



CITY 3 CONG HAND IS WITH ENEMIES OF INDIA: CM

OPINION 6 NOTHING 'GENTLEMANLY' IN CHINESE DIPLOMACY

WORLD 10 TURKIYE HALTS ALL TRADE WITH ISRAEL

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## Raebareli Rahul's new battlefield

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI/RAEBARELI

On deciding to contest from Raebareli Lok Sabha constituency, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi apparently made a calculated risk to solve several anomalies within and outside the party and hence retaining the legacy of Gandhi-Nehru family. In this scenario, neither the Gandhi scion has anything to lose, nor do the people of Raebareli, who were longing to continue their support for the grand old party's first family. The seat is currently held by longest-serving Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, who announced her retirement from electoral politics. While Sonia has been elected to the Rajya Sabha and will continue as a parliamentarian, the Congress and Rahul, who are confident enough to secure a victory in Raebareli as well as his current Wayanad Lok Sabha seat in Kerala, where he is contesting once again, will ultimately vacate the Uttar Pradesh Lok Sabha seat to pave the way for his sibling, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. The party also appeared to have concluded that Raebareli would be the safer seat for Rahul who lost Amethi to Smriti Irani last time by nearly 50,000 votes. Sources in the party said the plans were already there that



Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra upon their arrival before the nomination filing of Rahul ahead of the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections, in Raebareli. Pioneer photo

Priyanka could be fielded from Raebareli and Rahul from Amethi which he lost in 2019 but the party decided to avoid any controversy due to the continuous pitching by Priyanka's husband Robert Vadra through various platforms of media. Though, Vadra was part of the group that accompanied Rahul to the nomination office along with Sonia, Priyanka and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot accompanied the family. Ever since the announcement, Rahul contesting from Raebareli is considered a masterstroke for several reasons which includes taking the reins from Sonia in a real sense so that he can focus on a pan India poll campaign as he has bigger responsibility to ensure

that the INDIA Bloc wins more seats. Furthermore, with the Congress focusing more on Southern India due to declining affairs in the north, Rahul has maintained that he does not want to abandon his Wayanad constituency. In the event of losing this Lok Sabha seat again against Irani, it would have been a significant blow

to the leader of the largest political party. On the other hand, winning would have tarnished his image with the people of Amethi if he had chosen to leave after securing a victory. The party leadership which has fielded KL Sharma who is household name in Amethi as well as Raebareli and is confident enough to wrest the seat from Irani, wants to send a message that even a simple Congress worker successfully ran down the BJP candidate. Rahul filed his papers from Raebareli barely an hour before nominations closed for the Lok Sabha seat. The party ended the suspense over Amethi and Rae Bareli, announcing his candidature as well as Gandhi-Nehru family loyalist KL Sharma from Amethi, who too filed his papers amidst the presence of large number party workers. Polling in both parliamentary constituencies is on May 20. A large number of Congress workers, and those from INDIA Bloc partner Samajwadi Party, turned up at both the Lok Sabha constituencies. After filing his nomination, Rahul and other family members went to the district Congress office where family priest Radhe Shyam Dixit performed a puja. Sharma has been the key person who looked after the two prestigious constituencies on behalf of the Gandhis. Continued on Page 8



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves at supporters on his arrival for a public meeting for Lok Sabha elections, in Krishnanagar, West Bengal, on Friday. PTI photo

## Modi's advice to RaGa: 'Daro mat, bhaago mat'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATTA/NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi mocked the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi saying he had "run away" from Amethi for fear of defeat. "Today I also want to tell him, Daro Mat (don't be afraid), Bhaago Mat (don't run)," the Prime Minister sneered at three election rallies in West Bengal. Modi's jibe came after Rahul's most often repeated remarks against the PM "Daro Mat" and accusing the BJP Government of using probe agencies to terrorise critics and political rivals. Modi also attacked former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi saying he had predicted that both mother and son would avoid contesting from their seats out of fear. "I had said, their biggest

leader will not dare to contest. She will run away out of fear. She ran to Rajasthan and from there entered the Rajya Sabha. That is exactly what happened," he said. "I had said shehzade (Rahul Gandhi) is afraid of losing in Wayanad, and the moment voting ends, he will start looking for a third seat. Now even from Amethi, despite all his loyalists saying it, he panicked so much, he ran from there and is now looking towards Raebareli. These people keep going around telling people Daro Mat. Today I will also tell them... ji bhar ke keha hoon. Arey daro mat, bhaago mat," the PM said in Burdwan. Several BJP leaders seized on the Amethi-Raebareli decision, calling it a dead

giveaway that Rahul knows he can't win Amethi, where Union Minister Smriti Irani is contesting again after her win in the last Lok Sabha election. Modi also asserted that the Congress' tally in the Lok Sabha polls will be an "all-time low", as the grand old party would struggle to cross even the "half-century" mark in the hustings. Addressing back-to-back rallies in the Bardhaman-Durgapur, Krishnanagar and Bolpur Lok Sabha constituencies, the PM said if the Congress is voted to power, it would "snatch" quotas meant for the Scheduled Caste, Dalits and OBCs and give those to its "jihadi vote bank" to pursue the party's "appeasement politics". Continued on Page 8



## White House plays down 'xenophobia'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The White House has responded to US President Joe Biden's remark calling two of his QUAD partners — India and Japan — as well as Russia and China "xenophobic" nations, asserting that none of these countries, unlike the US, welcome immigrants. Responding to a question about the remarks made by Biden at an election fundraiser on Wednesday, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said that the president was making a "broader point". "He was making a broader point. Our allies and partners know very well that — how much this president respects them," Jean-Pierre told reporters at her daily news conference on Thursday. "As you know, in regard to Japan, they were just here for the state visit. The US-Japan relationship is an important relationship. It's a deep, enduring alliance," she said. "He (Biden) was making a more broad comment, speaking about this country and speaking about how important it is to be a country of immigrants and how it makes our country stronger. And so, that's what he was talking about," she said. "It relates to our relationship with our allies, that continues. Obviously, we have a strong relationship with India (and) with Japan. And the President, if you just look at the last three years, has certainly focused on those diplomatic relationships," Jean-Pierre said. "He was talking about who we are as a country. He was talking about the importance of being in a country of immigrants, especially as you see the attacks that we have seen very recently, in the last couple of years, those attacks on immigrants, in particular," the White House Press Secretary said, defending the president.

## EC unhappy with truant city slicks, plans to entice more

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The country's election watchdog has expressed its disappointment over voter apathy in metropolitan cities, including the National Capital region (NCR) cities, noting it as a pointer to the rigid levels of apathy in India's high-tech city in the first two phases of Lok Sabha polls. With the dismal poll average, the Election Commission has doubled up its voter participation interventions to overcome the 'small drop' in turnout in the first two phases. Besides an exclusive action plan taken up by it, the Commission hopes that urban centres going to polls in next phases turn the tide. The poll body has roped in celebrity endorsements featuring national icon Sachin Tendulkar, Rajkumar Rao, as well as actors Ayushmann Khurrana and Vijay Varma, alongside non-celebrity TVCs to promote voter's awareness. Additionally, short films and videos are being produced by DD for social media and its channels. Radio jingle, Vox pop programmes, RJ Mention, celebrity interviews, influencer engagement, and social media messaging are being done on various road station platforms. Food delivery platforms such as Zomato and Swiggy have also partnered with EC for disseminating voter awareness

messages in their unique style. In collaboration with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the poll body has launched voter awareness messages and songs which are being played at different stadiums during IPL 2024 to encourage people to cast their vote. The commission's social media cell has started a social media campaign "I am Election Ambassador". In another initiative, a voting day alert was sent to all Facebook users pan India to inform and inform the voters about the general elections and also to nudge them to participate in the festival of democracy. Vast network of post offices and banking institutions was also utilised by the poll body to reach out to a wide and diverse audience across the length and breadth of the country. The Department of Post has over 1.6 lakhs post offices and 1,000 ATMs and 1,000 digital screens while there are over 1.63 lakh bank branches and 2.2 lakh ATMs across public and private sector banking institutions. Following the dip in turnout in phase 1, the commission had directed State Chief Electoral Officers of Maharashtra, Bihar, UP and Rajasthan and Karnataka to come up with an additional set of plans to enhance voter turnout. Continued on Page 8

## Bengal gov dares TMC to assail him, sees a 'more sinister plot'

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Friday rejected the allegations of sexual assault leveled against him as an "absurd drama," a political "storm" — and a conspiracy by some political parties — which he expected and which was used to facing. A day after a woman employee at the Kolkata Raj Bhavan alleged that she was sexually harassed by the Governor, Bose blamed the political parties for the "absurd drama," adding he was expecting more such storms in the offing. His remarks come hours after the Governor's House administration banned entry of State Police and State Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya inside Raj Bhavan. Bose through an official statement said, "I welcome all

the generous allegations and the frequent innuendoes passed on me by some political forces. I understand, my friends, there is more in the offing. But one thing is clear, none of the absurd dramas is going to deter me from my determined efforts to expose corruption and curb violence." The Governor who left for Kerala — where he belongs — in the day also said "that is the nature of the political forces working in the State, adding, "I have braved many storms. I tell the political party that is plotting against me, this is no storm. This is only a storm in a teacup. Do not be surprised if you realise I am the storm. Bring out all the weapons from your armoury. Use it against me. I am willing. I am prepared. I shall continue my fight for the dignity and

respect of my brothers and sisters of Bengal." In an apparent bid to underscore the "absurdity" of the allegations, Bose a former IAS officer said that he could well be held responsible for the Famine that had hit Bengal or for the Great Calcutta Killings of 1946. After initial bonhomie between him and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Raj Bhavan's chemistry with Nabanna — State secretariat — had been on a falling track, particularly. The two sides had run-ins on a host of issues including the appointment of Vice Chancellors, corruption and rampant violence in panchayat elections. Referring to the incident Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee flayed the BJP for using the Raj Bhavan as its party office. Attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not sparing a single word on the allegations of molestation leveled by the Raj Bhavan staff against the Governor Banerjee said, "I am quite disturbed by this and here he (Modi) is attacking us but not sparing a single word on what happened at the Governor's House where he spent a night on Thursday." Continued on Page 8



## CBSE Class XII, X results to be out after May 20

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid speculations and rumours about announcement of the exam results by CBSE, the Board on Friday issued a clarification saying the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Class X and XII results are likely to be announced after May 20. "CBSE Class X and XII results are likely to be announced after May 20," the Board said in a note on its website. The Board exams for the two classes were conducted between February-April. The official website of cbseresults.nic.in said, "CBSE Board results for Class X and XII are likely to be declared after May 20, 2024." The Class X, XII results will likely be declared on the same day. Candidates who have appeared for Class X or XII Board examination can check the results on the official website of CBSE at cbse.gov.in. Continued on Page 8

## Doc's VIP treatment for Khandelwal in Chandni Chowk

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

In support of his successor, despite his two terms from the constituency coming to an end, former Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan made his presence felt at the grand roadshow held for the nomination filing of BJP candidate Praveen Khandelwal for Chandni Chowk on Friday. Along with Union Minister Piyush Goyal, Khandelwal started his journey from the ancient Gauri Shankar Temple turning the atmosphere ecstatic as one witnessed conch blowing, drum beating, band playing, and party flags fluttering in the roadshow. The sitting Chandni Chowk MP said, "The BJP is an organisation-based party, and our organisation

works not for individuals but for organisational development, and each candidate is a symbol of the organisation. We will ensure the victory of BJP candidate Khandelwal by ensuring maximum voter turnout on election day." This support adds a stark contrast to the infighting between the Congress in the national Capital, which is now out in the open with the exit of former Delhi Congress Chief Arvinder Singh Lovely. Slamming the INDIA Bloc, Goyal said, "The Congress and the AAP abuse each other in Punjab while they have seat-sharing arrangements in other States. The people of Delhi are intelligent enough not to be misled by such tactics," adding that the grand old party is going to be "wiped out"



Union Minister Piyush Goyal, former Union Minister and BJP leader Harsh Vardhan with others during a Jansabha in support of the party candidate from Chandni Chowk constituency Praveen Khandelwal, ahead of the third phase of Lok Sabha elections, at Chandni Chowk, in New Delhi, on Friday. Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

from the entire north India after the ongoing election. Further, Goyal said the INDIA Bloc of Opposition parties has no vision and blueprint for making the country a world power. "They

have nothing to give to the country except fake videos and narratives," he said. Referring to Khandelwal as a long-time friend, Goyal said he has been actively involved in finding solutions to the problems of traders, micro and small enterprises as well as consumers. BJP candidate Ramvir Singh Bidhuri also filed his nomination for the South Delhi seat, accompanied by Uttarakhanda Chief Minister Pushkar Dhama. A large number of BJP workers carrying party flags and raising "Jai Shri Ram" and "Ek baar phir Modi Sarkar" slogans marched along the roadshow of Bidhuri, greeting people from open-top vehicles. One witnessed people dressed in different traditional attires. While some dressed up in South

Indian attire, others wore Uttarakhanda attires in the rally. Prior to filing his nomination, Bidhuri also visited the Gopal Temple located in Prithviraj Market to seek blessings and mark the start of his road show. Accompanying Bidhuri, Dhama said the BJP's team work is going to repeat history and the saffron party will win all the seven Lok Sabha seats in the national Capital. Dhama encouraged the party workers, saying there is no contest against the BJP and their only challenge is the hot weather. "No matter how high the temperatures are, you have to bring the voters to the polling booths and ensure that the voting percentage does not fall," he said. Continued on Page 8



# Atul Anjan dies after prolonged illness

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Communist Party of India national secretary Atul Kumar Anjan died in hospital here on Friday morning after a prolonged illness. He was 70 and was suffering



from cancer. According to his sister Ratna Singh, Anjan had been suffering from cancer for several years and had earlier undergone treatment in Delhi and at present he was being treated at a hospital in Lucknow. Anjan began his political career at the Lucknow University Students' Union (LUSU) in 1977. Leaders of several political parties and social workers expressed grief over his death. The Uttar Pradesh politburo of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expressed deep grief on the demise of Communist Party of India national secretary Atul Kumar Anjan. Due to the demise of Atul Kumar Anjan, not only the CPI but the entire Leftist and farmers' movement have suffered a huge loss, the party said. Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait remembered Anjan as someone who fought for the interests of farmers. The national spokesperson of Bharatiya Kisan Union also shared a couple of pictures of him and Anjan.

# Second SP candidate files nomination from Lko

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

In an interesting development on the last day of the nominations on Friday, Samajwadi Party spokesperson Dr Ashutosh Verma filed his papers for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency. As SP's Ravidas Mehrotra had filed his nomination earlier, now there are two candidates from the party for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency. SP city president Fakhir Siddiqui said that if papers of both the candidates are found correct, national president Akhilesh Yadav would take a final call on who would be the candidate. Explaining why two candidates filed for nominations for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency, he said: "There were directions from the party that there was something lacking in the papers of Ravidas Mehrotra, hence under the directions of the SP president, Dr Ashutosh Verma filed his nomination papers. After the scrutiny of the papers, the national president will decide

who will withdraw the papers." Dr Ashutosh Verma is a child specialist and this is the first time he is in fray for the elections. One Kiran from the Samajwadi Party also filed nominations for the Lucknow Lok Sabha, but Siddiqui said there was no information regarding her. "Only Dr Ashutosh Verma and Ravidas Mehrotra from the SP have filed papers for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency," he said. Meanwhile, the last day of the nominations witnessed a total of 28 nominations, including 19 for Lucknow, seven for Mohanlalganj, and two bypoll to the Lucknow East assembly constituency. Syed Zeeshan Ahmad from Rajajipuram, a student of BA (III) at Kanpur University, filed his nomination for the Lucknow constituency as an independent candidate. Vinay Prakash Srivastava, a retired director from the Agriculture department, also filed his papers for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency. He said that he had contested elec-



tions thrice earlier. Mrudul Kumar Srivastava, an independent, said that he

would be contesting for the first time. "I had filed nomination for the assembly elections last

time, but the papers were cancelled," he said. Ashutosh Kumar, a private

company employee, filed his nomination for Lucknow East assembly constituency. He said it would be his first shot at the elections. A member of Bhartiya Jan Kranti Dal, he said he wanted to do something for the people. Kavita Nigam, who also filed nomination for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency, said if voted to power, she would bring down unemployment and make the city green. Jitendra Kumar, an advocate, filed his paper for Mohanlalganj. "I am contesting for the very first time. I am hopeful of winning because the incumbent, BJP's Kaushal Kishore, has done nothing," he said. Others who filed nomination papers included Mohammed Akram Ansari from Nationalist Jan Samaj, Mohammed Ahmed from Social Democratic Party of India, Saundarya Ranjan from AAP, Rekha Bharti from Azad Samaj Party, Vidya Shankar Mishra from Bahujan Mukti Party, Bhagwan from Samyukta Jan Sandesh Party, and Mohammed Raees from Muslim Majlis, Uttar Pradesh.

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### NOTICE

Shivam Sonker (Borrower) have agreed to create mortgage in respect of the Entire Second Floor of House No. 76/516 Coolie Bazar Kanpur Nagar having its covered area 73.05 Sq. Mts. alongwith 1/4 undivided land share With Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Ltd. and the power of attorney dated 07/09/2013 executed by Smt. Beena Jaiswal in favour of Sushila Devi is not traceable. If any person / institution have any claim against the said Property can contact to me, within 14 days. Bharat Bhatnagar, Advocate Office: Room No. 14 Second Floor Mudgal Adhivakta Bhawan Civil Court Kanpur Nagar Mob. 09839034426

### NOTICE

Original Free hold Sale-Deed Dated-07.06.2003 (No-7230) and Possession Certificate dated 02.12.1996 of my Property No- G-1464 EWS, Aawas Vikas Scheme No-1, Panki Road, Kalyanpur, Kanpur Nagar have been lost somewhere. Any use of the same shall be illegal. Report has been lodged with police on 02.05.2024. Equitable Mortgage over the said property is proposed to be created in favour of SBI, R.A.C.P.C. The Mall, Kanpur Nagar (Branch code- 03809) Smt Jyoti Singh D/O Late Kishnu R/O HNo- 62, Rajkiya Unnayan BHO, GT Road, New Colony, Kanpur Nagar.

### NOTICE

Saransh Tewari, residing at 535 Arya Nagar, Sitapur, reports the loss of the original lease deed dated 17.08.1979, registered at Sitapur Sub Registrar Office on 20.08.1979. The deed, in book "I", volume "785", pages "74" to "93", serial "2009", was executed by the General Manager, District Industries Centre, Sitapur, in favour of Shri Rameshwar Prasad. Sitapur police station is informed, with G.D. No. 038, dated 02/05/2024, under "Missing Assets" category. Applicant: Saransh Tiwari, Police Station: Kotwali Sitapur. Contact mobile number: 9336425088.

### आवश्यकता है

एस.एस.जी. कॉलेज ग्राम-मोट नौशहर, फतेहपुर (सम्बद्ध- प्रो. राजेश सिंह (रज्जु नैय्या) विश्वविद्यालय प्रयागराज) आवश्यक्ता है प्राचार्य एवं प्रकाशकों की कक्षा संकाय हेतु- (1) प्राचार्य- एक पद (2) हिन्दी साहित्य- एक पद (3) शिक्षा शास्त्र- एक पद (4) इतिहास- एक पद (5) गृह विज्ञान- एक पद (6) अंग्रेजी साहित्य- एक पद (7) संस्कृत- एक पद (8) समाज शास्त्र- एक पद विज्ञान संकाय हेतु- (1) जनसंख्यिक विज्ञान- एक पद (2) रसायन विज्ञान- एक पद (3) गणित- एक पद (4) भौतिक विज्ञान- एक पद (5) जन्तु विज्ञान- एक पद नोट:- वेतन एवं शर्तिकाय यू.जी.सी. एवं राज्य विश्वविद्यालय के मानकानुसार देय होगा। इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी अपना आवेदन विज्ञापन प्रकाशन से 21 दिनों के अन्दर विद्यालय के पते पर भेजें। मो. 79053 50038, 9846670899

### सार्वजनिक सूचना

मैं डॉ० अलक्षेन्द्र स्वरूप पुत्र स्व० रागेन्द्र स्वरूप साहिव, डॉ० वीरेन्द्र स्वरूप मेमोरियल ट्रस्ट, 15/60 सिविल लाइन्स, कानपुर आपको एतद्वारा अवगत कराना चाहता हूँ कि दिनांक 11.12.2008 को कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण के द्वारा पट्टा विलेख एक किताब प्लॉट सं० 2-सी, ब्लॉक "एन" स्क्रीम नं० 1 मोरिन्द नगर कानपुर क्षेत्रफल 3215.047 वर्ग गज या 2688.10 वर्ग मीटर की रजिस्ट्री वही सं० 1 जिल्द सं० 4797 के पृष्ठ सं० 379 से 416 पर क्रमांक सं० 7524 दिनांक 11.12.2008 को रजिस्ट्रीकृत हुयी थी, जो कार्यालय स्थानांतरित होने के बाद से उक्त पट्टा विलेख नवीन कार्यालय में मिल नहीं रहा है, और जो कहीं खो गया है। इसका प्रयोग अवैध होगा। डॉ० अलक्षेन्द्र स्वरूप साहिव, डॉ० वीरेन्द्र स्वरूप मेमोरियल ट्रस्ट 15/60, सिविल लाइन्स, कानपुर

### NOTICE

I Abdul moiz state that due to mistake, my mother's name in my 10th & 12th marksheet & certificate is written as Rehana Parveen. The correct name of my mother is Rehana Perveen. Please correct my mother's name From Rehana Parveen to Rehana Perveen.R/O-536/2162 New Madheganj, khadra, Lucknow,Pin: 226020.

### सूचना

मैं डॉ० अलक्षेन्द्र स्वरूप पुत्र स्व० रागेन्द्र स्वरूप साहिव, डॉ० वीरेन्द्र स्वरूप मेमोरियल ट्रस्ट, 15/60 सिविल लाइन्स, कानपुर आपको एतद्वारा अवगत कराना चाहता हूँ कि दिनांक 11.12.2008 को कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण के द्वारा पट्टा विलेख एक किताब प्लॉट सं० 2-सी, ब्लॉक "एन" स्क्रीम नं० 1 मोरिन्द नगर कानपुर क्षेत्रफल 3215.047 वर्ग गज या 2688.10 वर्ग मीटर की रजिस्ट्री वही सं० 1 जिल्द सं० 4797 के पृष्ठ सं० 379 से 416 पर क्रमांक सं० 7524 दिनांक 11.12.2008 को रजिस्ट्रीकृत हुयी थी, जो कार्यालय स्थानांतरित होने के बाद से उक्त पट्टा विलेख नवीन कार्यालय में मिल नहीं रहा है, और जो कहीं खो गया है। इसका प्रयोग अवैध होगा। डॉ० अलक्षेन्द्र स्वरूप साहिव, डॉ० वीरेन्द्र स्वरूप मेमोरियल ट्रस्ट 15/60, सिविल लाइन्स, कानपुर

### वेदस्वली सूचना

सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि हमारे पुत्र अंकित साहिव, डॉ० वीरेन्द्र स्वरूप मेमोरियल ट्रस्ट, 15/60 सिविल लाइन्स, कानपुर आपको एतद्वारा अवगत कराना चाहता हूँ कि दिनांक 11.12.2008 को कानपुर विकास प्राधिकरण के द्वारा पट्टा विलेख एक किताब प्लॉट सं० 2-सी, ब्लॉक "एन" स्क्रीम नं० 1 मोरिन्द नगर कानपुर क्षेत्रफल 3215.047 वर्ग गज या 2688.10 वर्ग मीटर की रजिस्ट्री वही सं० 1 जिल्द सं० 4797 के पृष्ठ सं० 379 से 416 पर क्रमांक सं० 7524 दिनांक 11.12.2008 को रजिस्ट्रीकृत हुयी थी, जो कार्यालय स्थानांतरित होने के बाद से उक्त पट्टा विलेख नवीन कार्यालय में मिल नहीं रहा है, और जो कहीं खो गया है। इसका प्रयोग अवैध होगा। डॉ० अलक्षेन्द्र स्वरूप साहिव, डॉ० वीरेन्द्र स्वरूप मेमोरियल ट्रस्ट 15/60, सिविल लाइन्स, कानपुर

## Man hurls shoe at SP Maurya

Agra (PTI): A man hurled a shoe at national president of Rashtriya Shoshit Samaj Party Swami Prasad Maurya during a rally here on Friday. The man, identified as Dharmendra Dhakrey, has been and further action is being taken against him, Dauki SHO Rampal Singh said. A spokesperson of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha (ABHM) claimed that Dhakrey is associated with the organisation.

the pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

### सूचना

मैंने अपना नाम KM SAKSHI से बदल कर SAKSHI TIWARI रख लिया है मैं इसी नाम से जानी जाती हूँ SAKSHI TIWARI D/o LAXMI PRASAD 41 A NEW MIG- HEMANT VIHAR, RAHI MEDICAL CENTER, PO- BARRA KANPUR NAGAR

### सूचना

मैंने अपना नाम MOHAMMAD SHOEB ANSARI से बदल कर MOHD SHOAB ANSARI रख लिया है। इसी नाम से जाना जाता हूँ MOHD SHOAB ANSARI S/o MOHD SHEHJADE ANSARI 100/4, JUHI SAFED COLONY, KANPUR NAGAR

### NOTICE

My Name is recorded as FOOLMATI in my husband's service record 7235641 and Aadhar card whereas the correct name is PHUL.MATI. I should be known and regarded with the same name. Phoolmati w/o Munendra Singh R/o Manu ka purva, Nagar Panchayat Khaga Distt. Fatehpur (U.P.)

### NOTICE

1, Mohd. Yusuf state that due to mistake, my mother's name in my 10th & 12th marksheet and certificate is written Farida Iqbal. The correct name of my mother is Fareeda Iqbal. Please correct my mother's name from Farida Iqbal to Fareeda Iqbal. R/O: 474/238/5A Sitapur Road, Near Shia P.G. College, Lucknow. 226020.UP.

## DM says sector, zonal magistrates assigned poll responsibilities

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

District Election Officer and District Magistrate Surya Pal Gangwar announced on Friday that nearly every sector magistrate has been assigned responsibility for approximately 15 booths, while each zonal magistrate is overseeing around 60-80 booths. According to the district election officer, the presiding officers, sector magistrates, and zonal magistrates form the backbone of the election process. He emphasised their critical role in ensuring the elections proceed smoothly without any incidents that could raise doubts about the integrity of the process. "It is the duty of zonal and sector magistrates to oversee the orderly conduct of elections and swiftly address any issues that may arise at polling booths, whether related to equipment malfunctions or other disruptions," he explained. Gangwar instructed all sector and zonal Magistrates to be thoroughly informed about various aspects of the polling process, including knowledge of forms, procedures for mock polls, and protocols for handling challenges related to VVPAT slips. He expressed confidence that they would collaborate effectively with their teams to facilitate peaceful elections in the district, stressing the importance of coordination with the presiding officers. The district election officer mentioned that training was provided to 224 sector magistrates and 46 zonal magistrates in a single session, with only three sector magistrates playing truant. Additionally, he announced

that the presiding officers and first polling officers who missed the training session would be given one last opportunity in a single session on Saturday. Meanwhile, a list of 150 staffers from the Lucknow Development Authority was compiled and sent to the officer concerned on Friday for deployment on election duty. The names were selected after thorough scrutiny to ensure that each individual is physically and mentally fit for their responsibilities. LDA Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi has taken the initiative to include staffers who can deliver optimal results during the polls. They have been instructed to ensure that no eligible voter is denied their right to vote. Even if voters have lost their ID cards or failed to bring it to the polling booths, they will be allowed to vote if their name appears on the official electoral rolls. The move is to achieve maximum voter turnout. A five-day training programme will begin in the main auditorium of the LDA head office in Gomti Nagar starting from Saturday. The training will cover the operation of EVMs, verifying voter identity card numbers against the main voter list, and other polling day formalities. Following the training, the staffers will gather at the District Election Office premises where they will receive their ID cards and detailed briefings on their assigned duties for an additional three days. They will be assigned specific polling stations. It will be their responsibility to transport the EVMs securely to the designated counting location after polling concludes.

## SGPGI department to celebrate Hand Hygiene Day today

Lucknow (PNS): The department of microbiology at Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS), will be celebrating its 36th Foundation Day on Saturday. On the occasion, an awareness programme will be organised on the occasion of World Hand Hygiene Day. A senior doctor from the department highlighted that this year's theme for 'World Hand Hygiene Day-2024' is 'Promoting knowledge and capacity building of health care workers through innovative and impactful training and education, on infection prevention and control, including hand hygiene'. Emphasising the critical importance of hand hygiene in preventing the spread of infectious agents among health-care workers, he noted that thousands of people worldwide die daily from infections acquired during healthcare services. Hands serve as the primary pathways for germ transmission, making hand hygiene practices essential for preventing health care-associated infections. The department's ultimate

aim is to introduce automation in clinical microbiology, implement molecular-based diagnostic tests for rapid identification of infectious agents and their antimicrobial susceptibility, and focus on molecular epidemiology. The department serves as the WHO Surveillance Centre for the polio eradication programme in UP and Bihar. A Viral Research Diagnostic Lab (VRDL) has been established to offer free viral diagnostics to patients. Routine surveillance of high-risk areas such as transplant units, intensive care units, dialysis units, and operation theaters is conducted. Additionally, the department publishes an annual newsletter featuring pathogen distribution, antibiotic sensitivity, and intriguing case reports. On the Foundation Day, Prof Dr Manodeep Sen from RMLIMS will deliver a talk on 'Promoting knowledge and capacity building on infection prevention & control, while Dr Chinmoy Sahu will discuss the role of susceptibility breakpoints vs MICs and its clinical significance.

## Railway Hospital employee found dead with throat slit open

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 52-year-old staff member of Railway Hospital was found dead with his throat slit open a few yards away from the chief medical superintendent's office on Friday. Police initially claimed that the man, identified as Mansharam of Rajni Khand in Ashiyana, committed suicide, although colleagues of the deceased suspected foul play. Despite reviewing CCTV footage, the police were unable to identify anyone approaching the area where the victim was found deceased. The family of the deceased did not provide any suspicious information regarding the incident. According to sources close to the investigation, the incident site is not within the CCTV range, suggesting that the perpetrator deliberately chose a blind spot to avoid detection. Around noon on Friday, the Alambagh police station was alerted by the Railway Hospital about the incident. This news prompted a substantial police response, with offi-

cers arriving at the scene to investigate. Entry into the hospital was restricted, and the crime scene was cordoned off to preserve any potential evidence. A police spokesman stated that based on initial observations and footage examination, it appeared to be a case of suicide, with the victim allegedly ending his own life by slitting his throat. The forensic team collected electronic and physical evidence for further analysis. The body was discovered a few yards away from the chief medical superintendent's office. It remains unclear whether the CMS was present in the office during the incident. Investigators were unable to locate the weapon used to inflict the fatal wound. There were no signs of struggle or blood spatter typically associated with self-inflicted injuries. Preliminary investigations revealed that the victim reached his office in the morning and later went missing. Colleagues started searching for him after hearing cries

from a female staff member. He was found in the corridor near the CMS room, prompting immediate medical attention, but he succumbed to injuries. Authorities swiftly collected blood-stained samples and initiated forensic analysis. Mansharam from Uttarakhnad worked as a peon in the CMS office. Despite suspicions of foul play among colleagues and the nature of the injuries, the police are currently treating the incident as a suicide due to the absence of compelling evidence suggesting otherwise. The investigation continues, focusing on all available leads to determine the circumstances surrounding this tragic event.

clear why he took the extreme step, while investigations are underway. Meanwhile, a security guard was found hanging from the grill of a ventilator, with a dupatta tied around his neck, in the morning. The deceased, identified as Anuragh Tiwari from Rae Bareilly district, was residing at a house in Neelmatha and was employed at a shopping mall. His brother Anubhav was informed about the incident by one Atul and he reached the scene. The police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigations into the case. Additionally, a 55-year-old employee of the Postal department passed away allegedly after falling off the roof of his house in Banthra on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday. Reports said that Tribhuvan Narayan from Mahau Padiyana village was sleeping on the terrace which did not have a boundary wall. Upon waking up to attend to nature's call, he inadvertently misjudged the roof's edge and fell to death.

## HSI aims to sterilise, vaccinate 80-85% of dog population within 5-7 years

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): A training programme was organised on Friday under the chairmanship of Municipal Commissioner Inderjit Singh, in collaboration with Human Society International India (HSI), for the implementation of the Indian Animal Birth Control Rules aimed at the safety and care of dogs under Lucknow Municipal Corporation. War room employees and other corporation officials also participated in the training. During the training session, HSI members emphasised that referring to dogs as stray or mad and treating them as such is legally prohibited. They clarified that these dogs are street dogs, not mad or stray. The training provided detailed information about the ongoing initiatives related to street dogs. HSI officials stated, "Our objective is to sterilise and vaccinate 80-85% of the city's street dog population within 5-7 years. We conduct community awareness programmes to sensitise people about the needs of street dogs and promote peaceful coexistence between humans and dogs. Unsterilised and unvaccinated dogs from designated zones are brought to the Animal Birth Control centres for sterilisation and vaccination," they explained. The HSI officials further said that their veterinarians perform the sterilisation surgeries and administer rabies vaccines to the dogs. Following the post-operative care, dogs are returned to the same location from where they were picked up, in accordance with Animal Birth Control rules. They collaborate closely with communities, individuals, and stakeholders to raise awareness and engage them in the process. It was emphasised that street dogs are protected under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA), 1960 and the Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules, 2001.

## NHRC finds 'negligence' in AMU stray dog incident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has found "negligence" by authorities in a stray dog attack incident that took place last year at Aligarh Muslim University campus in which a 65-year-old man was killed. In a statement released on Friday, the NHRC said it has recommended payment of a relief amount of Rs 7.5 lakh to the next of kin of the victim. Safdar Ali Khan was mauled to death by a pack of street dogs when he was out on a morning walk in a park on the AMU campus in April last year. The incident was widely reported and a video of it also went viral on social media. The NHRC "finds negligence of the authorities" in last year's stray dog attack resulting in the death of a person on the AMU campus in Uttar Pradesh, the rights

panel stated in a statement. The NHRC has asked the UP government, through its chief secretary, to pay Rs 7.5 lakh to the next of kin of Khan. A compliance report with proof of payment has also been sought within eight weeks, according to the NHRC statement. The NHRC had registered a case suo motu based on a media report dated April 17, 2023 about the incident and issued notices to the UP chief secretary, vice-chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, and the commissioner of Aligarh Municipal Corporation, seeking a detailed report on the incident. Based on the material on record, the NHRC had issued a notice to the chief secretary to show cause why Rs 7.5 lakh should not be recommended to be paid as monetary relief to the next of kin of the victim. However, the authorities con-

ferred forwarded a letter from the AMU registrar stating that the NHRC notice "does not contain any instruction the university must comply with." "There is no commission of violation of human rights or negligence in the prevention of violation of human rights and abetment on the part of the university," the authorities had stated in response to NHRC notice. The NHRC noted that the authorities were "apparently passing the buck in the matter." The NHRC observed that the benefits arising from the order could not be denied to the victims of a violation of human rights by the authority due to an act of negligence and abetment by the public servant. It confirmed the amount of relief of Rs 7.5 lakh as mentioned in the show cause notice, recommending that it has to be paid to the victim's next of kin.

## ED to probe money laundering in police recruitment paper leak

Lucknow (PNS): The Lucknow unit of the Enforcement Directorate has registered a money laundering case against the two alleged masterminds of the Uttar Pradesh Police constables recruitment exam question paper leak case. The alleged masterminds have been identified as Rajiv Nayan Mishra and Ravi Attri by ED officials. A senior ED official said that a case had been registered under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), based on 178 FIRs lodged in 41 districts of UP regarding the question paper leak. The ED will now interrogate Mishra and Attri, who are currently lodged in the Gautam Buddha Nagar jail, as well as officers from the UP Police Recruitment and Promotion Board involved in conducting the examination. On April 3, Mishra, 32, was arrested by the STF in Gautam Buddha Nagar. The second kingpin in the paper leak case, Ravi Attri, was also arrested in Gautam Buddha Nagar on April 10.

FORM NO. 1 DEBITS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, ALLAHABAD (Area of Jurisdiction-Part of Uttar Pradesh) Office of the Recovery Officer (600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow - 226007) DRC No. 724/2022/Lko (NOTICE UNDER RULE 2 OF SECOND TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961 READ SECTION 29 OF DEBITS RECOVERY ACT 1993) INDIAN BANK .....Applicant Bank Versus .....Defendants To, Mis BAGISH TRADERS & OTHERS 1. Mis Bagish Traders, Through its Proprietor Sri Dhananjay Pandey S/o Late Markandey Pandey, Address: 629/1, Naubasta Kalam, Chinnat, Lucknow-226028 2. Shri Dhananjay Pandey S/o Late Markandey Pandey, Registered Address: 1/282, Vijayanagar, Gornli Nagar, Lucknow-226028 This is to notify that a sum of Rs. 46,45,956/- (Rupees Forty Six Lacs, Forty Five Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty Six Only) together with pendente lite and future interest @ 12% per annum from the date of filing of the Original Application i.e. 06/11/2019 till the loan is fully liquidated and cost and is hereby allowed ex parte against defendant no. 1 & 2 jointly and severally. 2- You are hereby directed to pay the sum within 15 days of the receipt of this notice failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act, 1993. 3- You are hereby ordered to declare on Affidavit the particulars of asset no. or 02/07/2024 Before. 4- You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 02/07/2024 at 10:30 AM. Details of Costs: Application fees : Rs. 49,000/- Publication fees & Clerks : Not Claimed Counsel Charges : Not Claimed Miscellaneous Expenses : Not Claimed Clerical Charges : Not Claimed Recovery Officer - DRT Lucknow



# Yogi warns people against 'swarth ka gathbandhan'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday addressed massive public gatherings in Sambhal, Budaun and Aonla Lok Sabha constituencies of western Uttar Pradesh, urging voters to extend their full support to Bharatiya Janata Party candidates in the polls.

During these rallies, Chief Minister Yogi vehemently criticised Samajwadi Party and Congress. In Sambhal, he took aim at a former Pakistani minister's praise of Rahul Gandhi, while in Budaun, he questioned the stance of the SP and Congress regarding the Ram temple and highlighted the state government's effective crackdown on mafia and criminal elements.

In Aonla, Chief Minister Yogi labelled the SP-Congress alliance as 'swarth ka gathbandhan' (selfish alliance), accusing them of neglecting voters' interests once elections are over.

In all these three constituencies, Chief Minister Yogi emphasised the transformative vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership for India and termed the alliance of SP and Congress as harmful to the interests of the nation.

In Sambhal Lok Sabha constituency, Chief Minister Yogi appealed to people to vote in favour of BJP candidate Parameshwar Lal Saini. Criticising the opposition alliance, Chief Minister Yogi remarked, "Their actions are driven by self-interest rather than the welfare of the nation. While no one in the country praises Rahul Gandhi, former Pakistani minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain does. This exposes their true face."

Furthermore, Rahul tends to abscond to Italy whenever the nation faces crises, disregarding India and its people. However, he conveniently remembers Ram Lalla at election time and rushes to Uttar Pradesh. Rahul swiftly forges electoral alliances during elections, only to vanish once they conclude. This is his true character, he added.

The chief minister went on to say that the BJP stands amidst the election campaigns with the



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath receiving a memento at the BJP election rally in Aonla on Friday

aim of welfare of the poor, Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat. In the past 10 years, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country has progressed, and everyone knows it. In such circumstances, it is up to you to make the decision, he added.

In the Budaun Lok Sabha constituency, Chief Minister Yogi appealed to people to vote for Durvijay Singh Shakya. Attacking the opposition in his address, he said, "The Congress-SP alliance aims to harm the interest of the nation. Voting for them is similar to handing over a tractor to an inexperienced individual."

Referring to the Ram temple, the chief minister said, "After 500 years, Ram Lalla is finally seated in Ayodhya, and criminals and mafias in the state have been dealt with," emphasizing that, "Jo bache hain unka number bhi aega" (Those who remain will also face the consequences).

He further stated, "We will protect the righteous people and work to send the wicked to

their rightful place. There are no riots and no curfews are imposed in Uttar Pradesh. The rioters are roaming with placards around their necks begging for forgiveness."

During a public meeting in Aonla, the chief minister highlighted the double standards of Congress and the parties aligned with the INDI Alliance. He pointed out that they previously denied the existence of Lord Ram. "However, when the magnificent and divine temple of Ram Lalla has been constructed, they suddenly claim that Ram belongs to everyone, showcasing their dual character," he said.

"Similarly, during elections, they hail you as their mother and father, but once the elections conclude, they conveniently forget your significance," he remarked.

Chief Minister Yogi said, "Maharaja Dilip of Ayodhya once rescued a cow from the mouth of a lion. Such devout people are born on the land of Mother India." He said that SP and Congress

had a misconception that they could allow food preferences according to someone's interests. "Forget about cow slaughter in the state, even if anyone thinks about it, the gates of hell will be opened for them," he added.

Highlighting the nation's condition prior to 2014, Chief Minister Yogi said that Congress used to question the existence of Lord Ram and Lord Krishna, whereas SP used to threaten to put those chanting 'Jai Shri Ram' in jail. Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav addressed a public meeting with Chief Minister Yogi in the Budaun Lok Sabha constituency. He remarked that Chief Minister Yogi had showcased Uttar Pradesh as a role model for the entire nation.

"Nowadays, criminals believe that they can indulge in unruly behaviour, but in Uttar Pradesh, the chief minister does not tolerate such misconduct. The maintenance of law and order in the state serves as a prime example," he said.

## BJP's DP Singh files nomination from Rae Bareilly

Lucknow (PNS): Dinesh Pratap Singh, the Bharatiya Janata Party nominee for the Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha seat, officially entered the electoral fray on Friday afternoon by filing his nomination papers.

Prior to submitting his nomination papers, Singh led a roadshow through the city streets, drawing a significant turnout of BJP supporters and party leaders and workers.

Expressing his confidence in the upcoming electoral battle, Singh declared, "This time, history will witness a transformation in Rae Bareilly. The people are enthusiastic about giving a third term to Narendra Modi as prime minister."

The 56-year-old member of UP Legislative Council is no stranger to challenging the dominance of the Gandhi family in the region. In the 2019 election, he narrowed Sonia Gandhi's victory margin from 3.52 lakh votes in 2014 to 1.67 lakh votes. This time Singh will face Rahul Gandhi in the constituency which his mother, Sonia Gandhi, held from 2004 to 2024. Singh, who currently serves as Minister of State for Horticulture, Agricultural Marketing, Agricultural Foreign Trade, and Agriculture Export (Independent Charge) in UP, remains undeterred by the formidable challenge posed by the Gandhi scion. He said, "The departure of pseudo-Gandhis from Rae Bareilly is inevitable. The victory of BJP's 'lotus' is assured and Congress will face defeat in the constituency. Having contested against Sonia Gandhi herself, the presence of Priyanka and Rahul Gandhi holds little significance to me. Any Gandhi who ventures into Rae Bareilly will meet the same fate."

Hailing from Gunawar Kamangalpur village in Rae Bareilly, Singh's political trajectory saw a significant upswing following his entry in the BJP in 2018. His commendable performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections earned him a nomination to the legislative council and a ministerial berth when Adityanath secured a second term in 2022. With deep-rooted ties with the Thakur community and a family history of political influence in Rae Bareilly, Singh emerges as a contender, poised to challenge the stronghold of the Gandhi family.

# BJP put lives of people at stake, says Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amid raging controversy over the side effects of COVID-19 vaccine Covishield, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party of putting the lives of people at stake.

He alleged that the ruling party extorted political donations from a vaccine manufacturer. Addressing an election meeting in Kishni assembly segment of Mainpuri Lok Sabha constituency on Friday, the SP chief demanded a high-level probe into it. He also demanded free medical check-up of all persons who were administered the Covishield vaccine.

Akhilesh Yadav said allowing such lethal medicines amounts to a fiddling with public health and those responsible should be prosecuted. "I stand vindicated after the revelation about the side effects of the vaccine. I had refused to take the vaccine," he said.

"Around 80 crore Indians have been administered Covishield vaccine, and two doses are given to each person. The company which made its original formula has said that it causes a risk of heart attack," Yadav said.

Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple is seeking re-election from Mainpuri. "Those who have lost their loved ones due to the side effects of the vaccine or who feared the ill effects of the vaccine, their doubts and fears have now been proven right," he added.



The UK-headquartered pharmaceutical AstraZeneca has admitted that in "very rare cases", its COVID-19 vaccine, which is known as Vaxzevria in Europe and Covishield in India, can cause a blood clot-related side effect but the causal link is unknown, according to court papers being quoted in the UK media. In India, the AstraZeneca vaccine was manufactured by the Serum Institute of India.

Attacking the BJP, the SP chief further said, "The ruling party has put the lives of the public at stake by collecting political donations from the vaccine manufacturing company." "Neither the law, nor the public will ever forgive them. There should be a judicial inquiry at the highest level in this matter," Akhilesh Yadav added.

The SP leaders had made similar allegations while addressing election meetings in Mainpuri earlier this week, saying the BJP took "commission" from the manufacturer of the Covid vaccine, which they said was "forcibly" administered to people. SP national general secretary Shival Singh Yadav said, "It has now been exposed that they have taken commission in vaccines too. Low quality vaccines and medicines were given to the people."

Dimple Yadav said people were "forcibly" administered COVID-19 vaccines in the country. "A donation of Rs 200-300 crore was taken by the BJP and the pharma companies were given permission to market the vaccine. People were forcibly administered vaccines. Nowhere in the world vaccines were administered forcibly," Dimple said, adding that corruption in vaccine manufacturing has now come to the fore.

Akhilesh Yadav, addressing several meetings in Mainpuri, reminded the people of the series of failures of the BJP led Central and state governments and urged them to vote for the SP candidate.

# BJP to portray Rahul Gandhi as 'bhagoda' in Rae Bareilly

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With Rahul Gandhi's decision to shift his electoral battleground to Rae Bareilly and the Congress nominating a trusted aide for Amethi Lok Sabha constituency against Union minister Smriti Irani, the Bharatiya Janata Party's campaign narrative for these constituencies has crystallised. According to sources in the BJP, the party intends to portray Rahul Gandhi as a 'bhagoda' (deserter), citing his alleged fear of losing to Irani in Amethi. They assert that Irani's record win in Amethi is now inevitable, bolstering her position as the favoured candidate. Kishori Lal Sharma, a long-time manager for Sonia Gandhi

in Rae Bareilly, has been deemed an outsider for Amethi by BJP sources, further shaping their narrative.

"The BJP will now ask voters not to vote for Rahul Gandhi in Rae Bareilly, warning that he would not return to the constituency after the election as he did in Amethi.

"Woh to bhagoda hai," would be our tagline, said BJP leader Manish Dixit with a chuckle. He said: "The delay in decision-making reflects indecision and weakness within the Congress party. It is evident to voters that Rahul Gandhi was reluctant to contest and may abandon Rae Bareilly too, given his inclination to retain Wayanad."

In a bid to turn the tables in Rae Bareilly, the BJP pins its

hopes on its candidate, Dinesh Pratap Singh, to orchestrate a significant upset. Key MLAs of the constituency, Aditi Singh and Manoj Pandey, are expected to rally behind Singh, amplifying his prospects.

Reflecting on Sonia Gandhi's diminishing margin of victory in Rae Bareilly — from 3.5 lakh votes in 2014 to 1.67 lakh in 2019 — the BJP has strategically positioned Dinesh Pratap Singh for a rematch.

Emulating Irani's trajectory in Amethi, where she narrowed Rahul Gandhi's victory margin from 3.5 lakh in 2009 to approximately one lakh in 2019 before ultimately clinching victory by 55,000 votes, the BJP eyes a similar turnaround in Rae Bareilly.

# Cong hand is with enemies of India: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Launching a scathing attack on Rahul Gandhi and the "INDI Alliance", Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Friday that it was now evident that "Congress ka haath, desh ke dushman ke saath" (The hand of Congress is with the enemies of the nation).

The chief minister's remark came in the wake of reports that Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, a former minister in Pakistan's cabinet under Imran Khan, shared a video featuring Rahul Gandhi on social media, praising him. Before embarking on his campaign rallies in Sambhal, Budaun and Aonla

Lok Sabha constituencies, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath elaborated on this issue during a media briefing at his official residence. He said, "If Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party win, Diwali is celebrated in the country, whereas if Congress wins, its victory is celebrated in Pakistan. The people of the country should understand this difference and reject anti-national elements."

The chief minister said the elections had reached their peak today and naturally, those who were enemies of the country would exert their utmost to disrupt the atmosphere in favour of Prime Minister Modi. He emphasised, "The citizens

across the nation must observe how Pakistan is endorsing Rahul Gandhi. A former minister of the Pakistani government, who shamelessly supported the Pulwama incident, is now openly backing Rahul Gandhi, expressing joy in his support."

He further stated that this shows that both the hands of Congress and the enemies of the country are together. "Modiji emerges victorious, it will be akin to Diwali in India, but if Congress achieves success, Pakistan appears pleased. It is crucial for the citizens to take note of these statements and comprehend the intentions of the anti-India forces

involved."

The chief minister alleged that the Congress had strayed from its path post-independence. "Motivated by self-interest, it initially fostered national division and pursued appeasement policies for political gain. The adverse effect of appeasement policies was that separatism and extremism reached their peak within the country."

Besides, he said, the Congress government's corrupt practices led to the rapid spread of Naxalism. He said over the past decade, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts had effectively curbed terrorism, Naxalism and extremism. Chief Minister Yogi added,

"Consequently, a favourable national environment has emerged, fostering development and inclusive welfare schemes. Even those in the most marginalised positions benefit from government initiatives."

He remarked, "Naturally, the public favours Modiji on these fronts. We are confident that the populace will resoundingly reject Congress and the INDI Alliance's divisive and appeasement strategies, ensuring the victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the National Democratic Alliance under Modiji's leadership with a robust majority to form the government once again."

## BSP again fields Athar Jamal Lari from Varanasi

Lucknow (PNS): In a surprise move, the Bahujan Samaj Party announced the names of five more candidates for the Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, changing its nominee against Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Varanasi. The BSP has once again changed its candidate from Varanasi and has again given its ticket to Athar Jamal Lari against Prime Minister Modi. At first Athar was given the BSP ticket from Varanasi but later he was replaced by Syed Niaz. However, the BSP has once again named Jamal Lari as its candidate from Varanasi. The Congress is fielding UPCC president Ajay Rai against PM Modi. Moreover, the BSP has named Ramesh Singh Patel as its candidate from Allahabad, Moinuddin Ahmed Khan alias Haji Daddan Khan from Shravasti, Harishankar Singh alias Dada Chauhan from Bhadohi and Dr Ramsamuj from Bangaon Lok Sabha seat reserved for Scheduled Castes. The BSP also announced its candidate for the bypoll to Gainsari assembly constituency in Balrampur district. Mohammed Haaris Khan is its candidate from Gainsari.

# PM didn't waive loans of farmers: Priyanka Gandhi

Agra: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Friday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said he "bought planes for himself but did not waive off the loan of farmers".

Priyanka Gandhi held a road show in support of the Congress' candidate from Fatehpur Sikri Lok Sabha constituency, Ramnath Sikarwar. Sitting atop a vehicle along with Sikarwar and without taking any names, she said, "You have seen the biggest leader of the nation who has only misled you. He has only taken your votes by inciting your emotions during the elections. He has not given you anything. He has given to his rich friends only," she said. During the 1.5-km road show in Fatehpur Sikri, the Congress general secretary said, "The prime minister bought planes for himself but did not waive off the loans of the farmers. Has Modi ji wiped the tears of a single farmer or has he helped a single poor? He has only run his government for his rich friends and you only get a sack of five kilograms of ration."

Continuing her attack, she said, "Modi ji has remained busy visiting the world but he never comes close to you and understands your problem. One who gets power often gets arrogant... Modi has become 'ahankari' (arrogant) after remaining in power for 10 years."

Praising her brother Rahul Gandhi who filed his nominations from Rae Bareilly on Thursday, she said, "There is a leader in



the country who has walked over 4,000 kilometer on foot to meet you and understand your problems. We have made a Nyaya Patra because the most injustice in the last 10 years has been done to the poor, farmers and labour of this country." She reiterated the promises made to the youngsters and said the Agniveer scheme of recruitment in the armed forces will be rolled back if the opposition comes to power. Praising Sikarwar, a retired Army veteran, she said, "I can say that he is the most honest candidate in this election."

Besides the flags of the Congress, those of ally Samajwadi Party were also seen in the road show. Enthusiasm was seen among the workers of the two parties and the local people who watched the road show from the roof of their home and waved to the Congress leader. Sikarwar is pitted against sitting MP and BJP candidate Raj Kumar Chahar. He had lost the assembly election in 2022 from Kheraghar in Fatehpur Sikri by a small margin. Polling in Fatehpur Sikri will be held on May 7, in the third phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls.

## CPI (ML) flays house arrest of its leader

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) has strongly condemned the house arrest of its leader and district panchayat and INDIA bloc campaigner Arjun Lal in Sitapur district, three days before the prime minister's visit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to address a public meeting at Hargaan in Sitapur district in support of Bharatiya Janata Party candidate on May 5.

The CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav has urged the Election Commission of India to take cognisance of this, end the house arrest and restore the democratic right to campaign and also take action against the guilty officials. He termed the action of the administration as against free and fair elections, discriminatory, undemocratic and repressive.

He alleged that Arjun Lal was put under house arrest in Hargaan assembly constituency on Thursday afternoon. At that time, he had gone out to campaign in the area in favour of Samajwadi Party candidate Anand Bhaduria who is contesting from Dhaurahra Lok Sabha constituency.

The CPI (ML) also criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party for giving its ticket to Karan Bhushan, son of sitting Member of Parliament Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, from Kaiserganj, saying it showed the anti-women face of the saffron party.

The BJP denied its ticket to Braj Bhushan Sharan Singh following allegations that he sexually harassed female wrestlers.

**ARYAVART BANK** आर्यावर्त बैंक

(A Joint Undertaking of Govt. of India, U.P. Govt. & Bank of India) (संयुक्त संस्थान, उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार एवं बैंक ऑफ इंडिया का संयुक्त उपक्रम)

Regional Office: C-930, 931, Civil Lines, Dewa Road, Barabanki-225001

**Possession Notice Under Rule-8(1) (for Immovable Properties)**

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized officer of ARYAVART BANK, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the securities Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand notice in the account mentioned hereunder on the dates mentioned before the names calling upon the borrower and guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notices along with interest within 60 days from the date of receipt said notices. The borrower/legal heirs of borrower and guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notices are hereby given to the Borrower/legal heirs of borrower and guarantor in particular and the public in general that the undersigned has taken the possession of the properties described here below in exercise of power conferred on him under sub-section 13(4) of the Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the date mentioned against each property. The borrower/legal heirs of borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealing with the under noted property will be subject to the charge of ARYAVART BANK for the amount with interest and other charges etc. thereon.

**The Borrower's/Guarantors attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.**

Details of Properties whose possession has been taken are as follows:-

S. No.	Name of Borrowers & Guarantors	Amount Outstanding	Description of Property & Name of Owner	Date of Demand Notice / Possession taken
<b>Branch: Daryabad, District- Barabanki</b>				
1.	Borrower: M/s Yadav Inta Bhatta, Village-Ufrauli, Post-Hadaha, Barabanki-225415, Prop. Mr. Shiv Kumar Yadav S/o Mr. Maikulal, R/o Village- Lalpur, Post- Hadaha, Barabanki-225415 Guarantors: 1. Mr. Maikulal S/o Mr. Ramnath, R/o Village- Lalpur, Post- Hadaha, Barabanki-225415 2. Mr. Radhey Shyam S/o Mr. Maikulal, R/o Village- Lalpur, Post- Hadaha, Barabanki-225415	Rs. 16,95,788.39 + interest & expenses thereon from 01.10.2023	Ek kita plot situated at Khasra No. 78, Village- Kothideeh, District- Barabanki, total area 222.96 Sqmt. in the name of Mr. Radhey Shyam S/o Mr. Maikulal Yadav, R/o Village- Lalpur, Post- Hadaha, Barabanki-225415. Bounded: East: Khet Ram Khelawan, West: Rasta Kaccha 25 feet wide, North: Rasta Kaccha 28 feet wide, South: Plot Vikreta	29.12.2023 29.04.2024

Date : 04.05.2024 Place : Barabanki Authorised Officer

**इंडियन बैंक** Indian Bank

(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम) (A Govt. of India Undertaking)

ALLAHABAD

**POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property)**

**[Under Rule-8 (1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]**

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3, 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed here in below calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrowers/Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/ Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described here below in exercise of the powers conferred on him / her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said Rules.

The Borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charges of the Indian Bank.

**The Borrower's / Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.**

This Possession Notice is being served to the Borrower (s), Guarantor (s) & Mortgagor (s) to deposit the said dues. Details as under:

S. N.	Name & Address of the Borrower (s)/ Guarantor (s)/ Proprietor / Mortgagors	Description of the Immovable Property	Dt. of Demand Notice / Dt. of Possession Outstanding Amount
<b>Branch: Ujariyawan</b>			
1.	1. M/s Karka Dham Enterprises (Borrower), Regd Address: 656/5/1636, Mohanmadpur, Khatri, Adli Nagar, Lucknow- 226021 2. Mr. Jeevan Singh S/o Mr. Mata Badal Singh (Borrower & Mortgagor), Address: 9, Alkapuri, Kursi Road, Lucknow- 226022 3. Mrs. Mandavi Singh W/o Mr. Jeevan Singh (Guarantor), Address: 9, Alkapuri, Kursi Road, Lucknow-226022	All that part and parcel of the property situated at Plot No. 20, part of Khasra No. 67, measuring area 1200 sq. ft. Adli Nagar, Ward- Shankerpurwa, Lucknow, in the name of Mr. Jeevan Singh Patel duly registered at SR III Lucknow in book 1 volume 5498 on pages 273-296 at SR No 4095 dated 10.07.2006. Bounded as per deed: North: Plot No. 21 Samiti, South: Plot No. 19 Samiti, East: Plot Deegar Samiti, West: Rasta 20 ft wide	16.02.2024 30.04.2024 Rs. 20,92,420.00 and interest thereon

Date : 04.05.2024 Place : Lucknow Authorised Officer Indian Bank



# PM has made Kashi a model of development: Jaiswal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal praised the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for making Kashi a model of development as during the last 10 years, the PM had given a gift of ₹45,000 crore to beautify the overall face of this ancient holy city. Addressing a meeting of party workers organised at the City North Assembly Election Office, Gulab Bagh here on Friday, he said the workers of his assembly areas are working with a resolve to increase 45 per cent votes at each booth this time as compared to the last election. He said that to achieve the target of winning 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh, a lot of emphasis has to be laid on booth management. "It is mandatory to activate the booth committee at every booth and identify every voter of every house through the voter list at every booth," he said. He said that it is our resolve to motivate the voters to come out of their homes in groups and take them to the booth to vote.

Former MLA Jagdish Patel said that panna pramukhs is a strong part of the BJP's election strategy. "Panna Pramukh is a worker who has been given the responsibility of 60 voters of one page of the voter list and he/she is the head of one page of the voter list but it is the responsibility of the panna pramukh to talk to his 60 voters, contact them and decide that they all vote and vote in favour of BJP," he said and



UP Minister Ravindra Jaiswal at a meeting of BJP workers in Varanasi on Friday.

added that panna pramukhs have been entrusted with the responsibility that they have to meet every voter and remain in touch with them through phone till the last voter of his panna reaches the polling station. The former MLA said that the responsibility of the panna pramukh does not end here. "Before the start of the elections and after its end, every panna pramukh will prepare a report, based on the feedback of which it will be decided how many people voted in favour of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and from this the probability of victory and the vote percentage will be estimated," he said. Ashok Yadav, Shailendra Mishra 'Sonu', Sadhana Vedanti, Dinesh Kalra, Shobhnath Maurya, Ratan Maurya, mandal presidents and panna pramukhs were also present.

Earlier, addressing a press conference at city office of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at Gulab Bagh here on Friday, Jaiswal expressed his anger over the remarks of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in which

the latter has allegedly called the business class 'thieves and profiteers'. The minister said that the business class of the country will teach a lesson to the Congress in the parliamentary elections.

He alleged that during the election campaign in Rajasthan, former national president of Congress Rahul Gandhi had given a controversial statement saying that theft and profiteering are the habits of the traders and business community of the country which is also the main reason for the ruin of the farmers of the country. Making a counter attack the UP minister said Rahul Gandhi has become a 'victim of mental bankruptcy'. "The business class is the backbone of the country's economy but in the eyes of Rahul Gandhi, the business class of the country is a thief," Jaiswal said, who also hails from business community. The minister asked Rahul Gandhi where did he get wealth worth billions of rupees. He said that to take a revenge for the 'derogatory

## Nomination to start from May 7

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The nomination for Varanasi Lok Sabha seat will be held from May 7 to 14 and the proceedings will be held from 11 am to 3 pm at the Collectorate auditorium here. The nomination proceedings will not be conducted due to the second Saturday on May 11 and Sunday on May 12 being public holidays. The schedule for Lok Sabha General Election, 2024 has been fixed for 77-Varanasi Parliamentary Constituency. Giving the information here on Friday, Returning Officer, 77-Varanasi Lok Sabha Constituency S Rajalingam said that the date of notification of election is May 7 while the last date for nomination is May 14. He said that the last date for scrutiny of nomination is May 15 while the last date for withdrawal of candidatures is May 17 before 3 pm. The voting date will be June 1 from 7 am to 6 pm and counting of votes will be held on June 4.

remarks' made by Rahul the businessmen and traders of the country will get the deposits of the Congress confiscated. He appealed to the businessmen and traders of the country to unite and vote in favour of BJP and give a crushing defeat to Congress and its allies in the election.

# Three youths killed in accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Three youths, including two real brothers, were killed when a speeding Bolero collided head on with their bike in Kamsin police station area of Banda district late on Thursday night. All the three were returning home after selling vegetables. None of them was wearing helmet.

Reports said that two sons of Hussain Ali of Kamsin - Gulam Mohammad (20) and Raju (14) - and Kamlesh Sahu (25), son of Kedar Sahu of the locality, had gone to sell vegetable in Musiwa market on Thursday morning. Around 9.30 pm, when they were returning home on the bike, they met an accident. On the Kamsin-Dandau road, near Sikri bus stop, the Bolero collided head on with their bike as a result of which they sustained their serious injury. The police

sent them to the CHC by an ambulance where Kamlesh Sahu and Gulam Mohammad were declared dead by the doctors. Due to his serious condition, Raju was referred to the district hospital, Banda from where he was sent to Kanpur but he died on the way.

In another incident a farmer was killed while his wife seriously injured when a swarm of bees attacked them in a field in Patra Sadwa village under Gajner police area of Kanpur Dehat on Friday morning. The villagers rescued the couple and took them to a hospital where the farmer was declared dead by the doctors. Farmer Prem Narain along with wife Shanti had gone to harvest wheat crop in the field on Friday morning. After harvesting the crop, when he was preparing rope to make bundles of the crop, a swarm of bees from the hive in mango tree suddenly

attacked them and caused serious injury. The villagers rescued the couple and took them to the district hospital where Prem Narain was declared dead by the doctors. Sub-inspector Dharmendra Kumar rushed to the spot and sent the body for autopsy. Inspector Gajner Dilip Kumar Bind said kin of the deceased had informed that Prem Narain died due to attack of bees. On receipt of autopsy report, further action will be initiated in the matter, he said.

**SUICIDE:** A man committed suicide by jumping in front of a train near Chandpurwa gate under Bharuwa Sumerpur police station area of Hamirpur on Friday morning. The police sent the body for an autopsy. Manik Chand (35) of Chhaunk under Ata police station Distt. Jalaun, used to run a puncture repair shop beside a petrol pump in Factory Area. On

Friday morning he committed suicide by jumping before the train near gate No S-29. Area outpost incharge Rahul Mishra said kin of the deceased had been informed who are expected to arrive on the spot soon. The reason for his suicide is not yet known, he said.

**BUS CATCHES FIRE:** A bus caught fire due to a short circuit on Lucknow-Kanpur highway in Unnao on Friday afternoon. It was carrying 32 passengers from Lucknow to Kanpur. Thick smoke filled the bus near Azad Marg chauraha and it soon caught fire. However, driver Raj Kishore Chaurasia and conductor Abhishek Sharma of Tewaripurwa, Kanpur, showing alertness got all the passengers off along the highway. On the information of Achalganj police, fire brigade rushed to spot but by then the bus was gutted in the fire.

# PNM meeting organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A Permanent Negotiation Mechanism (PNM) meeting with NER Mazdoor Union (NERMU) was held at Bhartendu hall of the DRM Office here on Friday under the chairmanship of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER), Vineet Kumar Srivastava. Addressing the meeting, the DRM said that employee unions play an important role in railway operations and implementation of many important suggestions received through them increases efficiency. He said that with everyone's cooperation, the Varanasi Division registered many achievements.

Srivastava said that the work of doubling and electrification of railway tracks is being carried out rapidly. "Along with passenger traffic and passenger income, goods transportation and its income are continuously increasing. In the course of development of infrastructure, many works like non-interlocking work under doubling and electrification, construction of multi-model cargo terminal under Gati Shakti scheme have been done", Srivastava said, adding that in the redressal of complaints received through Rail Madad portal, NER stands first among the entire Indian Railways, for which everyone deserves congratulations. He stressed upon all the officers of the division to find new areas for increasing the income of Railways and

spend it judiciously and economically. Discussing the employee welfare works, he said closing payment is being made online to the retiring railway employees on the same day. Scholarship for the children of railway employees, prompt appointment on com-



passionate grounds, timely organisation of promotion examinations and the work of providing MACP is also being done on priority basis, he said.

Before this, Senior Divisional Personnel Officer (SDPO) Sameer Paul said in his address that the Railway administration is fully alert to protect the interests of the employees and efforts are made to resolve any employee complaint as soon as possible. He gave assurance that all the PNM meetings will be held on time. Addressing the meeting, divisional secretary of NERMU NB Singh drew the attention of the Railway administration towards several issues related to the welfare of the employees and expected that they would be resolved as soon as possible. While reiterating the commitment of full cooperation of railway workers in the progress of Railways, he stressed on bringing more and prompt compliance of the instructions issued

at various levels, including the Railway Board and the General Manager. He laid special emphasis on making provision of protective devices for the safety of track men of the division, providing accommodation facilities to the employees of small stations, organising community centres, providing weekly rest to artisan employees and the interests of the employees. "Satisfaction of employees is very important in taking the Railways on the path of development," he said and expressed satisfaction over the efforts of the Railway administration in this direction.

In the meeting, Additional Divisional Railway Manager (ADRM/Infra) Roshan Lal Yadav, ADRM/Operations Rajesh Kumar Singh, Senior Divisional Engineer (Coordination) Rakesh Ranjan, Senior Divisional Operations Manager (SDOM) Ajay Pratap Singh, Senior Divisional Security Commissioner (SDSC) S Ramakrishnan Abhishek, Senior Divisional Finance Manager Preeti Verma, Chief Medical Superintendent Dr RJ Chaudhuri, Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (C&W) Anubhav Pathak, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (General) Pankaj Kesharwani, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (SDEE/Operation) Anil Srivastava, Divisional Commercial Manager (DCM) Ramesh Pandey, Divisional Personnel Officer (DPO) Vivek Mishra and many others were also present.

## Meeting of NCR Scouts & Guides held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The 19th State Executive Committee meeting of North Central Railway (NCR) Bharat Scouts and Guides was held at North Central Railway Headquarters under the chairmanship of Senior Deputy General Manager and State Chief Commissioner VK Garg here on Friday.

The meeting started with the Scout prayer. Thereafter, the annual reports of Agra, Prayagraj and Jhansi districts respectively were presented through slides. In the meeting, Vice-President and Chief Personnel Officer/Administration Mudit Chandra, State Secretary and Deputy Chief Personnel Officer Mukesh Kumar Kulshrestha, State Treasurer and Deputy Financial Adviser and Chief Accounts Officer Shailendra Kumar Singh, and district chief commissioners and additional divisional railway managers of Prayagraj, Agra and Jhansi and all the office-bearers of the districts and headquarters Prayagraj participated. The meeting was conducted by State Organisation Commissioner Ravi Kant Sharma. Santosh Bajpai, Assistant State Secretary and Assistant Deputy General Manager expressed his gratitude to all the office-bearers present. The meeting concluded with the national anthem.

# IPR will give new direction to agricultural research: Behera

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Director of Indian Institute of Vegetable Research (IIVR) Dr Tushar Kanti Behera said the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) will give a new direction to agricultural research and the farmers will get benefits from intellectual property protection. He was addressing the participants in the Intellectual Property Awareness Programme organised on Thursday under the aegis of Zonal Technical Management Unit of IIVR Varanasi in which apart from



the scientists of the institute, the experts of 10 other institutes affiliated to the zonal unit were also present. The scientists in charges also participated online.

Stressing on the protection of intellectual property in agriculture sector and science, Dr

Behera urged the scientists to work in the global market to benefit the farmers by using their technologies safely. On the occasion Prof Siddharth Shukla of the Department of Environmental Sciences, Ram Manohar Lohia Avadh University addressed the scien-

tists on the topic 'Intellectual Property Rights and Traditional Knowledge'. In his lecture, Prof Shukla informed about the importance of intellectual property and our traditional knowledge in the current global scenario and various measures for their protection.

Dr Nagendra Rai of IIVR, coordinator of All India Integrated Vegetable Project Dr Rajesh Kumar and other scientists were also present. The programme was conducted by Dr Suhag Karkute and the vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Neeraj Singh.

## 2 arrested for murder

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Prayagraj police commissionerate apprehended two accused involved in the murder of an elderly man in Fazilabad Kalupur village under Bahria police station area here. The victim, Asharam's body was found lying in a pool of blood. Station House Officer Bahria police station was patrolling with police team when on being tipped off by an informer, Mohammad Aziz alias Azzi and Shahzad alias Shahzade of Fazilabad Kalupur, accused of murdering Asharam, the police team arrested from Sikandra Idgah Mansaita river culvert.

# VSICS adjudged outstanding UG college

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Dr Virendra Swarup Institute of Computer Studies (VSICS) here has been adjudged the Outstanding Undergraduate (UG) College in Uttar Pradesh for 'Sarvottam Placement 2024' by the Centre for Education Growth and Research (CEGR). Its Executive Director Dr Arpit Awasthi was felicitated with the award at a function organised in New Delhi on Thursday. Prof GD Yadav, National President, CEGR and Emeritus Professor of Eminent, ICT, Mumbai and others were present during the award ceremony. Secretary



Executive Director, VSICS, Dr Arpit Awasthi (extreme left) receiving the award in New Delhi.

Gaurvendra Swarup and Executive Director Dr Arpit Awasthi said it was indeed a matter of pride for all the institutions of UP, especially the management, teachers and students of VSICS. They said VSICS has always been committed to the quality and placement of students due to which it was nominated for this prestigious award. CEGR is a leading institution and only think tank of education in India which comprises over 10,000 educationists, corporate and research scholars. Its national council also comprises over 100 vice-chancellors from different parts of India.

**Bank of Baroda**  
Regional Office Kanpur Dehat Region : 118/330, 2nd Floor, Kaushalpur Gunti No. 5, Kanpur -208012  
Branch: Lalitpur Main Branch, Lalitpur

**Possession Notice**

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon the borrower & guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being with in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken 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 & 9 of the said rules.

The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the first charge of Bank of Baroda for amount & interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

**Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property and Out Standing Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand & Possession Notice Date**

**Borrower :** M/s Panth Chanderi Saree Udhog, **Priporietor :** Shri Janmede Panth S/o Shri Harku, Address : M/s Panth Chanderi Saree Udhog, Nai Basti Lalitpur. **Guarantor :** Shri Ashok Kumar Panth S/o Shri Janmede Panth, Address : M/s Panth Chanderi Saree Udhog, Nai Basti, Lalitpur.

**Demand Notice Date :** 29-02-2024 **Date of Constructive Possession:** 02.05.2024

**Property :** Land and Building Situated at Abadi Plot No. 242, Village Budwar, Pargana/Tehsil/Distt. Lalitpur. **Owner of Property :** Shri Ashok Kumar Panth S/o Shri Janmede Panth, Area : 275 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded-North :** Property of Vendor, **South :** Road (Lalitpur to Budwar), **East :** Property of Vendor, **West :** Property of Smt. Gendabi & Smt. Ladkunwar.

Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice: **Rs. 8,96,927.00 + Intt. +Others Charges**  
Total Dues as on Dated 02-05-2024 : **Rs. 9,41,636.00 + Intt. +Others Charges**

**Date :** 04-05-2024 **Place :** Lalitpur **Authorised Officer**

**SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CO. LTD.**  
Corporate Office : 425, Udyog Vihar Phase IV, Gurgaon-122015 (Haryana)  
Ph. : 0124-4212530/31/32, E-Mail: customercare@shubham.co website : www.shubham.co

**POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)**

Whereas the undersigned being the authorized officer of the Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited (hereinafter called Shubham) under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice calling upon borrowers to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described hereinbelow in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002.

The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited for an amount detailed below and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. Details are as below:

S. No.	Loan No/Borrower(s), Co-Borrower	Demand Notice Amount	Date of Demand Notice	Secured Asset	Date of Affiliation
1.	OLK0220500005047768, Durgesh Mourya, Meena Maurya	Rs. 16,88,437/-	20-02-2024	Plot number 70, Kharsa Number 2/10 2/11, 2/14, 2/15 Ka Minjuma Under Kalyanpur Vojna Pargana, Tehsil & District Lucknow Uttar Pradesh -226001	30-04-2024
2.	OLKW1903000005018294, Priyanka Mishra, Somil P Lal	Rs. 7,74,545/-	20-02-2024	House Unit No. 20, constructed on Minjuma of Kharsa No. 512, SA Village-Banithara Sikandarpur, Pargana-Bijnaur Tehsil-Sarojni Nagar, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh -226001	30-04-2024
3.	OKAN1811000005016307, Mohd Kashif, Farida Sultana	Rs. 11,17,193/-	20-02-2024	Ground Floor Of House No. 39/50, Situated At Malda Bazar Kamrup Nagar Kanpur Dehat Uttar Pradesh -208001	30-04-2024
4.	OVFN2112000005041475, Santosh Kumar Yadav, Lalji Yadav, Indrawati Devi, Manoj Kumar Yadav	Rs. 40,38,588/-	20-02-2024	House on Arazi No. 437, Mauza- Bhagwanpur, Pargana-Dehat Amanat, Tehsil & Distt-Varanasi Uttar Pradesh -221005	30-04-2024
5.	OALB1809000005014940, & OALB2112000005042197, Balwant Kumar, Neeta Devi	Rs. 7,86,743/-	20-02-2024	House No. 31 Old Thereafter 36/45 Present No. 54/45 Situated at Mohalla Naya Katra Pargana & Tehsil Sadar & Distt- Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh -211002	30-04-2024

**PLACE:** GURGAON, **DATE :** 03-05-2024 **Authorised Officer, SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE COMPANY LTD.**

# SPSEC organises scientific discourse for students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre (SPSEC) organised scientific discourse for the students of classes VI-XII on Thursday and Friday. Around 1,600 students were a part of it. The scientific discourse began with the formal welcome of Debashis Chakraborti, scientist and former director ADRDE (DRDO), Agra, Adjunct Professor, IIT Kanpur, followed by the auspicious lighting of the lamp. Chakraborti pursued the Engineering graduation in Mechanical Engineering from Bengal Engineering College, Shibpur (presently IEST, West Bengal), the Master's degree from Cranfield Institute of Technology (CIT), UK. The highlights of the discourse were based on interactive learning, real world applications, encouraging a presentation on Indian naval defence, inquiry-based learning and the use of technology. The first session of the day began with the



students of classes XI and XII followed by the second and third session with the students of classes IX & X and VIII respectively. The students were eager to know about the importance of research and the use of technology to defend our 75000 km of coastline. The students enthusiastically participated in the discussion. The session was not only interactive but also a meaningful one where the students exchanged ideas. The students learned about technology underwater and

careers in Indian defence and technology. The discussion also carried on with the science teachers based on the topic to make learning more interesting, impressive, significant and purposeful. Chakraborti appreciated the initiatives taken up by the school to provide insightful teaching and learning along with the inquisitive young minds always eager to explore beyond their horizon. Principal Bhawna Gupta and other faculty members were present on the occasion.

# Workshop on exam stress management

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A workshop related to examination stress management titled 'Mindful Excellence: Navigating Examination Stress with Serenity' was organised by the Student Wellness Cell of BHU on Thursday. The dimensions of exam stress management were explained during the workshop. The main speaker Col Manish Sharma explained the techniques of exam stress management by explaining the factors and reasons. The Dean of Students Prof AK Nema told the students to take positive stress during the examinations so that they can achieve the right goal of life. During the programme, Roohdar Meenakshi Kirat as the special guest, explained the dimensions of stress management to the students. Student Counsellor Nityanand Tiwari told about the work being done by the cell for the wellness of the students. During the programme, the student counsellor explained about the examination clinic which is run by the wellness cell

during the examination. He said that any student can get counselling in the cell daily between 3 pm to 5 pm for their stress related issues during examination. Coordinator, Centre for Integrated Rural Development Dr Alok Pandey, Commander S Sanyal, Advisor Student Affairs, Prof Sandeep Kumar and others were also present. The programme was conducted by student coordinators Shivangi Mishra, Suhani Agarwal, Aman, Akash, Prateek, Kishan, Rohit etc.

**SCHOLARSHIP:** Three students of Department of French Studies, Faculty of Arts, BHU, will go to France. Ishan Bhattacharya (MA 4th semester), Riya Bhattacharya (MA 4th semester) and Shilpi Kumari (MA 4th semester) of the Department of French Studies have been awarded the prestigious Assistant d'anglais (English Language Assistant) scholarship 2024-25 fully funded and sponsored by the Ministry of Education in France and mobilised by the French Institute in India, Embassy of France in India.



# Congress attacked Constitution by inserting word secular in Preamble: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress has been against providing reservation to the Dalits and the backwards and the party also "attacked" the Constitution by inserting the word 'secular' in the Preamble when it was in power, the BJP alleged on Friday. The BJP's charge comes at a time when the Congress has been claiming that the saffron party is seeking more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls to change the Constitution and also end the reservations provided to the members of the Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) if voted to power. Slamming the Congress at a press conference in the BJP headquarters here, party national general secretary Dushyant Kumar Gautam said, "They are repeatedly saying the



Constitution will be changed. Ambedkar used to say that the preamble of the Constitution is its soul. But they added a word 'secular' in it, which was the biggest attack on the Constitution." Asked if the Preamble will be restored to its original form if the BJP is voted to power again, he said, "This? Yes. The word 'secular' should not have been inserted in it (Preamble). This hurt the soul of B R

Ambedkar." Gautam alleged that the Congress has been against providing reservation to the "Dalits and the backwards" since its "birth" and brought the provision of creamy layer during its rule to "end reservation." "In a letter to all chief ministers on June 27, 1961, Jawaharlal Nehru (then Prime Minister) had clearly stated that he dislikes any kind of reservation, especially in services. The Congress and its leaders did not

show any regard for the Constitution as it provided nothing in the name of reservation at Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia (Millia) Islamia," the BJP leader charged. Asked if the BJP will provide quota for the Dalits and the backwards at AMU and Jamia Millia Islamia if voted to power, Gautam said, "For this, we will prepare a draft and make all efforts. They should get reservation. We have fought for the Dalits earlier also." Gautam alleged that the Congress denied reservation to the Dalits and the members of the backward classes in Jammu and Kashmir (J-K) by giving special status to the erstwhile state under Article 370. The Narendra Modi government, on August 5, 2019, abrogated Article 370, thus, ending the special status given to J-K, and bifurcated it into two Union Territories — J-K and Ladakh.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/HUKKERI (KARNATAKA)/ROHTAK

The BJP on Friday took a dig at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi after he filed nomination to contest from Raebareli with Union Home Minister Amit Shah saying he will lose the polls against the BJP candidate by a huge margin. Mocking Rahul Gandhi as someone who runs away from the battlefield, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh targeted him for shifting his Lok Sabha constituency to Raebareli and said he could not gather the courage to contest from Amethi. Addressing a public rally in Hukkeri (Karnataka), Shah said Rahul Gandhi is contesting the elections from Raebareli in Uttar Pradesh after running away from Amethi and predicted that he will lose the polls there against the BJP candidate by a huge margin. He also said former AICC



President Sonia Gandhi's multiple attempts to "launch" Rahul Gandhi had failed and claimed that this was the twenty-first attempt. The top BJP leader addressed a public meeting here in Belagavi district for party candidate from Chikkodi Lok Sabha segment Annasaheb Jolle. "Modi ji tried and at once Chandrayaan (mission to Moon) got launched. Sonia Gandhi has launched this 'yaan' named Rahul Baba (Rahul Gandhi) twenty times,

but her launching has not been successful. Today for the twenty-first time, running away from Amethi, he has filed nomination from Raebareli," Shah said. He said, "Rahul Baba, I'm telling the result of Raebareli from here. Against BJP's candidate Dinesh Pratap Singh, you will lose by a huge margin. Write down my words." In Rohtak, Rajnath said people like Rahul Gandhi want to lead the country, the senior BJP leader said in a swipe at the former Congress president at

a public meeting there, claiming that many Congress leaders wanted him to contest from Amethi but he chose to run away. "I am concerned that he may be given a different name after running away from this battle," Rajnath said. In New Delhi, the BJP took a swipe at Rahul Gandhi saying he is contesting the ongoing Lok Sabha polls from Raebareli in addition to Wayanad in Kerala, as he is going to lose the contest in the southern State. "Bhag Rahul bhag, Rahul bhag, Rahul bhag (run Rahul run) — this is what will go on now," Dushyant Kumar Gautam, the national general secretary of the BJP, told a press conference at the party headquarters when asked about Rahul Gandhi contesting the polls from the Raebareli seat. When pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has told the former Congress chief not to run out of fear, Gautam quipped, "Well, he (Gandhi) is a kid. He should be encouraged."

# From Feroze Gandhi to Rahul: Raebareli's tryst with Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The surprise nomination of Rahul Gandhi from Raebareli brings the focus back on the VVIP segment which was first represented in the Lok Sabha by the former Congress president's grandfather Feroze Gandhi, who held the seat in the first two elections after Independence. The strong foundations that Feroze Gandhi laid in the constituency were later nurtured and strengthened by his wife and former prime minister Indira Gandhi, who won from the seat in 1967, 1971 and 1980, followed by friends and family members of the Gandhi family. Indira Gandhi contested from two seats in 1980 — Raebareli and Medak in Telangana — and chose to retain the Medak seat. Arun Nehru won the 1980 bypoll and subsequently in 1984. From Arun Nehru, who was late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's right-hand man, to Sheila Kaul, another Gandhi kin, Raebareli returned several of the Gandhi family members and aides to the Lok Sabha. The seat was held by Congress' R P Singh in the 1960 bypoll after the demise of Feroze Gandhi, and by another Congress leader Baij Nath Kureel in 1962. Sheila Kaul, an aunt of Indira Gandhi, represented the seat in 1989 and 1991. In 1999, another



friend of the Gandhis, Satish Sharma represented the Raebareli constituency, till Sonia Gandhi shifted there. The only time the Congress did not represent the seat was in the wake of the Emergency in 1977 when Janata Party's Raj Narain defeated Indira Gandhi, who was then the prime minister, and BJP's Ashoke Singh in 1996 and 1998. Although Sonia Gandhi upon entering electoral politics chose to make her electoral foray from neighbouring Amethi Lok Sabha seat in 1999, a seat her husband Rajiv Gandhi had held earlier, she soon vacated it for her son Rahul's debut in politics in 2004. Sonia Gandhi subsequently held Raebareli four times between 2004 and 2019, although of late, her winning margins began dwindling. The party's calculation behind fielding Rahul from Raebareli instead of Amethi, also rests on the conclusion that Raebareli is a better, safer seat for the former Congress president, who

lost Amethi to BJP's Smriti Irani in 2019 by nearly 50,000 votes. Amid criticism that the Congress had given a walkout to Irani in Amethi, sources said, the party in its wisdom believed that Raebareli's historical, emotional and electoral importance for the Gandhi family was higher than that of Amethi. In her farewell message to the people of Raebareli, Sonia Gandhi had expressed confidence that the seat which always stood by her and the Gandhis will continue to support her family in future also. In the message on February 15, former party chief Sonia Gandhi informed voters of her Raebareli constituency that she will not contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls due to health and age issues. In an emotional message to the constituents of the segment she has represented since 2004, the 77-year-old also threw subtle hints of a possible entry of a member of her family from Raebareli.

# Give no dues certificate to people wanting to contest polls within 48 hours: EC to States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Friday directed States to ensure that those intending to contest polls are provided with 'no dues certificate' within 48 hours of the request as those who do not submit the document while filing nominations face the prospect of their papers being rejected. If a candidate is not able to provide 'no dues certificate' even after he has cleared all such dues, it goes against his candidature at the time of scrutiny of nominations. The EC advisory noted that there is "no respite" to the candidate even if he submits 'no dues certificate' after expiry of the statutory period of filing of nominations in the constituency concerned. Such instances may cause significant loss not only to the aspiring candidates but also to the political parties and electorate of the constituency concerned and "undermines the principles of participatory electoral democracy", the poll authority said. The advisory has been issued to ensure that this does not happen. It said during the ongoing Lok Sabha polls, an intending candidate could not obtain such a certificate despite clearing dues. A candidate who files nomination paper during an election to Parliament and state



legislature has also to file an affidavit before the returning officer concerned under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. During ongoing elections to the Lok Sabha, 2024, it has come to the notice of the Election Commission that an intending candidate could not obtain "No Dues Certificate" from concerned authorities and therefore could not file the same with respect to the (a) water charges and (d) telephone charges, even after the candidate had supposedly cleared all such dues. Such instances may cause significant loss not only to the aspiring candidates but also to the political parties and electorate of the constituency concerned and undermines the principles of participatory electoral democracy. The Supreme Court in its various judgments has said that the affidavit so submitted should be completely filled in and no column should be left blank.

# Dutee Chand joins sports icons in anti Vaping campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Dutee Chand, a national sprint champion and Olympian, has joined a group of influential sports icons, including Baichung Bhutia, Deepa Malik, and Neha Dhupia, in supporting Mothers Against Vaping in their campaign against the rising trend of vaping among Indian youth. The Mothers Against Vaping is a collective of women dedicated to combating the proliferation of new-age tobacco devices, particularly among children and adolescents. In a statement, Mothers Against Vaping emphasized the urgent need to address the health crisis facing young people due to the increasing use of electronic tobacco products. They highlighted the significance of proactive measures to raise awareness and implement concrete steps for protecting youth from the harmful effects of vaping. Chand's support and involvement will shine a powerful spotlight on the issue and raise its awareness, visibility and impact, the Mothers Against Vaping said in a statement. Quoting Dutee Chand, the statement said that "the need to highlight the devastating impact that vaping and e-cigarettes have on the lives of children." "Today, we are sprinting ahead as a sporting nation. From athletics to chess, it is thrilling to see the rise of talented



youngsters in diverse sports fields. But issues like harmful vaping habits among youngsters are setting us back so we must speak out against this trend," she was quoted as saying. "Children deserve to pursue their dreams, play and build their futures free from harmful distractions like vaping. Engaging in such habits can derail their paths and jeopardise their aspirations. Children, parents, teachers and society as a whole must understand the consequences of vaping and take proactive steps to eradicate this menace from our communities and our children's lives," added Chand. She highlighted the importance of creating an environment where children can pursue their dreams and aspirations without being derailed by harmful distractions like vaping. Chand called for collective action from parents, teachers, and society to eradicate this menace from communities and safeguard the future of children. Mothers Against Vaping pointed out the multitude of health

risks associated with vaping, including the emergence of lung injuries such as EVALI (E-cigarette or Vaping Product Use-Associated Lung Injury). They debunked the misconception that vapors from modern tobacco devices are harmless, citing evidence of harmful substances like nicotine and diacetyl, which have been linked to severe lung injuries and other health complications. The organization also highlighted the aggressive tactics employed by multinational companies to target vulnerable youth and expand their market base through social media advertising campaigns that glamorize and normalize the use of electronic devices. Various countries including India, Australia, Singapore, Thailand, Argentina, Japan and Brazil have banned vaping devices and e-cigarettes under comprehensive legislation addressing their production, distribution, and advertising. India's Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA) 2019 was enacted in response to growing concerns over the addictive nature of these products and their adverse health effects, particularly on young people. In India, vaping devices and e-cigarettes were banned under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA) 2019, which comprehensively addresses all aspects of their production, distribution, and advertising.

# Parents to sue Serum Institute over daughter death after Covid job

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), the manufacturer of Covishield, finds itself potentially entangled in legal troubles as the parents of a 21-year-old woman, who allegedly died ten days after receiving the vaccine in 2021, are contemplating suing both the company and UK-based AstraZeneca, the developer of the job. The British pharmaceutical giant is already under legal scrutiny in the UK, facing claims in at least 51 cases alleging that its vaccine caused deaths and severe injuries. AstraZeneca recently admitted that its vaccine can, in very rare cases, lead to Thrombocytopenia with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS). Covishield, derived from the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, was extensively administered in India. However, SII, based in Pune, has not yet responded to reports of impending legal action. Interestingly, the Union Health Ministry too has chosen to remain silent despite mounting criticism and concerns among Covishield recipients on social media. The Opposition parties like those from Congress, Samajwadi party and AAP have also criticized the Government following AstraZeneca's admission in a 100 million pound class action lawsuit. Venugopalan Govindan, who tragically lost his daughter, Karunya, expressed dissatisfaction



with AstraZeneca's belated admission, stating that it came after numerous lives had already been lost. He criticized SII for not halting vaccine supply after 15 European countries restricted its usage due to reported deaths from blood clots in March 2021. Despite their efforts to seek justice, grieving parents have struggled to get a hearing in various courts. "The manufacturer SII, the government who advertised these vaccines throughout the nation at huge expense to exchequer as 'safe and effective' without sufficient data (and when data emerged about the adverse events from around the world, they chose not to stop the rollout or at least sensitize people and medical fraternity about it), the regulatory bodies that approved it and subsequently didn't intervene to stop it when data emerged about the dangers, are all culpable in the

death of my daughter and countless others who have died after taking this so called vaccine," read Govindan's post which has gone viral since AstraZeneca submission that its Covid job can cause blood clotting. Venugopalan Govindan initiated a petition titled 'Post-vaccination side effects - Blood clots, MIS-A etc. Awareness required' soon after his daughter's demise in 2021. In his post, he held SII, the government, regulatory bodies, and others responsible for his daughter's death and those of others who died after receiving the vaccine. The national committee formed by the government concluded that there was insufficient evidence to link her death to the vaccine. India's vaccination campaign began on January 13, 2021, administering Covaxin and Covishield. Covishield received approval for use in 49 other countries. As of April 29,

2024, India has administered 1,749,417,978 doses of Covishield, making it the world's largest vaccination program. Symptoms of TTS, a rare condition associated with Covishield, include severe headaches, abdominal pain, leg swelling, or shortness of breath, usually appearing two weeks post-vaccination. Timely identification and intervention are crucial in mitigating severe consequences. India's vaccine arsenal during the pandemic included Covaxin, Covishield, Sputnik-V, Covovax, Corbevax, ZyCoV-D, among others. Soon after the UK vaccine manufacturer's job which is being sold as Covishield in India came under legal tangle, Bharat Biotech, based in Hyderabad, emphasized Covaxin's safety. It issued statement that it's vaccine underwent meticulous evaluation and demonstrated an excellent safety record during its licensure process. The vaccine maker also said that Covaxin was the only Covid-19 vaccine in the government's Covid-19 immunisation programme to have conducted efficacy trials in India. "Covaxin was evaluated in more than 27,000 subjects as part of its licensure process. It was licensed under restricted use in clinical trial mode, where detailed safety reporting was carried out for several hundred thousand subjects," Bharat Biotech said.

# PM Modi likely to file nomination for Varanasi constituency on May 14



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to file his nomination on May 14 for Varanasi constituency for Lok Sabha polls and will hold a road show a day earlier. Congress has fielded Ajay Rai against him. Varanasi will go to poll in the seventh phase on June 1. The process of nomination filing for the seventh phase of Lok Sabha elections will begin from May 7 and end on May 14. Rai is making his third bid for the Varanasi seat in Uttar Pradesh, having previously contested against Prime Minister Modi and suffered defeat in both the 2014 and 2019 general elections. Apart from Rai, stand-up comedian Shyam Rangeela has

also announced his electoral debut from Varanasi against Modi. Hailing from Rajasthan, Shyam Rangeela is renowned for his uncanny mimicking of Prime Minister Modi. Rangeela announced his candidature from Varanasi for the Lok Sabha 2024 on social media on Wednesday, May 1. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the Prime Minister scored a massive victory by a margin of 4,79,505 votes. Modi secured as many as 6,74,664 votes, while his nearest rival Samajwadi Party candidate Shalini Yadav bagged 1,95,159 votes. During the 2014 Lok Sabha election, Modi secured victory in Varanasi by a substantial margin of 3.37 lakh votes, defeating Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal, who managed to secure 2 lakh votes.

# India agrees to enhance collaboration with Indonesia during defence meet



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Indonesia on Friday reviewed the entire spectrum of their bilateral defence ties and agreed to enhance collaboration in areas of defence industry, maritime security and multilateral cooperation. These were the key takeaways from the seventh India-Indonesia Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting, defence ministry said. Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and Secretary General of Ministry of Defence, Indonesia, Air Marshal Donny Ermawan Taufanto, co-chaired the meeting. During the talks, both sides expressed satisfaction at the expanding scope of defence cooperation between the two countries. The progress made on various bilateral defence cooperation initiatives deliberated in meetings of Working Groups on Defence Cooperation and Defence

Industries Cooperation was also reviewed by the co-chairs. In addition, the dignitaries identified means to enhance existing areas of collaboration especially in the field of defence industry ties, maritime security and multilateral cooperation. During the visit, the Secretary General visited the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) headquarters here as well as TATA Advanced Systems and L&T Defence facilities in Pune. He also held deliberations with other Indian defence industry partners like Bharat Forge, Mahindra Defence and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited and discussed ways to enhance defence industrial capabilities by cooperation in research and joint production. He also called on Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan during the visit. The Secretary General is on a visit to India from May 02-04, 2024. He laid a wreath and paid homage to the fallen heroes at National War Memorial, New Delhi.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## School for scandal

With special focus on pro-Palestine protests, several global universities have turned into activism hubs

As more students join anti-Israel protests in countries like the US, England, France and elsewhere, it has spawned a debate regarding the role of educational institutes in shaping political ideologies and influencing global opinion, as well as the question of whether students should get involved in politics. The phenomenon of anti-Israel protests on campuses cannot be viewed in isolation; it reflects broader geopolitical undertones and social movements. However, the specific targeting of educational institutes as platforms for such protests raises important questions about the purpose of universities and their responsibility to foster constructive dialogue versus perpetuating bigotry. One aspect of this development is the clash between freedom of speech and the promotion of inclusivity and diversity. Anti-Israel protests, if not conducted respectfully and with a focus on dialogue rather than confrontation, risk alienating certain student segments. That said, it is also a fact that pro-Israel demonstrations were first witnessed in certain universities of esteem in the US. As Israel launched an offensive in Gaza, a parallel campaign started in these varieties, allegedly at Israel's behest and funding. Indeed, pro-Israel sentiment has been high in the US as well as in Europe; everyone remained tightlipped when Israel indulged in human rights violations in Gaza. Thus, the latest anti-Israel demonstrations are more of a reaction to that. Besides, even Israelites are now fed up with the ongoing war; they are rallying against Netanyahu and his policies towards West Asia in general and Palestine in particular.



As a Sanskrit saying goes: "Ya vidya sa vimuktaye"

(Education liberates)." Since it is a universal truth, this liberation must manifest itself in the conduct of students. No denying the logical boundaries of any dissent and that violence has no role in such demonstrations. The students must focus on their studies, which is what they are supposed to primarily do on college campuses. But it would be rather an anti-thesis of education if they are not aware of what is happening around them and if they fail to react to correct any wrongdoings around them. It is equally true, they can't remain unaffected by the social milieu around them. Back home, let us not forget it was essentially a student movement under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan that opposed the Emergency. During the struggle for Independence, many leaders quit colleges and jumped into the freedom movement. Bhagat Singh, on the issue of students joining politics, wrote: "Was (the students of England and Germany) quitting colleges and going to war not politics? Where were the preachers then; why didn't they ask those students to study? Only the efforts of students and youth have brought independence to any country which is now free..." The words are prophetic and inspiring; one wishes his essay could be read aloud in the western universities.

### PICTALK



Farmers harvest wheat at a village near the Indo-Pak border, on the outskirts of Jammu

## Nothing 'gentlemanly' in Chinese diplomacy



BHOPINDER SINGH

China's recent outcry over the alleged breach of 'Gentleman's Agreement' with the Philippines reveals a profound irony, given the history of its coercion and deceit

There is a huge amount of insincerity and gall involved in the Chinese complaint that the Philippines had torn up the bilateral 'Gentleman's Agreement' between Beijing and Manila. While the term 'Gentleman's Agreement' has an implicit assumption of 'trust' as a fundamental tenet besting a relationship, which may otherwise not be legally binding — to even imagine that there has been any element of 'trust' between these two sparring countries, is to put oneself up to ridicule.

Much of the tensions in the countries around the South China Seas originates from an expansionist instinct in China that seeks to coerce, intimidate and dominate the region with creative, wholly unique and untenable concepts like the 'nine dash line' (called out by the International Court of Justice, Hague, as illegal). But it is not just the Philippines but also other regional countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Brunei etc., that are up in arms over Chinese belligerence.

Recent events have seen optics like the Philippines charging China in the International Court of Justice, Hague (and winning the plea), dangerous military exercises to assert competitive territorial counterclaims, ramming and shooting with high-pressure water cannons at Filipino boats, disruption to freedom of navigation, denying access etc., hardly the backdrop to assume the word 'trust' between two constantly slug-fisting nations.

But the make-believe posturing and incredibly 'cry wolf' terms like 'Gentleman's Agreement' are an age-old Chinese norm, whenever anyone has stood up to expose its bullying and relentless expansionism. The Chinese through their conduct have unilaterally made a mockery of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Chinese have further upped the ante by dredging up sand to create artificial landmass e.g., around the restive Spratly Islands. This is enough to station a Military base replete with fighter planes and missiles and even anchor its fleet of so-called



"unsinkable aircraft carriers". All this has been done with sheer impunity and disregard towards any neighbouring countries' territorial claims, sense of security, or socioeconomic concerns. Duplicitousness and attempting to checkmate (by force or lure) any emerging force that could challenge the Chinese juggernaut is met with its patent falsehoods, sneaky 'salami tactic' encroachment, or even brazen show of force.

In the late 70s, the Chinese were more concerned about the Soviet Union, than with the United States of America. Beijing had counterintuitively started engaging with Washington DC to align it towards its side as it went about preparing to attack Vietnam. Chinese Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping on a trip to the United States had told US President Jimmy Carter, "The child is getting naughty, it is time he got spanked".

Soon thereafter, China attacked Vietnam in a war that is recalled in Vietnam as Chien tranh chong binh truoiung Trung Hoa (War against Chinese expansionism!) The physical-material superiority in favour of the Chinese PLA notwithstanding, most independent military historians acknowledge the bloody nose inflicted by the plucky, war-experienced and pugnacious



EVEN EARLIER IN THE 1950s, THE CHINESE LAID THE TRAP FOR NEHRU'S COMPLACENCY WHEN CHINESE PREMIER ZHOU ENLAI REFUSED TO CONTEST NEHRU'S RIGHTFUL INSISTENCE ON AKSAI CHIN BY ACCEPTING THAT CHINA HAD NO CLAIM ON IT

Vietnamese forces that led to a rupture between China and Vietnam, that still lingers subliminally.

Even earlier in the 50's, the Chinese laid the trap for Nehru's complacency when Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai refused to contest Nehru's rightful insistence on Aksai Chin by accepting that China had no claim on it. But Zhou would renege and contradict his earlier position by later claiming that Aksai Chin was already under the Chinese — they had surreptitiously built a road, while still playing naive and ingenuous, all along. Like all bilateral agreements that the Chinese are always willing to relegate to the bins, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence was put to the same fate. In yet another act that would soon become a standard Chinese practice over the years, the Chinese cartographical interpretation was revised with newly usurped territories and claims.

This template of dubious expansionism led to the 1962 Indo-China War and ensured unsettled status in the region with the Chinese 'updating' their official maps with new territories and new names. That same principle has been applied to sovereign maritime issues in the South China Seas and the ongoing tussle with the Philippines has its roots in the history of China's insatiable

expansionism and unbridled ambition to assert its hegemony.

Propaganda in the highly controlled media of China has been elevated to a fine art. Filipino Defence Secretary was quick to rebut the same by clarifying that he was, "not aware of, nor is it a party to, any internal agreement with China" and that his department had, "not had any contact with any Chinese Government officials since last year". The Chinese have been deft with wordsmithing in order to lay the blame for ongoing tensions in the Philippines by first invoking an alleged 'promise', which then became a 'Gentleman's Agreement' and have most recently morphed into a 'new model' and finally 'internal understanding'.

Gen Jonathan Malaya, of the Philippines National Security Council, put it bluntly, "The propaganda masters are clearly working overtime in Beijing to sow discord and division in our country". But unfortunately for the Chinese, there are fewer takers for their position by the day and there never was, or is, anything 'Gentlemanly' about Chinese diplomacy, for decades.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### KASHMIR'S PATH TO NORMALCY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "AFSPA repeal: A step towards Naya Kashmir," published on May 3, this is my response. The Union Home Minister's contemplation on AFSPA removal in J&K reflects a pivotal shift in the Government's approach towards the region. Amidst heightened security concerns and the promise of Naya Kashmir, the discourse on AFSPA underscores a nuanced balance between security imperatives and democratic values. While AFSPA has historically provided essential tools for security forces, its contentious history and instances of misuse necessitate a critical reevaluation. The Supreme Court's intervention in 2016 highlighted the need for accountability and checks on its implementation. As J&K transitions post-Article 370, the call for AFSPA's removal gains traction, signalling a maturation in the security landscape. With decreased terror incidents and improved governance, the time seems ripe for a phased withdrawal of AFSPA, bolstering confidence and fostering socio-political normalcy. Ultimately, the decision demands a holistic understanding, prioritising both security imperatives and civil liberties. A judicious approach, rooted in the aspirations of Naya Kashmir, holds the key to a peaceful and prosperous future.

Jiya Patel | Ahmedabad

#### PRESS FREEDOM IS VITAL

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Upholding the Fourth Estate in Digital Age," published on May 3, this is my response. Press freedom stands as an indispensable pillar of democracy, safeguarding our right to knowledge and accountability. Today, amidst the tumult of misinformation and Governmental pressures, World Press Freedom Day gains renewed significance. It's a reminder of the arduous battles journalists face worldwide, risking their safety to uncover truths and expose injustices. From the historical struggles during emergency periods to contemporary challenges amplified by digital landscapes, the essence remains



SANTOSH ANAND

## Leveraging NCERT textbooks for CUET

The textbooks offer varied resources for Common University Entrance Test aspirants, from fundamental concepts to advanced topics

The Common University Entrance Test (CUET) is a key gateway for students aspiring to secure admission to undergraduate programmes in various Central and other Participating Universities/Institutions / Organisations across India. Balancing the assessment of core competencies and subject knowledge, CUET presents both challenges and opportunities. As students gear up for their CUET 2024 journey leveraging a crucial resource: your NCERT textbooks is a very good idea.

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sible manner. Building a Strong Foundation NCERT textbooks follow a step-by-step approach to presenting concepts, making them ideal for laying a strong foundation. By breaking down complex subjects into manageable sections, they facilitate effective learning and foster a solid understanding of the fundamentals. As you advance in your CUET preparation, delving deeper into NCERT textbooks reveals more complex topics and advanced concepts. The detailed explanations, illustrative examples and practice questions provided in these textbooks help strengthen your understanding and problem-solving skills. Mastering the content presented in NCERT textbooks equips you to tackle higher-level questions and excel in the CUET exam confidently.

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**Subject-wise Approach:** Organise your study schedule around CUET subjects, allocating specific time slots for studying NCERT textbooks related to each subject. This targeted approach allows for in-depth understanding and mastery of key concepts. **Enhance Visual Learning:** Make the most of the visuals in NCERT textbooks, such as illustrations, diagrams, tables, graphs, charts, boxed information and examples for accelerated learning. These elements assist in organising information, explaining theoretical concepts and highlighting key points, leading to improved understanding and problem-solving. **Practice and Revision:** Regularly solve exercise questions and problems provided

at the end of each chapter in NCERT textbooks. Practice is crucial for reinforcing learning and identifying areas that need further revision.

**Supplementary Resources:** While NCERT textbooks form the core of your study material, supplement your preparation with reference books, online resources and mock tests to broaden your knowledge and enhance problem-solving abilities. NCERT textbooks offer a wealth of resources for CUET aspirants, from fundamental concepts to advanced topics. By incorporating them into your study strategy and using them effectively, you can enhance your preparation, boost confidence and maximise your chances of success in the CUET 2024 Exam. ExamFactor stands by to support your CUET journey. Remember, dedication, a strategic approach and the solid foundation provided by NCERT textbooks can empower you to progress from basic to advanced levels in your CUET preparation.

(The author is a Head Content, ExamFactor; views are personal)

### Deceptive digital dangers



Apropos the news article, "Time to curb fake videos in elections," published on May 3, this is my response. The emergence of 'deepfake' technology in political campaigns signals a disturbing trend toward digital deceit. The recent case involving Union Home Minister Amit Shah underscores the potential harm of manipulating videos to spread false narratives. Such malicious acts not only undermine the integrity of elections but also sow seeds of discord in society. The ease with

which these fake videos can be created using advanced technology raises concerns about the erosion of trust in media and public discourse. Moreover, the implications for national security, as highlighted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cannot be overlooked. While technological advancements have undoubtedly brought convenience, they also pose significant risks, particularly in cyberspace. Cybersecurity must evolve to address these ever-changing threats, with stringent measures implemented to combat the spread of misinformation and safeguard democratic processes. As citizens, we must remain vigilant against the proliferation of deepfake videos and advocate for robust measures to counter such deceptive practices. Only through collective efforts can we mitigate the dangers posed by digital manipulation and preserve the integrity of our democratic institutions.

Kavya Singh | Kolkata

unchanged: a free press is the bedrock of societal integrity. However, the journey towards press freedom is far from smooth. Nations like India, with its vibrant media, often find themselves entangled in debates over freedom's extent. The quote by Advani echoes the enduring struggle against undue influence and censorship. Governments must respect press freedom, for civil society to advocate relentlessly and for media organisations to uphold ethical standards unwaveringly. On this day, we salute the bravery of journalists who persist in the face of adversity, reaffirming our commitment to preserving the cornerstone of democracy: a free and independent press.

Dhruv Gupta | Jamshedpur

#### NATURE'S ARTISTIC SYMPHONY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Travel Across Enchanted Landscapes," published on May 3, this is my response. 'Paradise Regained' at Palette Art Gallery beautifully intertwines artistic mastery with a profound reverence for nature. The exhibition, curated by Uma Nair, serves as

a poignant tribute to Earth Month, showcasing the diverse interpretations of landscapes by ten exceptional artists. Each artwork is a testament to the artist's deep connection with nature, from Sanam Narayanan's fantastical realms to Umesh PK's multilayered odes. Paramjit Singh's vibrant oil paintings and Sanket Viramgami's intricate miniatures offer unique perspectives, while Jayashree Chakravarty and Sumesh Kamballur capture the essence of specific regions with captivating detail.

The exhibition not only celebrates the beauty of nature but also serves as a reminder of our responsibility to protect it. Through their art, the artists convey a message of environmental stewardship, urging viewers to appreciate and preserve the planet's beauty for future generations. 'Paradise Regained' is more than just an art display; it's a call to action to cherish and safeguard the paradise we call home.

Eshaan Kapoor | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN

## PROTECTING OUR DIGITAL WORLD

Cybersecurity is all about safeguarding trust, privacy and business interests



SHAINY SHARMA

With the proliferation of connected devices, cloud computing and various other digital platforms, the attack surface of the threats ranging from individual hackers to organised cybercriminal groups has expanded significantly. In the age, where technology pervades every facet of our lives, the importance of cybersecurity cannot be over stated and with the advent of technology, it has been deemed to have the emergence of new threats.

Cybersecurity measures, such as encryption, access controls and data loss prevention, help prevent unauthorised access, theft and misuse of confidential information. In an era of widespread digital connectivity, maintaining privacy, safeguarding personal information and communications from unauthorised surveillance, identifying theft and invasive data collection practices are crucial not only for individuals but for organisations too. The motto 'Protecting our digital world' is a responsibility we all share. Cybersecurity researchers cover a wide range of topics be it understanding the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) of cyber adversaries or focusing on developing methodologies, tools and best practices to integrate security into the software development lifecycle; are aimed at addressing current and emerging challenges in protecting digital assets and infrastructure. Cybersecurity researchers investigate software and hardware vulnerabilities to understand their root causes.

Safeguarding cybersecurity is imperative across all sectors of work be it business or education. Cybersecurity is integral to national security and defence strategies, as cyber threats pose risks to sovereignty, economic stability and public safety in shaping India's economic growth and global competitiveness, particularly in the realm of cybersecurity, the Indian Government has implemented various initiatives and policies such as Cyber Surakshit Bharat; Cyber Swachhta Kendra and many more to combat the cybersecurity challenges in India. These initiatives are aimed at generating awareness about the latest cybercrimes, detection and removal of malicious programs from devices and ultimately combat cyber threats by creating a secure cyber ecosystem.



The digital landscape is constantly evolving, with cyber threats becoming more sophisticated and pervasive. Cybersecurity measures, including threat detection, incident response and vulnerability management help identify, mitigate and contain cyber threats such as malware, phishing, ransomware and denial-of-service attacks.

Effective cybersecurity will build trust and confidence among stakeholders, including customers, partners, investors and the public at large. By demonstrating a commitment to cybersecurity best practices and compliance with regulations, organisations enhance their reputation and credibility in the digital marketplace.

The need for cybersecurity has increased due to the evolving threat landscape, technological advancements, digital transformation initiatives, regulatory requirements, geopolitical tensions and societal reliance on digital technologies. Cybersecurity is not just about safeguarding the data rather it's about safeguarding trust, privacy and freedom in the digital age. It requires a comprehensive and proactive approach involving technology, policies, education, collaboration and investment to address the evolving challenges posed by cyber threats. One needs to stay vigilant, informed and proactive in keeping online space secure. Strong passwords, regular updates and staying cautious of phishing attempts are just a few steps toward cyber resilient community. Despite advancements, cybersecurity does face a lot of challenges, including the constant evolution of cyber threats, the shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals and the global nature of cybercrime.

(The write is an educator; views are personal)

## Global tapestry and impact of terrorism



SUDHIR HINDWAN

In an era marked by geopolitical upheavals and regional conflicts, the spectre of terror looms large, transcending borders and threatening stability on a global scale

At a time when the world political landscape is dealing with a number of regional conflicts such as Israel-Palestine, Russia-Ukraine, skirmishes in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, trans-national terrorism has hogged the limelight world over during the last few years. Similarly at the domestic level terror organisations from across the border have unleashed a wave of terror in Kashmir to attract attention from the media to upturn the diminishing morale of the mercenaries. Seen in this recent perspective are the latest sinister designs of the terror forces in different parts of the world whether in Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Red Sea, Israel, Palestine, Scandinavian Countries, Central Asia or Russia. In the past few days, the insurgency has resulted in numerous killings of innocents and the martyrdom of several Army soldiers in different parts of Jammu and Kashmir on the domestic front in India.

International terrorism, though comparatively less in volume than the domestic variety, has crossed all limitations despite increased Government efforts to combat it. Much blood, if not ink, has flowed since terrorists struck the World Trade Centre and Pentagon in the US This was followed by an upsurge in terrorist activities across the globe. Repeated terror attacks over the years sometimes after a brief lull have not only exposed the security and intelligence network but also robbed confidence of modern nations in controlling the menace.

Whether terrorism is unleashed at the local, regional, national or international level, it cannot survive for long without international support and collaboration. In a globalised world, the matrices of power turn on the highly visible, inequalitarian structure of the international economy and as such inter-relations between socio-economic conditions in different parts of the world are becoming more and more obvious. At another level, the post-Cold War international political-economic order is still a victim of the power game that was thrust on the world by the then-big powers. Many seasoned international experts on violence and terror are of the opinion that the power network woven by the hegemonic might in the entire West Asian region has provoked the ire of the opposition forces in almost every State where they had an interest-based relationship. Thus, as societies globalise and curtains of opacity are raised through increased inter-societal interaction at the international level, people in under-developed countries are holding the big powers responsible for their inferior socio-economic positions. The Cold War Era leading to interference in crucial areas such as Afghanistan, South-East Asia, Gulf and Latin American countries has resulted in the development of peculiar trends that provided breeding grounds for terrorist activities. Talibanisation of Afghanistan would never have taken place had the powerful nations handled the situation well in the beginning.

Ajaz Ahmad highlights the shifting agricultural landscape in Poonch, noting a traditional focus on seasonal crops like maize. However, he observes a gradual change in mindset among local farmers, with growing enthusiasm for saffron production. "We have procured saffron seeds from Pampore and Kishtwar districts of Kashmir. Now, my desire is that after Pampore and Kishtwar, Poonch becomes the third largest center for saffron production in Jammu and



THE STRATEGIES OF IMPOSING ARMS AND ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON THE SO-CALLED ROGUE NATIONS DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS HAVE BEEN INEFFICIENT AND RATHER HELPED THESE NATIONS TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL SYMPATHY

and rather helped these nations to gain international sympathy. Although the hope of a permanent solution to the problem of terrorism is still far away, one hopes that the powerful nations will develop a more mature understanding of the phenomenon of terrorism that has assumed alarming proportions. The rapid international transportation and use of sophisticated weapons like AK 47 assault rifles and plastic explosives (RDX) have helped facilitate the expansion of terrorist networks around the world. Besides, the new suicide squads of terrorists have left the entire security apparatus of the affected States in a State of shock. The recent incidents cannot be viewed in isolation.

A leading anti-terrorism expert, Mr Brian Jenkins, believes that though more articulate and multiplied effort by the police and intelligence can tell us about a possible terrorist attack, there is still confusion over whether such a mechanism is successful in dealing with terrorists driven by fundamentalism. Gradually, religion is becoming the main motivating force for terrorism across the globe. There is a growing nexus between terrorists and internationally organised crime networks. Mr. Alison Jamieson, a British analyst on organised crime and political violence, commented that the distinction between terrorism and organised crime has become very blurred recently. An Italian organised crime expert, Professor Ernesto, says: "The terrorist's goal is an ideological one,

while organised crime's goal is financial, but the instrument is the same.

They both need money and arms". In Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers engage in drug trafficking to finance their struggle, in north-eastern India guerrillas kidnap tea planters and hold them to ransom to help fund their fight for independence. In Chechnya, the secessionists were heavily involved in drug distribution.

These days terrorists are more confident than ever before of their access to the vulnerable points before carrying out any of their attacks and they plan their attacks in a heroic manner for the justification and fulfilment of a cause that they think is just. Thus, they attempt, by their acts, to inspire and manipulate fear to achieve a variety of purposes. For effective administrative measures, various sources of terrorism must be found first. There is a need for a truly effective preparedness programme at the Government level.

First, we must know about the people involved in terrorist activities and their motivations. Dealing with a terrorist incident and mitigating its consequences need to be carefully thought out. Sufficient data about the terrorist-hit area could be of immense use. Intelligence should be able to provide information about terrorist targets, timing and site in advance. But the Government alone cannot do much to stop it. Individuals and groups can make a significant contribution towards improving the general security

environment. On the other hand, there is a need for sophisticated security procedures that can go all the way from airport screening to the border area.

Some kind of positive programmes which can alleviate the frustration of terrorists can prove effective. There is also a need to promote open institutions, including political institutions to absorb the ethnic, religious and political pressure and allow terrorists to vent their feelings in a proper way. This will change their mind and thus encourage them to settle their differences in a peaceful way. Since present-day terrorists are very well organised and more professional than their counterparts a decade ago, new concepts of safety and security should arise. A vigilant and assertive police and paramilitary network should replace the old one. There is an apprehension that with the availability of biological and chemical weapons, terrorists could start their campaign with a renewed vigour.

No civilised political system can progress until terrorism is wiped out, but terrorism cannot be eliminated unless there is a political solution. The need of the hour is the political will to solve problems that generate terrorism. The States affected by terrorism should open up avenues for a negotiated settlement of disputes and exhibit genuine willingness to resolve long-festering problems.

(The author, a recipient of the Bharat Gaurav award, is a professor and expert on strategic affairs; views are personal)

## Saffron cultivation: Replicate Poonch's success story

The Government must extend comprehensive support to farmers, fostering significant opportunities for saffron production in similar regions

In the heart of the border district Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir, amidst the rugged terrain and lush valleys, a quiet revolution is underway - the cultivation of saffron.

"For the past 5 years, we have been conducting trials of saffron and a year ago, we took the plunge into full-scale cultivation. The results? Astonishing! Our efforts were supported by School of Biotechnology at the University of Jammu, who provided us a generous grant of INR 10 lakhs. With unwavering support from Professor Jyoti and the expertise of the university's scholars, including PhD student Tahil Bhatti and SDO, Horticulture, Mohammad Fareed from Poonch, we started to explore saffron cultivation in Poonch,



BHARTI DEVI

uncovering the untapped potential of saffron production in the region," shared 35-year-old farmer Ajaz Ahmad from Bayla village, in Mandi tehsil, bordering Poonch. He has made a name for himself as a saffron farmer in the region, moving away from traditional farming over the past few years. In this research, Ajaz found that saffron production can be done in abundance in areas

like Surankote, Arai, Fatehpur, Bayla, Mandi and Mendhar of Poonch. The environment and soil here are almost similar to those in the regions of Jammu and Kashmir where saffron production takes place. Saffron holds the esteemed title of being one of the world's most prized spices. Known as "Kong" in Kashmiri, "Jafran" in Urdu and "Kesar" in Hindi, it is derived from the delicate threads of fragrant flowers. Historically, its cultivation has been confined to specific regions within the Union Territory. While some cultivation occurs in Kishtwar, the Pampore region of Kashmir reigns as its primary producer, renowned for its superior quality. Commanding a premium price, Pampore saffron fetches around 3 lakh rupees

per kilogram. It takes an astonishing quantity of flowers - approximately 160 to 180-to yield just one gram of saffron. Moreover, a kilogram of this precious spice requires the harvest of about half a million flowers.

Ajaz Ahmad highlights the shifting agricultural landscape in Poonch, noting a traditional focus on seasonal crops like maize. However, he observes a gradual change in mindset among local farmers, with growing enthusiasm for saffron production. "We have procured saffron seeds from Pampore and Kishtwar districts of Kashmir. Now, my desire is that after Pampore and Kishtwar, Poonch becomes the third largest center for saffron production in Jammu and

Kashmir," he said. He advocates for Governmental support in the form of security measures rather than subsidies, citing the comparatively high cost of saffron seeds. Ajaz emphasises the need for crop protection from wildlife, particularly bears that frequently ravage fields, suggesting that fencing could mitigate such risks and safeguard farmers' livelihoods.

It can be easily understood that extensive efforts are required for saffron production. In India, saffron cultivation begins in June and July, while in some regions, it starts in August and September. Flowering usually begins in October. Apart from India, saffron cultivation is mainly done in Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Iran and China. 80 per cent of

the world's total saffron production is concentrated in Spain and Iran alone. For the farmers involved in its production, it is nothing less than a boon because its price in the market ranges from 3 to 3.5 lakh rupees per kilogram. The allure of saffron extends to both men and women who actively engage in its cultivation. Shamim Akhtar, a 35-year-old farmer from Bayla, shared, "I've been cultivating saffron for several years now and the results have been rewarding. However, the construction of a road through our land resulted in crop damage. Nonetheless, my passion for saffron cultivation remains strong. Despite facing financial constraints to procure seeds, I aspire to continue with this endeavor."

Farmer Abdul Samad from the same village, however, has another concern on his mind. He is worried about agriculture being affected by changing environmental conditions. He explains that due to changing weather patterns, there has been a decrease in saffron production in Kashmir in recent years. It requires rainfall between 1000 to 1500 millimetres, which has decreased and untimely snowfall has had a negative impact on the soil, resulting in reduced saffron production.

Kashmir, which previously yielded up to 15 tons of saffron annually, has seen this output dwindle to 8 to 9 tons, a worrying trend. Despite this setback, Kashmiri saffron remains highly valued for its medicinal properties, known

to alleviate blood pressure and migraines and find use in beauty products. The central Government's attention to Kashmiri saffron is evident through initiatives like the National Saffron Mission (NSM). Aimed at bolstering saffron production and enhancing the socio-economic status of Kashmiri residents, the NSM has notably benefited saffron farmers. Additionally, various other Government schemes also promote saffron cultivation. However, for farmers to swiftly reap the benefits of these programs, they must be executed on a larger scale, given the increasing enthusiasm for saffron cultivation.

(The writer is a grassroots writer from Poonch, J&K. Charkha Features)



# Shinde emerges strong as BJP settles for 28 LS seats in Maharashtra

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

From the earlier 32 seats that it wanted to contest in the Lok Sabha polls Maharashtra, the big brother BJP has now settled down for 28 seats, leaving the remaining 20 seats to the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and NCP (Ajit Pawar). If anything, it is Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde who— with a final tally of 15 seats in his party's kitty — has emerged stronger in the just-finalised seat-sharing arrangement among the ruling MahaYuti constituents. Even as the ruling MahaYuti leaders were busy campaigning for the elections to 13 Lok Sabha seats in the first and second phases of Lok Sabha polls, Shinde was quietly negotiating with the central BJP leadership on the nine undecided Lok

Sabha seats (out of the total 48 seats). In the end, Shinde had his way in several of the disputed seats. Shinde's bargaining skills bear out from the fact that he has managed to arm-twist the BJP into giving his party three seats from Mumbai — the prestigious Mumbai, Mumbai north-west and Mumbai north-central, the adjoining Thane and Kalyan seats and also wrest the Nashik seat from the Ajit Pawar-led NCP. From the seat-sharing tie-up finalised within the ruling MahaYuti, it is quite surprising that the BJP — which has an excellent organisational base in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), comprising the country's commercial capital and the neighbouring Thane and Palghar districts — has given away five out of nine Lok Sabha seats in



the MMR to the Shinde-led Shiv Sena. What has surprised many as to how Shinde — whose Shiv Sena does not have as strong an organisational base as the

Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena in Mumbai and elsewhere in the state — has ended up with 15 seats, which is at least 5 seats more than 10 seats the BJP when Union Home

Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah had agreed to give to the ruling Shiv Sena. Unlike Shinde who worked his way from the beginning to get what he wanted from the BJP,

NCP breakaway group leader Ajit Pawar settled down for five Lok Sabha seats — of which he has allotted one seat to smaller party Rashtriya Samaj Paksha, from where its founder Mahadev Jankar is contesting from Parbhani. It was not just the BJP that had to give in to Shinde's demand. On its part, the Ajit Pawar-led NCP wanted to field its senior OBC leader Chhagan Bhujbal from Nashik. However, Shinde put his foot down and ensured that his man, two-time sitting MP Hemant Godse got the ticket to contest the Nashik seat. In fact, the BJP was keen in contesting the Thane — which incidentally is the home town of Shinde — and Kalyan — a seat that Shinde's son Dr Shrikant Shinde won in the 2019 Lok Sabha as the then united Shiv Sena candidate. However, after negotiations,

Shinde ensured that Shiv Sena got Thane on the ground it is symbolically very important for Balasaheb Thackeray-founded Shiv Sena, while he managed to get Kalyan on the premise it is represented by his son Dr Shrikant Shinde. Between the Shinde-led Shiv Sena and BJP, there was a lot of discussion on the choice of candidates. On the basis of an internal survey it had done, the BJP forced Shinde to drop three sitting MPs from the latter's camp in Vidarbha and Marathwada regions — Krupal Tumane from Ramtek (SC), Bhawana Gawali (Yavatmal-Washim) and Hemant Patil (Hingoli). In Yavatmal-Washim, five-time Shiv Sena MP Bhawana Gawali who quit the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena to join Shinde Sena, was dropped. In her place, the Shinde Sena

nominated Rajashree Patil, wife of the party's Hingoli MP Hemant Patil, to contest against Sanjay Deshmukh of the Sena (UBT). In Hingoli, the Shinde Sena has nominated Baburao Kolkatkar against Nagesh Patil Ashtikar of the Sena (UBT). "During the initial stage of seat-sharing negotiations, Shinde was dealing with deputy chief minister and senior state BJP leader Devendra Fadnis. But, when he realised that things were not working his way, he established a direct link with Amit Shah and held talks with him. But for the tough bargaining skills displayed by Shinde, being a new party we would not have got 15 Lok Sabha seats and that too three seats from Mumbai, from the BJP" a senior Shiv Sena leader close to Shinde said.

## Ladakh Lok Sabha seat to witness multi corner contest

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The cold desert region of Ladakh is set to witness a multi-corner contest with the entry of heavyweight rebel candidates in the fray on the last date of filing the nomination papers. Two prominent leaders including Haji Hanifa Jan and social activist Sajjad Kargili filed their nomination papers as Independent candidates in the office of ARO, Kargil on Friday. The voting is scheduled to take place in the fifth round of polling on May 20. The INDIA alliance has officially fielded Tsering Namgyal to take on the BJP candidate Tashi Gyalson. A close contest is expected between T Namgyal, a congress councillor & currently the LoP in Leh Autonomous Hill Development Council, and Tashi Gyalson of BJP. The two rebel candidates, Sajjad Kargili and Haji Hanifa Jan with a support base in Shia-dominated Kargil may play a spoilsport. Kargili finished second in 2019. Behind the curtains, Kargil witnessed a high-voltage political drama before the



local leaders belonging to the Shia community decided to field their candidate in the fray. During preliminary talks cracks surfaced within the INDIA alliance as Kargil-based leaders of the Congress party and the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference unilaterally announced the name of Haji Hanifa Jan to establish their supremacy over Leh-based party leaders. Senior alliance leader and former Congress minister Rigzin Zora while taking strong objection to the move called it a breach of the agreement reached among INDIA bloc constituents by the NC. As per the sharing formula the Congress party was expected to field its candidate. The name of Haji Hanifa Jan, district President of the

National Conference, was proposed by the Shia leaders of the party to their alliance partners in Kargil. Jora said Ladakh seat had gone to the Congress as per the agreement and it was wrong on part of the NC to field its district president from the constituency. Supporters of Haji Hanifa Jan refused to bend their knees and went ahead and persuaded him to file his nomination as an Independent candidate. Initially, the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) also faced some internal bickering after the sitting Member of Parliament Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, was denied a mandate for the second time. He had decided to file his nomination papers as an Independent candidate. The senior BJP leaders camping in Ladakh persuaded him not to contest the Lok Sabha polls as a BJP rebel candidate. BJP won the Ladakh Lok Sabha seat in 2014 and 2019. In 2014, Thupstan Chhewang won the seat for the BJP while in 2019, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal emerged the winner. The BJP this time replaced Namgyal with Tashi Gyalson.

## I wanted to part ways with uncle in 2004: Ajit Pawar

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As the ongoing electoral battle between the members of the Pawar family intensified in Baramati Lok Sabha constituency, breakaway nephew and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar of the NCP on Friday fired a fresh salvo at NCP chief and family patriarch Sharad Pawar, by revealing that he wanted to part ways with his uncle way back in 2004. Addressing an election rally at Indapur Assembly segment which falls in the Baramati constituency, Ajitdada — as Ajit Pawar is known in the State political circles — expressed his regret of not severing his political links with Sharad Pawar in 2004. In the 2004 State Assembly polls, the then NCP and Congress — which were ruling Maharashtra as Democratic Front (DF) — had won 71 and 69 seats as against 62 and 54 seats won by the Opposition Shiv Sena (then united) and the BJP respectively. The DF had gone onto form a state government for the second time. "In 2004, when we (NCP) had



won more seats, the Congress was ready to give the chief minister's post...Late (chief minister and Congress leader) Vilasrao Deshmukh told me that Madam (Sonia Gandhi) had said Congress had no moral right to claim the chief minister post," Ajitdada said at the Indapur rally. Ajitdada that if Sharad Pawar had insisted, the NCP could have got the chief minister's post. "Vilasrao Deshmukh asked us as to who would be chief minister from the NCP — whether it is me, (late) RR Patil or Chhagan Bhujbal". "What Pawarsaheb did was to seek and get four additional ministerial berths and give up the chief minister's post. Yet, at that time, I kept quiet. Now I feel I should have parted ways with my uncle in 2004

itself. I regret what I did not do then," Ajitdada said. It may be recalled that on July 2, 2023, the NCP witnessed vertical split after Ajit Pawar rebelled against the leadership, walked with a majority of party MLAs and teamed up with the BJP to be part of the Eknath Shinde government. At his election rally, Ajitdada had a dig at his uncle Sharad Pawar when he said: "Your political moves are strategies. And you term my political moves as betrayal. This is something I cannot digest". Meanwhile, the contest in Baramati Lok Sabha constituency between the two prominent members of the Pawar family — Sharad Pawar's daughter and three-time MP Supriya Sule and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar — is getting fiercer with every passing day. Baramati Lok Sabha constituency has been represented by the Sharad Pawar family for nearly four decades now. While Sharad Pawar was a two-time MP, his nephew Ajit Pawar represented Baramati for one term, Supriya Supe was a three-term MP from Baramati.

## Infant thrown to death in Kochi within three hours of birth

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

For the people of Kochi, Saturday May 3, 2024 will remain as an unforgettable and dreadful day for decades to come. The city woke up to the news that an infant, born hardly three hours ago was thrown out of a high rise residential apartment in the uptown Panampilly Nagar where the whose who of the metro has set up their residences. The incident occurred at 07.30 and the police on being alerted by persons who saw a plastic bag carrying the body of the child crashing down and hitting the ring road. The Kochi City Police team rushed to the site was taken back when they saw the content of the bag, the body of a new born child which has been broken and bruised. On inspecting all the 21 apartments, the police team came across a 21-year old woman who they confirmed as the one who gave birth to the child. She confided to the police that she was a rake victim and it was to escape from the ignominy of



being known as an unwed mother that she threw down the child. The city police commissioner who led the probe asked the media not to publish the name of the woman as she was a rape victim. Police are investigating the role of others in this gruesome act. The parents of the woman were interrogated by the investigators and by evening, it was disclosed that the cops are trying to find out the details of a SUV which was seen speeding away from the apartment immediately after the incident. Kochi has already emerged as the crime capital of south India as not a single day passes without reports of murder, gang warfare, drug pushing and narcotics related crimes.

## Hindus class II citizens in Didi Bengal: Modi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ BURDWAN/DURGAPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday invoked Hindutva in Bengal alleging how during the Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress raj the condition of the Hindus had dwindled to that of second class citizens "all for the sake of pursuing its appeasement politics." The immediate reference of the Prime Minister was an alleged remark by a former Bengal Minister and TMC MLA from Murshidabad Humayun Kabir who had a couple of days ago threatened to throw all the BJP supporters into Bhagirathi River (Ganges) in a couple of hours. "The question to be asked is why the Hindus in Bengal have

become second class citizens," the Prime Minister asked in election rallies at Burdwan-Durgapur and Krishnagar where he was campaigning for BJP candidates Dilip Ghosh and Amrita Roy respectively. Questioning the kind of politics that the TMC was playing in Bengal where its MLAs were free to utter certain objectionable words Modi asked, "what kind of politics is this" where a politician would threaten to throw BJP workers in a river. "Is this a part of appeasement politics being pursued by the TMC that the Hindus have been reduced to the level of second class citizens in Bengal?" he asked. Sandeshkhali too figured in his vehement attack on the Mamata Banerjee Government for its appeasement politics so

to say. "It is because of the appeasement politics that the State Government willfully left out the main perpetrator of the Sandeshkhali case" where the women were dis-honoured and their lands were grabbed right under the nose of the police administration, he said. "They did not touch Sheikh Shahjahan the main accused in Sandeshkhali case... the entire country watched in shame as the TMC continued to guard the main culprit," he said wondering whether it was the part of Mamata Banerjee's appeasement politics. Out of the two rallies Krishnagar constituency has more about 42 percent minority votes. The constituency is presently held by TMC's Mohua Moitra who was early this year expelled from parliament for

her alleged involvement in the cash-for-query case. She is pitted against the BJP's Amrita Roy a scion of the local royal family and CPI(M)'s Md Shadi. At Burdwan-Durgapur Modi campaigned for former State party president and national vice president Dilip Ghosh who won the Midnapore parliamentary seat in 2019. Ghosh is contesting against TMC's Kirti Azad a former BJP leader and a national cricket. Referring to the recruitment scam that has seen about 26,000 teachers and non-teaching staff losing their jobs — post a Calcutta High Court order — on grounds of large-scale corruption in appointment, the Prime Minister said his party had a moral support for the losers of jobs who had secured them honestly.

## TMC MP escapes chopper crash

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress MP and Bengali superstar Dev alias Dipak Adhikari had on Friday a narrow escape when the helicopter that he was travelling in suddenly developed snags and smoke started coming out of it mid-air. Dev who was campaigning for his party had gone to Rataua in Malda from where he was flying to Raninagar in Murshidabad district. "The flight had soared up barely 5-10 minutes when smoke started coming out of it and the ATC was informed immediately and the pilot managed to get it land at Malda Airport from where Dev took a car to go to his destination," TMC sources said.

## Bengal gov dares...

From Page 1

Senior BJP leader Dilip Ghosh however backed the Governor saying TMC was capable of arranging such situations to malign a person as high as a Governor. "This is nothing new. This is TMC's politics. I don't know how low they will stoop. They have earlier insulted the President, Prime Minister, Home Minister now they are insulting the Governor... people are watching and people will decide," he said. The woman who had on Thursday lodged a police complaint against the Governor leveling charges of molestation countered the statement of Bose on Friday narrating the entire incident saying, "I come from an apolitical family and have nothing to do with either BJP or TMC... I have been looking

for jobs and have this contractual engagement... Before Thursday he had done this to me earlier on April 25... not only this he did this to a lady dancer earlier who wrote a complaint and when I was handling that issue my seniors asked me to ignore it." Referring to the Governor's statements Bengal Minister Shashi Panja said that her party had nothing to do with whatever happened at Raj Bhavan. "Such an allegation against a governor never happened before. This has certainly demeaned the prestige of the chair of the Governor. We demand that an impartial inquiry should be done," Panja said wondering how the same person could who raised his voice against the Sandeshkhali incident could be involved in a similar incident.

## CBSE...

From Page 1

The CBSE X, XII results can also be checked on other official websites which includes - cbse.nic.in, cbseresults.nic.in, and results.cbse.nic.in. Other websites to check results are - digilocker.gov.in and results.gov.in. Roll number, school number and admit card ID are required to check the CBSE Board exam results online. This year around 39 lakh candidates have registered for CBSE Board Exam 2024 for Class X, XII across the country. CBSE Class X examination was conducted from February 15 to March 13 and CBSE Class XII examination was conducted from February 15 to April 2, 2024.

## Raebareli...

From Page 1

The last time a non-Gandhi was in the fray from the constituency was in 1998, when Satish Sharma, a close aide of Rajiv Gandhi and Sonia, contested the polls but lost to the BJP's Sanjaya Singh. BJP candidate Dinesh Pratap Singh also filed his papers from Raebareli. He had lost to Sonia in 2019. Singh had switched sides from the Congress in 2018, after being sent to the State Legislative Council twice by that party. BSP's Thakur Prasad Yadav also filed his nomination from Rae Bareli on Thursday. Rahul is now contesting from a seat that has been held by his mother Sonia, his grandmother Indira Gandhi and his grandfather Feroze Gandhi in the past. Feroze Gandhi held the seat in the first two elections after Independence. His wife Indira Gandhi won in 1967, 1971 and 1980, followed by friends and family members

of the Gandhis. Arun Nehru won the 1980 bypoll and subsequently in 1984. Sheila Kaul, Indira Gandhi's aunt, represented the seat in 1989 and 1991. The only time the Congress did not represent Raebareli was in the wake of the Emergency in 1977 when Janata Party's Raj Narain defeated Indira Gandhi, who was then the prime minister. And the BJP's Ashoke Singh won in 1996 and 1998. Sonia Gandhi won from Rae Bareli four times between 2004 and 2019. When Sonia decided to leave Raebareli and switch to the Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan, she addressed an emotional message to people of the constituency. "After this decision, I will not have the opportunity to serve you directly but my heart and soul will always remain with you. I know that you will stand by me and my family in future, just as you have in the past," she said in the February 15 message.

## EC unhappy with truant city slicks...

From Page 1

The commission also held one to one interaction with DEOs of low turnout districts (based on 2019 figures) in phases 3 and 4 to identify ways for enhancing turnout. The turnout so far has been 66.14 per cent in phase 1 and 66.71 per cent in phase 2, which, seen against electoral participation history in India

is among the best but somewhat lags the high benchmarks of 2019. The commission further informed that in collaboration with the Ministry of Railways, the Parliamentary Elections campaign logo "Chunav Ka Parv, Desh Ka Garv" has been integrated with IRCTC portal and tickets, SVEEP creatives are being displayed at railway stations and railway station announcements are including voter awareness messages. Clarifying the delay in announcement of official

voter turnout data after the completion of two phases, the poll body said as per statutory requirements, voter turnout is to be recorded at every polling station in absolute numbers in Form 17C. As a strong measure of transparency, the copies of Form 17C, duly signed by the Presiding Officer and all present polling agents, are shared with all present polling agents. Thus, leave alone Constituency, even booth wise data of actual number of votes polled is available with the candidates, which is a statutory requirement.

## Modi's advice to RaGa...

From Page 1

Modi slammed the Opposition Bloc INDIA and the Congress for "supporting" the "vote jihad" comments made by a candidate of the Samajwadi Party (SP), an ally of the grand

old party in Uttar Pradesh. The Prime Minister also challenged the Congress to give in writing that it would not amend the Constitution to provide reservations based on religion. "Our Constitution explicitly states that the Government of India must not provide reservations based on religion. The Congress wants to do the same as they are angry with the OBCs, Dalits and the tribals because they supported Modi," he said.

Modi said he has been challenging the Congress on three points for the last 10 days, but it has remained silent. "My first challenge is - Congress and the INDIA alliance should give assurance to the country in writing that they will not make any changes in the Constitution or give reservations based on religion. My second challenge is - they should promise the country in writing that they will not snatch the reservations of

SC/ST and OBCs and divide those based on religion. "My third challenge is that they should give in writing that wherever their State Governments are in power, reservations will not be given to Muslims based on religion by slashing the OBC quota," he said. Modi also said the "game of vote jihad" has been silently continuing in the country for decades. "The royal family of the

Congress, the TMC and the Left are silent on this appeal of 'vote jihad' against me. This means that every single member of the Opposition alliance agrees with it," he said. Hitting out at the coalition, the PM said the INDIA Bloc of Congress, TMC and the Left parties "has only one policy - appeasement". Reaching out to the Matua community of West Bengal, Modi said, "We had hoped that the TMC would support the

Citizenship (Amendment) Act, as the Matuas would benefit from it. But, the state's ruling party is opposing it for their vote bank politics." On Congress leader Sam Pitroda's remarks over wealth redistribution, the PM said, the Congress and the INDIA Bloc are planning to "take the wealth that you have accumulated by working hard and enduring hardships, and distribute it among their vote bank".





# Congress came to power in Karnataka with SDPI support: Shah

PTI ■ HUKKERI (KARNATAKA)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday alleged "anti-national elements" belonging to the Social Democratic Party of India were involved in the bomb blast in Bengaluru and claimed Congress came to power in Karnataka with SDPI support.

Targeting the Siddaramaiah-led government, he urged it to hand over the probe in the Hubballi student Neha Hiremath murder case to the CBI if the state was unable to investigate properly. The top BJP leader addressed a public meeting here in Belagavi district for party candidate from Chikkodi Lok Sabha segment Annasaheb Jolle.

"Modi ji ended terrorism from the country. Modi ji banned PFI. This Congress government in Karnataka has come to power with the support of SDPI. Look at the consequence, after they came to power, there was a bomb blast in Bengaluru," Shah said, referring to the Rameshwaram cafe blast on March 1. He said, "They (Congress govt) first said it was a cylinder blast, it was not a cylinder blast, it was a bomb blast by the anti-national elements of SDPI. When the probe was handed over to the



National Investigation Agency (NIA), it was known about the involvement of such elements." "Don't worry, let Congress government do anything...Narendra Modi government will keep Karnataka secure," he added. Chikkodi along with 13 other Lok Sabha segments in the state will go to polls on May 7. Referring to the murder of Neha Hiremath on her college campus last month, Shah said some in the

government said that the killing was due to personal issues. "What a personal issue? A girl, who did not want to undergo religious conversion was murdered. I met her mother day-before-yesterday in Hubballi. She told me that her daughter was under pressure to undergo religious conversion. I want to warn the Congress party, if you are unable to investigate the case properly, give it to the CBI. BJP will ensure that those

who did injustice to Neha Hiremath are punished," he added. Neha Hiremath (23), daughter of Congress councillor of Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation Niranjan Hiremath, was stabbed to death on the campus of the her college. The accused Fayaz Khondunaiq, who fled from the scene, was arrested by the police subsequently. Neha was a first year Master of Computer Application

(MCA) student and Fayaz was earlier her classmate. Congress cannot keep the country united and secure, Shah said, and listed out the achievements of Modi rule in the last ten years.

"Rahul Baba (Congress leader Rahul Gandhi) used to say don't take Corona vaccine, it is Modi vaccine, it is good that people don't listen to him and every one took (the job). At night in the dark, Rahul Baba along with his sister took vaccination. Rahul Baba you should be ashamed that even during a pandemic like Corona, you did politics," he said. Shah said, in this election, on one side there is Congress which "did Rs 12 lakh crore worth of scam and corruption", and on the other side there is BJP led by Narendra Modi, who despite being Chief Minister and Prime Minister for 23 years, does not have even a single allegation of corruption against him.

"On one side there is Rahul Baba who goes on foreign vacations once in three months, while on the other side there is Modi, who for 23 years did not take leave even on Deepawali and ate sweets with soldiers of the country (on the festival)," he said, as he asked the people to choose between the two.

"Whom do you want, 'Pariwarwaadi' (dynast) Congress or BJP that follows 'Parampara' (traditions)," he asked.

Shah also gave Modi the credit for resolving Ram Mandir issue and consecration of Ram Lalla idol at the temple in Ayodhya and also praised him for the development of Kashi Vishwanath corridor and Kedarnath and Badrinath, among other religious places of worship. He also hit out at AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi for not attending the consecration ceremony at Ayodhya despite being invited, and alleged that they skipped the event "fearing their vote bank".

"Does Kashmir belong to us or not," Shah asked the gathering and accused Kharge of asking what people of Karnataka and Rajasthan have to do with Kashmir. "Kharge saab, you have crossed 80-years, but you have not understood the people of Chikkodi, every child here is ready to sacrifice their lives for Kashmir." Alleging that in 10 months after coming to power, the Congress has destroyed Karnataka, Shah said: "Trust Modi once again, and he will take Karnataka forward."

# CPI concedes defeat at Wayanad

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Though the results of the ongoing election to Lok Sabha would be announced on June 4, the CPI in Kerala has conceded defeat of its Wayanad constituency Annie Raja in her fight against Rahul Gandhi. "We will win three of the four constituencies from where our candidates contested this election. The LDF is certain to win 12 candidates from the 20 constituencies," the State Executive Committee of the CPI said in a release on Friday. Thiruvananthapuram, Mavelikkara, Thrissur and Wayanad are the constituencies from where the CPI candidates are fighting the election. "We will win the first three constituencies while Annie Raja has done an excellent job by bringing down the majority of victory of Rahul Gandhi. This time Rahul Gandhi is unlikely to get a mammoth victory like the one he registered in 2019," said the CPI release.

Though is sure of defeat, Annie Raja has commenced the campaign for the by election in the event of Rahul Gandhi wins from Rae Bareilly and opts to quit Wayanad. As The Pioneer had reported earlier, no one had any doubts about the

prospectus of Rahul Gandhi's victory from Wayanad. The electorate of the constituency were familiar with Rahul Gandhi while Annie Raja was portrayed as Dilliwalla Rajkumari. Though the CPI expects the LDF to win in 12 out of the 20 seats at stake from Kerala, big brother CPI(M) and its strongman Pinarayi Vijayan is confident of making a clean sweep by winning all the 20 seats. "The good governance by the CPI(M) led Kerala Government since 2016 and the people friendly welfare measures have made the Pinarayi Vijayan led Government popular in the State. This is the secret behind our confidence," said M V Govindan, Kerala secretary of the CPI(M). The Congress-led UDF government had expressed confidence of winning all the seats at stake from the State. The strong anti-incumbency wave against the CPI(M) led government and the controversy generated by LDF Convener E P Jayarajan's alleged move to join the BJP has distanced the minorities from the CPI(M). This will help the UDF in a big way," said VD Satheshan, Leader of the Opposition.

# Shah morphed video: Five arrested Telangana Congress workers get bail

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

The city police on Friday said they arrested five Telangana Congress party social media activists in connection with Union Home Minister Amit Shah's alleged morphed video that went viral recently.

The accused were produced before a local court which granted them bail with a condition that each person will have to submit two sureties worth Rs 10,000 each and appear before the investigating officer on Monday and Friday till further orders.

According to a statement issued by the police, they received a complaint on April 27 from a state BJP leader alleging that the Telangana Congress Pradesh Congress Party on its X account posted morphed or fabricated video of Amit Shah's speech during his election campaign and public meeting at Siddipet recently, in violation of IT



Act. The deliberate and mischievous act of morphing the video is aimed at misleading people and voters creating fear amongst the OBC communities, the police said, adding they registered a case under Sections 469 (forgery), 505(1)C (circulating rumour), 171G (spreading false information), among others. According to police, on April 23, during a public meeting in Medak, Amit Shah made a speech.

The A1 received a morphed video and uploaded it on the "@INCtelangana" handle on X besides sharing it on various WhatsApp groups while A2 to A5 saw the video and further shared it to their individual X handles. When notified by X about the sensitivity of the content, the video was deleted, they said. Earlier, the Delhi Police summoned Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on May 1 for questioning in a case of a doctored video of Amit Shah.

# Modi: Congress plans to handover property to those involved in vote jihad

PTI ■ CHAIBASA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused the Congress of planning to allocate property to those involved in "vote jihad" while affirming that no power on earth would be permitted to alter the Constitution. "Congress wants to distribute your property to those indulging in 'Vote Jihad' but Modi will ensure that the poor, dalit and tribals have the first right on the country's property. No force on earth would be allowed to change or alter our Constitution," the PM said while addressing the 'Maha Vijay Sankalp Sabha' at Tata College Ground, Chaibasa. Hitting out at the JMM-led coalition in the state, the PM said it was patronising infiltration in Santal Parganas and indulged in vote bank politics akin to neighbouring West Bengal. "This has resulted in a decrease in tribal population there. Our women are not safe. The JMM

and Congress are usurping tribal land. They have even not spared Army land. Their leaders are neck-deep in corruption whether it be liquor, mining or sand. They are looting Jharkhand's mineral resources," the PM said.

Modi added that it was the BJP which created a separate Jharkhand state whereas JMM has joined hands with such political leaders of INDIA bloc which used to say that a separate state can be created over their dead bodies.

"Such forces were responsible for Jungle Raj in Bihar and are now active in Jharkhand," he added. He sought votes for party candidates in two Scheduled Tribe reserved Lok Sabha constituencies — Singhbhum and Khunti. The party has fielded sitting MP Geeta Korra, who recently switched to BJP from Congress, from Singhbhum and Union Minister Arjun Munda from Khunti.

# Congress has already accepted defeat: Smriti Irani

PTI ■ AMETHI (UP)

Union Minister Smriti Irani on Friday said that the Gandhis' absence from the electoral fray in Amethi indicates that the Congress has accepted defeat even before polling. "Gandhi family not being present in the election fray in Amethi indicates that Congress party has accepted its defeat in Amethi even before the polling on the seat," Irani, the sitting MP from Amethi, told reporters here. She made the remarks responding to Congress loyalist K L Sharma filing his nomination from the seat. "Had they felt there was any chance of victory on the seat, they would have contested from here and not fielded their proxy," the BJP leader said, referring to the Gandhi family.

She asserted she will win the constituency again when it goes to polls on May 20. Irani took a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who filed his nomination from Rae



Bareilly on Friday, saying, "the one who was not accepted by Amethi and fled to Wayanad will never fully belong to Rae Bareilly." "Also the question is: he, in Wayanad, said it is his family. Now what will he say in Rae Bareilly today?" she asked. Rahul Gandhi has been a three-time MP from Amethi. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, his streak was broken by Irani, who defeated him by a margin of more than 55,000 votes and was hailed as a "giant killer". Responding to a question, Irani said now that people in

Amethi have seen development under the Narendra Modi government, they are forced to wonder why it did not happen in the last 50 years. "They are asking why the Gandhi family did so much damage to the area," she said. "The PM had already predicted that after polling in Wayanad, Rahulji will look for a new seat and you are seeing it happen today," Irani said. Rahul Gandhi is a sitting MP from Wayanad in Kerala and has contested the seat again this election.

# INDIA Bloc supports anti national forces and is against Lord Ram, says Nadda

PTI ■ DAHOD

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President J P Nadda on Friday accused the INDIA bloc members of supporting anti-national forces, and alleged that they were against Lord Ram. He also claimed that the Congress party was trying to change the Constitution to provide reservation to Muslims.

In an election rally in Gujarat's Dahod, Nadda said several INDIA bloc leaders are either in jail or on bail, and called the grouping an alliance of dynastic parties and corrupt

people. "The UPA Government under Sonia Gandhi's leadership had given an affidavit in the (apex) court saying that Lord Ram is imaginary and there was no historical or scientific basis to prove his existence. They tried to create hurdles, but PM Modi paved the way (for the construction of Lord Ram temple) in the court. After 10 days of rituals, the consecration of Ram Lalla was performed on January 22," he said. "When slogans were raised at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in support of Afzal Guru, the



mastermind in Parliament attack case who was

hanged...The very next day, Rahul Gandhi went to the

JNU to support them. He supported the tukde-tukde gang who backed terrorist Afzal Guru, and his party made one of the gang members a Lok Sabha candidate," Nadda said, referring to Congress leader Kanhaiya Kumar. The Congress has fielded Kanhaiya Kumar from the North East Delhi Lok Sabha seat this time. "Aren't they with anti-national forces? Should you vote for them?" he asked. Accusing the Congress of trying to change the Constitution to grant quota to Muslims, Nadda said, "Yesterday, the prime minister

said in clear words that Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar has said reservation will not be granted in the name of religion but for social justice. But they (Congress) are trying to change the reservation given to the SC, ST and OBC communities to Muslims. It will be akin to looting our Constitution." He said Modi has challenged the Congress to give in writing that it will not do any such thing. "Congress works to strengthen those powers that weaken and divide the country," he said. Nadda said that 10 years ago, the common man thought

that nothing was going to change, and this is how politics worked. "But when you made Modi the country's prime minister, the same India is going ahead enthusiastically with the pledge of becoming a developed India," he said. "Earlier, politics was done in the name of caste, religion, appeasement, votebank. The politicians earlier did not do anything for the welfare of society but divided it into different castes. They would raise the voice of castes to create a vote bank for themselves," Nadda said. But after Modi came to power,

he challenged this kind of politics and introduced a politics of report card and a politics of development, responsibility and accountability, he said. Except BJP, every other party used tribals for political purposes. It is the BJP that changed the fate of tribals, he said, adding that Modi made a woman from the tribal community the country's President. "Modi's politics led to India's development, and the poor have benefited from the schemes like health insurance of up to Rs 5 lakh and pucca houses for the poor," he said.

# North Goa LS seat: In Sattari taluka, BJP tries to expand reach, Congress attempts to make inroads

PTI ■ PANAJI

The performance of the BJP and Congress in the rural Sattari taluka, covering only two assembly segments, will be a key factor in the North Goa Lok Sabha constituency in the coastal state.

The two rival parties are more or less evenly placed in other constituency areas, comprising 20 assembly segments. The scene was identical in Sattari taluka until a few years ago when the BJP emerged as a stronger player.

Ahead of the polls, BJP leaders said they are striving to increase their party's vote share in Sattari taluka, while the Congress is attempting to

reclaim lost grounds to turn the table on its rival. Sattari covers the Poriem and Valpoi assembly segments. The two seats in Goa — North Goa and South Goa — will go to polls in the third phase of the general elections on May 7. BJP has fielded its sitting MP Shripad Naik in North Goa, while Congress has nominated former Union minister Ramakant Khalap. Earlier, the BJP and Congress had equal dominance in this taluka, but the BJP won both assembly seats in 2022, establishing its stronghold. "The main task before the Congress candidate is to reduce the margin of BJP in Sattari taluka. If we can reduce

the margin here and increase our vote share in our other strongholds, then we will be able to sail through," said Girish Chodankar, former Goa Congress chief. Chodankar had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Lok Sabha polls from North Goa. In the Lok Sabha polls, the Congress had polled 7,561 votes against BJP's 16,580 in Poriem assembly segment. "Pratapsingh Rane (then Poriem MLA) had supported the BJP candidate (Naik) during the last parliamentary elections. He had extended support due to his personal rapport with Shripad Naik," said Vishwajit Rane, son of Pratapsingh. Amid Congress' efforts to reverse the BJP's gains,

particularly in Sattari, Vishwajit Rane, who is also the health minister of Goa, said he has been campaigning for the past one-and-a-half months to garner support for Naik. In the Valpoi assembly segment, the Congress had got 7,149 votes compared to BJP's 15,334 votes last time. Rane claimed that the people of Sattari are impressed by what Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done across the country. "BJP workers in Sattari are Modi Ka Parivar," he said, exuding confidence that Naik will win with a big lead. BJP Goa spokesman Giriraj Pai Vernekar said Congress is struggling to make inroads in Sattari.

# Incumbent BJP MP joins campaigning for party candidate in Ladakh

PTI ■ LEH

BJP's incumbent Ladakh BMP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, who had "revolted" against the central leadership for not giving him ticket, on Friday pledged his support to party candidate Tashi Gyalson, ending more than a week of uncertainty in the party camp.

However, all is not well with the Ladakh unit of the Congress, which is facing a vertical divide between Leh and Kargil districts. While official Congress candidate Tsering Namgyal, who is also leader of opposition in the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh, filed his

nomination papers, the party's Kargil unit on Friday accompanied National Conference leader Haji Hanifa Jan as he filed his nomination papers before the assistant returning officer. A keen contest is on the cards in the constituency as Sajjad Kargili, one of the prominent leaders of the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), also filed his nomination papers on Friday. Accompanied by his supporters, BJP MP Namgyal reached party headquarters in Leh and extended his support to Gyalson, who is also the chairman-cum-chief executive councilor of LAHDC, Leh. "I have not rejoined the BJP which is my home and my

family. Differences do crop up sometimes within a family but I am not angry with the BJP, (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi or Gyalson. I am sure the BJP will continue its winning streak in the Ladakh Lok Sabha seat and Ladakh will be one among our target of 400 seats in the general elections," he told reporters. Namgyal said they will take whatever steps needed for the bright future of Ladakh, to meet aspirations of the people and ensure security of the region. "I have learnt from the party that nation comes first, party second and self last... We have started campaigning for the party candidate," he said. Congress candidate Tsering

Namgyal filed his nomination papers on Thursday, and said the party's manifesto contains including Ladakh in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. "We support the four-point demand of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and KDA, and we will forcefully raise the demands within and outside the Parliament to fulfill aspirations of the people," he said, seeking support from the voters across the Union Territory. The LAB and KDA are jointly spearheading an agitation for the past four years to demand statehood for Ladakh, its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil and jobs for the local youth.



# Hamas sending delegation to Egypt for further ceasefire talks

AP ■ BEIRUT

Hamas said Thursday that it was sending a delegation to Egypt for further cease-fire talks, in a new sign of progress in attempts by international mediators to hammer out an agreement between Israel and the militant group to end the war in Gaza.

After months of stop-and-start negotiations, the cease-fire efforts appear to have reached a critical stage, with Egyptian and American mediators reporting signs of compromise in recent days. But chances for the deal remain entangled with the key question of whether Israel will accept an end to the war without reaching its stated goal of destroying Hamas.

The stakes in the cease-fire negotiations were made clear in a new UN report that said if the Israel-Hamas war stops today, it will still take until 2040 to rebuild all the homes that have been destroyed by nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment and ground offensives in Gaza. It warned that the impact

of the damage to the economy will set back development for generations and will only get worse with every month fighting continues.

The proposal that US and Egyptian mediators have put to Hamas — apparently with Israel's acceptance — sets out a three-stage process that would bring an immediate six-week cease-fire and partial release of Israeli hostages, but also negotiations over a "permanent calm" that includes some sort of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, according to an Egyptian official. Hamas is seeking guarantees for a full Israeli withdrawal and complete end to the war. Hamas officials have sent mixed signals about the proposal in recent days. But on Thursday, its supreme leader, Ismail Haniyeh, said in a statement that he had spoken to Egypt's intelligence chief and "stressed the positive spirit of the movement in studying the cease-fire proposal."

The statement said that Hamas negotiators would travel to Cairo "to complete the ongoing

discussions with the aim of working forward for an agreement." Haniyeh said he had also spoken to the prime minister of Qatar, another key mediator in the process.

The brokers are hopeful that the deal will bring an end to a conflict that has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, caused widespread destruction and plunged the territory into a humanitarian crisis. They also hope a deal will avert an Israeli attack on Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people have sought shelter after fleeing battle zones elsewhere in the territory.

If Israel does agree to end the war in return for a full hostage release, it would be a major turnaround. Since Hamas' October 7 attack stunned Israel, its leaders have vowed not to stop their bombardment and ground offensives until the militant group is destroyed. They also say Israel must keep a military presence in Gaza and security control after the war to ensure Hamas doesn't rebuild.

## Turkiye halts all trade with Israel over military actions in Gaza

AP ■ ANKARA

Turkiye on Thursday suspended all imports and exports to Israel citing the country's ongoing military action in Gaza and vowed to continue to impose the measures until the Israeli government allows the flow of humanitarian aid to the region.

A Turkish Trade Ministry statement said "export and import transactions in relation to Israel have been stopped, covering all products."

Turkish officials would coordinate with Palestinian authorities to ensure that Palestinians are not affected by the suspension of imports and exports, the ministry said. The ministry described the step as the "second phase" of measures against Israel, adding that the steps would remain in



Palestinians stand in the ruins of the Chahine family home, after an overnight Israeli strike that killed at least two adults and five boys and girls under the age of 16 in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, Friday. An Israeli strike on the city of Rafah on the southern edge of the Gaza Strip killed several people, including children, hospital officials said Friday.

force until Israel "allows an uninterrupted and sufficient flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza."

Publicly at least, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continues to insist that is the only acceptable endgame.

He has vowed that even if a cease-fire is reached, Israel will eventually attack Rafah, which he says is Hamas' last stronghold in Gaza.

He repeated his determination to do so in talks Wednesday with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who was in Israel on a regional tour to push the deal through.

The agreement's immediate fate hinges on whether Hamas will accept uncertainty over the final phases to bring the initial six-week pause in fighting — and at least postpone what it is feared would be a devastating assault on Rafah.

Egypt has been privately assuring Hamas that the deal will mean a total end to the war. But the Egyptian official said Hamas says the text's language is too vague and wants it to specify a complete Israeli pull-out from all of Gaza.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to talk about the

internal deliberations.

On Wednesday evening, however, the news looked less positive as Osama Hamdan, a top Hamas official, expressed scepticism, saying the group's initial position was "negative." Speaking to Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV, he said that talks were still ongoing but would stop if Israel invades Rafah.

Blinken hiked up pressure on Hamas to accept, saying Israel had made "very important" compromises. "There's no time for further haggling. The deal is there," Blinken said Wednesday before leaving for the US.

An Israeli airstrike, meanwhile, killed at least five people, including a child, in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza. The bodies were seen and counted by Associated Press journalists at a hospital. The war broke out on October 7 when Hamas militants broke into southern Israel and killed over 1,200 people, mostly Israelis, taking around 250 others hostage, some released during a cease-fire on November.

## Sunak under pressure amid dire local election results for his party

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's leadership is under severe pressure on Friday as the results of local elections and a crucial by-election poured in overnight, delivering what is being characterised as one of the worst poll outcomes for the governing Conservative Party in 40 years. Rebels from within his party are expected to renew their attacks on the British Indian leader after the Opposition Labour Party made definitive gains, including overturning the Tory majority in the Blackpool South by-election which was necessitated following a resignation amid a lobbying row. Labour Leader Sir Keir Starmer declared the result as a "seismic" victory and an overall poll verdict in favour of the party as it comes on the eve of a general election, expected later this year.

"Blackpool speaks for the whole country... This is the one

### Boris Johnson turned away from polling station

London (AP): Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was turned away from a polling station after forgetting to bring ID to vote in the UK's local elections. British media reported Friday that Johnson — who introduced the requirement for voters to provide ID with a photo when he was in office — was told by polling station staff in South Oxfordshire Thursday that he would not be able to vote without proving his identity. Sky News reported that Johnson, who served as Conservative prime minister from 2019 to 2022, was later able to cast his ballot and that he voted Conservative. Johnson introduced the Elections Act requiring photo ID in 2022 which was implemented last year.



contest where voters had the chance to send a message to Rishi Sunak's Conservatives directly, and that message is an overwhelming vote for change," said Starmer of the by-election. "The message to Rishi Sunak is clear. It's time for change, it's time for a general election," he said. The Labour candidate in Blackpool South, Chris Webb, defeated Conservative David Jones in the constituency which the Tories had won from Labour under former prime minister Boris Johnson in 2019. The swing of 26 per cent from

the Tories to Labour has been characterised as the third biggest in a by-election since 1945.

"We're probably looking at certainly one of the worst, if not the worst, Conservative performance in local government elections for the last 40 years," eminent pollster Professor John Curtice told the BBC. The by-election took place alongside local elections around England and Wales, in which voters elected their local councillors who manage day to day issues such as waste collection, roads and local infrastructure as well as crime fighting.

The results will continue to pour in over the weekend, with the overall picture expected to be clear by Sunday. But the early indications are that Labour has taken control of a number of local authorities in the regions that had turned away from the party in favour of the Tories over its anti-Brexit stance.

## Prosecutors present recorded conversation as key evidence

AP ■ NEW YORK

The prosecution's star witness has yet to take the stand in Donald Trump's hush money trial. But jurors are already hearing Michael Cohen's words as prosecutors work to directly tie Trump to payments to silence women with damaging claims about him before the 2016 election. The second week of testimony in the case will wrap up Friday after jurors heard a potentially crucial piece of evidence: a recording of Trump and Cohen, then his attorney, discussing a plan to pay off an ex-Playboy model who claimed to have an affair with Trump. The former president denies the affair. Prosecutors have spent the week using detailed testimony about meetings, email exchanges, business transactions and bank accounts to build on the foundation of their case accusing the pre-

### TRUMP HUSH MONEY TRIAL



sumptive Republican presidential nominee of a scheme to illegally influence the 2016 election. They are setting the stage for pivotal testimony from Cohen, who paid porn actor Stormy Daniels USD 1,30,000 for her silence before he went to prison for the hush money scheme. Trump's defense has worked

to poke holes in the credibility of prosecutors' witnesses, and show that Trump was trying to protect his reputation and family — not his campaign — by keeping the women quiet.

The defense also suggested while questioning an attorney who represented two women in hush money negotiations that Trump was, in fact, the victim of extortion. The recording played Thursday was secretly made by Cohen shortly before the 2016 election.

Cohen is heard telling Trump about a plan to purchase the rights to former Playboy model Karen McDougal's story from the National Enquirer so that it would never come out. The tabloid had previously bought McDougal's story to bury it on Trump's behalf.

## WH defends Joe Biden's 'xenophobic' remarks on India, China

Washington (PTI): The United States is a country of immigrants, the White House has said, defending President Joe Biden's remarks calling two of his QUAD partners — India and Japan — as well as Russia and China "xenophobic" nations, asserting that none of these countries, unlike the US, welcome immigrants. Responding to a question about the remarks made by Biden at an election fundraiser on Wednesday, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said that the president was making a "broader point." "He was making a broader point. Our allies and partners know very well that — how much this president respects them." Jean-Pierre told reporters at her daily news conference on Thursday.

"As you know, in regard to Japan, they were just here for the state visit. The US-Japan relationship is an important relationship. It's a deep, enduring alliance," she said.

"He (Biden) was making a more broad comment, speaking about this country and speaking about how important it is to be a country of immigrants and how it makes our country stronger. And so, that's what he was talking about," she said. "It relates to our relationship with our allies, that continues. Obviously, we have a strong relationship with India (and) with Japan. And the President, if you just look at the last three years, has certainly focused on those diplomatic relationships," Jean-Pierre said.

"He was talking about who we are as a country. He was talking about the importance of being in a country of immigrants, especially as you see the attacks that we have seen very recently, in the last couple of years, those attacks on immigrants, in particular," the White House Press Secretary said, defending the president. "The President is always going to be really clear on speaking to issues that matter to the American people."

## Kenya president postpones reopening of schools

AP ■ NAIROBI

Kenyan President William Ruto has postponed next week's planned reopening of schools until further notice, as heavy rains and floods that have killed more than 200 people continue.

The president, in his state of the nation address on Friday, said that "meteorological reports paint a dire picture," citing the possibility of Cyclone Hidaya hitting coastal Kenya in coming days. Kenya and other parts of East Africa have been overwhelmed by flooding, with more than 1,50,000 displaced people living in camps across the country.

Schools originally were to reopen this week, but the education ministry postponed that by a week. Students will now wait for the announcement of new reopening dates as some



dams and reservoirs that are either full or nearly full to evacuate or be forcefully moved. Water levels at two major hydroelectric dams have reached historic highs and the government has warned those living downstream along the Tana River.

Last week, a boat capsized on the river, which flows to the Indian Ocean, leaving seven people dead and 13 others missing. A passenger bus was also swept off a bridge along the same river last month. The government has been accused of an inadequate response to the floods.

The flooding has left more than 155 people dead in neighboring Tanzania, where Cyclone Hidaya is expected to hit coastal areas. Hundreds of people have been affected in Burundi, Ethiopia and Somalia as well.

schools remain flooded and others have been damaged. Some displaced people have been living in schools while the government prepares to relocate them to camps. The government has ordered people living near 178

## Denmark to liberalise its abortion law to allow procedure until 18th week of pregnancy

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

Denmark's government said Friday it is relaxing its restrictions on abortion for the first time in 50 years to make it legal for women to terminate pregnancies up to the 18th week from the previous 12th week. Officials said the law will also be changed to allow girls between 15 and 17 years old to have an abortion without parental consent. Marie Bjerre, the gender equality minister, said Denmark is strengthening women's rights while they are being rolled back in other parts of the world. "It is about the individual woman's freedom, about the right to decide over her own body and her own life. It is a historic day for women's equality," she said. Free abortion was introduced in Denmark in

1973. The limit was set at up to 12 weeks because "at that time all abortions were performed surgically, and at that time an abortion after the 12th week entailed a greater risk of complications," the health ministry said.

"After 50 years, it is time for the abortion rules to keep up with the times," Health Minister Sophie Lohde said. She said neighbouring Sweden, which set the legal limit at 18 weeks of gestation in 1996, has not experienced a significant increase in the number of abortions or when they are carried out.

The three-party centre government agreed on the move with two left-leaning groups, the Socialist People's Party and the Red-Green Alliance, and two centre parties, the Social Liberals and the Alternative. The deal is to be sealed by a

vote in parliament. No date for that was announced, but it is all but certain to pass because the government has a majority.

The change is expected to enter into force on June 1, 2025. The health ministry said the legal age of consent in Denmark is 15, and a 15-year-old girl can make her own choices about her own body. Bjerre said that she hoped that "young women can find support from their parents. But if there is disagreement, it must ultimately be the young woman's own decision whether she wants to be a mother. It is her body and her life."

Lawmaker Mette Thiesen, from a populist, anti-immigration party that was not part of the deal, called it "a terrible day. It's a terrible new law."

There is a "very fine balance between the woman's right to her own body, but also the right

to life of the little life that lies in the mother's womb," she told Danish broadcaster DR. "In week 18, we are talking about a small person with fingers and toes, which you can feel inside the womb."

Figures from the Danish Health Data Authority show that the total number of abortions in Denmark has been stable in recent years. In 2022 there were 14,700 medical abortions, compared to 14,500 in 2017. It peaked in 1975 when 27,900 abortions were performed.

While abortion is a deeply divisive issue in the United States, it is broadly legal across Europe.

France inscribed the guaranteed right to abortion in its constitution in a world first this year, sending a powerful message of support to women around the globe. Meanwhile, Poland's parliament held a

## China launches probe mission to Moon's far side

AP ■ BEIJING/WENCHANG

China on Friday successfully launched a 53-day-long lunar probe mission to collect samples for the first time from the far side of the Moon and bring them for scientific studies. The Chang'e-6 mission is tasked with collecting and then returning samples from the moon's far side to Earth — the first endeavour of its kind in the history of human lunar exploration, China National Space Administration (CNSA) said.

The entire mission would last for 53 days. The far side of the moon is not visible from Earth. An hour after the launch, an official announced that Chang'e-6's launch was "a complete success".

The CNSA has announced that scientific instruments from France, Italy and the European Space Agency/Sweden will be on board the lander of the Chang'e-6 mission and a

Pakistani payload on the orbiter. This is the first time that China has included an orbiter from its all-weather ally Pakistan in its moon mission. According to reports from Pakistan quoting the Institute of Space Technology (IST), the satellite ICUBE-Q has been designed and developed by IST in collaboration with China's Shanghai University SJTU and Pakistan's national space agency Suparco. ICUBE-Q orbiter carries two optical cameras to image the lunar surface.

The lunar probe was carried by a Long March-5 Y8 rocket blasted off smoothly from the Wenchang Space Launch Site on the coast of China's southern island province of Hainan. The launch was telecast live by state-run television.

Chang'e 6 consists of four components: an orbiter, a lander, an ascender and a re-entry module, according to CNSA. After collecting dust and rocks on the moon, the ascender will

transport the samples to the lunar orbiter for transfer to the re-entry module, which will carry them back to Earth.

The CNSA said earlier that the mission is poised to make breakthroughs in key technologies, such as automatic sample collection, take-off and ascent from the far side of the moon. Meanwhile, the probe will carry out scientific exploration of the landing zone.

The Change lunar exploration probe is named after the Chinese mythical moon goddess. The Chang'e 5 brought samples from the moon's near side. Chinese said the analysis of the samples found they contained water in tiny beads embedded in lunar dirt. China also plans to have a lunar station on the moon in future.

A major space power, China in the past successfully launched unmanned missions to the moon, including landing a rover. China has also sent a rover to Mars and built a space station, which is currently in

operation. Earlier, China announced plans for a manned lunar landing by 2030.

India became the first country to land near the little-explored lunar south pole region last year when its Chandrayaan-3's lander, carrying the Pragyaan rover successfully landed there. "Collecting and returning samples from the far side of the moon is an unprecedented feat. Now we know very little about the moon's far side. If the Chang'e-6 mission can achieve its goal, it will provide scientists with the first direct evidence to understand the environment and material composition of the far side of the moon, which is of great significance," said Wu Weiren, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and chief designer of China's lunar exploration programme. After the spacecraft reaches the moon, it will make a soft landing on the far side. Within 48 hours after landing, a robotic

arm will be extended to scoop rocks and soil from the lunar surface, and a drill will bore into the ground. Scientific detection work will be carried out simultaneously.

After the samples are sealed in a container, the ascender will take off from the moon and dock with the orbiter in lunar orbit. The returner will then carry the samples back to Earth, landing in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. The entire flight is expected to last about 53 days, the CNSA is quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua news agency. Remote-sensing images show the moon's two sides are very different. The near side is relatively flat, while the far side is thickly dotted with impact craters of different sizes and has much fewer lunar maria than the near side. Scientists infer that the lunar crust on the far side is much thicker than that on the near side. But why that is so remains a mystery.

## Maryland officials release cost estimate for rebuilding bridge

AP ■ ANNAPOLIS

Maryland plans to rebuild the Francis Scott Key Bridge in just over four years at an estimated cost between USD 1.7 billion and USD 1.9 billion, a state transportation official said Thursday. The state plans to build a new span by fall of 2028, said David Broughton, a spokesperson for the Maryland Department of Transportation. He said the cost estimate is preliminary, and detailed engineering specifics have not been confirmed.

As salvage efforts continue, authorities also announced late Wednesday they had recovered the body of a fifth person who was missing after the bridge's March 26 collapse, which shut down the port of Baltimore, one of the busiest ports in the country. Six members of a roadwork crew plunged to their deaths when a container ship lost power and crashed into one of the bridge's supporting columns.

The Key Bridge Response Unified Command announced that the victim found Wednesday was identified as Miguel Angel Luna Gonzalez, 49, of Glen Burnie, Maryland. All of the victims were Latino immigrants who came to the United States from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras.

"We continue to pray for Miguel Angel Luna Gonzalez, his family and all those who love him, acknowledging the anguish they have experienced since the Key Bridge collapsed," Gov. Wes Moore said in a statement Thursday. "We pray for comfort, we pray for healing, and we pray for peace in knowing that their loved one has finally come home." Salvage teams found one of the missing construction vehicles Wednesday and notified the Maryland State Police, officials said. State police investigators and Maryland Transportation Authority Police officers and the FBI responded to the scene and recovered the body inside a red

truck. The state police underwater recovery team and crime scene unit also assisted.

Meanwhile, the broker for the bridge's insurance policy confirmed Thursday that a USD 350 million payout will be made to the state of Maryland in what is expected to be the first of many payouts related to the collapse. Chubb, the company that insured the bridge, is preparing to make the USD 350 million payment, according to WTW, the broker. Douglas Menelly, a spokesperson for WTW, on Thursday confirmed plans for the payout, which was first reported by The Wall Street Journal. Chubb did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday. The Maryland Transportation Authority said Thursday that the state's treasurer filed a claim on the day of the bridge's collapse "against our USD 350 million property policy and put on notice our USD 150 million liability policy first tier carrier on behalf of MDTA."





A well-timed book, *Modi's North East Story*, enumerating the development story of the North East, is an inspiration for those genuinely wishing to connect with this hitherto remote region of India, says **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

# NARENDRA MODI INTRODUCES INDIA TO ITS ASHTALAKSHMIS



It is election time and television news channels across the country are on a roll as spokespersons of various Opposition parties try their best to churn out the "failures" of the NDA Government that has been in power for the past 10 years even as representatives of the ruling coalition vociferously list out the achievements of the BJP-led Government at the Centre. This is an age-old practice since the first General Elections held in India from October 1951 to February 1952. Although the ruling Congress party back then had nothing major to list out as achievements, the party continued to roll out new promises. From the basic provision of drinking water to all villages, establishment of schools in all districts of the country, to subsidised ration to the poorer sections of society, all topped the list of electoral promises. These so-called promises continued till the 1990s. In fact, in the 1960s, people were asked to forego a day's meal owing to the severe famine the nation faced back then. A lot has been written about the Green Revolution but the sad truth is that despite the much publicised initiative, hunger and malnutrition continued to haunt India. There was no serious attempt from the Governments of the day to increase productivity of our farm lands. India's

"pluralism" and "vivid nature" were on full display during the summer as well as rainy seasons. While the scorching heat of the summer played havoc in South India with most of the rivers going dry, the North experienced floods and deluge. Every year hundreds were drowned in the recurring floods as the snow in the Himalayas melted causing severe deluges in the mighty Brahmaputra which resulted in village after village in States like Bengal, Assam and Bihar getting completely devoured by flood waters. While the northern part of the country was battered by floods, the southern States were crying for drinking water. Rivers like the Kavery and the Krishna routinely run dry whenever the South West Monsoon fails to hit the Indian coast. The drought in the Kaveri River has severe implications for Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry as farming operations come to a complete standstill due to non-availability of water for irrigation. Although a lot of experts ranging from Sir Arthur Cotton and Captain Dastur to CP Ramaswamy Iyer and VK Rao had suggested the interlinking of Indian rivers no Government took note of the proposal. Every year the west flowing rivers in Karnataka and Maharashtra discharge thousands of cubic feet of water into the Arabian Sea while the Godavari discharges an equal

or more quantity of flood water into the Bay of Bengal. Had a responsible Government taken adequate measures to divert these river waters into the Mettur Dam or other parts of water-starved regions, Tamil Nadu would have come out of its perpetual struggle with water scarcity. The Supreme Court in 2002 ruled that the Government of India should take the initiative and interlink the rivers in the country so that the perpetual flood, drought and water scarcity problems would be resolved once and for all. Although we did get governments that worked while other governments worked faster, nothing permanent was done to sort out the issue for good. In fact, we even witnessed a Chennai-based Gandhian write to Prime Minister Narendra Modi immediately after the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, asking him not to take up the post of Prime Minister as the latter had no mandate to rule the country. Indeed, the priority of our politicians was at variance with that of the requirements of the common man. Till 1998, the country had not heard about a four-lane highway linking Kanyakumari and Kashmir and Surat to Silchar. Nobody took the initiative to bring down the travelling time between New Delhi and Thiruvananthapuram when train travelers had to toil for almost 52 hours to cover the 2900 km. There was no highway

**MODI'S NORTH EAST STORY**  
 Author : Tuhin Sinha and Aditya Pittie  
 Publisher: Rupa  
 www.rupapublications.co.in  
 Price: ₹595.00

between Chennai and Kochi and a bus journey took literally two days to reach the destination. If this was the situation in mainland India, the condition in the North East India was far worse. Insurgency grew by leaps and bounds. The Nagas, the people of Manipur, and other North Eastern states of India considered themselves as citizens of a separate country altogether. So much so, that a so-called government in exile is functioning from some European countries claiming to be the lone representative of the Nagas. Most of the youth of the North Eastern States are even misled to believe that they do not belong to India. Making matters worse, those in power in these regions never wanted to disprove this notion. Immediately after Independence from our British colonial masters, what the new rulers did instead was to create yet another problem, this time in Kashmir. A separate entity by the name North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) was formed with the objective of uplifting the seven sisters of Brahmaputra (as Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Assam, Nagaland and Mizoram were known initially). Unfortunately, the Congress Government that ruled post-Independence till 1977, 1980-1989, 1991-1996 and 2004-2014 did nothing for the economic and social development of these States. In 1998, when Atal Bihari

Vajpayee was sworn in as Prime Minister, he renamed the Seven Sisters of Brahmaputra as Ashtalakshmi by including Sikkim in the group and some long-needed efforts were made to bring these eight States into the national mainstream. Till then, news emanating from these States dwelt mainly on secessionism-related issues. Bodoland, AASU, the Maoists of Manipur and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim and the turf war between various terrorist organisations formed the crux of news broadcasts from the North East. However, when the BJP Government came to power in 2014, it launched a plethora of missions to harness the real potential of the North East. In fact, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the one to comprehend the vast opportunities and immense potential offered by this hitherto unexplored region of India. It is in this context that *Modi's North East Story* authored by two young professionals, Tuhin A Sinha and Aditya Pittie, deserves appreciation and immediate attention. The 196-page book offers a panoramic view of the eight North Eastern States and the path-breaking developments that have taken place in this long neglected region in the past decade. It has witnessed an unprecedented development in infrastructure, the number of

airports have increased manifold and the entire region today has rail and communication connectivity to boast of. Clearly, neither Prime Minister Modi nor his team are the kind to rest on their achievements. Instead they are continuing furiously on the path of development and work is going on at a frenetic pace to develop these States with world class infrastructure facilities even as they ensure that the essence and unique culture and heritage of these regions remain untouched. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Kiren Rijiju, the energetic and youthful Union Minister from Arunachal Pradesh and Pema Khandu, Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, and a host of such dynamic leaders and policy makers have made their mark in the holistic development of the North East. The authors of *Modi's North East Story* deserve kudos as make the readers travel straight to these scenic States with the story of the coming of age of the eight States, the *Ashtalakshmis*. Even an old and ailing person like this writer felt inspired to fly to these abodes of the God and Goddesses. The words penned down by Tuhin Sinha and Pittie come straight from the heart and indeed inspire their readers to visit the North East, behold its serene landscape and meet the people long alienated from the country's mainstream.

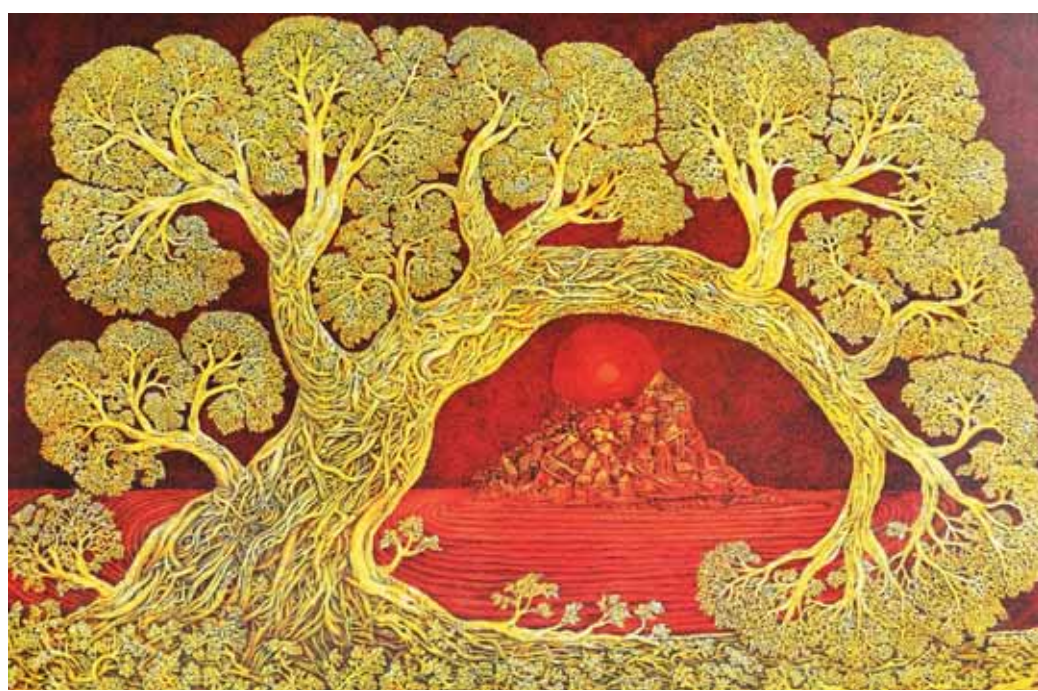
## A Breathtaking Journey into the Heart of Nature

Ompal Sansanwal's passion for trees and nature shines through every page of his book. His art whispers tales of resilience and interconnectedness - a heartfelt tribute to nature's enduring grace, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

**Meditations on Trees** by Ompal Sansanwal, co-published by Aleph Book Company and Black Cube Gallery, is a breathtaking journey into the heart of nature's timeless beauty and spiritual significance. Through a masterful fusion of art and philosophy, Sansanwal invites readers to contemplate the majesty of trees and their profound connection to human experience. At the core of Sansanwal's work are his stunning paintings of banyan trees which serve as powerful symbols of life, growth, and unity. With each brushstroke, the artist captures the essence of these ancient trees, infusing them with a sense of liveliness and wisdom that transcends time. His cityscapes, devoid of human figures yet brimming with life, offer a poignant reflection on the harmony between urban development and the natural world. *Meditations on Trees* offers a profound exploration of an artist's deeper connection with nature, particularly with trees, as a source of inspiration and reflection. Through a rich collection of artworks and insightful commentary, the book takes readers on a visual and spiritual journey, inviting them to contemplate the beauty and significance of trees in our lives. One of the key themes that resonate through the book is Sansanwal's view of trees as metaphors for life.

**MEDITATIONS ON TREES**  
 Author : Ompal Sansanwal  
 Publisher: ALEPH Book Company  
 www.alephbookcompany.com  
 AVAILABLE ON DEMAND

He sees them as symbols of strength, resilience, and interconnectedness, much like the complexities of human existence. This perspective is beautifully captured in his depiction of ancient banyan trees, with their aerial prop roots and sprawling trunks, mirroring the intricate web of relationships and experiences that shape our lives. The book also delves into Sansanwal's exploration of urban landscapes, particularly cityscapes. These paintings, characterised by softened hues and the gentle play of light, offer a serene glimpse into the rhythm of urban life, highlighting the harmony that exists between man-made structures and the natural world. Central to Sansanwal's artistic vision is his deep spiritual connection with nature. His paintings of the Nataraja using the banyan tree's branches and his portrayal of Krishna lifting Govardhan Hill are symbolic of his reverence for the divine in nature. His art not only celebrates the aesthetics of the natural world but also invites viewers to contemplate the deeper spiritual meanings embedded in them. In addition to his spiritual reflections, Sansanwal's artistic process is also explored in the book. His meticulous studies of trees and foliage in monochromatic pen and ink drawings reveal his keen observation of nature's intricate



details. These studies, combined with his use of light and shadow, showcase his mastery of technique and his ability to evoke a sense of wonder and awe in the viewer. The book also pays tribute to the influences the artist draws his inspirations from, which include French artist Georges Seurat and German writer Hermann Hesse. His study of Seurat's work inspired his techniques and processes, while Hesse's writings on nature resonated deeply with his own



spiritual beliefs. These influences, combined with Sansanwal's individualistic vision, have culminated in a body of work that is both deeply personal and universally resonant. This book is an immersive journey into the heart of nature through the eyes of a visionary artist. It offers a poignant reminder of the beauty and significance of trees in our lives and invites us to pause, reflect, and reconnect with the natural world

around us. His artwork is not just images on canvases, they are windows to a world where the boundaries between man and nature, art and spirituality reveal the timeless truths that lie at the core of our existence. Arguably, *Meditations on Trees* is a beautifully crafted book that celebrates the profound wisdom of nature. The heart of this book is Ompal Sansanwal's deep spiritual connection with nature, reflected in his exquisite artworks and insightful commentary. This timeless treasure resonates with readers of all ages, be it a nature lover, an art enthusiast, or one simply seeking a moment of reflection, making it a must-have for your library.





# RCB, GT EYE MUST WIN TO KEEP PLAYOFF HOPES ALIVE

PTI ■ BENGALURU

From a maths perspective, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans can still reach the IPL playoffs, but they need to ward off inner gremlins on Saturday to notch a mandatory win to keep that dream flickering.

The Royal Challengers are the bottom-dwellers with six points from 10 matches, while the Titans are placed eighth with eight points from 10 matches.

However, the floundering outings of Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals (10 points each) have fuelled the hopes of these two teams of sneaking into the middle tier of the points table and from there to the knockouts.



TEAMS (FROM):

But both RCB and GT will know that keeping their own house in order is a better option than depending on other teams to stay afloat as the IPL group stage is entering its business end.

In that context, the Faf du Plessis-led side will feel a tad more confident than their opponents after registering wins in their last two matches.

They have also found new heroes across these two games - Will Jacks powered his way to a match-winning century against GT, while Cameron Green finally lived up to his tag of all-rounder with crucial runs and wickets against Hyderabad.

RCB would hope for an encore from them at the home venue as well.

At the top, Virat Kohli continues to be a run-making presence as he recently became the first batter to go past 500-run mark in this edition of the IPL, and RCB will certainly like a few more from his willow.

However, the Royal Challengers will ask for some more consistency from their bowlers. The likes of Mohammed Siraj, who has been drafted into India's T20 World Cup squad, Yash Dayal, Karn Sharma and Swapnil Singh were on the money against SRH. But against

GT at Ahmedabad, they returned to their profligate ways, allowing them to whittle a 200-run total.

They will have to tidy up their act at the unforgiving M Chinnaswamy Stadium, as despite all their inconsistencies GT have the tools to punish them.

But to the Titans' dismay, those tools have malfunctioned more often than not, and it aptly mirrored in their two successive defeats against Delhi Capitals and RCB. Shubman Gill and Bhardwaj Sai Sudharsan have run an exclusive store of runs for Gujarat, amassing over 700 runs between them.

Other than them, the likes of Wriddhiman Saha, David Miller, Rahul Tewatia, Vijay Shankar and Shahrulkh Khan have not managed to even touch 200 this season, imparting a brittle look to GT's middle and lower order.

Their bowling group too has been vastly underwhelming, and none reflected it more than Rashid Khan. The star spinner has taken just eight

wickets across 10 matches while giving eight runs an over, a significantly higher economy rate than his overall 6.7 in IPL since 2017. In IPL 2023, Rashid had given away 8.24 runs an over but the Afghan took 27 wickets from 17 matches. This year, the wicket column too remained barren.

The pace bowlers offer a similar storyline. In the absence of Mohammed Shami, who is recuperating after a surgery, the Titans' most experienced duo of Umesh Yadav and Mohit Sharma have gone for plenty.

Mohit has taken 10 wickets in as many matches, the highest so far this season for GT, but leaked nearly 11 runs an over, while Yadav's economy stands at 10.5 for seven wickets.

The back-up options such as Sandeep Warrier, Nour Ahmad, R Sai Kishore and Azmatullah Omarzai too have not covered themselves with glory either, conceding way too many runs for minimal returns.

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

**GT:** Shubman Gill (c), David Miller, Matthew Wade, Wriddhiman Saha, Kane Williamson, Abhinav Manohar, B. Sai Sudharsan, Darshan Nalkande, Vijay Shankar, Jayant Yadav, Rahul Tewatia, Nour Ahmad, Sai Kishore, Rashid Khan, Joshua Little, Mohit Sharma, Azmatullah Omarzai, Umesh Yadav, Shahrulkh Khan, Sushant Mishra, Kartik Tyagi, Manav Suthar, Spencer Johnson, Sandeep Warrier, BR Sharath.

# KKR end MI dreams with 24-run victory

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Kolkata Knight Riders' bowling unit performed in unison to win a battle of attrition against five-time champions Mumbai Indians by 24 runs in an IPL match here on Friday.

If KKR batters were guilty of not working out their game plan on the go in the first half to be bowled out for just 169 with Venkatesh Iyer contributing 70, Mumbai Indians' underperforming batters stood no chance on a tricky wicket which demanded both application and patience. They were all-out for 145 in 18.5 overs and are practically out of the competition which has been a nightmare for Hardik Pandya.

It was KKR's first away win in Mumbai after 12 years and last time they won here, their principal owner Shah Rukh Khan was embroiled in an argument with security staff which led to his ban from the venue for next three years.

That year KKR won the trophy and this win took them to 14 points and kept them in contention for a finish among the first two teams.

Despite Suryakumar Yadav's brilliant fifty, Mumbai Indians were shot out for 145 in 18.5 overs chasing 170, found wanting with the bat once again as Mitchell Starc (3.5-0-33-4) cleaned up the tail for KKR's seventh win in 10 matches.

Until he top edged one off a full toss from Andre Russell (2/30), Suryakumar appeared to be proving the difference between the two sides with a top quality knock which brought MI back from the brink.

With six fours and two sixes, Suryakumar made 56 off 35 balls in an innings that kept MI's hopes alive.

Suryakumar also brought the equation down enough for his side to get over the line after they were reduced to 71/6 at one stage.

But none of the MI batters showed their hand up as KKR ran away with the game with a flurry of wickets towards the end.

Also impressive were KKR's spin duo of Varun Chakravarthy and Sunil Narine, producing identical figures of 4-0-22-2 to keep the MI batters under the pump.

Having smacked a six and a four off Starc, Ishan Kishan (13) missed connecting a wild heave which resulted in the Aussie knocking down his leg stump.

Naman Dhir (11) hit two fours to start with but he also went for a heave and missed with Chakravarthy striking on his first delivery.

Playing as an impact sub, Rohit Sharma (11) lofted Starc for a spectacular six over extra cover but failed to connect well when he went to pull a short one from Narine.

Manish Pandey covered a fair distance moving backwards to reduce MI to 46 for three in the powerplay.

Chakravarthy ensured a short stay in the middle for MI's most successful batter this year when he had Tilak Varma (4) caught by Narine at short third man.

The flow of wickets pushed MI on the backfoot and the pressure resulted in further success when Nehal Wadhwa (6) chopped one onto his wickets off Narine.

MI skipper and India vice-captain for the upcoming T20

World Cup Hardik Pandya walked out to loud boos once again at home turf Wankhede Stadium only to be outdone by the awkward pace off the surface.

Pandya's innings lasted only two balls as he too, like a few others, was early into his shot which produced a top edge to be grabbed easily.

Earlier, Kolkata Knight Riders' aggressive approach came a cropper on a sluggish surface as they were bowled out for a paltry 169 despite Venkatesh Iyer's half-century.

Venkatesh scored 70 off 52 balls but his selfish attitude of trying to preserve his own wicket by sacrificing enforcer Russell certainly cost the Shah Rukh Khan co-owned side 20 runs which didn't turn out to be costly in the end.

Veteran Pandey scored 42 off 31 balls in a stand of 83 for the sixth wicket with Venkatesh.

Just like the top-order was blown away before the total reached 60, the last five fell for just 29 runs as Jasprit Bumrah (3/18 in 3.5 overs) was too hot to handle with his toe-crushers at the death.

On a two-paced wicket which had the odd delivery coming on to the bat slower than expected, KKR batters were guilty of rushing into their shots and not reading the track well before formulating their plans.

As a result, half of their side was back in the hut in the powerplay without having anything significant on the board.

After the explosive top order cut a sorry figure, Rinku Singh (9) too squandered an opportunity to bat big, forcing KKR to turn to the experienced Pandey as impact sub for rescue.

## OTHER SPORTS



# After strong 2023, Indian athletes hope to make impact in World Relays

PTI ■ NASSAU (BAHAMAS)

A 15-member strong Indian Athletics contingent will look to make an impact in scenic Nassau and hope to qualify for the Paris Olympics in three events when the two-day World Athletics Relays Bahamas 24 commences here on Saturday.

The Indian men's 4x400 relay team has been making waves of late, coming up with impressive performances at the 2021 Olympics in Tokyo and following it up by challenging the USA's aura of invincibility at the World Championships in Budapest last August.

The team then lived up to the billing by clinching gold at the Hangzhou Asian Games with a tremendous run of 3:01.58. On a high following those superb performances last year, India would be hoping to reset the national and Asian record of 2:59.05 seconds set by the quartet of Muhammad Anas Yahiya, Amoj Jacob, Muhammad Ajmal and Rajesh Ramesh in Budapest.

The quartet will, however, have to work really hard to achieve that feat, given that its best this season is only 3:05.71 seconds, which is nearly four seconds adrift of their gold medal-winning performance in Hangzhou.

As per the World Relay format

for Paris, the two top teams in each heat on Saturday will advance to the final a day later. They will also secure Paris 2024 Olympic quotas in the process.

The Olympic lane seeding positions will be decided in the finals on Sunday and those will also be competing for medals.

All the other teams will compete in an additional round on Sunday where the top-two teams in each heat will also qualify for Paris.

India will be fielding teams in men's, women's and mixed 4x400m, with the men's quartet at the best placed to qualify for Paris based on their performances last year.

India has sent an eight-member men's 4x400m relay team here, including the Asian Games gold-medallist quartet of Amoj Jacob, Muhammad Anas Yahiya, Muhammad Ajmal and Rajesh Ramesh.

The squad also includes 2018 Jakarta Asian Games mixed relay gold medallist Rajiv Arokia, Noah Nirmal Tom, Yashas Palaksha and Avinash Krishna Kumar.

Amoj, Arokia Rajiv, Nirmal and Anas had also competed at the Tokyo Olympics, where they put up a commendable performance but missed out on a place in the final by a whisker on way to setting an Asian record of 3:00.25.

# Swiatek returns to Madrid Open final by beating Keys

AP ■ MADRID

Iga Swiatek cruised to a straight-sets semifinal win over Madison Keys to reach the Madrid Open final and a rematch against No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka.

Top-ranked Swiatek beat No. 20 Keys 6-1, 6-3 and will next face the defending champion Sabalenka, who rallied to overcome No. 4-ranked Elena Rybakina 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (5).

The Madrid Open is the only high-profile European clay-court title that Swiatek is yet to win.

"It was a pretty clean performance and really solid game from myself," she said. "I'm happy with everything."

It will be the third final of the year for Swiatek after titles in Indian Wells and Doha.

"I'm happy that we can play a final against the top players," Swiatek said.

"It shows consistency. For sure it's going to be a challenge, whoever it's going to be, and a tough match. I will be ready. I will focus on myself"



Sabalenka, who needed three sets to defeat Swiatek in the Madrid final last year, is into her third Madrid final after ending Rybakina's 16-match clay-court winning streak.

"I was just trying to fight for every point," Sabalenka said. "I was hoping that I'll have opportunity to turn this match around, and yeah, super happy that I was able to do that."

Keys said she was disappointed but there were "a lot of really

great things to take from the tournament" in the Spanish capital.

"It's been a while since I have won four matches in a row. Lots to build on. It's obviously great momentum going into Rome next week," she said.

"It's obviously only my fourth tournament back after the shoulder injury, so to do so well here and to be able to play some tough matches and have some three-set matches and be

physically 100% still and being able to look forward to Rome and hopefully play some good tennis there is a huge positive."

**MEDVEDEV INJURED:** Daniil Medvedev retired from his quarterfinal match after losing the first set 6-4, sending the 31st-ranked Jiri Lehecka into a semifinal against 35th-ranked Felix Auger-Aliassime.

No. 4-ranked Medvedev needed treatment on his upper right leg while leading 3-2, complaining about having trouble moving to his right. He also needed treatment at 4-3, and after Lehecka broke serve in the ninth game to win the set, Medvedev decided not to continue.

"It's never easy in a match like this," Lehecka said of Medvedev's retirement.

"If I were to choose the way how to win this match, it wouldn't be like that. So of course, it's never easy to see your opponent struggling, but at that moment, you just need to focus on yourself, trying to get the maximum level out of yourself."

# Klopp says he has no problem with Salah after touchline spat

AP ■ LIVERPOOL (ENGLAND)

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp insisted Friday his spat with Mohamed Salah has been "completely resolved," saying his long history with the star forward ensured there was no lasting damage to their relationship.

Klopp and Salah were involved in a touchline confrontation during the 2-2 draw at West Ham on Saturday. When Salah was asked after the game to comment on the incident, the Egypt international was heard saying: "There's going to be a fire today if I speak."

Nearly a week later, Klopp said the matter was a "non-story."

"There's no problem," said Klopp, who was speaking ahead of Liverpool's home match with Tottenham in the Premier League on Sunday. "If



we wouldn't know each other for that long, I don't know how we would deal with it but we know each other for that long and respect each other too much that it's really no problem."

The incident happened as Salah was preparing to come on as a substitute, having been selected on the bench for the second time in three games.

AP ■ LONDON

Tottenham's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League are getting thinner by the day.

By falling 2-0 at Chelsea on Thursday, Tottenham slumped to a second loss to a London rival in the space of four days in the Premier League - after a 3-2 home defeat to Arsenal in the north London derby on Sunday.

In between those losses came confirmation that England will have just four places in next season's expanded Champions League, and not five.

That's another blow to Spurs, who are fifth and stayed seven points behind fourth-place Aston Villa with one game in hand. They still have to play Liverpool and Manchester City in their remaining four games so it is looking increasingly unlikely they will close the gap to Villa.

"We lacked belief and

# Tottenham Champions League hopes hit further by 2-0 loss at Chelsea in Premier League

conviction in our game," Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou said.

"I don't know if it's low confidence but we're not playing with the mindset we need to play the football we want to and that's something I have to look at."

Headed goals by Trevoh Chalobah in the 24th and Nicolas Jackson in the 72nd were enough for Chelsea, which could yet salvage a place in one of the minor European competitions from what has been an underwhelming Premier League campaign for a squad assembled at a cost of more than \$1 billion.

Chelsea climbed above West Ham and into eighth place, two



points behind Newcastle and three behind Manchester United in sixth. It's likely that two of those three teams will be playing in either the Europa League or Europa Conference League next season.

Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino said it was the best feeling he had had all season about his team.

"It's the moment, after 10 months, that we start to realize how we compete," Pochettino said. "It showed we're doing things well."

"We showed it's not about names. It's about being competitive."

Pochettino, however, didn't sound convinced he had the backing of Chelsea's American owners to be around next season.

"It's difficult to see I am under scrutiny and judgment every week," he said, adding: "We'll see if I have time to build after today."

Tottenham has now won just one of its past 34 away league games against Chelsea, making it one of the most one-sided top-flight fixtures. The sole victory came in 2018, when Pochettino was in charge of Spurs.

Chalobah got on the end of a

free kick by Conor Gallagher to loop a header over Tottenham goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario and into the net to give Chelsea the lead. It was a 15th goal this season conceded from a set piece by Spurs and that is becoming a major issue under Postecoglou.

Jackson, who had a shot partially saved by Vicario and subsequently cleared off the line by Micky van de Ven in the first half, eventually got his goal when he was quickest to react after Cole Palmer's free kick rebounded out off the crossbar. Jackson did well to head the ball over two Tottenham defenders who were retreating toward their own goal line.