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LOSING STREAK



NEW DELHI, SUNDAY MAY 19, 2024; PAGES 8+4 ₹4

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# AIDE NABBED, KEJRIWAL THROWS THE GAUNTLET



SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

before inutes bail anticipatory was rejected, the Delhi Police on Saturday arrested Delhi Chief Arvind Kejriwal's controversial aide Bibhav Kumar in connection with the alleged assault on AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP

Swati Maliwal on Saturday. Kumar was picked up from the Chief Minister's official residence by the police and brought to the Civil Lines Police Station. Maliwal has yet not reacted to the news of Kumar's

The Tis Hazari court disposed of Kumar's anticipatory bail plea, terming it as "infructuous".

Additional Sessions Judge Sushil Anuj Tyagi noted that Additional Public Prosecutor Atul Kumar Srivastava appeared through videoconferencing around 4.45 pm and informed the court that Kumar has already been arrested in the case.





"On a court query, the additional public prosecutor for the State submitted that the applicant was arrested at about 4:15 pm," the judge

In a direct challenge to the Prime Minister, AAP convener and Kejriwal on Saturday dared him to arrest all top AAP leaders who will be marching en masse to the BJP headquarters on Sunday noon instead of picking them up one by one. Kejriwal, however, asserted that his party could not be crushed by sending its leaders to jail.

Kumar is accused of assaulting Maliwal on May 13 at the residence of Kejriwal, who is also the national convener of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Advocate Karan Sharma representing Kumar said, "We've not received any information from the police yet. We've sent them an email that we will cooperate in the investigation.'

Kumar on Saturday told the Tis Hazari court that he was "getting

quashed in the battle of political giants." "On May 17, I (Bibhav) sent an email stating that I will join the investigation. I don't know why this

Hariharan, appearing on behalf of Kumar, told the court.
He also said Kumar could not be arrested without being served with a notice under section 41A of the CRPC. His lawyer said he was just seeking interim relief as the

seeking interim relief as the apprehension of arrest was real.

"I'm not at flight risk. I'm not running anywhere," Kumar's lawyer Hariharan said while reading the application. "I'm just seeking protection right now...as the apprehension of arrest is very real," he added.

The AAP shared are

The AAP shared an email sent by Kumar which stated, "It has come to knowledge of the undersigned through the media that a case FIR number 277/2024 has been registered at PS Civil Lines in which the undersigned has been named as an accused. Though the

undersigned has not been served with any notice in the case till now, the undersigned categorically submits that he is willing to cooperate and join the investigation as and when called upon to do so by the investigating officer."
"It may be emphasised here that the

undersigned has also made a complaint bringing to light the true facts of the alleged incident that happened on 13.05.2024 vide emails dated 17.05.2024 to police," it said. On Friday night, Kumar had also mailed a complaint to the police against Maliwal for "illegal/ unauthorised entry into and creating a security breach by trespassing at the Chief Minister's residence; for creating a ruckus and interfering with public servants in discharge of duty

Continued on Page 2



Wreckage of a bus after it caught fire that left at least nine dead and fifteen others injured, near Tauru in Haryana's Nuh district, in the early hours of Saturday

#### **Five women** among nine killed in Nuh as running bus catches fire

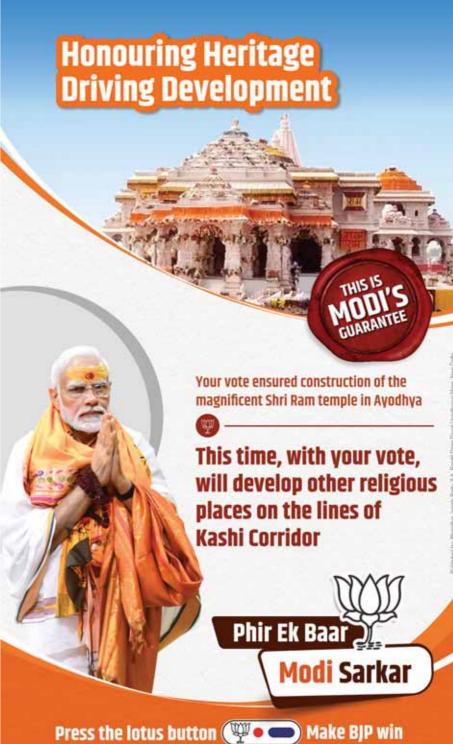
PNS CHANDIGARH

At least nine people, including five women, were burnt alive and 15 injured in a fire incident near Tauru in Haryana's Nuh district in the early hours of Saturday. The bus was carrying around 60 people, all residents of Punjab's Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana, who were returning from the pilgrim towns of Mathura and Vrindavan. All of them are

relatives, police said.
Police reported that the incident occurred around 2 am on the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Expressway. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained and a probe

is underway, a police official said.

A local resident said after noticing the fire, some people chased the bus on a motorcycle and asked the driver to stop. The locals also informed the police and the fire department. President Droupadi Murmu condoled the loss of lives in the fire and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. "The news of the death of many passengers in the tragic incident of a bus catching fire in Haryana's Nuh district is extremely sad. I express my deepest condolences to the bereaved families and pray for the speedy recovery of all those injured," Murmu said in a social media post. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has expressed grief over the loss of lives and assured the best possible treatment for those injured.



#### FLANKS COVERED FOR THE BIG FIGHT



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party candidates JP Aggarwal, Udit Raj and Kanhaiya Kumar during a rally for Lok Sabha elections, in New Delhi, on Saturday



Twenty-five foreign diplomats from 13 countries, including the UK, Australia, Russia, Nepal, Bhutan, and Indonesia, attended today's jansabha of Modi as observers of Indian democracy

### Bullet to ballot, Bundelkhand turns a new leaf

**BISWAJEET BANERJEE** 

The political landscape of Bundelkhand has long been intertwined with the shadowy world of dacoits, where election outcomes were once dictated by those lurking in the ravines. What began as a symbiotic relationship between politicians and bandits evolved into a political dynasty, with

dacoit families entrenching themselves in the corridors of power. While some locals believe dacoits still exist, their threat has greatly reduced. Ram Niranjan, 49, recalls a brutal

attack on his home one dark night in August 2012 by the Babli Kol gang in Doda Mafi, a village in Chitrakoot, resulting in the deaths of six family members

However, since Kol was killed in a police encounter in 2019, Niranjan says peace has been restored, and for the first

safe enough to vote

"The worst is perhaps over, and this is the first Lok Sabha poll without the menace of dacoits. We will vote for law and order, an issue that, along with employment, affects the poor the most," he said. The dacoits and politicians

had a deeply intertwined relationship. Six out of seven districts in Bundelkhand, including Jhansi, Jalaun, Banda, Mahoba, Hamirpur, and

> Chitrakoot, were dacoit-infested. Figures like Dadua, Nirbhay Singh Gurjar, and Thokia rose to prominence,

declaring themselves rulers of the ravines. Over time, they transitioned from outlaws to political patrons, wielding significant influence Initially, politicians would

over electoral outcomes. seek bandit support to secure election victories. However, as time passed, dacoit progenies entered politics themselves. Dadua. infamous Chitrakoot, Mahoba, Banda, the head of Karvi block in time, his entire family feels



established a political legacy. Despite his death in a 2007 encounter, his son Veer Singh became an MLA from Chitrakoot, and his brother Bal Kumar Patel won the MP seat from Mirzapur. Even Dadua's nephew, Ram Singh, secured the Patti assembly

seat in Pratapgarh. Similarly, Ambika Patel alias Thokia's family ventured into politics. Thokia's aunt Sarita

was elected uncontested as

aunt, Savita, secured a spot in District Panchayat without opposition.
In 2007, Thokia's mother,

Pipariya Devi, contested the Naraini Assembly seat in Banda under the Rashtriya Lok Dal banner, rallying support in Thokia's name. Nirbhay Singh Gurjar wielded considerable influence over the politics of Garautha in Jhansi, as well as Jalaun and Bhoganipur, ensuring victories for his favored ensuring

stray cattle.

Another notable figure was Phoolan Devi from Gorha village in Jalaun district. Following the infamous Behmai incident in 1981, she gained national attention. In 1996, two years after her release from prison, the Samajwadi Party gave her a Lok Sabha ticket.

Phoolan triumphed in her first electoral contest, becoming an MP from Mirzapur, though she was later assassinated. "There might be some smaller

bandits still hiding somewhere, but due to hiding proactive policing, not many would muster the courage, said Prahlad Vishwakarma, a local carpenter. As Bundelkhand bids farewell to the era of dacoit-dominated politics, a new chapter unfolds, marking a transition from the ravines to the legislative chambers. On the ground, the focus has shifted

issues like unemployment and Continued on Page 2 | from a mother who can repeal

### **Star-studded lineup** for tomorrow's vote

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

 $F_{(\text{ensuring to satisfaction})}^{\text{rom}}$ to tustikaran (appeasement ), plotting to send Ram Lalla to tent again and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's retirement to scrapping of Citizenship Amendment Act, issues dominated these during campaigning for the fifth phase of the 2024 Lok Sabha to be held on May 20. The political fate of Rahul Gandhi, Smriti Irani, Chirag Piyush Paswan, Goval, Rainath Singh, Omar Abdullah, Ujjwal Nikam, Karan Bhushan Singh, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Rohini Acharya. will be decided in the fifth phase in 49 constituencies spread across eight States and Union Territories.

The voting will begin at 7 am on Monday and conclude at 6 pm. This phase will witness voter participation from 14 seats in Uttar Pradesh, 13 in Maharashtra, seven in West Bengal, five in Bihar, five in Odisha, three in Jharkhand, and one each in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Political rhetoric continued during the fifth phase campaigning by both the BJP and the Congress. During the campaign, Modi raised the issue of CAA, Muslim appeasement, Marxists economics and attacked the Congress, accusing it of indulging in "shameful"

politics and plotting to send "Ram Lala to tent" again. Modi said he has resolved to free India from the biggest

model of corruption, appeasement and dynastic politics. Addressing a public rally in Uttar Pradesh's Lalganj ahead of Phase 5 of the Lok Sabha elections, Modi asked, "Koi maai ka laal paida hua hai jo from dacoits to pressing

CAA ko khatam kar sakta

hai? ("Has anyone been born

CONSTITUENCY NO. OF SEATS Sitamarhi, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur, Saran, Hajipur (SC) Jammu & Kashmir Baramulla **LADAKH** 1 Ladakh 13 Dhule, Dindori, Nashik, Kalyan, Palghar, Bhiwandi, Thane, Mumbai North, Mumbai North-West, Mumbai North-East, Mumbai North-Central, Mumbai South-Central, Mumbai South Odisha Bargarh, Sundargarh, Bolangir, Kandhamal, Aska Uttar Pradesh Mohanlalganj (SC), Lucknow, Amethi, Rae Bareli, Jalaun, Jhansi, Hamirpur, Banda, Kaushambi (SC), Barabanki (SC), Faizabad, Kaiserganj, Gonda West Bengal Bangaon, Barrackpore, Howrah, Uluberia, Srerampore, Hooghly, Arambagh Chatra, Koderma, Hazaribagh Jharkhand

LOK SABHA ELECTION PHASE V SEATS

2024 LS voting concludes for States marked in red on May 20

the CAA?" Jo bhi taakat ikathi karni hai karlo, mai bhi maidan me hun, tum bhi maidan me ho...aap CAA nahi mita paoge (gather all the strength you want, I am here, you are also here. You won't be able to repeal CAA)," Modi challenged INDIA Bloc leaders. On the other hand, the

Congress and other Opposition parties claimed that if the BJP wins 400 seats, they change the Constitution while AAPconvener Arvind Kejriwal raised

the issue of Modi's retirement age saying Amit Shah will be next Prime Minister in an apparent move to create confusion among the BJP's voters.

will be one of the most

watched seats in the fifth

Affairs from the Bharativa Janata Party (BJP), Smriti Irani. Sharma has played a since The Amethi Lok Sabha constituency in Uttar Pradesh

Smriti Irani.

and Amethi.

significant role in Congress 1983 and instrumental in Sonia's victory in the Amethi Lok Sabha constituency in 1999. Continued on Page 2

phase of voting, due to the

uncertainty over who the

Congress will field from the

constituency against sitting MP and Union Minister

The Amethi constituency, formed in 1967 during the

delimitation of parliamentary

seats, encompasses five

Assembly segments: Tiloi, Salon, Jagdishpur, Gauriganj,

The Congress party has

announced Kishori Lal Sharma as its candidate against the sitting Member of

Parliament (MP) and current

Union Minister for Minority

# businessmen, claims Rahul pitched poll campaign

 $F^{
m ormer}$  Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday alleged that Narendra Modi led Central Government and his party BJP has only increased extortions and unemployment across the country. Addressing his first public rally for the May 25 Lok Sabha elections in Delhi, Rahul slammed Modi for not doing anything for the small businessmen but giving Rs 16 lakh crore to industrialists like Adani-Ambani.

Rahul said that their party will scrap the Agniveer scheme, simplify GST, and help small businessmen rather than big industrialists if they are voted to power. Senior leaders and Congress candidates from Chandni Chowk Lok Sabha seat Jai Prakash Agarwal, from the North West Delhi Udit Raj, Kanhaiya Kumar from the North East Delhi, DPCC President Devender Yadav were also present at the

He urged Congress workers and the Aam Aadmi Party to work together and ensure victory for their alliance on all seven Lok Sabha seats in the national capital. "It's interest-



ing that I'll vote for AAP and Arvind Kejriwal will vote for Congress in these elections,'

Under a seat-sharing arrangement between the two constituents of the INDIA bloc, the Congress has fielded candidates from three of the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi while the AAP is contesting the remaining four.

"Congress doesn't want 'darpok' leaders those who are joining BJP fearing CBI-ED action and only want 'Babbar Sher' said Rahul Gandhi. Rahul claimed that Narendra Modi is refusing to have a

debate with him as the prime

minister cannot answer ques-tions about his "links" with a

which was carrying 14 crew

members, all Pakistani on

Indian waters, 180 nautical

miles off the coast of

Porbandar, Gujarat. The joint

team of Gujarat ATS and

Narcotics Control Bureau

(Operations), New Delhi

recovered 78 boxes of contra-

band suspected to be Heroin

weighing roughly 86 Kgs worth

nearly Rs. 602 Crore in the

and crew were brought to

Porbandar for further legal

Operation was based on intelligence received by ATS Gujarat

that units in Rajasthan and

Gujarat are involved in the illic-

it manufacturing of psy-

chotropic substances such as

Mephedrone in liquid form has

been seized. The total value of

procedures.

how he "misused" electoral bonds. "PM Modi is giving non-stop interviews to his favourite journalists but he will not have a debate with me because he knows he cannot answer my questions," he said. Rahul Gandhi also hit out at the media, alleging they were 'friends of 2-3 industrialists" as they would either show Ambani weddings, Bollywood stars or Narendra Modi on their channels round the clock.

few favoured businessmen and

In his speech, the senior Congress leader also referred to his questioning by the

"Still, stringers and cameramen working for these media houses will vote for Congress

Enforcement Directorate. "They got me interrogated by ED for 55 hours till they got tired... They snatched my house, I told them I don't want your house as the entire country is my home," he said. On those joining the BJP,

Gandhi said he was fine with it. "We don't want 'darpok' (coward) leaders, we want Babbar Sher'. We don't want those who cower fearing CBI-ED action.'

Talking about Congress and INDIA bloc plans if they are able to form government, Rahul Gandhi said, "We will throw the Agniveer scheme in the dustbin, simplify GST and help small businessmen rather than big industrialists."

# Modi did nothing for small | Lone, Omar conclude high

Peoples Conference Chairman Sajad Lone Saturday concluded his electrifying poll campaign by sending out a loud and clear message to the electorate to send a public representative to the Indian Parliament who can fulfill their aspirations and not remain silent.

Lone also cautioned the voters against electing a National Conference candidate in the

National Conference Vice President and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is locked in a straight fight with Sajad Lone from the Baramulla Lok Sabha seat. The two other key players who can make or break the poll outcome are Abdul Rashid Sheikh, an Independent candidate currently lodged in Tihar jail and former PDP Rajya Sabha MP Fayaz Ahmad Mir.

Lone reminded the voters nine out of 10 times a National Conference candidate was elected from the North Kashmir Lok Sabha seat.

He said if you verify the records by filing an RTI application you



will not find any data on how many times these elected parliamentarians raised your issues on the floor of the Parliament and resolved them. "Today, the whole world is closely watching you. It is not me but you all who are facing an examination".

Lone said after 2009 these were very crucial elections. It is a fight between oppressors and the oppressed. Taunting Omar Abdullah he thundered, "I will be happier with your defeat than my victory. It will be a befitting tribute to my father and all those who were cheated by the National Conference in 1987".

'Your hands are drenched in blood. Referring to the histo-



ry, Lone claimed every time New Delhi and Kashmir came face to face you were never seen standing with the Kashmiris. You always supported New Delhi. You remember Kashmir only when you are out of power. While remaining in oower you are always against the Kashmiris".

On the other hand, Omar Abdullah winded up his campaign in Budgam. He attended an impressive roadshow and also addressed a public

Attacking the rival candidates and the tactical support extended to them by the Bharatiya Janta Party in the valley Omar saturday said, "We have not been able to understand yet

what the aim of the (home minister's) visit was because the BIP has not fielded candidates here. First, there was a rumor that he had come for a security review meeting but no meeting took place," Abdullah told reporters in the Magam area of Central Kashmir's Budgam dis-

Abdullah claimed Shah's visit was aimed at giving "directions to the administration, BJP and its 'B', 'C', D' and 'E' teams on how to defeat the National Conference".

These parties have come together to defeat the National Conference on the directions of the BJP, he said. "But, by the grace of God, people are with us and we will prove that on

'Don't you think it is strange that the person who used to claim till yesterday that he would win the elections, his aim has now changed? Today, the People's Conference does not talk of winning the elections, it talks about defeating Omar Abdullah.

This tells you that all these parties follow the BJP's instructions. Their only target is the Conference," National Abdullah said.

### ₹9,000 crore worth of cash, liquor, drugs seized in first four LS phases, announces EC



**RAJESH KUMAR** ■ NEW DELHI

With three phases of polling still left, the Election Commission (EC) on Saturday said it had seized nearly Rs.9,000 crore worth of cash, liquor, drugs, precious metals and other freebies in the two months since the Lok Sabha elections were announced. In 2019, the total zures during the elections was worth Rs.3,475 crore. The contribution of seizure of drugs is Rs. 3958 Crores which is 45% of total

Data shared by the EC highlights that out of the total seizures worth Rs.8,889 crore by agencies across the country, drugs accounted for 45% or Rs.3,958 crore. The agencies have also seized Rs.849.15 crore in cash, 5.39 crore litres of liquor worth Rs.814.85 crore, Rs.1,260.33 crore of precious metals and Rs.2,006.56 crore of freebies that would have been distributed among electors. The seizure of drugs, liquor, precious metals, freebies, cash influences elections in varying degrees, some flowing directly as inducement while others through reduced levels of circulation of money. This, thereby, adversely impacts linkages of proceeds of illegal activities to political campaigns.

These elections have witnessed a series of targeted actions against the menace of drugs. Other states apart from Gujarat, Maharashtra and Delhi have also shown seizures of drugs. On 17.04.2024 Noida Police busted drug factory in Greater Noida wherein 26.7 kg of MDMA drug valued at Rs. 150 Crore were seized and two persons of foreign origin were arrested. The seizures in other cohorts have equally been impressive and surpasses the entire seizures of 2019 Parliamentary Elections by a big margin. Meticulous and exhaustive planning stands at its base.

Gujarat had the highest amount of seizures among all states and Union Territories, with Rs.1,461.73 crore in total seizures. The amount reflects a recent operation by the Gujarat ATS, the Narcotics Control Bureau and the Indian Coast Guard that led to seizures of drugs worth Rs.892 crore in three days.

A joint force identified and intercepted a suspected Pakistani fishing boat, 'Alraza'

#### Modi changed country's political culture in ten years, says Nadda is roaming with the Under the leadership of PM

only," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi changed the political culture of the country from politics of divide and rule to that of report card in the past ten years with the mantra of ʻsabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishvas and sabka prayas," BJP president J P Nadda said on

Addressing a public rally at Rehan in the Kangra Lok Sabha constituency in support of BJP candidate Rajiv Bhardwaj, he said, "Politics of divide and rule was going on in the country for 70 years which has been converted in the past ten years to the politics of report card, where the elected representatives have to show their performance."

Dubbing the INDIA bloc an "alliance of families promoting dynastic politics and saving corrupt people," Nadda said that leaders of this alliance facing corruption charges are either on bail or in jail, and would go back to jail after the

"Congress leader Rahul Gandhi

Constitution written by B R Ambedkar, which clearly states no reservation in the name of religion but the Congress party in Andhra Pradesh tried four times to give reservation on the basis of religion and similar attempts are being made in Karnataka," he added.

Launching an attack on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Nadda said that Kejriwal used to sit on dharna in the Nirbhaya case but a woman was allegedly assaulted in his drawing room. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati

Maliwal was allegedly assaulted at the residence of CM Kejriwal a few days back.

When the economies of the USA and European countries were dwindling and the economy of China was retarding, India was looked upon as a "shining star and a ray of hope" with the economy jumping from 11th to 5th position.

Seeking votes for Bhardwaj, Nadda said that by ensuring the would become the third largest economy in the world in three Modi, today India is second in the sale of medicine and third largest exporter of toys and the mobile phones are also made in India, he said.

"I visited the state thrice during the monsoon disaster last year and the Union govern-ment gave a sum of Rs 1,782 crore besides funds for construction of 11,000 houses for victims and 2700 km of roads," Nadda said and asked if the roads and houses were constructed by the state govern-

About 12,000 km of roads were constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojna in Himachal Pradesh during the tenure of former chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, Nadda further said.

Referring to the developmental initiatives of the Modi government, Nadda said four crore house have been constructed for the poor and three crore more houses will be constructed in the next five years, the roofs of every household, hence electricity bills will be

### Campaigning ends for five LS seats, 35 Assembly segments in Odisha

**PTI** ■ BHUBANESWAR

The high-decibel campaigning ended on Saturday for five Lok Sabha seats and 35 assembly constituencies in Odisha, which will go to polls

Among the prominent candidates in the second round of simultaneous elections in the state are BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, and his colleagues in the state government Bikram Arukha, Niranjan Pujari, PK Amat, Tukuni Sahu, Rita Sahu and SP Navak.

Ex-union minister and Sundergarh's sitting MP Jual Oram, former Indian hockey captain Dilip Tirkey, former union minister and hotelier Dilip Ray, and BJP's four-time Lok Sabha MP Sangeeta Singh De are also in the fray in this round of elections.

Patnaik is seeking re-election from his home turf Hinjili and also contesting from the under the Bolangir Lok Sabha seat this time. Altogether 40 candidates are Altogether 79.62 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their franchise on May 20. The BJD had won Aska and Kandhamal Lok Sabha seats in 2019, while three others had gone to the BJP.

Kandhamal, Bolangir, Bargarh

and Sundergarh Lok Sabha

seats, while 265 are in the fray

for 35 assembly constituencies.

The state, during this round of electioneering, witnessed heavy-weights of the ruling BJD, and the opposition BJP and Congress canvassing for their respective candidates.

Prominent leaders, who campaigned during this round of elections, included Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president J P Nadda, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and its leader Rahul Gandhi.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chhattisgarh CM Bhajan Lal, Tripura's ex-CM Biplab Kumar Deb also hit the

During the campaigning, PM Modi launched a scathing attack on the chief minister, accusing him of destroying the Odia "Asmita" (pride). Patnaik termed the campaign

speeches by BJP leaders as derogatory and abusive". "Some chief ministers and

union ministers come as political tourists only at the time of elections and then they disappear," Patnaik told PTI Videos. Personal attacks by political leaders cutting across the par-ties dominated the campaign in the second phase of elections in the state, while issues like price rise and under-development were getting subdued. On the last of electioneering on

Saturday, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw campaigned for BJP's Jual Oram in Bonai, while BJP MP and actress Hema Malini hit the campaign trail for party candidates in Angul, Pallahara and Deogarh under the Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat. Former union minister and was seen canvassing for the party candidate in the Balasore

### **Star-studded lineup...**

Mephedrone. Joint teams of From Page 1

Gujarat ATS and NCB The Bahujan Samajwadi Party (Operations) Delhi conducted (BSP) has named Nanhe simultaneous raids at Amreli Singh Chauhan as their and Gandhinagar in Gujarat, candidate from Amethi. The Sirohi and Jodhpur in party hopes that Chauhan will Rajasthan on 27th April 2024, be able to garner the OBC and seized illicit manufacturing Nonia community votes, units involved in the producwhich is a significant segment tion of Mephedrone, a psyin the constituency. Amethi chotropic substance under the has historically been a bastion NDPS Act. In the ongoing of the Congress party, as it has operations, 10 individuals have lost this seat only thrice, in so far been detained and a total 1977, 1998, and recently in of 22 kgs of Mephedrone powder and 124 litres of Ending weeks of suspense on

The move to field Rahul from

Rae Bareli instead of Amethi -

his former bastion - took

many by surprise. Meanwhile,

the BJP has nominated three-

Legislative Assembly and

former Congress member

Dinesh Pratap Singh as its

Lok Sabha candidate from the

constituency. The Bahujan

general elections, has named

Thakur Prasad Yadav as its

candidate from Rae Bareli.

Yadav, who unsuccessfully

contested the UP Vidhan

Sabha elections in 2017 and

2022, will make his debut in

the lower house of Parliament

The Hajipur Lok Sabha

in

Bihar,

with this candidacy.

constituency

Member of the

the last day of filing of nominations for the Rae Bareli Lok Sabha the seized psychotropic subconstituency, Congress announced Rahul as its stance, Mephedrone is estimated to be around Rs. 230 crores in the international marcandidate. The decision put to rest rumours that his sister In another operation, Gujarat and party general secretary ATC, Indian Coast Guard and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra NCB seized 173 Kgs of Hashish would be the one to replace worth Rs. 60.5 Crore has been their mother Sonia from the party stronghold.

time

seized on 29 April. "The Commission has laid special emphasis on seizure of narcotics and psychotropic substances. Analysis of data found that states/UTs which used to be transit zones are increasingly becoming con-sumption territories," the EC said. The Commission led by CEC Sh. Rajiv Kumar along with ECs Sh. Gyanesh Kumar Samaj Party (BSP), contesting all Lok Sabha seats in UP and Sh. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu held meetings with DG, Narcotics Control Bureau to independently in the 2024 take up analytics-based proactive action for ensuring action by dedicated Nodal Officers of NCB. Similarly active involvement of DRI, Indian Coast Guard, State police and other agencies was ensured during ongoing elections. All these measures have led to significant seizures in two months post announcement of polls.

adjacent to Patna, is one of the State's 40 parliamentary seats and comprises six Assembly segments. Hajipur has been the political bastion of the late Ram Vilas Paswan, who hails from this region.

Paswan's electoral prowess was evident from his remarkable record of victory here, having been elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) from Hajipur an impressive eight times.In the upcoming elections, Ram Vilas Paswan's son, Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader Chirag Paswan, and Rashtriya Janata Dal's (RJD) Shiv Chandra Ram will face stiff competition.

Ladakh Lok constituency, the largest in the country in terms of area, will be privy to the first major electoral contest after it was carved out of Jammu and Kashmir and granted Union Territory status in 2019. Ladakh will vote on May 20. What was initially touted to be a two-way fight, a direct contest between the BJP and Congress, parliamentary seat is now a three-corner fight with an

alliance of local groups fielding an Independent to challenge the national parties. Over the last few months, Ladakh witnessed widespread shutdown as thousands participated in marches, advocating for Statehood and constitutional protections under the sixth schedule for the Union Territory. For the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP has nominated Tashi Gyalson, the chief executive councillor-cum-chairman of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (Leh), as its candidate for the seat, replacing incumbent Member Parliament Jamyang Tsering Namgyal.

The Congress has put forth

Tsering Namgyal as its contender. Adding a twist to the electoral dynamics, the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) has fielded Haji Haneefa Jan, the Kargil district president of the National Conference (NC). Historically, the Congress has clinched victory in the Ladakh constituency on six occasions. As per an agreement with the NC, they have nominated Tsering Namgyal, who serves as the Leader of the Opposition in the LAHDC, both of which are constituents of the INDIA Bloc and the Leh Apex Body.

For Karan Bhushan Singh, the 2024 Lok Sabha elections will be a battle of nerves. The Kaiserganj Lok Sabha constituency in Uttar Pradesh is one of the State's 80 Lok Sabha constituencies. comprises five Vidhan Sabha seats, including Payagpur, Kaiserganj, Katra Bazar, Colonelganj, and Tarabganj, and is scheduled for polling in the fifth phase on May 20. Historically, the constituency

has witnessed alternating periods of dominance by various parties, with the BJP currently enjoying momentum after winning the last two Lok Sabha elections in 2014 and 2019.

According to the Election Commission, 695 candidates are in the fray for the fifth phase of polling. This count emerged after scrutinising 1,586 nomination forms filed for the fifth phase, 749 of which were deemed valid after the May 3 deadline.

### **Bullet to ballot, Bundelkhand...**

There is widespread inflation and joblessness. People continue to migrate out," said Raja Bhiaya, a convener of NGO Vidya Dham Samiti. "People applied for Government jobs but paper leaks have dashed their hopes."

The region, rugged and water-starved, has seen efforts from the BIP Government to provide drinking water through the Har Ghar Nal scheme. However, locals report gaps in execution, with many pipes not connected to houses. A 'Jal Saheli' team surveyed 26 villages and found water supply remains problematic. While the BJP Government's free ration scheme has fared better, some still sell rice to buy wheat.

For Dalits, the 'Samvidhan' (Constitution) is a major issue, with concerns that a BJP majority could alter it to their detriment. The INDIA Bloc has capitalised on these fears, warning that another BJP term might jeopardise reservation benefits.

As Bundelkhand moves forward, it does so with cautious optimism, hopeful that its political evolution will bring lasting peace and development. Polling in the Bundelkhand region is on

### AIDE NABBED, KEJRIWAL...

From Page 1 He wrote,

"When the complainant asked Maliwal to leave the CM residence, not only was he abused and physically pushed by her, but she also threatened to implicate him in false cases. Since Maliwal has made unauthorised entry, trespassed, breached the security of the CM residence, prevented Government officers from discharging their duty and assaulted the complainant, she is liable for her action as per law."

Claiming that this can be BJP's conspiracy, he said, "You are requested to take appropriate legal action against Maliwal. Since it is election time, all

of this may have been done at the behest of the BJP and it is therefore requested that her call records, chats and interactions with BIP leaders should also be investigated." On the arrest, National

(NCW) chairperson Rekha Sharma said, "Kumar got arrested from his house. So the CM was giving shelter to alleged criminals." Kumar was also summoned

by the NCW to appear before it on Friday, at 11 am in the morning, which he ignored. An FIR was registered on

Thursday under sections 308 (Attempt to commit culpable homicide), 341 (Punishment for wrongful restraint), 354 D (Stalking), (Punishment criminal intimidation), and 509 (Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at

Civil Lines police station. Maliwal's MLC done at AIIMS hospital during the wee hours of Friday has also confirmed that she sustained injuries on her face and leg. Calling Kumar a parrot in which Kejriwal's soul

resides, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said, "It is extremely shameful that Kejriwal, by forgetting his decades-old relationship, is now tarnishing the character of his partner, Maliwal, who has been associated with him for more than two decades. Now that Kejriwal's aide Kumar has been arrested, the day is not far when many dirty pages of Kejriwal's politics will become public." He urged Kejriwal to come

forward and support Maliwal at a time when the entire AAP is trying to defame her. "If the AAP is trying to implicate Maliwal by showing edited videos, it would be better for the Delhi Police to immediately take complete CCTV footage of the Chief Minister's residence into its possession," Sachdeva said, reacting to videos of Maliwal in the residence of Kejriwal

### Modi slams INDIA Bloc in Capital rally

aunching a scathing attack Launching a scauning attack
on the Congress and INDIA Bloc, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing an election rally at Delhi's Shastri Park, took a jibe at the INDIA Bloc parties, saying those who had come to stop corruption, were now being jailed for "scams worth thousands of crores".

In his first rally in North East Delhi's Kartar Nagar, for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Modi said opposition INDIA Bloc can go to any extent in pursuing its "vote bank" politics, claiming that the then Congress Government during the 2014 elections had handed over 123 properties spread across prime locations in Delhi to the Waqf Board for votes. Modi slammed the Congress-AAP alliance in Delhi as opportunistic, saying the world is watching how one corrupt party is covering for another corrupt party.

He said the Congress that ruled the national Capital for decades have come to a level where they are can't compete on even four

This in relation to the Congress and AAP fighting the elections together on three-four seat sharing arrangement. "Four generations of Congress ruled in Delhi but now they are not capable of fighting on even four seats here," he said. The Prime Minister said Congress not even in position to fight from Lok Sabha seat that has their '10 Janpath Durbar'.

Modi said the Lok Sabha elections this year would be to save the poor from the powers who were conspiring to take away their assets and about making India one of the top three

economies of the world. "This is the best time for 21st





century Bharat. This is the time when Bharat is making a long jump towards development," Modi said

Modi asserted that if he has any heir, it is the 140 crore Indians for whose bright future he has dedicated himself.

His every moment is for the country and his life is dedicated to realising the dreams of its citizens, the prime ministers said while addressing the rally

in North-East Delhi. Though he made no direct reference, Modi's remarks came amid repeated claims of Delhi Chief Minister and AAP supre-

mo Arvind Keiriwal that he will

make way for Home Minister Amit Shah after he turns 75 next year. He has chosen Shah as his successor, Kejriwal has claimed, an assertion refuted by top BJP

leaders who have said Modi

will lead the party even after

Listing several signature projects, including the new Parliament building and the war memorial, Prime Minister Modi asserted that he lives and works hard for democracy. It is Modi in whose heart democracy is alive, he said, noting that his government has built a museum dedicated to all the Prime

This Congress-AAP alliance seems determined to destroy Delhi, he said, adding that its leaders are responsible for fall in political standards and breaking people's faith.
Those who arrived to root out

corruption are doing the rounds of jail in scams running into thousands of crores of rupees, Modi said in a swipe at Chief Minister Kejriwal.

Chief Minister Kejriwal.

The Congress, he said, would not tire of taking credit for exposing the AAP government's scams but its Delhi leaders were forced by the Gandhi family to join hands with the city's ruling party. with the city's ruling party.

Keeping up his attack on the opposition alliance for its alleged pro-Muslim politics, Modi said the Congress had joined hands with those advocating for "vote jihad" for its vote bank during the 2014 elections.

It was agreed that they would vote for the Congress, and its government in turn handed over the country's properties to the Waqf Board, he said.

These properties were spread across prime locations where a yard of land costs many lakhs of rupees, Modi said, claiming that the opportunist opposition alliance can incite violence for its appeasement politics.
Prime Minister Modi blamed

them (opposition) for the 2020 Delhi riots following the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, and noted that many people, mostly Dalits, who were persecuted in neighbouring countries were recently granted citizenship under the law.

The opposition alliance supports reservation on religious ground, restoration of Article 370 and abolition of India's nuclear bombs, he claimed.

### BJP fans brave blistering heat to attend Modi rally

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

The crowd broke into a loud cheer of "Modi ji ko jai shree Ram" as Prime Minister Narendra Modi came for a rally held in the national Capital on Saturday. Filled with enthusiasm and excitement, scores of BIP workers and supporters came to see him despite the temperature rising to 45 degrees Celsius.

Prime Minister held his first rally in North east Delhi's Kartar Nagar to support three candidates of the party in Delhi- North East Delhi candidate Manoj Tiwari, Chandni Chowk candidate Praveen Khandelwal and East Delhi candidate Harsh Malhotra.

With big heart shaped cut outs with "Abki bar 400 par" written on it, people clapped non stop to welcome PM Modi. A boy was seen standing in the middle holding in his hand a framed photo of PM with his mother. The crowd also had first time voters who were enthusiastically seated on their seats, filled with anticipation to see their 'hero' Prime Minister.

When asked about why they are here, Deepanshi, aged 18 vears who has just passed class 12, said, "We have been seated here since 3 pm in the afternoon. I am so excited to see Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He is an inspiration for the youth. I have just completed my 12th and will be looking to serve this nation by applying in government jobs. He made Ram Mandir for us and we are eager to visit the holy site. We will do it this



year it self."

A young boy Dev mentioned that he wants to join BJP to serve the nation. He said, 'PM Modi has brought Hindu pride back. He made Ram Mandir. He has done so much development in the country. I will vote for him only."

A small girl named Tulsi, aged 5 years old, held in her hand dearly a cut out of Prime Minister with "mai bhi hu Modi ka parivar" written on it. However, some were also seen using it as a fan because of the heat.

On being asked about why they have come here despite the scorching heat in the city, Amitabh Ahuja, resident of Pritampura, said, "To be honest we didn't know there will be so much heat today. But even if it was known, a glimpse of Modi is enough to bear heat. "He further said that he is not just voting for BJP on the face of Modi on May 25, when polling in Delhi is slated, "I am giving my vote to BJP's candidate because of the party's development work.

Of course PM Modi is a factor too but I feel the party has helped in the development of

the country."
Further, 14 people who got
through Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) were seated in the front row. A person who got his home in India finally after waiting for years held a poster that read "Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) Songs like "mai taiyar, tu tai-

yar, Modi abki 400 par" and "Modi ka parivar, dege 400 par" were also being played at the venure. People wore T-shirts saying "mai hu Modi ka parivar" and saffron caps.

A divyang supporter of PM

Modi was also present to witness him at the rally. He was waiting excitedly wearing party's scarf. Many supporters were seen sporting saffron turbans and T-shirts with Modi's photo at back.

Party flags were fluttered and despite the heat, people shout-ed "Jai Shree Ram", "Bharat Mata ki Jai" and "abki bar 400

### LK Advani, Manmohan Singh, Hamid Ansari, Murli Manohar Joshi cast votes from home

Former vice president Hamid Ansari, former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh, former deputy prime minister LK Advani and former Union minister Dr Murli Manohar Joshi have cast their votes using the home voting facility, the Delhi poll body said. The office of the chief electoral officer (CEO) of Delhi on Thursday kicked off the home voting facility for elderly vot-

ties (PwDs) and it will go on According to the data shared by the office, 1,409 voters cast their ballots from the comfort of their homes across all seven parliamentary constituencies in Delhi on Friday, which was

the second day of the facility being started. The West Delhi constituency reported the highest number of home votes, with 348 voters participating. Among them, 299 were elderly indi-

viduals. With the completion of the





voters have exercised their right to vote from home, the CEO office said.

"Former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh and for-mer Union minister Dr Murli Manohar Joshi successfully cast their votes on May 17 from their home availing home voting facility in the New Delhi parliamentary constituency," the office said.

Former vice president Mohammad Hamid Ansari cast his vote on Thursday, it minister LK Advani cast his vote on Saturday, sources said. On the first day, 1,482 voters exercised their franchise from home. A total of 5,406 voters across Delhi -- elderly individuals and PwDs -- have filled out Form 12D to avail of the home voting facility in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

This initiative ensures these voters can participate in the electoral process with ease and dignity, eliminating the need to visit polling stations. Delhi will go to polls on May

#### **Kejriwal dares** PM Modi to put AAP leaders in jail

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

In a direct challenge to the Prime Minister, AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday dared him to arrest all top AAP leaders who will be marching en masse to the BJP head-quarters on Sunday noon instead of picking them up one by one.

Addressing a press conference, Kejriwal said you people are seeing how these people are after the Aam Aadmi Party, jail one after the other. "They put me, Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain, Sanjay Singh in jail. Today my PA was put in jail. They are saying that they will put Raghav Chaddha, who has just returned from London, in jail. They are saying in a few days, Saurabh Bhardwaj and Atishi will also be put in jail, he added.

national convener, however, asserted that his party could not be crushed by sending its leaders to jail. Daring the Prime Minister to

Kejriwal, who is also the AAP

Kejriwal said, "I want to tell the Prime Minister, you are playing this 'Jail ka khel' by putting one person after the other in iail. Sometimes you put Manish Sisodia, sometimes Arvind Kejriwal, sometimes Sanjay Singh in jail. I am coming to BJP headquarters with all my big leaders, MLAs, MPs, everyone, at 12 noon tomorrow. Whoever you want to put in jail, put them in all at once. You think that you will crush Aam Aadmi Party by putting Aadmi Party is not going to be crushed like this. You try putting them in jail once and

"The AAP is an idea. For as many AAP leaders you jail, the country would produce leaders a hundred times more," Kejriwal said.

He claimed that the AAP's 'fault" was that its government in Delhi built good schools, set up Mohalla Clinics, provided free treatment and ensured free round-the-clock power supply in the city which the BJP could not do.

### Maliwal MLC report confirms her claims of injury in assault

A Medico Legal case (MLC) report of AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal on Saturday confirms her claims of being injured in an alleged assault by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's controversial aide and former PA Bibhav Kumar. As per the MLC report by the Jai Prakash Narayan Apex Trauma Centre at AIIMS, she suffered injuries to four parts of her body, including her left leg and below

Maliwal in an FIR registered at Civil Lines Police Station mentioned "slapped multiple times" and "hit her head on a sharp object after she was pushed" by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide and former PA Bibhav Kumar. The MLC reveals bruises on her face and leg.The test was conducted on Maliwal in the wee hours of Friday and the report was published the following day. The MLC certificate reveals "bruises over proximal left leg dorsal aspect of approx size 3x2 cm and right cheek elbow below



right eye of approx size 2x2 cm". It also stated that according to the "history provided by the patient" of being assaulted by Bibhav Kumar at the Chief Minister's residence, Maliwal was "slapped multiple times", and "hit her head on a sharp the accused. "Physical assault by one known person (Bibhav Kumar-PA to to CM of Delhi) at CM house, Delhi at 9:15 am on May 13. Patient complaints of being slapped multiple times after which she was pushed and comments: her head hit a sharp object. She fell on the floor and after that she was hit multiple times by legs over chest, abdomen and pelvis," it stated, while adding that the patient at present is complaining of pain over thighs, pelvis, neck stiffness and headache.

### Maliwal assault case sinister scheme of BJP: AAP

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Days after confirming the alleged assault by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's controversial aide, the AAP has now taken a uturn and claimed the alleged assault on its leader and Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal, claiming that this case is 'a sinister scheme of the BJP to destabilise the AAP government'.

AAP has asserted that the BJP is orchestrating a political conspiracy involving the former Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) Chairperson to undermine AAP in the upcoming Delhi elections on May 25.

Senior AAP leader and Delhi Minister Atishi claimed, "Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal, who is entangled in an alleged recruitment scam case, is being coerced by the BJP. It is using legal threats to pressure Maliwal into targeting the AAP and Arvind Kejriwal. With voting just five days away, the AAP urges police to investigate Swati Maliwal's connections with BJP leaders to uncover the

She stated that Maliwal is facing an alleged recruitment scam case from the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) that

truth.



has been going on for the last several years. "An FIR has also been filed against her. Now this case is close to ending. Therefore, it seems that the same formula of the BJP to file cases against different leaders must have been used on Maliwal. Perhaps she was made to do this by threatening her about the case going on against her in DCW," she said. She further added, "We have

आदमी

also said that Swati Maliwal's call records should be investigated. We have come to know from reliable sources that she has been in constant touch with BJP leaders for the last few months. Delhi Police should

investigate what kind of political conspiracy is this, which is being hatched to attack AAP and Arvind Kejriwal just 5 days before the elections in Delhi. There should be a thorough investigation into how Maliwal is in contact with the

Ms. Atishi mentioned that the BJP does everything clearly and said, "Like other opposition leaders, BJP has adopted the same formula in the Swati Maliwal case as well. First a case is filed against her by the ACB, FIR is registered, it is under investigation now. Now through this case, this conspiracy has been hatched by Maliwal. She is made a pawn of this conspiracy just before the Additionally, Senior AAP Leader and Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj pointed to a video showing Maliwal threatening security personnel, which he said is "contradicting her claims of victimhood." On Tuesday, senior AAP leader

and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh had said that Kumar did misbehave with Maliwal and that Kejriwal is taking cognisance against it. Bharadwaj said, "When any woman makes such an allegation, people sympathise with her. When Swati Maliwal made this allegation for the first time, we also sympathised with her. Maliwal said that she was slapped, kicked and punched, her clothes were torn and somehow she managed to escape by saving herself. She said this on May 13." Refuting her claims by a video that surfaced on social media showing her sitting on a couch and arguing with the security personnels, Baradwaj said, "A video of Kejriwal's drawing room of May 13 has surfaced, in which two policemen and a female policeman are standing

in safari suits. These are the

CM's security personnel. In the

video, she is seen misbehaving

with those police personnel.

She is saying that I will get your

uniform removed. She is also

seen using abusive language for Bibhav Kumar. Her clothes are looking fine in the video. She is sitting comfortably on the sofa and is commanding. She does not look like she is suffering or making any noise." Further he said that in another video, security personnel are seen escorting Maliwal outside the CM's house, in which she looks fine. "Another video of May 13 has surfaced,

case against Maliwal is pending

in the court, a lot of pressure

would have been put on her by

in which security personnel escorted her outside the CM's house. In that video too, she looks fine and is walking well. In her alleged conversation on May 13, even after so much beating, she is walking fine," he said Challenging the BJP claims of not being in touch with her, he

said, "I was listening to BJP President JP Nadda. He is saying that no BJP leader is in touch with her. I challenge the BIP. It has all the investigation agencies. Get all the WhatsApp and FaceTime calls of Maliwal investigated by those agencies. Senior BJP leaders are in touch become public. The BJP leader also said it is with Swati Maliwal. JP Nadda hiding also knows this," he said, adding that the way an ACB

### BJP accuses AAP leaders of circulating edited videos

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP on Saturday Accused AAP leaders of circulating "edited" videos to tarnish the image of their own party MP Swati Maliwal, who has accused an aide of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of assaulting her.

Reacting to Swati Maliwal and Bibhav Kumar arrest issue, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Saturday said it is extremely shameful that Arvind Kejriwal, by forgetting his decades-old relationship, is now tarnishing the character of his partner, Maliwal, who has been associated with him for more than two decades.

Sachdeva said now that Keiriwal's aide Kumar has been arrested the day is not far when many dirty pages of Arvind Kejriwal's politics will

surprising that Kejriwal was Kumar in his own house which clearly shows how personally close are the two. Sachdeva said it is regrettable that since Friday, edited videos were being circulated in social media groups in an attempt to



defame Swati Maliwal, a member of the Aam Aadmi Party(AAM).

He also said team Kejriwal is now talking about protocol for Maliwal's meeting with the Chief Minister but she is the same person who was so close to him just three months ago that she was made a member of the Rajya Sabha. The BJP is a major political party, but none of our MPs have to follow any protocol to meet the state president, he added.

The BJP demands that if the AAP is trying to implicate Maliwal by showing edited videos, it would be better for the Delhi Police to immediately take complete CCTV footage of the Chief Minister's residence into its possession.

Sachdeva said Kumar is not just a supporter or aide of Chief Minister Kejriwal he is also the perpetrator of his good and bad deeds, and he is a parrot in which Kejriwal's soul resides. Kejriwal knows that if any action is taken against Kumar, he can open many misdeeds. and that's why Kejriwal had to hide him in his own home, state BIP chief claimed. Sachdeva said Maliwal is not the first female leader whom

the Kejriwal party has defamed or accused. Earlier, they have also raised questions about the deceased colleague Santosh Koli, apart from Kiran Bedi, Shazia Ilmi, and Richa Pandey who have all left Kejriwal due to his insulting behavior towards women colleagues.

### India, UK undertake comprehensive review of Roadmap 2030

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

India and United Kingdom undertook a comprehensive review of the India-UK 'Roadmap 2030' during Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra's two-day visit to London, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said here on Saturday.

The two sides also agreed to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in areas of trade, defence and security, science and technology and people-topeople exchanges.

The foreign secretary visited the UK from May 16 to 17 to attend the 16th round of

(FOC) between the two sides. In 2021, India and the UK adopted a 10-year roadmap t o expand ties in the key areas of trade and economy, defence and security, climate change and people-to-people connections among others.

At the FOC, the foreign secretary held talks with Sir Philip Barton, the permanent undersecretary at the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO).

Kwatra also held meetings with Minister of State (Foreign Office) Lord Tariq Ahmad, MoS for Defence Procurement James Cartlidge, NSA Sir Tim Home



Rycroft, Chief Trade Negotiator Crawford Falconer and Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to the UK prime minister, John Bew.

The MEA said both sides discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and regional and global issues of mutual interest.

"The foreign secretary and permanent under-secretary undertook a detailed review of the Roadmap 2030," it said. "Welcoming good progress across all pillars, they underscored their interest to raise the level of ambition and agreed to further strengthen bilateral cooperation including in trade

security, science and technology, people-to-people ties and mobility, energy, and climate change, as well as health," the MEA said in a statement.

It said India and the UK share a comprehensive strategic partnership which has been strengthened across all domains through regular highlevel political exchanges and meetings of bilateral institutional mechanisms. The India-UK relationship was elevated to the comprehensive strategic partnership in May 2021.

The two sides are currently negotiating a free trade agreement. Both sides are also keen to expand cooperation in the

liaison officer at the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre (IFC) that has emerged as a key hub in tracking movements of ships and other developments in the Indian Ocean region. The UK joined a select group of countries such as the US, Australia, Japan and France to depute officials at the

Gurugram-based facility. The Indian Navy established the IFC-IOR in 2018 to effectively keep track of the shipping traffic as well as other critical developments in the region under a collaborative framework with like-minded coun-

### India asks its students to stay indoors in Kyrgyzstan after clashes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI** 

Taking cognisance of violence in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, India on Saturday asked its students there to stay indoors after the Kyrgyzstan capital city reported clashes between some locals and foreigners. There are about 15,000 Indian students there. Pakistan also issued a similar advisory to its students in Bishkek.

The Indian embassy said it is in touch with the Indian students and the situation is "calm" now. The mission asked Indian students in the city to stay indoors.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar advised the Indian students to stay in regular touch with the Indian embassy. "Monitoring the welfare of Indian students in Bishkek. Situation is reportedly calm now. Strongly advise students to stay in regular touch with the Embassy," he said in a post on

The Indian embassy said, "We are in touch with our students. The situation is presently calm but students are advised to stay

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform general public that Mr. Vrinder Singh acquired the Property Bearing No. 347, Land area measuring 25 sq. yards., with all roof rights, out of Khasra No. 16/6, situated in the area of Village Keshopur and the Colony known as Guru Nanak Nagar, New Delhi 11018 by way of Relinquishment Deed dated 15.02.2024. Now, Mr. Virinder, Singh is intending to sell above said Naminguishment Deed dated 19,22024, Now, Vinider Singh is intending to sell above said property to Mrs. Rashmi and Mrs. Sangita Devi Further, Mrs. Rashmi, Mrs. Sangita Devi and Mr. Rajiv availing loan on above said property from Art Housing Finance (India) Limited & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 7 days of this publication to Mr. Pramod Kumar Singh Assessment Levi Seurce, Lieft Mrs. 2011, 2011 (Advocate), Law Source, Unit No. S-2-U, 2nd Floor, built on Plot no. 4 and 5, Ansal Utility Commercial Center, Paschim Vinar, New Delhi-110063 or contact at +91 9560309909 (M).

### THE PIONEER (

#### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Gunjan D/o Sunil kumar R/o 131 Kh. NO. 14/11,G-Block Swaroop Nagar, libas pur Po :Samai pur, Dist : North west Delhi -110042 have changed my name to Gunjan d/o Sunil Kumar. I shall be known as Gunjan Kumari d/o Sunil Kumar for all future purposes.

I, Yash S/o Sunil kumar R/o 131 Kh. NO. 14/11, G-Block Swaroop Nagar, libas pur Po :Samai pur, Dist: North west Delhi-110042 have changed my name to Yash S/o Sunil Kumar. I shall be known as Yash Kumar S/o Sunil Kumar for all future purposes.

PD(457)A

I, Shabana Parveen W/o Rahis Ahmed R/o C-79. Sector-25, Rohini Delhi-110085 hereby declare that I have changed my name Shabana Parveen Shabana permanently.

PD(458)C I, Rahis Ahmed Salmani S/o

Mohd Umar R/o C-79, Sector-25, Rohini Delhi-110085 hereby declare that I have changed my name Rahis Ahmed Salmani to Rahis Ahmed permanently.

PD(459)C I, Shivam Garg. S/o Sh. Padam Kumar Garg R/o B-76, B-Block Ashok Nagar, Ghaziabad UP, hereby declares that my father's name is Padam Kumar Garg, and that wherever the term Padam Garg appears, it is incorrect, and that he shall be known exclusively as Padam Kumar Garg for all future purposes.

PD(460)A

get in touch with the Embassy in case of any issue.'

Police in riot gear were deployed in part of Kyrgyzstan's capital overnight as large crowds gathered in anger over an alleged fight between local and foreign people, The Times of Central Asia reported.

The incident appeared to reflect tension over the presence of migrants, many from South Asia, in Kyrgyzstan, it said. Pakistan's mission said a few hostels of medical universities in Bishkek, where students from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan reside, have been

attacked amid the violence.

Reacting to the situation, the Kyrgyz Foreign Ministry said in the wake of the violence, "law enforcement agencies took prompt measures to detain persons involved in the event, both foreign citizens and citizens of Kyrgyzstan".

It said the situation was "completely under the control of law enforcement agencies" and said

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given to the general publi at large that Mr. Tarun Arora is the owner o Property No. 2/137, (Block No. 2 & Qtr. No.

Propérty No. 2/137, (Block No. 2 & Qtr. No. 137), area measuring 100 sq. yards, situated in the layout plan of Geeta Colony, Jheel Kuranja, Delhi-110031 known as said property by virtue of Sale Deed dated 12.03.2024 executed by Mr. Sanjeev Bhatia & Mr. Ankit Bhatia in favour of Mr. Tarrun Arora, duly registered as Doc No. 2024/4/I/2466, Book No. 1.Vol. No. 11119, Page nos. 109-128, regd. on 16.03.2024 in SRO-East Geeta Colony, Now Mr. Tarrun Arora is the undisputed

16.03.2024 in SRO-East Geeta Colony Now Mr. Tarun Arora is the undisputed owner of the said property. ICICI Bank Ltd. is intending to create a registered/equitable mortgage over the said property. In case any person, Financial Institute/Bank/Authority/Board or any other entity has any objection or vested interest over the said property, they may contact the undersigned within 14 days of this publication. It may be further noted that after the lapse of the aforesa period no claim in any manner shall be entertained and the same will be considered as waived or abandoned.

D/8779/201 ffice: Gadi & Associates,A-4, Westend Colon New Delhi-110021, +91-88000022

the date of receipt of the said notice.

Date: May 18, 2024

Place: Dehli/ NCR (Noida & Gurgaon)

indoors for the moment and "there are no seriously injured people among the participants of the incident". The Ministry went on to say that it did not receive information that any foreign citizen was injured in the violence.

Earlier in the day, the Indian Embassy in Kyrgyzstan tweeted, "We are in touch with our students. The situation is presently calm, but students are advised to stay indoors for the moment and get in touch with the Embassy in case of any issue. Our 24—7 contact number is 0555710041."

In its advisory posted on social media, Pakistan's Embassy in Bishkek said the matter escalated after videos of a fight between Kyrgyz and Egyptian students on May 13 went viral online on Friday.

"A few hostels of medical universities in Bishkek and private residences of international students, including Pakistanis,

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for public information that QRG Medicare

Limited (Marengo Asia Hospitals, Faridabad), Plot No. 1,

Sector 16, Faridabad-121002 is destroying patient

medical records (excluding MLC, Death, ongoing court

cases and KTP, LTP patients and New born baby IPD

files) from October 2016 to March 2018 as per the

Any patient/relative of the patients or any other person

related to the patient who desires to preserve the

indoor patient Medical Record for future references are requested to contact the medical record department

of the hospital for the same at Basement, Block-C, QRG

Medicare Limited (Marengo Asia Hospital, Faridabad),

or on 9467816025. 0129-4330000 or email to

**QRG Medicare Limited** (Marengo Asia Hospitals, Faridabad) Plot No. 1, Sector-16, Faridabad, Haryana 121002

21 beautiful years from 19.05.1980

And your wonderful, loving presence

You are Always in our hearts

Gun Nidhi & Manju Kapur Dalmia Agastya, Katyayani & Maya

We've been blessed to have your Laughter

Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)

Branch

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

mrd@marengoasia.com on or before 18th June 2024.

hospital policy and other regulatory norms

By Order: Medical Director

Amba....

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction

of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand

notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general

that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else

the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited shall Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi-110005

Rainbow memories

Every precious moment

Amba's friends and family



have been attacked. The hostels are inhabited by students from Pakistan Bangladesh," it said.

"There have been reports of light injuries to a number of students from Pakistan. Despite social media posts about the alleged death and rape of Pakistani students, so far, we have not received any confirmed reports."

The Embassy further said Pakistani students have been asked to "stay indoors until the situation returns to normal", adding that the violence appeared to be directed against all foreign students, and not iust Pakistanis. There are about 10,000 Pakistani students in the Central Asian nation current-

Meanwhile, Pakistan's

Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, Hasan Zaigham said authorities were liaising with local law enforcement in Bishkek to ensure the safety of students. Pakistan Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif has also expressed "deep concerns" over the situation in Bishkek, saying he has directed the country's envoy in Bishkek to "provide all necessary help and assistance"

social media, the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party posted several videos, in which a mob was seen walking and running on a road at night.

#### **NORTHERN RAILWAY** LASSIFIED

#### NOTICE

I am Neha Upadhyay W/o Mr. Manish Kumar Upadhyay Resident of P-099, Tower M,14th Avenue, Gaur City2, Sector - 16 C Greater Noida West, Surajpur I.A.Surajpur Gautam Buddha Nagar U.P. 201306 - Inform that in some records my name is mentioned as Neha Singh. Now after my marriage I have taken the surname of my husband and changing my name from Neha Singh to Neha Upadhyay. In future, I should be known and recognized by this name.

#### **OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE**

The Sr. Divisional Engineer-II, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender fo

NIT-27 Name of work: Dewatering of LHS in the section of SSE/PWAY/ SMQL under ADEN/SMQ
Approx. Cost of work: As per NIT or IREPS Earnest Money to be Deposited: As per NIT or IREPS

2. NIT-28 Name of work: Dewatering of LHS in the section of SSE/PWAY/BTU under ADEN/SMQL Approx. Cost of work: As per NIT or IREPS Earnest Money to be Deposited: As per NIT or IREPS

Date & Time of submission of tender bid 28.05.2024 to 11.06.2024 15:00 Hrs Date & Time of opening 11.06.2024 15:00 Hrs

Website particulars where complete

details of tender documents can be seen. • The tender documents can be seen.

• The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system. • For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. • No manual offers are acceptable. • Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only. No. NIT-27 & 28-24-25-W-II Dated:-17.05.2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Format C-1 (for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name and address of candidate: KANHAIYA KUMAR, S/o Lt JAY SHANKAR SINGH, House no. 50, Masnadpur, Bihat, Begusarai, Bihar - 851135

Name of political party: **INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS** 

(Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)

Name of Election: GENERAL ELECTION TO LOK SABHA 2024

\*Name of Constituency: 02 - NORTH EAST DELHI PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

I KANHAIYA KUMAR (name of candidate), a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

SI. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and dated	Status of case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1	AS PER LAST INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF FILING THIS FORM, CASE IS IN INVESTIGATION PHASE UNDER SDJM (SADAR NO. 2), KAMRUP (M), DISTRICT GUWAHATI	FIR NO. 55/2024	CASE IN INVESTI- GATION PHASE & CHARGES NOT FRAMED	- CASE REGISTERED U/S 120B/143/147/ 283/353/332/333/188/427 IPC ALONGWITH SEC. 3 OF PREVENTION OF DAMAGE TO PUBLIC PROPERTY ACT, 1984 ALLEGED UNLAWFUL DEVIATION & ALLEGED ASSAULT ON POLICE BY INC MEMBERS DURING "BHARAT JODO NYAY YATRA" IN GUWAHATI
2	COURT OF ADDITIONAL CJM-IST CLASS, BEGUSARAI	FIR NO. 34/2019 & GR NO. 1069/2019	CHARGES NOT FRAMED	- CASE REGISTERED U/S 188 IPC - ALLEGED ROLE IN VIOLATION OF MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT DURING 2019-GENERAL ELECTIONS (ALLEGED RALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION)
3	COURT OF ADDITIONAL CJM-1ST CLASS, BEGUSARAI	FIR NO. 73/2019 & GR NO. 1397/2019	CHARGES NOT FRAMED	- CASE REGISTERED U/S 188/171H IPC - ALLEGED ROLE IN VIOLATION OF MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT DURING 2019-GENERAL ELECTIONS (ALLEGED POSTER WITHOUT PERMISSION)
4	JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE-I, CIVIL COURT, BEGUSARAI, BIHAR	FIR NO. 53/2019 & GR NO. 1046/2019	CHARGES NOT FRAMED	- CASE REGISTERED U/S 188/171H IPC - ALLEGED ROLE IN VIOLATION OF MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT DURING 2019- GENERAL ELECTIONS (ALLEGED RALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION BY CPI DISTRICT IN-CHARGE)
5	AS PER LAST INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF FILING THIS FORM, PENDING BEFORE THE COURT OF SUB-JUDGE XV, PATNA.	FIR NO. 856/2018	CHARGES NOT FRAMED	- CASE REGISTERED U/S 143/353/379 /504/ 506 IPC - ALLEGED MISCONDUCT WITH DOCTOR-ON-DUTY AT AIIMS-PATNA - THE CANDIDATE IS UNAWARE WHETHER THE FIR HAS BEEN FORMALLY REGISTERED WITH A CASE NUMBER BY THE COURT.
6	COURT OF CJM BEGUSARAI	FIR NO. 214/2018 & GR NO. 4533/2018	CHARGES NOT FRAMED	- CASE REGISTERED U/S 147/149/341/323/307/504/295 IPC - ALLEGED ASSAULT BY CANDIDATE & ASSOCIATES ON CIVILIANS, OBSTRUCTION OF ROADS, & ATTEMPT TO STOP DURGA PUJA CEREMONY. THE CANDIDATE HAS BEEN DISCHARGED & THIS CASE HAS BEEN MENTIONED AS A MEASURE OF ABUNDANT CAUTION.
7	KIRAN GUPTA, ADD'L. SESSIONS JUDGE PATIALA HOUSE COURTS, NEW DELHI	FIR NO. 0110/2016 & CASE NO. 116/2022	CHARGES NOT FRAMED	- CASE REGISTERED U/S 124A/143/147/149/323/120B IPC - ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN ALLEGEDLY SEDITIOUS SLOGANEERING BY STUDENTS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

Maximum Punishment Imposed

NOT APPLICABLE

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Neeraj Malhotra/ Sonia Malhotra/ LBDEL00002098030 Flat No. E-203, 2nd Floor, Tower- E, Capital Gateway, Sector 111, Revenue Estate Of Village Chauma, Haryana Gurgaon- 122101/ May 16, 2024

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited. Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number Description of Property/

**Date of Symbolic Possession** 

Plot No.- A- 54 And A- 55, Old Vidhyadhar Nagar, Jaipur Rajasthan-302012/ May 15, 2024 Mohammad Ajij/ Salim Bano/ Yusuf Ali-January 04, 2024 Jaipur/ Delhi LBJA100004964649 25,34,215.00/-The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publicatic the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: May 18, 2024

\*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of the name of the constituency

no.

order(s)

Name of Court & date(s) of

NOT APPLICABLE

Description of

.offence(s) &

punishment imposed

NOT APPLICABLE

Authorized Officer ICICI Bank Limited

### Ukraine's mobilisation law comes into force | Singapore seeing

### ... as a new Russian push strains front-line troops

divisive mobilisation law in Aukraine came into force on Saturday, as Kyiv struggles to boost troop numbers after Russia launched a new offensive that some fear could close in on Ukraine's second-largest

The legislation, which was watered down from its original draft, will make it easier to identify every conscript in the country. It also provides incentives to soldiers, such as cash bonuses or money toward buying a house or car, that some analysts say Ukraine cannot afford.

Lawmakers dragged their feet for months and only passed the law in mid-April, a week after Ukraine lowered the age for men who can be drafted from

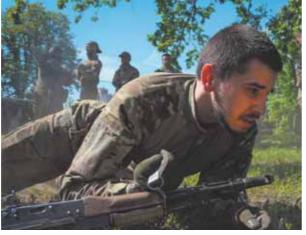
The measures reflect the growing strain that more than two

years of war with Russia has had on Ukraine's forces, who are trying to hold the front lines in fighting that has sapped the country's ranks and stores of weapons and ammunition. Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy also signed two other laws Friday, allowing prisoners to join the army and increasing fines for draft dodgers fivefold. Russia enlisted its prisoners early on in the war, and personnel shortages compelled Ukraine to adopt the page macause. adopt the new measures.

Russian troops, meanwhile, are pushing ahead with a ground offensive that opened a new front in northeastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region and put further pressure on Kyiv's overstretched military.

After weeks of probing, Moscow launched the new push knowing that Ukraine suffered personnel shortages, and that its forces have been



Newly recruited soldiers of the 3rd assault brigade train in Kyiv, Ukraine on Friday. A divisive mobilisation law in Ukraine came into force on Saturday, as Kyiv

spread thin in the northeast. Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday during a visit to China that the Russian push aims to create "a buffer

zone" rather than capturing Kharkiv, the local capital and Ukraine's second-largest city. Still, Moscow's forces have pummelled Kharkiv with

strikes in recent weeks, hitting civilian and energy infrastructure and prompting angry accusations from Zelenskyy that the Russian leadership sought to reduce the city to

On Friday, Mayor Ihor Terekhov said that Russian guided bombs killed at least three residents and injured 28 others that day.

Moscow denies deliberately targeting civilians, but thousands have died or suffered injuries in the more than 27 months of fighting. The US last week announced a

new USD 400 million package of military aid for Ukraine, and President Joe Biden has promised that he would rush badly needed weaponry to the country to help it stave off Russian advances.

Still, only small batches of US military aid have started to trickle into the front line, according to Ukrainian military commanders, who said it will take at least two months before supplies meet Kyiv's needs to hold the line. Thousands of Ukrainians have

fled the country to avoid the draft since Russia's all-out invasion in February 2022, some risking their lives as they tried to swim across a river separating Ukraine from neighbouring Romania and Hungary. Late on Friday, Ukraine's bor-

der service said that at least 30 people have died trying to cross the Tisza River since the full scale-invasion. Romanian border guards days

earlier retrieved the nearnaked, disfigured body of a man that appeared to have been floating in the Tisza for days, and is the 30th known casualty, the Ukrainian agency said in an online statement. It said the man has not yet been

# COVID-19 wave

Singapore is seeing a new COVID-19 wave as the authorities recorded more than 25,900 cases from May 5 to 11 even as Health Minister Ong Ye Kung on Saturday advised the wearing of masks again.

"We are at the beginning part of the wave where it is steadily rising," said Ong. "So, I would say the wave should peak in the next two to four weeks, which means between mid- and end of June," The Straits Times newspaper quoted the minister as saying. The Ministry of Health (MOH)

said the estimated number of COVID-19 cases in the week of May 5 to 11 rose to 25,900 cases, compared with 13,700 cases in the previous week. The average daily COVID-19

hospitalisations rose to about 250 from 181 the week before. The average daily intensive care unit (ICU) cases remained low at three cases, compared with two cases in the previous

The MOH said that to protect hospital bed capacity, public hospitals have been asked to reduce their non-urgent elective surgery cases and move suitable patients to transitional care facilities or back home through Mobile Inpatient Care@Home, an alternative inpatient care delivery model that offers clinically suitable patients the option of being hospitalised in their own homes instead of a hospital ward. Ong urged those who are at greatest risk of severe disease including individuals aged 60 years and above, medically vulnerable individuals and residents of aged care facilities, to receive an additional dose of the COVID-19 vaccine if they have not done so in the last 12

of Levice and seized a comput-

er and some documents, Markiza, a Slovak television station reported. Police didn't

With police remaining largely

silent about the case, it was not

clear how the suspect came to

Slovakia has strict rules on firearms and gun owners must

As a consequence, Slovakia has one of the lowest gun own-

ership rates in Europe. It was

ranked 23rd out of 27

European Union countries with

a gun ownership rate of 6.5 per 100 people, according to the Association of Accredited Public Policy Advocates to the

World leaders have condemned

the attack and offered support

Fico has long been a divisive

figure in Slovakia and beyond.

for Fico and Slovakia.

comment.

possess a firearm.



### Malaysian man kills two cops

AP KUALA LUMPUR

The man who attacked a The man who according to Malaysian police station and killed two officers was a recluse and is believed to have acted on his own despite suspected links to the Jemaah Islamiyah extremist group, the country's home minister said Saturday.

The man stormed the police station in southern Johor state near Singapore in the early hours of Friday with a machete. He hacked a police constable to death and then used the officer's weapon to kill another. He wounded a third officer before being shot dead. Police initially said the man could have attempted to take firearms from the station.

Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution called it a "lone wolf attack" based on an initial investigation and said there was no threat to the wider public.

"We have established that the attacker acted on his own ... a lone wolf driven by certain motivation and his own understanding," Saifuddin said. "His action is not linked to any larger mission." Police have said the man's father was a known member of Jemaah Islamiyah, a Southeast Asian network linked to al-Qaida, and that with his neighbors.

they found materials linked to the group in their home. Seven people including the man's parents and three siblings were detained and police said they were searching for some 20 Jemaah Islamiyah members in

The incident sparked concerns over a possible wider threat, prompting Singapore to issue a warning to its citizens to be vigilant when traveling to Johor. Police initially said the attacker was 34, but Saifudin later said he was 21 years old, with no criminal record. He said the man did not interact much

### Flash floods kill 86 in Afghanistan

**AP** ISLAMABAD

 $F^{lash \ floods \ from \ heavy \ seasonal \ rains \ have \ killed \ at \ least \ 68 \ people \ in \ Afghanistan,$ Taliban officials said Saturday, adding the death toll was based on preliminary reports. Afghanistan has been witnessing unusually heavy seasonal rains.

In the hard-hit western province of Ghor, 50 people were reported dead, said Abdul Wahid Hamas, spokesman for the provincial governor. He also said the province has suffered significant financial losses after thousands of homes and properties were damaged and hundreds of hectares of agricultural land destroyed following Friday's floods, including the capital city Feroz Koh.

Meanwhile, 18 people in the northern province of Farayab were killed and two others injured on Friday, according to Esmatullah Moradi, the provincial governor's spokesman. Damages to property and land were reported across four districts and over 300 animals were killed, he

#### Slovak PM is stable after 'miracles' in hospital; suspect appears in court suspect to his home in the town

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico 's condition was serious but stable Saturday as the man accused of trying to assassinate him faced his first court appearance.

Two hours of surgery Friday to remove dead tissue from Fico's multiple gunshot wounds led to a good prognosis for his recovery but he was still not well enough to travel to a hospital in the capital, Bratislava, government ministers said outside University F D Roosevelt Hospital in Banska Bystrica, where Fico was taken by helicopter after the shoot-

"Several miracles have occurred in Banska Bystrica in recent days coming from the hands of doctors, nurses and the personnel at the Roosevelt Hospital," Defence Minister Robert Kalinak said.

Fico, 59, was attacked as he greeted supporters following a government meeting Wednesday in the former coal mining town of Handlova. The suspect was tackled to the ground and arrested.

The update on Fico's health was issued as the man accused of attempting to assassinate him guard in the country's south-



A car supposedly carrying the suspect, in shooting of Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico, arrives at court in Pezinok, Slovakia on Saturday. Officials in Slovakia say Prime Minister Robert Fico has undergone another operation two days after his assassination attempt and remains in serious condition

made his first court appearance, according to Slovak state

Prosecutors were seeking an order from Slovakia's Specialised Criminal Court to detain the suspect.

Prosecutors told police not to publicly identify the man or release other details about the case, but unconfirmed media reports said he was a 71-yearold retiree known as an amateur poet who may have once worked as a mall security

Government authorities gave details that matched that description. They said the suspect didn't belong to any political groups, though the attack itself was politically motivated. The courthouse in Pezinok, a small town outside the capital, Bratislava, was guarded by officers wearing balaclavas and carrying rifles. News media were not allowed in and reporters were kept behind a gate outside. Police on Friday had taken the

His return to power last year on a pro-Russia, anti-American platform led to worries among fellow European Union and NATO members that he would abandon his country's pro-Western course, particularly on Ukraine.

### Pakistan, IMF to hold talks on fresh bailout package

PTI ISLAMABAD

 $P^{akistan, \ seeking \ a \ fresh }_{USD \, 6 \, billion \, to \, USD \, 8 \, bil-}$ lion loan package from the IMF, will hold talks with officials from the Washingtonbased lender to discuss the terms of the fresh bailout for the cash-strapped country, according to a media report on Saturday

An IMF support team has reached Pakistan to hold talks regarding its request for a fresh bailout package under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF). Pakistan has made a formal request for a fresh bailout package of USD 6 to USD 8 billion under the EFF with the possibility to be augmented through climate finance. If successful, it would be the 24th IMF bailout programme

'Right now, a mission team led by Nathan Porter, our Mission Chief, is meeting with the authorities this week to discuss the next phase of our engage-ment with Pakistan," International Monetary Fund's Communication Director Julie Kozack said on Thursday. IMF's Resident Representative

for Pakistan Esther Perez Ruiz said a team, led by Porter, would meet Pakistani authorities "to discuss the next phase of engagement". She had further said that the

aim of the negotiations was to "lay the foundation for better governance and stronger, more inclusive, and resilient economic growth that will benefit all Pakistanis", Geo News reported.

The team is expected to stay

in the country for more than 10 days and would receive data from different depart-

ments and would also discuss the upcoming budget for the fiscal year 2025 with the Ministry of Finance officials, Geo News reported quoting sources. Last Tuesday, Pakistan and the IMF started negotiations for a fresh bailout package to address the cashstrapped country's fiscal challenges and implement crucial reforms, media reports said.

Last month, Pakistan completed a short-term USD 3 billion programme with the IMF, which bailed the country out of any default. It was unclear whether the

IMF mission would end with a

formal staff-level agreement

for the next bailout package,

according to The Express

The duration, instrument, and

Tribune newspaper.

size of the next IMF programme were open to discussion, the report said, quoting Pakistan narrowly averted

default last summer, and the economy has stabilised after the completion of the last IMF programme, with inflation coming down to around 17 per cent in April from a record high of 38 per cent last May

The country is still dealing with a high fiscal shortfall, and while the external account deficit has been controlled through import control mechanisms, it has come at the expense of stagnating growth, which is expected to be around two per cent this year compared to negative growth last

### Yemen's Houthi rebels claim shooting down another US MQ-9 Reaper drone

AP DUBAI

remen's Houthi rebels on Y Friday claimed to have shot down an American drone, hours after footage circulated online of what appeared to be the wreckage of an MQ-9 Reaper drone.

Early Saturday, a vessel also came under attack in the Red

The two incidents likely represent just the latest attacks by the Houthis as they press their campaign over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed that rebels shot down the Reaper on Thursday with a surface-to-air missile.

remains held by allies of Yemen's exiled, internationally recognised government.

The Houthis later released footage they claimed showed the surface-to-air-missile being launched at night, along with night-vision footage of the missile hitting the drone.

A man, whose voice had been digitally altered to apparently prevent identification, chanted the Houthi slogan: "God is the greatest; death to America; death to Israel; curse the Jews; victory to Islam."

Online video showed wreckage resembling the pieces of the Reaper on the ground, as well as footage of that wreckage on The US military did not

He described the drone as respond to a request for com-"carrying out hostile actions" in ment from The Associated Yemen's Marib province, which Press over the Houthi claim.

While the rebels have made claims about attacks that turned out later not to be true. they have a history of shooting down US drones and have been armed by their main benefactor, Iran, with weapons capable of high-altitude attack. Since the Houthis seized the country's north and its capital. Sanaa, in 2014, the US military has previously lost at least five drones to the rebels.

Reapers, which cost around USD 30 million apiece, can fly at altitudes up to 50,000 feet and have an endurance of up to 24 hours before needing to land.

The drone shootdown comes as the Houthis launch attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, demanding Israel ends the war in Gaza, which

has killed more than 34,000

Palestinians there. The war began after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on October 7, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 others

The Houthis have launched more than 50 attacks on shipping, seized one vessel and sunk another since November, according to the US Maritime Administration.

Early Saturday, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre said a ship came under attack off the coast of Yemen's port city of Hodeida.

The captain "has confirmed sustaining slight damage after being struck by an unknown object on his port quarter," the UKMTO said. "The vessel and crew are safe and continuing to its next port of call."

### Man gets 30 years in prison for attack on Pelosi's husband

AP SAN FRANCISCO

The man who broke into the home of then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi seeking to hold her hostage and bludgeoned her husband with a hammer was sentenced Friday to 30 years in prison.

But prosecutors later filed a motion saying the court failed to offer the defendant, David DePape, an opportunity "to speak or present any information to mitigate the sentence" as required by federal rule. They asked the court to reopen the sentencing portion to allow him that option. The court did

not immediately respond. A jury found DePape, 44, guilty

ily member of a federal official. Prosecutors had asked for a 40year prison term.

ical world.

He suffered two head wounds including a skull fracture that was mended with plates and screws he will have for the rest of his life. His right arm and

been in custody.

In its afternoon motion to the court, the US attorney's office rect a sentence resulting from

his defense attorneys, Angela error, prosecutors said. attack on the Capitol.

through a difficult period in his life at the time of the attack, had undiagnosed mental health

record his interrogation of the Democratic speaker, who was not at her San Francisco home at the time of the attack, to

Chuang, told the judge to consider the prison terms being given to those who participated in the January 6, 2021, "The five most serious senoverthrow the government, range from 15 to 22 years," Chuang said.

Corley said the January 6 analogy didn't adequately reflect the seriousness of breaking into an official's private home. The attack may have a chilling effect on people seeking office

Am I willing to take that risk myself, but am I willing to risk my spouse, my children, my grandchildren?" the judge said. Prosecutors asked for the maximum sentence on each count and for DePape to serve 10 years concurrently, giving him

Before sentencing, Christine Pelosi read her father and mother's victim statements, explaining how the violent Pelosi wrote.

attack changed their lives. In Paul Pelosi's statement, he explained that 18 months after the attack, he still gets headaches and vertigo and has fainted and fallen twice at home. "Once you are attacked in such a public and political manner, with such threatening language, you always have to fear a copycat," Nancy Pelosi said in her statement. "When I encourage people, especially women to consider running for office, physical threats to the family should not even be a fac-

tor, but they are." Both Paul and Nancy Pelosi said there are still bloodstains

### Nepal bans sale of Indian spice-mix

fter Singapore and Hong Kong, Nepal has also banned the Asale and import of certain spice-mix products manufactured

by Indian brands over alleged quality concerns. Four spice-mix products by MDH and Everest were banned in the Himalayan nation from Friday due to suspected ethylene oxide or EtO contamination, according to the Department of Food

Powder; Mixed Masala Curry Powder of MDH and Fish Curry Masala of Everest have been banned in Nepal. "As residue contents of ethylene oxide are found to be exceed-

notice issued on Friday. 'Our serious attention has been drawn towards media reports about the sale of these sub-standard products in the market, and

they are harmful for consumption," it said.

in November of attempted kidnapping of a federal official and assault on the immediate famThe attack on Paul Pelosi, who

was 82 at the time, was captured on police body camera video just days before the 2022 midterm elections and sent shockwaves through the polit-

hand were also injured. Judge Jacqueline Scott Corley sentenced DePape to 20 years

for attempted kidnapping and 30 years for the assault, the maximum for both counts. The sentences will run concurrently. He also was given credit for the 18 months he has ing out that he was going

said DePape was not given the opportunity by the court to speak before being sentenced and that could present an issue. DePape's defence, however, said they opposed bringing back their client to court and filed a notice of appeal, according to the filing. Prosecutors and defence counsel did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment late Friday. The court has 14 days to cor-

DePape stood silently as he was sentenced and looked down at times. His public defence attorneys had asked the judge to sentence him to 14 years, pointacy, of literally conspiring to

issues and had no prior criminal history. At trial, DePape testified that he had planned to wear an inflatable unicorn costume and

upload it online. Ahead of the sentencing, one of

tences for people who were convicted of seditious conspir-

in the future, she said. They have to think not only,

a 40-year prison term.

on the floor and other signs of the break-in at their home. Our home remains a heartbreaking crime scene," Nancy

Technology and Quality Control here. Under this, Madras Curry Powder, Sambhar Mixed Masala

ing the prescribed limit in these four products, the import and sale of these products are banned within the country as per Article 19 of the Food Regulation 2027 B.S.," the department said in a

### FDI norms in certain sectors likely to be eased under new Government: DPIIT Secretary

PTI NEW DELHI

ndia has recently relaxed foreign direct investment norms in the space sector and there is a possibility of further FDI liberalisation in certain other areas when the new government will come to power, a top official said on Saturday

Secretary in Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Rajesh Kumar Singh said that in the last few years, India has liberalised FDI policy in many

segments. India has one of the most liberal foreign direct investment (FDI) policies in the world and in fact more liberal than many Southeast Asian countries that the country is often compared with, he said.

Recently FDI norms were eased in the space sector and "it is quite possible that under a new government, we can some

liberalisation of any pockets that are left and where some liberalisation is possible ," Singh said here at CII's annual business summit.

The Lok Sabha elections are underway in the country and the counting is scheduled for

The government has eased FDI norms in the space sector by allowing 100 per cent overseas investment in making components for satellites, as making part of efforts to attract overseas players and private companies into the segment. FDI in India declined 13 per cent to USD 32.03 billion in

April-December 2023, dragged down by lower infusion in computer hardware and software, telecom, auto, and pharma sectors, according to the government data.

Talking about the success of production linked incentive schemes (PLI), the secretary said so far Rs 1.13 lakh crore of investments have come in and the beneficiary

companies have recorded over Rs 9 lakh crore of sales, exports of Rs 3.45 lakh crore and created jobs for over 8 lakh people.

The scheme was announced in 2021 for 14 sectors, including telecommunication, goods, textiles, manufacturing medical devices,

automobiles, speciality steel, food products, high efficiency solar PV modules, advanced chemistry cell battery, drones, and pharma with an outlay of Rs 1.97 lakh crore.

Singh said some people criticize the scheme stating that it has not led to increase in domestic value addition but they should know that it takes time. People have raised issues with

regard to India attracting players in the semi-conductor segment stating that it is too capital intensive and not suitable for India.

"The target is not labour intensity, it is mainly strategic and to ensure that we do not

become over dependent on unsecured supply chains," he

On ease of doing business, he said they are working on the World Bank's Business Ready (B-READY) index for which

the survey will start in August and this ranking involves a new set of indices which will cover ease of entry, ease of operation and ease of exit of

The World Bank has shared a

set of 1,370 questions which will be assessed across various economies.

'Our survey starts in September. DPIIT along with various ministries is at work and trying to sort of first assess the situation and thereafter see whether we can make some quick reforms in certain areas to ensure that our overall performance improves," Singh

These rankings despite certain shortcomings have a signalling effect on foreign investors. "We need to ensure that we do not regress and we continue to improve when it comes to

those rankings," he said. He added that the department is working on the second edition of Jan Vishwas law after getting inputs from industry associations.

"We have to do several rounds of these exercises to eliminate some of the vexatious and penal provisions that are unfriendly for business," the secretary said.

In the first edition of the Jan Vishwas law, over 180 provisions were decriminalised Central Acts administered by 19 ministries and departments. Under the Vishwas

imprisonment and/or fine was removed in some provisions. Some of the legislations that were amended included the Boilers Act, Indian Forest Act, Drugs and Cosmetics Act, Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, Warehousing Corporations Act, Food Corporations Act, Patents Act, and Food Safety and Standards Act.

Further on the country's intellectual property rights (IPR) regime, the secretary said India has created a situation where its patent regime is meeting or getting close to global benchmarks in terms of patent examination

time and approval. The number of patents granted went up from 5,978 in 2014-15 to 1.3 lakh in 2023-24.

On how to enhance involvement of states in the reform process, he said "there are some weapons that we have to nudge them in the reform areas that we feel are really important for the country".



### Expecting good response from many companies on EV policy: Government

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

government Saturday said India is expecting good response from many automobile companies on its electric-vehicle (EV) policy, which was released in March to attract global players

Secretary in Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Rajesh Kumar Singh said that in the policy, the government has used tariff tweaks without actually spending any money to seek commitments from manufacturers to set up base in

"Everybody talks about one company (US-based EV major Tesla), but we are expecting from responses many companies to that policy," Singh said here at CII's annual business summit. On March 15, the government

approved an electric-vehicle policy, under which duty concessions will be given to companies setting up manufacturing units in the country with a minimum investment of USD 500 million, a move aimed at attracting major global players like Tesla

As per the policy, a company will get three years to set up manufacturing facilities in India, and start commercial production of e-vehicles, and reach 50 per cent domestic value addition (DVA) within five years at the maximum. The companies that would set

up manufacturing facilities for

EV passenger cars will be besides putting some on the allowed to import a limited number of cars at lower customs/import duty of 15 per cent on vehicles costing USD 35,000 and above for five years from the date of issuance of the approval letter by the approval

At present, cars imported as completely built units (CBUs) attract customs duty of 70-100 per cent, depending on engine size and cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value less or above USD 40.000.

global EV manufacturers. According to the scheme, the company will be allowed to import CBUs of e-4W manufactured by them at a reduced customs duty of 15 per cent, subject to the conditions. Singh also said that they have also managed to get commitments for investments in India in the tyre sector from two major multinational firms. "Two major multinationals came to us with certain products that were on a restrictive (import) list and they wanted that (those goods) to be allowed for imports. We told them that okay, we will allow you to import but we want these product lines to be manufactured in India. Once

gave

commitments, we allowed

India has imposed mandatory

quality control norms for

certain types of tyres in India,

those relaxations," he added.

us

those

goals that we have under the PLI (production linked government. incentive) investments can be met even by prudent use of tariff-and non-tariff policies". Talking about India and the

four-nation European bloc EFTA (European Free Trade Association) free trade agreement, which was signed The policy seeks to promote India as a manufacturing in March here, the secretary destination for EVs and attract said this is a first of its kind reputed commitments are there. Those commitments are going to be monitored and there is a provision even to

claw back the market access if those commitments are not met," he said. On March 10, India and EFTA signed a free trade agreement (FTA) under which New Delhi

licence list to boost domestic

Citing the example of EVs and

tyres, he said, "there are other ways to ensure that the kind of

(production linked

scheme

manufacturing.

received an investment commitment of USD 100 billion in 15 years from the grouping while allowing several products such as Swiss watches, chocolates and cut and polished diamonds at lower or zero duties.

The EFTA members are Liechtenstein, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland. He added that several FTA negotiations are under way and "my own anticipation is that you (industry) will see India becoming a little less conservative when it comes to these FTAs".

# Markets end special trading session with gains

Equity benchmark indices closed the special trading session on a firm note on Saturday, extending their rally to the third day running amid fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 88.91 points or 0.12 per cent to end at 74,005.94. During the session, it jumped 245.73 points or 0.33 per cent to 74,162.76.

The NSE Nifty advanced 35.90 points

or 0.16 per cent to 22,502. The National Stock Exchange (NSE) and BSE on May 7 said they will conduct a special trading session in the equity and equity derivative segments on May 18 to check their preparedness for handling major disruptions or failures at the primary site.

The special live trading session will have an intra-day switchover from the Primary Site (PR) to the Disaster Recovery (DR) site.

In separate circulars, the two exchanges said there will be two sessions — the first from 9:15 am to 10 am from the PR, and the second from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm from the DR site.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies reached an all-time peak of Rs 4,12,36,791.05 crore in the special trading session.

Among the Sensex components, Nestle,



Grid, Tata Consultancy Services, Technologies, Hindustan Unilever and State Bank of India were the major

JSW Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the laggards. Wall Street ended mostly higher on

The Dow Jones Industrial Average has

hit 40,000 for the first time, buoyed by

optimism from a softer-than-expected April inflation report, which has increased bets on a September rate cut by the Federal Reserve. This positive sentiment extends to

Indian markets, with the Nifty likely trading between 22,000-22,500, facing resistance at 22,500 and support at 22,000," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Friday after days of

unabated outflows. They bought equities worth Rs 1,616.79 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

"Dow Jones closing in record territory above 40,000 will continue to provide global support for equity markets. A significant trend now is the FIIs turning buyers yesterday, and this takes away the pressure on the markets," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services. The BSE benchmark climbed 253.31

points or 0.34 per cent to settle at 73,917.03 on Friday. The NSE Nifty rose 62.25 points or 0.28 per cent to 22,466.10. In the broader market, the BSE

smallcap gauge climbed 0.77 per cent and the midcap index advanced 0.48 per cent.

All the indices ended in the green, with healthcare, industrials, telecommunication, capital goods and realty emerging as the major gainers.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark climbed 1,341.47points or 1.84 per cent, and the Nifty went up by 446.8 points or 2 per cent. Earlier on March 2 (Saturday), the BSE

and NSE conducted a special trading session in equity and equity derivative segments.

Typically, switching to the DR site is done to ensure business continuity in the case of a major disruption

## Debt, equity holders approve merger

Shareholders and non-debenture debenture (NCD) holders of IDFC First Bank have approved a proposal to merge parent IDFC Ltd with the lender. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) convened a moeting on May 17 through

meeting on May 17 through video conferencing and other audio-visual means to consider and approve the composite scheme of amalgamation for IDFC First Bank, the bank said in a regulatory filing. The board of the bank

presented the result of voting on the proposal for amalgamation before the NCLT.

"We wish to inform that the resolution approving the Scheme was passed by the overwhelming majority of 99.95 per cent of the equity shareholders, representing



value of the equity shareholders of the bank value voting through remote evoting and e-voting during the meeting, in terms of the provisions of Sections 230-232 of the Companies Act, 2013," the lender said.

proposal was passed by the overwhelming majority of 99.99 per cent of the NCD holders.

As part of the composite scheme of amalgamation, IDFC FHCL would first merge with IDFC and then

IDFC into IDFC First Bank

Under the proposed reverse merger scheme, an IDFC shareholder will get 155 shares for every 100 shares she/he holds in the bank. Both stocks have a face value of Rs 10 each

IDEC was an infra lender in the private sector space, and following its bigger peers like ICICI and IDBI, it also launched a banking subsidiary in 2015 — IDFC Bank — but could not make a mark. Like HDFC Bank, the merged

IDFC First Bank will also have no promoter entity but is fully owned by institutional and public shareholders.

IDFC began as an infra lender in 1997. It got in-principle approval from the RBI to set up a bank in April 2014, and in October 2015, it launched IDFC Bank when on-tap licensing began, following which loans and liabilities of IDFC were transferred to the bank. In December 2018, it took over Capital First, a consumer and MSMEfocused non-bank since 2012, and was renamed IDFC First Bank and became a fullservice universal bank

#### PTI NEW DELHI

Softbank-backed OYO is set to refile its much-awaited IPO as the global travel tech player is close to finalising its refinancing plans to raise up to USD 450 million via sale of dollar bonds, sources said.

JP Morgan is the likely lead banker for the refinancing through the sale of dollar bonds at an estimated interest rate of 9 to 10 per cent per annum, a source said.

In preparation for the refinancing, OYO has already moved its application with markets regulator SEBI to withdraw its current draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). The company intends to refile an updated version of the DRHP, after the bond issuance. Oravel Stays Ltd, OYO's parent company, had in November prepaid a significant chunk of its debt amounting to Rs 1,620 crore through a buyback process. The buyback involved repurchasing 30 per cent of its outstanding Term Loan B of USD 660 million. The move

### OYO withdraws DRHP, to refile IPO post refinancing: Sources anticipates annual savings of USD 15-17 million (Rs 124.5 -

brought down its outstanding loan amount to around USD 450 million

A source closely involved in the company's IPO plans told PTI, "The refinancing will result in material changes to OYO's financial statements. Hence as per existing regulations, it will need to revise its filings with the regulator". "Since the decision for refinancing is at an advanced stage, it doesn't make sense to continue pursuing IPO approval with the current financials. So it's prudent to withdraw the current

application," he added.
The refinancing will extend the repayment timeline to five years -- versus the repayment of the remaining TLB due in 2026 -- the source said. The bond issuance would

significantly lower the current effective interest rate of 14 per cent on its existing USD 450 million Term Loan B (TLB)

result in annual interest savings of USD 8-10 million (Rs 66.4-83 crore) in the first year, after accounting for the costs associated with the bond "The refinancing is expected to issuance. The company

141.1 crore) thereafter, almost all of which would get added to all of which would get added to its net profits. Post the debt refinancing, the company is open to contemplating an equity round, to reaffirm investor confidence before a public listing to fortify its financial strength," the source

In September 2021, OYO had filed preliminary documents with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) for a Rs 8,430 crore IPO. The launching of the IPO was delayed due to the then volatile market conditions making the company prepare to settle for a lawar voluntion at around LED. lower valuation at around USD 4-6 billion instead of the USD 11 billion it was targeting

### Sundaram Home Finance hopeful of continuing growth momentum

PTI CHENNAI

Sundaram Home Finance the growth growth momentum to continue in the current financial year and would focus expansion into smaller towns, a top official has

The city-based company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Sundaram Finance Ltd would also be exploring opportunities in Tier 4 towns in South India, Managing Director Lakshminarayanan Duraiswamy said. "Given that the small towns in the South Market are seeing a good pace of growth on the back of increased affordability, we continue to be positive on the outlook for the real estate sector and are hopeful that the growth momentum will continue," he said in a



statement. "Our focus will be to penetrate deeper into smaller towns. We will also look at exploring opportunities in Tier 4 towns in South India and expect these new locations to drive our growth this year," he said. On the expansion drive launched in Maharashtra and Rajasthan, he said the company would continue to identify pockets of growth opportunities and steadily strengthen the base in West and Čentral India. Sundaram Home Finance which forayed into the small

business loan segment (up to Rs 20 lakh) has opened 30 exclusive SBL branches in Tamil Nadu with disbursements of over Rs 125 Earlier in the day, Sundaram

Home Finance reported a net profit of Rs 57 crore for the quarter ending March 31, 2024 as compared to Rs 65 crore registered during the same period of last year.
Disbursements during the

quarter under review surged by 20 per cent to Rs 1,469 crore, from Rs 1,222 crore registered corresponding quarter of last

### Sift, Niraj win in Olympic Selection Trials NBC will have crews at Manchester

Sift Kaur Samra won her third women's 50m rifle 3 positions competition while Niraj Kumar emerged victorious in the men's event for a second time on the penultimate day of the Olympic Selection Trial (OST) 3 and 4 here on Saturday. Sift shot 461.3 in the women's

3P trial 4 final to edge out Nischal by a point. Ashi Chouksey was third with 448.1. Shriyanka Sadangi and Anjum Moudgil were fourth and fifth respectively in the five-woman field.

In the men's 3P, Niraj finished on top with a healthy 462.9, a whole 1.7 ahead of secondplaced Chain Singh. Aishwary Tomar was third with 449.8, while Swapnil Kusale and Akhil Sheoran finished fourth and fifth respectively.

The results confirmed Sift as the top finisher in women's 3P, considering three best scores out of the four trials.

Anjum Moudgil confirmed her position as second best of the trials among the five qualified shooters. In the men's 3P, Aishwary Tomar



2 after the competition of four trial matches.

**CLARITY IN AIR EVENTS:** The day also saw the qualification rounds of the men's and women's 10m air rifle and air pistol trial 4 play While Sri Karthik Sabari Raj

and Swapnil Kusale finished 1- topped the men's air rifle with a score of 631.6, Ramita Jindal was the star of the day, posting a scintillating 636.4 (0.1 more than the existing world record set by China's Han Jiayu at the Baku World Cup earlier this month) to top the women's air

Ramita's effort meant that she

was now second in the overall calculations, just 0.1 behind Olympian Elavenil Valariyan, whose score of 633.0 has taken her to the top of the standings. Ramita at the start of the day was in the fourth position. Mehuli Ghosh (633.1) was second, while Nancy (630.6) and Tilottama Sen

respectively.

In the men's air rifle, the results had no bearing on the standings as Sandeep Singh (fourth with 628.3) and Arjun Babuta (fifth with 624.7) maintained their top two positions in the calculations.

Manu Bhaker confidently topped the women's 10m air pistol standings, finishing on top of the trial 4 qualification

round with a score of 581. Surbhi Rao (577) was second while Palak (572) was third. Rhythm Sangwan was fourth on the same score as Palak's but lost out on inner 10s while Esha Singh was fifth with 572. In the men's air pistol, Sarabjot Singh shot 584 to top the trial 4 qualifications, while Arjun Singh Cheema was second with 583. Varun Tomar (577) was third, Ravinder Singh (576) fourth and Naveen (574) finished fifth.

The results in air pistol meant that in the present calculations, Manu and Rhythm are 1-2 in the women's air pistol while Sarabjot and Arjun have the top two slots in the men's

# City, Arsenal for Premier League final

 $\underset{\text{on many significant}}{R^{\text{ebecca Lowe has reported}}}$ Premier League moments during her 11 seasons hosting NBC's coverage.

The one thing missing has been a second-place team overtaking the leader on the final day of the season. This weekend, Lowe and the

network's studio show will be at Emirates Stadium as Arsenal tries to do something that hasn't happened in Premier League history - move up from second to first

Championship Sunday. "Are we due one? Maybe," Lowe said this week before leaving for London.

Manchester City has a twopoint lead going into the final match day. Arsenal needs a win over Everton and needs City to lose or draw against West Ham to win its first Premier League title in 20 years.

If City wins, it becomes the first team to win four consecutive titles since the Premier League became England's top division in 1992. Lowe thought she was close to seeing history two years ago when Liverpool took an early lead against Wolves and Manchester City fell behind by two goals to Aston Villa. City rallied for a 3-2 victory and ended up winning the title by one point. While the studio team will be at Arsenal, the top announcing crew of Jon Champion and Graeme Le Saux will be in Manchester. That covers NBC no matter what happens Sunday.

Coincidentally, Arsenal was the last team to vault from second to first in England's top division in 1989.

You don't want to be where the story isn't. It is a difficult decision because it is a dynasty in Manchester, but sometimes in sports, the greatest stories are the underdog stories," Lowe said of the decision for the studio show to be at Arsenal instead of Manchester City.

NBC will once again have coverage of all 10 matches going on simultaneously. NBC will air the Manchester City match, USA Network has

Arsenal while CNBC will air Brighton vs. Manchester United and Golf Channel has Chelsea vs. Bournemouth. Peacock will stream all 10 matches, including exclusively.

The title going down to the final day will cap what has been a record season for NBC's coverage. Premier League matches on linear television and streaming are averaging just over 540,000 viewers per match, which is on pace to surpass the 2015-16 record.

This will be the third straight season and fourth overall NBC has averaged over 500,000. Six of the most-watched

Premier League matches in the U.S. Have come this season, including a record 2.1 million for Manchester City's scoreless draw against Arsenal on March 31. Peacock had two matches this season that averaged over 1 million.

The influx of new fans - driven in part by the title race but also NBC going on the road to different cities during the season for Premier League fanfests — has been one of the

biggest things coordinating producer Pierre Moossa has been pleased about this season. "We want to make sure we're authentic and true to the sport. But at the same time, we want to be inclusive and welcoming to the new audience," he said. The other has been the addition of Champion, who was already a favorite among U.S. Soccer fans from his work with ESPN. Champion and Peter Drury, who is in his second season with NBC, gives the network two top-flight

"What I've noticed is they bring out different aspects of Lee (Dixon) and Graeme's game. Lee and Graeme when they work with John is a different listen than when they work with Peter. Both are excellent listens but different perspectives, point of views and commentary. I think the viewers really benefit from that," Moossa said.

announcers.

Besides the title race, NBC will be keeping an eye on Liverpool hosting Wolves in Jurgen Klopp's final match as Liverpool's manager.

### Woods makes two early triples en route to a 77 and will miss cut at PGA Championship

AP ■ LOUISVILLE (USA)

Tiger Woods will miss the cut at the PGA Championship after making two triple-bogeys over the first four holes Friday on the way to 6-over-par

Woods finished the second round at Valhalla, the site of his 2000 title, at 7over 149 and left the course tied for 136th place. The top 70 and ties will move to the weekend. When Woods walked off the 18th green, he was eight shots behind the projected cut line. This will be the fifth time Woods has

missed the cut at the PGA, and the first since 2019. It will mark his 13th missed cut at a major since he turned pro in

After shooting 1-over 72 on the first dav. Woods said he was feeling stronger and needed more real-life rounds. But any hope that he'd get more action in this weekend faded quickly.



On the par-4 second, he tried to flop a shot over a bunker from a patch of rainsoaked rough near the green, but the ball went into the sand. He picked the next shot out of the sand, over the green

and into another bunker and made 7. It was a similar scene on the par-4 fourth, which is playing the fifth-easiest this week

On that one, he tried to finesse a shot

the top and rolled back in. His first try to get out hit the top of the trap and rolled back in again. That led to another 7 to close a three-hole stretch he played

From there, the only question was whether he would break 80 and avoid his worst score ever at the PGA. That remains a 9-over 79 at Southern Hills in His worst score at a major came last

month when he shot 82 in the third round of the Masters, en route to finishing last among those who made

This will be the fifth cut Woods has missed to go with two withdrawals since he captured the Masters in 2019 for his 15th career major. That doesn't include the seven majors he skipped completely since the start of 2021, when he shattered bones in his right leg and



### Satwik-Chirag pair enters Thailand Open final

PTI ■ BANGKOK

India's premier men's doubles Satwiksairai Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty entered the final of the Thailand Open badminton tournament with an easy straight-game victory over Lu Ming-Che and Tang Kai-Wei of Chinese Taipei here on Saturday.

Asian Games gold medallist pair of Satwik and Chirag needed just 35 minutes to beat their world No. 80 opponents 21-11 21-12 in the semifinal match of the Super 500 tournament at the Nimibutr Stadium here.

Satwik and Chirag have a deep relation with Thailand as it was here five years back in 2019 that they had won their maiden super 500 crown. On Saturday, the Indian pair inched closer to regaining the title after reaching the summit clash again. The Indian pair thus continued to make waves in the BWF World Tour after progressing to their fourth final of the season. The duo had finished runner-up at Malaysia super 1000 and Îndia super 750 before claiming the French super 750 in March.

In the final on Sunday, the world number three Indian duo, the top seeds in this tournament, will be up against the Chinese pair of Chen Bo Yang and Liu Yi, who defeated Kim Gi Jung and Kim Sa Rang of South Korea 21-19 21-18 in the other semifinal on

Satwik and Chirag had some

low returns in the last couple of tournaments. The Indian pair lost in the second round at All England Championships and then missed the Asia Championships due to an injury to Satwik. The Thomas Cup campaign was also not too fruitful as they lost a couple of narrow matches to top pairs. The final appearance will thus provide a major boost ahead of

the Paris Olympics.
On Saturday, Satwik and Chirag were not really tested by Lu and Tang, who played well only in patches but lacked the aggression and accuracy to trouble the Indians, who were a cut above their rivals.

In the opening game, Satwik and Chirag were up 3-0 but the Taiwanese pair managed to make it 5-4 before they started leaking points. Errors crept into their game as they went long a number of times, allowing the Indians to enter the break with an 11-7 lead.

Things didn't change after resumption as the Indians continued to gather point with their sharp placements. At 17-10, Chirag produced a powerpacked smash as they gained nine game points when

the Chinese went out twice. The second game began on a close note as the two pairs moves 4-4 to 6-6. Satwik also produced an ambitious behind-the-back return only to spray it wide. Leading 9-7 for the first time in the match, Lu and Tang, however, couldn't sustain the pressure as a fast and long rally ended at the nets for the Chinese.

### Zverev to face Jarry in Italian Open final after a comeback win over Tabilo

about an hour Alexander Zvere  $\Gamma$  had no answer to the rocket-like forehands and perfectly placed drop shots that Alejandro Tabilo kept producing on Rome's red clay.
The fifth-ranked Zverev kept patient,

though, and took his chance when it came as he rallied to beat his unheralded Chilean opponent 1-6, 7-6 (4), 6-2 on Friday for a spot in the Italian Open final. "I was just hanging on the second set. I brought my energy up," Zverev said. "He hit me off the court in the first set and I didn't play well at all, but he was a big reason why. He gave me no rhythm."
In Sunday's final, Zverev will face

anothern Chilean, Nicolas Jarry, who beat Tommy Paul 6-3, 6-7 (3), 6-3 on the American's 27th birthday.

The 24th-ranked Jarry came back from a set down to eliminate Stefanos Tsitsipas in the quarterfinals and will be playing his first Masters Series final.

It was an appealing contrast in styles between the big-serving 6-foot-7 (2.01 meter) Jarry, who goes for a lot of his shots, and the more defensive-minded Paul, who grinds it out and likes to make

his opponents play longer points. Zverev, the 2017 Rome champion, had the pinkie on his left hand bandaged following a fall in his previous match, after which he said his finger was "crooked." The German plays right-handed but uses a two-handed backhand. He said his pinkie was swollen and he was

using painkillers. "I tore a capsule. ... But I didn't break any bones," Zverev said. "The finger is still

very, very big. It was manageable. It's Zverev's third final in Rome. He won in 2017 by beating Novak Djokovic in



straight sets for his first Masters Series title. He lost to Rafael Nadal in the title match a year later.

"I've been here before," Zverev said. "I know what it takes and hopefully I can use that."

Top-ranked Iga Swiatek will play No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka in the women's final on Saturday.

Rome is the last big wamup before the French Open starts on May 26. Zverev, who has disputed a penalty order

from a German court over allegations that he caused bodily harm to a woman, faces a trial starting during Roland Garros. He said recently that he won't attend the start of the trial.

Zverev leads 4-2 in his career meetings with Jarry but the series is tied 2-2 on

"Nicolas is one of the most aggressive players we have on the tour," Zverev said. Obviously huge serve, huge forehand. Tries to hit big from both sides of the

The 32nd-ranked Tabilo eliminated topranked Djokovic in the third round on Sunday and hadn't dropped a set in the tournament until errors helped Zverev win the second-set tiebreaker. Zverev then took control early in the third.

Tabilo, who is a leftie, saved a break point midway through the first set with a slicing serve out wide to the ad court then produced three drop shots to serve out the set.

Zverev and Tabilo were born in the same year and played often as juniors, when Tabilo represented Canada, where he was



### Pranavi, Diksha and Tvesa make cut at German Masters

**PTI** ■ BRANDENBURG (GERMANY)

**D**ranavi Urs, Diksha Dagar Pand Tvesa Malik were the only ones to make the 36-hole cut at the Amundi German Masters.

Pranavi and Diksha carded 1-

over 73 each and were 3-over for two rounds and placed T-30, while Tyesa (77) squeezed inside the cut line at 5-over. Of the four others, Sneha Singh (75) missed the cut by a shot, Vani Kapoor (77) by three shots and Amandeep Drall

(78) by five shots.

Avani Prashanth withdrew midway through the second round. The cut fell at +5, with 66 players making it through to the weekend. Germany's Alexandra Försterling produced a round of 70 (-2) for the second consecutive day to lead by a stroke.

The Berlin native sat in a share of fourth place overnight and began her second round from the 10th tee at Golf & Country Club Seddiner See.

Försterling's round was built

around the three birdies she rolled in between the sixth and the ninth, as she had four birdies and two bogeys. Since teeing it up at this in

tournament Försterling has won three Ladies European Tour titles. Försterling leads the charge, but the page is plated. but there is plenty of German interest behind, with Patricia Isabel Schmidt, Sandra Gal and Helen Briem all one shot further back

The German trio sit in a tie for second place on three-under, alongside LET Order of Merit leader Bronte Law of England. Schmidt, leading on the opening day, had a trickier second round, shooting a 73. Five players sit in a share of sixth place, with France's Celine Herbin, Spain's Luna Sobron Galmes, Hong Kong's Tiffany Chan, Slovenia's Ana Belac and Morocco's Ines Laklalech all on two-undernar Crochio's Torgra Molecka par. Czechia's Tereza Melecka secured her first hole-in-one as a professional, acing the parthree fifth hole with a pitching wedge.

### T20 World Cup: Majority of Indian players to leave for New York on May 25

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The majority of the Indian players along with the jumbo support staff will be after the May 26 IPL final.

flying out to New York on May 25, with the rest leaving for the T20 World Cup only Earlier, the members of teams failing to qualify for the playoffs were supposed to leave for New York on May 21, two

days after the final league

game of the IPL on May 19

that there has been some change in plans and now the first batch will leave on May

"The likes of skipper Rohit Sharma, Hardik Pandya, Suryakumar Yaday, Jasprit

Bumrah, Rishabh Pant, Arshdeep Singh, Axar Patel are some of the players along with support staff who are expected to leave on May 25," a BCCI source told PTI on the

condition of anonymity. "Earlier, departure date for but it has since been learnt first batch was May 21 but



since India is playing only one India will open their warm-up game (vs Bangladesh on June 1), the players will get to spend some extra days at home," the source added.

Only those players who are part of the IPL final will stay back and will leave for New

York on May 27. This will also give adequate time to the squad to reduce jet lag and have at least three to four quality net sessions before the Bangladesh warmup game.

campaign against Ireland on June 5 in New York, followed by the marquee clash against Pakistan on June 9. India squad: Rohit Sharma

(Captain), Hardik Pandya (Vice Captain), Yashasvi Virat Jaiswal, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (WK), Sanju Samson (WK), Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Siraj.

### Rajasthan aim to snap losing streak, secure second spot against table toppers KKR

**PTI** GUWAHATI

Rajasthan Royals will be desperate to snap their four-match losing streak and finish in the top two when they meet table toppers Kolkata Knight Riders in an important

IPL game here on Sunday. Having secured the playoff berth with 16 points, Royals have started floundering at the business end of tournament losing matches on the trot.

Their batting flair has eluded them as they have not managed to cross the 150mark in their last two matches, and with their star England opener Jos Buttler returning home for national duty, the Royals have big shoes to fill.

Their top three batters Yashasvi Jaiswal, skipper Sanju Samson and local hero Riyan

Parag will have to shoulder additional responsibilities if they are to snap the losing streak and head to the playoffs finishing in top-two, that will give them two cracks to reach the final.

KKR (19 points), on the other hand, have already assured themselves a table top position after a washout against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad in the previous round handed them one point. They will be high on confidence but at the same time they may have to guard against complacency.

Since their win in the return leg clash against Mumbai Indians at Eden Gardens on May 11, KKR have not played any match with the washout in Ahmedabad. Travelling to Ahmedabad and then back home in Kolkata for a day's practice and again heading to



clash could be quite frustrating and break their rhythm of four-match winning streak.

It remains to be seen if the Gautam Gambhir-mentored side manage to hold on to the winning momentum without appearing to be rusty. In between, they have lost their

second leading rungetter this season as the Englishman is back home for the series against Pakistan in the build up to T20 World Cup next month. Salt and Narine, the two KKR openers, have scored 897 runs with seven fifties and one century between them at strike rate of 182-plus each. The duo's top form has been a key element in KKR's journey to their first playoffs since 2021. Rahmanullah Gurbaz will be a

Salt but expecting him to make an impact like Salt straightway will be unrealistic.

The Afghan wicketkeeperbatter, who played 11 matches in 2023, has not played any match this season and his last outing was way back on March 18 in a T20I versus Ireland. As KKR will be keen to keep

their rhythm intact, the onus will be on the likes of skipper Shreyas Iyer, finishing duo of Rinku Singh and Andre Russell to fire in unison. There is also some rain forecast

as conditions are likely to be on the slower side and in the last match between Rajasthan Royals and Punjab Kings the ball seemed to stop.
TEAMS (FROM):

Kolkata Knight Riders: Shreyas Iyer (c), KS Bharat (wk), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Rinku Singh, Angkrish

Rutherford, Manish Pandey, Andre Russell, Nitish Rana, Venkatesh Iyer, Anukul Roy, Ramandeep Singh, Varun Chakravarthy, Sunil Narine, Árora, Chetan Vaibhav Sakariya, Harshit Rana, Suyash Sharma, Mitchell Starc, Dushmantha Chameera, Sakib Hussain, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Gus Atkinson and Allah Ghazanfar.

Rajasthan Royals: Sanju Samson (c), Abid Mushtaq, Avesh Khan, Dhruv Jurel, Donovan Ferreira, Kuldeep Sen, Kunal Singh Rathore, Nandre Burger, Navdeep Saini, Ravichandran Ashwin, Riyan Parag, Sandeep Sharma, Shimron Hetmyer, Shubham Dubey, Rovman Powell, Tom Kohler-Cadmore, Trent Boult, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Yuzvendra Chahal, Tanush Kotian



### I did not live up to standard but overthinking was not an option: Rohit

**PTI** ■ MUMBAI

India skipper Rohit Sharma acknowledged that he could not match the expected batting standards in the ongoing IPL but instead of indulging in overthinking, his endeavour was to stay in the right zone and keep working on his flaws.

The five-time IPL winning skipper endured a wretched form in the second-half of the season, struggling to cross even a score of 20 in six matches for Mumbai Indians. "As a batter, I know I didn't live up to the standard. But, after playing for all these years, I now that if I overthink won't play well," Rohit said on JioCinema Match Centre Live. He returned to form with a 38ball 68 in their last match against Lucknow Super Giants but MI ended up on the losing side and finished the season at the bottom of the table.

"All I try is to stay in a good mindset, in the right zone, keep practicing, and improve on all the flaws in my game.

That's all I kept doing.
"Our season didn't go according to plan. We blame ourselves for this because we made too many mistakes during the season. We lost many games that we should

have won, but that's the nature of the IPL. You get a few chances and when those chances come, you must grab

'70 PER CENT OF T20 WC PLAYERS HAD CLARITY': The Indian skipper said they knew what their the T20 World Cup-squad would be like and 70 per cent of the players had clarity about their roles going into the IPL.

"We thought a lot about the team we ultimately selected for the World Cup. The spinners, seamers, batters, and keepers, we knew before the IPL who we would take to the World | PTI ■ BENGALURU

"The IPL performances for everyone can be up and down, so we didn't focus too much on that. We needed to see the performances of certain players, but it was important for us to give everyone the clarity they needed.

"Everyone going into the IPL needed clarity of whether they would participate in the team and what their role would be so they could practice and play accordingly. All of these indicators we had shared with 70% of the team before the IPL." India begin their T20 World Cup campaign against | Cinema. Ireland in New York on June 5. | "I think it has disrupted the

**PTI** MUMBAI

 $B^{\text{eing the India head coach is one of}}_{\text{the biggest assignments in cricket}}$ world and former Australia head coach Justin Langer believes that it could be very exhausting if the timing isn't right for the incumbent.

Langer, who coached Lucknow Super Giants during this IPL season was asked multiple times about his aspirations to become India head coach, a post set to be vacated by Rahul Dravid after T20 World Cup in the Americas.

"It would almost be the biggest job in cricket - being the head coach of the Indian cricket team," Langer replied when asked if the Indian board had approached him for taking on the

"One, because of the huge volume of cricket, the huge expectation. It would be a great challenge. It would be great fun and it would be a wonderful opportunity to win ICC titles," Langer told the media here at the Wankhede Stadium after Lucknow Super Giants beat Mumbai Indians by 18 runs in their last IPL match of the season.

Langer cited immense pressure and workload that comes along being an India coach, while adding that it has not been too long since he held a similar role with Australia

"But with all these things, the timing

has got to be right. I did four or so years with the Australian cricket team. It is all encompassing. It is

exhausting," said the 53-year-old.
"Rahul Dravid will probably tell you the same thing and Ravi Shastri will probably tell you the same thing. The pressure on winning for the Indian team is massive," he said.

He did drop a hint that he might not be mentally ready to commit 10 months a year for the job.

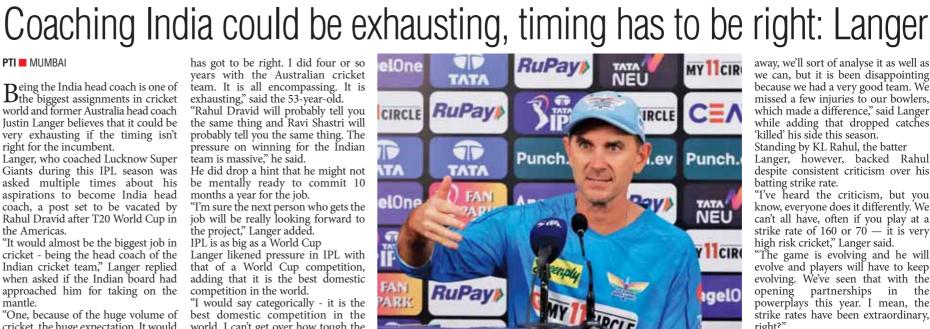
"I'm sure the next person who gets the job will be really looking forward to the project," Langer added.

IPL is as big as a World Cup
Langer likened pressure in IPL with
that of a World Cup competition,
adding that it is the best domestic competition in the world. I would say categorically - it is the

best domestic competition in the world. I can't get over how tough the competition is. There's so many good players. There's so many good teams. There's so much pressure on performance," he said.

"I guess the biggest thing is, it is just really tough cricket. It is like a World Cup. It is honestly like the same sort of pressure as a World Cup, and I've been to a few World Cups now.

'That's a great credit to the IPL that we're able to keep producing such fun, entertaining, evolving cricket in front of a capacity crowd with noise every



game. And there's a game on every

"I'm sad to go home. I'm going home on the weekend. I'm actually really sad to go home. I've loved it that much," he added.

Langer admitted World Cup selection for LSG players in their respective national sides could have been a

"I've had this sense that since the World Cup selection - and there is always distractions every IPL - but things seem to change a little bit," he

"I'm not exactly sure what happened, but we had a couple of poor games and it is cost us. We played some really good cricket. We started off I was warned about May; everyone's up and about in April, but how you go through May is very

important in the IPL. "( $\hat{\text{It}}$  is) something that we did fall away, we'll sort of analyse it as well as we can, but it is been disappointing because we had a very good team. We missed a few injuries to our bowlers, which made a difference," said Langer while adding that dropped catches

Standing by KL Rahul, the batter Langer, however, backed Rahul despite consistent criticism over his batting strike rate.

"I've heard the criticism, but you know, everyone does it differently. We can't all have, often if you play at a strike rate of 160 or 70 — it is very high risk cricket," Langer said.

"The game is evolving and he will evolve and players will have to keep evolving. We've seen that with the opening partnerships in the powerplays this year. I mean, the strike rates have been extraordinary,

right?"
"He, like the great players, will keep evolving. All the best players and best coaches keep getting better. He'll keep doing that," Langer added. Langer said only Rahul could tell if he

was disappointed on being excluded from India squad for the World Cup. 'You'd have to ask KL that, but if you look at his numbers throughout the series, it is a pretty good series. Actually, it is a very good series. We're one game off being in the playoffs next week," Langer added.

### Impact Player rule has disrupted balance of game: Virat Kohli

 $E^{\text{choing India skipper Rohit}}_{\text{Sharma's sentiments, star}}$ batter Virat Kohli has criticised the Impact Player substitution rule and said it is "disrupting the balance" of the game.

The mid-innings substitution rule, adopted in the previous edition of the IPL, has sparked a row with Rohit expressing his displeasure in a podcast last month. Now, Kohli has urged for a rethink of the rule.

"I agree with Rohit. Entertainment is one aspect of the game but there is no balance," Kohli said on Jio

balance and a lot of people are he said.

Rohit in the podcast had said, "I'm not a big fan... It's going to hold back all-rounders. Cricket is played by 11, not 12 (players)." Punjab Kings set the record for the highest successful chase in T20 history when they overhauled Kolkata Knight Riders' 262 with eight

balls to spare. Sunrisers Hyderabad also smashed the record for the highest-ever total in franchise cricket by posting 287/3 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

This edition has witnessed eight 250-plus totals and Kohli

Felt sorry for Hardik, never nice to go



ing like what BCCI they should do," Kohli said.

"I have never experienced

anything like it where bowlers

think they will concede four or a six on every ball. "Not every team has a Bumrah

(Jasprit) or the mystery of Rashid Khan," he said. "I am telling you, with one

extra batter there is a reason I am playing with 200-plus strike rate in the powerplays. I know there is a batsman waiting at No. 8 as well.

"We are playing a high level of cricket and it should not be that dominant in my opinion. There is a beauty about having an equal balance between bat and ball," Kohli added. said that the Impact Player rule is a "test case", implemented to give two Indian players opportunity in a game. He has also indicated that they

would talk to the stakeholders for using it in future editions of the IPL. "I am sure Jay (Shah) bhai has mentioned it already that they will review it and I am sure that they will come to a conclusion which brings the game into balance," said Kohli. As a batsman, I can say this rule is good but the match should be exciting. Only fours and sixes are not exciting in cricket. Exciting is that you can defend 160 as well," Kohli said.

from 14 matches at an average of 18 with no fifties. Boucher felt that Pandya has

only been effective as finisher when someone else has fired

for MI at the other end and mostly during successful years,

PTI MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians coach Mark Boucher really felt bad watching skipper Hardik Pandya face hostile reactions and boos from the fans throughout the disastrous IPL campaign and admitted that it did affect the star all-rounder, something that the management would need to address in coming days.

Pandya, after two successful seasons as Gujarat Titans skipper was brought back as captain of Mumbai Indians, removing five-time champion skipper Rohit Sharma, a decision that didn't sit well with legion of fans.

"It wasn't great hearing all the boos. I felt sorry for Hardik as well. It's never nice to have to go through something like that," Boucher said after MI lost their last league game to Lucknow Super Giants by 18

"I do think that there are certain things that did affect individuals, which ultimately did affect the team," Boucher said after MI finished last for the second time in three years.

underwhelming performances and outside pressure did cloud his judgement.

"There's a lot of stuff going on around him that, maybe, clouded his thoughts every now and again, which is tough for him as a leader as well. He certainly had a lot of support within our dressing room as well and guys trying to help him out as well. But it's a tough thing to go through as a player,"

Boucher said if any off-field issues are hampering the team, they require attention from management. "Those are the sort of things that, yes, we do need to sit down and address and hopefully make some good calls going forward, to address the off-field stuff that we can get it right on the field,"

"Ultimately,

this is professional unit and players and staff and everyone alike gets judged about the performance that they put on the field. If there's stuff that's happening off the field which is hampering that, then we need to address it," he said. Boucher backed Pandya to continue as MI skipper even though he admitted a thorough review of the team's abysmal performance would be assessed but no emotional

We'll have these conversations

decisions must be taken. "I think so. As I said, we haven't had discussions. Everything's been about the cricket stuff at the moment. Going forward, I'm sure that he is the guy that the franchise would like to take forward. We'll wait and see.



through something like that: Boucher on boos

at a later stage," he said. When asked if Boucher felt Mumbai Indians franchise should have handled the change leadership differently, the South African

agreed. "To be honest, I haven't really chatted to a lot of team



about management decision," Boucher replied when asked if the captaincy change could have been handed differently.

"Now is not probably the right time. Everyone is very disappointed and emotional, so no good decision will get made in the nearest time, which is now in a week's time." 'We need to evaluate exactly what's going on, things that we need improvement on, whether it be on the field or off the field stuff. We've got some great heads within the management team as well," Boucher said.

We'll sit down and we'll find a way on how to make it better, ultimately, for the players to come out and produce the sort of cricket that I think we know that these players can produce, which was under par this season," the head coach added. Boucher said Pandya did find form as a bowler but a lot was left to be desired as a batter.

"If he was here (at the press conference), he'd also (say that he was) disappointed in his performance. From a captain

perspective, I thought he had some good games," he said. Boucher said Pandya would emerge as a stronger leader from this experience. Pandya was booed twice on Friday -once he walked out to bat and once after he was dismissed. "A lot of the stuff that he's going

through is, personally, maybe a little uncalled for. It'll certainly be a learning curve for Hardik as his growth in leadership. "While times are tough now, a

couple of things will pass and it'll make him a tougher leader and it'll certainly grow him in the role as well," he said. Boucher said one of the reasons why Pandya failed as a batter was also due to the change in role from Gujarat

Titans to Mumbai Indians.

Pandya was 10th among MI

batters with a mere 216 runs

it was Kieron Pollard. "When Hardik was playing for Mumbai Indians, he was a finisher. He was playing in that sort of role with Polly (Kieron Pollard). He then went to (Gujarat) Titans and he was batting in a completely different scenario," Boucher

"He was batting up front. There were slight technical adjustments that he had to make to his game in order to face a newer ball and the different lengths when you're facing a new ball as well.

"He made himself aware of that as well. Throughout the whole season, it was a work in progress trying to get him back to the new role that he was playing now, more as a finisher, batting in the back end of innings as well," Boucher said, adding that Pandya needed to rediscover his hitting power.

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New Delhi, May 19, 2024

# a Continue pioneer Cont

"We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far"

— Swami Vivekananda



The future of education in India isn't just about doing well academically, it's about empowering kids to follow their passions and create their own paths to success. And that journey is definitely worth talking about, **ADITI SHARMA** 

### CANVAS OF CHANGE



hen I was a child, for me the world was a blank canvas, ready to be filled with colors. Each brushstroke was like a step towards understanding everything around me. Art was just more than a hobby for me, it was a way of expressing myself and finding escape in midst of chaos. But as I grew older, societal expectations started weighing me down. My parents and teachers believed that success only came from excelling in traditional subjects like math and science, leaving no room for the creativity that fueled my soul. Elders often believe that stress and pressure are exclusively their burdens to bear, yet who acknowledges that even toddlers struggle to take their first steps and teenagers face immense pressure to prove their worth to the world. This is where schools step in, recognizing

the importance of nurturing not just academic growth but also the social and emotional well-being of children. Through socio-emotive learning, students develop vital skills such as problem solving, effective communication, conflict management, and self-care. These abilities enable them to understand and manage their emotions, build supportive and cooperative communities, and ultimately help both themselves and others thrive.

One particular innovation that has impressed me is the use of Emotion Charts in schools. These charts have pictures of faces showing different emotions such as sadness, anger, surprise, happiness, silliness, fear, excitement, and embarrassment. Children can use these charts to express how they feel each day. The efforts made by schools to incorporate emotional learning are not only effective but also incredibly beautiful! This new approach to education is producing adults who are better at handling stress, managing their emotions, and controlling

When I was in 3rd grade, my mother always stressed about my exams and expected me to score a perfect 20 out of 20. This pressure pushed me into an exhausting race for marks. I believe children should be exempted from exams during their primary years so they can enjoy a stress-free childhood and focus on developing their creativity and skills. The new education system has introduced a change many of us wished for as children, which is no exams until 3rd grade. This shift creates a less pressured environment, allowing children to learn at their own pace without worrying about marks or grades. By eliminating early testing, we can cultivate a love of learning in a calm, supportive atmosphere, free from the anxiety of exams.

When my parents were in school, the main focus was on academics. When I was a student, we had academics as well as co-curricular activities and sports. But now, education has evolved even further. It includes subjects and activities like yoga, meditation, journal writing, and mindful coloring. This shift in education has had a significant positive impact on children. It has helped them in several ways with, aggression management, emotions regulation, making thoughtful decisions and

better communication in relationships.

Back in my teenage years, the school syllabus was synonymous with exams. Schools viewed exams as a method of assessment, but to me, they were more like photographs. Students needed to memorize information and reproduce it exactly in their answers. It felt as though we were being asked to take a screenshot of our textbooks and paste it directly onto our exam sheets.

Traditionally, assessments focused purely on memory recall. However, today's educational landscape has evolved significantly. Modern assessments extend beyond paper and pencil, embracing practical, hands-on experiences and field experiments. These contemporary methods provide a more comprehensive evaluation of a student's understanding and skills, offering a richer, more meaningful approach to learning and assessment.

Back in my 10th-grade days, I vividly remember yearning to choose subjects like English, Biology, and Fine Arts.

BOARDS! THE WORD ITSELF FEELS HEAVY WITH PRESSURE, EVEN THOUGH I NAVIGATED THEM LONG AGO. THE PRESSURE OF BOARD RESULTS WAS SUCH THAT, THOSE TIMES WERE SO STRESSFUL THAT

EVEN A PEACEFUL

IMPOSSIBLE, AND

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**BREATH FELT** 

AT ITS PEAK

transformation. It's surreal to think that students today have the liberty to tailor their education according to their interests and passions. Imagine a science student delving into the world of music or arts and it's truly an evolution! When I chose humanities, people often asked me what my future profession would be and if I could earn well with it. The rise in humanities enrollments has validated the importance of creative and critical thinking skills, fostering an environment that values artistic expression and cultural understanding. BOARDS! The word itself feels heavy with pressure, even though I navigated them long ago. The pressure of board results was such that, those times were so stressful that even a peaceful breath felt impossible, and my anxiety was at its peak. My parents often reminisced about facing board exams in 5th and 8th grades, but as a child of the 2000s, I thankfully escaped that additional stress. For me, board exams were a daunting once-a-year event in 10th and 12th grades. It was a struggle to cover entire textbooks, and while I managed above-average marks, the pressure was intense. However, the upcoming change to split exams into two sessions seems promising. This approach will distribute the workload more evenly, reduce stress and give students more time to prepare for the next session. This division will allow timely feedback on performance, identifying areas for improvement and providing

support before the next session,

My personal favourite change that

ultimately enhancing student

has ever been happened in the

learning and performance.

Unlike

some education

systems abroad, Indian education

our own set of subjects. But now,

with the advent of the new

undergone a dramatic

didn't grant us the freedom to pick

education policy, the landscape has

Indian education system has been the thoughtful replacement of the word "fail" with "essential repeat" and "back" with "supplementary." This shift was crucial, as the harsh terms "fail" and "back" often demotivate students and heighten the fear of judgment. The pay supportive

shift was crucial, as the harsh terms "fail" and "back" often demotivate students and heighten the fear of judgment. The new supportive terminology boosts self-esteem and encourages students to persevere, fostering a more positive and resilient mindset.

Cross culture learning is also a

major revolution which is crucial as it fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures. promoting empathy, respect, and global awareness among students. This inclusive approach not only enriches students' educational experiences but also equips them with the social and emotional skills necessary to navigate and contribute positively to a multicultural society. One of such is National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). NIOS offers flexible learning opportunities to students from diverse cultural backgrounds, including those from rural areas, tribal communities, and marginalized groups. Through its inclusive curriculum and open learning approach, NIOS promotes cross-cultural understanding by catering to the needs and realities of various communities across the

country. In cultural exchange programs at my school not only exposed me to diverse perspectives but also highlighted the varied approaches to education around the world. Witnessing how children from different international cultures learn and left a profound impact, opens eyes to new possibilities in learning. My school had students from France and they spent a week immersed in the school's community. They also had the opportunity to explore Delhi's landmarks, museums, and cultural

sites, accompanied by local students who act as guides and ambassadors. In return, they organized reciprocal visits, sending groups of students to partner schools abroad to experience different culture.

It is an enlightening experience that

underscored the importance of fostering international and global understanding through education, revealing that cultural exchange is not just a leisure activity but an essential aspect of comprehensive learning. With years these programmes have lifted students with gain of first-hand exposure to diverse perspectives, traditions, and ways of life. This experience not only broadens their worldview but also cultivates tolerance, appreciation for diversity, and intercultural communication skills. In the past, they often overlooked the importance of sports and physical education, especially during the crucial 11th and 12th grades. Previously, schools often overlooked this aspect of holistic development. However, there has been a shift in perspective, with educational institutions now recognizing the importance of nurturing not only academic excellence but also mental and emotional well-being through sports and physical activities. Speaking of mental health, it's heartening to see prestigious institutions like IITs and IIMs taking proactive steps to address the issue of student suicides. Programs focused on mental wellness and weekly counselling sessions are now becoming the norm, with institutions like IIT Guwahati leading the way. Well on discussing mental health, pandemic has affected our minds and changed the way we view

things around us. Were you a

quarantine student too? Well I was

During the COVID-19 pandemic,

Ed-Tech was the only way we could

learn. With the introduction of

EdTech, students now have access

wide range of learning resources that may not have been available to them before. Online platforms offer educational materials such as e-books, videos, and interactive tutorials, making it easier for students to explore different subjects at their own pace. Who would have imagined that tools like ChatGPT could handle assignments, develop content, and become indispensable aids? AI, VR, and AR have transformed education, especially in the arts, by creating exciting opportunities for creative expression and discovery. AI personalizes learning and provides intelligent creative tools, VR immerses students in virtual environments for hands-on artistic experiences, and AR overlays digital information onto the real world for enhanced visualization. Together, these technologies make art education more engaging, interactive, and innovative, fostering deeper creativity and understanding among students. The education system is changing, and it's not just about academic freedom. It's also about unlocking creativity and supporting overall **growth.** As someone who truly believes in the power of art, I'm excited to see more recognition of artistic and creative careers. It's no longer just about commerce and science. With the increasing popularity of vocational courses in fields like culinary arts, design, and interior decoration, India is on track to become a center of creativity and innovation. My passion for improving education comes from wanting to see every child bloom with their innovative and extraordinary minds. I wish to advocate for a system that not only keeps up with the times but also nurtures each person's unique talents and dreams. The future of education in India isn't just about doing well academically, it's about

empowering kids to follow their

and create their own paths to

success. And that journey is

definitely worth talking about.

passions, express themselves freely,





in spreading

falsehood.

that suppression of truth is equivalent to suggestion of what is false. One need not

elaborate on this as the term is self-explanatory. It may have a lot to do with the kind of the distinct discrimination the statecraft and diplomacy being followed by the BBC.

immortalised

superstition and sorcery.

Although the Government of Britain claimed that they do not have any prejudice against India, the reality is quite the opposite. The authors explain how the BBC portrayed India taking over Goa as an armed attack on Portugal, a blatant case of misinterpretation of facts by the news channel. During 2023, student unions

in Kerala were vying with each other in exhibiting the documentary film on Gujarat produced and aired by the BBC. The SFI students who always shunned the BJP were in the forefront of this campaign and arrangements in campuses so that the gullible students could be fooled. Most of the viewers who sat throughout the documentary were in the dark about the facts that led to the riots. They were also ignorant about the Supreme Court verdict or the findings of the Special Investigation Team that interrogated Narendra Modi, the then chief minister

of Gujarat for 19 hours. The BBC was rehashing and churning out charges levelled against Modi by TV journalists who had personal scores to settle with him. The most important thing to be borne in mind is that for the BBC, *jihadis* become terrorists only when they hurt British

interests. All other *jihadis* are

mere gunmen or liberators

fighting against countries

which Britain does not like.

During the Cold War, Britain

and the US had similar

clean.



sunday, magazine the pioneer





### TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PRINTMAKING

An exhibition showcasing the past five decades of printmaking through the works of works of five acclaimed artists, highlights the profound impact and continued relevance of the medium in today's art world, says SAKSHI PRIYA

he art world is a vast canvas, painted with vibrant strokes of creativity and innovation. Within this canvas, printmaking stands as a unique art form offering artists a medium to express their thoughts, emotions and perspectives in a distinct and appealing manner. Unlike painting or sculpture, where the final image is visible throughout the creative process, printmaking is a journey of revelation. The true image remains unseen until the very last stages adding an element of anticipation and surprise that makes printmaking so captivating. The exhibition, Rupantar Panch Dashak:

Five Decades of Printmaking, delves into this alluring world of inked narratives. The preview of the exhibition was held at the Visual Art Gallery. Curated by Alka Pande, this exhibition is not merely a showcase of exquisite artwork; it is a celebration of printmaking's enduring legacy and its transformative power. Organised by Members of Multiple Encounters, the exhibition brings together the talents of five renowned printmakers: Anandamoy Banerjee, Kavita Nayar, Moti Zharotia, Dattatreya Apte, and Sushanta Guha. Each artist, a master in his or her own right, explores the art of printmaking as a tool of personal expression, transforming the medium into a canvas for their unique visions. The show promises to be a celebration of exceptional talent, presenting various printmaking styles and

expressions. The exhibition's title, 'Rupantar', perfectly encapsulates the essence of printmaking signifying the transformative journey of an artist's work over five decades, highlighting the evolution and innovation inherent in their creations. Beyond the individual narratives, 'Rupantar' also offers a glimpse into the broader landscape of printmaking and enduring relevance in the

contemporary art scene. Anandamoy Banerjee, a recipient of prestigious awards like the AIFACS annual

best exhibition award, views printmaking as a reflection of his life experiences, dreams and artistic journey. His work, a blend of drawing, painting, prints and experimental pieces tells a story with each creation. Abstract and introspective, his works often present a colourful combination of human forms intertwined

with abstraction.
Dattatreya Apte, a founding member of the Indian Printmakers Guild draws inspiration from the world around him, the "reflections" and "impressions" that linger on surfaces. His prints whether painted, printed or physically cast, are a testament to his fascination with the art form's complex nature. Each piece showcases the evolution of his concept from an idea to the final artwork. Kavita Nayar's art reflects a deep personal journey, likened to the process of giving birth. Her focus on nature, particularly flowers symbolises life's cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Nayar's prints span five decades with works in oil pastels on paper and board. She also creates an installation with prints showcasing her diverse artistic expression. Moti Zharotia, an artist with a visionary

approach, uses printmaking to delve into the essence of life. His silkscreen prints beautifully blend masculine and feminine energies, as seen in his theme Purusha & Prakriti. In his wider collection, 'Impressions on Impression,' Zharotia symbolises the harmonious interplay of life's core forces. His work not only showcases the harmony between humans and nature but also highlights their interconnectedness creating a profound sense of balance and unity. Sushanta Guha, known for his socially conscious art uses printmaking as a tool to address pressing issues affecting humanity. His work vividly contrasts the rapid with the simultaneous decline of human values, leading to increased individual suffering and identity crises. Through his impactful woodblock prints and



lithographs, Guha urges viewers to contemplate the complexities of the contemporary world. His art serves as a poignant reflection of societal challenges particularly highlighting issues like violence and religious extremism. Alka Pande, the curator, describes Rupantar as an enlightening experience. Witnessing the development and transformation in the artist's practices over five decades offers invaluable insights for aspiring artists. Beyond showcasing finished works the exhibition sheds light on the "art of making" itself printmaking to the final artistic expression. Rupantar also bridges the gap between traditional printmaking and contemporary artistic practices. It

highlights how younger artists who may not specialise solely in printmaking, incorporate various printmaking styles into their mixed media creations. The art world is a diverse and dynamic realm offering a medium through which artists can express their creativity. Among these, printmaking stands out as a unique and fascinating art form with a rich history and enduring appeal. Printmaking is the art of creating images by transforging them. art of creating images by transferring them from a matrix or plate onto paper or another surface. This process allows for the production of multiple copies of an artwork making it an accessible and versatile medium for artists to explore and experiment with.

Ultimately, Rupantar Panch Dashak: Five Decades of Printmaking, is a multifaceted celebration. It celebrates the artistry and dedication of five master printmakers while also elevating the art form itself. It highlights the intricate techniques and rich history of printmaking while acknowledging its contemporary relevance. Rupantar invites viewers to delve deeper into the world of art and appreciate the story's work into every mark on the paper. This exhibition serves as a powerful reminder that printmaking is not merely a means of reproducing images; it's a dynamic and versatile art form capable of sparking introspection, igniting social commentary and revealing the intricate beauty of the artistic process itself.

The exhibition leaves behind a legacy of artistic excellence and imaginative exploration. It is not only a celebration of the talent but also highlighs the importance of printmaking in the art world. It has shown us that printmaking is not just a technique; it is a form of expression that can convey deep

emotions, tell compelling stories and

printmaking in preserving cultural

provoke thought and reflection. Let us

heritage, promoting artistic innovation

and enriching our lives with beauty and

### **Laapataa Ladies Shines Bright**

miscellany II

New Delhi, May 19, 2024

This Kiran Rao directed film is a must-watch for its engaging storyline, brilliant performances, and important social message, says SAKSHI PRIYA

Ladies, is a perfect blend of humour, social commentary and a heartwarming storytelling. Marking Kiran Rao's return to the director's chair after several years, the film is a delightful surprise that resonates with delightful surprise that resonates with the audiences. The original story by Biplab Goswami, screenplay and dialogues by Sneha Desai, along with additional dialogues by Divyanidhi Sharma contribute to the film's cohesive and engaging narrative.

The film boasts a talented cast with Pratibha Ranta (Jaya), Nitanshi Goel (Phool Kumari), Sparsh Shrivastav (Deepak Kumar), Satendra Soni (Chhotu) and Chhaya Kadam (Manju Maai) along with the charismatic Ravi Kishan (Shyam Manohar). Each actor delivers a stellar performance, bringing their characters to life with finesse and authenticity.

The story unfolds with two young The story unfolds with two young brides, Phool Kumari and Jaya, accidentally swapped during a train journey due to a veiled misunderstanding. As Phool's helpless husband, Deepak Kumar seeks help from a cop Shyam Manohar, a point when the journey of the perfect story begins

of the perfect story begins. Kiran Rao's storytelling is exceptional, seamlessly weaving together elements of amusement, emotion and social commentary. The film's storyline is compelling, offering a message about the importance of women's empowerment and identity in society. Rao adeptly employs humour and the motif of veiled identity (ghunghat) to illuminate the pervasive influence of patriarchy within society. The dialogue is witty and the humorous scenes are executed with finesse, keeping the audience entertained throughout.

One of the film's standout aspects is its emphasis on the importance of self-realisation and self-identity. Through the character's journeys, the audience is reminded that true happiness comes from within and that women are their own heroines. The film delivers this message with subtlety and grace, making it relatable to a wide audience.

The performances in *Laapataa Ladies* are superb, with Ravi Kishan stealing the show with his impeccable comic timing. His portrayal of Shyam Manohar adds depth to the film with his acting leaving a lasting impression. Chhaya Kadam's impression. Chhaya Kadam's portrayal of Manju Maai is undeniably impressive. She delivers





right as well." This powerful statement serves as a slap in the face of patriarchal norms, forcing viewers to confront the harsh reality of to confront the harsh reality of domestic violence disguised as love. Manju Maai doesn't stop there. Her wisdom shines through another impactful line: "Being happy on your own is the toughest thing, Phool, but once you've mastered it, no one can bother you." This resonates deeply, highlighting the importance of self-respect and the empowering freedom respect and the empowering freedom

found in self-sufficiency.

Pratibha Ranta and Nitanshi Goel shine in their roles, bringing depth and authenticity to their characters. Their fresh faces coupled with immense talent create magic on screen. Even actors with smaller screen time such as Satendra Soni as Chhotu, Durgesh Kumar as Dubeyji or Rachna Gupta as Deepak's sisterdeliver performances showcasing the depth and richness of the film's ensemble

The film explores themes of identity, self-discovery and empowerment. It highlights the strength and resilience of women showcasing how they navigate through societal expectations and find their voice in a male-dominated world.

Laapataa Ladies is a must-watch for its engaging storyline, brilliant performances, and important social message. Kiran Rao has once again proved her directorial prowess, creating a film that is both entertaining and thought-provoking. While viewers need to exercise patience as the film unfolds at a somewhat slow pace, this deliberate pacing contributes to the movie's beauty and its ability to make a conviction, truth and humour. Despite its leisurely pace, the film's Particularly noteworthy is her line, "A narrative depth and emotional man who loves you has the right to resonance make it a worthwhile and hit you and one day I exercised my memorable cinematic experience.

# Brett Lee bats for Australian Avocados

BY GYANESHWAR DAYAL

vocados Australia recently launched in the Indian market with Cricket Legend Brett brand ambassador. Soon Australian avocados would be available in India. The Australian exporters are upbeat about the Indian market as they feel it is the place where they would have first mover advantage and would be able to appeal to Indian consumers with their superior quality. Avocados are to the West what mangoes are to

superfood, are not just nutritious. incredibly Native to Central America, these green fruits are with near vitamins, and They're packed with healthy fats, fibre, minerals. particularly rich monounsaturated in fats, which are beneficial for heart health. Avocados are Australia incredibly versatile and can representing the Australian be enjoyed in various avocado industry, has forms: sliced on toast, officially entered the Indian mashed into guacamole, market, unveiling cricket blended into smoothies, or icon Brett Lee as their even used as a substitute for esteemed

butter in baking.



nutrition, just slice it and with a dash of lemon and salt and you have an Avocados, often hailed as a excellent healthy snack." Their creamy texture adds depth to dishes while providing a host of health

Beyond their nutritional value, avocados are also environmentally friendly. They require less water to grow compared to other fruits and can thrive in diverse climates. Avocados Limited, brand ambassador. This

In fact, Brett Lee was seen collaboration signals a making a few of avocado significant milestone for recipes by himself. As he both Australian avocados put it "for an athlete and the burgeoning Indian nothing better than having fresh fruit market. avocados for energy and Renowned for their

superior quality and health benefits, Australian avocados promise tantalise Indian taste buds with a fusion of flavour, texture, and nutrition. With Brett Lee lending his

endorsement, this launch to introduce a premium and healthy option Indian households, advocating for incorporation of avocados into daily meals and snacks.

The avocado market in

India is experiencing a notable uptick, mirroring a global trend of increased demand over the past decade. Avocados hailed as a nutritious addition to all diets, particularly suiting preferences. vegetarian avocado industry is also on the rise, with production forecasted to surge from over 115,385 tonnes in 2022-23 to approximately 170,000 tonnes by 2026.

Aligned with this growth trajectory, Australian growers are actively pursuing new overseas markets, including India, with increased exports crucial for the industry's long-term sustainability. So the next time you're craving something tasty and consider nutritious, reaching for an avocado it's not just a delicious fruit but also a powerhouse of

### The real face of BBC's news coverage

BBC's True Lies is a signboard cautioning the common man about the dangerous acts perpetrated by the British Government owned media network, writes KUMAR CHELLPPAN.

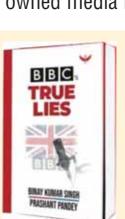
here are enough laws in the Indian Penal Code to punish those involved in impersonation and cheating. Reports about fake physicians, engineers and lawyers getting caught and sent to prison are routine affairs in India. There are rules in the statute books to punish those engaged in food adulteration and marketing. There was an incident involving the Chennai Police arresting a Class VIII dropout by the name 'Professor Ravi Kumar Reddy' in 2015 who has been teaching advanced power systems at Saveetha College of Engineering for nearly three years. His colleagues and students never got a chance to doubt his credibility till one of the professors came across the real Prof Ravi Reddy who had been teaching at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. The Chennai 'Professor' turned out to be Ashok Kumar Choudhury from Guntur who was blessed with photographic memory.

We have legislations and provisions in the IPC to book impersonators. Unfortunately, we do not have laws to prosecute fake journalists, the driving force behind media which is being flouted as the Fourth Estate of democracy. As on date most of the media and journalists act as propagandists while the line demarcating news and views have almost disappeared. There was a time when the English-speaking population of Chennai woke up to their bed Kaappee and the morning newspaper which was known by the name *Mount Road Mahavishnu*. Not anymore. moment readers understood that this *Mahavishnu* is feeding them fake and distorted news, they dumped the daily once and for ever. But the paper still survives because the minority

in this newspaper.
The story of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC World) is no different. The media house launched to disseminate to the world His Majesty's Voice (HMV) and counter the media blitzkrieg by Germany during the Second World War has degenerated into a fake news manufacturing plant. The last few decades of BBC's coverage of Asia and Africa speak volumes about its real intentions. The BBC is no more disseminating truths but specialises

There is a phrase which we regularly use; "Suppressio Veri, Suggestio Falsi" which means

Author Binay Kumar Singh and columnist and Prashant Pandey, a seasoned journalist,



**BBC'S TRUE LIES** BINAY KUMAR SINGH & PRASHANT PANDEY

**GARUDA BOOKS** have come out with BBC's True Lies, a book which deals with the purpose for which the radio channel was launched, and its modus operandi. While in college, our teachers used to tell us to listen to BBC Radio news so that it would help us improve our English pronunciation. But I found the All India Radio's English news bulletins legendary Surjit Sen, always stand out. The day I started listening go the bulletins aired by the BBC, I could make out channel had towards India. For the BBC editors, India was an uncivilized country of people believing

criterions in identifying heads of nations. Those heading Communist/socialist/ dictatorial regimes opposed to the then Soviet Union were friends of the US and UK. The best example was General Ziaul-Haq, the Pakistani despot who perpetrated terrorist acts against India. There were many Latin American heads of nations for whom democracy was an alien word and who

> coverage came out in the open during the last 1970s when OP introduced Parliament a legislation named the Freedom of Religion Bill. The BBC started sounding alarm bells in its bulletins claiming that all religions other than Hinduism were in danger in India! Of late, there were allegations from various Hindutva forces that BBC was into religious conversion in a big way. It is for the BBC to prove that their hands are Authors Binay Kumar and

> always were considered as

The real face of BBC's news

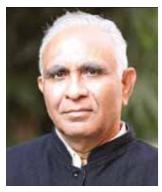
friends of US and UK.

Prashant need to be appreciated for bringing out this book packed with explosive information. Since public memory is short, they are likely to forget what the media airs/publishes once they listen or read the contents. BBC's True Lies is a signboard cautioning the common man about the dangerous acts perpetrated by the British Government owned media



# THE ENIGMATIC WORLD OF LEOPARDS

Leopards are the only large cat species with a widespread presence across the country, its conservation status and population dynamics serve as a barometer for the health of India's ecosystems



**HSSINGH** 

As per the

report on the

Status of the

(2022), the

**Leopard in India** 

overall leopard

the tiger range

states of India

was estimated

adult leopards.

states also, the

dominated area

in Uttarakhand.

**North-East India** 

and some other

major parts of

minor leopard

habitats in

were not

survey

those states

covered in the

subadult and

In the tiger

leopard-

at 13,870

landscape in 18

population in

leopard out of nine sub-species of leopard in the world, is found throughout India from Jammu & Kashmir in the North-West Himalayas to Cape Comorin in the south and, from the Gir forest (Saurashtra) and thorn forest in the arid zone (Kachchh) in the extreme west to the moist forest of Myanmar in the east. Although the majority of them, about 95 per cent are confined to India, its small populations, about 5 %, are also found in Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, east of the Indus River in Pakistan and a small area of southern China adjoining Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar. Out of eight subspecies of leopards in Asia, except the Indian leopard, none of the other subspecies of leopards in Asia, have a population above a thousand, and few of them such as the Amur leopard, and Arabian leopards are Critically Endangered. Only two sub-species, the African leopard and the Indian leopard still have viable populations and distribution ranges

reveal that India had a large population of

he Indian leopard (Panthera pardus fusca), a sub-species of

#### **POPULATION STATUS** Hunting records and British Gazetteers

leopards before the Second World War. It is stated in the publications that about 150,000 leopards were hunted during a span of 50 years (1875-1925). Perhaps, the leopard population was in the range of nearly one lakh hundred years ago. The population drastically declined and reached to lowest level in the 1960s when about 6000 to 7000 individual leopards were estimated in the Indian jungle by the famous naturalist E P Gee (1964). Protection and conservation measures by creating a network of Protected Areas and enacting laws have contributed to the leopard's recovery but the scale of poaching two decades ago slowed the recovery rate. When the scale of poaching declined, the population consistently increased in all leopard habitats, except Naxalite-affected states such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Telangana, Odisha and part of Maharashtra, and As per the report on the Status of the Leopard in India (2022), the overall leopard population in the tiger range landscape in 18 states of India was estimated at 13,870 subadult and adult leopards. In the tiger states also, the leopard-dominated area in Uttarakhand, major parts of North-East India and some other minor leopard habitats in those states were not covered in the survey. The Indian leopard occurs in 30 states and Union Territories whereas the population estimate in 2022 was only for major parts of 18 states.

Thus, the population declared in the leopard's report is only for two-thirds of the leopard distribution range, not for the entire India. Using data, as mentioned in the status report of leopard for leopard population in India by media and scientific communities is not correct. Major leopard states such as Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Haryana and major parts of Uttarakhand and North-East states are not covered in this report.

After accounting for all habitats, the leopard population was over 8,650 in the Central Îndia Landscape covering eight states. The second major population block supporting over 4,600 leopards in northern India: the Himalayas-Shivalik (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal, Uttarakhand, terai belt of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and the northern plains). The third major population block supporting about 3,600 leopards is the Western Ghats (Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and

The North-East and Brahmaputra plains have extensive forests but moderate to poor wildlife, including the Indian eopard and a total number of smart cats

may be in the range of about in the state in 2023. Arid and semi-arid zones comprising Haryana, Punjab, Nagar Haveli and the Western Aravallis in



Stories of man-eating leopards and and 24 of them were released in the adjacent forests. A similar story was punishing the culprit have been repeated in Gunnar and Nashik Forest Corbett's time also, hunters killed several innocent leopards while targeting a man-eater. Like criminals in human society, the man-eating leopard always harmed innocent leopards. When two man-eaters killed one and a half dozen people in Dhanpur taluka in Dahod district in Gujarat in 2003, the authority punished innocent leopards by eliminating 14 of them from the area. When three children were killed between Talala and Veraval in Junagadh in February 2003, a total of 11 leopards were punished by removing them from

When one or two leopards killed five people in Mandavi taluka in Surat districts in the post-monsoon and early winter in 2010, the situation compelled the Forest Department to engage several trap cages in the area. While hunting and trapping the man-eater, about two dozen leopards, including cubs were eliminated from the six villages in three months. When a leopard killed five people in Veraval in Junagadh in March 2012, a total of nine leopards were trapped and removed from the area. Similarly, when a leopard killed eight people in Visavadar and the surrounding area, about one and a half dozen leopards were captured and removed from the area in the year 2019. When leopards caused the death of human beings in the sugarcane belt in the fringe of Gir forests, over two dozen leopards were caged in 2023.

The situation in Uttarakhand was not different. There were cases when people retaliated and eliminated a large number of leopards in Uttarakhand, unnoticed by the department when the leopards killed human beings. When people were killed in Borivali National Park near Mumbai by one or two man-eaters, a total of 37 leopards were removed from the park in three years. In Ahmednagar division in Maharashtra, a total of 57 leopards were captured during 2001-05

captured from the Indian forests and locked in zoos where they are already crowded. Unofficial cases of leopard elimination due to human retaliation are equally high. A large number of the opards were eliminated or captured from high-concentration zones of the animals when one or two problem animals created an emergency.

One hunter, who has been hired to kill leopards on many occasions in Uttarakhand, killed 56 leopards over seven years and has been given awards for "bravery" for doing so. The Uttarakhand Wildlife Department keeps a list of authorized hunters. These kills appear to be "legal," though the shooters admit that for every man-eater killed, at least three innocents are slaughtered. It seems that public pressure forces authorities to "officially" declare a leopard as a man-eater in many

The association of the leopard with man has both advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage to the leopard in its proximity to man is its propensity for man-eating which was observed in many cases. The leopard, if once taken to man-eating, becomes a burden to the rest of the leopards and is often a deadly menace to children and is, therefore, eliminated immediately. Bur science and technology are yet to be developed to capture or eliminate man-eaters without harming innocents. The leopards have lived in close association with human beings for centuries and the man-eating has been a problem always. Modern society is now more arrogant and has no tolerance for such acts of wild animals. As a result, the people punish innocent leopards till the elimination of the maneater is confirmed beyond doubt. These incidents prove that man-eating reduces the survival chances of other leopards and hence administration has to be alert to track the animal when it starts attacking intentionally.

the extent of forest cover is 713,790 sq.

supreme cats. Seven states - Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh support about twothirds of the total leopard population. These states are rich in livestock, especially sheep, goats and dogs. As per the Forest Survey of India Report (2021),

km. in India. Of this, 684,000 sq. km. is in the states and Union Territories which support leopards. One-third of the forest cover in the leopard's states may not be

suitable for leopards.
Thus, potential leopard habitats may range over 450,000 sq. km. of forest cover to accommodate the growing population in the present occupancy areas of the leopards. How many leopards or tigers or Asiatic lions can be managed in the question. The big cats are on the path of recovery (about 700 lions, 3,680 tigers and over 20,600 leopards at present) in India but the dispersing big cats do not find proper habitats due to their fragmentations and absence of prey base. There is scope to accommodate the growing population of leopards in the forests which are devoid of leopards and wild ungulates, if herbivores are restocked by taking up long-term habitat restoration works.

#### **HUMAN-LEOPARD CONFLICTS**

Only about 35 per cent of the leopard population is found within national parks and wildlife sanctuaries and the rest were counted beyond the Protected Areas' boundaries. Leopards are also found in good numbers in extended habitats such as sugarcane fields, tea gardens, ravines, Prosopis thickets and other such nonforest areas. There are about three dozen Protected Areas or sites in the country where leopard density is high, over 10 adult and subadult leopards per 100 sq, km. and a few of them have very high concentrations, about 20 leopards or more per 100 sq. km. Dhanpur forests in Dahod district, Jambughoda forest in Godhra, sugar-cane belt in Mandvi taluka in Surat, some fringe areas around the forests of Gir and Girnar in Gujarat; Sanjay Gandhi National Park near Mumbai, some sites in the districts of Nashik, Ahmednagar and Gunnar in Maharashtra; Rajaji National Park, some areas in Pauri Garhwal, Teri Garhwal and Almora districts in Uttarakhand; Katarnighat forests in Uttar Pradesh and Kuno and Panna National Park in Madhya Pradesh, Sariska Tiger Reserve and a forest block adjoining Jaipur in Rajasthan; the Western Dooars in West Bengal and some open forest mosaics of central Karnataka have such high leopard concentration and human-leopard conflicts.

Population management in the conflict areas is one of the key management strategies to avoid human casualties and, if it is not done, public unrest may start in a big way against conservation. High leopard density normally results in the depletion of prey and frequent leopard attacks in the villages, leading to the eruption of anger and public agitation. Since the leopard population has doubled in India during the last two and half decades and it is now no longer Endangered or Vulnerable, there should

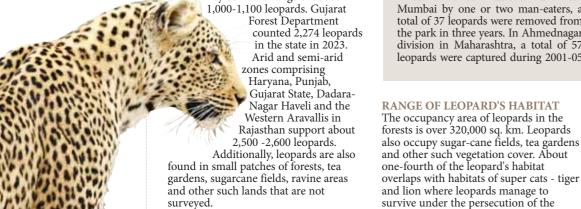
not be any hesitation to remove problem animals from such areas, if the attack on human beings persists. In no case, density should be allowed to exceed 25 adult leopards per 100 sq. km., as serious conflict is unavoidable in such high-

concentration sites. The human death rate in India due to leopard attacks was 400-410 people/year during the first decade of the 20th century (The Indian Forester Jan 1907). Independence of the country. Annually, about 95 to 100 human beings were killed by leopards during the first decade of the 21st century. Subsequently, human casualties increased consistently during the last decade due to the leopard's recovery and its dispersion in new areas, including villages and towns. In Uttarakhand, 565 human - beings were killed at an average rate of 22 human deaths/year by leopards since the creation of the state.

During the last few years, the average human death rate was 18 human deaths/year in Maharashtra. Annual death rate was 13 human deaths/year in Gujarat during the last five years. The scale of human deaths in Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal, Himachal, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Karnataka is also close to the same range. Thus, annually, over a hundred people are killed and thousands injured by leopard attacks. If population management policy is not placed into operation, the human death rate due to leopard attacks may reach to the level that prevailed a hundred years ago. Since human-leopard conflicts are scaling up with the increase of the leopard population in many states, the management of dispersing leopards in villages and cities and increasing humanleopard conflicts are major management The frequency of occurrence of leopard

attacks on humans over a specific period should be mapped for the identification of conflict hot spots. The management should establish a Rapid Response Task Team with equipment and infrastructure to attend to cases without delay. A Rapid Response Team with the necessary equipment should be placed into operation in high man-leopard conflict sites. Tranquilizer gun, flashlights (to each member); first-aid Kits (one large kit to each team); mobile phones (to each member); reflector jackets (to each member)' baffle shields and batons (to each member); public announcement system (one to each team); pamphlets and posters on 'Do's and Don'ts During Conflict Situations' (one set to each team) along with equipment as mentioned for RRT should be provided. Police Force should be integrated with the Task Force in high-conflict situations.

(Dr H S Singh is a Member of the National Board for Wild Life, Gandhinagar; views are personal)









agazine the pioneer agazine

















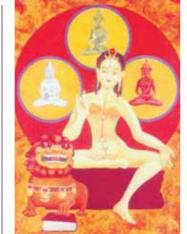






Friends or relatives seeking financial assistance for personal events or needs. Given your current stability, you're wellplaced to offer support, whether it be emotional or financial. Additionally, consider engaging in some charitable activities. As the week progresses, be wary of getting caught up in unrealistic dreams and desires. While it's natural to aspire for a luxurious life filled with fine dining, elegant apparel, and leisure, it's crucial to maintain clarity in your ambitions. Shifting goals too frequently can lead to confusion and a loss of true joy. Stay grounded and make firm decisions about what you truly want in life. With a realistic approach, you're more likely to achieve a sense of fulfillment. Embrace a positive outlook, as it will naturally attract good fortune, enhancing your overall well-being and prosperity.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Turquoise Lucky day Wednesday



#### **LEO** July 23-Aug 22

You have a natural inclination to lead and influence, often insisting on your own way of doing things. Your meticulous nature shines through in all your endeavors, and you infuse your surroundings with dynamism and responsiveness. Be aware, however, that an excess of intensity can sometimes lead to isolation or disputes, making interactions with colleagues and peers challenging. Situations may arise where differences in opinion could escalate into more serious disagreements. Channeling your robust energy into positive, constructive activities could be beneficial. You are endowed with a strong position and considerable influence, reflecting your hardearned status. Despite your competitive spirit, fostering a more cooperative atmosphere could enhance your achievements even further. Remember, balancing your assertiveness can help preserve and build upon the successes you've worked so hard to achieve.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Indigo Lucky day Friday



#### **SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week may bring some challenges to your health, possibly requiring a short period of medical attention. Despite this, it's a time rich with support and love from your partner, who will be by your side, offering care and comfort. Embrace this opportunity to deepen your spiritual connections; engaging in meditative practices can provide strength and restore balance. Allow yourself to lean into faith, embracing a path filled with love and compassion towards others. Family ties will strengthen as you find yourself sharing more with your partner. It's a perfect time for introspection and spiritual renewal. As the week progresses, you may find yourself drawn to peaceful retreats, which will aid in your recuperation. By week's end, expect to regain your usual pace, feeling refreshed and

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Maroon Lucky day Thursday



#### **TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week, you may find yourself in a position of influence and responsibility, leveraging your strong communication skills and leadership qualities. Your ability to empathize with others enhances your reputation as a dependable leader in your professional environment. However, be aware that not everyone may appreciate your approach. Some individuals could feel threatened by your success and might attempt to undermine your efforts. It's possible that achievements you've been aiming for, such as approvals or successful interviews, could unexpectedly benefit someone else due to underhanded tactics from competitors. As the week progresses, the weight of responsibilities may leave you feeling exhausted. It's crucial to consider the benefits of sharing tasks. By delegating, you can ensure a smoother workflow and prevent burnout, making your efforts more productive and less stressful.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Magenta Lucky day Sunday



#### VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week ushers in a period of abundance and emotional satisfaction, with financial gains enhancing your sense of security and triumph. Enjoyment comes through entertainment and luxuries, enriching your family life and fulfilling personal desires. As the week advances, you may seek deeper emotional connections, possibly leading to significant romantic gestures. Mid-week, however, could bring a wave of uncertainty, with feelings of instability and a notable chill in personal interactions. By week's end, you'll find it necessary to adapt and reassess your beliefs. This reflective period emphasizes the importance of evolving with the times, encouraging you to adjust your lifestyle and mindset. Embrace these changes to confidently face upcoming challenges, recognizing that sticking to outdated norms may no longer serve you well.

Lucky number 41 Lucky colour Ovile Lucky day Saturday



#### CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, you may find yourself emotionally sensitive, facing challenges that don't align with your hopes, leading to significant emotional distress. Your intentions to provide care might be stifled by circumstances, including health concerns that amplify your worries. Financially, prudent management and budget control are essential. As the week unfolds, it's crucial to adopt a methodical approach to daily activities. A balanced diet and disciplined lifestyle will greatly benefit your well-being. By week's end, you'll see notable progress in your professional life, with financial improvements from various sources boosting your economic status. This period could also be favorable for significant investments or acquisitions, such as a property purchase, bringing you satisfaction and an enhanced sense of stability

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Beige Lucky day Monday



#### **GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Last week you may have reaped the rewards of your hard work, but this week calls for caution. You may encounter conflicts or disputes at your workplace. Expect to face opposition from a colleague who views themselves as superior, potentially leading to troublesome situations characterized by criticism, rivalry, and verbal disputes. Midweek, you might find yourself influenced by someone whose presence is less than positive, a person who may challenge your principles and push you towards actions that clash with societal norms. However, your determination remains unshaken. With confidence, you navigate through these challenges. Your steadfastness and commitment to integrity will not only see you through but will also bring you success by week's end. As you overcome these obstacles, you'll earn admiration and applause, enhancing your reputation and leaving you feeling validated and respected.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Coral



#### LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week promises an enriching experience filled with enjoyment and recognition. Imagine being elevated to a place where success and joy are within easy reach, courtesy of your diligence and divine grace. You embody fairness, generosity, and a strong sense of justice, making you a natural leader whose guidance is sought after by many. Your pure intentions and ability to adapt gracefully to changes enhance your influence, helping you win admiration and respect in both personal and professional spheres. As you navigate through this period, your role as a pivotal figure is likely to be celebrated by your peers and loved ones. However, approach the weekend with caution; stay vigilant as there may be a minor financial setback or a health concern. Preparing ahead can help mitigate these risks, ensuring that your week remains largely positive.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Teal Lucky day Tuesday



#### **AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week starts with tough decisions that might impact you or someone close to you; fairness and clarity are crucial. Aim for a low profile at work, as competition for roles increases—engaging in conflicts won't help. Embrace submissiveness as a theme. By midweek, challenging feedback from a superior might leave you disheartened. To counter this, practice meditation or yoga to restore confidence and mental equilibrium. This is also a time to refocus on your goals and aspirations. As the weekends, the atmosphere will improve. Tensions ease, setting the stage for positive developments in personal relationships, possibly involving a romantic or lifelong commitment, alongside encouraging news. Remain open and receptive to new beginnings and opportunities

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Fuchsia Lucky day Wednesday



#### **CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week begins with a burst of energy, prompting you to take decisive action rather than dwell on feelings. A significant work opportunity arises, requiring immediate attention and the honing of your abilities. Remember, nothing is achieved without effort. Improved efficiency and clea communication will be key to your success. Midweek brings a flurry of financial transactions; you may find yourself both donating to worthy causes and settling debts. Emotions might overwhelm you during this period, prompting a thoughtful reassessment of recent decisions. As the week closes, a new partnership agreement may be on the horizon, enhancing both professional and personal connections. Those in search of romance might find themselves ready to make meaningful gestures, potentially leading to new beginnings in love.

Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Amber Lucky day Saturday



#### SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Lately, you may find yourself overwhelmed with increasing demands at work and in your studies. This surge in activity necessitates a period of rest to heal and replenish your energy. Without proper downtime, you might experience It's essential to focus on your health during this time. For women, particular attention should be paid midweek due to potential health sensitivities. Regular check-ups are crucial to maintain your well-being. At work, tensions may rise, potentially leading to disagreements with higher-ups. Managing your emotions and taking time to rejuvenate is key. If not, misunderstandings with authoritative figures in your life could escalate. Now is the time to balance your active life with moments of leisure to maintain harmony and

**\_ucky number** 3 | **Lucky colour** Lavender Lucky day Sunday



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#### PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week, you possess a vibrant energy and remarkable work potential. However, without clear goals, your efforts may not yield the desired results. Set specific objectives and channel your creative energies constructively. It's crucial to any health issues could lead to significant financial losses, so taking precautions is wise. Some of you might face personal and financial challenges midweek, and relationships could become strained. Remember, your mental strength and inner fire are your greatest allies during tough times. Opportunities will present themselves towards the week's end, but you must stay alert not to miss them due to preoccupation. Engaging in meaningful conversations and embracing travel can enhance your emotional well-being. Love and mutual understanding are on the horizon for couples.

ucky number 18 | Lucky colour Ivory

**ASTRO**TURF

BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

#### indicators that there seems to be no end of our struggle. This, despite so many pujas suggested by pundits to ward off the evil. Why so? Is there no remedial measure that could grant us ease and comfort? My husband, the breadwinner of family, has been subject to unwanted twists and turn in career all through his life? So far, he lost his job nothing less than a dozen times. In between, many a times he remained jobless as well. He is honest, truthful, hardworking, and yet runs out of favour with related bearing on our life. His health too, becomes a matter of concern every now and then." A lady, concerned

hat's wrong with our destiny

In the above context, let us first examine whether heavenly beings could grant boons in return for transactional pujas offered in their praise, to mitigate our sufferings. Experience suggests that had it been so, no resourceful person would have ever suffered in life. At the best, such pujas can bring in psychological satisfaction, which may help restore

about her husband's ordeal came

asking the other day

vour own faith. It may not be out of place to mention here that Vedas, which serves as the premise on which the Indian philosophy stands, does talk of various deities engaged in cosmic management. That, however, doesn't mean some heavenly form-beings like us, who could selectively respond to our prayers. They, in fact, symbolise various forces playing through the cosmos, vital to our life cycle, and available in equal proportion to all. It is difficult to digest that forces would be imbued with some mind-like organism to respond to our individual call, and that too mediated by pundits. What needs to be appreciated here that our lives are driven by cause-effect chain - "As you show, so shall you reap", which defines the course of our destiny. And it works in a selfautomated mode, almost like a software programme. There is no scope for any external agency adjudicating our course of destiny. The question now is: How does destiny play upon in our lives? Going by Îndian Philosophical concept, human life is structured in three layers -

### Watch and correct thought trends



Causal, Astral, and Gross bodies. On death, it is just the gross body that disintegrates. The causal and astral bodies that are pure energy platforms do not wither away. They carry over memory impressions pertaining to the

freshly incarnated body as thought seeds. These thought-seeds set the trends of mind - indwelling desires, virtues & attributes, habits & attitudes, likes & dislikes, prejudices &

past life and make it available to the

define in finite term specific events due in emerging times. They rather just offer a lead to proceed with. Here it needs to be appreciated that unless ground suited to germination of seeds is available, they may never bear fruit bearing plants. Invariably, guided by indwelling desires, we take off in life. Their fruition, however, would need qualitative effort, which, in the first place, calls for creating the ground necessary for fruition. Second, assess the environmental constraints as well as challenges posed by competing interests. Accordingly, articulate ways and means to intelligently pursue the task in hand. The irony, however, is that our mind, blinded by indwelling desires, doesn't allow time and space to invoke our own empowerment tool Buddhi – for due diligence, before taking the final call. And when we fail, instead of trying to find out our own fault-lines, we take refuse in our destiny.

obsessions. They, however, do not

The most potent remedy, therefore, is that your husband reflects upon his own mind-trends and makes necessary amends. In this context, let us look at

astrological pointers of the man concerned. The main marker is his Sagittarius lagna. Its lord Jupiter, though in exaltation, but is placed adverse to Uranus, Sun, and Moon. It implies, in the first place an undiplomatic and a tactless person. He would be known for his indiscrete and ill-timed instinctive outbursts at times not even sparing the seniors. Second, he is headstrong and opinionated, who may try to force his viewpoint. Third, he has a swaggering ego, often out of touch with reality that makes him stuck to his self-beliefs and not open to look beyond to explore better options. The Sun also illdisposed off to Moon makes him vulnerable to conflict and disharmony with others on the slightest pretext. Intelligence signifying Mercury sandwiched between headless Ketu and mischievous Neptune accounts for his inner confusions and insensible reasoning. And the result is there

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