



CITY 3 NADDA, YOGI SLAM CONG OVER PITRODA'S REMARKS

OPINION 6 AN OPEN LETTER TO SHEHBAZ SHARIF

WORLD 10 YEMEN'S HOUTH REBELS CLAIM TWO ATTACKS IN GULF OF ADEN

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY MAY 10, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

Established 1864

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



CSK AIM TO CONTINUE ASCENT TO TOP THREE 12 SPORTS

ED stonewall for Kejriwal

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Jailed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has sought 'relief' from the Supreme Court to enable him to campaign for the Lok Sabha polls, faced opposition from the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which is probing the AAP leader's role in a multi-crore excise policy. In a fresh affidavit filed on Thursday in the apex court, the ED opposed interim bail for Kejriwal, stating that the right to campaign for elections was "not fundamental" and that no political leader has ever been granted interim bail for campaigning, even if they are not contesting polls. The move comes a day before the Supreme Court is set to hear Kejriwal's interim bail plea in the case on Friday. Sources also said the ED is preparing to file a chargesheet in the liquor scam in which Kejriwal has been named as the kingpin. Interestingly, the ED said such an approach would incentivise every criminal to become a politician and being in campaign mode throughout the year while committing rampant offences and violations of laws in the country. "Around 123 elections have taken place in the past three years and if interim bail is granted for election campaigning then no politician could be arrested



File Photo: PTI

and kept in judicial custody since elections take place all year round," the ED said. It said there are numerous examples where politicians contested elections in judicial custody and some have even won but were never granted interim bail on this ground. "It is relevant to note that the right to campaign for an election is neither a fundamental right nor a constitutional right and not even a legal right," the agency said. It said to its knowledge, "no political leader has been

granted interim bail for campaigning even though he is not the contesting candidate. Even a contesting candidate is not granted interim bail if he is in custody for his own campaigning. "In light of the above, any special concession in favour of the arrestee enlarging him on interim bail for campaigning in general election would, in the humble submission of the respondent, amount to anathema to the rule of law and equality and create a precedent which would permit all

unscrupulous politicians to commit crimes, avoid investigation under the garb of one election or the other be it municipal election, or panchayat election or Assembly election or general election and thereafter upon being arrested, seek interim bail to campaign for one election or the other thereby creating two separate classes in the count viz. ordinary people who are bound by the rule of law as well as the laws of the country and politicians who can seek exemption from the laws in

the hope of securing interim bail to campaign for elections. In this regard, it may be noted that in the past five years, 123 elections have been held in various states in India," it said. The ED said in a federal structure, no set of election is more significant than another and therefore, every politician at every level would argue that if he is not let out on interim bail, he would suffer irreversible consequences. "Under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act alone presently there are many politicians who are in judicial custody and their cases are examined by competent courts upholding their custody. "There must be several political leaders in judicial custody throughout the country in non-PMLA offences. "There is no reason why a special prayer for a special treatment by the petitioner be accorded to". "Grant of interim bail merely for political campaigning would militate against and will be discriminatory to the rule of equality as work/business/ profession or activity of every citizen is equally important to him or her. It would not be possible to hold that work of a small farmer or a small trader is any less important than political campaigning of a political leader who admittedly is not contesting. Continued on Page 8



File Photo: PTI

Testing times ahead for BJP in Haryana

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

Just a few days ahead of the sixth phase of Lok Sabha elections in Haryana, the BJP-led Nayab Singh Saini Government has been trying to keep its flock together, while there has been a demand for a floor test by JJP leader Dushyant Chautala, who not very long ago was a partner with the BJP in the Manohar Lal Khattar Government. While Dushyant wrote to Governor Bandaru Dattatreya seeking a floor-test for the present Haryana Government to prove its majority on floor of the House, the Congress, which had earlier demanded the imposition of President's rule and early Assembly elections in the State, also sought time from the Governor for a meeting with a party delegation. This comes days after three Independent MLAs withdrew support from the

BJP Government, extending support to the Congress. However, Saini maintained that his Government is not in trouble. He told reporters in Karnal that his Government won a confidence vote in March and "if it comes to seeking the trust vote, I will do it again when the time comes". The BJP currently has 40 MLAs in the Assembly, shy of the majority mark of 45 in the now 88-member House. Technically, the BJP Government has the support of 43 MLAs (including Independents) now, though it claimed on Tuesday that four JJP MLAs too may offer "tactical assistance to the Government if needed", taking its strength to 47. The JJP had pulled out of the BJP coalition Government in March 2024. Of the JJP's 10 MLAs, at least six have distanced themselves from Chautala. Continued on Page 8

Russia says US poking nose into India affairs

PTI ■ MOSCOW

The US has not yet provided any reliable evidence of the involvement of Indian citizens in the murder plot of a Khalistani terrorist in that country, Russia has said, as it accused Washington of meddling in India's domestic affairs and the ongoing elections. In November last year, US federal prosecutors charged Indian national Nikhil Gupta with working with an Indian Government employee in the foiled plot to kill Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. Pannun, wanted in India on terror charges, holds dual citizenship of the US and Canada. He has been designated as a terrorist by the Union Home Ministry under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova, when asked to respond to a report by The Washington Post claiming that India is trying to adopt the policies as Russia and Saudi Arabia, said, "According to the information we have, Washington has not yet provided any reliable evidence of the involvement of Indian citizens in the preparation of the murder of a certain GS Pannun. Continued on Page 8

Sandeshkhali rape victim turns 'hostile'



SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

After Saturday's "fake video", on Thursday, emerged the 'fake FIR' in the Sandeshkhali mass rape case, threatening to dent and disturb the BJP's soaring graph in the Basirhat parliamentary constituency. Things tended to boomerang against the saffron outfit, even as the Trinamool Congress' sting teams worked overtime to turn the Sandeshkhali rape-and-land-grab cases upside down. Some women on Thursday said the police complaint that they were made to sign on blank sheets were not about rape but about non-payment of hundred days' work schemes. "We were tricked into signing the blank papers ... we were told that the signed papers would be used to claim the 100-days' work dues ... we had no idea that rape stories would be written

there. We discovered later that rape complaints had been lodged in our names. This is a blatant lie," they said. The woman said the incident took place on the day the National Commission for Women visited the island. "A woman called Piyali who is an outsider did it all ... we told them that we had not received money as part of the 100 days' job scheme. But in the name of getting us to write a complaint to that effect she made us sign on a blank sheet," she said. The BJP immediately rose up to control damage by saying the TMC is threatening the women to change their versions. "Earlier they showed a fake and paid video and now they are coming up with this ... The leadership will have to say what has to be said but it is clear that it is the same TMC which has been threatening the villagers into submission for the past 10 years once again have started doing so ... though I haven't seen it ... if the video is true then the women are being threatened to contradict their statements," a local BJP leader at Basirhat said on conditions of anonymity. State BJP leader Priyanka Tibrewal asked, "What the TMC was doing for the past several months ... why they have suddenly brought this fake video and fake FIR issue ... this is an afterthought ... but the damage has already been done ... earlier they said the women were lying and now they are saying they were tricked to lie." Continued on Page 8

INDIA Bloc to meet EC over turnout figures



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Leaders of the Opposition INDIA Bloc are likely to meet the Election Commission on Friday over their demand to promptly release the absolute voter turnout figures in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls after each phase. The Opposition leaders will also raise the issue of alleged "use of religious symbols" by the BJP in its campaign, sources added. The INDIA Bloc parties, including the Congress, Trinamool Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist), have written to the poll panel separately so far, expressing concern over the alleged "delay" in the release of the voter turnout data in the first two phases. Continued on Page 8

Various Opposition parties have also approached the poll panel over speeches made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other BJP leaders during poll campaigns, alleging that the Model Code of Conduct had been violated. Amid the Opposition's allegations, the poll watchdog had asserted that booth-wise data of the "actual number of votes polled" is available to the candidates soon after the voting ends. Opposition parties have also sought the details of the number of voters who exercised their franchise. In a statement issued last week, the EC also said it attaches "due importance" to the timely release of voter turnout figures after each phase of the poll, and said not just constituency, but booth-wise data of the actual number of votes polled is available with the candidates, which is a statutory requirement. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had written to leaders of various Opposition parties on the issue of alleged "discrepancies" in the voting data released by the EC. In his letter, Kharge urged that the INDIA Bloc leaders to "collectively, unitedly and unequivocally" raise their voice on the issue. The EC officially shared the turnout figure for the first two phases of Lok Sabha polls on April 30. Continued on Page 8

HOLY DAYS AHEAD



Kedarnath temple being decorated ahead of its opening for the 'Char Dham Yatra' in Rudraprayag PTI

Deadlock over, Air India Express will take to the skies again

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After two and a half days of stalemate, Air India Express and the crew reached a middle ground on Thursday, putting an end to the suffering of hundreds of flyers. The Air India Express cabin crew has decided to withdraw strike and join back for duty after the airline assured to look into all the issues raised by the cabin crew. Besides, the airline has agreed to withdraw the termination letters issued to 25 cabin crew and the management will review the cases as per service regulations, they added. The Tata Group-owned airline has cancelled more than 170 flights since Tuesday night after the cabin crew started

reporting sick to protest against the alleged mismanagement at the airline. Following the cancellation of several flights and the inconvenience to passengers, the Government had to get involved. At the request of the Regional Labour Commissioner Ashok Perumalla, a meeting was held on Thursday between Air India Express Union and the airline CEO to reach a solution. Apparently, after the meeting, a middle ground has been reached and the strike will end, much to the relief of the travelers. In the email notice of termination it sent to the affected employees, the airline added that the widespread sick leave "violated the Air



Air India and other planes parked at the airport in Mumbai on Thursday. Air India Express on Thursday cancelled 85 flights or around 23 per cent of the total daily capacity as the disruptions due to the cabin crew shortage continue. Air India will operate services on 20 of its routes to minimise inconvenience to passengers PTI

India Express Limited Employees' Service Rules as applicable" in addition to breaching the relevant laws.

The emailed statement followed Air India Express CEO Aloke Singh's announcement that the

airline was curtailing flight services until May 13 as a result of the cabin crew crisis. A section of the cabin crew

has alleged mismanagement and lack of equality in the treatment of staff. A conciliation process is happening under the Industrial Disputes Act after a union representing a section of the Air India Express cabin crew had filed a complaint before the labour department last year. Room sharing, lack of proper support, revised salary structure and alleged differential treatment of experienced crew members of Air India Express are among the issues being flagged by the striking cabin crew. On Wednesday, the Civil Aviation Ministry sought a report from Air India Express on the cancellation of flights and also asked the airline to resolve the issues

promptly. Discontent has been brewing among a section of staff at Air India Express since the start of the process to merge AIX Connect, formerly AirAsia India, with itself. Regardless of the actions taken by Air India Express, such as the dismissal of employees who went on mass leave without notice, it is ultimately the passengers who bear the brunt. The situation with Air India Express is even more dire, as many passengers are finding out about flight cancellations only after completing security checks. Soon after 30 crew members were sacked for staging mass sick leave, the Air India Express on Thursday announced that the airline

has cancelled 85 flights as flight operations were disrupted by shortage of cabin crew members. "We will be operating 283 flights today. We have mobilised all resources and Air India will support us by operating on 20 of our routes. However, 85 of our flights stand cancelled and we urge our guests booked to fly with us to check if their flight is affected by the disruption before heading to the airport," said the airline in the statement. In case their flight is cancelled or delayed beyond three hours, the Air India Express said the passengers may opt for a full refund or reschedule to a later date without any fees. Continued on Page 8

BJP's politics is for nation-building: Singh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

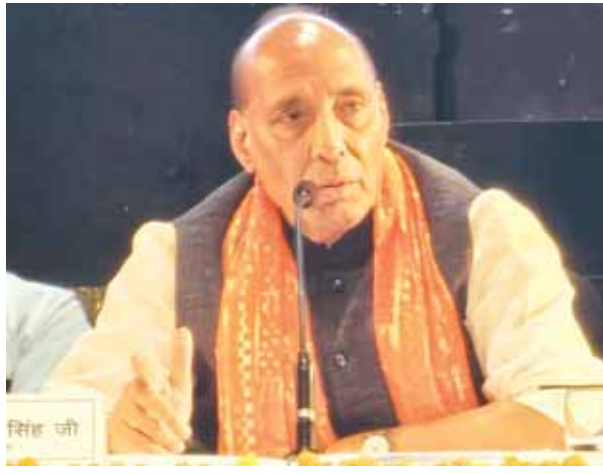
Defence Minister Rajnath Singh underscored the BJP's commitment to nation-building through politics during a gathering at a school in Lucknow on Thursday.

"We want to build such a country that is not only rich but has knowledge, science that leads the world," he said while speaking at a Prabhuddh Sammelan. He acknowledged the prevailing lack of confidence in politicians but highlighted the BJP's dedication to fulfilling promises and achieving manifesto goals, saying, "We have fulfilled our promises and completed all the tasks we mentioned in our manifesto."

Singh recounted significant BJP accomplishments, including the revocation of Article 370 and progress toward constructing the Ayodhya temple.

He emphasised the clarity of intentions behind these actions, noting, "Our intentions are clear. And I feel that it is a coincidence that Ram Lulla has entered into the palace and this will bring in Ram Rajya." Singh also addressed misconceptions about the Citizenship Amendment Bill, stating, "We made it clear that it was a citizenship bill and no discrimination had been made on the basis of religion."

Regarding economic progress, Singh cited India's rise in global rankings from the eleventh to fifth-largest economy, attributing this to decisive leadership. "Our PM came and he made a government of leadership and now our economy has jumped to the fifth place," he highlighted India's potential as a leading global player in science and innovation, saying, "Today India has more than



one lakh startups and these youth are carrying out miracles with new innovations." Singh lauded India's achievements in space exploration, citing Chandrayaan missions and the ethos of scientific ded-

intellectual heritage of sages, saying, "This is something which an intellectual alone can do and this message was given by the sages of the country." Singh addressed misconceptions about the BJP's policies, advocating for justice without appeasement and highlighting India's enhanced international standing. "We only say that there should be no appeasement and what is wrong in that," he said. He cited diplomatic successes in crisis management and praised the contributions of various communities to India's development. Singh urged political unity and refrained from politicising security issues, emphasizing the need for collective efforts in the national interest. "Being a defence minister, I would like to say that all political parties should forget their differences," he added.

FOURTH PHASE LS POLLS IN UP

A test of caste dynamics and BJP dominance

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

As the Lok Sabha elections progress into their fourth phase scheduled for May 13, the focus shifts to 13 crucial constituencies in Uttar Pradesh. This phase is poised to be a litmus test for caste influences and the enduring appeal of the Narendra Modi magic, presenting a formidable challenge for the Bharatiya Janata Party to maintain its stronghold on all 13 seats secured by it in the 2019 elections. While the initial phases primarily traversed through Jat and Yadav strongholds, the fourth phase presents a blend of both, with the BJP and the Samajwadi Party locked in a battle for dominance. The constituencies in this phase include Shahjahanpur (SC), Kheri, Dhaurahra, Sitapur, Hardoi (SC), Misrikh (SC), Unnao, Farrukhabad, Etawah (SC), Kannauj, Kanpur, Akbarpur and Bahraich (SC). Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Sitapur, Unnao, Etawah, and Bahraich boast significant Dalit voter populations. In the 2019 elections, riding on the Modi wave, the BJP swept all 13 seats going to polls in this phase, despite facing the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance. However, this election witnesses the BSP contesting independently, while the SP has entered into a seat-sharing agreement with its INDIA bloc partner Congress. The BJP faces the challenge of replicating its 2019 performance in this phase, while the SP aims to reclaim the prestigious Kannauj seat lost narrowly to the BJP in the previous election. Historically, the BSP has grappled to secure victories in several constituencies, including Shahjahanpur, Kheri, Hardoi, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, and Kanpur.

Verma is the BSP candidate. **KHERI:** Kheri has been a battleground for multiple parties. Since 1996, the BJP has won this seat four times, including consecutive victories in 2014 and 2019. On the other hand, the SP has emerged victorious thrice, with the Congress securing a win in 2009. In 2019, BJP's Ajay Mishra Teni retained his seat by securing 53.62 per cent of the votes, defeating SP's Purvi Verma. Despite controversy surrounding his son's involvement in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case of 2021, Teni remains the BJP candidate for the third time, challenged by SP's Utkarsh Verma. **DHAURAHRA:** Dhaurahra witnessed a competitive battle in the previous Lok Sabha election. BJP's Rekha Verma secured victory with 48.21 per cent of the votes, defeating BSP's alliance candidate Arshad Siddiqui. Rekha Verma continues as the BJP's candidate and faces SP's Anand Bhadouria and BSP's Shyam Kishore Awasthi. **SITAPUR:** In Sitapur, BJP's Rajesh Verma emerged victorious in 2019, securing 48.3 per cent of the votes. He defeated BSP's Nakul Dubey, with Congress securing a minor share of 9 per cent votes. Rajesh Verma continues as the BJP candidate, challenged by Rakesh Rathore of the Congress. **HARDOI (SC):** Hardoi saw a decisive victory of the BJP in 2019 when Jai Prakash Rawat secured 53.71 per cent of the votes, defeating SP's Shiv Prasad Verma. Both BJP and SP have fielded their previous candidates for the upcoming election. **MISRIKH (SC):** A lesser-known constituency, Misrikh saw BJP's Ashok Rawat emerging victorious in 2019, defeating BSP's Neelu Satyarthi. The BJP has repeated its sitting MP, who faces a challenge from SP candidate Manoj Kumar. **UNNAO:** Known as the 'Land of Pen and Sword', Unnao commands attention due to its significant Scheduled Caste population. In 2019, BJP's Swami Sakshi Ji Maharaj secured a landslide victory, defeating SP's Arun Shankar Shukla. The BJP has nominated Swami Sakshi Ji Maharaj once again, while the SP and the BSP have fielded Anu Tandon and Ashok K Pandey, respectively, highlighting the diversity of candidates. **FARRUKHABAD:** Farrukhabad has been a battleground for various political parties. In 2019, BJP's Mukesh Rajput emerged

victorious with 56.8 per cent of the votes, defeating BSP's Manoj Agrawal. The BJP has retained its sitting MP, while the SP has fielded Naval Kishore Kashyap and the BSP has introduced Kranti Pandey, adding complexity to the electoral dynamics. **ETAWAH (SC):** Etawah, historically an SP bastion, has witnessed changing political landscapes. In 2019, BJP's Ram Shankar Katheria defeated SP's Kamlesh Kumar. The BJP has retained Katheria this time, while the SP and BSP have introduced Jitendra Dohare and Ram Singh Baghel, respectively, reflecting the competitive nature of electoral politics. **KANNAUJ:** The electoral landscape of Kannauj underwent a significant transformation in the 2019 elections. BJP's Subrat Pathak dismantled the SP's fort by defeating the then sitting MP Dimple Yadav. The BJP has reiterated its support for Subrat Pathak, while the BSP has introduced a Muslim candidate, Imran Bin Zafar, adding a diverse dimension to the electoral contest. Akhilesh Yadav is the SP candidate. **KANPUR:** Kanpur remains a pivotal constituency in Uttar Pradesh politics. In 2019, BJP's Satyadev Pachauri secured victory, defeating Sriprakash Jaiswal of the Congress. In the upcoming election, both the BJP and Congress have fielded Brahmin candidates, namely Ramesh Awasthi and Alok Mishra, respectively, while the BSP has nominated Kuldeep Bhadouria, signaling a keenly contested electoral battle. **AKBARPUR:** Once a stronghold of the BSP, Akbarpur has witnessed shifting political allegiances over the years. In 2019, BJP's Devendra Bhole emerged victorious, defeating BSP candidate Nisha Sachan. In the upcoming election, the BJP has retained its candidate, while the SP has introduced Raja Ram Pal. The BSP has named a Brahmin candidate, Rajesh Kumar Dwivedi, further diversifying the electoral landscape. **BAHRAICH (SC):** Bahraich has seen a mix of political fortunes over the years. In 2019, BJP's Akshaibai Lal secured victory from this seat, defeating SP's Shabbir Valmiki. The BJP has introduced Anand Gond as its candidate for the upcoming election, while the SP has fielded Ramesh Gautam. The BSP has fielded a professor of Lucknow University, Brijesh Kumar Sonkar, as its candidate.

Priyanka Gandhi strikes emotional chord with people of Rae Bareilly

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday highlighted her family's association with the people of Rae Bareilly by remembering martyrs and offering floral tributes at the Kisan Shaheed Memorial in Munshiganj, Rae Bareilly. She was campaigning for her brother Rahul Gandhi, who is contesting the Lok Sabha election from Rae Bareilly. "During the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-21, the Kisan Movement broke out in Awadh. This movement was led by Baba Ramchandra and Madari Pasi. During the movement, a terrible firing incident took place in Munshiganj, Rae Bareilly. On 7 January 1921, the farmers were surrounded and shot dead on the bridge of the river Sai," Priyanka said while remembering the martyrs. She said on receiving information about this incident, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru reached Rae Bareilly and



met the affected farmers. She said after this massacre, the movement intensified and Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru were arrested. Meanwhile, highlighting the 'guarantee card' of her party, Priyanka said that the Congress would fulfil it unlike Bharatiya Janata Party, which forgot the 'achhey din' it promised to the people. "Women will get 50 per cent participation in government jobs. The honorarium of Anganwadi and ASHA workers and cooks will be doubled. All the products used in farming will be made GST-free. A permanent commission will be formed for loan waiver, unemployed youths will get Rs 1 every year," she asserted. Addressing the 'Nyaya Sankalp Sabha' organised in Kalasaha of Rae Bareilly parliamentary constituency in support of her

brother and Congress candidate Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka accused the BJP leaders of spreading false propaganda about the Congress manifesto so that the public's attention gets diverted from the real issues. She also said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was ignoring the dignity of his post. "Whenever there is a discussion on the TV during the elections, it is always based on religion in order to raise an irrelevant issue. Someday you will say the Congress party is going to steal your buffalo. Sometimes you will say the Congress party will enter your house with an X-ray machine and take away your jewellery. "The prime minister is saying this. He is holding such a big post... he is not looking at its dignity. Whatever comes to his mind, he is saying it so that your attention gets diverted. Basic

questions are not being raised because in the last 10 years, Modi ji's government has not done anything to answer those questions," she said. She alleged that the Modi government neither created employment nor reduced inflation. Meanwhile, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday termed as "absolute lie" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that Congress will put a "Babri lock" on the Ram temple in Ayodhya if it is voted to power, saying court judgments will be honoured. Prime Minister Modi had recently stated at a rally in Madhya Pradesh that he wants the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance to win 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls to ensure that the Congress does not bring back Article 370 in Kashmir and also put a "Babri lock" on the Ram temple in Ayodhya. "This is an absolute lie (yeh ek dum jhooth hai). The Congress party has said a number of times that it will honour the judgment of the court. We have done this (in the past), and will do so in the future," she told reporters here. On Modi's Adani-Ambani jibe, she said Prime Minister Modi had been forced to take their names. She noted that Rahul Gandhi, her brother, mentions the names of Adani and Ambani in his speeches every day.

BJP candidate takes jibe at rival from Cong

Rae Bareilly (PTI): The BJP's Rae Bareilly candidate Dinesh Pratap Singh has accused the Gandhi family of harbouring "hatred" for Rae Bareilly-Amethi, and asked why they did not field a local leader but opted for "Priyanka Gandhi's clerk" to contest the Lok Sabha polls from Amethi. Singh, who is taking on Rahul Gandhi in a high-profile electoral contest here, also claimed that the Gandhi scion will lose by a bigger margin than his mother Sonia Gandhi had won in the 2019 polls. Sonia Gandhi had beaten Singh in 2019 by over 1,67,000 votes. However, this was the lowest margin of victory that Sonia Gandhi has had in the five elections, including a bypoll, that she has fought from the constituency. "People have great trust in Prime Minister Narendra Modi and under his leadership, the country as well as the hard-earned income of the people is safe. People of Rae Bareilly also trust the prime minister," Singh told PTI in an interview here. "So, in such a scenario, I don't think the Congress candidate will be able to hold his ground before the BJP candidate in Rae Bareilly," he said. Asked about Priyanka Gandhi Vadra camping in Rae Bareilly and campaigning for her brother Rahul, Singh said it could be a topic of discussion for media people who have come from outside but her camping here was a non-issue for the people of Rae Bareilly.

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS
SHAHJAHANPUR (SC): Shahjahanpur has witnessed a varied political landscape over the years. The BJP secured victories here in 1998, 2014 and 2019, while the Congress emerged triumphant twice in 1999 and 2004. The SP clinched this seat only once in 2009. In the last elections, BJP's Arun Kumar Sagar emerged victorious with 58.09 per cent of votes, defeating BSP's Amar Chand Jauhar, who was the joint candidate of the SP-BSP-RLD alliance. The BJP has repeated Sagar while SP has fielded Rajesh Kashyap. Daudram

CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED

Neeraj Yadav College of Law
Ram Nagar, Malihabad, Lucknow
REQUIRES

Principal- 01 No.
Asst. Prof. Law (3&5Yrs)- 10 Nos.
Asst. Prof. (Humanities)- 01 in each sub (English, History, Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Psychology)
Qualification & Salary: as per UGC Norms.
Apply to the Manager within 15 days of this E-mail:- hlyge1997@gmail.com
Advt. Mob. No.- 9793000300 Manager

NOTICE

My name has been mentioned as Pramod S/O Ramchandar in my passport which is wrong. My correct name is Pramod Vishwakarma son of Ramchandar Vishwakarma. I should be known and recognized only by the name of Pramod Vishwakarma. Pramod Vishwakarma son of Ramchandar Vishwakarma Village Ojhauli, Post Pichri, Tehsil Sadar District Azamgarh, Pin Code-276403

NOTICE

I, *Ramawati Devi* mother of *JC-543264X Rank *Nb Sub* Name Rajendra Kumar R/o. Vill - Pure Pandit Majre Sairapur, PO- Musapur Teh- Lalganj, Dist- Rae Bareilly (UP) have *Changed* my name from *Ramawati Devi* to *Ramawati* vide affidavit dt 08-04-2024 before advocate and Notary, Lalganj.

NOTICE

I Murli Devi M/O hav. Biram Pal 4 rajpoot army no. 3005847W residence of bagwala, panchkula, haryana. In my son's army service record my D.O.B is wrongly mentioned as 01/07/1958 whereas in other documents my D.O.B is 01/01/1948. Which is true and correct

NOTICE

I, Deepu Gupta S/O Nankan Parshad Gupta R/O Purani Bazar, Tulsipur, Balrampur (UP) have changed my name to Deepu Kumar for all future purposes.

NOTICE

I am Radhika Shahi W/O Late Ramanand Shahi. My husband was in Ex-Army (S.N-PE /14273 /77) RANK- Sepoy). In my husband's Army service record my name incorrectly mentioned as Radhika Devi and DOB is 1-7-1945 by mistake. While my correct name is Radhika Shahi and the DOB is 15-09-1944. Please make necessary changes for my future purposes. vill-post -kati-hara thana ghosi dist Mau pin code 275301

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

NOTICE

I inform that my name is in my husband Rammurat Yadav service record 63 medium regiment c/o 56apo name Sangita DOB 10.04.1986 is wrong. My correct name is Sangita Yadav W/o Rammurat Yadav DOB 21-05-1984. Sangita Yadav W/o Rammurat Yadav, Akbarpur, Bilariyaganj, Azamgarh (UP) Pin-276121

NOTICE

I Murli Devi M/O hav. Biram Pal 4 rajpoot army no. 3005847W residence of bagwala, panchkula, haryana. In my son's army service record my D.O.B is wrongly mentioned as 01/07/1958 whereas in other documents my D.O.B is 01/01/1948. Which is true and correct

NOTICE

I, Deepu Gupta S/O Nankan Parshad Gupta R/O Purani Bazar, Tulsipur, Balrampur (UP) have changed my name to Deepu Kumar for all future purposes.

NOTICE

I am Radhika Shahi W/O Late Ramanand Shahi. My husband was in Ex-Army (S.N-PE /14273 /77) RANK- Sepoy). In my husband's Army service record my name incorrectly mentioned as Radhika Devi and DOB is 1-7-1945 by mistake. While my correct name is Radhika Shahi and the DOB is 15-09-1944. Please make necessary changes for my future purposes. vill-post -kati-hara thana ghosi dist Mau pin code 275301

Woman, with two male friends, arrested for husband's murder

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a shocking incident in Malohabad, a woman allegedly conspired with her two male accomplices to murder her husband, who had left his parents to live separately with her. The gruesome incident took place on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday. "The accused woman, Rekha (32), and her male friends — Sonu Pal (30) and Raju Raidas (25) — have been arrested after the investigation pointed to their involvement in the case. They have been charged under IPC Section 302 (Murder) along with sections of the SC/ST Act," DCP (West)

Durgesh Kumar said. The incident came to light early in the morning when villagers alerted the police upon finding a man's body in a pool of blood with his neck slashed, in his room in the Kushbhari area under Malihabad police station. Initial investigations revealed shocking details. The victim's three children were present in the same room where he was murdered. The police discovered that the wife had initially drugged her husband's food to subdue him before the fatal attack. Subsequently, Sonu held Pradeep's legs while he slept, and Raju attacked him from behind with a sharp weapon,

all while Rekha kept a watch at the door to prevent anyone from intervening or the children from waking. "Rekha was romantically involved with both Sonu Pal and Raju Raidas from the same village, with the affair being known to the deceased and his family, who disappeared but Pradeep defended her. He had chosen to live separately from his family to accommodate Rekha's desire to distance herself from her in-laws," the police explained. During questioning, the accused confessed to the murder, revealing that Pradeep had caught them together in compromising situations previously and had attempted to

restrict Rekha's interactions with them. The deceased's family was aware of Rekha's involvement with Raju Raidas and his accomplice in the crime. Durgesh Kumar elaborated that the two men had been involved with Pradeep's wife for about 5 to 6 months, meeting at Pradeep's house clandestinely. Upon discovering the affair, Rekha and her lovers conspired to eliminate Pradeep. "On the intervening night of May 8 and 9, Rekha laced Pradeep's dinner with sedatives, causing him to fall asleep quickly. She then summoned Sonu and Raju, who executed the murder as planned," the DCP added.

Woman divorced over dowry demand

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A resident of Chinhat was divorced over the phone by her husband from Karnataka due to a demand for dowry amounting to Rs 15 lakh and other items. The woman filed a complaint against her husband Zainul Abidin, her father-in-law Mohammed Ishaq, her brother-in-law Makhdam Samdani, and her sisters-in-law Tahira and Tabassum at the Chinhat police station. In her complaint, she stated that she married Zainul on January 9, 2022, according to Islamic law, and the marriage was registered at the registrar's office on January 13. "Zainul and his family members began taunting and subsequently torturing me, demanding Rs 15 lakh as dowry. They would beat me, lock me in a room, and deprive me of food," she alleged. She mentioned that she was allowed to attend her brother's engagement in Lucknow in

November 2022. "After the event, I asked Zainul to take me back to Karnataka with him, but he refused, citing financial constraints, and promised to bring me back later," she said. She spent time at her parents' house, waiting for Zainul to fulfil his promise. "On January 6 this year, I called him to inquire about his well-being. I was shocked when he told me he was married and had children from another marriage. He then divorced me over the phone and hung up," she alleged. She claimed that her ornaments and other items gifted by her parents and relatives were with Zainul.

government employee, received a call from an unknown number, where the caller identified himself as Umesh Mishra, a friend of the victim. As the voice resembled that of Umesh Mishra, Jagdish inquired about his well-being and the reason for the call. The caller urgently requested Rs 1 lakh, claiming that his UPI was not functioning due to poor internet connectivity. Trusting the caller's identity, Jagdish sent the money. Moments later, he contacted Umesh to confirm if he had received the necessary funds, only to learn that the latter had not made the call.

Tiwari provided a video recorded by the loader driver he was travelling with to Unnao. Reports said that Tiwari was instructed to visit the company's warehouse in Unnao and boarded a loader from Transport Nagar in Sarojininar. Upon reaching Scooters India crossing, he noticed two bike-borne men in front of the loader. The pillion rider accidentally dropped his mobile phone, which was crushed by an SUV passing by. Enraged by the incident, the two assailants forced the loader to stop instead of pursuing the SUV. "They pulled me out, grabbed me by the collar, and brutally assaulted me. They then robbed my mobile phone and cash before fleeing towards Unnao," Tiwari stated in the FIR. The police worked on the case and arrested one of the accused, identified as Ravindra Kumar aka Sachin Rawat of Meerut.

CITYBRIEFS



HINDI DEBATE
The Lucknow Public Collegiate, Sharda Nagar, organised an 'Inter-House Hindi Debate Competition' on Thursday. The competition was held in senior and junior categories, wherein eight students representing the four houses of the school participated. The competition provided a platform to the young minds to put forth their views with self-assurance and rigour. Joint director/principal Dr Jawaid Alam Khan gave away prizes to the winners.

RANDOMISATION
District Election Officer and District Magistrate of Lucknow Surya Pal Gangwar, oversaw the second randomisation of EVMs and VVPATs for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and assembly bypoll scheduled for May 20. This process was conducted assembly-wise in the presence of key officials, observers, candidates, and political party agents. The randomisation included booth allotment for the EVMs, determining which machines will be delivered to specific booths. The process ensures transparency and fairness in the deployment of EVMs and VVPATs across electoral booths.

MoU SIGNED
The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi, entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Haleon UK Trading Limited at Science Centre, New Delhi, in the presence of Dr N Kalaiselvi, Director General of CSIR and Secretary, DSIR, for environmental and societal activity pertaining to economic uplift, livelihood improvement, environmental stewardship and sustainable supply chain development in menthol mint farming and processing in Barabanki. The MoU was exchanged by CSIR-CIMAP Director Dr Prabhodh Kumar Trivedi, and Director of Government Affairs & Communication - Indian Subcontinent, Haleon India, Vedika Kapoor.

MEETING
A quarterly meeting of 'Rajbhasha Implementation Committee' of North Eastern Railway Lucknow Division was organised at North Eastern Railway, Lucknow division, on Thursday. Additional Chief Official Language Officer and Additional Mandal Railway Manager (Operation) Vikram Kumar said: "It is our constitutional responsibility to use the official language Hindi in government work, we appeal to all to use stamps in bilingual form at offices and stations." DRM Aditya Kumar commended the contribution of Lucknow division in the matter of experimenting and spreading official language in NER.

VISIT
General Manager of Western Railway Ashok Kumar Misra visited the RDSO on Thursday. Discussions were held between him and senior officials of the RDSO on various technical items and topics. ADG, RDSO, Sharad Kumar Jain, PED (Rolling Stock) Dinesh Shukla and other senior officers of the RDSO were also present in the meeting.

Nadda, Yogi slam Congress over Pitroda's remarks

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bharatiya Janata Party president JP Nadda launched a scathing attack on the Congress, condemning Sam Pitroda's "racist" remarks, saying an advisor of Rahul Gandhi talked about dividing India on the basis of colour of skin.

During a rally in Chitrakoot, Nadda criticised Pitroda's recent podcast remarks, where he categorised Indians based on ethnic and racial identities, labelling it as an assault on Indian culture.

Pitroda's association with Rahul Gandhi, coupled with his close ties to the Congress leadership, has amplified concerns over the party's stance on divisive issues.

Nadda accused the Congress of attempting to manipulate reservations by advocating for religious-based quotas, thereby jeopardising the rights of Dalits, tribals and backward communities. In his address, Nadda denounced the opposition's alliance, labelling it as a coalition formed solely to shield the corrupt and their kin. Highlighting the transformative impact of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, Nadda emphasised a departure from the politics of nepotism, casteism and appeasement towards a developmental agenda centred on inclusivity and progress.



BJP president JP Nadda at an election rally in Chitrakoot on Thursday

He underscored the BJP's commitment to fulfilling its promises and credited Modi with spearheading initiatives aimed at empowering rural communities, youth, farmers and women. Nadda hailed the remarkable turnaround of Uttar Pradesh under Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's governance, shedding its 'BIMARU' status to emerge as a leading state in the country.

The upcoming fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections on May 20 in the Banda constituency, encompassing Chitrakoot dis-

trict, assumes significance in the electoral landscape. Meanwhile, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also strongly criticised Congress leader Sam Pitroda's "racist" remarks, demanding an apology from the party.

Highlighting Congress' ongoing efforts to sow division based on colour and ethnicity, the chief minister alleged that the grand old party was responsible for the partition of the country in 1947. He said even after

Independence, the party committed the sin of dividing the country along caste, regional and linguistic lines/

"Sam Pitroda, the advisor and guide of the Congress leadership, espouses the party's historical divide-and-rule tactic. His remarks are reprehensible," Chief Minister Yogi said, while talking to reporters in the state capital. "The Congress must apologise to the nation for Pitroda's comments," he said, adding that Pitroda must refrain from commenting on the Ram temple.

'Ramdrohis' questioning necessity, relevance of Ram temple: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, campaigned for Bharatiya Janata Party candidates in Kheri, Dhaurahra, and Sitapur Lok Sabha constituencies. He said that while the public and devotees of Lord Ram were asserting themselves to support those who brought Lord Ram, 'Ramdrohis' were arguing against the necessity of the Ram temple's construction, questioning its relevance within India.

In a biting remark, he raised the question of whether the temple would be erected in Kabul, Kandahar, Lahore or Karachi if not in Ayodhya. He directly accused the Samajwadi Party of providing shelter to mafias and criminals, referring to them as 'shagird' (disciples) of the SP. Alleging SP's involvement in violent incidents, Yogi claimed they targeted Ram devotees and shielded those responsible for terrorist attacks.

Chief Minister Yogi highlighted the emergence of a new India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. He emphasised that those who attempt security breaches now face swift consequences - "Aaj suraksha mein sendh lagane walon ko yah pata hai ki aisa karne se pehle Yamraj jeevan ki door kaat ke jaenge". Furthermore, he urged voters to support BJP candidates:

Ajay Mishra Teni for the Kheri Lok Sabha seat, Rekha Verma for the Dhaurahra Lok Sabha seat and Rajesh Verma for the Sitapur Lok Sabha seat.

Addressing an election rally for Kheri Lok Sabha seat at Gola in Lakhimpur Kheri, the chief minister said that the SP would not even be able to open its account in the UP Lok Sabha elections of 2024 and all the five members of the party's first family were set to lose. The chief minister highlighted the completion of three phases of elections, stating, "There is only one voice resounding throughout the country 'Phir Ek Baar, Modi Sarkar'."

Taking a dig at opposition, the chief minister remarked: "The Congress and SP are now claiming that the construction of Ram temple was unnecessary. As the elections unfold, it is evident that it is a battle between Ram devotees committed to India's progress and the well-being of the underprivileged, and 'Ramdrohis' who jeopardise India's security, disparage the nation on global stages, and toy with the principles of Sanatan faith." He further mentioned that Congress and SP were conspiring to divide the country. "In the Congress era, the nation faced insecure borders and witnessed peak of terrorism and Naxalism. Similarly, the SP regime used to open fire at devotees of Shri Ram and

withdrew cases against terrorists," he said.

Addressing the election rally in support of Dhaurahra candidate at Mohammadi in Lakhimpur Kheri, the chief minister said that as the ongoing Lok Sabha elections reach a critical juncture with half of the constituencies having completed voting in three phases, the populace was echoing the sentiment, "Jo Ram ko laye hain, hum unko layenge". Yogi remarked, "For the first time in the country, we are witnessing a government completing a 10-year tenure, yet the public is resolutely electing BJP candidates to form the Modi government for the third time, brimming with enthusiasm and determination."

He continued, "The people of India are expressing their gratitude because the Modi government has tirelessly worked towards the development, welfare and dignity of the nation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dedicated himself to illuminating the future of both the current and forthcoming generations by sculpting a new India."

Addressing a public gathering in Biswan, Sitapur, Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that the entire election revolves around 'Ramdhakts' and 'Ramdrohis'. He added, "The public and Ram devotees are saying that we will bring those who have brought Ram, whereas

'Ramdrohis' are saying that the temple is 'useless', there was no need to construct it. What was the need for a temple inside India."

In a taunting remark, Yogi questioned whether, if not in Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Ram in Uttar Pradesh, the temple would be constructed in Kabul, Kandahar, Lahore, or Karachi. He reiterated Ayodhya's sacred status as the birthplace of Shri Ram and a revered pilgrimage site for millions of followers of Sanatan dharma. He affirmed, "Ayodhya holds deep religious significance for us. Today's Ayodhya invokes the spirit of the Ramayana period from Tretayuga, while Kashi embodies the essence of Satyug."

The chief minister highlighted the government's ambitious development plan for Naimisharanya, including the initiation of four-lane connectivity projects, the construction of guest houses, and the enhancement of the Gomti riverfront.

Additionally, efforts are underway to renovate and beautify temples, support local businessmen, and introduce new hotels and restaurants. The introduction of an electric bus service to Lucknow and plans for helicopter connectivity are also in progress. Furthermore, there are plans to extend the metro network from Lucknow to Naimisharanya, he added.

SP cannot see beyond Yadav family: Maya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati launched a scathing attack on the Samajwadi Party, saying it did not field a Muslim candidate from Kannauj as it cannot see beyond SP president Akhilesh Yadav's family.

The BSP chief asked the deprived sections, including the Dalits and Muslims, not to cast a single vote for Akhilesh Yadav's party in the Lok Sabha elections.

Mayawati, who campaigned for the party candidates in Kannauj against SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and other adjoining constituencies, said her party was "clean". She was referring to the electoral bonds controversy.

Referring to the electoral bonds given to Bharatiya Janata Party and Congress, she affirmed that the BSP never takes money from rich people and this has been made clear by the Supreme Court's observation that BSP runs its activities only with the financial support received from its workers and candidates.

The BSP chief, who addressed a joint election meeting for party's Kannauj, Farrukhabad and Etawah candidates, made several political attacks on the BJP, Congress and SP. She said that earlier the Congress governments adopted wrong policies, due to which it was out of the Central and state governments and now the BJP was also walking on the same path.

She said Dalits, exploited and deprived people, Muslims, religious, minorities were suffering in the BJP rule but the government was not paying attention to them and this had caused resentment among the people.

"There is a difference between their words and actions. Therefore, the BJP is not going to return to power at the Centre easily. Under the leadership of BSP, attention will be given to all sec-

tions on the lines of Sarvajana Hitay-Sarvajana Sukhaya. No one will be exploited. The welfare work done by BSP in UP four times is now being copied by the governments of other states. If we get a chance at the Centre, we will run the government at the Centre on the lines of BSP's UP model," she said. Mayawati said during the SP government, there was discrimination against Dalits and the underprivileged class in the state.

"The SP government changed the names of districts, institutions and parks built in the name of Dalit icons. Therefore, they no longer have any right to ask for votes from this class," she said. Attacking the BJP government at the Centre, the BSP chief said the saffron party's promise of 'achhe din (good days)' turned out to be a hoax, and its guarantee was also a sham. Mayawati said one should not be fooled by the words of these parties.

KUSHINAGAR, DEORIA CANDIDATES NAMED

Laying to rest speculations of Swami Prasad Maurya joining the Bahujan Samaj Party, Mayawati on Thursday announced two more candidates for the Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, including its nominee from Kushinagar constituency. In its 14th list of candidates released on Thursday, the BSP has fielded Shubh Narayan Chauhan from Kushinagar and Sandesh Yadav alias Mister from Deoria. The BSP's latest list of candidates is a big setback for Swami Prasad Maurya. He had announced to contest from Kushinagar Lok Sabha seat and then there were speculations of his going with the BSP. But Mayawati has put an end to all speculations by announcing the party's candidate for the Kushinagar Lok Sabha seat. Swami Prasad Maurya was to file his nomination on Thursday.

Akhilesh, Rahul to address joint election rallies today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and former chief of Congress Rahul Gandhi will address joint election rallies in Kanpur and Kannauj on Friday. Both SP and Congress are partners of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA). Akhilesh Yadav is seeking election to Lok Sabha from Kannauj. Polling in Kanpur and Kannauj will be held in the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections on May 13. Kannauj will be a pivotal seat, from where Yadav will make his fourth appearance in the electoral battlefield and Rahul Gandhi will address a joint rally of INDIA bloc to seek votes for the SP chief. After the joint rally, both leaders will move to Kanpur for a roadshow. Dimple Yadav will also accompany her husband in the

election rally in Kannauj. Meanwhile, taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his Adani-Ambani remark, Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday said the Bharatiya Janata Party had become so "nervous" that it had started attacking its own people.

Addressing an election rally in Bahraich, Akhilesh Yadav, while referring to a comment made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Adani-Ambani, said, "In the elections, you will have to be careful and take decisions very wisely because the people of BJP nowadays are frightened and so nervous that they have started attacking their own people."

"You must have heard Prime Minister Modi's speech yesterday. Till now, they used to say bad things about everyone but today they are attacking their own people," he said.

AXIS BANK LTD. PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS						
THE BORROWERS, IN SPECIFIC AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE GOLD ORNAMENTS PLEDGE IN THE BELOW ACCOUNTS IS PROPOSED TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE AXIS BANK AT THE BELOW MENTIONED BRANCH. THE BELOW MENTIONED BORROWERS HAS AVAILED THE CREDIT FACILITY FROM THE AXIS BANK LIMITED AGAINST THE PLEDGE OF GOLD ORNAMENTS ("GOLD LOAN FACILITY") IN FAVOUR OF THE BANK TOWARDS THE SECURITY. THE DEMAND NOTICES WERE ISSUED TO THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS CALLING UP THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS TO PAY THEIR OUTSTANDING AMOUNT TOWARDS THE GOLD LOAN FACILITY AVAILABLE. AS THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS HAVE FAILED TO REPLY THE OUTSTANDING LOAN AMOUNT, THE BANK IS CONSTRAINED TO INVOLVE THE PLEDGE AND PROPOSED TO CONDUCT AN E-AUCTION SALE OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY HEREUNDER ON 20-May-24 AT 12.30 PM TO 03.30 PM ON "AS IN WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", "WHATEVER THERE IS" AND "NO RECOURSE BASIS".						
DETAILS OF BORROWERS AND OUTSTANDING AMOUNT						
Sl. No.	CUSTOMER NAME	LOAN A/C NO.	AMOUNT OUTSTANDING (IN RS.)	DATE OF RECALL NOTICE	GROSS WEIGHT	NET WEIGHT
B.O.: AASHIANA LUC UP						
1	ANJU SANYAL	XXXXXXXXXXXX8997	27668.000	28-12-2023	10.150	6.650
2	ASHISH GUPTA	XXXXXXXXXXXX4553	41829.000	28-12-2023	12.240	11.840
B.O.: AGRA (UP)						
3	DEEPAK SHARMA	XXXXXXXXXXXX9805	35702.000	15-02-2024	14.100	11.200
4	DURGESH KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX8774	47733.900	15-02-2024	25.600	23.900
B.O.: ALIGANJ,LUCKNOW (UP)						
5	PRAMENDRA KUMAR SHUKLA	XXXXXXXXXXXX8609	100700.000	15-02-2024	32.090	30.490
B.O.: ALIGARH (UP)						
6	JITENDRA KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX7882	26712.000	28-12-2023	7.500	7.200
B.O.: ALLAHABAD (UP)						
7	SANJAY SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX9773	52902.000	28-12-2023	16.700	15.000
8	ARYA PRATAP SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX0118	31967.000	15-02-2024	10.400	10.100
9	YOGITA YADAV	XXXXXXXXXXXX1900	31640.000	30-09-2023	9.200	8.800
B.O.: AMROHA (UP)						
10	JAGDISH KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX0818	61742.000	15-02-2024	20.000	19.900
11	VIKRAM JEET SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX4369	106702.580	12-10-2022	66.300	66.100
B.O.: ANPARA UP						
12	PIYUS SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX1264	86631.000	25-08-2023	29.400	28.900
B.O.: ATRAULI, ALIGAR ALI UP						
13	BHURA KHAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX0525	154806.220	15-02-2024	48.000	47.200
B.O.: AZAMGARH (UP)						
14	SURY PRAKASH SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX0480	140048.000	28-12-2023	42.900	40.600
B.O.: BAHERI (UP)						
15	MOHAMMAD SAKIB	XXXXXXXXXXXX3366	368340.000	20-02-2024	116.400	114.600
B.O.: BAHRACH (UP)						
16	RAKESH TIWARI	XXXXXXXXXXXX4745	148030.000	25-08-2023	47.240	46.000
17	SWATI PATHAK	XXXXXXXXXXXX7164	83600.000	15-02-2024	27.720	24.900
B.O.: BALLIA (UP)						
18	AMIT KUMAR OJHA	XXXXXXXXXXXX1325	130518.000	15-02-2024	39.700	38.200
B.O.: BARABANKI (UP)						
19	KRISHNA PAL	XXXXXXXXXXXX0066	84996.000	28-12-2023	21.600	21.000
B.O.: BARHALGANJ (UP)						
20	SHIWAM KUMAR SHRIWASTAVA	XXXXXXXXXXXX3010	160864.000	30-05-2023	52.400	52.400
B.O.: BASTI (UP)						
21	SUMIT KUMAR YADAV	XXXXXXXXXXXX1717	86421.000	15-02-2024	25.720	24.950
22	RAHUL	XXXXXXXXXXXX4501	43302.000	15-02-2024	13.260	12.800
23	ARVIND KUMAR NAYAK	XXXXXXXXXXXX0266	47596.000	20-02-2024	10.700	10.400
B.O.: BHAISSANA,MUZAFF MUZ UP						
24	MO RASHID ALI	XXXXXXXXXXXX1047	129756.000	28-12-2023	42.600	42.100
B.O.: BUNOR (UP)						
25	AYESHA	XXXXXXXXXXXX1787	651395.000	25-08-2023	178.100	177.000
B.O.: BISWAN SIT UP						
26	ANIK	XXXXXXXXXXXX2259	49214.000	28-12-2023	14.700	14.000
27	LALIT KUMAR SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX9285	223020.000	20-02-2024	62.200	61.100
28	SAMIR GUPTA	XXXXXXXXXXXX0278	237400.000	20-02-2024	71.900	65.300
B.O.: CHOWK LUCKNOW LUC UP						
29	MO IDREES	XXXXXXXXXXXX1643	58649.040	15-02-2024	17.500	17.100
30	AARISHA RIZWAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX0103	367518.000	15-02-2024	109.100	108.200
31	SUNEEL KUMAR PAL	XXXXXXXXXXXX0757	43809.190	09-11-2023	13.100	12.700
B.O.: DHAMPUR BIJ UP						
32	SHAHNAZ	XXXXXXXXXXXX9742	77677.000	08-02-2023	13.700	18.000
B.O.: ETAWAH (UP)						
33	KUMARI ARTI	XXXXXXXXXXXX3135	58833.000	15-02-2024	21.950	20.150
B.O.: FARRUKHABAD (UP)						
34	SHYAM SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX6935	44894.000	28-12-2023	12.900	12.700
B.O.: FATEHPUR (UP)						
35	NAJEEB ULLA	XXXXXXXXXXXX4177	143543.380	25-08-2023	41.260	39.000
B.O.: GAJRAULA (UP)						
36	SAZIO	XXXXXXXXXXXX7635	73033.510	12-10-2022	17.300	16.100
B.O.: GANGAGHAT UNN UP						
37	VINOD KUMAR GAUTAM	XXXXXXXXXXXX6143	28800.000	22-03-2024	8.400	8.200
38	MO UMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX1319	110295.710	10-10-2023	41.700	30.600
B.O.: GARH ROAD, MEERUT (UP)						
39	FIROZ KHAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX3468	105247.240	15-02-2024	30.780	29.880
B.O.: GHAZIPUR (UP)						
44	AMRESH GUPTA	XXXXXXXXXXXX6491	39100.000	28-12-2023	10.000	10.000
45	BHOLA GUPTA	XXXXXXXXXXXX1676	37204.000	28-12-2023	10.000	10.000
B.O.: GOLA GOKARNANAT GLA UP						
46	MERAJ KHAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX0167	56811.400	20-02-2024	17.000	16.750
47	VISHAL KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX9220	49922.000	12-09-2022	9.960	9.950
B.O.: GOMTI NAGAR,LUCKNOW (UP)						
48	KRITIKA VATS	XXXXXXXXXXXX0769	45729.210	15-02-2024	18.300	13.500
49	KRITIKA VATS	XXXXXXXXXXXX0155	89954.000	09-11-2023	29.390	27.890
B.O.: GONDA (UP)						
50	ABHAY PRATAP SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX8917	37191.000	28-12-2023	10.880	10.490
B.O.: GORAKHPUR (UP)						
51	JAY LALITA	XXXXXXXXXXXX2867	80365.140	15-02-2024	29.500	27.900
B.O.: GT ROAD, KANPUR (UP)						
52	JATIN LALCHANDANI	XXXXXXXXXXXX9007	58319.000	10-10-2023	15.800	14.700
B.O.: HARDOI (UP)						
53	SHUBHAM TRIVEDI	XXXXXXXXXXXX1547	112214.000	15-02-2024	46.100	36.500
B.O.: HOLI GATE MATHU MAT UP						
54	NEELAM	XXXXXXXXXXXX9392	35034.000	28-12-2023	10.900	10.300
B.O.: JAJMAU KAN UP						
55	VAIBHAV SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX8439	43092.000	20-11-2023	10.600	10.400
56	SHANAWAZ KHAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX1196	78560.000	20-10-2023	23.100	19.800
B.O.: JEWAR GBNAG UP						
57	VIKASH	XXXXXXXXXXXX6106	117542.000	15-02-2024	35.900	34.000
B.O.: JHANSI (UP)						
58	SUNIL KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX6693	31779.000	22-03-2024	9.200	8.750
59	RAHUL DUBEYE	XXXXXXXXXXXX1898	107400.000	20-02-2024	38.000	28.050
60	SAVITA SAXENA	XXXXXXXXXXXX5562	573800.000	20-02-2024	169.800	154.050
B.O.: KAKADEO ,KANPUR (UP)						
61	ROHIT DWIVEDI	XXXXXXXXXXXX1877	46250.660	09-11-2023	15.000	14.200
62	ARUN KUMAR MISHRA	XXXXXXXXXXXX5444	878025.100	10-10-2023	257.200	248.600
63	VIKAS AMLANI	XXXXXXXXXXXX2543	60685.000	28-12-2023	19.000	17.100
64	VISHAL BAJPAI	XXXXXXXXXXXX1552	54525.000	28-12-2023	15.900	15.300
65	SAHJEET RATHOR	XXXXXXXXXXXX7575	35444.000	15-02-2024	10.300	10.000
66	VINOD SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX6187	59946.590	15-02-2024	19.900	19.200
B.O.: KANPUR (UP)						
67	GANESH KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX9985	66975.000	15-02-2024	20.300	19.800
68	ATUL KUMAR JHA	XXXXXXXXXXXX1867	34531.350	22-03-2024	10.000	9.600
69	VIKESH SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX8513	32360.000	28-02-2024	10.500	10.150
70	RAJ GUPTA	XXXXXXXXXXXX1206	31460.000	20-02-2024	9.000	8.600
B.O.: KONCH KNH UP						
71						

Bansal: Election is to fulfil resolve of developed India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

National general secretary of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Sunil Bansal said that this election is to fulfil the resolve of developed India and to curb corruption. "The people of Kashi are fortunate that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has been representing Varanasi for the last 10 years, has chosen Kashi for the third time", he said while addressing the workers of Varanasi Cantt assembly at BJP Election Office (Tulsi Udyan) in Mahmoorganj and City South assembly at Saroja Palace in Piplani Katra here on Wednesday.

He said that the local residents are eager to give an unprecedented welcome to the PM who will come to his parliamentary constituency on May 13. He asked the party workers to go to people's homes and invite them to join the PM's roadshow on May 13. "As the PM has done many works for the development, today Kashi has completely changed", he said, adding that Kashi is 'Mini India' in itself as people from many states reside here so the proposed roadshow will see people from various states welcoming him in different costumes.

Bansal said that after the nomination of the PM, we will get 15 days and in this period, we have to contact every house and also unite the BJP supporters. "It is our responsibility to ensure more than 80 per cent voting. Only if there will be more than 80 per cent voting, we will be successful in achieving a historic victory. It is our responsibility to meet new voters and appeal to them to vote in favour of BJP. To realise the dream of a developed India by



BJP general secretary Sunil Bansal addressing a meeting of party workers in Varanasi on Wednesday.

2047, we will have to give unprecedented and historic success to the PM in the Lok Sabha elections", he said.

He said today due to the efficient leadership of the PM, we have emerged as the fifth largest economy on the global stage. Varanasi Lok Sabha coordinator Ashwini Tyagi, regional president Dilip Patel, city chief Vidyasagar Rai and many others were also present in both meetings. The Cantt meeting was attended by MLA Saurabh Srivastava, Cantt assembly in-charge Subhash Kushwaha, and many others while City South programme was presided over by MLA Neelkanth Tiwari. It was conducted by Alok Srivastava and vote of thanks was proposed by city president Vidyasagar Rai.

Earlier, while reviewing the party's ongoing preparations for Modi's roadshow, Bansal said through it the message of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat' will be given to the world. While addressing the meeting of 11 beat heads and senior office-bearers associated with the arrangements, Bansal said that the roadshow will set a new trend. "By holding booth level meetings in all the five assemblies of Varanasi

Lok Sabha, the public representatives and senior BJP office-bearers along with the booth committees should go door to door and give invitation letters to the people of Kashi to come to the roadshow", he said.

According to him, for the road show, 11 beats were made from Malviya Statue to Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham and the responsibility of these 11 beats has been handed over to public representatives and senior BJP office-bearers. "Under these 11 beats, 10 points each (about 100 points) have been made on which Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Maheshwari, Marwaris, Tamil, Punjabi etc communities will welcome the PM in their traditional attire. "Flowers will be showered at these points. Drums will be played. The people of Kashi will welcome the PM with shehnai, shankhnaad and Damru Dal. Along with this, cultural programmes at various places, artistes from Banaras singing folk songs and batuks chanting Vedic mantras will be the main attractions. People of Muslim community from Madanpura are also coming forward to welcome PM", he said. Later, the members of Lok

Sabha Management Committee conducted late night route inspection to check the preparations. During the route inspection, Varanasi Lok Sabha coordinator and MLC Ashwani Tyagi, Mayor Ashok Tiwari, district oresident and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma, city chief Vidyasagar Rai, MLAs Dr Neelkanth Tiwari and Saurabh Srivastava, MLC Dharmendra Rai, Rajesh Trivedi, Suresh Singh, Ayush Jaiswal, regional media in-charge Navratan Rathi etc were present.

Meanwhile, Bansal addressed the party workers of Jan Sangh period. "Today BJP has the highest number of MPs and MLAs. BJP is in government in most of the states of the country and the old party workers have contributed the most in taking the party to this position", he said. While handing over important work to the former office-bearers, Bansal said that they should make a programme of inviting 100 workers every day and send message to at least a hundred people through WhatsApp to help the PM win with the highest number of votes. In the meeting, regional BJP president Dilip Patel, Lok Sabha coordinator Ashwini Tyagi, city and district in-charge Arun Pathak, MLC Ashok Dhawan, city president Vidyasagar Rai, Mayor Ashok Kumar Tiwari, Lok Sabha convenor Surendra Narayan Singh, former city president Prem Prakash Kapoor, TS Joshi, Sudhir Mishra, Pradeep Agrahari, former MLC Dr Shivnath Yadav, former Mayors Ramgopal Mohale and Mridula Jaiswal, former Deputy Mayors Ratan Singh and Sanjay Rai, former Mandal presidents, former corporators etc were present.

No nomination filed on 3rd day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

No nomination was filed by any candidate on the third day of nomination for 77-Varanasi parliamentary constituency under Lok Sabha General Election, 2024 here on Thursday. So far, only four candidates have filed their nomination papers. Apart from this, one nomination form was taken by Athar Jamal Lari of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) whereas people have also received 12 treasury challans.

Earlier, Expenditure Observer of Varanasi Parliamentary Constituency Ajit Dan held a meeting in the New Circuit House auditorium on Wednesday and took information from the officials concerned about the arrangements related to the elections and gave necessary guidelines. The candidates contesting Lok Sabha elections, their agents and office-bearers of political parties can meet the observer at New Circuit House from 9 am to 10 am for information related to election expenditure etc and he can be contacted on his mobile No 9236051760.

Youth found hanging

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A youth was found hanging from a tree in Patara, Ghatampur on Thursday morning.

Baburam Gautam of Madhiyakheda, Fatehpur, said his son Manish Gautam (22) was an icecream vendor. On Thursday morning he was found hanging from a babool tree near Hirni village turn. Inspector Ghatampur Pradip Kumar Singh said the body had been sent for autopsy. A probe is on in the matter, he added.

Two killed as bus overturns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Two persons died and 27 others seriously injured when their speeding bus overturned on the Agra-Lucknow expressway near Holepur village under Thathia police station area of Kannauj early on Thursday morning. The incident took place when a maize-laden truck going to Haryana from Bihar, in a bid to overtake a vehicle, suddenly hit the road divider and overturned. As a result the sacks of maize scattered on the street and the bus coming from Bihar from behind and going to Delhi overturned.

As many as 29 persons were injured in the incident. The police and UPEIDA personnel got them admitted to the medical college where two of them were declared dead by the doctors. Ashok Kumar of Gopalganj and another person died in the accident. Station

House Officer (SHO) Kishanpal said efforts are on to ascertain identity of another deceased. The injured included Pranshu (15) of Chakarpan, Katiya, Gopalganj, Chandrika Rai (40) of Gopalpur, Murad (24) of Majharia, Vinod Kumar (37) of Navada Paprauli, Butan (35) of Hathuwa, Vinod Kumar (25) of Gopalpur, Upendra Kumar (37), Amrendra Singh (32) of Baniya Sapad, Phulwaria, Jamal Ahmad (19) of Sainahi, Ashraf Ali (25) of Vathuwa Bazar, Shubham Singh (21) of Bhure village, Babita Devi (35) of Avdantola, Rovhari, Kushinagar, Asif Ahmad (18), Sahil Ansari (18) of Rajapur, Meeraganj, Munim (40) of Koelapurwa, Pataria, Sugriv Kumar (35) of Rasapur, Campari, Gorakhpur, Puja

(32), Yashpal (40) of Ghamad, Rohtak, Chandan Singh (40) and Mithlesh Devi (35) of Sinha village, Manjpurara. Due to their serious condition, four of the injured were referred to Kanpur.

In another incident a 20-year old girl was found hanging from a tree under mysterious circumstances in a primary school in Chaubepur police station area early on Thursday morning. The incident came to light when children and teacher reached the school and found the body hanging. The police and forensic team rushed to the spot and carried out investigation. Kin alleged the hanging of body after killing the girl. ACP Billhaur Ajay Kumar Trivedi said a probe was on in the matter. The body had been sent for autopsy. Some important clues had come to the fore during investigation. Prima facie, it appeared to be a case of suicide, he said.

Workshop on capacity building for women farmers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) South Asia Regional Centre (ISARC) convened a workshop on capacity building for women farmers here on Thursday, marking the beginning of a transformative project aimed at revolutionising agriculture in India. The workshop titled "Technological Innovation in Agriculture for Food Security and Income Enhancement: A Capacity Development Initiative with Women Farmers (and Scientists) of Rice-Based Agri-Food Systems in India" was attended by key stakeholders from across the country. Professors and scientists from various Indian agricultural universities and institutes such as BHU (Varanasi, UP), Assam Agricultural University (Jorhat,

Assam), Bihar Agricultural University (Sabour, Bihar), Indira Gandhi Agricultural University (Raipur, Chhattisgarh), Acharya Narendra Dev University of Agriculture and Technology



(Kumarganj, Ayodhya), Birla Agricultural University (Ranchi, Jharkhand) and ICAR-Indian Vegetable Research Institute (Varanasi, UP) participated in the workshop. Supported by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, this pioneering effort represents a collaborative effort to address the capacity development needs of women farmers and scientists

in India's rice-based farming systems. Through this initiative, DBT and IRRI aim to empower women farmers and scientists engaged in rice-based agri-food systems. Building on the success of its initial phase (Technology Innovation in Rice Cultivation - Empowering Women Farmers in India), which focused on training women farmers in rice production, this project is expanding its scope with broader scope and enhanced objectives. Addressing the inaugural session, Dr Sudhanshu Singh, Director, ISARC, stressed the need for capacity development among women farmers in India. "Our effort today stems from the recognition that despite their invaluable experience in crop management, many women farmers are still hampered by domestic responsibilities," he said.

Nation's bright future rests on youth: MLC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

MLC Arun Pathak said that the responsibility of the bright future of India lies on the shoulders of the youth, hence young voters should ensure their active participation in this great festival of democracy. While addressing the students of Gyan Dayini Mahila Mahavidyalaya in Rameshwar Mandal under Rohania assembly here on Wednesday, he said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi implemented many schemes for the uplift of women. They include 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' and special attention to women in Jan Dhan Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, construction of toilets, increasing the period of maternity leave to six months, provision for women in Mudra Loan etc.



He said the PM gave 33 per cent reservation to women in Lok Sabha and assembly for women empowerment. "Therefore, to make Narendra Modi the Prime Minister for the third time, the women power should unite and pledge to make lotus bloom at every booth", he said. State BJP secretary Archana Mishra, Zila Panchayat chairperson

Poonam Maurya, Amit Pandey, Aman Sonkar, Brijesh, Abhishek, Avagat, Amit Pandey and college teachers were present.

Meanwhile, while appealing to the people to vote in favour of BJP at a function of women members of Bareilly Vyapar Mandal, state BJP secretary Archana Mishra said that Narendra Modi's govern-

ment has given new dimensions to the development of Kashi and it has provided many employment opportunities to the people of Kashi. "Today, after the construction of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, People are coming to Kashi from all over the world. The people of Kashi are getting its direct benefit. Today, there has been a huge increase in the income of everyone from rickshaw pullers to hotel businessmen", she said, adding that today women are completely safe under Modi and Yogi governments. The programme was presided over by regional president of Mahila Morcha (Kashi) Namrata Chaurasia. District BJYM president Aman Sonkar, patron of Vyapar Mandal Yogita Tiwari, Bina Singh, Akhilesh Pathak and others were also present.

Joint meeting on TPI held at BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A joint meeting on the Third Party Inspection (TPI) was held with Chittaranjan Locomotive Works and Patiala Locomotive Works at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) under the chairmanship of General Manager (GM) Sushil Kumar Srivastava here on Wednesday.

In the meeting the quality of locomotive items inspected by these agencies were discussed in detail. The BLW GM explained in detail about the ways to do timely inspection and also gave suggestions to the inspection agencies on the method of inspection of different categories of items and the qualification of their inspectors with respect to product nature.

The third party inspecting agencies presented inspection related information through PPT presentation. Apart from the GM, the interaction session was participated by Principal Chief Materials Manager (PCMM) Rajneesh Gupta, Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer Subrata Nath, Chief Materials Manager (Loco) Trilok Kothari, CMM (Engine) Atul Saxena, CMM-I Ashish Kumar Agarwal, CMM (Headquarters) Sanjay Kumar Mishra, Chief Mechanical Engineer (Production and Marketing) Suneel Kumar, Deputy General Manager Anuj Katiyar and others.

Rare adrenal gland tumour successfully removed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A remarkable feat was achieved by successfully removing pheochromocytoma, a rare and high-risk adrenal gland tumour, from a 28-year-old woman using a minimally invasive laparoscopic procedure. The alertness and quick response of the doctors at Ujala Cygnus Kulwanti Hospital here saved the life of this woman. Despite the high-risk factor in the surgery, there was no ICU stay and patient was discharged in three days.

Unknown to the presence of tumour in her body, the patient was initially undergoing evaluation for infertility at some other hospital. However, when she started experiencing episodic headaches, palpitations and breathlessness, the patient consulted the doctors at Kulwanti Hospital who immediately evaluated her where an ultrasound revealed a mass above the left kidney, prompting a deeper investigation. A contrast CT scan then confirmed the presence of a 6x6 cm tumour on the left adrenal gland. "Following the initial diagnosis, functional evaluation established the tumour as a pheochromocytoma," explained Dr Satyam Srivastava, urologist.

"Pheochromocytomas are rare, and we usually receive one case like it in two-three years, but they pose a significant health risk due to their potential to release excess hormones, leading to high blood pressure and blood sugar levels potentially leading to life threatening complications like brain haemorrhage and heart attack." In this case, the adrenal tumour was causing severe hypertension, with readings reaching a dangerous 220/150 mmHg (normal blood pressure is around 110/70 mmHg). This uncontrolled hypertension contributed to her symptoms.

"Due to the complex nature of pheochromocytoma and the associated risks during surgery, meticulous planning was crucial," said Dr Srivastava who along with Dr Kush Pathak (surgical oncologist) carried out the surgery. "The tumour's hormonal activity can significantly impact blood pressure and heart rate, making surgery challenging."

To address this challenge, the doctors' team adopted a multidisciplinary approach. Dr Shivendra (DM Endocrinology) provided pre-operative optimisation for two weeks, meticulously monitoring and controlling the patient's blood pressure and other para-

eters. This crucial step helped to significantly reduce the surgical risks.

A laparoscopic left adrenalectomy was performed by a team comprising Dr Satyam Srivastava (Urology), Dr Kush Pathak (Surgical Oncology), and Dr Pradeep Naithani (Anesthesia and Critical Care). This minimally invasive technique involves making small ports in the abdomen to access the surgical site with the help of laparoscopic instruments and a camera.

"Laparoscopic surgery offers numerous benefits compared to traditional open surgery," explains Dr Kush Pathak. "These benefits include minimal blood loss, faster recovery time and reduced pain for the patient."

In addition to this, achieving stable hemodynamics (blood flow and pressure) throughout the surgery was paramount for patient safety. Dr Pradeep Naithani, Anesthesia and Critical Care specialist played a vital role. He stated, "Precise control of anesthesia and pain medication ensured minimal fluctuations in blood pressure and heart rate during adrenal tumour removal and allowed the surgical team to operate with minimised risks."

BLW WWO honours 27 employees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Women Welfare Organisation (WWO) of Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) honoured 27 class IV employees who completed 20 years of service. Under the guidance of chairperson of WWO Gauri Srivastava and secretary Shweta Singh, a total of 27 class IV employees, who have completed 20 years of service in BLW or whose retire-



WWO Chairperson Gauri Srivastava honouring a BLW employee in Varanasi

ment is near, were honoured with gifts. WWO office-bearers, including Neelam Gupta, were also present.

On the occasion a cultural programme was also presented by the members of the organisation. WWO treasurer Anupriya Singh along with other senior office-bearers and members were present in the programme. The programme was conducted by secretary Shweta Singh.

Youth's body found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The body of 23-year-old Himanshu Chaurasia, who was missing for two days, was found floating in the river on Thursday. The family had lodged a missing report at Shahganj police station two days ago. The family told the police that Himanshu had an affair with a girl. He was upset for the past five days.

Reports said that a body was found floating in the Yamuna river near the Boat Club under Kydganj police station area on Thursday. The police took it out with the help of divers. The police identified the body by calling Himanshu's family members. Himanshu had left the house on the night of May 7 and did not return since then. Kydganj inspector Deepa Singh said the night when Himanshu left the house, he was talking to the girl on mobile. After this he left the house in anger. Singh further said that it is believed that Himanshu committed suicide

by jumping from the new Yamuna bridge after quarrelling with his girlfriend. However, the cause of death will be clear only after the post-mortem examination report comes.

Meanwhile a woman constable fell prey to cyber thugs. On seeing the advertisement of salwar suit on the social media platform, the constable booked it. After this, a call came on her mobile. The caller assured to deliver the suit and deprived her of ₹72,161 from the account. A loan of ₹1.44 lakh was also taken on the account. The constable has lodged a case at the Daraganj police station in this connection.

INJURED: A school bus carrying children from Phulpur in Prayagraj to Andawa, Jhansi, suddenly got stuck in a roadside pit due to steering failure here on Thursday. Fortunately the bus got stuck in a four feet deep pit in the field and stopped suddenly. The injured children were taken to a local hospital for treatment with the help of villagers and parents.

Students felicitated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Eight students of Ranjana Devi Mahavidyalaya and Dhrupad Kendra, Kanpur, excelled in the state level music competition 2023-24 organised by the UP Sangeet Natak Akademi. They were awarded prizes and felicitated at a function organised by the UP Sangeet Natak Akademi at Sant Gadge auditorium, Lucknow. All the students have been receiving training from the President's awardee and internationally renowned Dhrupad maestro Pt Vinod Kumar Dwivedi and young vocalist Ayush Dwivedi of the city. Vice-Chancellor of Bhatkhande University Prof Mandvi Singh, Principal Secretary (Tourism & Culture), UP Government, Mukesh Meshram and Academy Director Dr Shobhit Nahar felicitated the winners with memento, citation and cash prize of ₹ 2,500 (first), ₹2,000 (second) and ₹500 (third). The winners include Priyakshi Pandey, Chetan Gupta, Akshita



Awasthi, Bhavya Joshi, Shreshtha Gupta, Vaishnavi Tewari, Mridul Kumar Awasthi and Aradhya Gupta. Convenors Renu Srivastava and Dr Pawan Tewari said the competitions were organised in two phases at city level and state level. In the state level competition, around 200 children took part and in the final, eight students of Ranjana Devi Sangeet Mahavidyalaya and Dhrupad Kendra, Kanpur, emerged winners in 'khyal' and 'dhrupad' style of recital. Manager of RDSM Ranjana Dwivedi while congratulating the victorious students said around 40 students of the Mahavidyalaya had won this prestigious competition during the past one decade. About 15 students had been selected for the scholarship awarded by the Government of India, she added.

KDA hands over demand drafts to 7 farmers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) handed over demand drafts to seven farmers against the sale of their 0.82036 hectares of land for setting up of its new township 'New Kanpur City' project. These farmers included Manjulata, Sonal Tripathi, Ritesh Kumar Agarwal, Sohan Lal, Ramesh Chandra, Ankit Singh and Brijendra Singh. The compensation paid to these farmers for their land was four times the present circle rate. Under the directives of the Vice-Chairman Madan Singh Gabriyal, Law Officer Shashi Bhushan Rai handed over the demand drafts to these farmers who extended their gratitude to KDA. According to Dr Ravi Pratap Singh, OSD, Land Bank (Zone 1), so far registry of over 19 hectares of land acquired from the farmers had been executed by KDA.

Annual prize day organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Boys' High School and College Annexe, Holy Trinity School celebrated its Annual Prize Day with great enthusiasm here on Thursday. The event was a testament to the hard work, dedication and achievements of the students. Academic Supervisor CB Luke, Headmistress R Mandal, Assistant Headmistress S Bennett, Dr A Mukhopadhyay, incharge of College Section and A Jaiswal, incharge of classes IX and X at Boys' High School and College were present.

The programme began with a song by the school choir. It was followed by the prize distribution for the Junior School and then for the students of the Middle School. The highlight of the event was the awarding of prizes to outstanding students across various disciplines, including academics and sports. St Patrick's House was the overall champion for the session 2023-24 and bagged the Cock House

Trophy. The Principal's Trophy was awarded to Sherlyn Zyna Mandal of St George's House. Agastya of St Patrick's House was declared the Best Athlete. Kunal Kumar of class III was



declared Best in Academics in the Junior School while Tejinder Singh of class VIII was declared Best in Academics from the Middle School section scoring 97 per cent marks each. The atmosphere was charged with pride and admiration as students received their well-deserved accolades, inspiring others to strive for excellence. The ceremony concluded with a heartwarming speech by Academic Supervisor CB Luke. She also supervised on the all-

round development of the body, mind and soul of the students. She drew attention towards healthy eating habits of the students. On the occasion she highlighted the importance of the impression of parents and teachers on the character building of children.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Headmistress R Mandal who appreciated the active involvement of the parents in the children's journey of growth. She took pride in announcing the 100 per cent results of ICSE and ISC of Boys' High School & College. She thanked Principal DA Luke for the unwavering support. The day concluded with the national anthem.

CONGRATULATED: Kaustubh Tripathi, a student of class X at St Joseph's School and College, scored 96.60 per cent marks in the ICSE Board examination. Besides, Devansh Mishra, also a student of class X, scored 92.20 per cent marks. The principal has congratulated both the students.

Format C-1

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

Name and address of candidate: **Rahul Gandhi**, 10 Janpath, New Delhi 110001

Name of political party: **Indian National Congress**

Name of Election: **Lok Sabha General Election- 2024**

Name of Constituency: **36- Rae Bareilly Parliamentary Constituency**

I, **Rahul Gandhi**, a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

S. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and dated	Status of case(s)	Section(s) of/Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1	Not Available	FIR No. 240/2021 dated 09.09.2021 Delhi.	The Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in W.P.(C) 8210/2021 its order dated 24.01.2024 referred to the existence of the aforementioned FIR. The FIR per direction of the Hon'ble High Court is in sealed cover. I am therefore, not aware of the details of the FIR. I am also not aware of whether I am arraigned as an accused in this FIR. I am, however, disclosing its existence out of abundant caution.	SS. 228A IPC SS. 23(4) POCSO SS. 74 Juvenile Justice Act Alleged disclosure of identity of parents of minor rape victim girl on the Twitter handle of the candidate.
2	9 th Addl. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court, Nrupatunga Road, Bangalore City	FIR No. 0362/2022 dated 4.11.2022 Yeshwanthapura Police Station, Bengaluru City, Karnataka	Investigation was stayed in terms of order dated 16.12.2022 in Writ Petition No. 25123/2022 by Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka. On 28.6.2023 the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka was pleased to dismiss the above writ petition.	Copyright Act u/s 63 IT Act u/s 66 and SS 34, 120B, 403, 465 IPC It is alleged against the accused that they have used song(s) that the Complainant had copyrights over in the social media/Twitter handle of Indian National Congress while covering a video of the Bharat Jodo Yatra.
3	Court of Metropolitan Magistrate 9th Court Bandra, Mumbai, Maharashtra	Complaint Case No. 311/SS/2023	WP/3011/2023 filed before the Hon'ble Bombay High Court challenging order dated 23.11.2019 rejecting the application for dismissal of Complaint on the ground that two separate offences cannot be tried together is pending.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation against RSS with reference to the murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh.
4	Special Court MP/MLA, Ranchi, Jharkhand	Complaint Case No. 1698/2018 (MP/MLA Case No. 16/2021)	The order dated 15.09.2018 passed in Cr. Revision No. 281/2018 by which the Magistrate was directed to take a fresh look on the materials available on record, after he had dismissed the complaint, was challenged in Cr. M.P. No. 4241/2018 before the Hon'ble High Court of Jharkhand at Ranchi and vide order dated 16.02.2024 the WP was dismissed.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation against Bhartiya Janata Party, its leaders, supporters and workers with reference to criminal antecedents of the President of the Party.
5	Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Kamrup (Metropolitan), Guwahati, Assam	Complaint Case C.R. 559/2016	Criminal Revision Petition No. 26/2023 was filed before the Additional District and Sessions Judge by Complainant challenging order dated 18.3.2023 passed by the learned Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Kamrup in C.R. Case No. 559/2016. The Criminal Revision Petition was allowed vide order dated 22.09.2023. The ACJM, Kamrup, Guwahati was directed to hear both parties afresh and pass fresh order.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation against RSS with reference to persons belonging to RSS not allowing the Accused to visit Barpeta Satra.
6	Court of the 3rd Jt Civil Judge, JD, JMFC, Bhiwandi, Maharashtra	Complaint Case SCC 2425/2014	1. WP ST/14290/2023 filed by the Accused challenging the admissibility of documents is pending before Hon'ble High Court of Bombay. 2. WP/799/2022 filed by the Complainant challenging order rejecting application for issuance of witness summons was rejected on 22.6.2022 by Hon'ble High Court of Bombay. 3. WP/376/2019 filed by the Complainant challenging application rejecting to mark the transcript copy as an Exhibit. Rejected vide Order dated 20/9/2021 by Hon'ble High Court of Bombay. 4. The summoning order dated 11.07.2014 passed by the Ld. J.M.F.C., Bhiwandi was challenged before the Hon'ble High Court of Bombay vide Criminal Writ Petition No. 4960 of 2014. Hon'ble High Court was pleased to dismiss the petition vide order dated 10.03.2015. Against the order dated 15.12.2014 an SLP Cr. No. 3749/2015 was filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court, which was dismissed as withdrawn vide order dated 01.09.2016.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation against RSS with reference to association of members of RSS with the murder of Mahatma Gandhi.
7	Court of Ms. Taniya Bamniyal, ACMM-III, Rouse Avenue Courts, New Delhi	Complaint Case No. 18/2019	The summoning order dated 26.06.2014 was challenged before the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi vide Cr. M.C. No. 3333 of 2014. The Hon'ble High Court was pleased to dismiss the petition vide order dated 7.12.2015. Against the order dated 07.12.2015 a SLP Cr. No.1024 of 2016 was filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court, which was disposed off vide order dated 12.02.2016, whereby all inferences and conclusions drawn by the High Court, on the various factual aspects in the matter were expunged and liberty was granted to raise all the issues before the trial court. Moreover, trial court proceedings have been stayed on 22.02.2021 by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi on a 482 petition (Cr.M.C. No. 578/2021) filed by the Complainant. These is no charge and no conviction.	SS. 403, 406, 420 r/w 120-B IPC Private Complaint by Dr. Subramanian Swamy, former MP Rajya Sabha (former Member of BJP National Executive) regarding alleged conspiracy to criminally misappropriate and cheat the shareholders of M/s The Associated Journals Ltd. by M/s Young Indian and its Directors.

(A) Pending criminal cases

S. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and dated	Status of case(s)	Section(s) of/Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
8	Court of Addl. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate 13, Ahmedabad, Gujarat	Criminal Case No. 29989/2019	Trial was stayed by the Hon'ble Gujarat High Court in terms of order dated 10.02.2021 in Special Criminal Application No. 1744/2021 filed by the complainant.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation case against Ahmedabad District Co-operative Bank and its Chairman on deposit of 750 crores during demonetization.
9	Court of Additional District & Sessions Judge 8th, Surat, Gujarat	Criminal Appeal No. 254/2023	A private criminal complaint was filed with regard to an alleged defamatory statement made by the Accused against the so-called Modi Samaj under SS. 499, 500 IPC. Candidate-Accused was convicted and sentenced to Simple Imprisonment for 2 years on 23.03.2023. As it was a 2 year sentence hence sentence was suspended for 30 days by Chief Judicial Magistrate, Surat on 23 March 2023. 8th Additional Sessions Judge, Surat granted bail to the Accused on 3 April 2023 and suspended the sentence of the Accused pending appeal vide order dated 3 April 2023. The order of conviction has been stayed vide order dated 4 August 2023 by Hon'ble Supreme Court in SLP (Cri.) No. 8644/2023 which is pending. Pursuant to the Supreme Court order on 4 August 2023 the Lok Sabha issued a notification dated 7 August 2023 canceling the "disqualification".	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamatory statement made by the accused against allegedly the so called Modi Samaj.
10	Court of Metropolitan Magistrate 16, Ahmedabad, Gujarat	Criminal Enquiry Case No. 36580/2019	Trial was stayed by the Hon'ble Gujarat High Court in terms of order dated 24.02.2021 in Special Criminal Application No. 2010/2021 filed by the complainant.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation against Bharatiya Janata Party, its leaders, supporters and workers with reference to criminal antecedents of the President of the Party.
11	Special Judicial Magistrate MP/MLA Court, Patna, Bihar	Criminal Case Complaint (P) 1551/2019	Trial was stayed by the Hon'ble Patna High Court in terms of order dated 24.04.2023 in Special Criminal Misc No. 73323/2019.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamatory statement made by the accused against allegedly all persons with surname Modi.
12	Special Court MP/MLA, Ranchi, Jharkhand	Complaint Case 1993/2019 (MP/MLA Case No. 17/2021)	1. Cr. M.P. No. 152/2020 u/s 482 of Cr.P.C. against summoning order before Hon'ble Jharkhand High Court. The petition was dismissed vide order dated 5.7.2022. 2. WP Cr. No. 302/2023 was allowed vide order dated 16.08.2023 exempting personal appearance by the Hon'ble High Court at Ranchi.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamatory statement made by the accused against so called Modi clan.
13	Court of 40th Metropolitan Magistrate Girgaon, Mumbai, Maharashtra	Complaint Case CC No. 6200/SS/2021	Trial was stayed by the Hon'ble Bombay High Court in terms of order dated 22.11.2021 in Writ Petition No. 4391/2021.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation against Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
14	Special MP/MLA Court, Chaibasa, Jharkhand	Complaint Case 229/2021	1. Cr.M.P. No. 1368/2022 u/s 482 of Cr.P.C. in Jharkhand High Court against summoning order is pending. 2. W.P. Cr. No. 230/2024 was filed challenging order dated 27.02.2024 passed by learned Magistrate, Chaibasa issuing NBW. Hon'ble High Court vide order dated 20.03.2024 stayed NBW for one month. 3. W.P.(Cr.) No. 276 of 2024 filed before the Hon'ble Jharkhand High Court and vide order dated 25.04.2024 it has been directed that further proceedings shall remain stayed.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation against Bharatiya Janata Party, its leaders, supporters and workers with reference to criminal antecedents of the President of the Party.
15	ACJM (Custom), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	Complaint Case No. 628/2018	The Hon'ble Court was pleased to dismiss the aforementioned private complaint vide order dated 26.09.2019. Criminal Revision 283/2022 was filed by the complainant and same is pending before Hon'ble ADJ, Court No. 14, Lucknow.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Bhartiya Janata Party, its leaders and workers.
16	ACJM COURT NO.27, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh	Criminal Misc. Case No. 126818/2022	The Hon'ble Court was pleased to dismiss the aforementioned private complaint vide order dated 14.6.2023. Criminal Revision 547/2023 was filed by the complainant and same is pending before Hon'ble Special Court, MP/MLA Court No. 19, Lucknow.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation of Shri Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.
17	Special Court MP/MLA, Sultanpur Uttar Pradesh	Criminal Misc. Case No. 1943/2018	The matter is currently pending in the Special Court MP/MLA, Sultanpur where process was issued on 08.01.2024 and the accused was admitted to bail on 20.02.2024. A plea is yet to be recorded and the trial is pending.	SS. 499, 500 IPC Alleged defamation against Bharatiya Janata Party, its office bearers with reference to criminal antecedents of the President of the Party.
18	Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Bengaluru, Karnataka	Complaint Case 7399/2024	Matter is currently pending before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Bengaluru for service of other accused parties.	SS. 499, 500 IPC It is alleged that the accused have made false imputations against the ministers and office bearers of the Bhartiya Janta Party for having a rate card for appointment and transfer in important government posts.

(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences

S.No.	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum Punishment Imposed
1	Complaint Case No. 18712/2019, Metropolitan Magistrate, Surat Order of conviction dated 23.03.2023	A private criminal complaint was filed with regard to an alleged defamatory statement made by the Accused against the so-called Modi Samaj under SS. 499, 500 IPC. I was convicted and sentenced to Simple Imprisonment for 2 years on 23.03.2023. As it was a 2 years sentence hence sentence was suspended for 30 days by Chief Judicial Magistrate, Surat on 23 March 2023. 8th Additional Sessions Judge, Surat granted bail to me on 3 April 2023 and suspended the sentence to me pending appealvide order dated 3 April 2023. The order of conviction has finally been stayed by Hon'ble Supreme Court in SLP (Cri.) No. 8644/2023 vide order dated 4 August 2023 Pursuant to the Hon'ble Supreme Court order on 4 August 2023, the Lok Sabha issued a notification dated 7 August 2023 canceling the "disqualification". And restored my Membership as Member of Parliament.	2 years



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Air turbulence

Air India Express cabin crew's moody 'sick leave' hits operations, leaves fliers high and dry

In the realm of air travel, few situations are as frustrating as flight cancellations. The anticipation of reaching a destination is replaced by uncertainty and inconvenience. Such was the case recently when Air India Express, the low-cost subsidiary of Air India, found itself in a crisis, leading to a wave of flight cancellations. The flag carrier of India has long been grappling with financial woes and operational challenges. Despite various restructuring efforts, the airline has struggled to stay afloat in a fiercely competitive industry. The latest crisis began when over 300 senior cabin crew members of Express flights reported sick at the last minute, resulting in the cancellation of more than 90 flights since Tuesday night, leaving airports in disarray and passengers seething with frustration. Of course, Air India has now lent a helping hand to its subsidiary, deciding to operate 20 flights against 74 Express cancellations on Thursday, and sacking 30 crew members over "sick leave". The root cause of this crisis stems from longstanding grievances articulated by Air India Express Employees Union (AIXEU). They have voiced concerns about unfair treatment, citing instances where internal job postings were filled with external candidates, bypassing qualified internal staff. The owners, on their part, do not recognise AIXEU. The Regional Labour Commissioner in New Delhi has also criticised the management for alleged violations of labour laws, highlighting a lack of responsible decision-making. Adding to the turbulence is Air India's ongoing financial struggles and operational challenges.



Air India Express, despite its parent company's losses, remained profitable. In 2021, it was sold to the Tata Group, which merged it with AirAsia India. It aimed to capture the budget aviation market with a focus on non-trunk routes and ancillary services. It is the only profitable airline with the Tatas. In 2023, the airline made a profit of Rs 116.84 crore, while the other airlines in the Tata Group's aviation stable — AirAsia India, Vistara and Air India — incurred a combined loss of Rs 15,530 crores. The fallout from these cancellations has been significant, with passengers expressing their frustration on social media platforms. Long queues, missed connections and inadequate communication have characterised the scenes at airports. In response, Air India Express has issued apologies and promises of improved services, but the damage to passenger trust has been done. The Indian aviation sector has huge potential but the issues of mismanagement are galore. The Govt must proactively ensure that the fliers are not taken for a ride and the airlines also do not incur losses. Besides, the pandemic years were very traumatic for the industry and it is slowly recovering. The Govt must resolve the crisis before it snowballs into a crisis and takes down the whole sector. Looking ahead, the fate of Air India and its subsidiaries remains uncertain. Only time will tell whether Air India Express and its counterparts can rise above the chaos and emerge with flying colours.

PICTALK



Students perform during the celebration of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's birth anniversary, in Nadia

An open letter to Shehbaz Sharif

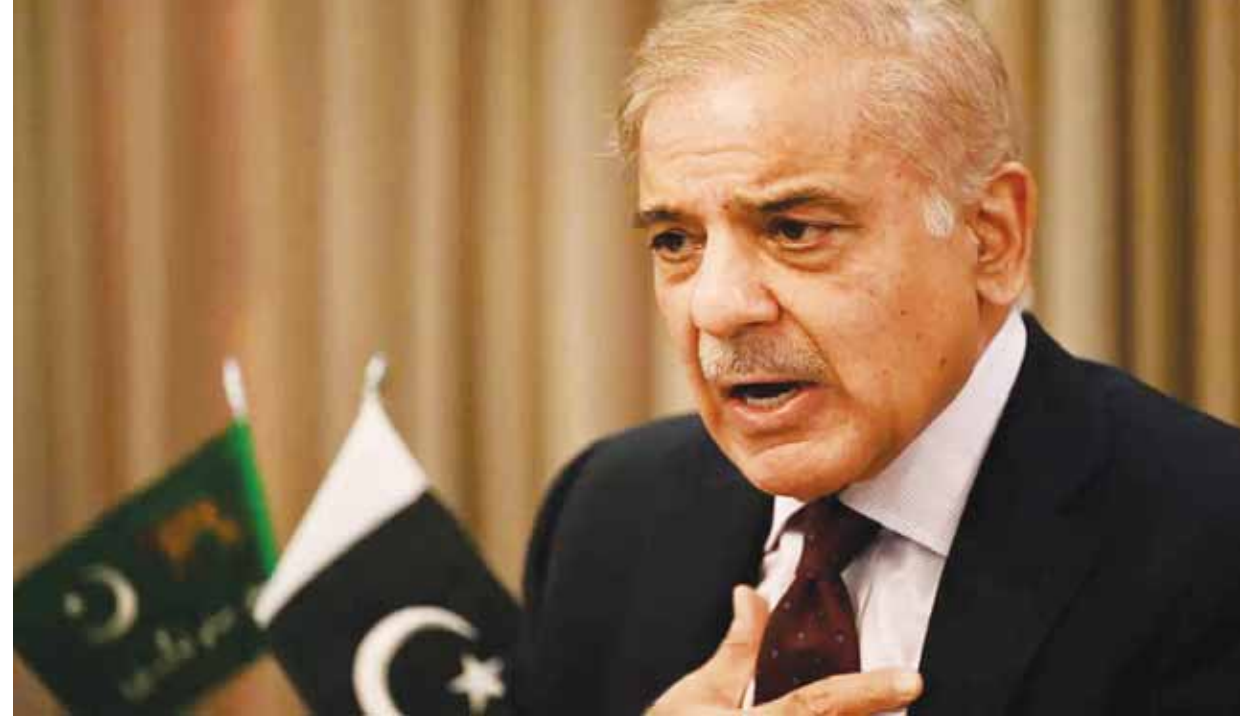
We tolerated terrorist violence for many years but when we could no longer tolerate it, we went to Parliament to do away with Article 370. But we did not resort to violence



PRAFULL GORADIA

Dear Vazir-e-Azam Shehbaz Sharif Sahab, I have taken the privilege of writing to the Prime Minister of our neighbouring country, which, till 76 years ago, was part of us, but separated in acrimonious circumstances. I'm sure that you're aware, as a lot of in India are, that this separation and the aftermath it gave rise to continues to not only cast its shadow over the subcontinent but also torment relations between various communities. This open letter to you is a humble attempt, not to hark back to the events of those decades and apportion blame, but to address the contentiousness of modern-day issues that continue to trail in their wake.

Whenever the issue of Ayodhya, the Gyan Vapi temple (Varanasi) or the Krishna Janmabhoomi (Mathura) comes up, my mind travels to Lahore and the Gurudwara Shaheed Gunj at the Naulakha Bazar locality of your splendid city. The ownership of the place was disputed by the local Muslims who claimed that the place had originally been a mosque. It had been converted into a gurudwara by the local Sikhs during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. When opportune in the 19th century, the people of the city, led by some Muslim Leaguers, went to court over this. They did not win their case for the re-conversion of the gurudwara into a mosque. Legal counsel argued that an appeal could be filed if necessary, right up to the Privy Council. However, the then premier of Punjab Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan advised against any further action as it might open a Pandora's Box across the subcontinent, which was then undivided. Sikandar Hayat also advised against any further litigation. Any use of the argument of adverse possession might cause the return of many of the temples that had come into Muslim possession. What was then perhaps overlooked was that a Hindu temple is a residence of the divine and not merely a prayer hall. The pratimas (icons) are the first step in the quest for spirituality. Ultimately, spirituality can be



active by having a darshan of the avatar of the divine. In Sikhism, they do not have an icon nor the scope of spirituality in the same way as in a Hindu temple. Prophet Moses, the founding prophet of Judaism, the first of the three Semitic religions—also called Religions of the Book—known in Islam as Hazrat Moosa, had expressly forbidden any idol worship by the second of his Ten Commandments; "Thou shalt not make any graven image of thy lord the god". Your faith has rigidly adhered to this particular Commandment. However, it does pain me no end to state that you have carried this adherence way too far. In your country, over 75 temples have been desecrated or pulled down after independence in 1947, a sordid trend that is continuing. From my Urdu teacher who was a scholar, I have learnt that it is your bounden duty as a momin (believer) to desecrate butts (idols) installed by kafirs (infidels). But for the sake of friendly relations between us two neighbours, your people should desist from such desecrations. I am saying this after



POLITICAL LEADERS OF YOUR GENERATION MIGHT STILL FIND COMFORT IN THE NOTION THAT INDIANS ARE A PEACEFUL AND DORMANT LOT AND THEREFORE WON'T REACT MUCH. THAT MIGHT INDEED HAVE BEEN THE CASE A COUPLE OF DECADES AGO, BUT IT IS NO LONGER SO

accepting the fact that Islam detests parasti (idol worship) and insists on majahab parasti (adherence to the faith) alone. But we live in a world where adherents of other religions too have equal rights to profess and practice their faith, without hurting others. I appeal to you to care for our sentiments and not target the temples and idols that still survive. Political leaders of your generation might still find comfort in the notion that Indians are a peaceful, and also dormant, lot and therefore won't react much. That might indeed have been the case till a couple of decades ago but is no longer so. India and Indians are changing. Real change in our civilizational journey was heralded in December 1992, of which I was fortunate to be a humble part. In India, we have begun a movement to restore the temples that were casualties of the medieval age. I shall shortly be writing to Madam Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of our eastern neighbouring country. Dozens of temples continue to be desecrated in her country every year. You would agree that good neigh-

bours do not hurt each other. Kindly, remember that there are thousands upon thousands of mosques built upon the ruins of ancient temples. So far, we have preferred to approach the courts of law and minimize unilateral action. I appeal to you to also eschew violence. In Kashmir too, over 130 temples were attacked and desecrated even as India continued to hold control over the state's territory. I am aware that Pakistan took great umbrage when we abrogated Article 370, but is it any wonder that we had to do so? We tolerated terrorist violence for many years, but when we could tolerate it no longer, we went to Parliament to do away with Article 370. But you would certainly appreciate that we did not resort to violence even on this issue. Our Muslim compatriots are cooperating to a moderate degree, even in the state of Kashmir. This is a trend which we hope continues. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EVOLUTION OF MONETARY POLICY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Evolution of Monetary Policymaking in India," published on May 8, this is my response. The journey of India's monetary policy from its inception to the present day is a saga of adaptation and evolution. From the establishment of the Reserve Bank of India to the modern era of inflation targeting, each phase has been marked by its unique challenges and responses. The nationalisation of banks in 1969 marked a pivotal moment, transitioning monetary policy towards a more centralised, planned approach. However, external shocks like the oil crises of the 1970s tested the resilience of this system, necessitating revisions and reforms.

The introduction of the Multiple Indicator Approach in 1998 reflected a shift towards a more holistic understanding of economic dynamics. Yet, the global financial crisis of 2008 exposed vulnerabilities, prompting a recalibration towards inflation targeting. While inflation targeting has its merits, recent disruptions such as demonetization and the pandemic have highlighted its limitations in addressing supply-side pressures. As the landscape of inflation evolves, a nuanced and comprehensive policy framework is imperative, one that combines the principles of inflation targeting with proactive measures to mitigate supply-side disruptions. In essence, the history of India's monetary policy underscores the need for continual adaptation in the face of evolving economic realities.

Vihaan Reddy | Bengaluru

REFLECTIONS ON ELECTIONS

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Elected leaders need to rethink," published on May 8, this is my response. Election times unveil a complex tapestry of our democracy, woven with threads of hope, disappointment, and societal reflection. As citizens, we witness the ritual dance of power, where promises collide with reality, and ideals meet the harsh edges of pragmatism. The model code of conduct, ostensibly a guardian of fair play, often feels like

Political manoeuvring



Apropos the news article, "Modi, Lalu in a tug of war on Muslim quota," published on May 8, this is my response. The recent political discourse surrounding reservations in India has taken a contentious turn, with various parties embroiled in a heated debate over extending reservation benefits to Muslims. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vehemently opposed such a

move, labelling it as a ploy to undermine existing quotas for SC, ST, and OBC communities. The BJP accuses its rivals of attempting to appease a specific vote bank by advocating for Muslim reservations while disregarding the principles of social and educational backwardness outlined in the Constitution and the Mandal Commission report. Conversely, opposition figures argue that denying reservations to Muslims would be unjust and tantamount to disenfranchisement. Amidst these exchanges, accusations of conspiracy and attempts to manipulate voter sentiments loom large. The charged rhetoric underscores the high stakes of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, where competing visions of governance, identity, and social justice are at play. As citizens, it's imperative to critically engage with these debates and hold our leaders accountable for their promises and policies.

Kiara Sharma | Mumbai

a mere whisper against the cacophony of electoral fervor. Expenditure limits crumble under the weight of unchecked spending, leaving us disillusioned with the integrity of the process. The impact of elections extends beyond just voting, as they can turn schools into battlegrounds, with political theatre taking centre stage and the future suffering while the eloquence of our founding luminaries seems lost amidst the mudslinging and vitriol of contemporary discourse. Yet, amidst the chaos, there is a glimmer of hope embodied by figures like APJ Abdul Kalam, whose legacy reminds us of the transformative power of leadership rooted in humility and service.

Arya Kapoor | Kolkata

BEGGING IS AN EPIDEMIC

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Benevolent hearts: Dynamics of begging and household donations," published on May 8, this is my response. Begging has been ingrained in the roots of Indian society for ages. This sickening culture has become a fashion, a compulsion, a profes-

sion and even a kind of recreation in our country. Beggars in India easily outnumber their ilk in other big countries. To the Westerners, India is a land of mendicants. Beggars are found everywhere—on roads, crossings, footpaths, etc. But their favourite hangouts are bathing ghats, temples, religious fairs, railway stations, trains and bus stands. It is a real nuisance to be confronted by street beggars in all places. Like the Almighty, they seem to be omnipresent. You are waiting for a bus or walking down a road with your friend, and beggars suddenly appear from nowhere and start an endless volley of supplications until you give them a few coins out of sheer disgust and helplessness. The monstrous practice of begging cannot be eradicated from our society because millions are living 'below the poverty line', yearning for a morsel of food. Unfortunately very little has been done by our past and present governments to obliterate the social illness of begging.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Enigma of copyright in the digital world

Policymakers face the formidable challenge of revising copyright laws effectively to tackle the complexities presented by AI

People often say that in this digital world, nothing remains secret. Even personal details can be accessed through the Internet. The quantum of information on the Internet is so vast that, despite the security measures, it is not cent per cent foolproof. In such a scenario, one must critically examine copyright's relevance in the digital world. Copyright rules and laws traditionally protect every creation or innovation, so the original creator retains credit for their work and is aptly rewarded through monetary benefits. When an author creates a book, they automatically own the copyright. This gives them the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, perform, and display the book and create derivative works based on it. In most countries, copyright protection for a book typically lasts for the author's lifetime plus 50-70 years. During this time, others generally cannot reproduce or distribute the book without the author's permission unless their use falls under a specific exception, such as fair use or fair dealing. Within the realm of music,



this signifies that the individual responsible for creating a song, the writer of the lyrics, the composer, or the performer, possesses the sole entitlement to utilise, disseminate, and capitalise on that song. In India, organisations such as the Indian Performing Right Society (IPRS) and Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) administer the rights of copyright owners and collect royalties on their behalf for the public performance and broadcast of songs. Copyright also extends to research works, protecting and monetising one's creations through patents. Unfortunately, journal publishers own the copyright for research publications. The publishers amass massive amounts through subscriptions and advertisements without providing any monetary benefit to the authors. Most of the reputed journals

do peer reviews free of cost, take processing charges from authors, and get subscription fees and advertisements as revenue. What does the poor researcher get? A mental satisfaction of getting published in a high-impact journal? In a way, it's not fair. A few magazines, of course, practice giving honorariums to the authors. Despite having stringent copyright rules and regulations, its efficacy is questionable in the rapidly evolving digital age landscape. The widespread availability of digital content and the simplicity of sharing information on the Internet have presented unprecedented difficulties and intricacies for existing copyright rules. Today, one can easily copy content from online resources without crediting the original creator. Content available on social media sites, including photographs, is widely reproduced. Identifying the original content creator, be it literary or artistic works, is often difficult. Even stringent protective measures like user authentication mechanisms such as passwords, multifactor authentication (MFA),

and role-based access controls (RBAC) to restrict access to authorised individuals or groups and watermarking techniques often fail to prevent the infringement of copyrights. The advent of AI in digital platforms has complicated the situation. As AI systems become more sophisticated, their ability to create, replicate, and modify content raises intricate legal questions regarding ownership and authorship. Though AI can do any role, it lacks the human touch in its creation that connects human minds. While individuals are accountable for creating and instructing these algorithms, the AI system autonomously produces the outcome, erasing the distinction between human and machine authorship. The current necessity lies in incorporating ethical, cultural, and economic considerations while crafting a new policy that effectively balances the rights of creators and AI developers.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN



FIRST COLUMN

EU-CHINA RELATIONS AT A CROSSROADS

Xi embarks on a strategic journey across Europe, a move laden with symbolism



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Geo-political adjustments are getting done, bilaterally and plurilateral, even as the world's largest democracies are busy calming their domestic constituencies, where a key rallying agenda is China. The two largest democracies, India and the US, both of whom have their own set of issues with China, are in the middle of some of the most competitive election processes, ever seen across the globe. Meanwhile, the EU, or at least many of its member countries, not to mention US allies such as Australia are carefully recalibrating the entangled web of engagement with China.

It is by no coincidence that Chinese Premier Xi Jinping, was on a strategic three-nation tour of Europe, earlier this week. This tri-nation tour, during which the Chinese premier, also met the European Union president Ursula Von der Leyen, comes after a gap of almost 5 years and is also a time when many European nations have been blaming China for pushing highly subsidised electric vehicles into their markets, making several European auto factories redundant. The Europeans also wanted to focus on China playing a larger role in stabilising its "friends without limits" Russia, in the war against Ukraine, pushing up fuel-aided inflation across the region. The Europeans in the plain speak, they are known for, outlined clearly in the president's press statement, "the first topic where we exchanged views on was the geopolitical situation. We especially discussed Ukraine and the conflicts in the Middle East. We agree that Europe and China have a shared interest in peace and security. We count on China to use all its influence on Russia to end Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. President Xi has played an important role in de-escalating Russia's irresponsible nuclear threats, and I



am confident that President Xi will continue to do so against the backdrop of the ongoing nuclear threats by Russia. We have also discussed China's commitment not to provide any lethal equipment to Russia. More effort is needed to curtail the delivery of dual-use goods to Russia that find their way to the battlefield. And given the existential nature of the threats stemming from this war for both Ukraine and Europe, this does affect the EU-China relations. "The message from the EU to China was, don't help Russia in its unjust war on European soil, or else the bilateral relation would be in trouble. No surprises, Ukraine and the Middle East didn't feature, till the bottom three paragraphs of the press statement issued by the Chinese team, post the trilateral meeting.

Also no surprises with the language which read "On the Ukraine crisis, President Xi pointed out that China, France and the EU all wish to see an early ceasefire and return of peace in Europe, and support political settlement of the crisis. China has been working vigorously to facilitate talks for peace. China's objective and just position and its constructive role have been widely recognized by the international community. China is ready to stay in communication with relevant parties." The other significant element of these conversations was traded, as all parties involved are feeling the constraints of escalating fuel costs, the volatile geo-political environment and, the post-Covid, supply chain mismatch. The EU provided sharp pointers on Chinese subsidised products, free and fair access to each other's markets and supply chain resiliency in their conversations. A defensive China maintained that the two sides have extensive common interests and broad space for cooperation in green and digital transition. It is necessary that they properly address economic and trade frictions through dialogue and consultation, and accommodate each other's legitimate concerns. "China has started making, the right moves to woo back some of its largest market partners, at a time when India and the US, the other key stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific theatre, are busy with their elections. India will get over elections in about a month, and an agile nimble China policy outlook awaits.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Economic progress in India: A reality check



ATUL SEHGAL

Despite notable achievements, economic progress falters due to the neglect of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Public Sector Undertakings and agricultural reforms



India has come a long way since 2014 in the matter of various indices and parameters of economic development. Consider this. India has increased her per capita income through this decade from USD 1560 to USD 2500, a 60 per cent increase. It has purportedly lifted 400 million persons out of poverty during the decade. Its foreign exchange kitty has increased from USD 322 billion to USD 640 billion during the same period. These are impressive figures. Large figures are always impressive, but they need to be checked, compared and corroborated to be sanctified.

Consider this now. The per capita income of India increased from USD 600 to USD 1560 for the period from 2004 to 2014 which is a bigger increase of 160 percent. Its foreign exchange reserves increased from USD 107 billion to USD 322 billion between 2004 and 2014. Whereas the surge from 2004 to 2014 was 200 per cent, it was only 100 per cent in the next decade.

The above comparative figures talk aloud about India's poor economic development in the last decade. This is not an overall performance report on the current NDA government. This government has many unprecedented achievements to its credit. But on the economic front, it doesn't seem to have delivered. Why has the NDA not been able to deliver on the economic front? There are several reasons.

Neglect of MSMEs: The micro, small and medium enterprises sector in the country did not receive the attention due to it. This sector is the main source of employment generation. Imports from China continued to swell and many manufacturers closed down their factories to become traders and distributors. Poor implementation of the Make in India programme: The Make in India was a well-conceived ambitious programme



THE GOVERNMENT DID WELL TO BLUEPRINT REFORMS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR—THOSE RELATED TO MSP AND PROCUREMENT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE. BUT THE GOVERNMENT FAILED TO IMPLEMENT IT BY CAPITULATING IN FRONT OF FAKE PROTESTERS MASQUERADING AS FARMERS

to boost indigenous manufacturing. The scheme had its points of deficiency but regrettably, the major driving points of the grandiose scheme remained largely on paper and were never implemented properly. The result—share of manufacturing in the economy continues to stagnate at 14 percent.

Absence of bureaucratic reforms: Our obsolete, corruption-ridden colonial bureaucratic system had never delivered earlier and cried for reforms. But the reforms did not come. The result was a failure of key developmental programmes like the 100 Smart Cities Programme. The government did a remarkable job of establishing GST and promulgating the IBC. This enabled a clean-up of banks and a sharp decline in their NPAs. However, the failure of the government to increase the ease of doing business by cutting down on bureaucratic red tape is a big reason behind the continuing lack of a suitable ecosystem for business and big investment.

Failure to implement Agricultural Reforms: The government did well to blueprint reforms in the agricultural sector—those related to MSP and procurement of agricultural produce. But the government failed to implement the same by capitulating in front of fake protesters masquerading as farmers.

Neglect of PSUs: The government paid very little attention to the state and central PSUs which account for 15 per cent of the total economic activities in the country. It kept on harping on the absence of the need for the government to be in business. This

was an impractical approach to handling the Indian economy and failed to tap the big PSUs in which so much of public money had been invested.

Failure to bring about judicial reforms: Justice in this country continues to be delayed, denied and derailed. Despite big talks to the contrary, the government did nothing in the direction of judicial reforms. This was and remains a big dampener to FDI and even domestic investment in new business.

Notwithstanding the above, we must bear in mind that most of the previous governments had left deep pits in our economy that needed to be filled to prepare the ground for the rapid holistic development of the country. The UPA government, between 2004 and 2014 did produce better numbers for FE reserves and economic growth rate but the money generating that investment and growth was preponderantly from the huge proportion of parallel-black money economy out of the overall economy. Money was meagrely flowing for the critical sectors of defence and infrastructure and even for some important socialistic schemes. Modi 1.0 and Modi 2.0 changed this by bringing economic discipline and curbing corruption and economic malfeasance. It brought GST and IBC and did the clean-up of Banks by bringing down drastically the NPAs. It severely dented the black money economy. These were the pits filled by the Modi government that have prepared fertile soil for the fast-track economic progress of the country now. Given the above, it is imper-

ative and is also expected that the Modi government, if returned to power, will take the undermentioned steps to boost real progress on the economic front. Economic progress is the foundation of the overall progress of a country. Progress on other fronts like defence, foreign affairs, etc. has been significant but sustainable multifaceted development can only be achieved on the foundation of a strong and healthy economic bottom line.

The country needs drastic institutional and bureaucratic reforms. It needs urgent implementation of the farming sector reforms which were shelved after so much drum beating. The education sector calls for a thorough overhaul to replace the colonial Macaulay established system with an indigenous system in tune with the nation's ethos and tradition.

Sloganeering and political gamesmanship need to be replaced by serious, earnest and committed steps for boosting investment, trade, manufacturing and exports. India has a huge potential for becoming an economic powerhouse in quick time but we need to go about building our economy with due seriousness and dedication, rising above narrow interests of caste, class, political affiliations and last but not least, political expediency. It is very much hoped that Modi 3.0, with a two-thirds majority, will usher in the much-needed administrative, bureaucratic and judicial reforms for the speedy economic progress of the country.

(The author is a management consultant; views are personal)

India and Armenia strengthen defence ties amidst regional instability

As the Turkey-Azerbaijan-Pakistan axis looms, the growing Indo-Armenia partnership emerges as a vital defence against destabilising forces

In recent years, the strategic partnership between India and Armenia has undergone a remarkable transformation—fired by their shared commitment to fortify defence capabilities and confront regional security challenges head-on. Against the backdrop of Armenia's enduring struggle with Azerbaijan and Turkey's support for Azerbaijan's advantages, the precipitating connection between Armenia and India stands for recognition. Armenia's proximity to India and both agreeing to diversify their strategic alignment, deserves special attention on the global stage.

Military Cooperation: Armenia's imperative to diversify its security alliances and bolster its military capabilities,



PADMALOCHAN DASH

particularly amidst the enduring conflict with Azerbaijan, is evident through heightened defense spending and collaborations with nations such as India and France. India's involvement with Armenia's military not only strengthens its defensive capabilities but also serves to counterbalance external-internal influences like Turkey and Pakistan in the South Asian region. The expanding Indo-Armenian

partnership encompasses various facets, including the exchange of weaponry, joint military exercises, and strategic consultations, all aimed at enhancing defense readiness and security in their respective regions.

Advanced Weaponry and Joint Exercises: The acquisition of state-of-the-art weaponry highlights the growing defense cooperation between India and Armenia. Reports indicate ongoing provision of military hardware from India to Armenia, including multiple-launch rocket systems, anti-tank missiles, and radar systems. Additionally, joint military exercises and training programs are underway to enhance preparedness and interoperability between their

armed forces. These collaborative efforts facilitate the exchange of expertise and tactics, fostering effective coordination for potential future operations, from joint exercises to intelligence sharing, both nations are committed to showcasing their military capabilities and strengthening their strategic partnership.

Geopolitical Determinations: Armenia's pivotal role in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) offers India diversified trade routes and enhanced access to Eurasian markets, bolstering strategic interests in economic resilience and geopolitical balancing. Conversely, India's military support for Armenia underscores its commitment to preserving regional peace and countering aggressive

manoeuvres by the Turkey-Azerbaijan-Pakistan axis. Through the realisation of mutual interests, India and Armenia can reshape security dynamics in the South Caucasus region by challenging the dominance of larger geopolitical actors and their support for rogue powers.

Turkey-Azerbaijan-Pakistan Axis: The Turkey-Azerbaijan-Pakistan axis poses a substantial threat to respective regional stability, with Turkey's unwavering support for Azerbaijan during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict then raising concerns about potential escalations. The longstanding military partnership between Turkey and Pakistan, characterised by defence production, joint training exercises, and high-level military dialogues, under-

scores their concerted efforts to advance mutual geopolitical goals and exert influence in the regions. This axis represents a significant challenge to the security and stability of the South Caucasus and South Asian regions, as that axis seeks to consolidate its power and undermine the influence of other regional stakeholders. Responses and Ongoing Efforts: In response to the burgeoning influence of the Turkey-Azerbaijan-Pakistan axis, India's steadfast support for Armenia signifies a resolute stance against their aggressive manoeuvres in the region. Aimed at preserving a delicate balance of power, India and Armenia are all set to intensify their collaboration to address these threats. While Turkey's stance on

Kashmir validates the burgeoning Indo-Armenia defence cooperation, the nexus between Turkey's involvement in the Kashmir issue and Pakistan's alignment with Azerbaijan's agenda cannot be seen as a mere happenstance, rather a meticulously orchestrated strategy with far-reaching intention. In this backdrop, the urgent need for a meticulously planned multilateral defence partnership underscored. This becomes essential to counter the unholy Turkey-Pakistan-Azerbaijan axis—thereby ensuring stability in both the Caucasus and South Asian regions.

The Promising Prospects: The emerging strategic cooperation between India and Armenia holds immense promise for enhancing region-

al security and advancing shared interests. Both nations are poised to deepen their partnership and address prevailing challenges through concerted efforts in military collaboration and strategic alignments. India's steadfast support for Armenia underscores its dedication to maintaining peace and stability in the Caucasus region. With far-reaching implications for global geopolitical outcomes, the Indo-Armenia partnership has the potential to redefine the regional balance of power and contribute significantly to the stability and prosperity of both the Caucasus and South Asian regions.

(The writer is working with an Independent Think Tank; views are personal)

EC announces poll to four seats of Maharashtra Legislative Council

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid the ongoing Lok Sabha elections in the State, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced the schedule for the biennial elections to the Maharashtra Legislative Council to fill four seats — two seats each from the Graduates' and Teachers' constituencies, on June 10, 2024. The four members — whose impending retirement from the State Legislative Council on July 7 have necessitated the biennial elections — are: Vilas Potnis (Shivsena UBT) from the Mumbai Graduates' Constituency, Niranjan Davkhare (BJP) from the Konkani Division Graduates, Kishore Bhikaji Darade (Shivsena UBT) from the Nashik Division Teachers' constituency and Kapil Harisachandra Patil (Lokbharti Party) from the Mumbai Teachers' constituency. This is the first-ever biennial elections to the Maharashtra Legislative Council after the June 2022 vertical split in the Shiv Sena, which has thrown



up a new Shiv Sena headed by chief minister Eknath Shinde, and the rebellion within the NCP which saw Ajit Pawar walked out a majority of the party MLAs and joined the Eknath Shinde Sena-BJP government on July 2, 2023. While the ruling BJP will have to retain one seat, the Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray and the Shinde Sena will vie with each other to win two seats. There will be a fierce contest for the Mumbai Teachers' constituency seat. While the elections to the Graduates' Division constituencies are contested on the basis of party symbols,

Teachers' Unions affiliated to political parties or those independent of political affiliations will put up candidates in the elections to the Teachers Division constituencies. As per the poll schedule announced by the ECI, the notification for the biennial MLC elections will be issued on May 15, while the last date for filing of nomination papers is May 22. The nominations will be scrutinised on May 24 and the last date for withdrawal of nomination papers is May 27. The elections to four MLC seats will be held on June 10, while the counting of votes will take place on June 13.

No victim reached out to register complaint against Prajwal: NCW

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National Commission for Women (NCW) on Thursday said no victim has come forward to register a complaint with the NCW against Karnataka MP Prajwal Revanna, and one woman complainant who reached out to it alleged that she was forced to register a fake complaint against the JD(S) leader. The timely submission of the Action Taken Report (ATR) by the concerned authorities reveals several significant findings, the National Commission for Women (NCW) added. It said a Special Investigation Team (SIT) committee has been formed to probe the matter thoroughly. Notably, there is a commendable presence of female officers entrusted with conducting investigations and ensuring sensitivity and empathy in handling such cases, it added. According to the NCW, the ATR indicated the registration of two cases based on the complaints of sexual abuse by the victims, alongside an additional complaint filed for abduction by a relative.



However, no victim has come forward to register a complaint with the commission in this case, it said. "One woman complainant came to the commission to register a complaint against three individuals dressed in civil uniform, allegedly introducing themselves as Karnataka Police officials and forcing her to give a false complaint in this case," the NCW claimed. "She stated that she is being called by random phone numbers threatening her to complaint. It has come to light that this complainant was forced by

a group of individuals to file a complaint, under the threat of potential harassment and false implications. The victim has sought protection for her family's welfare, underscoring the seriousness of the situation," it said. In a separate development, the NCW said, it has been noted that the 700 women who submitted online complaints are affiliated with a social activist group and have no direct involvement or association with the primary complainant in the case. "NCW would like to state that 700 women have not given any complaints to NCW regarding Prajwal Revanna case. Some media channels are falsely reporting this," the commission said in a post. The police booked Prajwal Revanna and his father JD(S) MLA and former minister H D Revanna for sexual harassment and criminal intimidation based on a complaint from a woman, who worked in their household. Prajwal (33) is the BJP-JD(S) alliance candidate for the Hassan Lok Sabha seat which went to polls on April 26.

Molestation charges: West Bengal Governor shows CCTV footage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA



Days after a contractual employee at Kolkata Raj Bhavan brought sexual assault charges against Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose he on Thursday showed the CCTV footage of the said date to a limited audience that he called "common men" which would not comprise members from any political party or for that matter police force. May 2 footage from two CCTV cameras at the main gate was shown to people at the hall on the ground floor of Raj Bhavan, sources said adding there were about one hundred people. The alleged incident took place when a woman working as a contractual ministerial employee complained to the Hare Street Police that she had been molested by the Governor on the pretext of giving her a good assignment and maybe a good and permanent posting. "Governor Bose has launched a programme 'SACH KE SAAMNE' in the background

of the mischievous and fabricated allegations by the police that Raj Bhavan is not sparing the CCTV footage of an incident which is under the illegal and unconstitutional investigation of the police," said a Raj Bhavan post. It was also said that the Honourable Governor has decided that the CCTV footages can be seen by any citizen of West Bengal — except politicians Mamata Banerjee and her police for the stand they had taken, which is in public domain."

Believers' Church head Yohannan passes away

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

KP Yohannan, the Metropolitan Bishop of the Believers' Church and founder of Gospel For Asia, the renowned evangelisation organisation passed away at Dallas in USA late Wednesday evening following a car accident. Thiruvalla born Yohannan, who has been renamed as Athanasius Yohan following his elevation as Metropolitan Bishop was on an official trip to USA. A speeding car hit him while he was on his morning walk through a country road on Tuesday. The police rushed to the spot and airlifted him to a specialty hospital where it was found that Yohannan had suffered serious multiple injuries including broken ribs that damaged his liver. He was on life support system since he was admitted to the Dallas hospital and a cardiac arrest turned

fatal. The Believers Church management informed that his mortal remains would be brought back to Thiruvalla for the final rites. The Believers Church has many educational and business enterprises spread across the country. Spiritual Journey, the radio programme broadcast by Yohannan was a popular show among the his followers. Yohannan was 74 and is survived by his son and daughter. Born into a poor family of duck rears in Thiruvalla, Yohannan rose to become the best evangelist in Asia and is credited with bringing millions of "sinners" to the path of Cross and Jesus. Those who vehemently oppose religious conversion themselves offered all possible help to Yohannan and his army of proselytisers to operate freely across India. He spent lavishly on these organisations by pro-

viding them with advertisements worth millions of rupees. In a rare show of communal harmony, publications owned by the RSS always spotted the advertisements issued by Yohannan. Starting his evangelization drive through the renowned Operation Mobilization, Yohannan had made proselytization an art form. The satellite TV channels owned by Yohannan are a major relief to people waiting for a call from the Holy Spirit. Details like the time and place of the Metropolitan's last journey is awaited. Believers Church was in the news in 2020 and 2022 following ED raids in the Church premises and business establishments owned by it. There were reports that the raids led to seizure of hundreds of crore rupees which is believed to be from money laundering.

BJP expresses concern over rise in Muslim population

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday expressed concern over the pace of increase in Muslim population in the country and wondered its impact on the reservation provided to SCs, STs and OBCs, claiming the Congress is "hell bent" on providing quota to the minority community if voted to power. The ruling party's reaction came after a recent working paper by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) said the share of the Hindu population decreased by 7.82 per cent between 1950 and 2015 in India, while that of Muslims increased by 43.15 per cent, suggesting that there is a conducive environment in the country to foster diversity. The paper titled 'Share of Religious Minorities: A Cross-Country Analysis (1950-2015)' further said the share of Jains in the population of India decreased from 0.45 per cent in 1950 to 0.36 per cent in 2015. The report comes ahead of the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha polls. "It's a very well-known fact, which has been in the public domain for around a decade. If you see the 1951 census, Hindus were having 88 per cent population and Muslims 9.5 per cent. In the 2011 census, Hindus (population) reduced to 79.8 percent from



80 percent while Muslims' percentage went up by more than 14.5," BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said. "But, the question arises that if by this pace the population is increasing and Congress is hell bent upon giving reservation to the Muslims on the basis of population, they will cut the share of the SCs, STs and the OBCs," he added. Trivedi said the Congress, if voted to power will, then keep on "changing" the share of reservation in future with increase in the Muslim population, "which is more likely because they (Muslims) are having possibility of multiple marriages". Muslims share in the reservation will keep on increasing also because of "conversion and infiltration because they are having a secular cover from them (the Congress)", he added. "So this is a bigger question and a bigger challenge which they (Congress) have to

answer," the BJP spokesperson said. Senior BJP leader and Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that the EAC-PM's report raises many questions because one particular community is "increasing its population in a manner where demography of India is being altered, changed". "This leads to some questions that need to be asked and answered," he said, adding "How much of growth in Muslim community is being caused by illegal immigration and conversion?" he asked. "What is the impact of this significant increase in the minority community's (Muslims) population on the rights and opportunities (available) for the other minority communities? There are Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs and Christians. Is there any crowding out of these minority communities as a consequence of this (rise in Muslim population)?" Chandrasekhar asked. He alleged that some political parties including the Congress are making "huge attempt to alter the Constitution and bring religion based reservation". "So, what will be the consequence when you have the Muslim community increasing its population so rapidly, from 9 per cent to 14.5 per cent and there are political forces that want to give them reservation," he said.

BJP workers protest over Pitroda remark

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Scores of party leaders and workers of the BJP held a protest over former chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress Sam Pitroda's controversial 'racist' remarks near the Congress headquarters at Akbar Road in the national capital on Thursday, demanding an apology from the leaders of the party, including Rahul Gandhi. Party workers were seen holding posters saying "Racist remarks won't work, won't work" and "Rahul Gandhi apologise, apologise" during the protest. Stating that diversity is India's biggest strength and it is held through the common thread of unity, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva remarked, "But the racist statement of the Congress leader abuses our unity and integrity. This statement by Pitroda is not spontaneous. After seeing the ground shifting from under their feet after three phases of the Lok Sabha polls, Congress leaders are now resorting to racist remarks." The protesters demanded an apology from Congress leaders, including former party chief Gandhi, for insulting the people of the country and Indians living abroad. Pitroda resigned as the chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress on

Wednesday after his controversial remarks spurred the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to label the Congress "racist". He stoked a major controversy with his remarks during a podcast where he cited ethnic and racial identities like Chinese, Africans, Arabs and Whites to describe the physical appearance of Indians from different parts of the country. BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri, who was also present at the protest, said that Sam Pitroda's statement is an insult to the country and no countryman will tolerate it. "The Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that abusing BJP, abusing me will be tolerated but if 140 crore people of the country are abused then it will not be tolerated. Sam Pitroda's statement is not just a statement but an insult to the country and every nationalist is on the streets against this statement," Bidhuri said. The veteran leader Pitroda was an advisor to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and has been closely associated with Rahul Gandhi, accompanying him during his foreign visits. As the BJP has made Pitroda's comments a poll issue, the Congress has distanced itself from his remarks, describing those as "most unfortunate and unacceptable".

Russia says US poking nose...

From Page 1 "Speculation on this topic in the absence of evidence is unacceptable." Washington lacks understanding of India's national mentality and history and continues to make "unfounded accusations" about religious freedoms in India, she said. "Regular unfounded accusations by the United States against New Delhi... We see that they groundlessly accuse not only India but also many other states... Of violating religious freedoms are a reflection of the United States'

misunderstanding of the national mentality, the historical context of the development of the Indian state and disrespect for India as a state," she said. Describing the interference as a "colonial period mentality," the Russian spokesperson accused the White House of complicating the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. "The reason is that they try to unbalance the internal political situation in India in order to complicate the (ongoing) general parliamentary elections. That is part of meddling into India's internal

affairs," RT news quoted her as saying. "The Washington Post, it seems to me, should use the term 'repressive regime' and everything you quoted in relation to Washington. It is difficult to imagine a more repressive regime than Washington, both in domestic and international affairs," she said. The Washington Post, citing unnamed sources, named a Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) officer in connection with the alleged plot to kill Pannun on American soil last year.

Sandeshkhali rape victim turns 'hostile'

From Page 1 Another BJP leader said, "The TMC can do everything... a party that can steal jobs can steal and fake anything." The scandalous developments at Sandeshkhali --- allegedly involving some of its local leaders like Sheikh Shahjahan who were presently in jail --- had immensely injured the image of TMC and the Mamata Banerjee Government in the run up to the parliamentary elections. Incidentally the Thursday's

video emerged days after a similar sting video coming up on Saturday sparking controversy. In the earlier purported video an individual identified as Gangadhar Koyal a reported booth-level saffron leader was heard telling that some women of Sandeshkhali who were not victims of sexual assault had misrepresented her case under the direction of a top Opposition leader. TMC general secretary Abhisek Banerjee went to town with the video clips claiming how the BJP had used its ill-gotten

money in its disinformation campaign by dishonouring the women of Sandeshkhali to earn political mileage before the elections. The TMC on Thursday approached the Election Commission of India seeking police action against the State BJP leadership, including Opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari, saying how the purported videos showed that that the BJP's own functionaries were claiming that the sexual assault stories were all concocted. "We have written a letter to

the EC. We've told them how the Sandeshkhali incident was a conspiracy hatched by the BJP so that false rape statements are given. There were no rapes in Sandeshkhali, it is all a lie," TMC MP Sagarika Ghosh said. In Kolkata Bengal Minister Shashi Panja playing a video where a top BJP leader was heard using abusive words against women said "the entire Sandeshkhali episode is a sham... things were hatched for votes... those who have money used them to malign TMC and Bengal".

ED stonewall... Testing times ahead for BJP in Haryana

From Page 1

"This court would take the call about grant, refusal of interim bail/release after three-day long arguments of the petitioner. As against this, the respondents have just begun. On this ground also this court may take a final view about the petition after fully hearing the respondent particularly when there is no medical urgency which requires consideration of interim release without fully hearing the respondents," the affidavit said. "If the petitioner is extended any interim relief on account of him being a politician for the purposes of campaigning

in general elections for his part there is no gain saving that all politicians incarcerated in some case or the other would not seek a similar treatment claiming that politicians are a class of their own," the ED said. On Wednesday, Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who headed the bench that heard Kejriwal's petition against his arrest in the case, said, "We will pronounce the interim order (on bail) on Friday. The main matter related to the challenge to arrest will also be taken up on the same day." The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader was arrested on March 21 and is currently lodged in Tihar Jail under judicial custody.

From Page 1

The Congress has 30 MLAs in the House. The support of the three Independents takes its tally to 33. Chautala drew Dattatreya's attention to the "current political turmoil in the State" and urged him to direct the appropriate authority to immediately call for a floor test. The JJP said it is ready to help the Congress topple the Government. Independent MLAs Sombir Sangwan (Dadri), Randhir Singh Gollen (Pundri) and Dharampal Gonder (Nilokheri) withdrew support to the ruling BJP in Haryana on Tuesday. Saini's predecessor ML Khattar claimed that many MLAs are in touch with the BJP and there is "nothing to worry about". Chautala wrote that after the Saini Government demonstrated its majority in the Vidhan Sabha with the support of several Independent MLAs,

Independent legislator Ranjit Singh Chautala resigned. Given these developments, including the withdrawal of support by the three Independents, it is evident that the incumbent Government no longer commands a majority in the Assembly, Chautala said. Referring to Article 174 of the Constitution, the JJP leader said the article "confers upon the Governor the authority to summon, prorogue, and dissolve the legislative Assembly". Chautala mentioned the landmark case S R Bommai case and said the Supreme Court had clarified the "Governor's discretion in determining the majority of a Government". "The court emphasised that a Governor has a constitutional obligation to act judiciously and impartially in such matters and can call for a floor test to determine a Government's majority," he said in the letter.

Deadlock over...

From Page 1 The number of cancelled flights at 85 translates to over 20 per cent of the airline's scheduled daily flights. In the earlier statement, the airline said it has cancelled 74 flights and will be operating 292 services. Earlier in a statement, the airline said the crew members were rostered for a flight on Tuesday. "However, you informed the Scheduling team at the last moment that

you were unwell and accordingly reported sick. It is noted that at around the same time, an overwhelming number of other cabin crew members have also reported sick and not reported for their duties. This clearly points to a pre-mediated and concerted abstention from work without any justifiable reason," it added. The airline said as a result, "a large number of flights had to be cancelled, thereby disrupting the entire schedule, which cause tremendous inconvenience to our esteemed passengers".

"Your act amounts to a concerted action with a common understanding, to not operate the flight and to disrupt services of the company." As it terminated the services of the cabin crew members, the airline said, "You will no longer be considered an employee; you will no longer have access to official mails, servers, other communication; and you and your dependants shall not be eligible for any employee-related benefits provided by the company." Since Tuesday night, approximately 15,000

passengers have already been affected by cancelled flights. Air India Express, which operates between 350 and 400 flights per day - comprising over 250 domestic and 120 international flights - is now reducing its daily flight schedule by about 40 until 13 May. The airline has asked passengers to check if their flight is affected by the disruption before heading to the airport. If the flight is cancelled, or delayed beyond three hours, they may opt for a full refund or reschedule to a later date without any fees, it added.

INDIA Bloc to meet EC over turnout figures

From Page 1

According to EC figures, a voter turnout of 66.14 per cent was recorded in phase one and 66.71 per cent in phase two of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. For the third phase of voting that took place on Tuesday, the EC's voter turnout app on Wednesday showed that 65.55 per cent voting had occurred. A Press release on Monday by

the EC also contained the total number of electors in every seat, along with the voting percentage figures. Based on the complaints made by Opposition parties as well as the BJP, the poll panel had earlier issued notices to BJP president JP Nadda and Congress president Kharge over alleged violations of the Model Code of Conduct by leaders from their parties.

LS poll contest between vote for development, vote for jihad: Shah

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the 2024 election is Rahul Gandhi vs Narendra Modi and that it is a contest between vote for development and "vote for jihad".

Addressing an election rally in Bhongir Lok Sabha constituency of Telangana, he said the election is between Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Bharatiya guarantee" against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's "Chinese guarantee". Describing the Congress, BRS and AIMIM as a triangle of appeasement, he said the parties don't let Ram Navami procession to take place and that they also oppose CAA. "These people don't allow the celebration of Hyderabad Liberation Day" (September 17). These people oppose CAA. These people want to run Telangana on the basis of Sharia and Quran," he said. BJP would secure nearly 200 seats in the three phases of Lok Sabha elections held so far and Telangana needs to vote to help the party cross the target of 400 seats, Shah said. Observing that BJP had won four of the 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana in 2019, he asked Chief Minister



A Revanth Reddy to realise that BJP would win more than 10 seats in the present elections. The double digit score in Telangana would make PM Modi cross 400 seats, he predicted. Referring to Congress' allegation that BJP would change the Constitution and abolish reservations, he said Congress wants to fight elections by telling lies. Congress says Modi would scrap quotas but he has not done so despite being in power for the last 10 years with full majority, he said. But, Congress in Telangana robbed the reservations of SC, ST and OBCs by providing four

percent reservation to Muslims, he alleged. Shah said BJP would end Muslim reservation and increase SC, ST and OBC quotas, if they came to power. "Modi ji does what he says. The guarantees of Rahul baba (Gandhi) don't last even till sunset," he said. At the time of Telangana assembly polls, Rahul Gandhi had promised Rs two lakh farm loan waiver, Rs 15,000 every year for farmers, Rs 12,000 annually for agriculture workers, Rs 500 bonus on MSP for paddy farmers, Rs five lakh loan to students without guarantee, 'scooty' to college going girls and interna-

tional schools in every tehsil, but they have not been implemented, Shah said. Congress withheld the construction of Ram temple for 70 years, but Modi, in just five years, won the case, performed 'bhumi puja' and later participated in the consecration, he said. AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge said that though people from Rajasthan and Telangana don't have anything to do with Kashmir, the people of Bhongir would be ready to sacrifice their life for the sake of Kashmir, he said. Highlighting the abolition of Article 370, Shah also said Modi has ended terrorism, Naxalism and made the country secure. He alleged that AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, BRS and Congress are "ABC of appeasement".

Modi removed triple talaq, but Congress, BRS and AIMIM want to bring it back, he said, adding that the parties also boycotted the consecration of the Ram temple. He also alleged that Revanth Reddy made Telangana the "ATM" of Congress. Shah highlighted the various development works undertaken by the Modi government in the Bhongir LS constituency, including establishment of AIIMS.

Amid exodus, Congress faces uphill task to breach BJP stronghold of Dhar in MP

PTI ■ INDORE

Battling the exit of some key leaders in poll season, the Congress in Madhya Pradesh is facing a formidable challenge of penetrating the Dhar Lok Sabha seat -- a BJP stronghold -- where tribals and farmers play a decisive role in determining the outcome of elections.

Reserved for tribal candidates and having around 19.5 lakh eligible voters, the Dhar seat has been held by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the last 10 years. It will go to polls in the fourth phase of the seven-phase election on May 13. The BJP has fielded former MP Savitri Thakur (45) from Dhar, denying renomination to sitting MP Chhatar Singh Darbar, while the Congress has nominated Radheshyam Muvel (47), a supporter of the leader of opposition in the state assembly Umang Singhar.

While Muvel claimed the exit of some leaders would not affect his poll prospects, Thakur expressed confidence in winning the election, saying her party has worked for the region's development.

Muvel, who is contesting a Lok Sabha election for the first time, asserted that he would win by a margin of at least 1.5



lakh votes. "Dhar voters have been asking what Thakur did for the constituency when she was an MP between 2014 and 2019. Tribals are still forced to migrate from the district due to unemployment," Muvel told PTI. The BJP candidate had "nothing to show" as her own achievements and was banking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi to win the seat, even though there was no "Modi wave" this time, Muvel said. The Modi government has failed to tackle basic problems like price rise and unemployment, the Congress candidate claimed.

Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress suffered a

major setback when its former MP from Dhar, Gajendra Singh Rajukheri, quit the party and joined the BJP in March. Switching of sides by opportunistic leaders will not make any difference to us in the Lok Sabha elections. Only the Congress leaders who are corrupt are going to the BJP," Muvel said.

However, Thakur expressed confidence that she would win the election by a margin of more than three lakh votes and said she does not see Muvel's candidature as a challenge. There are about 10 lakh women voters in the constituency and the BJP has done a lot of work for their welfare, she said. Thakur is seeking the support

of the voters of Dhar where the prime minister addressed a huge rally on May 7, by highlighting -- "Modi ki guarantee". She claimed the Congress could not provide any benefit to the tribals despite being in power in the country for 70 years. "Under the Congress rule, wells, roads and ponds were built only on paper due to rampant corruption in tribal areas. During the Modi government's tenure, concrete work has been done on the ground in these areas," Thakur said. The Dhar Lok Sabha constituency comprises eight assembly segments, including Mhow in the Indore district. In the 2023 state assembly elections, the Congress bagged five of these segments while the BJP won three.

Political analyst Prakash Hindustani said, "The Congress cannot have high hopes in the Lok Sabha election even after a good performance in Dhar in the last assembly polls because the arithmetic of both the elections is completely different."

Interactions with voters in Dhar suggest that in addition to national issues, the Bhojshala dispute, railway projects and priority to local people in employment in industrial areas are also important issues for them in the Lok Sabha polls.

Modi to hold rallies in Odisha tomorrow

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address three election rallies in Odisha on Saturday, a state BJP leader said. Modi will also take part in a roadshow in Bhubaneswar on Friday, Odisha BJP vice-president Golak Mohapatra said. "On May 11, he will address three public rallies - the first in Kandhamal at 9.30 am, the second in Bolangir at 11.30 am and another in Bargarh at 1 pm," he said.

"The PM will also hold a roadshow in Bhubaneswar from 8 pm on Friday. He will stay the night at the Raj Bhavan," Mohapatra said.

The roadshow will start from BJP's state headquarters near Sri Ram Mandir and end at Vani Vihar Square. Tight security arrangements have been made for the roadshow and the poll rallies, police said. Modi had last visited Odisha on



May 6, when he addressed two public meetings in Berhampur and Nabarangpur. Simultaneous Lok Sabha and assembly elections will be held in Odisha in four phases, starting May 13.

How Centre determined Hindu, Muslim population without Census: Tejashwi

PTI ■ PATNA

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Thursday cast doubts on the EAC-PM report, questioning how the Centre could determine the Hindu and Muslim population without even conducting a Census. The report of the Economic Advisory Council to the PM (EAC-PM) stated that there has been a rise in Muslim population and a fall in Hindu percentage.

The former deputy chief minister of Bihar alleged that the ruling dispensation at the Centre was creating a rift between Hindus and Muslims to divert attention from "real issues". "You arrived at numbers without holding a Census? Wasn't Census due in 2021? You are the prime minister of the country... Please give up your Hindu-Muslim binary and talk about issues," Yadav said.



The RJD leader made the remark while replying to questions from journalists on the EAC-PM report. The working paper by the EAC-PM, titled 'Share of Religious Minorities: A Cross-Country Analysis (1950-2015)', stated that the share of Hindus in the country's population decreased by 7.82 per cent (from 84.68 per cent to 78.06 per cent) between 1950 and 2015, while that of Muslims

increased from 9.84 per cent to 14.09 per cent during the period.

Yadav said, "Neither PM nor BJP leaders will talk about growing unemployment, price hike and several other important issues. The PM will not talk about special status to Bihar. The Modi-led central government is just trying to create a rift in the society. They want to change the Constitution. We will not allow divisive forces to create rift in the society."

When asked about PM Modi's scheduled roadshow in Patna on May 12, Yadav said, "Let him (PM) do roadshows or airshows, nothing is going to change. The NDA will face a humiliating defeat in the country as well as in Bihar. We (INDIA bloc) are talking about 'jobshov'... We will provide one crore jobs to unemployed youth after coming to power at the Centre."

Srinagar: 52,100 Kashmiri migrants eligible to vote

PTI ■ JAMMU

As many as 52,100 Kashmiri migrant voters across the country are eligible to exercise their franchise in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar constituency on May 13.

The constituency is gearing up for an intense electoral showdown. As many as 17.4 lakh voters, including 8.7 lakh women, will decide the fate of 24 candidates in the fray. Over 1.13 lakh Kashmiri migrants are registered to cast their votes for the Lok Sabha elections for three seats in the Valley, officials said.

"As many as 52,100 Kashmiri migrants will exercise their right to franchise from Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency on May 13. Of these, 25,760 are male voters and 26,340 are female voters," Assistant Returning Officer (ARO), Migrants, Riaz Ahmed told



PTI Video here. He said there are 1,13,873 registered voters, including 56,290 men, 57,582 women and one transgender person, in three parliamentary constituencies of Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag. A total of 26 polling stations have been set up for the migrants, out of which 21 are in Jammu, four in Delhi and one in Udhampur. "We have set up 21 polling stations in Jammu. In view of the increase in voters, we have to set up some more axillary polling stations. For the

Srinagar constituency, we have increased them to 23 polling stations," Ahmed said. The Election Commission (EC) has arranged pick and drop facility for Kashmiri migrant voters. It will be available from 6 am to 6 pm, he said.

"The transport facility will be available where there is more concentration of migrant voters on polling dates," he said. Special awareness camps were held in Jammu, Udhampur and Delhi to ensure maximum participation of Kashmiri migrants in elections.

BJP insecure so discussing non-existent aspects of Congress manifesto: Prithviraj

PTI ■ CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

The Bharatiya Janata Party has turned insecure amid the Lok Sabha polls and was discussing issues that are not even mentioned in the Congress' manifesto, former Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan said on Thursday.

Chavan was here to campaign for Chandrakant Khaire, Lok Sabha candidate of the Shiv Sena (UBT), which is an ally of the Congress and the NCP (SP) in the Maha Vikas Aghadi. "The BJP raises the slogan of 'abki baar 400 paar' but is insecure. That is why it is discussing issues (to attack the Congress) that are not even mentioned in our manifesto.



We have said we will give Rs 1 lakh to poor women annually. Now this is something the BJP will not discuss," he said. Queried about merger of parties, Chavan asserted people in Maharashtra generally do not like the presence of too many outfits. "Even I think small political parties will merge with other parties post Lok Sabha polls," he claimed,

though he refused to name the parties he was referring to. Brushing aside the impact of the All India Majlis e Ittehadul Muslimeen in the polls here, Chavan claimed Muslims will vote for MVA.

"In the 2019 polls the AIMIM was in alliance with Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi. That does not exist anymore," he pointed out.

EC orders repolling at polling booth in Gujarat

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The Election Commission (EC) has ordered fresh voting on May 11 at a polling station under the Dahod Lok Sabha seat in Gujarat from where a man live-streamed voting on May 7, the video of which went viral, an official said Thursday.

Four election officials, including a presiding officer, an assistant presiding officer and two polling officers as well as a police constable were suspended in connection with the incident, the office of the Gujarat Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said in a release. The EC declared null and void the voting which took place at Pathampur polling station at Santrampur taluka in Mahisagar district after taking into account a report submitted by the Returning Officer and Observer regarding irreg-



ularities, the CEO said. As soon as the irregularities were reported, the CEO sought a report from the RO regarding the incident, it said. The report was sent to the Election Commission, which under section 58, sub-section 2 of the Representation of the People Act, declared the polling held at the polling station on May 7

as null and void. A fresh polling has been scheduled at the polling station between 7 am and 6 pm on May 11, it said. "The presiding officer, assistant presiding officer, two polling officers and one police constable have been suspended in connection with the incident," it added. Of the 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat, polling was held in 25 constituencies on Tuesday in the third phase of the general elections. The BJP candidate in Surat has won unopposed. The Congress had lodged a complaint with the EC about "booth capturing" and "bogus voting" by submitting a copy of the viral video, and demanded repolling. The accused, Vijay Bhabhor, had stayed in the polling booth for five minutes, during which he went live on Instagram and also allegedly cast votes on behalf of two other electors, resorting to bogus voting, officials said.

Prabha Taviad is the Congress candidate in the constituency. She is pitted against incumbent MP Jasvantsinh Bhabhor. The Congress claimed that the person who relayed the "booth capturing" video on Instagram is the son of a local BJP leader. The video shows Vijay Bhabhor purportedly focusing the camera on EVM (electronic voting machine) and VVPAT (voter verifiable paper audit trail) machine and seeking five to ten minutes from a poll official even when he is asked to leave. Bhabhor purportedly also says that "only the BJP works here". His accomplice was also seen in the video. "The machine belongs to my father. Only one thing works - that is BJP," says Bhabhor before pressing a button on the EVM, as per the video. "Only Vijay Bhabhor works here," he purportedly says. He was later detained on the charge of bogus voting.

Repolling at four booths in Betul LS seat in MP on May 10

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Repolling at four booths in Madhya Pradesh's Betul Lok Sabha seat will be held on Friday, an official said on Thursday.

The Election Commission on Wednesday ordered re-election at the four booths after a few electronic voting machines (EVMs) were damaged when a bus ferrying them and polling personnel post-voting on caught fire on Tuesday night near Sonora Gaula village in Betul, the official said.

Repolling would be held from 7 am to 6 pm on Friday at the Government Integrated High School, Rajapur, Government Integrated High School, Raiyat, Government Primary School Kunda, Raiyat, and Government Integrated High School, Chikhlimal, the official said. These booths come under Multai assembly segment of the Betul parliamentary seat.

The middle finger on left hand of voters will be inked during the repolling, the official said. A dry day and holiday have been announced in the areas where repolling will be held, he said. Polling parties left on Thursday after collecting the necessary material from the Government Integrated Girls School at Betul Ganj to conduct the exercise, the official said. An estimated 72.65 per cent polling was recorded in the Betul Lok Sabha seat on Tuesday, a poll official earlier said.

Betul was among nine seats in Madhya Pradesh which voted in the third phase of Lok Sabha elections.

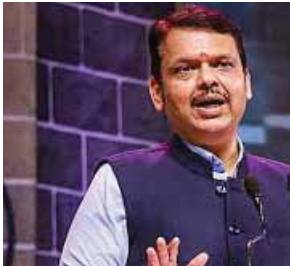
Uddhav Thackeray has lost mental balance: Fadnavis

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reacting to his former ally's diatribe, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday said Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray had lost his mental balance.

Thackeray, at a campaign rally a day before, had said that Fadnavis and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde were "intoxicated monkeys" speaking on the instructions of those sitting in Delhi.

"Uddhav Thackeray has lost his mental balance. He needs treatment by a psychiatrist. He is talking like this because he can see defeat in the elections clearly," Fadnavis told reporters



here. The people have rejected the Sena (UBT) chief, therefore he was using foul language, the BJP leader further said. Thackeray parted ways with the old ally BJP after the 2019 assembly elections and joined hands with the undivided NCP and Congress to form a government.

Congress leaders Vikramaditya Singh, Anand Sharma file nominations from Mandi, Kangra

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Congress leaders Vikramaditya Singh and Anand Sharma on Thursday filed their nomination papers from the Mandi and Kangra Lok Sabha seats, respectively. While Singh attacked BJP candidate Kangana Ranaut in an oblique reference, Sharma shunned the "outsider" tag, and said they had never questioned why Prime Minister Narendra Modi, hailing from Gujarat, contested elections from Varanasi. "We are doing politics of development, she is doing politics of entertainment," said Singh,

adding that this "picture" directed by Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur would fail at the "box office" on June 1. Singh, who was accompanied by his mother and state Congress chief Pratibha Singh, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and Congress Working Committee (CWC) member and Himachal in-charge Rajiv Shukla, said, "Kangana is abusing Congress leaders from the stage but in the past 20-25 days, she had not even once spelt out her vision for the constituency. "Kangana had started her campaign 20-25 days back and from morning to evening, she

used abusive words for us but has not uttered a single word on her vision for this parliamentary constituency," he said, adding that she should tell people what she wanted to do. Mandi would be made a smart city and Jalori Jot tunnel would be constructed on the line of the Rohtang tunnel. The remote Pangri area of Chamba would also be connected through the tunnel, Singh told PTI. "I would take forward the long and deep relation with the people of Mandi," the Congress candidate, who is the son of late chief minister Virbhadra Singh, said. Scion of erstwhile Rampur

estate, Singh is pitted against actor and BJP candidate Kangana Ranaut. Elaborating on the achievements of the Congress, Singh said the party has opened IIT at Mandi, a medical college at Nerchowk and been instrumental in construction of the Kirathpur-Nerchowk four lane. "We stood with the people of Mandi during the worst monsoon disaster last year and will continue to be with them, and I have got Rs 3,500 crore for the state from the Centre," he added. Besides the development agenda, long pending matters related to Good and Service tax,

revenue deficit grant and old pension scheme would also be taken up with the Union government after the party wins, he assured the people of Mandi. "Change of winds are visible in the country and after the first three phases of Lok Sabha polls, the BJP has been washed out in the South and halved in the North," he claimed. The Congress government in the state would continue with its development and welfare agenda for the next three-and-a-half years, he said while exuding confidence that his party would also win all the six assembly seats in the bypolls.

First shipment of aid to floating pier in Gaza departs from Cyprus

AP ■ NICOSIA

A shipment of humanitarian aid left a port in Cyprus on Thursday morning and was on its way to the US-built pier in Gaza, the first delivery to the newly built ramp, Cyprus' foreign minister said.

The relief is desperately needed, with the United Nations saying people in Gaza are on the brink of famine and as Israeli troops have ordered the evacuation of 1,00,000 Palestinians from Gaza's southern city of Rafah. Earlier this week, Israel sent tanks to seize Gaza's nearby Rafah crossing with Egypt, shutting down a vital border entry point needed to get assistance into the battered enclave. It remains uncertain whether Israel will launch an all-out invasion of Rafah as international efforts for a cease-fire continue. Israel has said that an assault on Rafah is crucial to its goal of destroying Hamas after the militant group's October 7 attack on southern Israel that left 1,200 dead and 250 seized as hostages

and abducted to Gaza.

The United States, which opposes a Rafah invasion, has said Israel has not provided a credible plan for evacuating and protecting civilians now crammed in Rafah. The war has killed over 34,800 Palestinians, according to Gaza health officials, and has driven some 80 per cent of Gaza's population of 2.3 million Palestinians from their homes. President Joe Biden said on Wednesday that he would not supply offensive weapons that Israel could use to launch an all-out assault on Rafah, over concern for the well-being of the more than 1 million civilians sheltering there.

Biden, in an interview with CNN, said the US was still committed to Israel's defense and would supply Iron Dome rocket interceptors and other defensive arms, but that if Israel goes into Rafah, "we're not going to supply the weapons and artillery shells used." In response, far-right Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir

implied in a post on the social platform X that Hamas loves Biden, using a heart emoji in the tweet. Ben Gvir has pushed for a punishing military response and has threatened to leave the government if Israel does not carry out a wide-ranging military operation in Rafah. The US vessel Sagamore, loaded with much needed humanitarian assistance, departed from the port of Larnaca early on Thursday with the aim of transferring as much aid to Gaza as possible through the maritime corridor, said Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos.

The vessel's voyage comes about two months after Biden gave the order for the building of the large floating platform several miles off the Gaza coast to be a launching pad for deliveries since not enough aid was getting in through land crossings, which require stringent checks by Israel, and by air drops.

The US military finished the construction of the temporary pier and causeway,

Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh said Tuesday, but plans to move it into place on the shore were on hold due to weather and other logistics. Singh told reporters that US military ships and the assembled pier were at the Ashdod port and that high winds and sea swells made it too dangerous to install the pier at the Gaza beach.

An official from Cyprus told The Associated Press that if conditions didn't allow for the vessel to offload directly onto the pier, it would load smaller vessels, which would transport the aid directly to Gaza. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the details of the operation. Still, humanitarian workers say aid coming by sea won't be enough to alleviate the dire humanitarian suffering in Gaza and that the most effective way to get assistance in is by land. But the closure of the Rafah crossing and the nearby Kerem Shalom crossing this week cut off the entry of food, supplies and fuel for aid trucks and generators.

International aid groups warned Wednesday that a distribution network is at risk of collapse across the territory because fuel shipments into Gaza were cut off. Israel's threat of invasion of Rafah itself, where many of the aid groups have based their warehouses and staff, is also further disrupting distribution, the groups said. Israel said it reopened on Wednesday the Kerem Shalom crossing, shut after Hamas mortars killed four Israeli soldiers nearby in an attack on Sunday, but aid groups said no trucks were entering the Gaza side.

Trucks let through from Israel must be unloaded and the cargo reloaded onto trucks in Gaza, but no workers in Gaza can get to the facility to do so because it is too dangerous, the UN says.

Meanwhile, attacks continued across Gaza with Israeli airstrikes on a residential building killing eight people, including four children, late Wednesday, according to hospital records.



Protesters carry a model of the Dome of the Rock during a Stop Israel demonstration, between Stortorget and Malmållsplassen in Malmö, Sweden, Thursday. There have been calls for Israel to be excluded from the Eurovision Song contest because of its conduct in its war against Hamas. AP/PTI

'US won't supply weapons for Israel to attack Rafah, in warning to ally'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden said that he would not supply offensive weapons that Israel could use to launch an all-out assault on Rafah — the last major Hamas stronghold in Gaza — over concern for the well-being of the more than 1 million civilians sheltering there.

Biden, in an interview with CNN on Wednesday, said that the US was still committed to Israel's defence and would supply Iron Dome rocket interceptors and other defensive arms but that if Israel goes into Rafah, "we're not going to supply the weapons and artillery shells used."

Biden acknowledged that "civilians have been killed in Gaza" by the type of heavy bombs that the US has been supplying — his first validation of what administration critics have been loudly protesting, even if he still stopped short of taking responsibility. His threat to hold up artillery



shells expanded on earlier revelations that the US was going to pause a shipment of heavy bombs.

The US has historically provided enormous amounts of military aid to Israel. That has only accelerated in the aftermath of Hamas' October 7 attack, which killed some 1,200 people in Israel and led to about 250 being taken captive by militants.

Biden's comments and his deci-

sion last week to pause the shipment of heavy bombs to Israel are the most striking manifestations of the growing daylight between his administration and Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government. Biden said on Wednesday that Israel's actions around Rafah had "not yet" crossed his red lines, but has repeated that Israel needs to do far more to protect the lives of civilians in Gaza.

The shipment was supposed to consist of 1,800 2,000-pound (900-kilogram) bombs and 1,700 500-pound (225-kilogram) bombs, according to a senior US administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter. The focus of US concern was the larger explosives and how they could be used in a dense urban area. "Civilians have been killed in Gaza as a consequence of those bombs and other ways in which they go after population

centres," Biden told CNN. "I made it clear that if they go into Rafah — they haven't gone in Rafah yet — if they go into Rafah, I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah, to deal with the cities, that deal with that problem."

"We're not walking away from Israel's security," the Democratic president continued. "We're walking away from Israel's ability to wage war in those areas." Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin earlier Wednesday confirmed the weapons delay, telling the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense that the US passed "one shipment of high payload munitions."

"We're going to continue to do what's necessary to ensure that Israel has the means to defend itself," Austin said. "But that said, we are currently reviewing some near-term security assistance shipments in the context of unfolding events in Rafah."

UK PM Sunak asks university chiefs to fight antisemitism

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Thursday urged university chiefs to address the rise in antisemitic abuse on campus and disruption of learning in reaction to the Israel-Hamas conflict. Sunak and his ministers will meet with university vice-chancellors to ensure a zero-tolerance approach to antisemitic abuse is adopted on all campuses, Downing Street said. The government said it wants to make it clear that debate and the open exchange of views in universities is essential but that this can never tip over into hate speech, harassment or incitement of violence. "Universities should be places of rigorous debate but also bastions of tolerance and respect for every member of their community," said Sunak. "A vocal minority on our campuses are disrupting the lives and studies of their fellow students and, in some



cases, propagating outright harassment and antisemitic abuse. That has to stop," he said. The meeting is to also help to inform planned government guidance on combatting antisemitism on campus. Meanwhile, the Office for Students (OfS) has committed to publishing the response to its consultation on a new condition of registration, which could give OfS the power to impose sanctions where there is clear evidence that universities are failing to take sufficient or appropriate

action to tackle harassment, including antisemitic abuse. "I have made it absolutely clear that universities must crack down on antisemitism and ensure that protests do not unduly disrupt university life," said Education Secretary Gillian Keegan.

In the Budget last year, the government announced GBP 7 million of extra support to tackle antisemitic abuse in educational settings, and GBP 500,000 of this will be dedicated to supporting the work of the University Jewish Chaplaincy, boosting support for Jewish students on campus.

The University Jewish Chaplaincy helps students deal with incidents of antisemitism and intimidation and currently supports over 8,500 students at over 100 universities in 13 regions. The Union of Jewish Students (UJS) have criticised the "toxic environment" faced by Jewish students across the country.

China criticises US for ship's passage through Taiwan Strait

Taipei (AP): China's military criticised a US destroyer's passage through the Taiwan Strait, which occurred less than two weeks before the island's new president takes office and while Washington and Beijing are making uneven efforts to restore regular military exchanges.

Navy Senior Capt. Li Xi, spokesman for the Eastern Theater Command, accused the U.S. of having "publicly hyped" the passage of the USS Halsey on Wednesday.

In a statement, Li said the command, which oversees operations around the strait, "organized naval and air forces to monitor" the ship's transit and handle matters "in accordance with laws and regulations."

The Navy's 7th Fleet said the Halsey "conducted a routine Taiwan Strait transit on May 8 through waters where high-seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law."

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer transited through a corridor in the Strait that is "beyond the territorial sea" of any coastal state, the fleet's statement said.

"Halsey's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to upholding freedom of navigation for all nations as a principle," it said. "No member of the international community should be intimidated or coerced into giving up their rights and freedoms. The United States military flies, sails, and operates anywhere international law allows."

Where international law allows. The last such passage was April 17, a day after U.S. and Chinese defense chiefs held their first talks since November 2022 in an effort to reduce regional tensions. Military-to-military contact stalled in August 2022, when Beijing suspended all such communication after then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan.

China responded by firing missiles over Taiwan and staging a surge in military maneuvers, including what appeared to be a rehearsal of a naval and aerial blockade of the island.

Trump-linked group unveils national security book for second term

Washington (AP): Making future military aid to Ukraine contingent on the country participating in peace talks with Russia. Banning Chinese nationals from buying property within a 50-mile radius of US government buildings. Filling the national security sector with acolytes of Donald Trump. One of several groups trying to lay the groundwork for a second Trump administration if the former Republican president wins in November is out with a new policy book that aims to articulate an "America First" national security agenda.

The book, shared with The Associated Press before its release Thursday, is the latest effort from the America First Policy Institute.

Like the Heritage Foundation's "Project 2025," the group is seeking to help Trump avoid the mistakes of 2016, when he entered the White House largely unprepared.

Beyond its policy efforts, the institute's transition project has been working to draft dozens of executive orders and developing a training program for future political appointees. Heritage has been building an extensive personnel database and offering its own policy manuals.

Both groups stress they are independent from Trump's campaign, which has repeatedly tried to distance itself from such efforts, insisting that the only Trump-backed policies are those the candidate articulates himself.

Still Fred Fleitz, the book's editor, noted that he and retired Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, who served for a time as Trump's acting national security adviser and wrote several of the chapters, have been in frequent touch with the former president, soliciting feedback and discussing topics such as Ukraine at length.

"We hope this is where he is. We're not speaking for him, but I think he will approve,"



said Fleitz, who formerly served as the National Security Council's chief of staff. He said he hopes the book will serve as "a guidebook that will be an intellectual foundation for the America First approach" to national security "that's easy to use."

"It's a grand strategy," added Kellogg. "You don't start with the policies first. You start with the strategies first. And that's what we've done."

The group casts the current trajectory of US national security as a failure, thanks to a foreign policy establishment it accuses of having embraced an interventionist and "globalist" approach at the expense of America's national interests. While short on specifics, the book offers some guideposts to how a future Trump administration could approach foreign policy issues such as Russia's war against Ukraine.

Trump has said, that if elected, he would solve the conflict before Inauguration Day in January, but has declined to say how.

The book's chapter on the war spends more time discussing how the conflict unfolded than how to end it. But it says the US should make future military aid contingent on Ukraine participating in peace talks with Russia. It predicts the Ukrainian army will likely lose ground over time and advises against the US continuing "to send arms to a stalemate that Ukraine will eventually find difficult to win."

Yemen's Houthi rebels claim two attacks in Gulf of Aden

Jerusalem (AP): Yemen's Houthi rebels on Thursday claimed two missile attacks in the Gulf of Aden on two Panama-flagged container ships that caused no damage, while also saying they targeted a ship in the Indian Ocean in a previously unreported assault.

The claims by Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree come as the tempo of the rebel attacks have waned in recent weeks as they've been targeted by repeated airstrikes launched by a US-led coalition warship in waters crucial to international trade. The Houthis insist their assaults will continue as long as Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip goes on. Saree in a pre-recorded statement claimed attacks on the MSC Diego and MSC Gina. The Joint Maritime Information Center, a U.S.-led coalition of nations operating in the Mideast, said those two missile attacks happened early Tuesday.

"Neither were hit and all crew on board are safe," the center said. "The vessels were last reported proceeding to next port of call."

The center added that the vessels were "likely targeted due to perceived Israeli affiliation."

Both vessels were operating for Geneva-based Mediterranean Shipping Co., which did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Saree did not say why it took the rebels two days to claim the attacks. He also claimed the Houthis targeted the MSC Vittoria, another container ship, in the Indian Ocean. An attack on that vessel, however, has not been acknowledged by any authorities. The Houthis say their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are aimed at pressuring Israel to end its war against Hamas in Gaza, which has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians there.

Chinese President Xi receives ceremonial welcome in Hungary

AP ■ BUDAPEST

Chinese President Xi Jinping received a ceremonial welcome in Hungary's capital on Thursday ahead of a day of talks with Hungarian officials which are expected to result in further Chinese investments in the Central European country. Hungarian President Tamás Sulyok received Xi in an opulent courtyard of Budapest's Buda Castle, where the two men walked down a red carpet beside a ceremonial honor guard and listened to the Chinese and Hungarian national anthems. Numerous Chinese and Hungarian officials attended the ceremony, including Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Hungary's long-serving populist leader who has pursued deeper ties with Beijing while distancing himself from his more mainstream partners in the European Union.



Xi arrived in Hungary late Wednesday in a European tour that also took in Serbia and France. He will hold talks later in the day with Orbán and other officials on potential Chinese investments in Hungary in infrastructure, energy and electric vehicle manufacturing. Beijing has invested billions in Hungary and sees the EU member as an important foothold inside the 27-member trading bloc. In December, Hungary announced that one

of the world's largest EV manufacturers, China's BYD, will open its first European EV production factory in the south of the country — an inroad that could upend the competitiveness of the continent's auto industry.

Hungary is also hosting several Chinese EV battery plants and hopes to become a global hub of lithium ion battery manufacturing, and has undertaken a railway project to connect the country with the Chinese-controlled port of Piraeus in Greece as an entry point for Chinese goods to Central and Eastern Europe.

Both governments have been careful to keep the contents of any potential deals secret until their official announcement. But unconfirmed media reports suggest China could announce additional investments in EV manufacturing and in developing Hungary's railway network.

Passengers, crew evacuated after plane's tyre burst

Ankara (AP): A total of 190 people were safely evacuated from a plane in Turkey on Thursday after one of its tyres burst during landing at a southern airport, Turkey's transportation ministry said. No one was hurt. The Boeing 737-800, belonging to Turkish-based Corendon Airlines, stopped safely on the runway after landing at Gazipasa airport near the Mediterranean coastal town of Alanya, the company said. The plane, which carried 184 passengers and six crew members, was on a flight from Cologne, Germany. Corendon Airlines denied Turkish media reports that the aircraft had landed on its nose. Turkey's Transport and Infrastructure Ministry reported damage to the plane's front gear but did not provide details. The runway was not damaged but flights were diverted to the nearby Antalya airport while the aircraft was being removed.

Stormy Daniels will return to the witness stand in Donald Trump's hush money trial on Thursday, two days after she spent hours recounting in sometimes graphic detail the alleged 2006 sexual encounter with the former president that she was eventually paid to keep quiet about during the 2016 presidential election.

The former president's attorneys aggressively sought to poke holes in Daniels' credibility during cross-examination, accusing the porn actor of trying to extort Trump and rehearsing her testimony — two assertions she forcefully denied. The defense also made a failed attempt to have a mistrial declared, arguing that Daniels' morning testimony had "nothing to do with this case and is extremely prejudicial."

Trump denies the two ever had sex. Prosecutors say Trump and two of his associates orchestrated a scheme to influence

Stormy Daniels to return to stand in hush money trial

AP ■ NEW YORK

Stormy Daniels will return to the witness stand in Donald Trump's hush money trial on Thursday, two days after she spent hours recounting in sometimes graphic detail the alleged 2006 sexual encounter with the former president that she was eventually paid to keep quiet about during the 2016 presidential election.

The former president's attorneys aggressively sought to poke holes in Daniels' credibility during cross-examination, accusing the porn actor of trying to extort Trump and rehearsing her testimony — two assertions she forcefully denied. The defense also made a failed attempt to have a mistrial declared, arguing that Daniels' morning testimony had "nothing to do with this case and is extremely prejudicial."

Trump denies the two ever had sex. Prosecutors say Trump and two of his associates orchestrated a scheme to influence



charges. Trump is accused of falsifying internal business records to cover up the hush money payments and instead recording them as legal expenses. He has pleaded not guilty.

The case is the first-ever criminal trial of a former US president and the first of four prosecutions of Trump to reach a jury. Over the first few weeks of Donald Trump's hush money trial, the scene outside the courthouse has largely settled into a routine — a few dozen members of the public, a typically small group of demonstrators and the journalists covering the day-to-day developments.

But the arrival of Stormy Daniels seems to have shifted that equilibrium.

With Daniels set to re-take the stand on Thursday, a far larger share of the public has amassed outside 100 Centre Street, alongside new ranks of media from the US and abroad.

A few minutes before 8 a.m., as

lines swelled to their longest since the start of the trial, court officers said they had no choice but to turn people away.

Among the members of the public in line was Rose Brennan, a 63-year-old woman wearing a hand puppet meant to resemble Donald Trump.

"He has accompanied me on many adventures," she said of the puppet. "Even though I hoped he would have been retired by now."

She said she and the puppet travelled from New Jersey, arriving outside the courthouse at 5:30 a.m. because "I just want to be a witness to history." A Georgia appeals court on Wednesday agreed to review a lower court ruling allowing Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis to continue to prosecute the election interference case she brought against the former president.

On Tuesday, the federal judge in Florida presiding over the classified documents prosecution of Trump has canceled

the May 20 trial date, postponing it indefinitely. As former President Donald Trump remains stuck in the courtroom listening to salacious details of an extramarital sexual encounter he denies, another spectacle is playing out in the background as his vice presidential tryouts get underway.

The dynamic was on full display in Florida at a fundraiser at his Mar-a-Lago club that doubled as a VP audition.

"This weekend, we had 15 people. ... They're all out there campaigning," Trump told Spectrum News 13 Wisconsin on Tuesday. "It might actually be more effective this way because, you know, every one of them thinks they could be chosen, which I guess possibly is so."

For now, the presumptive GOP nominee is happy to revel in the attention as reporters parse his choices and prospective candidates jockey and woo him in an "Apprentice"-style competition.



Photos: Pankaj Kumar/Pioneer

THE ENCHANTING TAPESTRY OF INDIAN CULTURE

The Kendra Dance Festival mesmerised audiences with its captivating blend of dance and storytelling, showcasing India's rich heritage. From spiritual explorations to mythological tales, each performance left a lasting impression, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



Step into a world where art transcends boundaries and narratives come alive through graceful movements. The Kendra Dance Festival 2024, hosted at the prestigious Kamani Auditorium in New Delhi, was a mesmerising journey through the rich tapestry of Indian culture. Over three enchanting evenings from May 3 to May 5, 2024, this festival promised and delivered an unforgettable exploration of Indian culture through the captivating art of dance drama.

Each night unfolded a unique dance drama, transporting audiences to a different realm. The festival opened with *Parikrama*, a production that transcended the boundaries of entertainment to delve deep into the human psyche. Through a harmonious blend of direction, choreography, lighting, costumes and production *Parikrama* entranced the audience. The choreography, a brilliant fusion of movements mainly derived from the Chhau dance form, drew a standing ovation, highlighting the dedication and skill of the performers. Principal performer artist Shivam Sahni, essaying the challenging role of Atma, spoke of the difficulty in portraying a non-being showcasing the depth and complexity of the production.

The visionary direction of Padmashri Shobha Deepak Singh transformed the stage into a

realm of spiritual exploration. The production beautifully depicted the cyclical nature of existence, from birth to liberation, drawing from the profound concepts of Indian philosophy. The audience was taken on a journey from the potentiality symbolised by *Hiranyagarbh* to the manifestation of the soul as *Atman*, exploring the soul's struggle against the senses and its quest for liberation, ultimately achieving *Moksha*. The innovative use of lighting and sound coupled with a thoughtful script added layers of depth to the performance making it a profound theatrical experience.



The second night brought the epic *Mahabharata* to life with *Karna*. This captivating dance drama delved into the complexities of human existence through the lens of the enigmatic Karna. We stood witness to his struggles and triumphs, his unwavering ideals, and the timeless questions of morality and righteousness that his life embodied. The choreography, expressive and evocative, brought Karna's life to vibrant life on stage, evoking both sympathy and admiration from the audience. The performance was a visual masterpiece, with every detail from the expressive dance to the exquisite costumes contributing to its exceptional excellence. The unwavering support from the audience filling every seat in the auditorium further solidified the importance of celebrating and preserving Indian culture.

The final evening culminated with *Meera*, in vibrant portrayal of renowned saint

poetess. This dance drama, titled after its central figure, delved into her life and legacy. Meera's poetry bursting with vibrancy and effervescence resonated with audiences carrying messages of liberation and inner awakening. The performance challenged societal norms and redefined Meera's image offering an introspective exploration of the struggles faced by women. Drawing inspiration from Rajasthani dance styles, the choreography beautifully captured Meera's enduring influence. The Kendra Dance Festival's success was solidified by the audience's profound engagement with the performances evident in the thunderous applause and heartfelt comments such as "heaven for the eyes" and "a soulful performance."

Throughout the festival, the commitment of the Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra to preserve and promote India's rich cultural heritage was evident. Their tireless efforts in organising this exceptional dance festival have not only enriched our lives but also provided a platform for these alluring stories to be shared with the world. The choreography for all three performances by Shashidharan Nair, combined with Padmashri Shobha Deepak Singh's visionary direction, created an alluring experience that celebrated the timeless beauty of Indian culture. As Padmashri Shobha Deepak Singh aptly stated, "The Kendra Dance Festival's productions are not just performances; they are reflections of our cultural essence and timeless wisdom." The Dance Festival was

a testament to the power of artistic expression and a celebration of the enduring relevance of Indian culture in today's world. It was an unforgettable journey that left a lasting impression on all who were fortunate enough to witness its magic. The deepest appreciation is reserved for Padmashri Shobha Deepak Singh for her visionary leadership and unparalleled artistic direction. Under her guidance, the Kendra Dance Festival has transcended mere entertainment to become a transformative and unforgettable experience showcasing the profound beauty and depth of Indian culture to audiences worldwide.

The three-day celebration of dance was an enduring and compelling experience where storytelling, acting, dance, drama, and music converged to create an unforgettable spectacle. The festival beautifully showcased the rich tapestry of Indian history and mythology weaving together narratives that resonated with audiences and left a lasting impression. The performances were a testament to the cultural heritage of India offering a glimpse into its vibrant traditions and timeless stories. This festival was a celebration of artistic excellence and a tribute to the depth and beauty of Indian culture. This festival wasn't just a celebration of dance; it was a celebration of heritage, a testament to the enduring power of storytelling and a glimpse into the soul of India.

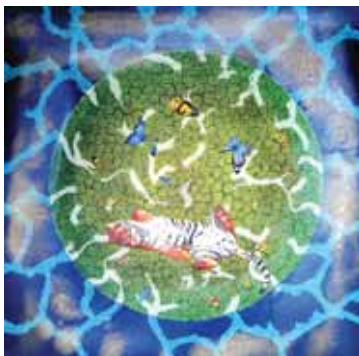
A Journey through Creativity and Appreciation

SAKSHI PRIYA explores the world through the eyes of master artists and emerging talents whose works redefine the boundaries of creativity

Embark on an alluring journey into the vibrant world of art with 'Detente: A Haven of Artistic Rhapsody', an exhibition that celebrates the spirit of creativity and cultural diversity. This exhibition showcase of modern and contemporary Indian and international art invites spectators to explore a variety of artistic themes and narratives, each piece offering a unique perspective on evolution, culture, and society.

Stepping into the gallery feels like entering an enchanted world where each painting tells a captivating story, inviting viewers on a journey of emotions and creativity. The exhibition, featuring works by renowned master artists such as MF Hussain, SH Raza, GR Santosh, Satish Gujral, Manu Parekh, B Prabha, Anjali Ela Menon, Ajay Samir, Anup Kumar Chand, Ashok Bhowmick, alongside contributions from contemporary and participating artists like M Narayan, Bahaar Dhawan Rohatgi, Sanuj Birla, Aditee Garg and more, is a testament to the richness and diversity of contemporary Indian and international art.

The artwork demands to be seen and appreciated by all, showcasing the exquisite talent of each artist. Visitors stand before the paintings, interpreting and admiring the work in their unique way, captivated by the details, patterns,



and colours. This experience highlights the immense value and appreciation for art in today's world. The gallery itself feels like a journey through memory lane which continues to resonate even after they are no longer with us. Their art speaks volumes, as the saying goes, "an artist's work always stays with us." Artists like SH Raza, GR Santosh, MF Husain, B Prabha, and Satish Gujral demonstrate their mastery through their paintings, with each piece reflecting their profound skill and artistic vision. The walls of the gallery

exude a mesmerising aura, showcasing the true worth and beauty of these artworks. M. Narayan's artwork, with its focus on equestrian aesthetics, captures the power and speed of horses through expressionist strokes and dynamic lines. His paintings convey the thrilling energy and elegant beauty of horses and polo players, drawing viewers into a world of vivid colours and bold strokes. Satish Gujral's canvas delves into the depths of history, channelling an expressionist grandeur of gesture and space. Bahaar Dhawan Rohatgi's art invokes a sense of calmness with abstract explorations

that blend various mediums. Her pieces unlock the immensity within her artistic journey, revealing layers of emotion and dreams through intricate brushstrokes. Manu Parekh's work echoes the rich tradition of Indian folk art fused with modernist sensibilities. His paintings evoke a rousing provocation known for their vibrant and dynamic composition that captures the essence of painting. Aditee Garg's sculptures are praised for their cultural resonance and narrative depth with graceful curves that almost become

performative in nature. Her work invites viewers to join in transporting them to the realm of magnificent creatures through intricate narratives and expansive spaces. The artwork of Anup Kumar Chand is described as a tribute to the majesty of nature, particularly awe-inspiring tigers. His paintings create a world of fantasy shapes where colours seamlessly blend with the background resulting in a harmonious visual symphony. Sanuj Birla's exceptional painting is noted for its excellence in art, creating dreamy visions inspired by movies and comic books holding a special place in everyone's heart.

Each artist's work is celebrated for its uniqueness and ability to evoke a range of emotions and interpretations making the exhibition a truly immersive and inspiring experience for all visitors. The exhibition is not just about showcasing art; it is about honouring the legacy of artists and the impact of their work. It is a celebration of power, grace, and beauty. As visitors immerse themselves in this artistic journey, they

are transported to a world where time slows down and the boundaries between reality and fantasy blur. The gallery becomes a testimony to the immersive experience that art can offer, where every piece evokes a beautiful sense of emotion and reality. Sumer Raj Chadha, the founder of Gallery West End reflects on his appreciation for art, nurtured over the years by his grandmother, Santosh Raj Chadha, a passionate art collector. He says, "This exhibit is a tribute to a true art aficionado and a fervent connoisseur of beauty, our vanguard, late Santosh Raj Chadha, my beloved grandmother. She sowed the seed of love for art and has been a custodian of creative curiosity in our family." Chadha's dedication has transformed this exhibition into a platform for artists to showcase their talent and connect with enthusiasts. His commitment to honoring artistic legacies and encouraging creativity shines in every aspect of this remarkable exhibition. 'Detente: A Haven of Artistic Rhapsody' is more than just an art exhibition; it is an incredible source of inspiration and an immersive journey into the artistic vision of modern and contemporary artists. It is a place where art speaks to everyone, inviting them to delve into realms of exploration, connection, and inspiration.

Photos: Pankaj Kumar/Pioneer



KOHLI STARS FOR RCB, PUNJAB KINGS ELIMINATED

PTI ■ DHARAMSALA

Royal Challengers Bengaluru defeated Punjab Kings by 60 runs in their Indian Premier League match here on Thursday. Star batter Virat Kohli slammed a 47-ball 92 as Royal Challengers Bengaluru posted 241/7 after being invited to bat first. In reply, Punjab Kings were all out for 181 in 17 overs. Rilee Rossouw made 61 in 27 balls, while Shashank Singh got 37 in 19 balls. Mohammed Siraj picked up 3/43 for RCB, while there were two wickets apiece for Swapnil Singh, Lockie Ferguson and Karn Sharma. The butterfingers Punjab fielders were guilty of dropping catches as Kohli and Patidar capitalised on the reprieves to put on 72 off 32 balls after they were invited to bat. Kohli, who was dropped on 0 and 10, made PBKS pay as he timed the ball nicely, used his feet and wrists to bring up his sixth IPL fifty this season. Patidar, who was also given two lives, provided the early momentum as he slammed six maximums and three fours

during his 23-ball 55. Kohli and Cameron Green (46 off 27 balls) continued the onslaught, adding 92 runs off 46 balls to take RCB across the 200-mark. Green hit five fours and a six before being caught in the final ball of the innings as RCB scored 77 in last five overs. Pacer Vidhwath Kaverappa (2/36) picked up two wickets in the powerplay on his IPL debut but his figures could have been much better had the fielders not dropped three catches off his bowling. Kohli was dropped in the third ball but Kaverappa dismissed Faf du Plessis (9) in his second over to give Punjab the first breakthrough. The IPL debutant could have had Kohli again had Rilee Rossouw held on to a screamer. PBKS, however, couldn't create pressure as Sam Curran (1/50) conceded 16 runs, which included two fours and a six, with Will Jacks doing the maximum damage. Kohli smashed Kaverappa for a six over long-off, but the bowler removed Jacks at the other end, with Harshal Patel (3/38) taking the catch for his second wicket. Patel, however, dropped Patidar



and then conceded three boundaries while bowling as RCB scored 56 in the powerplay. It started raining sixes thereafter as Kohli and Patidar slammed a maximum each to spoil Kaverappa's bowling figures. Patidar then creamed spinner Rahul Chahar for three mighty maximums before depositing Arshdeep and Sam Curran for two more sixes, the last one bringing up his fifty in 21 balls. With Patidar on fire, RCB crossed 100 in the ninth overs. The Punjab skipper, however, got rid off Patidar in the 10th over with Jonny Bairstow holding on to an edge as RCB reached 119/3. Rain briefly interrupted play as the spin duo of Liam Livingstone and Chahar bowled tidy overs after resumption. Kohli completed his fifty in 32 balls and hit Livingstone for two fours. Green brought up the 150 with a four off Patel. Kohli then went berserk as he slog swept Livingstone for a six, while Curran was deposited over mid-wicket for a 94-metre maximum. He sent one over long-on for another maximum. Dinesh Karthik (18) then helped RCB move past 240.

Will KL Rahul step down from LSG captaincy for last two games?

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

All but out of contention for the IPL play-offs, KL Rahul's future as Lucknow Super Giants skipper is uncertain for the remaining two games after the team received a pasting at the hands of Sunrisers Hyderabad at home on Wednesday. It is a foregone conclusion that the LSG skipper, who was roped in before the auction in 2022 for a record Rs 17 crore, is unlikely to be retained before the mega auctions in 2025. However, there is speculation that the skipper might step down on his own and concentrate on batting during the next two games. "There is a five-day gap before the next game against DC. As of now, no decision has been taken but it is understood that if Rahul plans to just concentrate on his batting for the remaining two games, the management won't mind," an IPL source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. Videos of LSG owner Sanjiv Goenka's agitated conversation with Rahul emerged on social media after Sunrisers Hyderabad opens Travis Head (89 not out off 30 balls) and Abhishek Sharma (75 off 28 balls) reached a target of 167 in less than 10 overs. This was after the home team batters struggled to get going on the same track. Worse, Rahul's (29 off 33 balls) batting in the Powerplay has been one of the biggest reasons for LSG's below-par show in the cash-rich league and it seems that Goenka has finally run



out of patience. The India star has scored 460 runs in 12 games and could again cross the 500-run mark for the season but it is his strike-rate of 136.09 which is the problem. LSG are still mathematically in contention as they can reach 16 points by winning their remaining two games — vs Delhi Capitals in New Delhi on May 14 and vs Mumbai Indians at Wankhede on May 17. However, it will be very difficult to massively improve upon the net run-rate (-0.760). In case, Rahul decides to step down, vice-captain Nicholas Pooran, easily the team's most impactful batter in the season, is likely to take over for the remaining two games.

CSK aim to continue ascent to top three

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Despite being hit by the absence of key bowlers due to injuries as well as international commitments, Chennai Super Kings will still like to display their on-field ruthlessness while taking on wooden spooners Gujarat Titans in a 12th round IPL encounter here on Friday. Caught in a mid-table logjam with 12 points from 11 games, the away match against Gujarat will be very important for Rituraj Gaikwad's men as they are still not assured of a play-off berth and a defeat could really dent their chances. With Deepak Chahar and Matheesha Pathirana out of the tournament due to injuries and Mustafizur Rahman back on national duty, CSK's bowling attack sans Ravindra Jadeja and Tushar Deshpande can at best be termed second string. A lot will depend on how the three CSK spinners — Ravindra Jadeja, Mitchell Santner and Moeen Ali bowl on a two-paced track. Yet, the manner in which CSK

defended a total of 167 in Dharamsala against Punjab Kings will give their fans hope of upping the ante against Titans, who have already lost seven in the tournament so far. A win will take them to third place in the standings, ahead of Sunrisers Hyderabad by virtue of better net run-rate. Among the three teams stuck on 12 points, only CSK (+0.700) enjoys a positive net run-rate. On paper, bottom-placed Titans are still in the mix but with a maximum tally of 14 points, it would be very difficult for the Shubman Gill-led side to get into the top four. The side is low on confidence having managed just one win from their last five matches and has struggled in all departments of the game. Their bowling has lost firepower in absence of the injured Mohammed Shami, while the captaincy responsibility has weighed down heavily on the talented opener Gill, who has three single digit scores and a highest of 35 in his last five outings. Sai Sudharsan, Shahrukh Khan



and David Miller have also been inconsistent. The bowling unit needs to improve its performance as the likes of Mohit Sharma and Josh Little have been leaking runs in the Powerplay. While defending a paltry 147, their bowlers gave away 92 runs in the Powerplay against RCB, who chased down the target in just 13.4 overs. With no support from the new ball bowlers, the Afghan spin duo of Noor Ahmad and Rashid Khan also seemed less effective. CSK, on the other hand, have no such concerns with skipper Rituraj Gaikwad

leading by example. He has been their top run-getter with 541 runs from 11 innings, just one run away from Virat Kohli in the race for the Orange Cap. Daryl Mitchell was also among runs in a 19-ball 30 against PBKS in their last match as they would just hope that Shivam Dube returns to form after capping successive golden ducks. Their biggest plus in the win over PBKS has been the addition of Simarjeet Singh. Making his debut for CSK as an impact player, Simarjeet clocked 140-plus consistently

and returned with 2/16 from his three overs. **TEAMS (FROM)** Gujarat Titans: Shubman Gill (c), David Miller, Matthew Wade, Wriddhiman Saha, Kane Williamson, Abhinav Manohar, B. Sai Sudharsan, Darshan Nalkande, Vijay Shankar, Jayant Yadav, Rahul Tewatia, Noor Ahmad, Sai Kishore, Rashid Khan, Joshua Little, Mohit Sharma, Azmatullah Omarzai, Umesh Yadav, Shahrukh Khan, Sushant Mishra, Kartik Tyagi, Manav Suthar, Spencer Johnson, Sandeep Warrier and BR Sharth. **Chennai Super Kings:** Rituraj Gaikwad (c), MS Dhoni (wk), Aravely Avaneesh, Ajinkya Rahane, Shaik Rasheed, Moeen Ali, Shivam Dube, RS Hangargekar, Ravindra Jadeja, Ajay Jadav Mandal, Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Nishant Shrivastava, Deepak Chahar, Tushar Deshpande, Mukesh Choudhary, Simarjeet Singh, Prashant Solanki, Shardul Thakur, Maheesh Theekshana and Sameer Rizvi.

OTHERS SPORTS

UWW suspends Bajrang; SAI approves his training stint abroad but wrestler cancels trip

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Wrestling's world governing body UWW has suspended Bajrang Punia till the end of this year following NADA's decision to hand him a provisional suspension for refusing to undergo a dope test. However, in a rather surprising decision, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) sanctioned close to Rs nine lakh for his training abroad despite being well aware of NADA's order. Bajrang, one of the country's most successful wrestlers, was suspended by NADA on April 23 after being served a whereabouts failure notice on April 18. In his defence, the Tokyo Olympics bronze-medallist

said he never refused to give his sample for testing but merely asked the Dope Control Officer to explain the presence of expired kits which were brought to take his sample. Bajrang told PTI that he has not received any communication from the UWW about his suspension but the world governing body while updating its internal system clearly mentions that he stands suspended. "Suspended for the following reason until Dec 31, 2024," reads the update on Bajrang's profile. "Provisionally suspended by NADO IND for alleged ADRV (Anti-Doping Rule Violation)," was the reason mentioned. Interestingly, the Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), in its



April 25 meeting, was informed that Bajrang has been sanctioned Rs 8,82,000 plus air fare (actual) for his proposal to train at Dagestan, Russia from May 28. Bajrang's initial proposal was for a 35-day training trip from April 24 but, as per the minutes of MOC meeting, due to "conflicting travel dates due to

his whereabouts failure, he chose to defer the travel plans from 24th April, 2024 to 28th May, 2024." The proposal also included travel plans of his strength and conditioning coach Kaazi Kiron Mustafa Hasan and his sparring partner Jitender. Neither Sandip Pradhan, the SAI Director General, nor Col. Rakesh Yadav, joint CEO TOPS, responded to calls or messages, when PTI reached out for an explanation for the decision to sanction his training. Bajrang confirmed that he had given a proposal for approval to SAI. "I am also surprised that SAI cleared it. I have actually cancelled my plan, I am not going anywhere for training

now," Bajrang said, adding that his lawyer has filed the reply to NADA. In the same MOC meeting Sarita Mor, who competes in the women's 57kg category, was sanctioned Rs 5,96,000 for her training stint in the USA along with her husband and coach Rahul Mann from May 5. Anshu Malik had locked the women's 57kg category Paris Olympics quota during the Asian Qualifiers in Bishkek. Anshu's training stint in Japan, along with her father and coach Dharamveer Malik, was also approved at a cost of Rs 14,67,000. If WFI decides to hold one final selection event, Sarita will have to emerge winner in the trials to challenge quota-winner Anshu.

Diksha set for landmark 100th start on LET



PTI ■ SEOUL

Diksha Dagar will become the first Indian woman golfer to play 100 events on the Ladies European Tour when she tees up at the Aramco Team Series Korea, her first appearance in the series. Diksha, who turned pro in 2019 and won on LET in her first full season, has been a regular on LET since then. Currently ninth on the LET Order of Merit, Diksha turned 23 in December. She is one of the three Indians to tee off at the New Korea Country Club. The other two Indians in the field are Pranavi Urs and Vani Kapoor. Diksha will also lead the team of Czech Tereza Melecka and Korean Do Yeon Park, while Pranavi and Vani are in the team led by Singaporean Shannon Tan, who has already

won once in her rookie season. Diksha was part of the winning team in the Aramco Team Series in London in 2021. That was the year when the series was played across five countries. Diksha has finished in the Top-10 of the individual section only once. That first Top-10 came this year in Tampa Florida, where she was tied sixth. Diksha, a lock-in for the Olympic Games in Paris, is ranked 147th in the world and the second best Indian after Aditi Ashok (53rd). A gold medallist at the 2021 Deaflympics, Diksha is also a recipient of the Arjuna Award in 2023. "Representing India is the biggest honour one can have so I am looking forward to my second Olympic appearance," said Diksha, who is the only

golfer to have played at both the Summer Olympics (2021 Tokyo) and the Deaflympics (2017 and 2021). Diksha is one of only two Indian women to have won on the LET and she has done it twice — once in Investec South African Women's Open in 2019 and in Czech Ladies Open in 2023. "For the present my focus is the LET, where I have won twice and I want to do better," said Diksha, who is also aiming to get to the LPGA Tour in the United States. Diksha, who won once in the Tippstort Czech Ladies Open and was T-3 at the Amundi German Masters and Hero Indian Open last year, was also third in the Order of Merit. She had nine individual Top-10 finishes and one more in the team event in Hong Kong. This season she has had Top-10 finishes in Lalla Meryem Cup in Morocco (9th) and in Tampa Florida (T-6). The busy part of the season is still ahead of her. Vani has been around for some years but is still looking for her first win on the LET, as is Pranavi Urs, who is playing her first full season on the Tour. Meanwhile, the French star Pauline Roussin-Bouchard, who produced a fine winning effort at the Aramco Series event in Singapore last year, is all set to take on winners Danielle Kang and Lydia Ko.

Real Madrid rallies late to beat Bayern 2-1 and reach another Champions League final

AP ■ MADRID

After yet another magical night at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, Real Madrid is back in the Champions League final. The 14-time European champion pulled off another thrilling comeback on Wednesday, rallying to defeat Bayern Munich 2-1 and reach the final for the second time in three seasons.



Like it happened so many times in 2022, Madrid needed some late drama to advance. Joselu scored in the 88th minute and then in stoppage time as Madrid advanced 4-3 on aggregate to set up a final against Borussia Dortmund on June 1 in London. "Well, it has happened again what has happened so many times before," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "It's inexplicable. Fans who push us on, a

fantastic stadium, players who never stop believing - it's simply something magical." Bayern had taken the lead on an Alphonso Davies goal in the 68th - and then deep in stoppage time thought it had equalized but hadn't because of an offside call that Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel described as "disastrous" and "against the rules." Joselu's first goal was a tap in after Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer spilled an easy save. The second was initially called off for offside but was eventually allowed after video review. "You always dream of being part of moments like this," the 34-year-old Joselu said. "Not even my best dreams were as good as this."

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.