapnil Singh, Saurav Chauhan.

**Delhi Capitals:** Prithvi Shaw, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Abhishek Porel, Shai Hope, Rishabh Pant (wk/c, suspended and unavailable), Sumit Kumar, Tristan Stubbs, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mukesh Kumar, Ishant Sharma, Khaleel Ahmed, Kumar Kushagra, Praveen Dubey, Lalit Yadav, Lizaada Williams, David Warner, Jhye Richardson, Anrich Nortje, Yash Dhull, Mitchell Marsh, Ricky Bhui, Rasikh Dar Salam, Vicky Ostwal, Swastik Chikara.



## CSK look to rekindle playoffs hopes against a strong but hurt RR

PTI ■ CHENNAI

In need of a win to firm-up their position in the IPL playoff race, Chennai Super Kings have the heavy task of nullifying a deeply hurt and frustrated Rajasthan Royals here on Sunday.

Let's take a quick assessment of the two protagonists' situations. The Super Kings are currently fourth in the standings with 12 points from as many games but the defeat against Gujarat Titans on Friday has added dollops of pressure on them, and now they need victory in their remaining two matches.

The Royals, on the other hand, are second with 16 points but they are smarting from two successive defeats against Sunrisers Hyderabad, which was by just a run, and Delhi Capitals.

They are in no real danger of missing the playoff spot, but the Sanju Samson-led side will be eager to return to the winning ways at the earliest and enter the knockouts.

What had hurt CSK against GT was the malfunction of their top-order consisting Ajinkya Rahane, Rachin Ravindra and skipper Rituraj Gaikwad and they would be desperate to regain the momentum in Chepauk.

Ravindra might be given another go against Royals, but it could be a make-or-break situation for him.

Although it was pleasing to see Daryl Mitchell and Moeen Ali among runs, Shivam Dube, who has been CSK's bulwark this season, has gone silent ever since he was selected to the Indian team for the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Having scored a 13-ball 21 against GT, he has twin causes to fire — to justify his selection for the World Cup and carry his team closer to the playoffs.

As for the CSK's bowling, Tushar Deshpande once again fired against GT while Shardul Thakur surprised all with his economical outing.

However, the Chennai bowlers are expected to buckle up and do well in this fixture at home, their strong area.

The low amount of dew in this afternoon clash might help CSK spinners.

On the other hand, desperate to end the losing streak, Rajasthan could not have asked for a more suitable opponent than an unsteady CSK.

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has not been at his best this season, will be desperate to prove his mettle before travelling to the Americas for the T20 World Cup.

## GT can make it to play offs, miracles do happen: Skipper Gill

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill is Goptimistic about sneaking into the IPL play-offs, even though odds are heavily against them despite the 35-run win over Chennai Super Kings here. Gill (104 off 55b) and B Sai Sudharsan (103 off 51b) notched up destructive centuries to propel GT to 231/3 and then restricted the defending champions to 196/8 to stay alive in the play-off race. The win lifted GT from the bottom of the table to the eighth spot. They have 10 points from 12 games, while CSK remained fourth with 12 points.

"The chances of us qualifying was 0.1 or 1 per cent. I think all of us, all 25-30 of us, believe that we can still make it into the play-offs."

"Because I have seen miracles happen with this team in the past couple of years and we all do believe in that," Gill said in the post-match press conference on Friday night.

Gill, however, felt that GT were some runs short despite piling up a huge total.

"When I got out, I was a bit frustrated. I thought as a batting unit, we left 10-25 runs out there. At one point we were 195/0 in 15 overs, so I thought that 250 was a pretty gettable score and I was thinking about that."

"It is as satisfactory as any hundred. We lost our last three games and it was important for us to win this one and that is what me and Sai were



discussing. We were trying to maximise every opportunity and every challenge that was thrown at us."

The young skipper also had words of appreciation for his opening partner Sudharsan.

"Last year he (Sudharsan) missed a hundred in the final, having come back and the way he played in the middle overs is exceptional."

"He is someone who works very hard on his game and for someone like him to be able to execute those shots was just magnificent," Gill said.

Talking about the talismanic Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who played a 11-ball 26-run cameo with three sixes, and his fan following, Gill said, "Wherever Mahi bhaji plays, it is their (CSK) home ground, so nothing different with that."

"But at least, when we were scoring, people were cheering for us and when we visited Chepauk, it was complete silence when we hit boundaries or took a wicket," he concluded.

## Calm under pressure Sudharsan needs to be spoken about more: Smith, Moody

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

B Sai Sudharsan broke away from the mould of anchor with a brilliantly crafted hundred against Chennai Super Kings, and the "calm under pressure" demeanour of the Gujarat Titans' opener has left stalwarts Graeme Smith and Tom Moody impressed.

Till the match on Friday, Sudharsan struck runs at a moderate strike rate of 131.67 while coming at No. 3, but the promotion to the opener's slot seemed to have liberated him.

Against CSK, the Tamil Nadu left-hander made 103 off 51 balls (5x4s, 7x6s) and his strike-rate read 201.96.

Smith said Sudharsan should be given more opportunities.

"Sudharsan is so under the radar, he is the leading run-scorer for GT this season, the fastest Indian to a thousand IPL runs with a difference of six innings. He needs to start being spoken about a bit more," said Smith on JIO Cinema.



Former Australian all-rounder and a revered coach Tom Moody praised Sudharsan for maintaining his composure in the match against a tough opponent.

"The way this young player goes about his business is a joy to watch. He seems so calm under pressure. He seems to have the right answers at the right time."

"He knows when to go big to look for that boundary to take pressure out of an over and he seems to be able to keep pace with the game," Moody told Star Sports Cricket Live show.

Former South Africa skipper Smith lauded the partnership between Sudharsan and Shubman Gill that was worth 210 runs, joint highest for the opening wicket this season.

"The partnership was excellent, left-hand-right-hand combination, they ran between the wickets well; they picked their targets, and their matchups were just outstanding," he added.

Moody also underscored the importance of the alliance between Gill and Sudharsan.

"The partnership was nothing short of extraordinary. They complemented each other exceptionally well, evident in their visible enjoyment on the field, as Gill expressed during the post-match presentation."

"This camaraderie is crucial for any backing and partnership," added Moody.

## Pant to miss RCB game due to suspension for slow over-rate

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant will miss Sunday's crucial match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru after he was handed a one-match suspension for maintaining a slow over-rate for the third time this IPL season.

Pant was also fined Rs 30 lakh for the Code of Conduct breach that took place during DC's 20-run win against Rajasthan Royals on May 7 here.

DC were 10 minutes behind time at the start of the final over in that game.

"Mr Rishabh Pant, Captain, Delhi Capitals has been fined has been fined and suspended for one match for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct after his team maintained a slow over-rate against Rajasthan Royals at the Arun Jaitley



Stadium, Delhi on May 07, 2024," an IPL statement read. The Capitals had been found guilty of maintaining slow over rates against Chennai Super Kings (March 31) and Kolkata Knight Riders (April 3) earlier in the season.

"As it was his team's third offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences,

Rishabh Pant was fined INR 30 lakh and suspended for one match."

All other DC players were also penalised.

"The rest of the members of the Playing XI, including the Impact Player, were each individually fined either INR 12 lakh or 50 per cent of their respective match fees, whichever is lesser."

DC filed an appeal challenging this ruling of the match referee which was referred to the BCCI Ombudsman for review. The Ombudsman conducted a virtual hearing and stated that the decision of the match referee is final and binding.

"As per Article 8 of the IPL Code of Conduct, the Delhi Capitals filed an appeal challenging the ruling of the Match Referee. Following this, the appeal was referred to the BCCI Ombudsman for review."



## High calibre batting from Gill, Sudharsan disrupted our plans: CSK coach Fleming

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming said the defending champions were undone by the "high calibre" batting effort of Gujarat Titans' openers — skipper Shubman Gill and B Sai Sudharsan — during their 35-run defeat in an IPL match here.

Gill (104 off 55b) and Sudharsan (103 off 51b) notched up destructive centuries in an opening stand of 210 runs to propel GT to 231/3 and then restricted the defending champions to 196/8 to stay alive in the play-off race.

The win lifted GT from the bottom of the table to the eighth spot. They have 10 points from 12 games, while CSK remained fourth with 12 points.

"It was a good onslaught and the batting was of the highest calibre. Right from the first over they disrupted our plans. It wasn't till the latter stages we got some control," Fleming said at the post-match press conference on Friday night.

"We didn't execute as well as we could but the other part was the sublime batting from two very good players."

The former New Zealand captain praised Sudharsan for

his effort.

"In the final last year, he (Sudharsan) played beautifully, he got 96. I have watched him closely, he has got good connections around the Chennai area. He is a wonderful player and today he proved that," Fleming said CSK were put under immense pressure by the onslaught of GT openers, resulting in errors in bowling and fielding.

"We were a little bit handicapped by the absence of some players. The players who were playing today did really well in the last game, so the confidence was high."

PTI ■ CHENNAI

With the sheer momentum they had in the first half of IPL 2024, Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Donovan Ferreira said on Saturday the team should have qualified for the playoffs by now but with three more games still remaining, the side had a great chance to make the top-two. The Royals, who were leading the IPL table till just a few days back, have slipped to second spot following two consecutive defeats and would be desperate to get back to winning ways when they take on defending champion Chennai Super Kings here on Sunday.

"We should have already qualified for the playoffs by now. But, the IPL is a long tournament, and obviously, the second half is important," said Ferreira during a pre-match press conference here on Saturday.

The Royals are currently on 16 points, the same as leaders Kolkata Knight Riders but the latter have a far superior net run rate. "We had set out nicely by winning most of the games in the first half, and this game (against CSK) is quite important. We have three games left, but we don't want to leave it too late and put pressure on ourselves," he added.

After they play CSK on Sunday, Royals have games against Punjab

## RR should have qualified for playoffs by now: Ferreira ahead of CSK tie

Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders.

"If we win this game, it will give us an even better chance of finishing first or second. Anyone playing against Chennai knows they are a good team. The past few games have been close, and these small margins can go either way. But hopefully, we can get over the line tomorrow by playing the brand of cricket that we have been playing."

The Royals' middle order is a bit of a concern as it has not been tested much this season but Ferreira said the training intensity had ensured all the batters were in good shape.

"It's (middle order) not much of a concern. We are grateful that our top order has put us in good positions and got us over the line. But, we have got capable batters and a deep batting line-up to pull us through."

"We just need to keep backing ourselves. With three games to go, we don't want to test ourselves but keep the momentum going. It's about training with the match intensity with



the middle order so that when the moment arrives, your skills are sharpened, and you back yourself to pull the game through."

Sunday's fixture will be the first afternoon game at Chepauk this season, and the South African reckoned that spin would play a crucial role, especially with R. Ashwin returning at his home venue.

"Obviously, this is a turning track. So, Ashwin will play a big role with (Yuzvendra) Chahal tomorrow?" The city is in the grip of an intense heat wave, with temperatures in the range of 41 degrees C. Asked how would they handle the conditions, Ferreira said that as cricketers, they are used to it.

"Fortunately, most of our training

schedule has been in the afternoon, so we are kind of used to the heat. But, it's not possible to replicate the match intensity in training.

**"NOT GOOD FOR ANY TEAM TO LOSE THREE PRIMARY BOWLERS":** CSK will be without three of their primary bowlers — Mustafizur Rahman (returned home), Matheesha Pathirana (hamstring injury) and Deepak Chahal (injury). Ferreira said rather than focus on the issues facing the rivals, his team would play to its strengths.

"It's not good for any team to lose three primary bowlers. But in cricket, any guy can bowl well. It's for us to focus on what we have to do, analyse the bowlers and see who we can take down and how we can do it."

"This is a different wicket and condition, so we should not focus on what they have been doing but what we can do. It's about having good plans and structure to execute it well out there," he said.

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I ANIRUDHDA NANDANWAR S/o BHASKAR NANDANWAR R/o 255 District Center Bhubaneswar Khorda Chandra Sekharpur Odisha-751016 have changed my minor daughter's name ANEKA NANDANWAR to TOYA NANDANWAR aged-3-Years.

PD/441/A



"Though we travel  
the world over to find  
the beautiful, we must  
carry it with us or  
we find it not"

— Ralph Waldo Emerson



Of the 150 villages that exist in West Garo Hills of Meghalaya, only 13 to 15 are Songsarek villages. In these, only five or six houses continue to uphold the ancient Garo traditions and follow the rituals related to the animist society. Wangala dance, brewing of Chubitchi being a few, writes **NAVNEET MENDIRATTA**

## VIBING TO THE DANCE OF A 100 DRUMS

It is clearly the road less travelled. The West Garo Hills of Meghalaya in Northeast India may not have attracted the fancy of the tourists as their Khasi hills counterparts (yet), but that could well be a blessing in disguise for a region that is holding on to the last bit of ancient Garo traditions — the Songsarek practices. Songsarek is a pre-Christian animist religion that is fast losing out to conversions to Christianity, that spread in the region in the second half of the nineteenth century and intensified throughout the twentieth century. Currently, of the 150 villages that exist in the region, only 13 to 15 are Songsarek villages. In these, only five or six houses continue to actively practise the rituals related to the ancient Garo society.

A narrow hill road leads us to the Songsarek village of Gondenggre. Located in the Rongram subdivision of West Garo Hills district in Meghalaya, the village is located 18 kms from sub-district headquarter Rongram and some 36 kms from district headquarter of Tura. Our entourage comprises a group of nine Royal Enfield bikers and content crew who are here to document the living heritage of the communities in these regions as part of a unique partnership between Royal Enfield and UNESCO.

The project titled, The Great Himalayan Exploration, involves engaging with Royal Enfield's motorcycling community and inspiring them to come forward to not just explore the landscape but to help preserve and promote the living heritage of the communities in these regions. Documentation is the first step in this direction.

These practices range from performing arts (dance forms, songs, etc) to tangible crafts (handmade paper from tree bark, specific types of hats, etc), food practices (preservation techniques, culinary cultures), agricultural practices, local medicinal practices, body art and even indigenous spiritual and social systems.

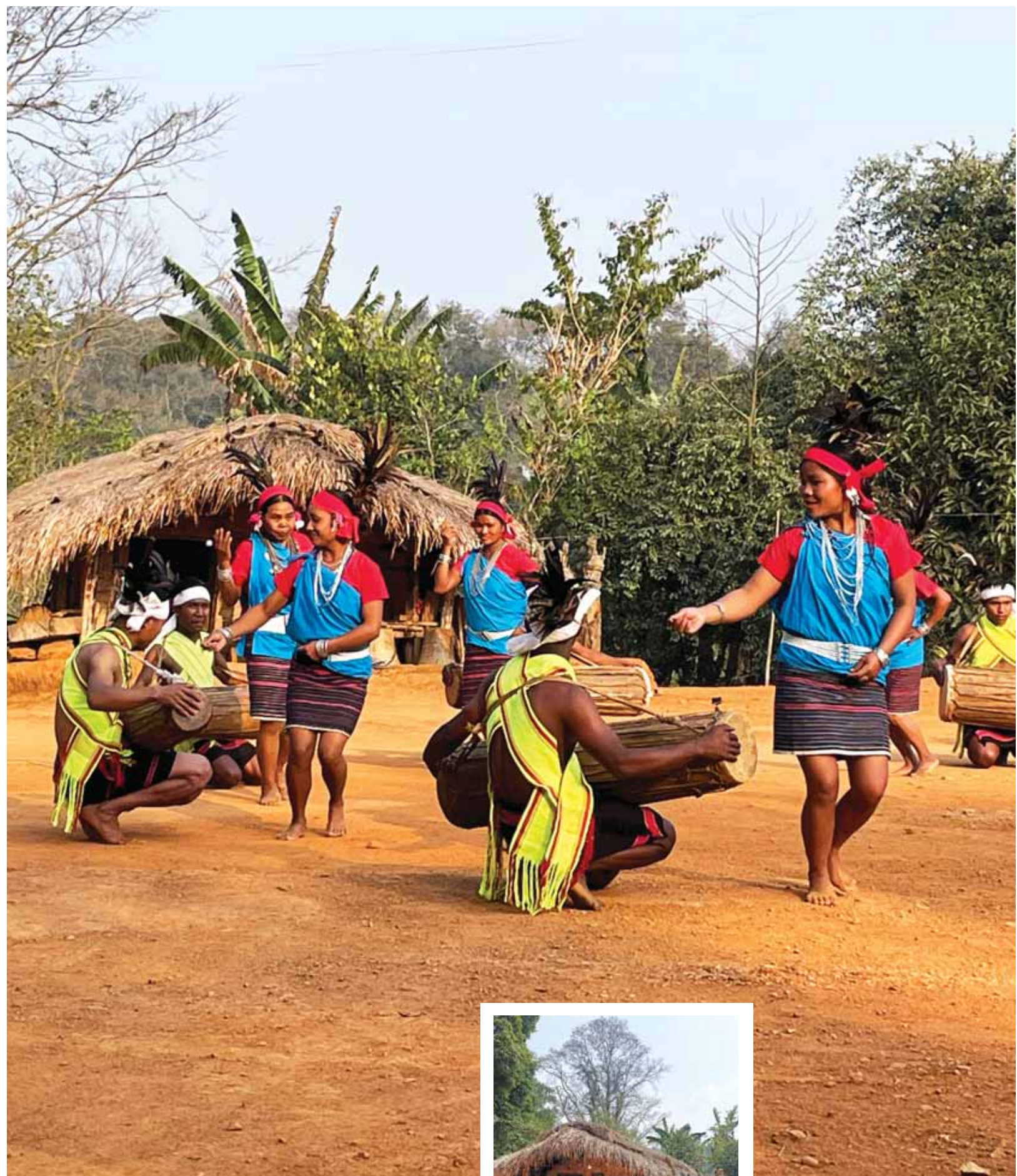
### KEEPERS OF THE TRADITION

Upon reaching the village, we are greeted by the Nokma or the village headman with a generous serving of *Chubitchi* or

the traditionally fermented (but weak) alcoholic rice beverage that is poured right into our mouths from an *abet* or a hollowed dried bottle gourd. It is the locals' way of welcoming the guests and must be accepted by them as a mark of honour. *Chubitchi* flows freely in Garo villages. There is no age or stigma attached to its consumption. It is an important part of every Garo celebration — be it religious rituals, meetings, social gatherings, birth, marriage, during *Wangala* (harvest festival) or even a house warming ceremony. It is said that in pre-modern era, the Garos would serve the drink before taking off for a hunt or to fight enemies. The traditional ways of making *Chubitchi* are said to have been passed down orally among the Garos until the arrival of Baptist American Missionaries. In the present day, though the knowledge of brewing *Chubitchi* continues to be shared in the interiors of Garo Hills, it is no longer a preferred practice in urban areas.

Songsareks of Gondenggre are friendly albeit private people. Curiously is writ large on their faces as language holds them back from communicating freely with the outsiders. Rakkan M Sangma, Joint Secretary of the 100 Drums Wangala Festival Committee and Secretary of Garo Heritage Village plays interpreter and takes us through the rituals and practices of the villagers. "Song in the local language means village or a native place and *Warek* means houses built in a line. By that definition, *Gondenggre* is a spread out village with houses that are built in a single line," says Sangma. "About 5-7 kms from the village, there exists a strong sacred grove called *A Song Kosi*. It is a special place where outsiders are forbidden from entering. No one is allowed to speak in that forest let alone pluck a single leaf. No one, not even a member of our tribe, can cause any harm to the trees, flowers, or animals there," he shared.

Cleanliness is a buzzword in most parts of Meghalaya. Made from bamboo, Garo houses typically last for about four to five years. The kitchen is usually located outside the house. A complete set up comprising kitchen and dining space at the entrance of the village is meant



to be used by the community for celebrations and meetings. The rooms are usually spread out. According to Sangma, a lot of taboos including "untouchability" *vis-a-vis* the outsiders are practiced even today. The outsiders are not allowed to enter or touch anything inside the Garo spaces.

Sacrifice remains an inherent part of Songsarek practices. There is a sacrifice to mark everything that is considered important — it could be a wedding or any celebration, a big announcement, to appease the Gods, to ward off evil or even to fight a disease.

The blood marks are like trophies in the village. The Songsareks believe in keeping their Gods happy.

### DANCING TO A HUNDRED DRUMS

*Wangala*, the Garo traditional dance dedicated to their main Deity and the God of Sun, crops and fertility, *Misi-Saaljong*, features as an Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) practice.

Inspired by the wagtail bird, the dance imitates the bird's behaviour, using musical instruments such as a flute made from buffalo horn and drums. It is a group dance where pairs of men and women wearing wagtail feathers in their headgear line up and move along a circle in short, slow but forceful steps. The dance is led by the Nokma who sings the traditional songs in a high pitch while the rest of the men play the drums. The Garo women folk make traditional dance gestures imitating the bird or even animals and clap.

The women wear skirts made from handwoven cloth woven on looms. The typical pattern is that of the eye of the Goddess of wealth, *Susime*, resembling a diamond. Wagtail bird holds a special meaning in the Songsarek beliefs. The villagers closely observe the flight of the bird

“SONG IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE MEANS VILLAGE OR A NATIVE PLACE AND WAREK MEANS HOUSES BUILT IN A LINE. BY THAT DEFINITION, GONDENGGRE IS A SPREAD OUT VILLAGE WITH HOUSES THAT ARE BUILT IN A SINGLE LINE”



### THE GREAT HIMALAYAN EXPLORATION PROJECT

Royal Enfield's partnership project with UNESCO, The Great Himalayan Exploration, draws rider-researchers to document the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Himalayas.

"The aim is to document and safeguard the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Himalayas and thereby, raise awareness about the living treasures that make up the beating heart of India," says Bidisha Dey, Executive Director, Eicher Group Foundation — the CSR and Sustainability arm of Royal Enfield. According to her, over two editions and 16 curated rides, 119 rider-researchers have already documented 66 practices across the Eastern Himalayan states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, North Bengal, Sikkim and Tripura.

"We are now set to extend our exploration to the Western Himalayas in 2024," says Dey.

"We conduct a detailed on-ground recce before rolling out the riders to ensure the assent of the locals and as respect for their privacy. We are especially careful to follow the community protocols on how to approach the community and then conduct capacity building programmes to educate the rider researchers before they set out on their journeys," she shares.

Among the practices recorded are: The black pottery of Tyr Shang village in the West Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya, *Muga* silk threads of Assam, *Mon Shugu*, the ancient art of making paper of Arunachal Pradesh, living roots bridges of Meghalaya, handmade mask art of Majuli island, Assam.

"For us, the partnership is not just about the documentation. It's also about creating awareness about the intangible cultural heritage practices," concludes Dey.

to predict the waterfall for the season. Every *Wangala* or the harvest festival, the Songsareks put handprints on their doors (using three fingers) with rice flour indicating the water level and for good harvest. These imprints are usually made by the male members of the community outside the house of the Nokma, where most rituals are conducted. The Garos are a matrilineal, matrilineal and matrifocal society. They continue to carry forward the surname of the women of the family. The boys live with their parents till they reach puberty and then shift into a dormitory style bachelor home in the village till they get married into a girl's family. While the matrilineal aspect remains strong, the rules surrounding bachelor homes are somewhat easing out, shares Sangma.

# ENCALM'S WARM EMBRACE OF ATITHI DAIVO BHAVA



**PAWAN SONI** pens down his personal experience at the airport with Encalm's services to provide a 360 degree view of what this innovation brings to the table



The hustle and bustle of travel can often leave one weary and longing for a moment of respite. Gone are the days when travelling was mundane. We are at a time when journeys in fact can be as exhilarating as the destination themselves. During my recent trip to Italy, while passing through Terminal 3 (T3) International Airport in New Delhi, I stumbled upon the Encalm Prive Lounge — a sanctuary of luxury and comfort that undoubtedly ranks among the world's finest.



With a staggering capacity of over 550 guests, the Encalm Prive Lounge caters exclusively to business travelers, accessible either through business class tickets or higher with various airlines, or by paying an entry fee. Unlike other lounges, complimentary card benefits do not apply here; however, cardholders can access another Encalm lounge, albeit not as lavish as the Prive lounge.

Culinary delights await at the extensive buffet which is rivalling with the leading star hotels selection and offers separate selections for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians. I loved the watermelon cheese as a canape, prawns and garlic cream kebabs, Chicken biryani and even the simple but tasty beetroot halwa. The lounge's leaf-shaped bar is a visual delight, offering a range of complimentary and paid options that cater to every palate. Given current Delhi's excise policy issue, there were many brands including Prosecco that weren't available at the time of my visit.



The lounge boasts of four sleeping pods, providing weary travellers with a private sanctuary to rest and rejuvenate before their next journey. Of course this is a paid facility at ₹1000 plus taxes per hour.

One of the standout features of the Encalm Prive Lounge is its expansive conference room, which doubles as a personal dining room, perfect for business travelers or senior bureaucrats and VIPs looking to conduct meetings or enjoy a meal in a private setting.

For those looking for entertainment, the lounge offers a small gaming zone and a dedicated kids area, ensuring that travellers of all ages have something to enjoy during their visit. The virtual gaming zone and Xbox games comes as a chargeable feature separate from the lounge charge though it can be availed by only the lounge users. A small fitness centre and kids play area comes complimentary along with the lounge facility.

In addition to its luxurious amenities, the Encalm Prive Lounge also offers

excellent spa services. I had the pleasure of trying their 30-minute foot massage, which left me feeling relaxed and rejuvenated, ready to embark on the next leg of my journey. Currently this 30-minute spa came complimentary by using my DreamFolks card; else one will have to shell out ₹1500 for using this facility. Had there been a provision of complimentary foot massage machines and the massage chairs like at Singapore airport, I would have rated Encalm Prive lounge the best in the world without even blinking an eye.

While the lounge service came complimentary with my flight tickets, Encalm has another facility called Atithya Meet and Greet Service. So if you are a first time traveller or just worried about your parents or kids traveling alone, just avail this service from their portal that comes in various options — Silver, Gold and Elite. This service provides you with a guest manager who will escort you from the entrance without having to wait in the queue, help you through check-in and immigration services. They try to help you go through business class immigration service but it depends upon the government official to allow it. And then they help you get the buggy till your boarding gate. If you have a business class ticket or are planning to use the lounge through credit cards, in my opinion, Silver tier option gives you the best value for money.

Overall, my experience at the Encalm Prive Lounge and Atithya Meet and Greet service was nothing short of exceptional. From its elegant ambience to its impeccable service, the lounge sets a new standard for airport hospitality. Next time you travel, consider experiencing the luxury and comfort of Atithya Meet and Greet Service and Encalm Prive Lounge apart from the usual shopping.

(Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com)

In an informative tête-à-tête with **SHOBORI GANGULI**, Encalm Hospitality CEO **VIKAS SHARMA** outlines his vision of revolutionising the world of airport hospitality

Possibly never before in history has the global hospitality industry and its ecosystem been as severely hit as it was during the 2021 Pandemic. Not even the two World Wars in the last century left nations gasping for breath as Covid did, with its lethal tentacles paralysing MSMEs, travel and tourism businesses, and their subsidiary industries. Unannounced lockdowns and travel restrictions drilled unparalleled fear into the human psyche, with no end in sight. But, as Charles Dickens put it in *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair." Clawing back for survival under such adversity, the hospitality industry was quick to innovate. Mr Vikas Sharma, the Chief Executive Officer of Encalm Hospitality, entered this volatile world as a beacon of hope in the year 2021, in a territory unexplored and uncharted and at a time when fear of human contact reigned supreme.

Armed with the vision to infuse fresh life into the business of hospitality, and, of course, with an enviable arsenal of 25 years of experience in the trade, Sharma went about restructuring the landscape of airport hospitality through an unparalleled experience — much like the American Pioneer who wanted "to go where no man has gone before." Air travel, even for those going business class, has its attendant share of anxiety and restlessness. Seeking to ease this, Mr Sharma, through Encalm, concretised a novel definition of airport services. "Hospitality" is the key word in this endeavour, says a proud Sharma.

In a short span of three years, Sharma today heads a 200 plus team which, according to him, is crucial in taking the organisation's long term objectives forward through "strategic thinking and effective communication." At a time when most airlines provide their Business Class passengers with state of the art lounges and customized relaxation plans without overheads, what does



VIKAS sharma, CEO, ENCALM HOSPITALITY PVT LTD

Encalm bring to the table, especially if the passenger has to pay for it? Sharma is quick to enumerate that, "Encalm Hospitality has become synonymous with exceptional hospitality and top-of-the-line services right from Atithya to the

Encalm Lounges and Spa." Available in all three terminals of the Delhi Airport, Encalm Lounges are also available in Hyderabad and Goa. To ensure an "elevated airport experience" Sharma lists out the services the company has on offer.

Penetrating into the luxury realm of a regular lounge and Spa, Encalm's services and hospitality combine a range of assisted services, incorporating basic non-aviation chores such as assistance service, buggy services, and porter assistance. The company's offerings go beyond the aesthetics of bespoke carved lounges and Spas with a personalised "Atithya Meet and Greet" — constructed on the foundation of *Atithi Daivo Bhava* (Guests are equivalent to the Almighty), taking airport experience to another level altogether.

As the Encalm CEO proudly asserts, his knowledge and experiences help synergise the operational and management foundations of the Encalm brand. Needless to add, he has an impressive portfolio having served as the General Manager of Sheraton Hotel and Resorts, Director of Operations at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company and the Director of F&B at Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts. Operations, sales and marketing, finance and revenue management are his core competence. He was felicitated as the General Manager of the Year 2019 award by HOSI in association with Sheraton Hotel and Resorts, and Leadership Excellence Award by Marriott Hotel, again in 2019. An MBA graduate from INSEAD, Sharma has a bachelor's degree from IHM, Gwalior.

Interestingly, Sharma is also an avid cricket follower of cricket and badminton, the former fructifying into reality when Encalm became the Hospitality partner with the Delhi Capitals for IPL 2024. Talking about the partnership Sharma says, "As a lifelong cricket enthusiast, the sport embodies more than mere competition — it's a fervent passion fostering camaraderie and excitement. Partnering with Delhi Capitals underscores my enduring dedication to cricket and its profound community impact. Through Encalm Hospitality's alliance with this dynamic IPL team, we embrace cricket's essence, engaging with fans authentically and enriching the sport's vibrant legacy."

## Splendid Expedition Across Switzerland

Switzerland calls out to travelers with a taste for stunning mountain views, picturesque landmarks, and unique adventures. Step onto the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland for an incredible voyage through the country's rich culture and breathtaking landscapes. This train journey guarantees an unforgettable encounter with Switzerland's captivating charm

BY AKANKSHA DEAN

As travelers, we set off to find new horizons, discover new cultures, savor delicious foods, and create lasting memories. Switzerland is a great choice for explorers, with stunning mountain views and charming villages that become part of every traveler's dream vacation. While Switzerland offers many ways to explore, taking a train journey is a truly magical experience. The Grand Train Tour of Switzerland is an adventure not to be missed. This remarkable trip reveals the beauty of Switzerland's mountains and its rich history. You can start and end your journey wherever you please, with destinations like Zermatt, St. Moritz, Lucerne, and Lugano awaiting your exploration. For those eager to visit every stop on the journey, the Swiss Travel Pass is the perfect solution. This ticket gives you access to all the destinations along the route. Covering 1,280 kilometers, passing by 11 serene lakes, and revealing five UNESCO World Heritage Sites set against the stunning alpine backdrop, this train journey ensures an engaging and unforgettable experience.



### MOST POPULAR TRAIN JOURNEYS THAT ARE A PART OF THE GRAND ROUTE

**Hop on the Glacier Express,** a legendary trip winding through the breathtaking Swiss Alps from Zermatt to St. Moritz. Take a journey on the Bernina Express to discover the Bernina Pass, Bernina Range, and the UNESCO World Heritage Rhaetian Railway. Travel along the Golden Pass Line, linking Lucerne to Montreux through stunning scenery. Enjoy the

Gotthard Panorama Express as it traverses the famous Gotthard Pass. Lastly, ride the Lucerne-Interlaken Express for captivating views of the Jungfrau region.

### MUST KNOW

Switzerland presents a rich array of experiences, from enchanting urban centers to tranquil mountain hamlets, crystal-clear lakes to towering peaks, and from ancient vineyards to fine dining destinations. The Swiss Travel

System offers a smooth, comfortable, and upscale way for tourists to discover this enchanting nation. With the Swiss Travel Pass, visitors gain access to Switzerland's comprehensive public transportation network, enabling them to seamlessly traverse the country by train, bus, boat, or mountain railway.

Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer

## LET'S GOA...

BY PAWAN SONI

Goa remains an ever-popular destination, with its property prices soaring post-COVID and a surge in demand for new eateries and nightspots. Each visit to Goa reveals new experiences, making it a perennial favorite. During a brief 3-day break from work, my wife and I opted for a villa stay over a traditional hotel, choosing the relatively new Villa Heliconia in Siolim.

### LOCATION

Villa Heliconia is conveniently located near the MOPA airport, making it easily accessible from most places in North Goa. Situated close to the buzzing spots in North Goa, it even shares a wall with the popular restaurant Hosa, known for its innovative take on traditional South Indian cuisine. I recommend trying Hosa for its exquisite interiors, great cocktails, and inventive dishes. However, ensure you have a reservation to avoid disappointment, as we found ourselves seated at an inconvenient high bar table for the last minute booking.

### AMENITIES

The villa is spacious, boasting two large living areas and six rooms, along with a swimming pool and lifts. Ideal for groups of friends or extended families, the private



pool is definitely a highlight. Decent-sized rooms, with at least two rooms featuring personal balconies ensures accommodation for kids and elderly as well.

### HOUSEKEEPING

We were impressed by the attentive housekeeper, Shuvendu Kashyap, whose knowledge extended beyond housekeeping to include coffee and a variety of subjects. The entire team was polite and eager to please.

### FOOD

One of the highlights was the option to have the staff

### FACT SHEET

Villa Heliconia, 9 Ground Floor, Landmark, Plot No Syno.329, Vaddy, near the church, Siolim, Goa

Phone Number: 9350009000

prepare food of your choice, perfect for when you want a break from outside meals. I particularly enjoyed their dal, paneer, and tawa roti. Breakfast offered a variety of options, including eggs,

paranathas, cut fruits, poori-aloo, and poha apart from beverages like fresh juice, tea and coffee. During my visit, I discovered that the owner, Abhishek Aggarwal, and I are both from Gurgaon. I reached out to him to share my pleasant experience with the villa. Abhishek, an excellent hospitality professional turned real estate entrepreneur, shared his journey of success. His hard work and good fortune not only led to the opening of Villa Heliconia but also to several upcoming luxury projects in Goa, including a 4-bedroom villa in Morjim, a 5-bedroom super luxury Bali-themed villa in Siolim, and a 10-bedroom boutique property in Calangute, which will be rented out as individual rooms rather than a villa. Villa Heliconia, a dream fulfilled for Abhishek, is a testament to the fact that some dreams do come true.

(Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com)

# SAVING THE GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

The Great Indian Bustard critically endangered and integral to India's wildlife heritage, faces multifaceted threats including habitat loss, collisions with infrastructure, and poaching. As efforts to safeguard the species intensify, the imperative to reconcile competing interests between development and conservation grows more urgent



BKP SINHA



ARVIND K JHA

The Supreme Court of India in MK Ranjitsinh and Ors vs. Union of India has constituted a seven-member committee and tasked it with addressing the delicate balance between conservation initiatives for the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) and the installation of renewable energy projects in its habitat. This decision follows the Court's acknowledgement of the challenges posed by its April 2021 directive mandating the burial of all power lines within the GIB habitat, a measure claimed to be expensive and impractical over extensive distances by Power companies and the Central Government. With the complex interplay between development and conservation at the forefront, the committee has to assess primarily the viability of reducing the area banned for overhead powerlines from 80,000 to 13,663 square kilometres. The GIB figures in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, in Appendix I of CITES and is classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Included in the National Wildlife Action Plan, it has been earmarked for a recovery program under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India. During the Mughal and British periods, the GIB was one of the top game birds. Historical accounts suggest that tribal Bhils used to set fire to the bushes surrounding their nests to trap females. The species has been facing numerous threats to its survival including occasional poaching, collisions with high-tension electric wires, fast-moving vehicles, and free-ranging dogs in villages. Additionally, habitat loss and alteration due to the diversion of grasslands and scrublands, extensive agricultural expansion, mechanized farming practices, and infrastructural developments such as irrigation systems, roads, and windmills pose significant challenges.

Weighing approximately 15 kilograms each, their bulk poses a challenge when navigating around electricity lines or windmills, often resulting in fatalities or injuries. The dry semi-desert regions where the bustard once thrived, particularly in parts of Rajasthan, have also undergone significant transformation due to irrigation canals, converting the landscape into highly cultivated areas. Present-day threats include further expansion of linear infrastructure such as roads and electric power transmission lines leading to collision-related mortality. The proposed expansion of renewable energy infrastructure, including large-scale deployment of solar panels across desert and grassland areas, further jeopardizes the bird's habitat.

In its historical range, the great Indian bustard once existed across Western India, spanning 11 states, including parts of Pakistan, with strongholds in the Thar desert and the Deccan plateau. Known for its preference for flat, open landscapes with minimal disturbance, it thrives in grasslands. Their numbers, however, have dwindled dramatically, with only around 150 individuals estimated to survive as of 2018, down from around 250 in 2011. Most of the population, estimated at around 120, is concentrated in the arid grasslands of Thar, Rajasthan, particularly in the Desert National Park and the Pokhran Field Firing Range, with smaller populations reportedly scattered elsewhere in the country. In Maharashtra, two individuals had been reported in Nanaj, Solapur district,

where the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is actively involved in conservation efforts. Concerningly, however, the absence of the great Indian bustard in Nanaj in Maharashtra as well as in the Rollopadu Wildlife Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh for the past few years suggests a looming risk of local-level extinctions. Known for their slow reproductive rate, GIBs lay only a few eggs and invest nearly a year in caring for their chicks. Establishing a founder population requires a minimum of 20 breeding females and 5 to 10 breeding males. In the relatively better populated Thar region, specifically focused upon in the



Supreme Court case, the looming risks of the maze of infrastructural development, food insecurity, conflicts, and climate change-induced impacts exacerbate the challenges faced by them. As regards actions taken to safeguard the dwindling population of the GIB, the MoEFCC, Rajasthan Forest Department, and Wildlife Institute of India (WII), came together in 2018 to initiate conservation breeding programs and conduct scientific research for GIB's conservation. Notably, the WII had already identified ten potential locations for GIB breeding centres in 2017, setting the stage for proactive conservation measures. Drawing on expertise beyond borders, the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC) from Abu Dhabi was enlisted as a technical partner due to its successful track record in breeding other bustard species. The collective efforts resulted in the establishment of two breeding centres in Rajasthan, housing a total of 29 GIBs, bolstering hopes for the species' survival. Further support poured in from WWF-India, which helped in crafting guidelines for a comprehensive State Action Plan for Resident Bustard Recovery Programme and backed future expansion plans in Gujarat. In Karnataka's Siruguppa taluka, the Ballari Forest division proposed a Detailed Project Report with an

investment of INR 24 crores for a research centre dedicated to the GIB cause. In Maharashtra, with GIB sighted in recent years neither in Nanaj of Solapur nor in Warora of Vidarbha region, a proposed collaboration with Rajasthan aims to exchange tigers for GIBs, with plans to establish a breeding centre in Nanaj. Assessment of the overall strength, budgetary outlay, and position of the MoEFCC and forest departments in decision-making in the Government reflects that the effectiveness of efforts to secure the future of the GIB is just inadequate. The weakening of statutory instruments and establishments related to forest and wildlife conservation in the recent past is quite revealing in this regard. In the case of GIB also, on an uneven field, stakeholders grapple with the urgent need to balance developmental agendas with conservation imperatives, claiming to be providing a sustainable coexistence for this emblematic avian species. However, amidst endeavours by some professional foresters, a pressing challenge looms large today. About 66,337 sq. km of land for overhead transmission lines are considered despite WII's recommendation that mitigation of powerline-linked mortality required a ban on high tension wires,

undergrounding of <66 kv wires, and retrofitting of existing wires with bird diverters. WII's findings also underscored the perilous predicament, with an estimated 16 GIB fatalities annually due to collisions with high-tension lines in the Thar region alone. Such alarming mortality rates, validated by tagging efforts by WII, are in sharp contrast to the indication of the number of recorded mortality cases as insignificant before the highest court. Using a lower number of collision deaths as a basis for allowing a network of overhead powerlines in GIB habitats will be akin to advocating the discontinuance of medicines in a pandemic situation where due to a reduced number of survivors, deaths per day may be lowered. An approach of balancing conservation and development by permitting power projects, in a critically endangered species' habitat with just about 140 survivors, currently less polluting than non-renewable resources deserves perhaps a second look. The idea of development and its impact created and sold by the most selfish species on earth pitted against the right to life of a species at the brink of extinction needs to adopt a much wider and multi-sectoral perspective. India's insolation data in many areas, not natural habitats of GIB, presents

similar ranges as in Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Annual Mean Daily Global Solar Radiation (AMDGSR) map indicates 6.8 to 5.6 kWh/ m<sup>2</sup>/ day in different parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat; 6.0 to 5.8 in Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Ladakh; and 5.8 to 5.6 in states like Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu. India's solar power generation capacity having reached about 76 GW in FY24, is concentrated in Rajasthan and Gujarat with 17.8 GW and 10.1 GW. Large states like MP and UR are major disappointments. Authorities should consider the country-wide spread and benefits, site-specific costs on infrastructure, and the capacity utilization factor (CUF) figures reported to be 20 for Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh; 19 for Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh; and 18 for Gujarat. Considering this scenario, any honest concern for balancing conservation and development must, instead of compromising GIB's future, explore and exploit the potential spread out in the country for solar projects. That would be true climate justice! (The writers are Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra; views are personal)

**The WII had already identified ten potential locations for GIB breeding centres in 2017, setting the stage for proactive conservation measures. Drawing on expertise beyond borders, the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC) from Abu Dhabi was enlisted as a technical partner due to its successful track record in breeding other bustard species. The collective efforts resulted in the establishment of two breeding centres in Rajasthan, housing a total of 29 GIBs, bolstering hopes for the species' survival**





**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week promises a wealth of positive developments. A surge of spiritual energy is set to enhance your awareness, enveloping you in a glowing aura. Listen closely to your intuition—it will guide you confidently forward. Expect a time rich in affection, joyous celebrations, and meaningful connections. Inspirational creativity and artistic achievements will flourish, alongside significant personal milestones and unexpected blessings. The care and attention from others will deepen your experience of heartfelt connections. Your life will be enriched by the realization of your deepest aspirations. Your adept handling of situations in love, friendship, or career will seem almost magical. This period also offers a perfect opportunity to delve into new learning and refine your abilities across various disciplines. Embrace this time of growth and fulfillment.

**Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Mustard**  
**Lucky day Monday**



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

The week begins on a challenging note, particularly in your personal connections. High hopes might lead to emotional reactions due to unexpected behaviors from close ones, compelling a desire for solitude. As the week progresses, obstacles persist, demanding sharp focus and keen observation to stay aligned with your ambitions. Travel could become necessary, possibly involving leisure trips with loved ones, blending routine with refreshing experiences. Your demeanor shifts from serene to vibrant as the week advances, rejuvenating your spirit and approach to life. At home, you'll exhibit care and attentiveness, while in professional settings, you'll show dynamism and fairness. This balanced approach fosters respect from peers and admiration from superiors. By the week's end, a sense of harmony pervades all aspects of life, leading to financial upliftment.

**Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Green**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

You have a vibrant energy and a keen interest in acquiring new skills, with a practical focus on financial stability. Prioritize clear communication about practical matters and values. A new venture or project is on the horizon, so it's important to stay organized by taking detailed notes and maintaining secure records. Your dedication and patience will enhance your awareness and personal growth. Mid-week brings opportunities for advancement, possibly including job offers or new income sources, and even potential romantic connections. However, exercise caution as the week ends; challenges and disagreements in professional settings may arise, potentially causing frustration. Despite these obstacles, support from a family member will be a bright spot, offering help or a cherished gift. Expect positive outcomes from any health evaluations.

**Lucky number 21 | Lucky colour Yellow**  
**Lucky day Monday**



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

You have a knack for confronting reality, even when it's tough, and you can assess circumstances quickly. Your innate ability to perceive the underlying intentions and wishes of others is remarkable. You have a direct, clever, and pragmatic approach to matters. You have little patience for deceit or frivolity. However, achieving a healthier internal equilibrium is crucial, including finding the right mix of activity and rest, maintaining good health practices, and managing your emotions. It's important to make discerning choices that align with your best interests. In any legal situations, anticipate a fair resolution. You'll find that your dedication often leads to public praise and appreciation. In scenarios that once seemed disordered, you will find yourself in control, bringing order and clarity.

**Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Silver**  
**Lucky day Thursday**



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This period invites you to deepen your connections with those you hold dear. As your relationships bloom, you'll find increased stability and emotional satisfaction, making it an ideal time to let go of any lingering doubts. Your career, too, is poised for growth. As the week progresses, you'll feel a strong desire for personal autonomy and recognition. You shine as a nurturing presence in the lives of those you care about, provided your leadership is respected. Your attributes of ambition, resilience, and discipline steer you towards positive outcomes, making it a favorable period for making sound decisions and reaping the rewards of diligent effort. However, as the week closes, unexpected challenges might disrupt your peace. Reassess these situations carefully.

**Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Blue**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

You are on the brink of gaining fresh insights into a pressing concern. Embracing intellectual achievement is worthwhile, as the power of thought holds immense potential. However, it's important to balance sharp intellect with empathy. Your determination to pursue your aspirations is unyielding, despite the numerous obstacles and opposition you may encounter. At your workplace, you'll find others showing interest in your projects, creating a competitive environment. Tensions at home might escalate, making communication challenging and leaving you contemplating a drastic decision to leave. However, remain patient, as positive changes are on the horizon. With determination and thoughtful strategy, no challenge is too great to overcome. Influential guidance, possibly from a mentor or a family member like a father or elder brother, will significantly enhance your ability to realize your goals.

**Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Black**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Sharing your work with a like-minded and diligent partner could prove beneficial for you. You may find yourself engaging with more tasks and projects, which will keep you actively occupied. Effective teamwork, involving strategizing and leveraging collective skills, is crucial for achieving objectives. Your emotional equilibrium allows you to access deeper insights and understanding. This period emphasizes your nurturing side; you offer support through empathetic actions and soothing words, contributing positively to others' well-being. Your composed demeanor helps you maintain a steady approach in various situations, reinforcing your influence in professional settings where structure is appreciated. Potential travel may be on the horizon, reflecting a readiness to embrace new experiences. This phase is marked by a commitment to personal and spiritual development, as you engage in meditative practices, yoga, and participate in communal spiritual gatherings.

**Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Red**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week, you will experience profound fulfillment as your efforts begin to bear fruit. Deep connections and emotional openness may lead to significant new bonds. Your dreams align with reality, bringing satisfaction and contentment. You may feel torn between emotions and logic, yet you'll successfully navigate towards your goals. Mid-week, a sense of adventure could inspire a new project or journey, pushing you to step out of your comfort zone. Your energy levels remain high, fueling your pursuits. As the week ends, you'll enjoy a harmonious balance, reaping rewards across all life facets—social, financial, and personal, culminating in a deep sense of fulfillment and well-being. The weekend promises relaxation and a vibrant social life, enhancing your overall joy.

**Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Orange**  
**Lucky day Thursday**



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

You feel emotionally balanced and exhibit confidence and generosity, often caring deeply for others. Your natural charisma makes you an engaging diplomat and an enchanting partner, whether in conversations or relationships. However, it's crucial to avoid the extremes of your passionate or emotional sides. Leaning too heavily towards passion might lead to self-inflicted stress, whereas excessive emotionality could leave you feeling submerged and lost. This week, the atmosphere at work might become challenging, marked by fierce competition and potential conflicts. Be vigilant as colleagues might attempt to take credit for your efforts. Stay focused on your professional responsibilities, requiring much creativity and attention. Opt for tactful interactions and embrace diverse perspectives rather than using force. Accountability is key; avoid placing blame on others for setbacks.

**Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Off White**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week, you stand at a crossroads, facing a significant choice that will influence your path forward. As you navigate this decision, the key lies in recognizing the hidden opportunities that may initially appear as setbacks. Trusting in the strong, balanced bond you share with those around you will empower you and bring clarity to your decisions. Your innate confidence and dynamic presence will guide you in executing your plans effectively. Social interactions, particularly celebrations or gatherings, will prove beneficial, enhancing your connections and opening doors to new possibilities. As the week draws to a close, expect to receive affirmations of your efforts and achievements. An unexpected acknowledgment or positive news will highlight your success, fostering further growth in areas that align with your best interests.

**Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour White**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week finds you deeply attuned to your spiritual ambitions, seeking a mentor to enhance your connection with the higher realms. Your commitment transcends specific beliefs, embracing a collective spirit through community engagement. Midweek, your attention shifts to professional endeavors where dynamic interactions and bold initiatives pave the way for success. Your efforts are characterized by determination and are likely to yield professional advancement and harmonious interactions with colleagues. Presently, you embody kindness and authority, garnering respect and influence. A strong sense of self-awareness guides you, as your inner wisdom steers you towards beneficial decisions. Overall, your approach to life is well-rounded and thoughtful, positioning you ideally to navigate choices that align closely with your values and goals.

**Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Pink**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

You are enveloped in a nurturing atmosphere of love and unity, with strong connections enhancing your environment with joy and solidarity. Creativity enriches your interactions, making family time rewarding, especially as younger members excel. Those hoping to expand their family may soon receive joyful news, and a significant celebration could further uplift spirits. This week encourages a structured approach in your personal and professional life, urging optimal organization and efficiency. It's a crucial period to assertively pursue your ambitions while maintaining a balanced perspective. Embrace this as a chance for personal growth and transformation, perhaps by shedding outdated habits. This focused approach will not only advance your goals but also stabilize your inner sense of security.

**Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Fuchsia**  
**Lucky day Sunday**

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Shape your destiny through conscious efforts

What is in store of my son's destiny? How far he will study? Will he land up in a good job?" Someone came asking a couple of years back. He informed that his son was insistent on pursuing engineering course. But given his performance at school, it looks difficult. He was advised an easier option of pursuing Commerce. For, with lesser efforts, he could take the course to its logical end, which may at least secure him a decent job. But he won't listen. At the outset, let me assure you that your son is a potential guy. Don't underestimate him. His performance would not have been up to mark so far. Should he address his few weaknesses, following the process suggested, his positives will bloom out in full, which is immense. In fact, he carries the potential to complete higher studies. For, 4th cusp sub-lord Venus, identified with graduate studies is tenanted in the nakshatra owned by Rahu occupying the 9th house, marked with higher studies. 9th sub-lord Mars is again in the 9th house and posited in the nakshatra owned by 9th lord

Sun. Such a close connect of the houses referred promises higher education. Benevolent Jupiter is beautifully aligned with the Sun. It implies that he is a responsible guy who is promised an honourable and dignified life. He enjoys good executive ability and can hold a position of trust. Even more because Karmic Saturn extends its benefic aspect on the Sun, which grants him with excellent organising skill having his eyes even on finer details. Intelligence signifying Mercury is well aligned to intellectually ordained Uranus. That offers him a scientific bent of mind and is highly intelligent. Mercury being well disposed towards Mars grants him analytical abilities worth pursuing Engineering. He could do well particularly in Computer Science, as would Saturn and Ketu, together placed in the 3rd house marked with his basal instincts mean. What further adds to his potential is that 3rd cusp sub-lord Venus is posited in the nakshatra owned by Rahu in the 9th house, both occupying Mercury owned sign Virgo. He does also carry the



potential to do well in commerce as 10th lord Venus has benefic association with mind signifying Moon. But it will be still better if he pursues Computer Engineering. Now it is up to him to take the final call.

How well your son utilises the above virtues will define his future course of destiny. "I feel good to hear about my son's indwelling potential. Why then it doesn't reflect in his performance as

on date?" Countered the man. Well, if he carries positive qualities, there are enough of inherent weaknesses also that stand in way of his potential side from blooming out in full. Mind signifying Moon, incidentally the 8th lord makes him habitually suspicious even of his own worth. Still more because Saturn is ill-disposed off to Moon, which further creates self-doubt. Moon is placed adverse to Mercury, which implies that he lacks focus. He would be engaged in conflicting thoughts and has a worrisome mind. Jupiter placed adverse to Venus makes him comfort loving. If that would not be enough, Saturn and Ketu together also bring in an escapist tendency, which may not allow him taking timely initiatives. Mars and Rahu together in a Mercury owned sign makes him dissipate his energies towards varied unproductive ends. "Sir, is it possible to change his habit tendencies, as they die hard?" Asked the man. Don't forget that human beings enjoy the exclusive privilege to guide their action by choice and discrimination. It is, however, equally

true that choice option carries equal probability of use and misuse. That's the premise on which destiny stands. But here again, the choice option also enjoins upon a being to self-reflect, identify one's own weaknesses, acknowledge them, and then address them by making conscientious choice. One more good thing about your son is that his spiritual quotient is quite high. For, the lagna sub-lord Mars happens to be the 9th sub-lord as well, which is conjunct Rahu, the 5th sub-lord. When guided properly, he will be keen to pursue meditative technique suggested. If he does that especially before he sits for studies, he will be able to remain focused for long. With time, his mind will stabilise and will be able to overcome his inherent weaknesses. His indwelling potential will then play out unhindered to his full advantage. He may then be able to do justice to whatever discipline he opts for. The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com