



CITY 3 BSP REMOVES ANAND AS NATIONAL COORDINATOR

OPINION 6 GLOBAL SOUTH'S CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

WORLD 10 ISRAELI FORCES SEIZE RAFAH CROSSING IN GAZA

LUCKNOW, WEDNESDAY MAY 8, 2024; PAGES 12 3



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INCONSISTENT SRH TAKE ON LSG FOR PLAYOFFS SPOT 12 SPORTS

Mercury Rises, Voting Falls

61 Per Cent Polling In Phase III of Lok Sabha Elections

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Amidst the hostile weather conditions, the third phase of the Lok Sabha polls on Tuesday saw a further dip in the voting percentage which recorded 61.81 per cent voter turnout when compared to 66.14 per cent in the first phase followed by 66.71 per cent in the second.

Comparatively, in the 2019 elections, these same 93 seats collectively recorded an overall turnout of 67.33 per cent. The third phase failed to buck the trend amid hot weather and heatwave in the polling States. Experts and political parties attributed the decline to heatwave and voters' apathy.

The stakes are high for the BJP in this round as it had won an overwhelming majority of these seats, including all in Gujarat, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, in the last election. Fate of candidates for more than half of the 543 Lok Sabha has been sealed while four phases still remain for the counting to be done on June 4. Voting has been completed in 283 seats out of 543 seats so far.

Except sporadic incidents of violence in four constituencies in West Bengal, the polling in 10 States and Union Territories has been peaceful.

Five States — Assam, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat and Karnataka — have wrapped up



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shows his ink-marked finger after casting his vote for the third phase of Lok Sabha elections, in Ahmedabad, on Tuesday

PTI

their polling in phase three. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Chief Electoral Officer for Gujarat, P Bharathi, industrialist Gautam Adani were among the early voters to cast their vote. Modi urged people to vote in record numbers and said their active participation will make the election more vibrant.

While the BJP has already declared a win in Surat Lok Sabha seat as unopposed, stakes are significant for the BJP and its allies, which had, in 2019, won 75

of the 93 seats. INDIA Bloc parties had won only 11. Four seats had gone to the undivided Shiv Sena, two were won by independents, and one by the AIUDE.

As per the EC's voter turnout app (till 8 pm), Assam witnessed the highest voter turnout of 75.30 per cent followed by West Bengal at 73.93 per cent, while Maharashtra witnessed the lowest at 55.21 per cent, with Bihar doing slightly better at 56.55 per

cent and Gujarat at 56.88 percent. Chhattisgarh recorded 67.24 per cent, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu 65.23 per cent, Goa 74.47 per cent Karnataka 68.75 per cent and Madhya Pradesh. According to the Election Commission, the figures are an "approximate" trend and are likely to rise as data is being collected.

In Uttar Pradesh, Agra witnessed 51.53 per cent polling, Aonla 54.73 per cent, Budaun 52.77 per



Will Kejriwal Be Able To Campaign For AAP?

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI



After the arguments by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Supreme Court in the multi-crore liquor-gate scandal on Tuesday in the court, all eyes are on the judiciary to see whether AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal would be granted interim bail, allowing him a chance to campaign in the Lok Sabha elections.

After much deliberation on the arguments made by Kejriwal's legal team and those representing the probing agency, the Supreme Court deferred its order on the Delhi Chief Minister's interim bail plea, with a two-judge bench rising without pronouncing an order. The court is likely to hear the matter on Thursday. Meanwhile, a Delhi court extended Kejriwal's judicial custody in the money laundering case till May 20. Special Judge for CBI and ED matters Kaveri Baweja extended Kejriwal's custody after the AAP leader was produced before the court through a video conference on the expiry of his remand granted earlier.

Legal experts are of the view there is a possibility that the Supreme Court might grant Kejriwal interim bail in view of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. "Suppose we grant interim bail on account of elections. Then if you say you will attend office then it may have a cascading effect... Dr Singhvi if we give any interim bail we do not want you to be performing official duties as somewhere it will lead to conflict. We do not want interference at all in

the working of the Government," the court remarked. However, in the same breath, the court also remarked, "Let us see whether at all it (interim bail) should be given or not." The bench reserved its decision after hearing the arguments put forth by senior advocate Singhvi and Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, who appeared for Kejriwal and the ED, respectively.

Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, appearing for the ED, staunchly opposed showing any leniency to Kejriwal on account of the Lok Sabha polls and said granting interim bail to the AAP national convener would amount to creating a separate class for politicians.

"Please do not earmark a political leader as a separate class and let them not be separated from the common man. It is being stated that nothing was done (by the ED) in 1.5 years and (he was) picked up during elections. That is not the correct impression at all," he said.

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THE PIONEER REPORTS FROM GROUND ZERO

GUJARAT

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

A voter turnout of 55.22 per cent was recorded till 5 pm in 25 Lok Sabha seats of Gujarat in the third phase of the elections on Tuesday. Home Minister Amit Shah from Gandhinagar as well as his Cabinet colleagues Mansukh Mandaviya and Parshottam Rupala from Porbandar and Rajkot, respectively, are in the fray.

Gujarat has 4.97 crore voters, including 2.56 crore men, 2.41 crore women and 1,534 persons from the third gender. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi cast his vote at Nishan School in Ranip area, Shah exercised his franchise at a polling booth in Naranpura, both of which fall under the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat.

As per the data shared by the Election Commission, the tribal-reserved Valsad constituency in south Gujarat recorded the highest turnout of 68.12 per cent, while Amreli in Saurashtra saw the lowest turnout of 45.59 per cent till 5 pm.

Meanwhile, a 45-year-old woman polling officer deployed at a polling booth in Amreli district died after she complained of uneasiness while on duty on Tuesday, an official said. Kaushika Bahariya, a government school teacher, was deployed at a booth in Jafraabad town.



Some voters braved physical limitations to exercise their franchise. A person with disabilities used his leg to cast his vote, and another person voted on a stretcher. Dedicated non-resident Gujaratis (NRGs) turned up in large numbers to cast their vote in their hometowns. The State Election Commission ensured that voting was a celebratory exercise by decorating some polling stations like wedding venues and setting up selfie points for voters to make their day memorable. In Nadiad, which falls under the Kheda Lok Sabha constituency, Ankit Soni, who lost both hands, cast his vote using his legs. "Around 15-20 years ago, I suffered an electric shock and lost my hands. With the blessings of my teachers and parents, I started drawing, completed CS and earned an MBA. I am working towards a PhD. I voted using my legs," Soni said.

UTTAR PRADESH

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Over 56 per cent polling was recorded till 5 pm in the Lok Sabha elections being held for 10 seats in Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday in the third phase. According to the Election Commission, by 5 pm, 57.34 per cent votes were cast. Voting began at 7 am and will continue till 6 pm. More than 1.89 crore voters are eligible to vote in these 10 constituencies. With the end of this phase of voting, 26 of the 80 Lok Sabha seats have already gone to polls.

Agra witnessed 53.99 per cent polling till 6 pm, Aonla 57.08 per cent, Budaun 54.05 per cent, Bareilly 57.88 per cent, Etah 59.17 per cent, Fatehpur Sikri 57.09 per cent, Firozabad 58.22 per cent, Hathras 55.36 per cent, Mainpuri 55.88 per cent and Sambhal 62.81 per cent.

The third phase is important for the family members of Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav. Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple Yadav is aiming to retain the Mainpuri seat, which she won in a bypoll following the death of her father-in-law. Akshay Yadav, the son of SP national principal general secretary Ram Gopal Yadav is contesting



from Firozabad and Aditya Yadav, the son of SP national general secretary Shivpal Yadav, is making his electoral debut from Budaun. Voting began at 7 am and concluded at 6 pm. More than 1.89 crore voters are eligible to vote in these 10 constituencies. With the end of this phase of voting, 26 of the 80 Lok Sabha seats have already gone to polls. Uttar Pradesh has the highest 80 parliamentary constituencies among all the states. Polling in the state is spread across all seven phases from April 19 to June 1. The counting of votes will be taken up on June 4.

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MAHARASHTRA

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a polling marred by an incident of violence which claimed one life and left another person injured in Osmanabad parliamentary constituency, as many as 53.40 per cent of total 2.09 crore voters exercised their franchise till 5 pm in eleven constituencies that went to polls in the third phase of high-stake Lok Sabha polls held on Tuesday.

On a day when Kolhapur registered a maximum 63.71 per cent polling while prestigious Baramati registered a lowest 45.68 per cent voting till 5 pm, a man was knifed to death and one person sustained stab wounds in a brawl that broke out near a polling station in Patsangvi village in Bhoom taluka of Osmanabad district.

The tentative final polling percentage figures are likely to be released either later on Tuesday night.

As per the revised figures put out by the Election Commission of India on April 30, 2024, 63.71 per cent of total voters exercised their rights in five constituencies in the first phase of the Lok Sabha held in Maharashtra on April 19, while 62.71 per cent of the total electorate voted in eight Lok Sabha constituencies during the second phase of polling held on April 26. Compared with the percentages of voting that took place in the first



and second phases of Lok Sabha polling held earlier, the polling witnessed in the third phase of the Lok Sabha on Tuesday is not very encouraging which can be called at moderate polling. The polling percentages in 11 Lok Sabha constituencies at 5 pm are as follows: Latur-55.38 per cent, Sangli-52.56 per cent, Baramati-45.68 per cent, Hatkanangale-62.18 per cent, Kolhapur-63.71 per cent, Madha-50 per cent, Osmanabad-52.78 per cent, Raigad-50.31 per cent, Ratnagiri -Sindhudurg-53.75 per cent, Satara-54.11 per cent and Solapur-49.11 per cent. Together, the average works out 53.40 per cent.

Since the third phase final phase polling may be around 60 per cent, it is not clear yet as to what impact it will have on the Lok Sabha polls in eleven constituencies that went to polls on Tuesday.

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WEST BENGAL

SAUGAR SENGUPTGA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal continued to reverse its polling trends as Tuesday's third phase polling passed off without reporting a single electoral violence related death. Notwithstanding, reports of sporadic and stray violence filtered in from different parts of four constituencies of Murshidabad, Jangipur, Malda South and Malda North. Amid all these voters polled briskly but a tad on the lower side. Most number of incidents came from Murshidabad where CPI(M) candidate Md Salim ran from booth to booth to report alleged illegal gathering and false voting.

The CPI(M) leader was seen holding an alleged fake polling agent at Raninagar area whom he later handed over to the police. In other places he was seen chasing away people who were jamming the booths. In the process the TMC workers raised "go back" slogans against him, sources said.

In 2019 a number of people had died at Murshidabad alone. In an election about 20 years ago the same district had seen about 75 people killed in a single day... even in last year's panchayat elections lakhs of people could not vote," said a local adding "comparing to what happens in Murshidabad this year things were far more cooler." At Jangipur a BJP booth president was seen exchanging blows with a TMC counterpart who was trying to rig polling, sources said. At Malda South bombs were hurled at Ratua to chase away voters, Congress candidate Isha Khan Chowdhury said.

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Top LeT commander among two terrorists killed in Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU



A top commander of the Resistance Front (TRF), responsible for targeting members of the minority community, police personnel, and others, was killed, along with one accomplice in an overnight encounter with the joint team of security forces in the South Kashmir district of Kulgam on Tuesday.

The TRF is an offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba. The encounter broke out after the security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Redwani Payeen of Kulgam late on Monday after receiving

inputs about the terrorists. "The operation continued throughout the night and concluded on Tuesday afternoon. Two terrorists were neutralised and their bodies have been retrieved," IG Police, Kashmir Vidhi Kumar Birdi said. "The slain TRF commander has been identified as Basit Dar. He was an A-category terrorist and was involved in

at least 18 cases. He was involved in the planning of conspiracy to attack minorities, police forces, and civilians," Birdi added. The terrorists, according to Birdi, were given ample time and opportunity to surrender. "They did not pay any heed to the caution by police and security forces. The terrorists continued firing upon the forces and were killed in the encounter," he said. According to police, the house in which the terrorists were hiding caught fire on Tuesday morning during the exchange of fire between the two sides.

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Modi, Lalu in tug of war on Muslim quota

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI/PATNA/BHOPAL

After a political slugfest over Constitution, SC/ST & OBC reservations during the campaigning for three phases of the Lok Sabha elections, a row over Muslim reservation has gained momentum ahead of the fourth phase scheduled on May 13. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday hit out at RJD president Lalu Prasad over his statement that he is in favour of extending reservation benefits to Muslims.

Modi said the INDIA Bloc wants to snatch all quotas for SC, ST, and OBCs and give them to their 'vote bank' as part of a deeper conspiracy. The PM also asserted that India has reached a turning

point in history, and people have to decide in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections whether 'vote jihad' or 'Ram Rajya' is the way forward for the country.

BJP's partner in NDA, the JD(U) slammed Lalu for favouring reservation for Muslims, saying his stand violates the basic spirit of the Constitution as well as the Mandal Commission report. Such a statement is tantamount to a conspiracy against the backward who get reservation due to their social and educational backwardness, Janata Dal (United) spokesperson K C Tyagi said.

Addressing a public rally in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar, the PM said a big alliance partner of the INDIA Bloc has endorsed what he used to say



about their plan to end the reservations for SC, ST and OBCs. "Their leader, who has eaten the animal's fodder and convicted by the court, even by the Supreme Court in the corruption case, is out on bail due to health. The Congress is making him dance on their head. He is saying not only

Muslims should get reservations but all the reservations should be given to Muslims. Means they want all the reservation to Muslims by snatching it from SC, ST and OBC," Modi said. After all, why these people are doing this is because they are counting their remaining breath with the help of this

"very vote bank" as everything else is over and nothing left with them, "one by one all have left and ran away", he said.

"I have been saying the same thing about them for the last several days. I was saying that they would cut some part of the reservation and give it on the basis of religion but the conspiracy is deeper... They are saying on the day of voting that they want to give all the reservation of SC, ST and OBC to Muslim community," Modi said. He recalled how the maker of Constitution BR Ambedkar had opposed religion-based reservation.

Lalu alleged that the ruling BJP at the Centre wanted to do away with reservations by scrapping the Constitution.

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Govt action plan to protect people from heatwave

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a proactive move to combat the blistering heatwave gripping the state, the Yogi Adityanath government has prepared a comprehensive action plan to protect people from its severity and also provide relief during emergencies. Under this, the appointment of nodal officers has been mandated at the state, district, and municipal levels. Additionally, stringent measures include monitoring of heatwaves at district and civic level through video conferencing. With a view to safeguarding citizens from the sweltering temperatures, the action plan will be implemented effectively by following the instructions received from the Government of India. Instructions have been given by the Urban Development Department for implementation of the action plan on priority basis for the management of heatwave as well as the diseases and ill-effects arising from it. As per the instructions, wide publicity should be done regarding do's and don'ts during the heatwave and warnings should be issued through mobile messages/WhatsApp regarding its ill-effects. Additionally, proper arrangements should be made for ORS packets at health and Anganwadi centres. The instructions also include changes in the working hours of schools, labourers and workers, and guidelines for preventing deaths due to sunstroke.



It has also been mandated to designate temples, community halls, and malls as cooling centres. Arrangements for water and buttermilk should be made at public places by NGOs, community groups and individuals. Adequate shelter arrangements will be ensured in urban bodies to protect people from heat. In addition to this, all necessary measures to ease the impact of heatwave should be widely disseminated among the public in extreme temperature conditions. A public awareness campaign should also be conducted regarding prevention and

treatment of heat-related illnesses. Weather forecasts and temperature will be displayed at busy places. Furthermore, special campaigns for water supply will be conducted by urban bodies to keep all water pumps in working condition and to repair and restart those which are not working. Repairing of pipelines supplying water from main pipelines to residential areas will be done to ensure clean water supply. Additionally, chlorination will be carried out periodically for water purification. Samples of water will be collected at user-

end points regularly for bacteriological and virological testing to monitor the quality of drinking water. In areas where drinking water supply is from hand pumps, distribution of chlorine tablets in appropriate quantities will be done as required. In areas affected by drinking water scarcity, water supply will be arranged through tankers. Inspection of sewer lines and water pipelines will be conducted in urban areas, and any leakage or breakage found in sewer or water pipelines will be promptly repaired. Until the leakage is fixed, alternative arrangements will be made to ensure safe drinking water supply in the affected area. Additionally, appropriate veterinary medicines and provision of drinking water will be ensured for animals at shelter locations. The instructions also include arrangements for shade and drinking water at bus stations and terminals. Provision of drinking water will be ensured for pilgrims at temples and other religious places. Areas like cities, hamlets, and slums expected to be most affected by heatwave will be identified, and arrangements for drinking water made there. Additionally, proper shade will be arranged in open parks. Water will be sprinkled on the streets regularly. Appropriate planning should be prepared for the construction of new buildings in urban areas. Construction work for green buildings will be carried out while adhering to environmental and building codes.

65-yr-old man killed for amorous advances towards minor girl

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To protect the honour of his lady love from a 65-year-old man, a youth, in collusion with the girl, orchestrated the killing of the alleged stalker and disposed of his body in a drain in Riverbank Colony, under Wazirganj police station. The gruesome details came to light after police discovered his body nearly a month following the execution of the crime. An autopsy report revealed incisions on the body, prompting the police to register a murder case on May 6, altering the section of the IPC initially invoked for the victim's disappearance. A subsequent investigation implicated Bunty Kashyap of River Bank Colony as the primary suspect, and he was arrested. Additionally, the police detained the accused's fiancée, a minor, as part of ongoing inquiries. DCP (West) Durgesh Kumar said that Bunty confessed to his crime, disclosing the underlying motive for murder. "The elderly man would frequent the girl's residence, making unwelcome advances and allegedly harassing her on multiple occasions," explained the DCP. According to Bunty's confession, driven by anger upon learning of the elderly man's advances towards his beloved, he devised a plan to eliminate him, involving the minor accomplice. He recounted how they wielded a sharp-edged weapon to perpetrate

Man found hanging

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 30-year-old man named Ajeet Shukla from Krishna Lok Colony in Faizullahganj, was discovered hanging from the ceiling at his house in Madaon police station area on Tuesday. He allegedly used a bedsheet to tie around his neck and took his life on Monday night. The police have sent the body for autopsy and started an investigation into the matter. Meanwhile, a truck driver, Mahadev from Ranchi, Jharkhand, was killed on Monday in the BBD police station area when another truck struck him while he was getting his vehicle repaired by a mechanic along Kisan Path at Anaura Kala village.

According to the deceased's wife, Mahadev was standing at the roadside when the reckless driver hit him, resulting in his immediate death. Police have registered a case regarding this incident.

CHAIN-SNATCHING

Two alleged chain-snatchers, identified as Rohit alias Kali and Harshu Singh Bisht from Kailashpuri locality, were arrested on Tuesday for depriving a woman, who was walking with her neighbour outside Eco Garden in Alambagh, of her gold chain. The incident took place when the accused, with their faces covered by *gamchhas*, targeted the woman during her evening walk on the pavement.

The crime while the victim was on the roof of his house. Following the murder, they wrapped the body in a bedsheet and disposed of it in a nearby drain under the cover of darkness, unable to transport it over a long distance due to its weight. Bunty further revealed that the victim's persistent harassment of the girl, especially during her work outings, deeply perturbed her. Attempting to evade arrest, Bunty fled with the minor girl but was eventually apprehended. He admitted to believing that the body would decompose over time, concealing his crime indefinitely.

The DCP recounted how the victim's disappearance was reported by his son on February 9, three days after he went missing. Despite extensive efforts by the family and law enforcement to locate him, their search proved futile. The subsequent discovery of the body in the drain, wrapped and exhibiting signs of foul play, prompted a shift in the investigation towards identifying potential suspects. Bunty's involvement gradually emerged as a prime suspect, culminating in his confession during police interrogation.

Girl held hostage, gangraped

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Seven youths, including the boyfriend of a girl, allegedly gangraped her while keeping her captive for two days at a garage in Thakurganj police station area where they force-fed her sedatives before executing the crime. The incident was reported on May 3 night and it came into light on Monday after the accused set her free sensing police action against them, as the girl's family was searching for her and they got a whiff of it. Police teams were formed and the named accused were arrested after the girl's parents filed a

case. The accused, identified as Himanshu Soni (boyfriend), Sahil & Sameer of Thakurganj, Anil Kumar of Sitapur, and Wahid of Barabanki are teenagers. Himanshu, with the help of Sahil, cajoled the victim into meeting him and later, Anil, Wahid and Sameer also joined in. As per reports, the girl went missing after she went out of her house to dump garbage. It later surfaced that Sahil met her outside and took her along to meet Himanshu to talk about their marriage. It was alleged that the other four accused, including Himanshu, were present there and they all took her to a garage where they force-fed her sedatives before taking turns to rape her. "They threatened to kill my daughter and the family members if she reported the matter to police. They also looted her gold ring, a gold earring and Rs 10,000 from her," the girl's mother stated in the complaint. DCP (West) Durgesh Kumar claimed that five youths were involved in the crime and all of them had been arrested.

Ravidas Mehrotra banks on 'jan sampark'

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

It's 8:45 am on Tuesday, and the area near the Bholu Khara police station is bustling with activity as Samajwadi Party workers wearing red scarves and caps gather for a 'jan sampark' in the Chitragupta ward of the Para area. A party worker said that a proposed meeting at the Railway Loco Workshop has been cancelled, and SP candidate for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency, Ravidas Mehrotra, is heading directly to the spot. As a black car arrives, a Samajwadi Party worker exclaims, "Sansad ji" has arrived. Ravidas Mehrotra, dressed in white kurta-pyjama, takes a phone call while sitting in his car. A seasoned campaigner, Mehrotra exhibits calm composure before embarking on his campaign trail. Stepping out of the car, he is greeted by enthusiastic chants of victory, and workers heap garlands around his neck, which he accepts and returns to his supporters. In the background, a party worker carries a tape recorder highlighting Mehrotra's accomplishments in the area as they

proceed with door-to-door campaigning. Mehrotra first enters Shri Siddhi Vinayak Peeth temple with his workers to seek blessings, partakes in prasad, and then begins his 'jan sampark'. Speaking to a reporter, he mentions campaigning for 12 hours daily. "I start at 7:30 am and campaign until 12:30 pm. In the four-hour interval, I engage with different groups such as state employees, advocates, and others. In the evening, from 4 pm to 9 pm, we continue with 'jan sampark', organising rallies and public meetings," he explains. He acknowledges the overwhelming response from the public, expressing a desire for change. During campaigning, he sustains himself with fruits, buttermilk, and water. "The love and response from the public energise us. The hot weather is not a challenge; we remain attentive to people's needs. Even if someone knocks on our doors at 2 am, we address their concerns. Having endured isolation in jail, we can easily bear the heat," he adds. Mehrotra criticises Defence Minister and BJP MP Rajnath Singh for lacking interest in



people's issues. "He shows up once every five years for nominations and holds a few meetings without addressing public concerns. In contrast, we remain with the public, fighting for their issues tirelessly. Fifty years ago, I joined a revolution and have been jailed 250 times for cham-

ping public causes," he asserts. Reflecting on the COVID-19 period, he contrasts their efforts with Rajnath Singh's absence. "People were suffering without medicines, treatment, oxygen, or food. We stood by them, but Rajnath Singh didn't visit Lucknow once," he

remarks. He questions the government's policies, highlighting disparities in employment opportunities. Mehrotra promises to tackle corruption and expedite pending infrastructure projects. "The outer ring road project, pending for ten years, will be completed in six months if elected," he vows. He outlines plans for free electricity, government schools, hospitals in every locality, and filling 30 lakh vacant Central government positions. He accuses the BJP of unfulfilled promises and high inflation. "Modi's assurances are mere gimmicks; the BJP misleads the public," he claims. Pradeep Sharma, in-charge of Cantt Vidhan Sabha for the Samajwadi Party, emphasises their daily 'jan sampark' programme, addressing issues of unemployment, education, and healthcare. He credits Akhilesh Yadav's work in Lucknow and criticises the BJP's focus on divisive issues. Sharma predicts a favourable outcome, citing silent support and a strong indication of the Samajwadi Party's victory in the ward with an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 voters.

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In my son's (MANI KUMAR LIMBU Army no 9423634K, Rank-Hav, Unit-7/11 GR) service records my name is wrongly mentioned as JITA LIMBU and DOB is 22/07/1951. Whereas my correct name and DOB is JEETA LIMBU and 20/09/1955 for all future purposes.

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In my father's (MANI KUMAR LIMBU Army no 9423634K, Rank-Hav, Unit-7/11 GR) service records my name is wrongly mentioned as JEYA LIMBU and DOB is 30/08/2002. Whereas my correct name and DOB is JEYA LIMBU and 30/08/2000 for all future purposes.

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NOTIFY THAT MY CORRECT NAME IS HIMANSHU KHURANA D/o MAHESH KHURANA AS PER MY EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS, AFTER MARRIAGE I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM HIMANSHU KHURANA TO POOJA GOGIA. IN FUTURE I WILL BE KNOWN AS POOJA GOGIA W/o MUKESH GOGIA FOR ALL PURPOSES. POOJA GOGIA W/o MUKESH GOGIA, ADDRESS 546/1283 A HARDOI ROAD, NEAR YADAV LOHA BHANDAR, BALAGANJ, LUCKNOW, UTTAR PRADESH-226003

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Raminder Singh, Raminder Singh son of Late Surinder Singh Bhasin both are the same person who resides in 645 Faithful Ganj Cantt Kanpur.

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I have changed my name from Mohammad Akil Khan to Mohd Akil Khan S/O Abdul Latif Khan R/O 98/119 - A Nazir Bagh Beconganj, Kanpur

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NOTICE

I, Mohamed Asif Bakshish Ahmed S/o Bakshish Ahmed R/o Bairuni Khandak, Lucknow have changed my name to Mohammad Asif for all future purposes. PD(421)A

Second randomisation conducted for LS polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The second round of randomisation for worker assignments in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and assembly bypoll, scheduled for May 20, was completed by District Election Officer and District Magistrate Surya Pal Gangwar. The process took place in the presence of General Observer for Lok Sabha 34 Mohanlalganj, N Vasantha Kumar, and General Observer for Lok Sabha 35 Lucknow, Om Prakash Kaseria. Joint Magistrate Gunja Agarwal initiated the randomisation process by announcing the random numbers. This process determined the assignments

of various roles, including presiding officers, polling officers I, polling officers II, polling officers III, and micro-observers. In this round, duties were assigned to a total of 17,510 workers, comprising 4,148 presiding officers, 4,148 polling officers I, 8,296 polling officers II, and 385 micro-observers. Additionally, 459 additional polling officers and 459 additional polling officers III were assigned for the Lucknow East assembly constituency, totalling 918 additional personnel. The district election officers have said that duty orders for all assigned workers are being prepared and will be available to the concerned departments at the Collectorate premises. The departments are instructed to promptly serve and inform the assigned workers of their duties. During the randomisation process, alongside the district election officer, other officials including returning officer for Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha, Chief Development Officer Ajay Jain, Joint Magistrate Gunja Agarwal, ADM (Finance and Revenue) Rakesh Kumar Singh, NIC Information Science Officer Krishna Mohan, and others participated.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I MINTOO RAI S/o DEENA NATH RAI R/o 35 Betyahata New Avas Vikas Colony Gorakhpur Uttar Pradesh-273001 have changed my name to ARYAN RAI. PD(421)A

CITYBRIEFS

INTERACTIVE SESSION

An interactive session on "Tourism in Uttar Pradesh: Possibilities and Accomplishments" was held at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan. The session aimed to foster dialogue and gather suggestions from representatives of the hotels and hospitality industry. Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary DS Mishra presided over the event as the chief guest, alongside Principal Secretary (Tourism and Culture) Mukesh Kumar Meshram, and others including the chairman of UP Hotel and Restaurant Association. Organised by the UP Tourism department, the event gathered prominent tourism officials and stakeholders to discuss strategies for enhancing the state's tourism ecosystem to increase footfall. "Uttar Pradesh is a land of immense opportunities and possibilities. While we currently lead in domestic tourism, there is tremendous scope to boost inbound tourism with concerted efforts from all stakeholders. We possess rich cultural heritage, traditions, art, and crafts that can be leveraged to attract tourists. With 12 dedicated tourism circuits and excellent connectivity, we have a lot to offer compared to many global destinations," Mishra remarked. "To enhance tourism, we must promote UP's unique destinations and traditions, providing tourists with diverse options beyond well-known spots. The hotel and hospitality industry stands to benefit significantly from increased tourist inflow, making them vital pillars of the tourism sector," he added. Principal Secretary Mukesh Kumar Meshram said, "The cultural, geographical, and heritage richness of UP holds immense potential to attract tourists. While we excel in domestic

tourism, our focus now is to elevate inbound tourism. This requires collective efforts from all stakeholders to offer immersive experiences that appeal to foreign tourists. By creating memorable experiences, tourists can become brand ambassadors for our state."

CII KRISHI BHARAT FROM NOVEMBER 15 TO 18

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Tuesday announced that the 16th edition of 'CII Agro Tech India', now rebranded as 'CII Krishi Bharat', will be held in Lucknow from November 15 to 18. CII Krishi Bharat has hosted 15 editions in Chandigarh, bringing together farmers and agri-tech stakeholders from neighbouring regions. This year, aiming to reach a broader audience in the farming and agri-sector, CII is shifting its focus to Uttar Pradesh.

ABDOMINAL WALL ANATOMY

A CME was organised on 'Abdominal wall anatomy and its relevance to current surgical perspective' in the department of anatomy at Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences. The CME was inaugurated by director Prof C M Singh. The anatomy department registered with the Society of Anatomical Sciences and unveiled the logo of the Society, whose objective is to conduct educational activities such as research work, professional development of students, guidance related to medical profession, community outreach programmes etc. Also, basic medical science and clinical science have to be correlated so that undergraduate and postgraduate students can benefit from it.

4 IPS officers shifted

Lucknow (PNS): Four officers of the Indian Police Services (IPS) cadre were transferred on Tuesday. The transfers were effected with the permission of the Election Commission.

SN Sabat has been removed from the post of Director General of Police (Prison Administration and Reforms) and given the responsibility as Director General of Crime Branch, Crime Investigation Department (CBCID). PV Ramasastri, who has returned from central deputation, has been made the Director General of Prison Administration and Reforms.

Additional Director General of Police Anand Swaroop has been sent to the Police Headquarters. He has also returned from central deputation. Apart from this, Additional Director General of Police Dr N Ravinder has been made the GSO of the Director General of Police.

Repld. A/D FORM NO. 5 D.R.T./AID
THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow
(Area of Jurisdiction: Part of Uttar Pradesh)
Summons for filing Reply & Appearance by Publication
No. Date
(Summons to defendant under section 13 (3), of the recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)
O. A. No. 1058 of 2023
BETWEEN
Aryavart BankApplicant
Versus
M/s Bharat Button House and otherOpposite Party
To,
05. Rudal Singh Son of late Kamta Singh Resident of House No. 448/147, New Nagaria Ashpuram Colony, Near St. Joseph School Tahkurganj Lucknow-226003
In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in set along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal/PO on 31.05.2024 at 10.30 A.M., failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence. Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow

INDI Alliance is anti-Hindu, anti-Ram: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a blistering attack on the opposition parties on Tuesday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the Congress, the Samajwadi Party and the entire "INDI Alliance" are anti-Hindu and anti-Ram. Addressing mediapersons at his official residence before departing for election campaigning, Yogi also criticised the statements made by SP leader Ram Gopal Yadav and RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav. He remarked, "These are the people who open fire at Lord Ram devotees, question the existence of Lord Ram and challenge his divine power. Expecting them to honour India's faith, national heroes, and show reverence for the esteemed freedom fighters who played pivotal roles in our independence struggle is futile."

The CM further said that whether it is Congress, Samajwadi Party, DMK, RJD, or the National Conference, all have opposed the Ram temple in Ayodhya. "They are against Hindus and the Sanatan faith. They are the ones that nurture the policy of appeasement. These supporters of terrorism behave contrary to the ideals of Lord Ram," he stated. "People associated with the Congress and the INDI Alliance have tried from the beginning to stall the verdict from the honourable court in Ayodhya's Ram Temple case. These people used to act as barriers and create obstacles. When the case went to the Supreme Court, these people ensured that nothing happened for 7-8 years. However, when the NDA government was formed under the leadership of PM Modi at the Centre, and then in Uttar Pradesh, the case was expedited," Yogi said, adding under the leadership of PM Modi, a grand temple was built in Ayodhya. "Millions of devotees from across the nation and around the globe are reaching there to express their faith and witness the rejuvenated Ayodhya. The members of the Congress-SP and INDI Alliance, however, have consistently aligned themselves with those who



oppose Lord Ram," he remarked. In response to the remarks made by Ram Gopal Yadav, Yogi criticised them, stating that they exemplify the true nature of "INDI Alliance".

He further highlighted that the Ranganath Mishra Committee suggested giving 6 per cent reservation to Muslims out of 27 per cent meant for the OBCs. At that time, the BJP had strongly opposed this on the grounds that reservation could not be done on the basis of religion. Then, the Sachar Committee was formed to attempt to intervene in the reservations for SC/ST. He mentioned that the opposition parties also tried to include some Muslim castes in the SC/ST, which was opposed by the BJP, as Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar was also against reservations based on religion. Yogi expressed concern that despite efforts to safeguard the rights of SC/ST and Backward castes, parties like Congress, SP, and RJD might attempt to diminish their reservation privileges and redistribute them to minorities whenever they have the chance. He warned against the potential division of India, urging voters to vehemently reject such actions.

committees," Yogi added. He further highlighted that the Ranganath Mishra Committee suggested giving 6 per cent reservation to Muslims out of 27 per cent meant for the OBCs. At that time, the BJP had strongly opposed this on the grounds that reservation could not be done on the basis of religion. Then, the Sachar Committee was formed to attempt to intervene in the reservations for SC/ST. He mentioned that the opposition parties also tried to include some Muslim castes in the SC/ST, which was opposed by the BJP, as Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar was also against reservations based on religion. Yogi expressed concern that despite efforts to safeguard the rights of SC/ST and Backward castes, parties like Congress, SP, and RJD might attempt to diminish their reservation privileges and redistribute them to minorities whenever they have the chance. He warned against the potential division of India, urging voters to vehemently reject such actions.

144 candidates in fray in fifth phase polls

Lucknow (PNS): In the fifth phase of polling for 14 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, there are 144 candidates in the fray. The last date for withdrawal of nomination papers was May 6. The votes for the fifth phase will be cast on May 20. The voting for by-election to the Lucknow East Assembly constituency will also be held simultaneously on May 20. There are only four candidates in the fray in the bypoll, which was necessitated by the death of sitting BJP MLA Gopal Tandon. The constituencies going to polls in the fifth phase include Mohanlalganj, Lucknow Rae Bareilly, Amethi, Jalaun, Jhansi, Hamirpur, Banda, Fatehpur, Kaushambi Barabanki, Faizabad, Kaiserganj, and Gonda. Eleven candidates are in the fray in Mohanlalganj (SC) seat, and prominent among them represent the BJP, SP and BSP. Ten candidates are contesting from the Lucknow Lok Sabha seat and prominent among them are Defence Minister and BJP candidate Rajnath Singh, SP's Ravidas Mehrotra, and BSP's Mohammed Sarwar Malik. Eight candidates are in the fray from Rae Bareilly Lok Sabha seat. It's a prestigious seat for the Congress and its former president Rahul Gandhi is contesting from there this time. Minister of State in the Yogi Adityanath government Dinesh Pratap Singh is the BJP candidate from Rae Bareilly. As for Amethi, there are 13 candidates in the fray, with prominent among them being Union minister Smriti Irani from the BJP, and Kishori Lal Sharma from the Congress. Six candidates are contesting from Jalaun Lok Sabha seat in the Bundelkhand region, while ten candidates are in the fray from Jhansi seat and 11 candidates are contesting from Hamirpur. From the Banda Lok Sabha seat, there are 12 candidates in the fray. Fifteen candidates are contesting from the Fatehpur Lok Sabha seat and 10 from Kaushambi (SC). From Barabanki, there are 13 candidates in the fray, while as many candidates are contesting in Ayodhya.

Maya: BJP crushed farmers' movement, people won't fall for deception now

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party president and former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh Mayawati on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party. Addressing an election gathering at the Government Inter College ground in Lakhimpur Kheri on Tuesday afternoon, the BSP chief said that the people of BJP crushed the farmers' movement, and the public is not going to fall for any of their deceptions now. Mayawati said that the public has learned a lesson from the BJP's empty election manifesto and "jumlebaazi". She said that the BSP is fighting the elections on its own and has no alliance with any other party. "The BJP has crushed the farmers' movement. No drama, jumlebaazi, or guarantee is working in this election," she said, adding that her party has not formed an alliance but is fighting alone. The BSP supremo claimed that the party has given proper participation to the entire society in ticket distribution. Regarding the Congress, BJP

and their allies, she said: "The Congress has been in power for most of the time since independence. They made the capitalists rich, gave them concessions at every level, and made them strong. The BJP is also using government agencies to silence the voice of dissent and issues raised by opposition parties." She also said that the country's borders are also not safe. She told the crowd that the Congress and the BJP have to be stopped from coming to power in the country's elections. "No one should be fooled by empty election manifestos because these parties do not implement the manifestos after the elections. The little food material being given to the farmers is not being given to the farmers from its own pocket but from the taxes paid by the common people. Attacking the BJP, she said that in the name of religion, the Muslim community is especially being exploited and harassed, and this will be stopped. The Sikh community has also been exploited. At that time, the Sikh community was devastated and ruined," Mayawati said.

BSP chief removes Akash Anand as national coordinator

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president Mayawati on Tuesday removed nephew Akash Anand from the post of National Coordinator. She took the step citing maturity. "Till maturity is attained, he is being separated from the important responsibility of the post of national coordinator and successor," she said. In a post on social media platform X, she wrote that BSP is not only a party but also a movement of self-respect, self-esteem and social change of Baba Saheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, for which "Kanshiram ji and I have dedicated our entire lives". The new generation is also being prepared to give it momentum. She said that in this sequence, along with promoting other people in the party, Akash

Anand was declared the national coordinator and her successor. But, in the larger interest of the party and the movement, he is being separated from both these important responsibilities till full maturity is attained, she added. Mayawati further wrote that his (Akash Anand) father Anand Kumar would continue to fulfil his responsibility in the party and the movement as earlier. "The BSP leadership is not going to shy away from making any kind of sacrifice in the interest of the party and the movement and in taking forward the caravan of Baba Saheb Dr Ambedkar," she added. Earlier, after a case was registered against Akash in connection with violation of the Model Code of Conduct in Sitapur, he was stopped from attending any public meeting in support of party candidates.

BSP accused of aligning with BJP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Social organisation Bahujan Bharat has accused the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) of aligning with the BJP in this Lok Sabha elections. Organisation's president and former IAS officer Fateh Bahadur claimed that the BSP is indirectly supporting the BJP. He mentioned the recent changes in BSP candidates across various Lok Sabha seats to buttress his claim. "Just two days ago, the BSP changed its candidates in Jaunpur and Basti, signalling that their priority is not just winning elections but aligning with the forces who are hell-bent on working against the tenets of Indian Constitution," he said. The president of the organisation stated that it is unfortunate that the Indian Constitution is under threat in the country, and instead of supporting the INDI Alliance, which is fighting to protect the Constitution in Uttar Pradesh, the BSP is openly siding with anti-constitutional forces. He emphasised that the fight in this election is to protect the rights of Dalits, backward classes, and minority communities, which are secured by the Constitution itself. "The BSP was formed by Kanshi Ram to ensure rights for these communities are secured. However, the current BSP leadership is supporting anti-constitutional forces by selecting candidates in elections who can damage the opposition alliance," he said. Organisation's secretary-general and vice-president, both of whom were former coordinators of several districts in BSP, said that Dalits are suffering due to Mayawati's policies.



Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav getting his finger inked before casting his vote in Saifai on Tuesday

After Cong, now BSP left with no member in Upper House

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After recent developments in the Uttar Pradesh State Assembly, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) now finds itself without any representatives in the Upper House, following the conclusion of MLC Bhimrao Ambedkar's term on May 5. Ambedkar is currently contesting the Hardoi Lok Sabha seat on a BSP ticket. In addition to the Legislative Council, where the BSP had no members, the BSP's representation in the Legislative Assembly was reduced to just one member after Uma Shankar Singh retained his

Party. The SP now holds the position of Leader of Opposition in the Council, having secured three seats out of the necessary ten required for this role. This change occurred following the removal of Lal Bihari Yadav from the post on July 7, 2022, due to the SP's diminished representation. Currently, the BJP holds 79 seats in the Council, while other parties such as Apna Dal (Sonelal), Rashtriya Lok Dal, Nishad Party, Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party, Jansatta Dal Loktantrik, Teachers' Group, and Independent Group have varying levels of representation.

इंडियन बैंक		Indian Bank			
इलाहाबाद		ALLAHABAD			
Zonal Office Lucknow, New Building, 2nd Floor, Hazratganj, Lucknow-226001, Ph. 0522-2286272, 2287283, Fax: 0522-2288033, E-mail id: zolucknow@indianbank.co.in					
NOTICE OF SALE E-AUCTION					
Notice in intended sale under rule 8(6) of The Security Interest (Enforcement Rules) 2002 under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002					
Whereas, the Authorized Officer of Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank) had taken constructive possession of the following property /ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same of "AS IS WHERE IS, AS IS WHAT IS, AS IS WHATEVER THERE IS" basis for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upto failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act platform provided by the Service Provider, contact & detail for Symbolic Possession of property is available at present.					
Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)/Proprietor/Partners/ Director(s)/Guarantor(s)	Description of the Immovable Property mortgaged	Dt. of Demand Notice Dt. of Possession Notice Out.Amt. as per Demand Notice	a) Reserve Price b) Earnest Money c) Account Details by EMD d) Incremental Bid Amt.	Date & Time for submission of EMD Date & Time of E-Auction
Branch : Indira Nagar B Block					
1.	Smt. Usha Choudhary (Borrower/Mortgagor) W/o Mohd. Meraj, Address: 479/19, Ward- Qadam Rasool Iradat Nagar, Nirala Nagar, Lucknow, UP Address 2: H No. 3/33 Sec-B Priyadashini Colony, Sitapur Road, Lucknow	All the part and parcel of the property H No. 479/19, Mohalla-Iradat Nagar, ward- Qadam Rasool, Lucknow, area 78.06 sq. mt. Belonging to Mrs. Usha choudhary (Borrower) W/o Mohd Meraj, Bounded By: East: Road 8 ft, West: House of Kallan Khan, North: House of Lala Ramkishun, South: House of Basant Lal	02.02.2024 23.04.2024	a) Rs. 45,67,000/- b) Rs. 4,57,000/- c) 6127853725 IFSC: IDIB000H561 Hazratganj Branch	Till 11.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM 12.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
2.	Mohd. Meraj S/o Chhunna Choudhary (Co-Borrower), Address: 479/19, Ward-Qadam Rasool Iradat Nagar, Nirala Nagar, Lucknow, UP Address 2: H No.3/33 Sec-B Priyadashini Colony, Sitapur Road, Lucknow	All that part and parcel of the property H No. 193, Rasoolpur Sadat-2, Police Station, Indira Nagar, Bakshi Ka Talab-226016	26.12.2023 25.04.2024	a) Rs. 16,51,000/- b) Rs. 1,70,000/- c) 6127853725 IFSC: IDIB000H561 Hazratganj Branch	Till 11.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM 12.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
Branch: Lucknow Main					
1.	Virendra Yadav S/o Ram Adhaar Yadav (Borrower/Mortgagor), H.No.193, Rasoolpur Sadat-2, Police Station, Indira Nagar, Bakshi Ka Talab-226016	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Plot No.13, Minzumla Khara No.386, Village Rasoolpur, Saadat, Pargana Mahona, Tehsil Bakshi Ka Talab, Area: 1000 Sq Ft i.e. 92.936 square meter. Boundaries: East: Land of Pratap Etc. West: Road 20 ft wide, North: Plot No. 192, South: Plot No. 194	20.09.2023 18.12.2023	a) Rs. 21,88,000/- b) Rs. 2,19,000/- c) 6127853725 IFSC: IDIB000H561 Hazratganj Branch	Till 11.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM 12.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
2.	Mrs Shila Devi W/o Virendra Yadav (Co Borrower), H.No.193, Rasoolpur Sadat-2, Police Station, Indira Nagar, Bakshi Ka Talab-226016	2. All that part and parcel of Shop No. 4 on ground floor having total covered area 15.05 Sq Mtr. Situated at Anant Modern Enclave H No. 158/75, old no.210 Ganga Prasad Road, Lucknow, Bounded by:- North: Property Seller, South: Property Sri Rohit Kumar Jaiswal, East: Common Passage, West: Property Shri Rama Shankar Advocate	20.09.2023 18.12.2023	a) Rs. 14,63,000/- b) Rs. 1,47,000/- c) 6127853725 IFSC: IDIB000H561 Hazratganj Branch	Till 11.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM 12.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
Branch: Takrohi Bazar					
3.	Smt. Aish Jahan W/O Late Sri Ansar Hussain Khan (Borrower), R/O 46 Shalimar Colony Phase 1 Behind Bright Career College, New Haider Ganj Campwell Road Lucknow-226003	1. All that part and parcel of Shop No. 2 on ground floor having total covered area 22.513 Sq Mtr. Situated at Anant Modern Enclave H No. 158/75, old no.210 Ganga Prasad Road, Lucknow, Bounded by :- North: Flat Ajay Vishwakarma, South: House Road and Ganga Prasad Road, East: Road Anant Modern Enclave, West: Flat Mohd Salam	20.09.2023 18.12.2023	a) Rs. 21,88,000/- b) Rs. 2,19,000/- c) 6127853725 IFSC: IDIB000H561 Hazratganj Branch	Till 11.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM 12.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
4.	Smt. Aish Jahan W/O Late Sri Ansar Hussain Khan (Legal Heir of Late Sri Ansar hussain Khan), R/O 46 Shalimar Colony Phase 1 Behind Bright Career College, new Haider ganj Campwell Road Lucknow-226003	2. All that part and parcel of Shop No. 4 on ground floor having total covered area 15.05 Sq Mtr. Situated at Anant Modern Enclave H No. 158/75, old no. 210 Ganga Prasad Road, Lucknow, Bounded by:- North: Property Seller, South: Property Sri Rohit Kumar Jaiswal, East: Common Passage, West: Property Shri Rama Shankar Advocate	20.09.2023 18.12.2023	a) Rs. 14,63,000/- b) Rs. 1,47,000/- c) 6127853725 IFSC: IDIB000H561 Hazratganj Branch	Till 11.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM 12.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
5.	Ms Sumeja D/O Late Sri Ansar Hussain Khan (Legal Heir of Late Sri Ansar hussain Khan), R/O 46 Shalimar Colony Phase 1 Behind Bright Career College, new Haider ganj Campwell Road Lucknow-226003				
6.	Sri Ausaf S/O Late Sri Ansar Hussain Khan (Legal Heir of Late Sri Ansar hussain Khan), R/O 46 Shalimar Colony Phase 1 Behind Bright Career College, new Haider ganj Campwell Road Lucknow-226003				
7.	Sri Vinod Gupta S/O Late Sri Pal Krishna Gupta (Guarantor), Add-1: R/o 7 Sadar Bazar Lucknow Pin-226002				
8.	Mohd Rafiq Azad S/o Mohd Mubeen (Guarantor), R/O 49 B Bhadewan Haiderganj Lucknow Pin-226001				
Bank Website	E-Auction Website	Property Location	Photo of Property	Name & Mobile Number of Authorised Officer/Branch Manager	
				Authorised Officer: Kumar Ashutosh Mob.: 7052360007 Branch Manager: Chandrabhan Gupta Mob.: 8052055267	
For verification about document, property & inspection thereof, the intending bidders may contact Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank), above mentioned Branch, Lucknow during office hours before on 10.06.2024 and for auction related query intending bidders may contact above mentioned Branch.					
For downloading further details and Terms & conditions, please visit : (1) http://www.ibapi.in (2) https://www.mstcecommerce.com					
Place : Lucknow, Date : 08.05.2024					
INDIAN BANK (erstwhile Allahabad Bank)					

Modi likely to file papers on May 14

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The entire nation's eyes are on high profile Varanasi parliamentary constituency where the nomination process began on Tuesday. This seat is considered as most prestigious as Prime Minister Narendra Modi will contest from here for the third time. According to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) sources, Modi will file his nomination on the last day of nomination on May 14 and will hold a road show before that on May 13.

There is a possibility that senior leaders of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and BJP from across the country and many chief ministers may join Modi here as it was seen in 2019 when presidents of most of NDA partners were present here. It is also expected that like 2014 and 2019, Modi will take out his nomination procession after garlanding the statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at Maldahiya.

The nomination process for 13 Lok Sabha seats of Purvanchal (eastern UP) including Varanasi began during the day as all these constituencies will go to voting on June 1. In this belt, the nomination also started in Chandauli, Ghazipur, Ballia, Mirzapur, Robertsganj, Ghosi, apart from others of Purvanchal, including Salempur, Bansaon.

Two file nomination papers on first day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The nomination process for Varanasi parliamentary constituency began with the issuance of election notification by the Returning Officer/District Election Officer S Rajalingam here on Tuesday morning.

On the first day of the nomination process, two candidates filed papers. Koli Shetty Shivakumar filed his nomination as an independent candidate while Abhishek Prajapati filed nomination from Bahadur Aadmi Party (BAP). Apart from this, as many as 12 nomination forms were taken where as people have also received 55 treasury challans. Those who received nomination papers on the first day of nomination are Vindhyaachal Paswan (Indian Republican Party), Sanjay Kumar Tiwari (Independent), Abhishek Prajapati (Bahadur Aadmi Party), Narsingh (Independent), Ramkumar Jaiswal (Independent), Avachitrao Sham (Jan Seva Gondwana Party), Paras Nath Kesari (Rashtriya Samajwadi Jan Kranti Party), Dayashankar Kaushik (Bharatiya Jawaan Party), Shankar Sharma (Independent), Sunil Kumar



A candidate filing his nomination paper in Varanasi on Tuesday.

(Indian National Samaj Party), Ajay (Indian National Congress) and Ranveer Singh (Sanjog Janadesh Party). According to the returning officer, the nomination process which started on Tuesday will continue till May 14 daily from 11 am to 3 pm at Rifle Club in the Collectorate auditorium here. The nomination proceedings will not be conducted on May 11 due to second Saturday and May 12 due to Sunday being public holiday. He further said that the last date for scrutiny of nomination is May 15 while the last date for withdrawal of candidature 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.

Meanwhile, all preparations have been completed for peaceful nomination. Elaborate security arrangements like barricading, barriers at crossings etc have been made near the nomination venue. During the nomination period, ordinary vehicles will not be allowed to go within a radius of 100 metres from the venue and only five people, including the candidates and the proposer, will be allowed to reach the nominated venue.

The attractive artefacts of the Ganga ghats of Kashi etc have been engraved on the wall of the Rifle Club and its entire premises have been painted. The campus has been equipped with CCTV cameras

Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar and Deoria. In most of the Lok Sabha seats of Purvanchal, voting will be held in the sixth and seventh phases. Pindra assembly segment of Varanasi district is a part of Machhalishahar (Reserved) Lok Sabha seat of Jaunpur district.

Apart from Pindra, two of the district assembly seats (Shivpur and Ajgara) are part of Chandauli parliamentary constituency where Union Heavy Industry Minister Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey is facing a tough challenge from former Uttar Pradesh minister and INDIA Bloc candidate Virendra Singh of Samajwadi Party (SP) this time.

The Varanasi Lok Sabha seat has five assembly segments, including three of urban areas (City South, City North and Varanasi Cantonment) and two of rural areas (Rohania and Sewapuri).

Modi will face a main challenge from state Congress president and joint INDIA Bloc candidate Ajay Rai who will file his nomination papers on the auspicious occasion of Akshya Tritiya on May 10.

Athar Jamal Lari is contesting the elections as Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) candidate, Rajasthan's comedian Shyam Rangeela and others have also announced to contest from Varanasi.

Bodies of woman, girl recovered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Panic prevailed in Hasanganj Kotwali police station area of Unnao following the recovery of bodies of a woman and a five-year old girl along the service road on Lucknow-Agra expressway on Tuesday morning. The police could not ascertain the identity of the deceased. Reports said that the villagers recovered the bodies of the woman (26) and the girl (5) near Tala Sarai village on Tuesday morning and informed the police about it. The woman was strangled with her own red dupatta and her nose was bleeding. The girl's body was also lying besides her. The marks on her throat indicate that she had been strangled. The woman was wearing yellow salwar suit, red dupatta, toe rings and anklets while

the girl a black T-shirt, half pant and anklets. The word 'Montu' was written on the right hand of the woman. The police sent the bodies for an autopsy and efforts are to ascertain their identity. Kotwali incharge Chandra Kant Mishra said a probe was on in the matter. The footage of CCTV cameras installed on the way is being examined and the people of nearby localities are being quizzed, he said.

BURGLIED: The house of a senior BJP leader was burgled in Bilhaur police area station late on Monday night. On getting information the police rushed to the spot on Tuesday morning and probed the issue.

KILLED: One person was killed when two bikes collided head on under Rajpur police station area of Kanpur Dehat late on Monday night. After

probe, the police sent the body for autopsy. Pappu alias Lala of Kanhaiya Nagar, Rajpur, was a mason. On Monday night he was going to attend a marriage ceremony when he collided with a bike and succumbed to his injuries on the spot. He is survived by wife Anjum, daughters, Saniya, Ashiya, sons Faizan and Ehsan. SO Rajpur Prabhath Singh said raids were on to nail the absconding motorcyclist. On receipt of autopsy report and complaint further action will be initiated, he said. Meanwhile, a youth of Etawah was found dead on Delhi-Howrah rail route near Sarai village under Rura police station area of Kanpur Dehat on Tuesday. After identifying the body and suspecting the killing after falling from a moving train, the police sent it for an autopsy.

Man, nephew shot at

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A man and his nephew were shot at and injured by some miscreants after robbing them of their motorcycle in Changaipur village under Mandhata police station of Pratappur late on Monday night. The goons after committing the crime fled from the scene. Both the critically injured were brought to the medical college. Along with SO Mandhata, additional superintendent of police reached the Medical College and took

information about the incident from the injured. The doctors referred them to the SRN Hospital in Prayagraj in a critical condition. Vipin Singh (32), a resident of Changaipur, was going home on a bike with his nephew, Rohit alias Satyam (29). As soon as they reached near the village, the robbers came in front of them and started firing at them. As a result Vipin sustained injuries in his leg and Rohit Singh in his neck. The attackers fled with their motorcycle. On getting information, the family mem-

bers arrived and brought both of them to the medical college. On seeing their serious condition, the doctors referred them to the SRN Hospital. Additional Superintendent of Police (East) Durgesh Singh, who reached the Medical College, took information about the incident from the injured. The injured said that while going home, some people on a bike shot at them. On information Station Officer (SO) Shrawan Singh also reached the spot. The SO said the incident is being investigated.

Kayakalp Programme: Final assessment of Chowkaghat Urban CHC done

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The final assessment (external assessment) of Urban Community Health Centre (CHC) Chowkaghat under the Kayakalp Programme for the year 2023-24 was done on Monday. The assessment team comprising Dr Shriya Singh, Dr Mohammad Abid and Dr Ruchi Pathak highly praised the CHC for cleanliness and found all the equipment and materials at the right place after the completion of the civil work which done there.

The team conducted a thorough inspection of the labour room, general ward,

lab, pharmacy and operation theatre etc. During the time the team members directed to strengthen the lab and it appreciated the services being provided to the patients in the delivery room and pharmacy. In completing the final assessment of CHC Chowkaghat, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary, Superintendent Dr Falguni Gupta, Nodal Officer of NUHM Dr Amit Singh, Divisional Urban Advisor Mayank Kumar Rai, District Urban Health Coordinator Ashish Singh etc played an important role. Superintendent Dr Falguni Gupta said in the

first assessment conducted under the Kayakalp programme for the year 2023-24, the CHC had received more than 71 per cent marks. The results of the second peer and final assessment will be announced soon. She said medical and health facilities are being continuously expanded at the Urban CHC Chowkaghat and under the leadership of the CMO, the First Referral Unit (FRU) is being operated here. "Our aim is to provide high class medical and health facilities to all the patients coming to the CHC without any discrimination, for which the entire staff is always committed", she added.

Traders will teach Rahul a lesson: Jaiswal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal reiterated that the business community would not tolerate its insult and will teach a lesson to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi who allegedly made 'derogatory' remarks during his recent election campaign in Rajasthan. Participating as the chief guest in the meeting organised by Vaishya Samaj in Maidagan area here on Tuesday, Jaiswal said that the business community should seek an apology from Rahul.

He said that the 'controversial' statement of Rahul against the traders has created tremen-

dous anger not only in Kashi but also among the Vaishya and business community of the entire country. "The businessmen and Vaishya community of the country held meetings at various places and the process of expressing their anger continues", he said, condemning the "indecent" remarks made by Rahul Gandhi. In the meeting, it was decided by the Vaishya Samaj that Rahul Gandhi should apologise to the Vaishya Samaj and in case of non-apology, the entire Vaishya Samaj will try its best to teach Congress a lesson and get the deposits of Congress and its allies confiscated in the Lok Sabha elections. Jaiswal said that Vaishya

community is the backbone of the country's economy and Rahul Gandhi has tried to attack that backbone. "History is witness that great men like Mahatma Gandhi and Bhamashah have been produced by this Vaishya community and the Vaishya community has always been at the forefront in the uplift of the country," he said.

The meeting was attended by sub-castes of business community like Keshari, Raunihar, Vaishya, Chaurasia, Baranwal, Sonar, Agarwal, Agrahari, Marwari, Jaiswal, Gupta, Madhyashiya, Sahu, Modanwal and Kanyakub. Prof K Yash Jaiswal, Dr Virendra Kesarwani, Dr Rachna

Agarwal, Shailendra Mishra, Abhay Kesarwani, Indubhushan Gupta, Dilip Jaiswal, Rakesh Gupta, Shashank Agarwal, Piyush Agarwal, Ravi Kumar Seth, Harish Agarwal and many others attended the meeting.

Earlier, in continuation of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s contact campaign with the heads of religious maths and temples, Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu', along with a group of workers, offered prayers at five more temples. He met the mahants and priests of the temples and sought their support in favour of candidature of Prime

Minister Narendra Modi for his victory with record votes. The minister met Mahant Gushbarao of Chintamani Ganesh Temple (Sonarpura), former Mahant Kulpati Tiwari of Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Suresh Tiwari of Vishalakshi Temple (Meerghat), Mahant Rajnath Tiwari, Mahant Shankar Upadhyay of Dharmeshwar Mahadev Temple (Dharamkup) and Mahant Rajeshwar Prasad Upadhyay of Bade Hanuman Temple (Meerghat). The minister was accompanied by his Public Relations Officer (PRO) Gaurav Rathi, Santosh Saini, Saurabh Rai, Hardutt Shukla, Arun Pandey, Dilip Yadav, Sudhir Tripathi etc.

बैंक ऑफ बरोडा Bank of Baroda Regional Office, Kanpur Metro Region: 118/330, 1st Floor, Gumti No. 5, Kaushalpur, Kanpur - 12

Possession Notice Branch: Collectorganj, Kanpur

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 & O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand Notice Date & Possession Notice Date

Borrower: Smt. Renuka Singh W/o Shri Vikram Singh, R/o: 110 MIG, Indira Nagar, Kalyanpur, Kanpur and Also at Flat No. 1004-G, Premises No. 203, Floor No. 10, Gulmohar Residency, Bairi Akbarpur Bangar, Kanpur and Shri Vikram Singh S/o Shri Sukh Veer Singh, R/o: Flat No. 1004-G, Premises No. 203, Floor No. 10, Gulmohar Residency, Bairi Akbarpur Bangar, Kanpur. **Guarantor:** Shri Mukesh Jha S/o Shri Paras Nath Jha, R/o: Flat No. 316, 3rd Floor, Gulmohar Residency, Indira Nagar, Kalyanpur, Kanpur.

Demand Notice Date: 02-02-2024 • Date of Constructive Possession: 02-05-2024

Property: Residential Flat No. 1004-G, On 10th Floor of Gulmohar Residency, Arazi No. 1679 Min, Bairi Akbarpur Bangar, Azad Nagar New Kalyanpur Kalam, Kanpur in the name of Smt. Renuka Singh W/o Shri Vikram Singh and Shri Vikram Singh S/o Shri Sukh Veer Singh. **Area:** Builtup Area 171.63 Sq. Mtr. & Undivided Share in Land 64.90 Sq. Mtr. **Bounded-North:** Passage thereafter Lift. **South:** Open Setback thereafter public road & Other House, **East:** Staircase thereafter Flat No. 1003-F. **West:** Staircase thereafter Flat No. 1006-F O/s Amount as per Demand Notice: **Rs. 48,55,020.00** + Intt. + Others Charges

Date: 08-05-2024 **Place:** Kanpur Nagar **Authorised Officer**

Left wings extend support to Rai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Several Left parties and Sorganisations have extended their support to INDIA Bloc candidate Ajay Rai of Congress, expressing their full support to him in the election campaign for Varanasi parliamentary constituency.

Senior office-bearers and prominent leaders of Left parties and organisations, including CPI, CPM, CPI-ML, Forward Bloc and Central Employees' Union held a meeting with Congress candidate Ajay Rai at the latter's Central Election Office at Lahurabir here on Tuesday and announced their full support.

Left wings also showed their solidarity towards the INDIA Bloc and discussed the organised election campaign strategy and their supporting



Congress candidate Ajay Rai holding a meeting in Varanasi on Tuesday.

role. The left leaders said that the political atmosphere has changed across the country as well as among the people of Varanasi. They said that the people are increasingly inclined towards the INDIA Bloc and it has created enthusiasm and

instilled confidence in all of them and they would spend their entire strength for the victory of the Congress candidate. They said that the Left parties have won the Varanasi parliamentary seat twice in the past and they had won in Kolsala (prior to delimitation) assembly seat in the district nine times. "We have traditional cadre in the entire region and we will work with full organised strength and determination to create history in this election campaign", they told Ajay Rai. In the meeting, apart from Congress candidate Ajay Rai, Prof Satish Rai, the left leader Rama Udal, Jaishankar Singh, Nand Kishore Shastri, Nandlal Patel, Ajay Mukherjee, Amarnath Rajbar, Jai Shankar Pandey, PK Dutta, Mobeen Ahmed, Ram Dular, Imtiaz Ahmed etc participated.

Cholapur CHC supt honoured

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Principal Secretary (Health), Uttar Pradesh, Partha Sarathi Sen Sharma honoured Superintendent of the Community Health Centre (CHC), Cholapur Dr RB Yadav through a letter sent on Monday. CHC Cholapur, known as district's Mini Government Hospital, got the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) certificate recently. In his letter the principal secretary has mentioned that it is a matter of great joy that under the NQAS programme of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, CHC Cholapur has achieved 82.7 per cent score in the year 2023-24. By getting this mark, it got the honour of NQAS certification under MusQan programme, which clearly shows that the Health department is

moving towards registering new achievements every day. For this certification, Sharma said the pioneering efforts of Dr RB Yadav and the entire staff of CHC Cholapur are greatly appreciated and it is also hoped that the CHC Cholapur team will try to bring more innovation in the work in future also which will further enhance the image of the Health department in the state and the country.

He expressed full confidence that with the continuous efforts of the superintendent and his team, the CHC will continue to provide high quality medical services in the future. Apart from this, CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary, deputy CMOs, ACMOs, district programme managers and other officers also congratulated the superintendent of CHC Cholapur and his team.

State Bank Of India Regional Business Office, -03, Fatehpur U.P. (Near Agrasen Chauraha, Jail Road, Behind DPS School) PIN No. 212601

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersign being the authorized officer of the State Bank of India, R.B.O.-3, Agrasen Chauraha, Jail Road, Fatehpur 212601, under the securitisation & Reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of security interest act 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under sub section 13(2) & 13(12) read with rule 8 & 9 of the security interest (enforcement) rules 2002, issued Demand Notices calling up on the borrower /guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest expenses and other charges etc. thereon within 60 days from the date of said notices. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to borrower/guarantor in particular and public in general and that undersigned has taken possession of property described herein below in exercise of power conferred on him U/S 13(4) of the said act read with rule 9 of the said rule on the date mentioned and there against the borrower/guarantor in particular and public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with property any delinks with property will be subject to charge of State bank of India, R.B.O. 03, AGRASEN CHAURAHA, JAIL ROAD, FATEHPUR 212601, under for SBI Branch MURATGANJ KAUSHAMBI (14935). for an amount and interest and other charges thereon mentioned against each account herein below.

Sr.No.	Borrower Name & Address	Account Details	Details of property
1.	Smt. Manju Devi W/o Shri Ashok Kumar Kesarvani R/o Muratganj, Pargna & Tehsil Chayal, Distt. Kaushambi.	Demand Notice dt: 09/01/2024 Possession Dt: 04/05/2024. Outstanding Amount: Rs. 08,88,335/- + Interest + etc.	Property in the name of Smt. Manju Devi W/o Shri Ashok Kumar Kesarvani Arazi No. 337 Waka Mauza Dhanni Tehsil Chayal, Distt. Kaushambi (U.P.). registered in the office of sub registrar, Tehsil Chayal, Distt. Kaushambi (U.P.) on Book No. 01, Zild No. 450 Page No. 137 to 3158, at Per Document no 3417/2013 on dated 16/12/2013

Boundaries: North: Land Of Vendor South: Muratganj-Bharvari Road East: Land Of Heera Lal West: Land Of Vendor admeasuring 101.92 sq. mtr.

Dated: 08.05.2024 **Place:** MURATGANJ KAUSHAMBI **Authorised Officer, State bank Of India, RBO-3, Fatehpur**

Pooja awarded PhD degree

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Science (SHU-ATS) scholar Pooja Jagannath Sonpakar was awarded PhD degree in education after completing her research work.

The chairperson in the final viva of Pooja Sonpakar was Professor Anshu while the external examiner was Prof Pratibha Upadhyay, former Head, Department of Education, University of Allahabad. Pooja's PhD guide was Dr Anupama Mehta and her research title was "Re-emergence of Vedic Education in Modern Era". Her thesis gives comprehensive information of ancient texts which can be decoded and can be used in present scenario. Associate Dean Dr Samala S Masih, SFMC Dean Dr Ashish Alexander, Dr Niharika Dennis, Dr Anupama Mehta, Dr Avis Chintamani, Dr Prem Prabha, Dr Chetna Pandey, Dr Sangeeta Alfred, Dr Kirti Cutting, Dr Syeda Sara Aziz, Dr Jyotsna Jaiswal, Dr Prakashobh, Dr Anjani Saxena etc. were present in the final viva voce exam.

70 meritorious students awarded

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kumodini Nigam Memorial Meritorious Students' Award ceremony was organised at BNSD Balika Vidyalaya, Meston Road on Tuesday in which 70 meritorious students were awarded by patron Prof Govind Shanker Nigam and co-patron Prof. Naveen Mohini Nigam. Anju Kumari was awarded for receiving seventh position in UP Board. Five students were awarded specially for getting highest marks in Physics.

Manju Shukla, Principal of the school welcomed chief guest Manoj Kumar Dwivedi (Joint Director, Education), special guest Dr PK Saxena, Director Legal Cell and members of the School Board of Management.

Chief guest asked the students to set goals and sincerely pursue them. They lauded the idea of the 'Kumodini Nigam Memorial Society' for coming up with the idea of honouring meritorious students. Prof Naveen Mohini Nigam proposed the vote of thanks. She lauded the efforts of the principal and the teach-



The Kumodini Nigam Memorial Society felicitating meritorious students on Tuesday.

ers in honing the skills of students.

ISO EVENT: Former Director, National Sugar Institute (NSI), Prof Narendra Mohan, has been invited to moderate the session on "Diversification for Sustainability" during the 64th International Sugar Organisation (ISO) event to be held at Mandapam, New Delhi, from June 25 to 27. In view of the pivotal role played by him in transforming the Indian sugar industry into clean and green industry producing bio-chemicals, other bio-products and bio-energy besides sugar, he has been invited by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution to chair the

session and express his views for the benefit of the delegates participating in the event from 87-member sugar producing countries. The ISO is an inter-governmental body devoted to improving conditions of the world's sugar market through debate, analysis, special studies, transparent statistics, seminars, conferences and workshops. The ISO headquartered in London in its 63rd council meeting announced India to be the chair of the organisation for 2024.

TWO KILLED: Two persons, including the driver, were killed while one other was seriously injured when a truck hit their loader from behind near Mungisapur village on

national highway in Kanpur Dehat on Tuesday morning. On being hit by the truck, the loader driver lost control over the vehicle which rammmed into a tree. After first aid, the injured was referred to the district hospital. Loader driver Sudhir Vishwakarma (45) son of Ram Charan Vishwakarma of Deogaoan Lalganj, Azamgarh, after loading grease drums from Akbarpur early on Tuesday morning had proceeded for Achhalda (Auraiya) with Gaurav Sharma (42) of Jaunpur, Sikandra (Kanpur Dehat) and Arun Rajput of Kanpur Nagar. On reaching Mungisapur under Derapur police station area, the speeding truck hit the loader from behind. The loader rammmed into a pipe tree. All the three were seriously injured. The police sent them to Derapur CHC where Gaurav and Sudhir were declared dead by the doctor. After the first aid, Arun was referred to the district hospital. Derapur inspector Anil Kumar said kin of the deceased had been informed. On receipt of complaint, an FIR will be lodged and action will taken in the matter, he said.

Shekhar Suman, Radhika Kheda join BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a boost to the BJP on the day of the third phase of polling for the Lok Sabha polls, actor and TV personality Shekhar Suman, who recently garnered attention for his role in Netflix's Heeramandi, joined the BJP at the party headquarters in Delhi, adding to the list of other actors including Kangana Ranaut, Arun Govil and Rupali Ganguly, who joined the saffron camp amid the elections. Former Congress National Media Coordinator Radhika Kheda also joined the BJP a day after she resigned from the Congress.

Addressing the media in the presence of senior BJP leaders, including National General Secretary Vinod Tawde and National Media Department In-Charge Anil Baluni, at the party headquarters on Tuesday, Suman said, "Till yesterday, I did not know that I would be sitting here today because many things in life happen knowingly or unknowingly. I have come here with a very positive thinking and I would like to thank God that he ordered me to come here." The actor said he was waiting for Heeramandi to get hit before joining the party. "Log



kahi ye na kahe ki mere paas karne ko kuch nahi tha, isleye politics join ki. Heeramandi has now become a global hit," said the comedian-actor. He said that its probably god's wish behind him joining politics. "Hoiye vahi jo ram rakha" said Shekhar Suman quoting Ram Charitmanas. "Till yesterday I did not know that I would be sitting here today because many things in life happen knowingly or unknowingly. I have come here with a very positive think-

ing and I would like to thank God that he ordered me to come here..." added Suman. "You have to follow what Lord Ram has thought. I don't have any negative thoughts, I am thinking only about the country. A man depends on his words but they have no meaning beyond a point. But there is a difference between saying something and doing it. I can give a long address but it will mean anything only after I have done something," the actor added, and thanked

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP chief JP Nadda, among others.

Suman is currently enjoying the success of his recently released web series, Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar. Sanjay Leela Bhansali's show premiered on Netflix earlier this month and also stars Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, Richa Chadha, Sanjeeda Shaikh, Aditi Rao Hydari, Sharmin Segal Mehta, Farida Jalal, Fardeen Khan and Adhyayan Suman in key roles. It explores the various aspects of a woman's trials and tribulations.

Before joining the BJP, Radhika Kheda made sensational allegations against Chhattisgarh Congress media chairman Sushil Anand Shukla. The former Congress national media coordinator claimed during her detailed press conference that on April 30, Chhattisgarh Congress media chief Sushil Anand Shukla started misbehaving with and abusing her when he went to talk to him. Radhika Kheda further alleged that the room remained locked for around a minute and she was abused. She all the three men came towards her and no one opened the door even as she kept screaming.

EC directs X to take down Karnataka BJP video on quota row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday directed social media platform 'X' to 'immediately' take down an animated video shared by the Karnataka unit of the BJP related to the row over reservation for the Muslim community.

In a letter to the nodal officer of 'X', the EC took exception to the non-compliance of the directive of the Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer to the social media platform for taking down the video. The panel said the animated video shared by the Karnataka unit of the BJP on its social media handle was violative of the extant legal framework. The EC said the Chief Electoral Officer of Karnataka registered an FIR in this connection and wrote to 'X' on May 5 to take down the objectionable post as per the provisions of the Information Technology Act and the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021.

"However, the post has not been taken down yet.

Therefore, 'X' is directed to take down the post immediately," the EC said.

The fresh directive to 'X' came on the day votes were being cast in the remaining 14 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka. Polling in the other 14 parliamentary constituencies of Karnataka was held on April 26.

The Karnataka Congress had filed a complaint with the Chief Electoral Officer of the state, accusing the BJP of promoting enmity and hatred between the Muslim and the SC/ST communities.

The complaint pertains to an animated video shared by the Karnataka BJP, which has caricatures of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The cartoon shows the leaders putting an egg marked 'Muslim' on a bird's nest and after it hatches, Rahul Gandhi feeds 'funds' to the 'Muslim' hatchling while others strive for it. The 'Muslim' hatchling grows as a result and kicks the three others - SC, ST and OBC - out as Gandhi and Siddaramaiah laugh.

Kharge writes to INDIA Bloc leaders to raise voice over discrepancies in voting data

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge wrote to the leaders of various parties of the INDIA Opposition Bloc on Tuesday, questioning the alleged discrepancies in the voting data released by the Election Commission (EC).

In his letter, Kharge urged the INDIA Bloc leaders to raise their voice against such discrepancies, for "our only objective is to protect the culture of a vibrant democracy and the Constitution". "Let us ensure the independence of the Election Commission of India and make it accountable," he said in his letter.

"As the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), it should be our collective endeavour to safeguard democracy and protect the independent functioning of the ECI. All the aforementioned facts force us to ask a question -- could this be an attempt to doctor the final results?" he asked. "We all know how Prime



Minister (Narendra) Modi and the BJP are visibly flustered and frustrated by the voting trends and their receding electoral fortunes in the first two phases. The entire nation knows that an autocratic regime, drunk with power, can go to any extent to stay in the chair," Kharge said. "I would urge all of you that we must collectively, unitedly and unequivocally raise our voice against such discrepancies, for our only objective is to protect the culture of a vibrant democracy and the Constitution," he added. Several opposition parties have raised questions on the delay in releasing the polling data by the EC.

Defence Secretary lauds BRO for playing major role in security of country

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane here on Tuesday lauded the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and termed it an extremely crucial organisation which, through its infrastructure projects in border areas, is playing a major role in the security of the country. The BRO is also ensuring the socio-economic progress of far-flung areas, he said.

He made these observations on the occasion of the 65th Raising Day of the BRO. In his address, the Defence Secretary praised the BRO for fulfilling its responsibilities successfully in inhospitable terrain and tough weather conditions. Aramane commended the

BRO for completing the projects in a time-bound manner, exuding confidence that the Karmayogis will continue to ensure border infrastructure development in a record time. He urged the BRO to infuse latest technology and techniques for faster completion of projects, through which human efforts will be reduced and utilised more efficiently. Automation and mechanisation will be key for the BRO in the future, he said.

The Defence Secretary also recalled the valuable contribution of the BRO personnel in the relief and rescue efforts during the Silkyara Tunnel Collapse and the Sikkim Floods. He added that the Organisation will play an important role in the Vibrant Villages Programme which

envisages comprehensive development of select border villages.

Speaking on the occasion, Director General, Border Roads Lt General Raghu Srinivasan stated that the pan-India presence of the BRO reflects its commitment to national security, connectivity and development.

The event also witnessed the unveiling of a compendium on Sela Tunnel as well as some books including 'Oonchin Sadaken', 'Path Pradarshak' and 'Path Vikas' by the Defence Secretary. He gave away Excellence Awards to the BRO personnel for the year 2023-24 and felicitated the women achievers of the Organisation. The Casual Paid Labourers who worked in various projects such as Sela Tunnel, as well as



during Sikkim floods were also felicitated. Raised with just two projects in 1960 - Project Tusker (now Vartak) in the East and Project Beacon in the North, the BRO has today become a vibrant

organisation with 18 projects operating in 11 States and three Union Territories. It has now established its credentials as the leading infra construction agency in the high-altitude and difficult snow-bound areas.

The BRO executes road construction and maintenance works at altitude ranging from 9,000 ft up to 19,000 ft along the Northern and Western frontiers, primarily to meet the strategic requirements of the Armed Forces.

In over six decades, it has constructed over 62,214 kms of roads, 1,005 bridges, seven tunnels and 21 airfields in adverse climatic and geographical conditions along India's borders as well as in friendly countries, including Bhutan, Myanmar, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, thus contributing towards the nation's strategic objectives. In 2023-24, the BRO completed a total of 125 infrastructure projects worth Rs 3,611 crore. This includes the construction of Sela Tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh on

Balipara-Chardwar-Tawang Road. The tunnel was dedicated to the Nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently from Itanagar virtually.

The BRO will soon commence the construction on 4.10-km long Shinkun La Tunnel. Once completed, this tunnel will become the world's highest tunnel at 15,800 ft bypassing Mila Tunnel in China at 15,590 ft.

The BRO accomplished the completion of two significant airfield projects namely Bagdogra and Barrackpore, marking yet another milestone in its journey of excellence. The foundation stone for Mudh Airfield Project was laid by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh recently. The BRO aims to complete the project within

just two working seasons.

Over the few years, the BRO has witnessed an exponential surge in budget expenditure, marking a remarkable leap forward in capabilities and impact. This increased budgetary support has empowered the organisation to undertake crucial projects, accelerate critical infrastructure development, and enhance its operational readiness.

The BRO has been at the forefront of promoting gender equality and inclusivity, offering key roles and opportunities to women. Officers like Col Ponung Doming is leading critical projects in Eastern Ladakh. Assistant Executive Engineer (Civ) Nikita Chaudhary has played a pivotal role in successful completion of Sela Tunnel Project.

Tourism Ministry unveils Cool Summers of India campaign

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

As the scorching summer sun bore down on travelers worldwide, the Union Tourism Ministry of India has embarked on a transformative journey to redefine summer vacations by unveiling the "Cool Summers of India" campaign at the three-day much-sought after Arabian Travel Mart 2024 in Dubai from May 6.

The campaign is an invitation to global tourists to explore the lesser-known destinations of India's diverse landscapes during the summer season. Moving away its focus from traditional tourism strategies, the campaign spotlighted 50 enchanting getaways across four corners of the country from the snow-capped peaks of Gulmarg, Patnitop, Auli in Jammu and Kashmir to the lush valleys of Wayanad in Kerala. The curated list of 50 summer hotspots getaways also include destinations like Pithoragarh, Auli, Chopta



Valley, Binsar in Uttarakhand; Bir Billing, Kinnaur and Tirath Valley in Himachal Pradesh giving travelers a wide range of options to explore, from serene hill stations to lush green valleys.

"By diverting attention from overcrowded tourist hotspots to these hidden treasures, the Ministry aims to reach out to a wider audience, including potential foreign tourists as well as alleviate strain on pop-

ular destinations and ensure that India's summer getaways are not confined to domestic travelers alone," said Rajnish Kaistha (Sr. Vice President) of the International Association of Tourist Operators (IATO). The Ministry's tagline says it all. "From the snowy peaks of the Himalayas to the misty hills of the Western Ghats, from the serene lakes of Kerala to the cascading waterfalls of Mizoram, India's got the

coolest summer getaways that'll have you feeling frosty fresh!" Moreover, leveraging social media channels like WhatsApp to disseminate information about these destinations, the Ministry has ensured that the campaign reaches a wider audience, including potential foreign tourists who may not be familiar with the hidden gems of India.

The campaign went live on Monday and social media handles of 'Incredible India' have already shared a teaser and some glimpses of this "segment offering" in its run-up. Arabian Travel Mart is one of the key events in the global tourism arena.

It is largely targeted towards drawing the foreign tourists by challenging the notion that India is too hot for summer travel, as the Indian subcontinent has a range of weather, sources had said here on May 3. "The event marks a significant step in strengthening India's presence in the Middle East tourism market," the min-

istry said in a statement adding that an 'Incredible India' pavilion was inaugurated by Satish Kumar Sivan, Consul General of India to Dubai.

"The pavilion has made a resounding entry, aiming to capture the entirety of the UAE market. Leading a delegation comprising tour operators, luxury hotels, wellness resorts, and the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation, India is poised to showcase itself as a 365-day destination," the statement said. India's participation in the Arabian Travel Mart 2024 holds immense potential for the tourism industry and the economy at large, they said.

The event provides a platform for the Indian tourism players to exhibit their offerings, forge alliances within the industry and attract visitors from the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. This, in turn, is expected to bolster revenue generation and foster job creation within the tourism sector, the statement said.

Talks on nurturing future leaders held at Commandants conclave

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The sixth edition of Commandants' Conclave was held on Tuesday at Military Institute of Technology, Pune and participants brainstormed on charting the course for future defence strategies in nurturing the future leaders of Indian Armed Forces, Defence Ministry said here.

Giving details, officials said the meet was held under the aegis of Head Quarters Integrated Defence Staff. The Commandants of esteemed Armed Forces Training Institutions and War Colleges along with other senior leadership of Armed forces attended the conclave. Senior leadership gathered at MILIT, Pune and exchanged insights, shared best practices at institutions and strategised on building future-ready Forces. This landmark event



underscores Indian Armed Forces' commitment to continuous improvement, innovation and collaboration in the face of evolving global challenges.

This conclave served as a platform for the commandants and decision-makers of AFTIs to engage in open dialogue and discussions on fostering joint culture of learning and adoption of new technologies in

training the future leaders of the Armed Forces.

During the conclave, a wide range of key topics on strategic-resilience, technological advancement, human capital development, interoperability and jointness were discussed to harness innovation, technological advancement and to leverage the best practices of institutions for ensuring world class training at the AFTIs.

Indian Naval ships reach Singapore to enhance ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to further enhance bilateral defence ties, Indian naval ships Delhi, Shakti, and Kiltan led by Rear Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet arrived at Singapore on Monday, Navy said here on Tuesday.

Giving details, officials said the Indian team was accorded a warm welcome by personnel of Republic of Singapore Navy and High Commissioner of India in Singapore. The visit is part of the operational deployment of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet to the South China Sea. Moreover, this visit is poised to further strengthen the long-standing friendship and cooperation between the two mar-



itime nations through a series of engagements and activities. During the ships' stay in harbour, various activities planned to be undertaken include interactions with the High Commission of India, professional interactions with the Republic of Singapore Navy as also academia and community outreach amongst other activities, reflecting the shared

values of both navies. The Indian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy have had robust relations spanning three decades of cooperation, coordination and collaboration with regular visits, exchange of best practices, and reciprocal training arrangements. The current deployment underscores the strong linkages between both the navies.

Government to formulate standards for over 2,000 medical devices

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is in the process of formulating standards for over 2,000 medical devices being produced in the country in order to make them globally competitive.

"Zero defect, full effect, this is our mission. Through BIS, we are making product standards for medical devices which would be comparable to ISO. We have already set standards for 1,500 products," Department of Pharmaceuticals Secretary Arunish Chawla said on Tuesday.

Highlighting the critical need to focus on quality to ensure that India becomes globally competitive, he noted that the government is in the process of formulating standards for over 2,000 medical devices being produced in the country in order to make



them globally competitive. "Right now our med-tech sector is 75-80 per cent import dependent. In the next five years, we want to bring down this import dependence to less than 50 per cent," Chawla said while speaking to

reporters here on the sidelines of an industry event 'Meditech Stackathon 2024' organized by the Department of Pharmaceuticals in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The formulation of standards for around 500 products is in the process, he added. Government and industry should work together to bring down import dependence in the medical device segment to below 50 per cent over the next five years, said the senior official.

CII National Medical Technology Forum Chairman Himanshu Baid highlighted the need for enhanced data collation mechanisms to address gaps in product consumption and production within India.

Chawla further stressed on the need to produce quality products for global markets and noted that the government is trying to enhance standards of manufacturing process. Chawla noted that the industry is also focusing on creating quality systems to get export certification which is

followed across overseas markets.

He noted that the PLI scheme for medical devices has played a stellar role in the growth of the segment.

"Around 150 medical devices, which used to be imported earlier, are now being produced in the country...Even exports have started now of such products," Chawla said.

Exports have overtaken imports in consumables and disposables during last year, he said, and urged the industry to continue with the momentum in other pillars of the med-tech sector.

India's Med Tech industry is poised to grow to USD 50 billion by 2030 from the current level of USD 14 billion. India currently ranks as the fourth largest market for medical devices in Asia and stands among the top 20 globally. Net imports for 2022-23 stood at USD 4,101 million.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The die is cast

The pivotal third phase of the elections concluded with a low turnout, featuring prominent contenders

Yesterday, Prime Minister Modi exercised his voting right. He was vocal about India's exemplary democratic process on the global stage. Indeed, the complexity of Indian elections, given the vastness of the nation and its electorate, makes their execution a challenging feat. As the 2024 Lok Sabha election reaches midway, India's political arena brims with fervour, anticipation, and meticulous scrutiny. The third phase of voting holds particular significance, especially for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with voting taking place in Gujarat, the home turf of Prime Minister Modi, and Amit Shah, the Home Minister. The presence of both leaders casting their votes amplifies the importance of this phase, shaping the election's narrative thus far. The third phase encompassed 11 States and Union territories, witnessing 93 constituencies participating in the electoral process. Notably, the BJP secured victory in the Surat constituency in Gujarat uncontested. With voting in 283 Lok Sabha seats (52 per cent of total Lok Sabha seats)



complete, the election is less than a month away from its logical conclusion. After four more phases, the results would be out on June 4. What set the third phase apart was the presence of several constituencies where notable figures were contesting. This phase hosted several prominent candidates, including Amit Shah (BJP) from Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat; Digvijaya Singh (Congress) from Rajgarh, Madhya Pradesh; Shivraj Singh Chouhan (BJP) from Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh; Dimple Yadav (Samajwadi Party) from Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh; Supriya Sule (NCP - Sharad Pawar) from Baramati, Maharashtra; Jyotiraditya Scindia (BJP) from Guna, Madhya Pradesh; Pralhad Joshi (BJP) from Dharwad, Karnataka; and KS Eshwarappa (BJP) from Shimoga, Karnataka, among others.

The Election Commission reported a turnout of 66.14 per cent and 66.71 per cent for the first and second phases, respectively. The third phase was no different in terms of voter turnout. With the completion of the third phase, the fate of 283 Lok Sabha seats has been sealed, marking the election's midpoint with 52% of seats voted upon. The persistently low turnout across all phases raises concerns for both democracy and political parties, each grappling with the challenge of ensuring voter participation. For the BJP, the third phase holds immense significance. As a party entrenched in power since 2014, it faces the daunting task of not only maintaining its stronghold but also expanding its influence across diverse regions of the nation. As the Lok Sabha election unfolds, discernible trends and dynamics offer insights into the nation's pulse. Despite facing formidable challenges, the BJP leverages its organisational strength, robust campaign machinery, and Modi's charismatic leadership to maintain its competitive edge. However, navigating through economic concerns, social tensions, and regional disparities presents formidable obstacles. The outcome of this phase serves as a litmus test for the BJP's policies and leadership shaping the trajectory of Indian politics.

PICTALK



Women show their ink-marked finger after casting votes for the 3rd phase of Lok Sabha elections, in Bareilly. PTI

Evolution of monetary policymaking in India

With the changing nature of inflation and macroeconomic turbulence, remaining committed to inflation-targeting seems daunting

The history of monetary policymaking in India dates back to the pre-independence era, but it gained significant momentum and structure post-independence. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was established in 1935, as a private shareholders' bank and was nationalized in 1949, giving the Government greater control over monetary policy and credit system. With the establishment of the Planning Commission in 1951, emphasis was laid on the direct and active role of Central banking. A breakthrough year was 1969 when 14 private sector banks were nationalized. It led to transforming monetary policy into 'credit planning' and taking up a 'command approach' (Khatkate, 1990). Soon the economy suffered due to the two oil price shocks (1973-75 and 1979-81) leading to critical economic crises, which led to large-scale monetary expansion in the form of Government debt to support fiscal policy. It badly hit the inflation situation when it reached 23% in 1974-75. The condition worsened and



became dismal when India had to borrow largely from the IMF and also faced a critical BOP situation. Hence, the revision of the monetary policy framework was the way ahead. This was done by appointment of a committee (which came to be known as the Chakravarty Committee (1985) chaired by Sukhmooy Chakravarty) to review the functioning of the monetary system by the then Governor of RBI, Dr Manmohan Singh. The RBI Governor, C Rangarajan, introduced the Multiple Indicator Approach (MIA) in 1998, incorporating various macroeconomic factors like interest rates, inflation, exchange rates, output growth, employment, foreign trade, capital flows,

banking stability, among others, into the monetary policy framework, moving away from the unreliable M3 target due to economic liberalisation's unpredictability. This provided monetary authorities the flexibility to cater to a broad forum of economic disruptions. The economy was coordinating well with the MIA till the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 dawned, and a high-order expansionary fiscal and monetary policy was floated to capture the receding economic growth. This jeopardised inflation management by the RBI with the inflation gliding into double digits in 2009-10. The RBI became hawkish and between March 2010 and October 2011, the repo rate was increased by 325 basis points. It started preparing for inflation as the primary goal of monetary policy. Finally, in May 2016, the RBI formally adopted inflation-targeting (IT), the target being a 4 per cent inflation rate, with a relaxation of 2 per cent on both sides, to handle unforeseen macroeconomic disruptions. Taming inflation helps

counter investor uncertainty and business sentiments, anchors inflationary expectations, unfavourable exchange rates and balance of payments, besides supporting receding purchasing power. The IT did not get a fair chance to prove itself due to economic disturbances like Demonetisation and the Pandemic, and the current geo-political unrest has led to supply-side inflationary pressures that are difficult to control with IT, which is more efficient against demand-side inflation. With the changing nature of inflation from demand to the supply side, macroeconomic turbulence, and burgeoning uncertainties, remaining committed to IT seems daunting. The RBI needs to frame a comprehensive policy to make determined efforts to address and supplement IT with prudent actions to counter supply-side disruptions especially, affecting food prices.

(The author is assistant professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi; views are personal)



KAJLEEN KAUR

Global South's cultural diplomacy

Cannes transcends its role as a mere film festival; it serves as a beacon of cultural exchange, artistic exploration, and industry innovation



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

As we inch closer to the second week of May, excitement for the forthcoming 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival is reaching a crescendo. The Cannes Film Festival, since its inception, has been hailed as the platform celebrating the joy and creativity of cinema, the high point of confluence of cultures, and talents, and an assembly of masters of storytelling. In recent years, its stage has increasingly spotlighted the cinematic voices of the Global South, a trend underscored by the burgeoning presence of films from Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Building on last year's diverse selection from Japan, China, and South Korea, Cannes in its 77th edition, from 14th to 25th May 2024, reaffirms its commitment to amplifying varied narratives and perspectives. This year's edition promises to continue this trajectory, featuring standout entries like "All We Imagine As Light" by Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia, "Boku No Ohisama (My Sunshine)" by the acclaimed Japanese filmmaker Hiroshi Okuyama, "Viet Nam" by Vietnamese filmmaker Truong Minh Quy, and "The Village Next to Paradise" by Somali filmmaker Mo Harawe. These selections highlight the new creative talent spots for cinema.

With the evolving world, there is a deeper significance highlighted by the recognition of cinema as a potent tool of soft power by countries in the Global South. Across the continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, nations have increasingly acknowledged the power of storytelling through cinema as a means to amplify their cultural influence and enhance their global standing. Over the past two years Cannes Film Festival has seen a dynamic shift in programming, from a European narrative to a more perceptive Southern inclusion and interconnection. In the borderless world that we live in today, the prominence of the Global South as a group has risen despite being dominated by multipolarity. Enhanced communication and the growing effects of globalisation have blurred geographical



boundaries, ushering in a new era where technology plays a pivotal role in shaping interactions. This transition has reverberated across various realms, including the cinematic sphere, where soft power finds expression on prestigious platforms. Cannes truly give the Global South a platform for creativity on the silver screen. Nomination and participation in prestigious festivals like Cannes are not merely accolades but recognition of the importance of soft power in the creative ecosystem. By showcasing their cinematic prowess and an amalgamation of their creative skills on a global stage, countries in the Global South seek to assert their cultural identity, foster cross-cultural dialogue, and bolster diplomatic ties. In an era where cultural diplomacy holds increasing sway, the Cannes Film Festival serves as a creative platform for nations to assert their soft power through the medium of cinema. Through their cinematic endeavours, these filmmakers become cultural ambassadors, bridging divides and fostering mutual understanding between nations. At the helm of the 77th Cannes Film Festival jury stands Greta Gerwig, both an accomplished actor and a filmmaker. Gerwig's appointment signals a broader effort towards gen-



BY SHOWCASING THEIR CINEMATIC PROWESS AND AN AMALGAMATION OF THEIR CREATIVE SKILLS ON A GLOBAL STAGE, COUNTRIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH SEEK TO ASSERT THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITY, FOSTER CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUE, AND BOLSTER DIPLOMATIC TIES

der representation at Cannes, a realm historically dominated by male voices. Symbolising a step towards inclusivity and recognition of the invaluable contributions of women in shaping cinematic discourse. As the jury list for this year awaits announcement, anticipation brews for a lineup that mirrors the festival's commitment to diversity, echoing last year's eclectic mix of talents from Argentina, Afghanistan, Morocco, Zambia, and beyond. Amidst the glitz and glamour, the Marché du Film emerges as a vital nexus for industry professionals, offering a platform for networking, deal-making, and creative exchange. With its finger firmly on the pulse of evolving industry dynamics, the Marché du Film embraces innovation and adaptation. Recognising the need to cater to the ever-changing landscape of filmmaking, it champions emerging trends, technologies, and voices, fostering a conducive environment for the flourishing growth of the global film industry. As over 14,000 industry professionals converge in Cannes annually to present and explore nearly 4,000 films and projects, the Marché du Film serves as a catalyst, urging professionals to elevate their business acumen and seize new opportunities.

Indeed, Cannes itself is a reflection of society's evolution, a microcosm of shifting cultural paradigms and technological advancements. Embracing the ethos of change, the Festival de Cannes introduces innovative elements to its programming, staying at the vanguard of storytelling in the digital age. One of the nominations for this year's Immersive Competition includes 'Maya: The Birth of a Superhero', an XR experience created by Poulomi Basu, an Indian artist and CJ Clarke. The announcement of eight projects as part of the Immersive Competition heralds a bold foray into uncharted territory, encompassing location-based virtual reality, mixed reality experiences, projection mapping, and holographic works. Amid these shifts, India shines bright with the participation of Payal Kapadia, Sandhya Suri's 'Santosh', FTII's 'Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know' and the screening of Shyam Benegal's 'Manthan'. As the global cinematic landscape continues to evolve, Cannes remains steadfast in its mission to celebrate the myriad voices that enrich the tapestry of world cinema. (The writer is former additional director general, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI; Views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JP AGGARWAL'S COMMITMENT

Madam — Apropos the news article, "I have not lost touch with Chandni Chowk people: Aggarwal," published on May 6, this is my response. In a political landscape rife with rhetoric and rivalry, Jai Prakash Aggarwal emerges as a steadfast figure, deeply rooted in Chandni Chowk's tapestry. Despite electoral turbulence, his commitment to constituents remains resolute. Aggarwal's recent critique of Prime Minister Modi's language underscores a concern for decorum in public discourse, a sentiment often lost in the cacophony of contemporary politics. His indictment of the BJP's alleged misuse of investigative agencies reflects a broader apprehension about democratic norms and the rule of law. Beyond partisan skirmishes, Aggarwal's focus on local issues—traders' welfare, infrastructure, and healthcare—reveals a genuine concern for Chandni Chowk's residents. His vision for the area, encompassing tourism, urban renewal, and social welfare, speaks to a holistic approach to governance. Amidst shifting political alliances, Aggarwal's unwavering commitment to his constituency stands out as a beacon of stability. As he embarks on his eighth electoral campaign, his pledge to serve remains unyielding, a testament to the enduring spirit of public service.

Zoya Chatterjee | Chandigarh

VOTERS' DISILLUSIONMENT

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Narendra Modi introduces India to its Ashtalakshmis," published on May 4, this is my response. The narrative of electoral promises, unfulfilled commitments, and regional disparities echoes through the decades of Indian politics. From the inception of the democratic process to contemporary times, the saga persists. The cyclical pattern of pledges made during elections, often forgotten once power is secured, perpetuates a sense of disillusionment among the populace. Despite significant milestones like the Green

Make mistakes to learn something new



Apropos the news article, "Oops, I Dropped The Lemon Tart," published on April 28, this is my response. Gyaneshwar Dayal's piece in The Pioneer paints a vivid canvas of Chef Massimo Bottura's recent culinary odyssey in New Delhi. Bottura, not merely a chef but a maestro of gastronomy and a beacon of philanthropy, brought the essence of Osteria Francescana to India's capital once more. His partnership with The

Leela Palace New Delhi illuminated the culinary scene, offering an unforgettable experience steeped in innovation and sustainability. The narrative delves into Bottura's culinary philosophy, highlighting his penchant for turning mistakes into masterpieces, epitomised by the iconic "Oops! I Dropped the Lemon Tart." His interactive session at The Leela, where he shared the genesis of this dish, revealed profound insights into creativity and embracing imperfection. Through his culinary prowess and philanthropic endeavours, Bottura transcends the role of a chef, becoming a global inspiration. His anticipation for a simple breakfast with underprivileged children reflects his humility and dedication to making a difference beyond the kitchen. In essence, Bottura's visit not only tantalised taste buds but also stirred hearts, leaving an indelible mark on India's culinary landscape.

Neha Gupta | Delhi

Revolution, persistent challenges like hunger and malnutrition endure, revealing systemic failures in addressing agricultural productivity. The poignant juxtaposition of floods ravaging the North while droughts parch the South underscores the urgent need for holistic solutions, like river interlinking. However, bureaucratic inertia and political apathy have impeded meaningful progress. Amidst this backdrop, the Northeast emerges as a beacon of transformation, propelled by visionary leadership and concerted efforts to integrate the region into the national fabric. The narrative of Modi's North East Story encapsulates this metamorphosis, beckoning readers to witness the evolution firsthand and embrace the region's vibrant culture and potential.

Amaira Singhania | Bengaluru

WORK FROM HOME CHALLENGES

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Mastering self-leadership during work from home," published on May 6, this is my response. The transition to remote

work has been a mixed bag, with some relishing newfound flexibility while others struggle to delineate between work and home life. Blurred boundaries breed conflicts, taxing individuals' energy and focus. Boundary theory sheds light on these dynamics, emphasising the impact of role transitions on work-home conflicts.

Employers must support employees, but self-leadership is equally vital. As remote work becomes ubiquitous, individuals must proactively manage their roles. Yet, challenges persist, from lacking managerial support to battling distractions. Self-leadership emerges as a beacon amid these complexities. Its principles empower individuals to adapt, innovate, and thrive in remote environments. As remote work becomes the norm, mastering self-leadership will be indispensable for professional success and personal well-being alike.

Reyansh Joshi | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

OVERCOMING BONDAGE OF THINKING

God's grace frees us from anguish, guides us on the right path



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

This is a cruel fact. We are hopelessly tied down by our thinking, especially negative. What do you see on roads? Older folks are engrossed in thoughts. What happened? They realized that they were not so great after all. But the obstinate ego would not allow them to seek help where it is available. If a solution to a problem is to be found, it must be; this is their thinking. Sure, but how long would you meditate on it? There should be a time limit. No, that is why obsession is a very common problem.

Other ages are no better. The younger ones are guilty of lusty thoughts. With the advent of cell phones and the internet, age is no longer a bar. What a shame when one is supposed to be in the 'brahmacharya' (celibacy) stage. As one gets older, thoughts of earning the maximum amount of money capture the imagination. There is nothing wrong with it except our expectations should be based on reality. Otherwise, there will be a lot of pain. What is common to all ages is fear of different kinds. This is a real problem, which causes all kinds of mental diseases. This particular problem requires help at the highest level, that is from God, but will we turn to Him? Also common to all ages are hate, anger, enmity, etc. There is hardly any chance of relief when we think that we are the centre of the universe, even though there are eight billion of us. If that were true, there would be eight billion centres of the universe. See, how silly such thinking is. This is what is the basis of our thought process. The frog mentality of thinking one's limited knowledge is everything leads many to dismiss spiritual practices as simplistic, when in fact they are meant to be easily accessible to all.



Let us get to the bottom of this all-pervasive problem. What is this mind? It is a faculty given to us for thinking, willing and feeling. It is subtle, i.e. far more strong than the gross body. The mind affects the body, as we all have experienced. When we are disturbed, our bodies get affected; their working is disturbed. Why has God given us a faculty, which can hurt us so much? He had to do to give us free will, which can bring bliss, as indicated by Lord Krishna, 'A person, having consciousness, unattached to external sense objects, enjoys that happiness within, which is extraordinary. He who, with consciousness united to Brahman, finds eternal joy. God's kindness lies in our return to Him, part of the Cosmic Design, where independence is limited, and control rests with God. So we must turn to God to control our uncontrolled and negative thinking. Lord Krishna States, "Undoubtedly the mind is very difficult to control due to its fickle nature, but it can be brought under control by practice and by detachment from inappropriate sense objects." (6.35) This practice has to be with help from God. Otherwise, there will be partial success only. As we age, our focus shifts towards God, as our physical pleasures diminish, highlighting the purpose of the "Ashram" system for spiritual growth in later years. Therefore, God has made provisions for unlimited mental enjoyment. But we have to seek shelter from God for that. We should not be turning to drinks, etc. for compensation to get over our woes, because they send us deeper into more suffering. Fear is a defence mechanism but only in the limited sense. It should alert us to take curative action. But if it overtakes our thinking, fear becomes a serious problem, as all mental diseases point to. The conclusion is: that we must turn to God with determination sooner than later. Then God will not only free us from the bondage of painful thinking but will also help us in all matters with His guidance and help. This is the way the System has been designed.

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

Elected leaders need to rethink

It is time that elected representatives live up to the expectations of their electors as responsible, honest and devoted community leaders



JS RAJPUT



These are election times and each one of us is a part of the process. These are also times of model code of conduct in the shape of guidelines for political parties and candidates. There are restrictions imposed by the election commission on the maximum expenditure a candidate could incur. Everyone knows what happens to it! In general, people are no more worried about spiralling high expenses that the spread of elections imposes on the candidate and State exchequer.

The spread of elections leads to avoidable wastage of manpower and other resources required to conduct and complete the process. The worst sufferers are the schoolchildren, as teachers are the most easily available manpower for elections at every stage! Once elected, no one is willing to pave the way for the generation next! Election times also reveal the behavioural decline amongst those who had tasted the fruits of power earlier but were dethroned by the people.

Their frustrations even bring forth utterances that may be blatantly unsocial, personal and not acceptable in a civil society. The elders have created conditions that demand innovative action by the young 'millennials' who must realize how their elders have decimated the basic principles of democracy by taking recourse to caste combinations, igniting regional and linguistic sentiments, and creating communal antagonism at the cost of deteriorating social cohesion! Independent India began its new journey at around 18% of literacy, today its boosts to nearly 80% of it despite the population increase of over 100 crores. We are a learning society. Our international standing is at its best after independence. One wonders why the language used by politicians against each other should become so coarse and uncivil. It could put to shame any decent educated person. Respect for the learned, committed and experienced is one of the most liked of the treasures of our heritage which unfortunately stands torn to tatters. India shall never be in a position to ignore the



ARTICULATING THE NORMAL EXPECTATIONS FROM THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE APJ ABDUL KALAM WAS GIVING VOICE TO EVERY SANE INDIAN: "IT HAS BECOME CRUCIAL FOR US TO BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT WE CAN RIGHTLY EXPECT FROM OUR LEADERS, FROM PANCHAYAT MEMBERS TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT"

presence of great luminaries of contemporary times like Gandhi, Patel, Subhash Bose, Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and others. How could anyone who wishes to understand India do so without getting familiar with Swami Vivekananda, Ramkrishna Paramhans, Tagore or Sri Aurobindo? Hope lies only in those who were in schools a couple of years ago, and were mesmerized by a saint-scientist; the indomitable APJ Abdul Kalam. I had personally witnessed on numerous occasions how children of India fell in love with him. It was not because of his position or the Pokhran II, it was because of the love his persona emanated for every child, every Indian! India stands blessed with numerous such luminaries who could make a change in the area around their place. One wishes political aspirants learn from APJ, and other luminaries how to deal with people! APJ Abdul Kalam was one of the most admired and loved celebrities during the millennial transition to the 21st century. He was a professional leader who led by example, through heart-to-heart connections with one and all. His dedication and devotion to the national cause were of the highest order. He inspired, he motivated and he achieved his target with gusto.

He could win over every Indian irrespective of their socio-economic station in life, his profession or his ideological leanings. APJ endeared himself particularly to the children of India in whom he could see the emerging India, the future India! He ignited the curiosity and creativity of millions of children. He gave them 'wings of fire'. He entered the Rashtrapati Bhavan with two bags and left with the same after five years. India needs people with such

personalities right from the panchayat level to the Parliament with whom every individual could feel connected, who may be acknowledged as 'approachable'. All this, and much more; reverberates in one's mind as various inputs concerning the general elections float before everyone. Each one of us who has voted over a dozen times in general elections would love to talk about the drastic change that has occurred in the quality of leadership on a larger scale, the deterioration in mutual respect and regard amongst those in public life, in power or opposition.

We are witness to the usage of a language for the opponents that would have shamed everyone some five decades ago. Today, no one seems to be worried about it. The only encouraging sign is that all this is being noted by the voters, and they are despising it. In the long run, one could say with confidence that it would not work in favour of the truants. Sadly enough, the defects of elections about whom Gandhi had written as early as 1922, have reached every stage of elections, including even those of panchayat Raj bodies.

One must not give up hope. And there is always hope for the better after having reached the bottom. Articulating the normal expectations from the elected representatives, APJ Abdul Kalam was giving voice to every sane Indian: "It has become crucial for us to be clear about what we can rightly expect from our leaders, from panchayat members to local councillors of a municipal corporation to members of parliament." In other words, there has to be ownership. Whether it is the panchayat member, development officer, councillor, MLA MP or minister, they have to at least try to be

the best of their ability to do what they are elected to do. We need a Parliament with a vision, one that has the larger picture in mind and can rise above petty party politics.

How would such a parliament perform? What are how it can play a far more constructive role than it has in the last Lok Sabha? I would also expect that the Hon'ble members of the next Lok Sabha shall firmly and sincerely resolve not to present before the nation any spectacles that disturb the functioning of the August House, and present a poor example before the young of India. What was happening till now, was a matter of serious concern for the last couple of decades. It was precisely articulated with great concern by the veteran politician C. Subramaniam: "The indiscipline that marks the proceedings of parliament and legislatures is a matter of great concern. Not only panderism is created obstructing the proceedings of the legislatures but also acts of violence among the members inside the legislatures are becoming common and an almost everyday occurrence. Nobody is prepared to observe the rules of the game. Then how can we expect the masses of the people to observe discipline and respect the laws and regulations?"

It is time that future MPs and other elected representatives live up to the expectations of their electors as responsible, honest and devoted community leaders. They have to be a source of inspiration to generations ahead. Let them resolve not to let even a minute of parliament's time be wasted! It would be a great gift to the nation!

(The author works in education, social cohesion and religious amity, views are personal)

Benevolent hearts: Dynamics of begging and household donations

Despite legal prohibitions in many States, begging persists with beggars being one of the highest recipients of household donations

Begging is a ubiquitous phenomenon in India and is hidden in plain sight. Perceptions of 'persons engaged in Beggary' may vary but it is also evident that many households donate to them. 'Persons engaged in Beggary' are largely missing from the discussions on public policy in the country. A recent study by the Centre of Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP) at Ashoka University showed that 'persons engaged in Beggary' are one of the highest recipients of household donations, ranking only after 'religious organisations'. This leads us to question, what are the motivations that lead households in such a large proportion to donate to 'persons engaged in Beggary'. Who are the biggest donation-makers to



SHAIVYA VERMA

'beggars' with respect to gender, geography and age? And in what 'form' donations are received by the 'persons engaged in Beggary'? Even though begging is not a crime it is legally prohibited in more than twenty States and Union Territories and can invite punishment for one year to 10 years and even beyond under special circumstances. The pros and cons of the existing laws are another

debate.

The study by CSIP showed a 14% increase in total 'cash' donations by Indian households from INR 23.7 thousand crores in 2020-21 to INR 27 thousand crores in 2021-22 of which 'persons engaged in Beggary' are one of the preferred recipients of household giving among 'religious organisations', 'non-religious organisations', 'family and friends', 'household staff', and 'supporting a cause or signing a petition'. They are the second highest recipient of household donations both in terms of overall market size and the proportion of households who made donations to them among other recipient groups in the study. The report further notes that the market size and the average cash payments to

the 'persons engaged in Beggary' have increased from 2020-21 to 2021-22. While 'persons engaged in Beggary' are one of the preferred recipients, households do not trust them with their money but with materials. Despite a high proportion of households who donated to 'persons engaged in Beggary' they received the lowest value of 'cash' donations from households (under INR 100). While 'persons engaged in Beggary' were least preferred for 'cash' donations as compared to other recipient groups in the study, a clear preference to donate 'in-kind' was noted for this recipient group. More than half of those donating to 'persons engaged in Beggary' donated 'in-kind' which is starkly different from 'in-kind'

donations received by other recipient groups. Households are mostly driven by their intrinsic motivations when giving to the 'persons engaged in Beggary'. 'Religious beliefs' are one of the top motivators. It guided 55% of households that gave to the 'persons engaged in Beggary'. Religious beliefs can be understood as 'helping others is a way to serve God', and 'good karma/ Almighty rewards good deeds'. Furthermore, 'family traditions' play an important role in motivating households to give to the 'persons engaged in Beggary'. They are also affected by the visible hardship due to poverty and are driven to donate in order to support someone in financial distress. Rendering 'seva' or service

also emerged as a significant motivation for giving to 'persons engaged in Beggary'. Households also find it easier to give in smaller amounts in 'cash', which leads many households to offer some money to 'persons engaged in Beggary'. About 60% proportion of households responded to have donated to them. The study also found that donations made to 'persons engaged in Beggary' were in the range of smaller amounts 'under INR 100'. It was intriguing to find that the givers who are more empathetic to the 'persons engaged in Beggary' are the people who have a 'vulnerable' position in society and are mainly dependent on others for social and economic security. Older women and households from

rural areas and from lower socio-economic categories are primary givers to 'persons engaged in Beggary'. More households from rural India donate to 'persons engaged in Beggary' than households from large towns. In fact, the proportion of households making offerings to 'persons engaged in Beggary' in rural India was higher than the national average of the proportion of households who gave to 'persons engaged in Beggary'. Similarly, 'giving' by lower socioeconomic category (SEC D/E) to 'persons engaged in Beggary' was higher than the national average. While about 53% of households from higher and middle socio-economic categories (SEC A, SEC B and SEC C) contributed, more

than 65% of households contributed towards 'persons engaged in Beggary' from the lower socioeconomic groups (SEC D/E). In terms of gender and age, older women between the ages of 46 to 60 years are the biggest and primary donation-makers to the 'persons engaged in Beggary'. Beggary in many forms has been in existence for ages. Due to the hardships faced, persons engaged in Beggary usually suffer from negativity, hopelessness, low self-esteem and stigma. In India, 'people engaged in Beggary' are often seen outside religious places. The writer is Senior Research Manager at the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy (CSIP), Ashoka University. Views expressed are personal

BJP members deployed in war room working overtime

STAFF REPORTERS ■
NEW DELHI

Party workers deployed in the war rooms of the BJP's State unit are working overtime to gather information and disseminate messages to the target audience in anticipation of the Lok Sabha polls slated to be held in the national capital on May 25.

With a little over two weeks to go for Lok Sabha polls in Delhi, those in the war rooms of the BJP's state unit are working hard to secure a win in each of the seven Lok Sabha constituencies in Delhi. The war room has been set up in all the parliamentary constituencies which operates in two shifts manned by around eight people.

The centres start operations at 10 am every day to ensure timely execution of scheduled plans and programmes of the party, said a BJP leader involved in the activities. "In fact, these war rooms-cum-call centres were fully operational since September last year but now they are running at full steam with an enhanced need for dissemination of messages among party leaders and workers as well as gathering feedback from the public," said the BJP leader.

The basic work of these war rooms



involves gathering feedback from voters, and circulating messages related to the BJP leaders' programmes and other information, he said.

"Preparations related to polling at the booth level and taking stock of preparations for the different stages of elections are also carried out through these centres," he said, adding that these war rooms also send out messages to party leaders and workers. "We are sometimes tasked with reaching out to specified groups of workers to pass on information meant for them," said a member of one of the war

rooms in Delhi. The saffron party won all seven seats with huge margins in the 2014 and 2019 parliamentary polls.

The party is pitted against the opposition INDIA bloc partners AAP and Congress, contesting on four and three seats, respectively.

Similar arrangements have also been made in all the Lok Sabha constituencies in the country where around 30,000 personnel are deputed to run the centres, which are run according to the instructions and guidelines laid down by senior national and state leadership.

SC stays court order on school jobs termination in West Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■
KOLKATA

In a timely relief for the Trinamool Congress Government the Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the April 21 Calcutta High Court order terminating the jobs of 25,753 school teachers and non-teaching staff and restrained the Central Bureau of Investigation from taking any coercive measure against the Mamata Banerjee Cabinet but not before lambasting the State for perpetrating a "systemic fraud" in conducting the recruitment process in 2016.

Saying that the recruitment authorities were duty-bound to maintain digitised records related to the appointment of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff the Bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra delivered an interim order staying the Calcutta High Court verdict terminating about 26,000 jobs. The Court also set aside the



High Court order directing the terminated employees who had secured their employment by adopting unfair means to return the entire salary they had drawn since the date of joining with 12 percent interest.

Insofar as the State Cabinet is concerned the High Court had directed the CBI to bring its members under investigation and do so by taking the suspects in custody if required. The Apex Court put a stay on that order too. The Supreme Court however allowed the CBI to continue its investigation into the Bengal teacher

recruitment scam case. The case would be heard post summer vacation on July 16 post, sources in the bar said. The case arose out of the "school jobs for cash scam" and had besides seeing a number of TMC ministers and MLAs going to jail put the entire party on a sticky wicket in the election year.

While the sacked teachers heaved a sigh of relief with many of them saying, "this order will for the time restore not only our lost honour but also give a relief financially," asking, "why we who had taken our exams cleanly should suf-

fer for the crime committed by unscrupulous people?" Bengal Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya on other hand said that "truth finally prevails and it has prevailed ... the hawks that were making merry by eating away the jobs of common people have been exposed now."

However, Calcutta High Court justice Srinjay Sengupta said, "it is just a stay and not the final verdict ... even the School Servicer Commission has conceded to the fact that there has been large-scale corruption in the recruitment process ... both the High Court and the Supreme Court have seen that prima facie ... no one wants the jobs of the honest candidates to go but it the dishonest appointees have to be found out in the larger public and students' interest and the interest of those candidates who had appeared in the exams, got empanelled but were not considered because those who purchased the jobs by greasing the palms of the people in power by-passed them."

Three independent MLAs in Haryana join Congress

PNS ■
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

In a setback to the ruling BJP in Haryana amid the Lok Sabha elections, three independent MLAs on Tuesday announced that they have withdrawn their support to the Nayab Singh Saini-led government in the state. The three MLAs -- Sombir Sangwan, Randhir Gollen and Dharampal Gonder -- also said that they have decided to extend support to the Congress during the elections.

They made the announcement at a press conference held in Rohtak in presence of former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and State Congress chief Uday Bhan. "We are withdrawing support to the government. We are extending our support to the Congress. We have taken this decision on various issues including those related to farmers," he said.

Uday Bhan said, "The three independent MLAs -- Sombir Sangwan, Randhir Singh Gollen and Dharampal Gonder -- have withdrawn their sup-



port to the BJP government and extended their support to the Congress."

"I also want to say that present strength of (90-member) Haryana Assembly is 88, of which the BJP has 40 members. The BJP government earlier had support of JJP MLAs and Independents, but JJP had also withdrawn support and now Independents are also leaving. Nayab Singh Saini government is now a minority government. Saini should tender his resignation as he does not have right to stay even for a minute," said Bhan demanding immediate assembly polls.

After 10 MLAs of its partner JJP withdrew support couple of months ago, the independents had backed BJP and the Saini won the trust motion.

In the 90-member Haryana assembly when elected, BJP won 41 MLAs, Congress 30, JJP 10 while seven Independents and one MLA each from the INLD and HLP.

Former chief minister and senior Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda said the State government has lost the moral right to be in power and it should resign and President's Rule should be imposed in the State.

Patna one of most severely flood hit parts of India: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

In the context of flood vulnerability, Patna in Bihar stands out as one of the most severely affected districts in India, according to a joint recent research by IIT-Delhi and IIT-Roorkee. West Bengal's Murshidabad and Maharashtra's Thane ranks second and third respectively, according to a district-level flood severity index (DFS) developed by researchers at IIT-Delhi and IIT-Roorkee. The index takes into account the historical severity of floods based on the number of affected people, the spread and duration of floods.

The researchers said the top 10 districts where flood severity is the highest are: Patna, Murshidabad, Thane, North 24 Parganas (West Bengal), Guntur (Andhra Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), Ballia (Uttar Pradesh), East Champaran (Bihar), and East Medinipur (West Bengal). These are followed by Muzaffarnagar (Bihar),

Lakhimpur (Assam), Kota (Rajasthan), Aurangabad (Maharashtra), Malda (West Bengal), Rajkot (Gujarat), Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh), Aurangabad (Bihar), Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Jalpaiguri (West Bengal), Darjeeling (West Bengal), Dibrugarh (Assam), Azamgarh (Uttar Pradesh), Chamoli (Uttarakhand), West Champaran (Bihar), Amravati (Maharashtra), Medinipur West (West Bengal), and Samastipur (Bihar).

Though Chamoli in Uttarakhand does not face recurrent floods, it appears on this list because of a few isolated highly damaging flood events.

Among the 30 districts facing the highest risk of floods, 17 are in the Ganga basin and three are in the Brahmaputra basin. Among all the Indian river basins, the Ganga basin has the highest population, and its high flood proneness is worrisome, said the researchers, including Manabendra Saharia, an assistant professor at IIT-Delhi. Assam experiences the highest

number of floods in India, having faced more than 800 flood events over 56 years. The other flood-prone states, in descending order of flood events, include Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

Data from 1967 to 2023 shows that Thiruvananthapuram has experienced more than 231 floods or more than four events per year on average. Five districts -- Thiruvananthapuram, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Kamrup, and Nagaon -- have been categorised as "severely flood-prone," having recorded more than 178 floods, or more than three events per year on average.

The researchers said localised intense rainfall events are likely to rise in the future due to climate change, and therefore, more flash floods are expected. Under the warming climate, the frequency of cyclones will increase, and coastal and near-by inland areas will face more instances of intense rainfall and floods. It is also likely that areas that are not currently flood-prone may begin to see flooding.

Defer scheme payments till LS polls, EC tells Telangana Government

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday directed the Telangana government to defer payments under the Rythu Bharosa scheme till Lok Sabha polls are held in the state on May 13, saying Chief Minister Revanth Reddy violated the model code of conduct by referring to the payouts in his public speeches.

In a letter to the Telangana Chief Electoral Officer, the Commission said Reddy had violated the model code of conduct by publicly speaking about the ensuing disbursement under the scheme on or before May 9. Elections to all 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana will be held in the fourth phase on May 13. "In the above premise and clear violation of Model Code of Conduct by Revanth Reddy, President Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee and star campaigner and Chief Minister, the Commission has directed that disbursement of balance instalment under the

Rythu Bharosa scheme for Rabi season of 2023 will be effected only after completion of poll in the state of Telangana on 13.05.2024," the Commission said.

It also expressed concern over attempts to politicise the ongoing scheme during the elections and held that such actions were deemed as attempts to influence voters and disturb the level playing field.

The commission noted that similar directives were issued for the Rayathu Bandhu scheme during the Telangana assembly elections in 2023 on the condition that no new beneficiaries will be added to the scheme and the disbursement of instalments will be done without any publicity.

The Commission had asked the Telangana government to make payments through bank transfers and that no public function or political functionary will be involved in the process. The scheme has been renamed as Rythu Bharosa by the Congress government in Telangana.

Modi, Lalu in tug of...

From Page 1

"The BJP is against the provision of reservations made in the Constitution. Hence, it wants to do away with both", Lalu told reporters at the legislative council premises.

The ailing septuagenarian, who nowadays prefers to stay indoors, is attending a swearing-in ceremony where his wife Rabri Devi took oath as an MLC.

On BJP's charge that if voted to power, the Congress, RJD and other allies would "steal" reservations meant for OBCs and divert these to Muslims, Lalu said, "But should not Muslims get the benefit of reservations? (Aarakashan to milna hi chahiye Musalmanon ko)".

He also said the BJP is indulging in scaremongering (bhadka rahe hain) by raising the bogey of "jungle raj" at election rallies.

Addressing an election rally in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district, Modi hit out at the Opposition Congress, saying its intent is very dangerous and alleged it calls for "vote jihad" were directed against him.

Speaking at a poll rally a week ago, Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Maria Alam, the niece of Congress leader Salman Khurshid, called for "vote jihad" in favour of Naval Kishore Shukla, the INDIA Bloc candidate from the Farrukhabad Lok Sabha seat of Uttar Pradesh. The SP is an ally of the Congress and a key constituent of the Opposition INDIA Bloc.

Take action against anonymous political hoardings: EC to Delhi CEO

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission has reminded the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) P Krishnamurthy to take action against anonymous political hoardings in the national capital on Tuesday amid the poll authority receiving complaints, including those by the Congress.

In a letter to the CEO of Delhi, the EC said, "We have been receiving representations from various stakeholders, including political parties, regarding anonymous election hoardings at authorised and unauthorised sites in the

national capital."

Anonymous political or election hoardings or advertisements are those which do not bear on their face the names and addresses of the printer and the publisher, which is a violation of the electoral laws and the provisions of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). Section 127A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, unequivocally prohibits the printing or publishing of election pamphlets, posters, placards, or banners without prominently displaying the name and address of the printer and publisher.

Two terrorists...

From Page 1

The ongoing searches have been going on across five district headquarters of Rajouri, Poonch, Doda, Udhampur and Kathua to ascertain the whereabouts of two active groups of foreign terrorists hiding in the area.

A member of the Village Defence Guard (VDG) was killed in a brief gunfight with the terrorists in the Basantgarh area of Udhampur on April 28. The security forces have relied on aerial surveillance to maintain a tight vigil besides using sniffer dogs and foot soldiers to track down their footprints. So far no contact was established with the hiding group of terrorists.

The security forces have questioned several residents and also detained a few overground workers to ascertain the coordinates of the terrorists hiding in the upper reaches taking advantage of the natural cave-like structures and thick foliage. Police have also put posters of two suspected terrorists offering a cash reward of Rs 20 lakh for any information leading to their arrest.

Maharashtra

From Page 1

State political circles is that Baramati recorded as low a polling percentage of 45.68 till 5 pm. Even if Baramati records an additional 10 per cent voting in the last hour of polling, the final polling will be around 56 per cent, which is far lower than the final polling percentage of 61.82 recorded in 2019 in the home turf of Pawars.

It is difficult to hazard a guess on what impact the low polling percentage will have on the results in the Baramati constituency where a bitter electoral battle is being waged between prominent members of the Pawar family -- Sharad Pawar's daughter and three-time MP Supriya Sule and his estranged nephew and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar.

In Kolhapur and Satara where two scions of iconic Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj -- Shrimant Chhatrapati

Shahu Maharaj and Shrimant Chhatrapati Udaynaraje Bhosale are trying their luck in Kolhapur and Satara constituencies respectively, the polling percentages at 5 pm were 63.71 and 54.11 respectively.

In Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg where senior BJP leader, former Chief Minister and current Union Minister Narayan Rane is seeking election to the Lok Sabha for the first time, 53.75 per cent of votes turned out to vote. In Solapur where veteran Congress leader and former Union Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde's daughter Praniti Shinde (Solapur) is contesting, the voter turnout was a relatively low 49.11 at 5 pm.

In Osmanabad (now known as Dharashiv) where sitting MP Omraje Nimbalkar of the Shiv Sena (UBT) is contesting against his own sister-in-law sister in law Archana Patil of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, the polling percentage was 52.78

per cent at 5 pm. In Madha from where Sharad Pawar had been elected to Lok Sabha in 2009 polls, sitting BJP MP is taking on Dhairyasheel Mohite-Patil of the NCP (Sharad Pawar). Here, 50 per cent of total voters turned out to exercise their rights. In Latur (SC) where sitting BJP MP Sudhakar Shringare (BJP) is taking on a rank new comer Dr Shivaji Kalghe of the Congress, the polling percentage was 55.18.

In Sangli where sitting BJP MP Sanjay Patil is pitted against Chandrabah Patil (SS-UBT) and a formidable independent candidate Vishal Prakashbapu Patil, 52.56 per cent of the electorate voted till 5 pm.

In Hatkanangle where a three-cornered contest is being witnessed among the Dhairyashil Mane of the Shinde-Sena, Raju Shetti of the Swabhimani Paksha and Satyajet Patil of the Shiv Sena (UBT), the polling percentage was 62.18.

Will Kejriwal Be Able To Campaign...

From Page 1

Releasing him because he is a politician is not a correct precedent, the SG insisted.

He chose to be a Chief Minister without a portfolio and it is done to accommodate some people. If bail is allowed, won't this be irreversible if the plea is allowed," the SG asked. The SG said letting out Kejriwal citing elections will set a bad precedent and others will seek similar exemptions.

"The court is allowing the doors of contingencies just to let out this one person and the public prosecutor will not be able to argue even if a kirana owner comes. I know these are inconvenient arguments," he said. However, the court said it is not creating any special exemption for politicians but is only passing the order taking into account the fact that the general elections are due.

"We are not going by whether he is a politician or not a politician. Every individual involved will have a special

circumstance or case involved. We have to see if that person falls under that special circumstance considering elections are there. We are not saying there is a different law for others," the court made it clear.

The bench has divided the hearing on Kejriwal's petition against his arrest into two parts. His main petition challenges his arrest by the ED and seeks it to be declared as illegal, while the second aspect pertains to grant of interim bail keeping in mind the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. The court has reserved the order on the issue of grant of interim bail.

Before rising for the day, the bench indicated that next day of hearing the judges will be sitting in different combinations, and if the hearing on matters listed for Wednesday gets completed and the judges have time in hand, they would resume hearing Kejriwal's plea against his arrest by the ED.

Uttar Pradesh

From Page 1

Yadav, Dimple Yadav, their daughter Aditi Yadav, Ramgopal Yadav, Dharmendra Yadav and other family members cast their votes in Etawah's Saifai. BJP candidates S P Singh Baghel and Parmeshwar Lal Saini cast their votes in Agra and Sambhal, respectively.

Speaking to reporters after casting his vote, Ramgopal Yadav exuded confidence that Dimple Yadav would win the Lok Sabha polls with a greater margin compared to the bypolls. A group of Muslim women near a polling station in Budaun's Sahaswan Assembly segment alleged that they were being stopped from casting their vote. They also alleged that the men accompanying them were beaten by police.

District Magistrate Manoj Kumar refuted the charges, saying the people who had already cast their votes were gathering unnecessarily and police had to move them away to maintain law and order. He said, "Voting is going on

peacefully in the district and the effort was to a higher polling percentage than in the last election."

In Budaun, residents of Dhoranpur village boycotted the polling for the first three hours, saying politicians had ignored their demand for a road. A sub-divisional magistrate reached the village and persuaded the local people to vote.

BJP leader Prem Shankar Shukla alleged that some unidentified persons hurled stones at his vehicle in Mainpuri's Kusmara area when he was going to vote along with the party's former district unit chief Pradeep Chauhan and others.

He claimed that his driver was injured in the attack. Superintendent of Police, Vinod Kumar said that action will be taken after a complaint is received. Samajwadi Party's Budaun candidate Aditya Yadav alleged that the local administration was not allowing party supporters to vote at various booths in Ujhani Sahaswan.

West Bengal

From Page 1

All this even as the four constituencies witnessed a comparatively low polling at about 74 per cent when reports last came in at 5 pm. The polling percentage was likely to go up by a few percentage points as many people were still standing in queues.

Amid the stray and sporadic violence and sloganeering, singer Arijit Singh rode a scooter to his polling booth at Jiaganj in Jangipur constituency where he and his wife cast their votes. Jangipur stood out also on account of the instance put by Madhabi Lata Sil a 110-year-old woman who walked up to the booth to exercise her voting rights.

"Radha Gobinda (God) has kept me alive to do some works and I think voting is also one of them ... so I have come to vote though it is very difficult for me to walk off do my works on my own," she said, adding she would continue to vote as long as she would be able to do so.



Want 400 seats to ensure Congress does not put Babri lock on Ram temple: PM

PTI ■ DHAR (MP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said he wants the BJP-led NDA to win 400 seats in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls to ensure the Congress does not bring back Article 370 in Kashmir and put a "Babri lock" on the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Addressing a rally at Dhar in Madhya Pradesh, Modi also slammed RJD president Lalu Prasad's statement over favouring reservation benefits to Muslims.

He said the opposition INDIA bloc's "conspiracy" is deeper and it wants all reservation of the SCs, STs and OBCs for its vote bank.

He also accused the Congress of belittling Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, adding the opposition party has started saying he had a very little role in framing the Constitution.

"The truth is that the Congress parivar deeply hates Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar," Modi said.

The PM said the Congress is

spreading rumours that if he gets 400 Lok Sabha seats, he will change the Constitution. It seems as if the Congress people's intelligence is focussed on their vote bank, he said.

"It is important for the country's people to know the BJP-led NDA already has 400-plus seats in Parliament. We used this number to scrap Article 370 (which provided special status to Jammu and Kashmir)," the PM said.

"Modi wants 400 seats so that the Congress won't bring back Article 370 to spoil the game, Modi wants 400 seats so that the Congress won't put a Babri lock on the Ram temple in Ayodhya," he said.

The PM said that about 14 days back, he challenged the Congress to give in writing to the country's 140 crore people that it will not give reservation on the basis of religion.

"Secondly, I asked them to give in writing that they will never snatch reservation being given to SCs, STs and OBC and thirdly, to give in writing that they will never give reservation



to Muslims by committing dacoity from the existing OBC quota, but they are not responding and sitting silently by putting a lock on their mouths," he said.

The PM said he wants 400 Lok Sabha seats to prevent Congress from "dacoity" of the OBC quota to benefit its vote bank.

"We have also used these 400

plus seats to extend SC/ST quota for 10 years, appoint a tribal woman as the country's President for the first time and to provide reservation to women," Modi said.

The PM said he is asking for 400 seats so that he can stop every conspiracy of the Congress and INDIA alliance.

"Modi is asking for 400 seats so that the Congress does not hand over the country's vacant land and islands to other countries, it does not take away reservation given to SC/ST/OBCs and give it to its vote bank, and does not declare all castes of its vote bank as OBC overnight," he said.

Targeting Lalu Prasad, Modi said the Congress is making him "dance on their head".

"Their leader who has eaten animal fodder, has been convicted by court in a corruption case and is out on bail due to health reasons is saying Muslims should not just get reservation but all the reservation should be given to Muslims."

"This means they want all the reservation to Muslims by snatching it from the SCs, STs and OBCs," Modi said.

These people are doing this because they are counting their

remaining breaths with the help of this "very vote bank", everything else is over, nothing is left with them, Modi said.

"I was saying they will cut some part of the reservation and give it on the basis of religion but the conspiracy is deeper.

"They are saying on the day of voting that they want to give all the reservation of SCs, STs and OBCs to the Muslim community," he said.

"Do you accept this game of Congress and its allies? Should such people lose their deposits or not?" Modi asked.

He said Ambedkar had opposed religion-based reservation.

"Should such people be kept away from politics forever or not? This will be the biggest tribute to BR Ambedkar," he said.

When Congress was out of power, Ambedkar was given the Bharat Ratna, he added.

"The Congress has started saying that he (Ambedkar) had a very little role in framing the Constitution and Pandit Nehru

made the most significant contribution in the making of the Constitution," Modi said.

He said the Congress has stabbed Ambedkar and the Constitution in the back.

The Congress has sunk so deep into the quagmire of appeasement politics that it cannot see anything else, Modi said.

"If Congress has its way, it will say its vote bank has the first right to live in India," he added.

"Till Modi is alive, he will foil attempts to erase India's identity in the name of fake and pseudo secularism," the PM said.

Modi said the opposition was defeated in the first phase of Lok Sabha polls, destroyed in the second phase, and whatever is left of it in the third phase today will also collapse.

"Because the whole country has decided 'fir ek baar', he said, to which people added "Modi sarkar". Modi said these "dynasts wrote false history to glorify themselves and now have started creating lies about the Constitution also.

Women voters of Guwahati LS seat seek better future for kids, secure environment

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

From aspiration of a better future for their children to the hope that the government will "work for the people" to appeal for a secure environment for office-goers, women voted with diverse issues in mind in Assam's Guwahati constituency on Tuesday, where two female candidates are locked in a direct fight.

As polling for the prestigious seat commenced along with three other constituencies in the third and final phase in the state, voters braved inclement weather to exercise their right of franchise.

Women, who outnumber men by over 34,000 in terms of total voters in Guwahati, had their agenda in mind while choosing their representatives.

Out of the total 20,36,846 voters in Guwahati, 10,35,588 are women, 10,01,200 are men and 58 are from the third gender. BJP is seeking to retain the seat for the fourth consecutive term through its candidate Bijuli Kalita Medhi, while the Congress has fielded Mira Barthakur Goswami. Guwahati has been represented by a woman BJP MP since 2009.

"It is for a better future for my child that I have voted today. We could not manage to rise much in life, but we do hope that we can give a good education to our son and the government will help us in it," Pushpa Boro, a voter at one of



the five model-cum-all women polling stations, set up in Kendriya Vidyalaya, Khanapara, told PTI.

This is the first time she is voting in a Lok Sabha election, and she came with her three-year-old son who had a nice time playing with the balloons which were used to decorate the polling station.

Sahitya Akademi awardee Anuradha Sarma Pujari, also a voter in the same polling station, said it is with the expectation of a better future that she cast her vote.

"Everyone should come and vote as this is the least we can

do for our country. We should vote as politically conscious citizens. We expect the new government will work for a better country and more development," the senior journalist and author added.

Nilufar Rahman, a school teacher, hoped for a more secure environment for office-goers like her and with two women candidates in the fray, she was optimistic that they would be considerate of their problems.

"As working women, we face many difficulties, including security issues, proper public transport and lack of other facilities. I hope the new MP

will take up these matters," Rahman said before getting clicked at the polling station's selfie point.

Octogenarian Suparna Das sounded less enthusiastic about the government addressing the people's problems but was out in the rain to cast her vote.

"I have always voted, as far as possible. There has been no change in our conditions, whoever may have formed the government. But I still feel it is my duty and I fulfil it. I do hope the government will work for the people," Das, who was accompanied by her nephew, added.

Abusing Sanatan culture now a fashion for Opposition: Yogi

PTI ■ SITAPUR (UP)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday claimed that abusing Sanatan culture and questioning the existence of Lord Ram and Lord Krishna has become a "fashion" for the opposition leaders.

"Supporters of the Samajwadi Party open fire on Lord Ram's devotees and perform 'aarti' for terrorists. They demand the withdrawal of cases against the perpetrators. They celebrate the death of Lord Ram's devotees and shed crocodile tears over the demise of gangsters," he said.

Addressing election rallies in the state, Adityanath said after the third phase of polling for the general elections on Tuesday, voting for over half of the Lok Sabha seats would be over and the nation is "resonating with the slogan 'Abki Baar 400 Paar'".

"The new India stands resolute against terrorism, responding with strength," he said.

At election meetings in Sitapur and Misrikh parliamentary constituencies, the BJP leader alleged that questioning the existence of God and abusing Sanatan culture has become a "fashion" for the opposition.

He urged people to exercise their franchise to show those who insult Lord Ram and Lord Krishna their rightful place.

"How can we accept those



who raise questions about Lord Ram and Lord Krishna? Ultimately, it is the people of the country who will respond through their votes," Adityanath said.

He said that BJP's double-engine government has taken up several initiatives for the development of Naimisharanya, a pilgrimage spot in Sitapur.

"Just as Ayodhya is experiencing a revitalization, Naimisharanya is also undergoing a transformation. Plans are underway to introduce air services and electric bus services along with the construction of guest houses for the visitors," Adityanath said.

Addressing another election meeting, the senior BJP leader claimed that while the

Samajwadi Party used to arm the youth with pistols, his government provided them with tabs.

Taking a jibe at the opposition, the chief minister said, "Let the 'supporters of Pakistan' know that people are starving in Pakistan, a nation created after the partition of India. While there's a struggle for a kilogram of flour there, 80 crore people in India are receiving free ration."

"Our MLAs and MPs stand in solidarity with the poor. They have ensured that the government provides facilities and financial assistance to the needy for their treatment. During the SP and Congress rule these funds were misappropriated for personal gain," Adityanath alleged.

Uddhav totally opposite to Balasaheb, says Shinde

PTI ■ THANE

In an all-out attack on his former party chief-turned-rival, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Tuesday accused Uddhav Thackeray of doing "dogli rajneeti" (double-faced politics) and alleged that his predecessor was plotting an attack on his house while pretending to be making a peace offer for his return to the Shiv Sena after they split nearly two years ago.

Shinde, who now heads the "real" Shiv Sena, also said Uddhav was totally opposite to the party founder Balasaheb Thackeray and was only interested in furthering his self-interest, unlike his father who always stood by his party's workers and never went back on his words.

In an exclusive interview with PTI at his residence here, Shinde alleged that Uddhav Thackeray abandoned Balasaheb's ideology for the greed of the chief minister's chair when he broke ties with the BJP to join hands with the Congress.

"We are the real Shiv Sena and taking forward Balasaheb's vision of Hindutva and the state's development," he said.

Uddhav Thackeray's outfit cannot be called a "Hindutva" party as they joined hands with the Congress which insults Savarkar and they cannot even refer to Balasaheb as "Hindu Hriday Samrat" anymore, he said.

Asked whether Uddhav Thackeray called him to come back and offered him the chief minister's post after his rebellion in June 2022, Shinde said, "He sent an emissary to me and while that person was talking to me, he announced he was throwing me out of the party."

"He (Uddhav) was holding a meeting where they called for burning my effigy, attacking my house, those sorts of things were happening. These meetings were happening when they had supposedly sent people to talk to me. 'Dogli rajneeti, chahre pe alag, pet mein alag, honthon pe alag' (This is double-faced politics, something on the face and something totally opposite behind it)," the chief minister said.

"Balasaheb was something else. He will say whatever he has to say and he will never go back on his words. Whatever he would say once, will become cast in iron. There can't be another Balasaheb Thackeray," he added.

The 60-year-old Shiv Sena leader, who became the chief minister soon after parting ways with Uddhav Thackeray and with the support of the BJP, said that when assembly elections happened in 2019, the people's mandate was for the BJP-Shiv Sena government.

"But he (Uddhav) abandoned the ideology of Balasaheb Thackeray for the greed of the chief minister's chair. We are now taking forward Balasaheb's ideology and that forms the foundation of this Government.

Voters exercise franchise in nine LS seats of Madhya Pradesh

PTI ■ BHOPAL

At least 62.28 per cent of voters exercised their franchise till 5 pm in nine Lok Sabha seats of Madhya Pradesh in the third phase of the general elections on Tuesday, a poll official said.

Of the nine Lok Sabha seats, Rajgarh recorded the highest 72.08 per cent turnout, followed by Vidisha with 69.2 per cent, Guna with 68.93 per cent, Betul with 67.97 per cent, Sagar with 61.7 per cent, Bhopal with 58.42 per cent, Gwalior with 57.86 per cent, Morena with 55.25 per cent and Bhind with 50.96 per cent, till 5 pm, the official said.

Former chief ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Digvijaya Singh and state Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president V D Sharma were among the early voters.

Congress leader Digvijaya Singh and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, who are contesting the polls from Rajgarh and Guna, respectively, will not be able to vote for themselves as the former is a registered voter of Bhopal, and the latter is registered to vote from Gwalior, party sources said.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan, the BJP candidate from Vidisha seat, exercised franchise with his wife, Sadhna Singh, and



two sons at a polling booth in his native village, Jait, in Sehore district.

Polling began at 7 am and will conclude at 6 pm across 20,456 polling stations, including 1,043 managed by women personnel and 75 by Divyang employees, an election official said.

To ensure smooth polling, the administration made the local candidates sit in the police control room in Morena in the Gwalior-Chambal region, which is considered a sensitive area.

The police made BJP candidate Shivmangal Singh Tomar, BSP's Ramesh Chandra Garg and Congress candidate Satyapal Sikarwar sit in the police control room, Superintendent of Police Shailendra Singh Chouhan said.

The candidates came to the police control room with their consent and sat together, as it

has happened here in the past, he said.

A total of 1.77 crore voters will decide the fate of 127 candidates who are contesting from Morena, Bhind (SC-reserved), Gwalior, Guna, Sagar, Vidisha, Bhopal, Rajgarh and Betul (ST-reserved) seats spread across 19 districts of the state.

Polling in Betul (ST) constituency was initially scheduled to be held in the second phase on April 26 but was deferred due to the death of a candidate.

In all, 127 candidates, including nine women, are in the fray in the third phase of the elections.

Bhopal has the highest number of 22 candidates, while Bhind has the lowest at 7. Voters include 92.68 lakh men, 84.83 lakh women, and 491 members of the third gender, while 1.66 lakh voters are 'divyangjan' (people with disabilities), 88,106 are above the age of 85, and 1,804 are 100 plus years old, the poll official said.

As many as 5.25 lakh voters are in the age group of 18-19 years.

Of the 29 Lok Sabha seats in Madhya Pradesh, polling for 12 seats took place in the first two phases on April 19 and 26. The remaining eight seats will go to polls in the fourth phase on May 13.

Modi praises EC and underlines importance of voting

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday cast his vote for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections in Gujarat's Ahmedabad city and praised the Election Commission for conducting the polls "almost violence-free" and in a voter-friendly manner in the first two phases.

Ahmedabad is part of the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency, from where PM Modi's cabinet colleague and Union Home Minister Amit Shah is seeking his re-election. On the occasion, PM Modi said the conduct of elections in India and their management can be a learning process for other democracies, and added that leading universities in the world should carry out a case study on the country's polls.

He also underlined the importance of voting as he called it a special gift. PM Modi, who arrived in Ahmedabad on Monday night, reached the polling booth at Nishan Public School in Ranip locality of Ahmedabad city soon after polling began at 7 am, and cast his vote.

Shah accompanied the PM when he arrived there to cast his vote. Modi greeted people, gave autographs to them on his way to the polling booth. He shook hands with many



members of the public.

He also lifted a baby girl who was being carried by her mother in the crowd and spent some light moments with the child. A woman from the crowd tied a 'rakhi' to him as a token of sisterly affection.

Before entering the polling booth, the prime minister bowed down to his elder brother Somabhai Modi.

He cast his vote after getting his finger inked. After coming out of the polling booth, Modi waved to the crowd and showed his inked finger.

Modi is a registered voter from Ranip area. Somabhai Modi lives near Nishan School, which falls under Sabarmati assembly segment of Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency.

Talking to reporters later, the PM appealed to people to come out in large numbers to vote. "Matdaan samanya daan nahi. Hamare desh main daan

ka mahatva hai (Voting is not a common gift. In our country, a lot of importance is attached to giving donations). People of the country should vote in large numbers keeping this feeling in their hearts," Modi said.

Today is the third phase of voting and campaigning will go on for almost three weeks and four more phases of voting will be held, he said.

"As a voter from Gujarat, I have been voting from here (Nishan School) for the last many years, and our Amitbhai (Shah) is the candidate of BJP from here," Modi said. "Today is the day of celebrations of democracy. I will congratulate the Election Commission, security forces and officials involved in conducting the first two phases of polls almost violence-free. In the past, violence during elections was very common," he said.

"I would also like to

congratulate the election commission for conducting the entire election in a voter-friendly manner. The conduct of our election, our election management is such that it can be a learning process for other democracies.

Big universities of the world should carry out a case study on Indian elections," Modi said. "This year, almost 64 countries of the world are going to polls. There should be a comparison of elections between India and other countries. This year, the festival of democracy is not only in India but around the world," Modi said.

He said he would congratulate the Election Commission for adopting good practices of the world in conducting elections in India. Modi also praised the Election Commission for adopting modern technology the poll management. Shah cast his vote at a polling station in Naranpura locality of Ahmedabad, and appealed to voters to participate enthusiastically to elect a stable government committed to make India prosperous.

Shah greeted, interacted and even offered autographs to his supporters as he approached his polling booth at a sub-station in Ahmedabad. Shah accompanied his wife Sonal Shah, son Jay Shah and his wife to cast his vote.

Israeli forces seize Rafah crossing in Gaza

AP ■ CAIRO

Israeli tanks seized control of Gaza's vital Rafah border crossing on Tuesday as Israel brushed off urgent warnings from close allies and moved into the southern city even as cease-fire negotiations with Hamas remained on a knife's edge.

The UN warned of a potential collapse of the flow of aid to Palestinians from the closure of Rafah and the other main crossing into Gaza, Kerem Shalom, at a time when officials say the northern part of the enclave is already experiencing "full-blown famine."

The Israeli foray overnight came after hours of whiplash in the Israel-Hamas war, with the militant group on Monday saying it accepted an Egyptian-Qatari mediated cease-fire proposal. Israel, however, insisted the deal did not meet its core demands. The high-stakes diplomatic moves and military brinkmanship left a glimmer of hope alive — if only barely — for a deal to bring at least a

pause in the war, which as it marked its 7-month point Tuesday, has killed more than 34,700 Palestinians, according to local health officials, and has devastated the Gaza Strip.

The incursion appeared to be short of the full-fledged offensive into Rafah that Israel has planned, and it was not immediately known if it would be expanded.

The looming operation threatens to widen a rift between Israel and its main backer, the United States, which says it is concerned over the fate of around 1.3 million Palestinians crammed into the city. US President Joe Biden warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu again on Monday against launching an invasion of the city after Israel ordered 100,000 Palestinians to evacuate from parts of Rafah.

Cheers of joy overnight among Rafah's Palestinians over Hamas' acceptance of the cease-fire turned to fear Tuesday. Families fled in a steady stream out of Rafah's eastern neighbourhoods on

foot or in vehicles and donkey carts piled with mattresses and supplies. Children watched as parents disassembled tents in the sprawling camps that have filled Rafah for months to move to their next destination — which for many remained uncertain.

"Netanyahu only cares about coming out on top. He doesn't care about children. I don't think he'll agree" to a deal, said Najwa al-Saksuk as her family packed up. Israeli strikes rang out and raised plumes of black smoke.

The Israeli 401st Brigade entered the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing early Tuesday, the Israeli military said, taking "operational control" of it.

Footage released by the military showed Israeli flags flying from tanks that seized the area. It also said that ground troops and airstrikes targeted suspected Hamas positions in Rafah. The military claimed it had intelligence the crossing was "being used for terrorist purposes," though it did not immediately provide evidence.

It said Hamas fighters near the crossing launched a mortar attack that killed four Israeli troops near Kerem Shalom on Sunday and that more mortars and rockets were fired from the area on Tuesday. The Rafah crossing with Egypt and the Kerem Shalom crossing with Israel are critical points of entry for food, medicine and other supplies keeping Gaza's population of 2.3 million alive. They have been closed for at least the past two days, though the smaller Erez crossing between Israel and northern Gaza continues to operate.

Israeli authorities denied the UN humanitarian affairs office access to Rafah crossing Tuesday, its spokesman Jens Laerke said, warning that the disruption could break the fragile aid operation. All fuel for aid trucks and generators comes through Rafah, and Laerke said they have a "very, very short buffer of about one day of fuel."

"If no fuel comes in for a prolonged period of time, it would be a very effective way

of putting the humanitarian operation in its grave," he said.

Israeli strikes and bombardment across Rafah overnight killed at least 23 Palestinians, including at least six women and five children, according to hospital records.

Mohamed Abu Amra said his wife, two brothers, sister and niece were killed when a strike flattened their home as they slept. "We did nothing. ... We don't have Hamas," he said. "We found fire devouring us. The house was turned upside down."

Egypt's Foreign Ministry condemned the seizure of the crossing, calling it "a dangerous escalation." Egypt has previously warned that any seizure of Rafah — which is supposed to be part of a demilitarised border zone — or an attack that forces Palestinians to flee over the border into Egypt would threaten the 1979 peace treaty with Israel that's been a linchpin for regional security.

Netanyahu has said an offensive to take Rafah — which Israel says is Hamas' last

major stronghold in Gaza — is crucial to the goal of destroying Hamas after its October 7 attack on southern Israel that triggered the war.

In that unprecedented Hamas raid, militants killed some 1,200 people and took around 250 others as hostages back to Gaza. Israeli critics say Netanyahu is concerned about his government's survival, since hard-line partners in his coalition could bolt if he signs onto a deal before a Rafah invasion.

As Israel announced it would push ahead with Rafah operations, it said the cease-fire proposal that Hamas agreed to did not meet its "core demands." But it said it would send a delegation to Egypt to continue negotiations. An Egyptian official said delegations from Hamas and Qatar arrived in Cairo on Tuesday.

An Egyptian official and a Western diplomat said the draft Hamas accepted had only minor changes in wording from a version the US had earlier pushed for with Israeli approval.

Police break up pro-Palestinian student protest

AP ■ AMSTERDAM

German police on Tuesday broke up a protest by several hundred pro-Palestinian activists who had occupied a courtyard at Berlin's Free University earlier in the day, the latest such action by authorities as protests that have roiled campuses in the United States spread across Europe.

The protesters had put up about 20 tents and formed a human chain around the tents. Most had covered their faces with medical masks and had draped kufiyah scarves around their heads, shouting slogans such as "Viva, viva Palestina". Earlier on Tuesday, Dutch police arrested about 125 activists as they broke up a similar pro-Palestinian demonstration camp at the University of Amsterdam. In Berlin, police called on the students via loudspeakers to leave the campus. Police could also be seen carrying some students away and some scuffles erupted between police officers and protesters.

Police used pepper spray against some of the protesters. The school's administrators said in a statement that the protesters had rejected any kind of dialogue and they had therefore called in police to clear the campus. "This form of protest is not geared towards dialogue. An occupation is not acceptable on the FU Berlin campus," university president Guenter Ziegler said.

FU is the abbreviation for Free University. "We are available for academic dialog — but not in this way." The administrators said some protesters attempted to enter rooms and lecture halls at Free University in order to occupy them. The protest organizers, which say they are made up of students from various Berlin universities and other individuals, had called on other students and professors to take part in the action, the university statement said. In recent days, students have held protests or set up encampments in Finland, Denmark, Italy, Spain, France

and Britain, following earlier protests at US campuses.

Amsterdam police said on the social media platform X that their action was "necessary to restore order" after protests turned violent. There were no immediate reports of injuries. Video from the scene aired by national broadcaster NOS shows police using a mechanical digger to push down barricades and officers with batons and shields moving in, beating some of the protesters and pulling down tents. Protesters had formed barricades from wooden pallets and bicycles, NOS reported.

The demonstrators occupied a small island at the university son Monday, calling for a break in academic ties with Israel over the war in Gaza. After clearing the Amsterdam protest by early afternoon Tuesday, police closed off the area by metal fences. Students sat along the banks of a nearby canal. The school said in a statement that police ended the demonstration at its Roeterseiland campus overnight Tuesday "due to public order and safety concerns."

"The war between Israel and Hamas is having a major impact on individual students and staff," it said. "We share the anger and bewilderment over the war, and we understand that there are protests over it. We stress that within the university, dialogue about it is the only answer."

In Finland, dozens of protesters from the Students for Palestine solidarity group set up an encampment outside the main building at the University of Helsinki, saying they would stay there until the university, which is Finland's largest academic institution, cuts academic ties with Israeli universities. In Denmark, students set up a pro-Palestinian encampment at the University of Copenhagen, erecting about 45 tents outside the campus of the Faculty of Social Sciences. The university said students can protest but called on them to respect the rules on campus grounds.

Malaysia defends companies that supply weapons to Israel

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia will not interfere in business relations between arms manufacturers and other countries, its defence minister said Tuesday, after protesters demanded that the government expel companies that supply weapons to Israel from an international exhibition. More than 1,300 companies from 60 nations are participating in Defence Services Asia and the concurrent National Security Asia exhibitions that started Monday. The events are hosted and co-organised by Malaysia's Defence Ministry and Home Affairs Ministry.

The Solidarity for Palestinian coalition held a brief rally outside the exhibition centre on Tuesday to protest the presence of US weapons maker Lockheed Martin, European missile manufacturer MBDA and others that provide arms to Israel. The coalition accused the manufacturers of being complicit in Israel's offensive in Gaza.

They said the companies' presence was inconsistent with the Malaysian government's support of Palestinian statehood and insensitive to the many Malaysians who oppose Israel's actions in the Palestinian territories. Muslims account for two-thirds of Malaysia's 34 million people. "We urge the Malaysian government to take a firm and consistent stand. Do not allow these murderous arm dealers to participate and prevent their war mongering," coalition spokesperson Tian Chua said. Defence Minister Khaled Nordin said Malaysia opposes all forms of injustice against the Palestinian people but is also a "free trade country". He said the exhibition is a space for the defense industry to display its latest technology and help countries strengthen their defense preparedness. "This exhibition does not favour or give advantage to any particular country or company," Khaled said in a statement. "The relationship of some global defense companies with certain countries is a business matter that Malaysia will not interfere with."

'Gaza may be Joe Biden's Vietnam'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

In April, Bernie Sanders repeatedly stood shoulder to shoulder with President Joe Biden, promoting their joint accomplishments on health care and climate at formal White House events while eviscerating Donald Trump in a widely viewed campaign TikTok video.

Then just last week, Sanders was bluntly warning that the crisis in Gaza could be Biden's "Vietnam" and invoking President Lyndon B. Johnson's decision not to run for reelection as the nation was in an uproar over his support of that war.

Such is the political dichotomy of Bernie Sanders when it comes to Joe Biden. They are two octogenarians who share a bond that was forged through a hard-fought primary in 2020 and fortified through policy achievements over the last three years.

Now, in this election year, Sanders will be Biden's most powerful emissary to progres-



sives and younger voters — a task that will test the senator's pull with the sectors of the Democratic Party most disillusioned with the president and his policies, especially on Gaza.

Privately, Sanders has felt less enthusiastic in recent days about making the political case on Biden's behalf as the Gaza crisis worsened, according to a person familiar with Sanders' sentiments. Still, Sanders remains adamant that the specter of Trump's return to the Oval Office is too grave a threat and stresses that "this election is not between Joe Biden and God. It is between

Joe Biden and Donald Trump."

"I understand that a lot of people in this country are less than enthusiastic about Biden for a number of reasons and I get that. And I strongly disagree with him, especially on what's going on in Gaza," Sanders said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

But Sanders continued: "You have to have a certain maturity when you deal with politics and that is yes, you can disagree with somebody. That doesn't mean you can vote for somebody else who could be the most dangerous person in American history, or not vote and allow that other guy to win."

That will be the thrust of the message that Sanders will carry through November, even as progressive furor over Biden's handling of the war in Gaza continues to escalate, protests continue to fester and Sanders' own critiques of the administration's policy become more pointed.

"He's not trimming the sails on Gaza, because of

Biden," said Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vt., who succeeded Sanders in the House and joined him in the Senate last year. "Bernie's credibility is that he's maintained his solid positions, and then he's going to make the case why, Biden versus Trump."

Few can doubt Sanders' influence throughout the Biden presidency. Once rivals for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020, the two men later joined forces to assemble half a dozen policy task forces that underpinned the party's policy platform later that year — an unusual endeavor that helped bring the Democratic socialist's supporters into Biden's fold.

That laid the groundwork for a burst of ambitious policymaking in the first two years of the Biden administration, from a sweeping \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief package in early 2021 to legislation in the summer of 2022 that was a mish-mash of longstanding Democratic priorities, including cheaper prescription drugs for Medicare beneficiaries.

Sanders, who helped craft those blueprints as head of the Senate Budget Committee, had been directly encouraged by Biden to go big in those proposals, with the assurance that the president had his back.

"You and I have been fighting this for 25 years," Biden told Sanders admiringly at their joint health care event in April. "Finally, finally we beat Big Pharma. Finally."

Sanders, like many others who back Biden's domestic achievements, believes the public is still too unaware of them. He was the one who approached White House officials about doing an event specifically to spotlight a drop in the cost of inhalers.

More than three years into Biden's term, Sanders' connections throughout the West Wing are deep.

He chats regularly not only with the president, but his top aides, including White House chief of staff Jeff Zients, senior adviser Anita Dunn and national security adviser Jake Sullivan.

2 killed, 21 injured in knife attack at hospital in China

Beijing/Kunming (PTI): At least two people were killed and 21 others injured in a knife attack at a hospital on Tuesday in China's Yunnan Province, local authorities said, in the latest incident of mass stabbing in the country.

The attack took place at around 11:30 am when a man assaulted people with a knife at a local hospital in Zhenxiang County, the county's public security bureau said.

The injured are being treated in the hospital, and the case is under investigation, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported. It is not yet known whether police have subdued the suspect, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

China, where private gun ownership is illegal for most civilians, has faced a spate of mass knife attacks in public places in recent years.

In August last year, two people were killed and seven others injured after a man with a history of mental illness attacked people with a knife in a residential district in also Yunnan.

In July of that year, six people, including three children, were killed in a stabbing at a kindergarten in the south-eastern province of Guangdong. Zhenxiang County, situated in Yunnan's northeast, borders Guizhou and Sichuan provinces and, until 2020, was classified as "poverty-stricken".

Stormy Daniels called to witness stand at Trump's hush money trial

New York (AP): Prosecutors in the hush money trial of former President Donald Trump have called porn actor Stormy Daniels to the witness stand.

Daniels has alleged that she had a sexual encounter with Trump a decade before the 2016 presidential election. Trump has denied it.

Trump stared straight forward as Daniels entered the room, turning his head slightly in her direction as she approached the witness stand. Prosecutor Susan Hoffinger led off by asking Daniels about her upbringing in Louisiana. Daniels talked about having grown up poor and wanting to become a veterinarian.

UK court rejects Nirav Modi's fresh bail plea due to 'real, substantial' flight risk

PTI ■ LONDON

Fugitive businessman Nirav Modi, who has been in prison in London for over five years, on Tuesday made a new bail application which was rejected by a UK judge who ruled that he continued to pose a "substantial risk" of absconding justice. The 52-year-old diamond merchant, who lost his extradition battle to face fraud and money laundering charges in India, did not appear for the bail hearing at Westminster Magistrates Court in London but his son and two daughters were present in the gallery.



go ahead.

"However, I am satisfied that there remain substantial grounds against bail. There continues to be a real, substantial risk that the applicant [Nirav Modi] would fail to attend court or interfere with witnesses," concluded Judge Zani in his judgment after a short hearing. "This case involves, by any footing, a very substantial fraud allegation... not one where bail can be granted and the applica-

tion is refused," he said. The court heard that while Modi had lost his legal fight against being extradited, there were "confidential" proceedings ongoing which had been instigated by him.

This would indicate an asylum application but the only indirect reference made to it in court was when the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), appearing on behalf of the Indian authorities, dismissed the assertion that the UK Home Secretary may "never be able to order extradition" as incorrect. He has demonstrated his complete determination to not face the allegations in an Indian court and it is no exaggeration to say the fraud in question is over USD 1 billion, of which only USD 400 million has been seized. Therefore, he could still have

access to significant resources in various jurisdictions," CPS barrister Nicholas Hearn told the court.

A joint Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) team had arrived from India for the hearing and followed the proceedings in court. There are three sets of criminal proceedings against Modi in India — the CBI case of fraud on the Punjab National Bank (PNB), the ED case relating to the alleged laundering of the proceeds of that fraud and a third set of criminal proceedings involving alleged interference with evidence and witnesses in the CBI proceedings.

He was arrested on an extradition warrant on March 19, 2019, and then UK Home Secretary Priti Patel ordered his extradition in April 2021.

Boeing calls off its first astronaut launch due to valve issue

AP ■ CANAVERAL

Boeing called off its first astronaut launch because of a valve problem on the rocket Monday night. The two NASA test pilots had just strapped into Boeing's Starliner capsule for a flight to the International Space Station when the countdown was halted, just two hours before the planned liftoff. United Launch Alliance CEO Tory Bruno said an oxygen pressure-relief valve on the upper stage of the company's Atlas rocket started fluttering open and close, creating a loud buzz. The valve may have exceeded its 200,000 lifetime cycles, Bruno said, which means it would have to be replaced, pushing the launch into next week. But if engineers can determine the valve is still within that limit, the launch team could try again as soon as Friday. It was the latest delay for Boeing's first crew flight, on hold for years because



of capsule trouble. Bruno said similar valve trouble had occurred in years past on a few other Atlas rockets launching satellites. It was quickly resolved by turning the troublesome valves off and back on. But the company has stricter flight rules for astronaut flights, prohibiting valve recycling when a crew is on board. "And so we stayed with the rules and the procedures, and scrubbed as a result," Bruno said at a press conference. NASA's commercial crew pro-

gram manager Steve Stich acknowledged it was a tough call.

"We're taking it one step at a time, and we're going to launch when we're ready and fly when it's safe to do so," Stich told reporters.

Within minutes of the countdown halting, Boeing's new astronaut was back at the launch pad to retrieve Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams from their pad at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. Starliner's first test flight without a crew in 2019 failed to reach the space station and Boeing had to repeat the flight. Then the company encountered parachute issues and flammable tape. NASA hired Boeing and SpaceX a decade ago to ferry astronauts to and from the space station after the shuttle program ended, paying the private companies billions of dollars. SpaceX has been in the orbital taxi business since 2020.

Details of UK military personnel exposed in payroll data breach

London (AP): British officials say the names and bank details of thousands of serving British soldiers, sailors and air force members have been exposed in a data breach at a payroll system. The Ministry of Defence said Defence Secretary Grant Shapps would make a statement in the House of Commons on Tuesday afternoon "setting out the multi-point plan to support and protect personnel". The ministry would not comment on a Sky News report that Chinese hackers are suspected of carrying out the cyberattack. Cabinet Minister Mel Stride told Sky that "we are not saying that at this precise moment". British media reported that the government will blame "hostile and malign actors" but will not name the country it believes is responsible.

Trump faces jail threat over gag order

AP ■ NEW YORK

Donald Trump returns to his hush money trial Tuesday facing a threat of jail time for additional gag order violations as prosecutors gear up to summon big-name witnesses in the final weeks of the case.

Stormy Daniels, the porn actor who has said she had a sexual encounter with Trump, and Michael Cohen, the former Trump lawyer and personal fixer who prosecutors say paid her to keep silent in the final weeks of the 2016 presidential campaign, are among those who have yet to take the stand but are expected to in the coming weeks.

The jury on Monday heard from two witnesses, including a former Trump Organization controller who provided a mechanical but vital recitation of how the company reimbursed payments that were allegedly meant to suppress embarrassing stories from surfacing and then logged them as



legal expenses in a manner that Manhattan prosecutors say broke the law. The testimony from Jeffrey McConney yielded an important building block for prosecutors trying to pull back the curtain on what they say was a corporate records cover-up of transactions designed to protect Trump's presidential bid during a pivotal stretch of the race. It was focused on a \$130,000 payment from Cohen to Daniels and the subsequent reimbursement

Cohen received. McConney and another witness testified that the reimbursement checks were drawn from Trump's personal account. Yet even as jurors witnessed the checks and other documentary evidence, prosecutors did not elicit testimony Monday showing that Trump himself dictated that the payments would be logged as legal expenses, a designation that prosecutors contend was intentionally deceptive.

McConney acknowledged during cross-examination that Trump never asked him to log the reimbursements as legal expenses or discussed the matter with him at all. Another witness, Deborah Tarasoff, a Trump Organization accounts payable supervisor, said under questioning that she did not get permission to cut the checks in question from Trump himself. "You never had any reason to believe that President Trump was hiding anything or anything like that?" Trump attor-

ney Todd Blanche asked. "Correct," Tarasoff replied.

The testimony followed a stern warning from Judge Juan M. Merchan that additional violations of a gag order barring Trump from inflammatory out-of-court comments about witnesses, jurors and others closely connected to the case could result in jail time.

The \$1,000 fine imposed Monday marks the second time since the trial began last month that Trump has been sanctioned for violating the gag order. He was fined \$9,000 last week, \$1,000 for each of nine violations. "It appears that the \$1,000 fines are not serving as a deterrent. Therefore going forward, this court will have to consider a jail sanction," Merchan said before jurors were brought into the courtroom. Trump's statements, the judge added, "threaten to interfere with the fair administration of justice and constitute a direct attack on the rule of law. I cannot allow that to continue."

Stimac announces second list of probables for World Cup qualifiers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Injured central defender Sandesh Jhingani missed out as Indian senior men's team head coach Igor Stimac on Tuesday announced his second list of 15 probables for the Bhubaneswar camp ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026 preliminary joint qualification round 2 matches against Kuwait and Qatar. The first list of probables was announced on Saturday. Key defender Jhingani, who sustained a right knee injury during India's Asian Cup group match against Syria in January, missed out of the list. The 26 players from the first list will begin training in the Odisha capital on May 10. The 15 players from the second list, comprising players from Mumbai City FC and Mohun Bagan SG, who contested the ISL Cup final, will join the camp on May 15. A total of 41 players will take part in the national camp. The Blue Tigers will face Kuwait in



Kolkata on June 6 before travelling away to take on Qatar on June 11 in their last two matches of Group A. India are currently placed second in the group, with four points from four matches. The top two teams in the

group will qualify for Round 3 of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers and book their berth at the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027. **The second list of 15 probables for the Bhubaneswar**

(training from May 15): Goalkeepers: Phurba Tempa Lachenpa, Vishal Kaith Defenders: Akash Mishra, Anwar Ali, Mehtab Singh, Rahul Bheke, Subhasish Bose Midfielders: Anirudh Thapa, Deepak Tangri, Lalengmawia

Ralte, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Liston Colaco, Sahal Abdul Samad **Forwards:** Manvir Singh, Vikram Partap Singh **The first list of 26 probables for the Bhubaneswar camp (training from May 10):** Goalkeepers: Amrinder Singh, Gurpreet Singh Sandhu. Defenders: Amey Ganesh Ranawade, Jay Gupta, Lalchhungnunga, Muhammad Hammad, Narendra, Nikhil Poojary, Roshan Singh Naorem. Midfielders: Brandon Fernandes, Edmund Lalrindika, Imran Khan, Isak Vanlaluatfela, Jeakson Singh Thounaojam, Mahesh Singh Naorem, Mohammad Yasir, Nandhakumar Sekar, Rahul Kannoly Praveen, Suresh Singh Wangjam, Vibin Mohanan. Forwards: David Lahlansanga, Jithin Madathil Subran, Lalrinzuala, Parthib Sundar Gogoi, Rahim Ali, Sunil Chhetri.

What to know about journey of Olympic torch to Paris

AP ■ PARIS

The Olympic torch will finally enter France when it reaches the southern seaport of Marseille on Wednesday. And it's already been quite a journey. After being lit by the sun's rays on April 16 in Ancient Olympia, the torch was carried around Greece before leaving Athens aboard a three-mast ship named Belem, headed for Marseille. The Belem was first used in 1896, the same year the modern Olympics came back. It will be accompanied by more than 1,000 boats as it parades around the Bay of Marseille, before arriving at the Vieux-Port, or Old Port, and docking on a pontoon resembling an athletics track. Torch bearers will carry the flame across Marseille the next day, the last stretch running on the roof of the famed Stade Vélodrome, home to Marseille's passionate soccer fans. After leaving Marseille, a vast relay route will be undertaken before the torch odyssey ends on July 27 in Paris. Here's a look at where the torch goes before reaching Paris: **MONT-SAINT-MICHEL:** The torch is due to reach the famed and visually stunning site of Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy on May 31. Located in an area of raised land surrounded by water, the island fortress looks like it was created for a Game of Thrones film set. But it's real, and very old. So old that it already existed during the Hundred Years' War between England and France, from 1337 to 1453. An English attack was even fended off. Later it became a prison, and in 1979 it was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Every year swarms of tourists are in awe of its raw and



haunting beauty. **ACROSS THE OCEANS:** The torch travel route is even more unique considering it takes a detour through France's overseas territories called the Relais des Océans, or Ocean Relay. Riding the waves of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean, it will be in French Guiana on June 9 before hitting New Caledonia on June 11. Next is the island of Réunion at Saint-Denis — coincidentally the same name as the Paris suburb with the Olympic village — before reaching Papeete in the surfing realm of Tahiti, then Baie-Mahaut in Gaudeloupe and finally Fort-de-France in Martinique. **FROM SEA BREEZE TO HEAVY CHEESE:** Just five days after landing on French shores, the torch heads up the Alpine mountain pass of Chamonix-Mont-Blanc for Olympic Day on June 23. The Haute-Savoie region is known for its outstanding Chamonix ski resort, which hosts World Cup races, for sweeping views across glacier fields to nearby Italy, and — some would say more importantly — as a producer of fine cheese. A Cheese Olympics, should it be invented, would feature a

sturdy crew of eight competitors from Savoie: Abondance, Beaufort, Chevrotin, Emmental, Reblochon, Tome, Tomme and the heavy-duty Raclette. **HEADING FOR PARIS:** After leaving fromage-friendly Savoie, torch bearers will digest in the Doubs region of eastern France, and then visit the Alsace city of Strasbourg in the northeast. Three days later the torch will reach Verdun, the site of one of the most horrific battles of World War I. From February to December 1916, more than 700,000 French and German soldiers were killed or wounded at the Battle of Verdun. **BASTILLE DAY ARRIVAL:** The torch is to arrive on the streets of Paris on July 14 — hardly surprising, considering it's Bastille Day, France's national day. The torch will stay the following day in Paris, then exit again before snaking back to the French capital via Versailles — home to the resplendent Royal Palace — and the suburbs of Nanterre on July 24 and Seine Saint-Denis on July 25. From there, it's to travel a very short distance back to Paris on July 26, the eve of the grandiose opening ceremony where athletes will parade on more than 80 boats at sunset on the Seine River.

AP ■ ROME

Atalanta came from a goal down to beat Salernitana 2-1 in Serie A and improve its chances of a place in next season's Champions League. The Bergamo-based club rose above Roma and into fifth place. The top five qualify automatically for the Champions League. Atalanta rested some regular starters with one eye on Thursday's second leg of the Europe League semifinal against Marseille. It went behind after 18 minutes when Loum Tchaoua scored against the run of play. But Atalanta woke up in the second half. Gianluca Scamacca converted a nice headed assist by Mario Pasalic and six minutes later Teun Koopmeiners stroked home from outside the box.

Atalanta comes from behind to beat Salernitana and improve Champions League chances

Salernitana remained on the bottom of the table and will spend next season in Serie B. **UDINESE DRAWS WITH NAPOLI:** Udinese equalized deep in stoppage time to draw with Napoli 1-1 at home and earn a vital point in its fight against relegation. Substitute Isaac Success was surrounded by defenders but managed to squeeze a shot home in the second minute of stoppage time. Until then, it had looked like a certain defeat for the home side



after Victor Osimhen scored his 15th league goal five minutes into the second half. Osimhen rose to power home an inviting cross from Matteo Politano. The Nigeria international also had a goal chalked off 10 minutes from the end. Udinese remained third from the bottom and in the relegation zone but it was just two points behind Empoli and Frosinone. Three rounds remain and six teams are fighting to avoid joining Salernitana in the second division.



India's Kavin Quintal bags top 10 finish 2024 FIM Junior GP World Championship

PTI ■ CHENNAI

ace Indian rider Kavin Quintal made a stunning debut in the 2024 FIM JuniorGP World Championship with a top-10 finish in the Stk European class in Round 2 at the Circuito do Estoril, outside Lisbon, Portugal. Fifty Motorsport team, Kavin clocked 23:19.001s for the 11 laps, just 34.866s adrift of the winner Adrian Rodriguez of Spain (SF Racing) and just 16.092s off fifth-placed Lorenzo Della Porta (Yamaha GV Racing) the current championship leader and 2019 Moto3 champion. The 18-year-old faced early setbacks as he crashed during out-lap in qualifying and had to start the race from the 30th position on the grid. The stock race was red flagged due to deteriorating track conditions in the rain in the second lap, but Kavin had

already moved up to 19th place by then. He navigated through the treacherous conditions overtaking his competition one-by-one and crossed the finish line in an impressive ninth position, for a top-10 finish among 36 riders. The stock race is a stepping stone for Moto2 and JuniorGP World Championship, a new FIM event for juniors on to the road for MotoGP. Having begun racing as a 13-year-old, Kavin became the youngest rider to bag points in the FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle Championship in 2018, switched to Honda Talent Cup in 2019. He made his international debut in the Asia Talent Cup in 2020 and represented India thrice in the Asian Road Racing Championships, with two top-10 finishes in 2023. Kavin's next race will be Round 3 of the JuniorGP Stk at Barcelona from May 16-19.

Gukesh, Arjun and Praggnanandhaa in Warsaw for Superbet Rapid and blitz

PTI ■ WARSAW

Fresh from his historic triumph at the Candidates' tournament, Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh will compete in the Superbet Rapid and Blitz chess tournament which begins here on Wednesday. A part of the Grand Chess tour, the event will also see GM R Praggnanandhaa in action for the first time since the Candidates while world number seven Erigaise Arjun is the other Indian in the 10-player field for the tournament which will have nine rounds of rapid and 18 rounds of blitz to decide the winner. The tournament favourite is none other than world number one Magnus Carlsen



of Norway who starts as the top seed. The USD 175000 prize money event has as many as six wild cards in the first of the five events. The tour also has a bonus prize pool of USD 175000 for the top three finishers out of which a UDS 100000 is reserved for the

winner. The four players who have signed up for the entire tour are Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa, Anish Giri of Holland and Nodirbek Abdusattarov of Uzbekistan. All of them will take part in four out of five events out of which two will be classical and remaining

three will be rapid and blitz. Besides Carlsen and Arjun, the other four wild cards have been given to Wei Yi of China, Duda Jan-Krzysztof of Poland, Vincent Keymer of Germany and Kirill Shevchenko of Romania. Set to play four out of five events in the tour, Gukesh looks like one of the tour favourites. The Chennai-based player also has a World Championship match to play later this year against Ding Liren of China and he surely has his hands full. Praggnanandhaa is a known expert in the faster version of the game and has beaten Carlsen a few times already. If there is one opponent that creates fear for the opposition — that's this 18-year-old Praggnanandhaa.

Arjun might have missed out on a Candidates berth very narrowly but has quickly put that setback aside. Banking on open events that elite players seldom play, Arjun struck back like a hurricane and briefly became top Indian rated player too till Gukesh surpassed him. Arjun is one uncompromising player in the world who fears none and wants to be his best, no matter who the opposition is. For Carlsen, the biggest opposition will come from the Indian trio only, both in Rapid and Blitz. Gukesh may not be the best when it comes to faster version of the game but the reason why he is playing is a clear signal that he wants to get better at it.



Late Baldé header steals dramatic 4-3 win for Lyon at Lille

AP ■ LILLE

Lyon scored a dramatic stoppage time winner to beat Lille 4-3 in a topsy-turvy French league thriller. Mama Baldé got the winner with a superb header in the second minute of stoppage time to shock a home side that led 1-0, 2-0, and 3-2. Lyon's fourth win in five league games ended Lille's run of three consecutive home victories. Bafodé Diakité put Lille ahead with a fine header after 20 minutes, and Edon Zhegrova added a second 16 minutes later when he fired a low shot home from outside the box. Goals from Said Benrahma in the 65th and substitute Malick Fofana eight minutes from time brought Lyon level. Bafodé Diakité gave Lille the lead again three minutes later with his second goal. Alexandre Lacazette made it 3-3 two minutes remaining and Baldé grabbed the spotlight. Lyon moved into seventh place in Ligue 1, two points behind Lens.

Thiago Silva to return to Brazilian club Fluminense after leaving Chelsea at the end of the season

AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Veteran defender Thiago Silva will return to Brazilian club Fluminense after leaving Chelsea at the end of the season. The 39-year-old Silva said last week he was not extending his contract with Chelsea and Fluminense announced Tuesday that the center back is joining on a

free transfer. The defending Copa Libertadores champion posted a picture of Silva wearing a Fluminense shirt on social media with the text: "The monster is back." Silva played for Fluminense between 2006 and 2008. He left for AC Milan in 2009, and three years later joined Paris Saint-Germain. The Brazilian joined Chelsea in



2020 and won the Champions League the following year. The defender was in Brazil's squad for the last four World Cups. He also won the 2013 Confederations Cup and the 2019 Copa America with the national team. Silva is expected to join Fluminense once Brazil's transfer window reopens in July.

Olympic bound Preeti among seven Indians to win gold at Asian U-22 & Youth Boxing Championships

PTI ■ ASTANA (KAZAKHSTAN)

Paris Olympics-bound Preeti was among seven Indian boxers to have clinched the gold medal as the country's medals tally hit a high of 43 at the conclusion of the Asian U-22 & Youth Boxing Championships here. Preeti (54kg) made a remarkable comeback after going down 0-5 in the first round to register a 3-0 win in the final against Kazakhstan's Bazarova Elina. The Indian boxers won 12 gold, 14 silver and 17 bronze medals to finish second behind hosts Kazakhstan who

bagged a total of 48 medals. The first gold medal on Tuesday went to Vishvanath Suresh in the 48kg category with the reigning defeating Kazakhstan's Karap Yernar 5-0. Nikhil (57kg) defeated Sabyr Yerbolat of Kazakhstan with a referee stopped contest (RSC) win in the third round. Akash Gorkha (60kg) secured a 4-1 win over Kazakhstan's Ruslan Kuzeubayev to win India's third gold medal in the men's category. In the women's category, Poonam Poonia (57kg) and Prachi (63kg) defeated Kazakhstan's Sakysh Anel and

Anar Tursynbek respectively with an identical 4-1 scoreline. Later, Muskan (75kg) was made to work hard by Uzbekistan's Zokirova Aziza for a 3-2 split decision but one that gave India's its seventh gold medal. Preet Malik (67kg), Guddi (48kg), Tamanna (50kg), Saneh (70kg) and Alfiya Pathan (81kg) finished their campaigns with silver medals after going down in their respective finals. The Indian U-22 team grabbed a total of 21 medals including seven gold, five silver and nine bronze medals.



LIST OF MEDAL WINNERS: Youth medalists: Gold - Men's: Brijesh Tamta (48kg), Aryan Hooda (51kg), Yashwardhan Singh (63.5kg); Women's: Laxmi (50kg), Nisha (52kg); Silver - Men's: Sagar Jakhar (60kg), Priyanshu (71kg), Rahul Kundu (75kg), Aryan (92kg); Women's: Tamanna (54kg), Nikita Chand (60kg), Shrushti Sathe (63kg), Rudrika (75kg), Khushi Pooniya (81kg); Bronze - Men's: Sumit (67kg), Sahil (80kg), Lakshay Rath (92+kg); Women's: Annu (48kg), Yatri Patel (57kg),

Parthavi Grewal (66kg), Akansha Phalasswal (70kg), Nirjhara Bana (+81kg). U-22 medalists: Gold - Men's: Vishvanath Suresh (48kg), Nikhil (57kg), Akash Gorkha (60kg); Women's: Preeti (54kg), Poonam Poonia (57kg), Prachi (63kg), Muskan (75kg); Silver - Men's: Preet Malik (67kg); Women's - Guddi (48kg), Tamanna (50kg), Saneh (70kg), Alfiya Pathan (81kg); Bronze - Men's: M Jadumani (51kg), Ajay Kumar (63.5kg), Ankush (71kg), Dhruv Singh (80kg), Jugnoo (86kg), Yuvraj (92kg); Women's - Devika (52kg), Kajal (66kg), Ritika (+81kg).



INCONSISTENT SRH TAKE ON LSG IN PUSH FOR PLAYOFFS SPOT

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad will be eager to move on from their underwhelming batting display when they host Lucknow Super Giants in a crucial Indian Premier League match here on Wednesday. Both teams are locked in at 12 points from 11 games with SRH making the top four cut based on a slightly superior net run rate of -0.065 compared to LSG's -0.371. The Sunrisers find themselves in a fierce competition for the top four spot with Kolkata Knight Riders (16), Rajasthan Royals (16) and Chennai Super Kings (12) stationed above them on the points table. The winner of the duel will take a leap in the playoff race. The Pat Cummins-led side has ample talent but has been unable to hold on to a winning run recently. Sunrisers have lost three of their last four matches, mainly because their destructive batting line-up hasn't delivered. In their last match against Mumbai Indians, which they lost by seven wickets, they failed to put up a good target on the board, which has been



their strong suit this season. Barring Travis Head, who has been their stand out performer, the other batters in the side have faced a recent slump. After displaying his power-hitting ability, young opener Abhishek Sharma has

breached the 30-run mark just once in the last four games. And while SRH head coach Daniel Vettori has conceded that the openers are not expected to do the job all the time, the middle order needs to step up.

The flamboyant Heinrich Klaasen has also been unable to strike the ball consistently and Nitish Reddy too has been patchy. The bowlers have fared better compared to their batting counterparts. T Natarajan has been

consistent with the ball while seasoned seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar also seems to have found his mojo after his incisive spell helped SRH eke out a one-run win against RR. LSG, on the other hand, have to get over their overall lacklustre display against Kolkata Knight Riders, when they not only conceded the first-ever 200 plus score at the Ekana Stadium but also folded their innings at 137. It was a day when skipper KL Rahul failed to anchor the innings while the likes of Marcus Stoinis and Nicholas Pooran were unable to get the big shots when needed. Ayush Badoni has had a subdued run in this IPL and the uncapped Indian player would be keen to shrug off the rustiness. LSG's struggles with the ball have been majorly due to the lack of firepower in their pace-bowling department. With tearaway pacer Mayank Yadav ruled out of the IPL and left-arm pacer Mohsin Khan also picking up an injury, the onus will be on Afghan quick Naveen-ul-Haq, young Yash Thakur, Stoinis and spinners Krunal Pandya and Ravi Bishnoi to deliver.

Delhi Capitals keep hopes alive with win over RR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Capitals earned a hard-fought 20-run win over Rajasthan Royals to technically stay alive in the IPL play-offs race as home spinners Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav played a key role in the team's victory in the must-win contest here Tuesday. Yet again, it was Jake Fraser-McGurk (50) and Abhishek Porel's (65) coruscating display of power-hitting that took DC to a challenging 221 for eight. Chasing a stiff target to secure their place in the play-offs, the Royals were going strong but once skipper Sanju Samson (86 off 46 balls) was dismissed in the 16th over, their innings lost momentum. They ended up at 201 for 8. Wrist spinner Kuldeep (2/25 in 4 overs) and left-arm spinner Axar (1/25 in 3 overs) exhibited impressive control over line and length that did put brakes on Royals' scoring rate in the middle overs. The two bowlers gave away just 50 runs in their combined seven overs. After Tuesday's win, Delhi Capitals moved to fifth place with 12 points — the same as three other teams — but even if they win their remaining two contests, it will be difficult for them to make the knockout stage as the teams placed above them have better chances of logging 18 points. DC can have a maximum of 16 points. Veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin had jolted the Capitals with wickets in his successive overs but pacer Avesh Khan bled runs. Samson's stroke-making was a treat to watch, even as Jos Buttler could not make the most of a dropped chance. Samson treated the seasoned pacer Ishant Sharma with utter disdain, scoring easy boundaries off him. Buttler struggled to get going and was handed a chance when he was on 8 as Jake Fraser-McGurk dropped a high catch off Mukesh Kumar.

The England batter dragged one from left-arm spinner Axar, who displayed the art of containing the batters on a small ground like Kotla. Kuldeep too had the batters in a tight leash as the asking rate grew. Rasikh Dar cleaned up Riyan Parag after getting hit out of the park. Samson completed his fifty with a six off Kuldeep and then launched a severe attack on Dar, who leaked 18 in runs

freely. The initial boundaries were largely well-timed drives and lofted shots in the 'V' space. Fraser-McGurk grew restless and began to throw his bat around. The Australian gradually got his rhythm and was harsh on Avesh, who he blasted for 28 runs, plundering four fours and two sixes in the fourth over of the innings to complete his half-century in just 19 balls.



in the 13th over of the innings. Royals needed 91 runs from 42 balls. Debutant Shubham Dube supported his skipper well as he hit a monstrous six off Ishant after hitting a four. Left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed bowled four wides in a row before creating a chance to get rid of Samson, whose lofted shot just fell short of long-off fielder. However, after the departure of Samson, Royals innings fell apart. Earlier, had it not been some smart bowling by Ashwin and fellow off-spinner Riyan Parag in the middle overs, DC would have put more runs on the board.

As fate would have it, Fraser-McGurk had a soft dismissal when he hit a full-toss from Ashwin straight to cover fielder Donovan Ferreira. Shai Hope too departed soon in a rather unfortunate fashion. Porel hit Sandeep straight, the ball touched the bowler's hand before crashing into the stumps, and caught the West Indian outside the crease. Yuzvendra Chahal (1/48 in 4 overs) began with a slightly fullish length and was hammered for six by Porel. Parag, though, did a great job with his off-spin as he managed to keep the batters quiet.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former Australia captain Michael Clarke does not read much into Rohit Sharma's string of poor scores, but suggests that the "fatigued" Indian skipper take a break to freshen up ahead of the T20I World Cup. Rohit, who will lead India in the next month's 20-team global showpiece, has four single-digit scores in his last five outings for his franchise Mumbai Indians in the ongoing IPL. The 37-year-old has had a busy season this year with an intense five-Test series preceding the IPL for Mumbai Indians, who are all but eliminated from the race to the playoffs this year. "Rohit, being the wise judge of his own performances, will

'Fatigued' Rohit Sharma needs break to freshen up ahead of T20I World Cup: Michael Clarke

undoubtedly be disappointed, especially considering his strong start. In my view, he might be feeling a bit fatigued as well," Clarke told Star Sports. "A break to freshen up could do wonders for him, but as the Indian captain and a key player for Mumbai Indians, you're not getting a break. He's going to have to find form," Clarke continued. Rohit played as an impact substitute in their match against Kolkata Knight Riders last week, raising some concerns for the Indian camp. However, he played a full game



against Sunrisers Hyderabad three days later. Clarke said it is only a matter of time before Rohit gets back to his usual elements as a batter.

"He was in a great mood. He's happy, which is a really good sign. He doesn't seem to be struggling with his timing; it's just a matter of getting out," he

said. "With someone like Rohit, it's only a matter of time before he finds his form again. Hopefully, he stresses less and focuses on his game because he's too talented to keep missing out. He's at his best when he's timing the ball, rather than trying to force it," he added. Clarke, meanwhile, also had praise in store for Rohit's deputy for the World Cup and MI skipper Hardik Pandya, who returned with 4-0-31-3 in their seven-wicket win over SRH on Monday.



KKR players spend night in Varanasi after flight diverted multiple times due to bad weather

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Kolkata Knight Riders players had a harrowing experience as they were forced to spend a night at Varanasi after their flight from Lucknow to Kolkata was diverted multiple times due to bad weather. Following their massive 98-run win over Lucknow Super Giants on Sunday, the Shreyas Iyer-led side left on Monday evening for Kolkata at 5:45pm. The team was scheduled to arrive at 7:25pm. But the charter flight had to be diverted to Guwahati first and then to Varanasi after adverse weather conditions made it impossible to land the plane in Kolkata. The KKR media team provided an update at 8:46pm, saying, "Due to inclement weather over Kolkata, the KKR charter flight has been diverted to Guwahati. We've just landed here." Then another update at 9:43pm said, "We've got clearance to fly back to Kolkata now, from Guwahati. Estimated arrival: 11pm."

However, the ordeal was not over for the players and support staff as multiple attempts to land the flight failed, forcing the officials to divert the flight mid-air to Varanasi. "Flight took off from Guwahati to Kolkata, was scheduled to land at 11 PM. Couldn't land once again due to bad weather, despite several attempts. Diverted mid-air to Varanasi now. Just landed here," said an update at 1:15 am. The KKR team then spent the night at Varanasi and will be travelling to Kolkata this afternoon. "The team would be checking into Varanasi hotel for overnight stay. Return flight to Kolkata TBD on Tuesday (7 May) afternoon," the KKR media team said in the final update at 3:00 am. Fortunately, KKR's next game is against Mumbai Indians at Edens Garden on May 11. The two-time former champions will play Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad on May 13 and Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati on May 19 for their final two league matches.

OTHER SPORTS

Man United in crisis: Transfers, tactics and takeover helped lead up to 4-0 humiliation at Palace

AP ■ MANCHESTER (ENGLAND)

A bad season just keeps on getting worse for Manchester United. The 20-time English champion was routed 4-0 by Crystal Palace on Monday and faces the prospect of its lowest finish in the Premier League era, as well as a season without European soccer. League qualification was already beyond Erik ten Hag's troubled team before its latest defeat. Now, sitting eighth in the standings, even the third-tier Conference League could end up out of reach. On current form, United might need to beat Manchester City in this month's FA Cup final to secure a place in the Europa League. On current form, there is little chance of that happening. One of the world's most storied clubs is in a mess and the humiliation at the hands of

Palace was the latest evidence of that. A record of 13 league defeats is the most United has suffered in a Premier League campaign. In all competitions that number rises to 18, including four losses in six games as United crashed out of the Champions League at the group stage. Ten Hag's team has conceded 81 goals in all competitions, which is the most since 1976-77. According to stats company Opta, United has also spent more time in a losing position in league games this season than a winning one. Its only win in its last seven league games was against last-placed Sheffield United. United's lowest finish in the Premier League era - which it long dominated, winning 13 titles under former manager Alex Ferguson - was seventh under David Moyes in 2013-14. Here are some of the reasons



behind United's fall this season. **INJURIES:** United's substitutes' bench against Palace included six teenagers and two goalkeepers, such is the level of the injury crisis which has gripped Ten Hag's team. Jonny Evans, the veteran 36-year-old center back, was rushed back from injury to cover for the absent Harry Maguire and midfielder

Casemiro had to play as a makeshift defender. It has been the story of United's season with key players ruled out for long periods, including Luke Shaw, Lisandro Martinez, Mason Mount, Casemiro, Christian Eriksen, Rasmus Hojlund and Marcus Rashford. Yet United is not the only team to suffer from injuries, with Liverpool and Newcastle also seeing their squads decimated

by absences. Even Ten Hag accepted there was no excuse for Monday's performance. "The players who were available should do better. It's a deserved defeat," he said. **TACTICS:** Last season United had one of the meanest defenses in the Premier League, with only treble-winning City and Newcastle conceding fewer goals. It's been a very different story in Ten Hag's second season in charge, with the openness of his team a consistent problem. To compound the issue, United has found goals hard to come by at the other end of the field. A total of 52 scored is the joint lowest in the top half of the standings, level with 10th-place Bournemouth. Luton - which is in the relegation zone - has scored 49. United is too open in midfield, too fragile in defense and not potent enough in attack. And it falls on Ten Hag to come up with the solutions.



Badosa shows signs of her old form in a win over Andreeva at Italian Open

AP ■ ROME

Paula Badosa showed signs of her former top-five form during a 6-2, 6-3 victory over 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva in the first round of the Italian Open on Tuesday. Badosa was ranked as high as No. 2 before she missed the second half of last year due to a back injury that has also slowed her this season. She's now No. 126. Badosa jumped out to a 5-1 lead in the first set before a 45-minute rain delay and then picked up where she left off against the 40th-ranked Andreeva, who was the WTA tour's newcomer of the year in 2023. Badosa reached the quarterfinals in Rome last year but that turned out to be her penultimate tournament of the season. It was Badosa's first win since beating Simona Halep at the Miami Open last month in Halep's return from a doping ban. It also ended Badosa's six-match losing streak against players ranked in the top 40 that had stretched back to Rome last year. Also on the red clay at the Foro Italico, Shelby Rogers routed Italian wild-card entry Lisa Pigato 6-1, 6-0.

Bengal, Haryana win women hockey nationals ties

PTI ■ RANCHI

Bengal and Haryana registered identical victories by margins of 2-1 over Odisha and Maharashtra respectively in the National Women's Hockey League 2024 here on Tuesday. Bengal showed relentless attacking prowess and swift passing throughout the game. Their breakthrough came in the second quarter when Shanti Horo (23) manoeuvred past Odisha's defence before unleashing a thunderous shot into the net. The momentum swung

further in Bengal's favour in the second half when Shanti Horo (39) capitalised on an unmarked opportunity in the D area, slotting home her second goal with precision. Odisha managed to score a goal in the final quarter through Dipi Monika Toppo (51), who converted a penalty corner. Nevertheless, Bengal held on to their lead to emerge winners. Despite the loss Odisha, remained on top of the points table with 12 points from six matches. In the day's other match, Haryana dominated possession from the start.



The breakthrough came through Manju Chorsiya (12), who capitalised on an opportunity to score from open play, putting Haryana in the lead. In the second half, Haryana strengthened their position with Pooja (37) converting a penalty corner. Despite Maharashtra's efforts and multiple opportunities, including four penalty corners, they could only convert one, with Sukanya Dhaware (55) scoring a field goal in the dying minutes to narrow the deficit for her team.

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