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KKR TARGET PLAYOFF BERTH AT HOME 12 SPORTS

Delhi ready for Game of Throne

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal walked out of Tihar Jail on Friday evening, hours after the Supreme Court granted him interim bail until June 1 so that he can campaign for the Lok Sabha elections. As he exited through gate number 4, Kejriwal was welcomed by a sea of AAP workers, as well as senior leaders like Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Atishi, and Saurabh Bhardwaj. His wife Sunita Kejriwal, his daughter Harshita and AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak turned up outside the jail to give him a rousing welcome with workers chanting slogans and Kejriwal waving to his supporters. As Kejriwal left from Tihar in his convoy clad in yellow T-shirts, AAP supporters danced to dhol beats and fed each other sweets at the party office here on Friday.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal addresses supporters after coming out of Tihar Jail as the Supreme Court (SC) granted him interim bail in a money laundering case, amid the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, in New Delhi, on Friday. Pioneer Photo

In a major relief to embattled Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the SC on Friday granted him interim bail in a money laundering case at the peak of the election season but barred him from visiting his office or the Delhi Secretariat and signing official files unless absolutely necessary for obtaining the Lieutenant Governor's approval. He has been asked to surrender to the prison authorities by June 2. June 1 is the last day of the seven-phase elections. The votes will be counted on June 4.

Kejriwal's release from jail, however transient, is expected to give a boost to the AAP's Lok Sabha campaign in Delhi where polling is scheduled for May 25, with its foremost leader hitting the hustings. Setting him free for 21 days after 50 days of custody in the money laundering case, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta in its eight pages order, said Kejriwal

will have to surrender and go back to jail on June 2. Kejriwal was arrested on March 21 by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the excise policy case. In his first address, Delhi Chief Minister said, "Didn't I tell you I'd be back soon? I am back." He added, "I'm fighting against dictatorship with all I have, now 140 crore of us have to do that." He also thanked the Supreme Court judges who delivered the verdict.

"Tomorrow at 11 am, we will all go to the Hanuman Mandir in Connaught Place, then there will be a Press conference at the party office at 1 pm; I request all of you to come to the Hanuman Mandir," he said. Slogans like "Jail ke taale toot gaye, Kejriwal ji choot gaye", "Modi ji ja rahe hain, Kejriwal ji aa rahe hain", and "dekho dekho kon aaya, sher aaya sher aaya" rent the air at the AAP office on Friday. Many supporters carried posters with slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi

written on them. The bench also directed Kejriwal to furnish bail bonds in the sum of Rs 50,000 with one surety of the like amount to the satisfaction of the jail superintendent. A wave of jubilation swept across the INDIA Bloc parties as the news spread like wildfire, with his AAP terming it a "triumph of truth". "Hanuman ji ki jai. This is the victory of democracy. It is the result of the prayers and blessings of millions of people. Many thanks to everyone," Kejriwal's wife Sunita, who was filling in for her husband during his absence from the electoral battleground, said in a post on X in Hindi. Kejriwal is the first sitting Chief Minister in India to be put behind bars. Imposing bail conditions on the embattled AAP leader, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said, "He shall not visit the Office of the Chief Minister and the Delhi Secretariat." It asked Kejriwal to not sign any official file unless absolutely necessary to obtain the Lieutenant Governor's sanction during the 21-day interim bail period. It asked Kejriwal to not sign any official file unless absolutely necessary to obtain the Lieutenant Governor's sanction during the 21-day interim bail period. "He shall be bound by the statement made on his behalf that he shall not sign official files unless it is required and necessary for obtaining clearance/ approval of the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi," the top court said.

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Storm lashes across Delhi

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A strong, gutsy storm hit the National Capital and its adjoining areas late Friday evening, enveloping the skyline with dust. Incidents of trees uprooting were also reported. As a result of the dust storm, temperatures apparently decreased, as predicted earlier in the day by the India Meteorological Department, indicating that the heatwave would soon fade. "Duststorm/ thunderstorm with rain (followed by rain) and gusty winds with speed of 50-70 km/hour occurred over and adjoining areas of entire Delhi and NCR (Loni Dehat, Hindon AF Station, Ghaziabad, Indrapuram, Chhapraula, Noida, Dabri, Greater Noida, Gurugram, Faridabad," IMD said in a statement. India's unbearable heatwave saga appears to be reaching its conclusion as the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a wet spell accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, and winds across several States, including the national Capital over the next three days. The change in weather comes just a month after April's blistering heat, which earlier prompted the authorities to issue a string of health advisories and school closures in heatwave-hit areas like Bhubaneswar in Odisha. "Heatwave is about to end from the entire country. Only in West Rajasthan and Kerala a heatwave alert has been issued. Tomorrow, the heatwave will only be present in West Rajasthan," said IMD scientist Soma Sen. She said though they have issued a yellow alert for west Rajasthan and



Kerala, impact is unlikely. "From tomorrow the heatwave will end in the country. The alert will remain only for west Rajasthan." "Strong moisture flow is coming to the country from the Bay of Bengal, due to which thunderstorm activity is increasing in the country...There will be a possibility of cloud-to-ground lightning in these thunderstorms," she said as quoted by a news agency here. Former Director General of Meteorology at IMD Dr KJ Ramesh said heatwaves have been abated and thunderstorms will develop from Southern India. Almost all the States will witness thunderstorms and natural lightning with high intensity. He explained that strong moisture flow from the Bay of Bengal is increasing thunderstorm activity in the country. Giving out thunderstorms and heavy rain warnings for some hilly States and the northeast, the weather department said strong lightning is possible.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting for Lok Sabha elections, in Hyderabad, on Friday. PTI

Cong plotting to kill Hindu faith: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ HYDERABAD/MANDURBAR (MAHARASHTRA)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who returned to campaigning on Friday after a day's break, hit out at the Congress while addressing a rally in Maharashtra, saying the party is "conspiring to eliminate the Hindu faith in India". Modi also accused the Congress of spreading lies regarding job reservations and the Constitution. Alleging that the Congress' "hatred" towards Hindus and their culture is being exposed daily, Modi said the leader who tutors 'shehzada' also said Ram temple should not have been built at Ayodhya. He has declared that construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya and celebrating Ram Navami is against the idea of India, Modi claimed. "I go to the temple with great pride. He has given a certificate that even this is anti-national," he said. In another rally in Hyderabad, Modi said the national party is "anti-Hindu" and it knows religion-based reservations are unconstitutional. "The Congress wants to make Hindus second-class citizens in their own country. Are they talking about vote jihad because of this?" he questioned. Attacking the Congress Government in Telangana, Modi said he referred to

double (RR) tax in the State, without taking any names, but Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is giving explanations to the media indicating who is associated with it. Addressing an election rally in Mahabubnagar Lok Sabha constituency, Modi said the 'shehzade' of Congress (Rahul Gandhi) started off with 'mohabbat ki dukaan' before polls which lost steam as elections approached. "The 'shehzade' (prince) is now poisoning society by speaking of supporting 'tukde-tukde gang,'" he claimed. In a veiled reference to Congress leader Sam Pitroda's recent remarks, he said the 'shehzade's advisor' who lives in America described South Indian people as looking like Africans, which the PM claimed implied that Telangana people look like Africans. "You know why, because he doesn't like your skin colour. Now Congress will decide based on skin colour who is African and who is Indian," he said. "Do you perform puja on Ram Navami or not? Do you want to go to Ayodhya for darshan? Are you going to commit anti-national activity (with worship)?" he asked. He also said the Congress never bothered about welfare of Adivasis. Prime Minister Modi's ruling BJP has repeatedly accused the Congress of being "anti-Hindu" and "appeasing" Muslims.

BJP leader on the mat in harassment case

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

A city court on Friday ordered the framing of charges against the BJP MP and former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) Chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, in a sexual harassment case lodged by six female wrestlers. The court said there is sufficient evidence against him to frame charges while discharging him in a complaint filed by one of the six women wrestlers. Brij Bhushan was denied the BJP ticket to contest from his home seat Kaisergunj for this Lok Sabha polls, however, he got a ticket for his son Karan Bhushan Singh from the same seat. The Opposition parties had

been demanding swift action against the senior Bhushan for the alleged cases. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Priyanka Rajpoot ordered framing of charge for criminal intimidation against Brij Bhushan and will formally frame the charges on May 21. The court also ordered framing of charges against co-accused and former WFI assistant secretary Vinod Tomar in the case. The court said there is sufficient material to frame charges against Brij Bhushan in the offences of outraging the modesty of a woman and sexual harassment (sections 354 and 354A of the IPC) against five of the victims.



For accused number 2 Vinod Tomar, former WFI assistant secretary who is the second accused in the case, the court framed charges under Section 506 part 1 regarding victim number 1. For the remaining offences, the court said he

stands discharged. The lower court however discharged Brij Bhushan in the allegations levelled by victim number 6. The sixth victim's allegations dated back to 2012. The Delhi Police had filed a charge sheet in the case against Brij Bhushan, a six-time MP, on June 15 under sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354A (sexual harassment), 354D (stalking) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code. Brij Bhushan's plea seeking further investigation in the case was rejected last month. It had earlier deferred the framing of charges against

Brij Bhushan since his advocate Rajeev Mohan sought further investigation in the case. They alleged through an application that he was not in Delhi when one of the six wrestlers was allegedly molested. The police, in its 1,500-page chargesheet, had mentioned statements of at least 22 witnesses from across four States, including wrestlers, a referee, a coach and a physiotherapist, who have corroborated the allegations made by the six women wrestlers against Brij Bhushan. Another Delhi court is likely to pronounce its order on May 20 on whether to accept a police report seeking

cancellation of a sexual harassment complaint filed by a minor wrestler against Brij Bhushan. During the in-chamber proceedings held on August 1 last year, the minor wrestler had told the court that she was satisfied with the Delhi Police's investigation in the case and not opposed to the closure report it had submitted. On June 15 last year, the police filed a report before the court seeking cancellation of the case involving the girl after her father made a startling claim midway through the probe that he levelled false allegations of sexual harassment against Brij Bhushan to get back at him for perceived injustice to his daughter.

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Aiyar back to help BJP cause

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

An old video of another senior Congress leader, who has served in the Cabinet of several Prime Ministers, Mani Shankar Aiyar, has provided fresh ammunition to the BJP on Friday to attack the Congress, which, a few days ago, had worked hard to douse the flames ignited by its leader Sam Pitroda. In the midst of an aggressive Lok Sabha campaign, the BJP seized upon them, accusing the grand old party of being an apologist for Pakistan and the terrorism emanating from its soil. Meanwhile, the Congress again quickly distanced itself from Aiyar's comments. His remarks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of the 2014 general elections left a scar on the Congress till now. In the video, which has gone viral on social media, Aiyar is heard saying that India should respect Pakistan as it is a sovereign nation and engage with it since it also possesses an atom bomb. Aiyar said the video is old and being resurfaced now as the BJP's election campaign is faltering. He indicated in the video that if a "mad person" comes to power there and uses the atom bomb, it will not be



good and will have its effect here too. As the remarks triggered a row, the Congress said it totally disagrees with the remarks made by Aiyar some months ago. Aiyar does not speak for the party in any capacity whatsoever, Congress media department chairperson Pawan Khera said. Home Minister Amit Shah slammed the Congress for "raising question mark" on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and asserted that every inch of it belonged to India and no force can snatch it. "Aiyar is telling us to respect Pakistan as it possesses an atom bomb. A few days ago, INDIA Bloc leader Ferooz Abdullah said do not talk about PoK as Pakistan has an atom bomb. I want to tell the Congress and INDIA Bloc that PoK belongs to India and

no force can snatch it," Shah said at an election rally in Jharkhand's Khunti. Hitting back at BJP Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi said why is Pakistan being discussed when elections are taking place in India and the unemployment rate here is at a 45-year high. "I ask when was the statement made? ... If it is an old statement, then why are we discussing it today? Secondly, I want to ask, where are elections taking place, in India or in Pakistan? They are taking place in India. So why are we discussing Pakistan?" she said during her campaign trail in Amethi for the party's candidate Kishori Lal Sharma. BJP cited recent comments of more Congress leaders to make its point. The leader of Opposition in Maharashtra, Vijay Wadettiwar, had said IPS officer Hemant Karkare was killed by a cop affiliated to the RSS and not Pakistani terrorist Ajmal Kasab and former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi had dismissed a recent terror incident in Poonch in which an Air Force official died as a poll stunt, noted Union Minister Rajeev Chandrashekar.

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EC lashes out at Kharge's 'biased' turnout narrative

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Amid concerns expressed by various Opposition parties over the voter turnout data, leaders of the INDIA Bloc from Congress, TMC, DMK, Left, met the Election Commission at Nirvachan Sadan on Friday, submitting alleged violations of the model code of conduct by the BJP leaders during the ongoing Lok Sabha polls campaign. Though the EC is yet to respond on the meeting with Opposition members, it however in a strongly-worded letter replied to the Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge who a day earlier had written to the leaders of various Opposition parties on the issue of alleged "discrepancies" in the voting data released by the EC. The EC rejected Kharge's allegations that it had delayed the release of the final voter turnout numbers for the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections and told him the utterances from president of a national political party is attacking the very credibility of the electoral steps and processes, and can have a negative impact on voter participation. Following which Congress



Photo: The Pioneer

chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh responded by defending the concerns raised by the Congress president. "The response of the EC to the issues raised by the Congress president in his letter to the INDIA parties is simply beyond description. The EC is a Constitutional body entrusted with the responsibility of being an impartial body that ensures, and is seen to ensure, a level-playing field to all political parties. Both the content and intent of the letter will be a permanent blot on the reputation of an institution that can boast of luminaries like Sukumar Sen, TN Seshan, JM Lyngdoh and others," Ramesh said in a statement. EC dubbed as "aggression on

vitals of live election operations" through Kharge's recent statements concerning the ongoing Lok Sabha elections 2024. The poll body termed Kharge's letter as his attempt to push a "biased narrative." In a five-page response with annexures, the poll panel rejected charges of mismanagement and delay in the release of voter turnout data and termed Kharge's allegations "unwarranted," "without facts" and "reflective of a biased and deliberate attempt to spread confusion." The commission condemned Kharge's statement in which he wondered whether the delay in releasing voter turnout data was an "attempt to doctor the final results".

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Sweltering heat no deterrent for Kushwaha

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

As the sun rays grow hotter and Kanhaiyalalpurwa in Vikasnagar stirs to life. Alok Kushwaha, dressed in a bright yellow kurta-pyjama, stands outside a house, initiating his campaign for bypoll to the Lucknow East assembly constituency.

At some distance away, two SUVs display BSP posters and flags, symbolising Kushwaha's presence. Accompanied by dedicated supporters distributing pamphlets, Kushwaha maintains an unwavering smile despite the sweltering heat, embodying an approachable demeanour.

Moving through the neighbourhood, the campaign team leaves a trail of clear instructions: "Haathi ka button dabana hai is baar aapko" (Press the elephant symbol this time). A female supporter actively engages women residents, rallying them to vote and facilitating discussions with Kushwaha.

In this lower-middle-class area, Kushwaha's appeal resonates, eliciting positive responses from residents. Reflecting on their schedule, Kushwaha notes

the rigorous campaigning from 7 am to 1 pm, and then again from 4 pm to 11 pm, fuelled by the generosity of the households they visit. "I eat whatever I get during the campaigning. We visit each house and get something to eat," he shares. Despite being a first-time candidate, Kushwaha highlights that all contenders for the Lucknow East, including Congress's Mukesh Singh Chauhan and BJP's OP Srivastava, are first-time MLA hopefuls.

Confident in victory, Kushwaha predicts a winning margin of one lakh votes, dismissing concerns about BJP dominance in the constituency. "At one time, Lucknow East had the maximum of Congress voters," he recollects, acknowledging the shifting political landscape.

Addressing local concerns, Kushwaha acknowledges previous development efforts by the former MLA but emphasises the need for continued progress. "There is a lot which remains to be done. The sewers are blocked, and drinking water provision requires attention," he remarks.

Looking forward, Kushwaha outlines plans to reduce gov-



Alok Kushwaha, BSP candidate for bypoll to Lucknow East Assembly constituency, meets and greets people in Kanhaiyalalpurwa, Vikasnagar

ernment school fees and expand educational access, prioritising equal facilities for all. He pledges to address infrastructure challenges, ensuring regular maintenance of sewer and drinking water systems to mitigate residents' hardships. Amidst positive campaign

feedback, Kushwaha affirms public readiness for change and promises diligent efforts to secure results.

In response to broader political forecasts, Kushwaha counters BJP's optimism about winning 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh, underscoring BSP's competitive

stance. Reflecting on voter apathy in the Lok Sabha elections, Kushwaha links disinterest to perceived neglect in developmental governance. He highlights the need for proactive rehabilitation efforts in beautification drives, citing Mayawati's administration as a positive precedent.

Ravi Valmiki, BSP's Vidhan Sabha incharge, outlines their campaign strategy, emphasising sector-wise coverage and direct engagement with constituents. Looking ahead, Valmiki underscores the importance of responsive representation to bridge the gap between promises and action within the constituency.

Meanwhile, the Khujali village in Mohanlalpurwa comes alive with the sounds of campaigning, as supporters chant 'Jai Bharat', 'Jai Samvidhan', urging villagers to press the 'Hathi' (elephant) button on the polling day (May 20).

The blue colour of BSP candidate for Mohanlalpurwa Lok Sabha candidate Rajesh Kumar's campaign is unmistakable as his supporters gather with enthusiasm, armed with all the paraphernalia to sway voters.

The village, with a mix of pucca and kutcha houses, features underdeveloped roads. Fifty percent of the voters belong to scheduled castes, with the rest from other communities.

Rajesh Kumar mentions campaigning relentlessly from 7 am to 9 pm, with no breaks, often resting in villagers' homes in the scorching heat.

"We are farmers, so the high temperatures don't affect us much. We've covered 95% of the villages already," he states. Moving door-to-door, the group urges voters to give BSP a chance to serve. "RK Chaudhary of INDIA bloc was the MLA, and Kaushal Kishore of BJP the MP, but there has been no development in a decade. People have confidence in us," Rajesh asserts. He reports positive feedback, claiming BSP's strong chance of victory, citing public rejection of incumbent faces in favor of new ones.

Promising development, he highlights the urgent need for road repairs and better school infrastructure. "Unemployment is rampant. I'll strive to create jobs and establish factories," he vows. On Kaushal Kishore's track record, he defers to public judgment on June 4.

Employment, inflation real issues for youth



Priyanka Pathak



Ambuj Mishra



Rishi Dixit



Himanshu Vats

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The youth in the city are all set to vote on key issues such as employment, inflation, and paper leaks as Lucknow goes to polls on May 20. Priyanka Pathak, currently pursuing PhD in Mass Communications at BBAU, said that her primary concerns revolve around employment and education, issues she plans to base her vote on. "As a student, I am keen on understanding the job prospects in academics, another key area for my vote," she explained. Priyanka also emphasised inflation, stating, "Although I receive a fellowship as a PhD scholar, it's challenging to make ends meet. A government increase in stipends would greatly benefit us. Addressing inflation is crucial."

She further stressed her concern about climate change, urging the new government to implement environmental regulations. "The environment's impact on us is evident and substantial—mentally, physically, and economically," she added.

Ambuj Mishra, pursuing masters at BBAU, intends to vote

based on issues such as reinstating student unions in universities, reducing educational fees, and managing self-financed courses. "The new government should support student elections for better representation," he emphasized. Himanshu Vats, another student, emphasised the impact of paper leaks as a significant issue for him. "I've faced considerable challenges due to paper leaks, with many exams stuck in legal disputes, leading to uncertain prospects for us," he said. Himanshu highlighted the impact of delayed job vacancies and the unregulated private sector, advocating for stricter regulations on working hours and minimum wages.

Rishi Dixit, pursuing PhD in Mass Communications, said he prioritises combating divisive politics and addressing unemployment. "As a student of psychology, I am concerned about political parties exploiting communal sentiments for votes. India's diversity should be respected," he said. Rishi also stressed the importance of combating corruption, noting a decrease post-digitisation, which has aided students like him.

IMA backs Rajnath Singh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Indian Medical Association (Lucknow) organised a doctors' meeting at the IMA Auditorium in support of Defence Minister and BJP candidate for Lok Sabha elections Rajnath Singh on Friday. Deputy Chief Minister and Health Minister Brajesh Pathak was the chief guest on the occasion. Special guests included State Forest and Environment Minister Dr Arun Kumar Saxena, BJP city president Anand Dwivedi, senior leader Neeraj Singh, MLA Dr Neeraj Bora, and state medical cell convenor Dr. Abhay Mani Tripathi.

Pathak emphasised BJP's commitment to upholding the honour and self-respect of doctors. He highlighted the rapid establishment of "One District, One



Medical College' in UP under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, with ongoing efforts to enhance modern medical facilities across the

state. Anand Dwivedi shared Rajnath Singh's concerns about improving medical facilities for middle and lower-income classes. He mentioned a health fair organised under the defense minister's directions, distributing free sanitary pads and setting up open gyms in parks for public health.

Neeraj Bora, also a doctor, empathised with the profession's challenges and emphasised the reduction in bureaucratic hurdles under the BJP government, enabling doctors to focus more on patient care. The meeting was attended by IMA Lucknow president Dr Vineet Mittal, secretary Dr Sanjay Saxena, Lucknow LNHA president Dr Anoop Agarwal, secretary Dr Sanjay Lakhtakia, and ANHWA president Dr SM Hasan among others.

RWA office-bearers to urge people to get finger inked

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi on Friday convened a meeting with a joint delegation of Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) office-bearers to encourage residents of their respective apartments to exercise their voting rights on polling day (May 20).

The LDA VC emphasised that the efforts of bureaucrats were solely aimed at boosting voter turnout without favouring any political party or leader, aiming for maximum participation and achieving 100% voting. Division Commissioner Roshan Jacob announced that polling teams achieving 100% voter turnout at their booths

would be honoured with citations. Jagnath Nath Singh, an RWA office-bearer, raised concerns about poor sanitation conditions at Sunrise Apartments in Gomti Nagar, urging officials to take steps for cleanliness.

In response, Tripathi highlighted ongoing initiatives to improve hygiene and sanitation, noting visible improvements resulting from these efforts.

Municipal Commissioner Indeerjeet Singh outlined measures like door-to-door waste collection to address garbage accumulation in public areas. Tripathi also underscored LDA's commitment to promoting rainwater harvesting systems in apartments and individual houses to address water scarcity, emphasising the need for individual initiative in implementing these measures. In addition to the delegation, residents from Gomti Nagar and other areas attended the meeting. District Magistrate and District Election Officer SP Gangwar, Chief Development Officer Ajay Rai and other officials also attended the meeting.

the pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I Taraanum w/o Hasan sardar R/O 98/7, Bhusa Mandi Aminabad Lucknow. In some Documents my name is written Taraanum Sardar and in other Documents my name is written Taraanum. The correct name in Aadhar card is Taraanum. Mention Correct name in school record of my Son ArBaz Hasan. That is Taraanum.

NOTICE

This is to inform that my correct name is BUNIYAD BAQAR RIZVI Son of Shri YAD HASAN RIZVI, which is printed on my Aadhar Card and Pan Card. Due to mistake in my daughter's High School marksheet (Roll No. 5152988) and Intermediate marksheet (Roll No. 23685539) my name was printed as FAWAD ASKARI, Which is my alias name.

NOTICE

Wrongly Mentioned as Mother name -SAROJ KUMARI of my son GANESH KUMAR IN SCHOOL RECORD 10TH AND 12TH MARKSHEET ETC. Correct mother Name is SANTOSH KUMARI IN FUTURE KNOWN AS SANTOSH KUMARI W/O SUSHIL KUMAR VILL/POST-DHAMNI KHERA, UNNAO. U.P.

NOTICE

J Bhagothi Devi spouse of JC735256N, NB Sub DMT Vijendra Singh R/o Sankhan Tal, Churu, Rajgarh, Rajasthan-331303 have changed my name from Bhagothi Devi to Bhagothi Devi vide affidavit dated 09-05-2024 Before High Court Prayagraj.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from MISHTI AGRAWAL to MISTHI AGRAWAL. In future I shall be known as MISTHI AGRAWAL. MISTHI AGRAWAL D/o Atul Agrawal 36 Chahchand, Zero Road, Prayagraj

NOTICE

Notice I have changed my name from POORVI MEHROTRA to POORVI MEHROTRA MISRA. Hereinafter I shall be known & identified as POORVI MEHROTRA MISRA, 3A/46(4), Azad Nagar, Nawabganj, Kanpur U.P.-208002

NOTICE

I Ruby Porwal wife of Late Dileep Kumar, declare that I have lost my Original Freehold Deed dated 22.08.2014 of my property bearing House No. E-786 Scheme EWS, Mohalla Barra U.P.U.D.P., Kanpur Nagar. If anyone tries to use it for any cause it will be considered illegal and void.

सूचना

मेरा वास्तविक नाम अर्जुन वर्मा है जो कि दस्तावेजों में अर्जुन दर्ज हो गया है। भविष्य में मुझे अर्जुन वर्मा नाम से ही जाना जाए। अर्जुन वर्मा पुत्र स्व. धनीराम निवासी 88/बी-2 बाबूलाल का हाता, सुभाष रोड हरजेंद्र नगर, कानपुर नगर

NOTICE

I, Mahendra Singh Yadav, R/O-HIG-40 Jarauli Phase-2, Kanpur Nagar, declare that I have severed ties by their wrong conduct and behaviour with my son Avinash and his wife Reema and have evicted them from my movable and immovable property. I and my family will not be held responsible for its actions and transactions.

NOTICE

Informed all, My Daughter Name Sakhi Devi is wrong. Correct Name is Shakhi Devi. Let it be known by this name in future. Dinesh kumar S/o Shivbalak R/o village Bhikhampur post khunta PS Jafarganj Distt. Fatehpur (UP)

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHIV KUMAR VERMA S/O UMESH CHANDRA SRIVASTAVA R/O 104/2A Madan Mohan Malviya Road Allahabad Agriculture Institute Uttar Pradesh-211007 have changed my name to SHIV KUMAR.

PD(427)A I, BABY RUSHI D/O FARMAN ALI R/O Mohalla Hawaili Kariyaneeem Bhogaon Mainpuri Uttar Pradesh-205262 have changed my name to RUSHI KHAN.

PD(428)A I, HONEY SINGH alias KM HONEY SINGH D/O MANOJ KUMAR SINGH R/O 160 Colonel Ganj Fatehgarh Farrukhabad Uttar Pradesh-209601 have changed my name to VIDHANI GAHARWAR.

PD(429)A I, ANVITA GUPTA D/O MADHAV PRASAD GUPTA R/O Shiv 16/17 A-M Pachopandawa Kadirpur Varanasi Uttar Pradesh-221003 have changed my name to VISHNUPRIYA GUPTA.

PD(430)A I, VINOD MODANWAL S/O RAMNIHOR MODANWAL R/O Ward No.03 Suriyawan Patti Joravar Singh Saraiya Sant Ravidas Nagar Uttar Pradesh-221404 have changed my name to PRINCE GUPTA.

Man falls for fake WFH offer, loses ₹4.65L

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A man fell victim to an online fraud in Sushant Golf City police station area and lost Rs 4.65 lakh. The incident took place on Friday when the victim, Devanshu Sharma, received a call offering a work-from-home (WFH) job from an unidentified number. Believing it to be a legitimate opportunity, Devanshu agreed and was manipulated by the fraudsters into investing the mentioned sum for promised returns. "After completing the tasks they assigned, I requested my money with the promised profit, but then realised it was a scam,"

Devanshu stated in his complaint. The scammers then demanded an additional Rs 3 lakh as a "price" to supposedly refund his invested amount. The police have registered a case and started investigations. The cops have also issued a warning urging people to avoid clicking unknown links, downloading apps from unidentified callers, and falling for work-from-home job offers.

helper. The driver, Surendra Yadav (40) of Gorakhpur, along with his helper Bajinath Yadav (38), was transporting ballast in the truck. Reports said that around 11 am, one of the truck's tyres deflated near the Beli underpass, causing it to overturn. Surendra was crushed to death under the truck, while Bajinath sustained minor injuries. Commuters alerted the police, who rushed both the driver and his helper to the CHC, where Surendra was pronounced dead. The police have notified Surendra's family, and Bajinath is currently receiving treatment. The truck has been removed from the accident site to clear the

way for traffic. Meanwhile, a 27-year-old security guard deployed at Traffic Park in Krishna Nagar was found hanging from a tree near his residence in Banthra. The victim, Manish Patel, hailed from Tirwa village and was found with a shirt and gamchha tied around his neck. According to deceased's brother Anuj Patel, Manish was unmarried and reportedly suffered from an undisclosed illness. The police have started investigations. The cops suspect that Manish's decision to end his life may have been influenced by his health-related issues. They said autopsy would ascertain the cause of death.

TRUCK DRIVER KILLED IN ROAD MISHAP

In a tragic incident on the Poorvanchal Expressway in Gosainganj, a truck overturned, resulting in the death of the driver and injuries to his

CITY BRIEFS

JOB NEW BRANCH

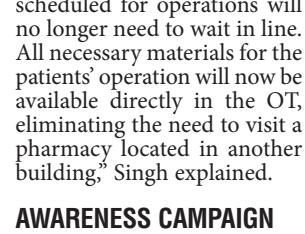


Indian Overseas Bank's (IOB) Bhitauli branch was inaugurated by AKTU Vice-Chancellor Prof JP Pandey on Friday. Chief Regional Manager, Lucknow, Purna Chandra Satpathy, Branch Manager Satyam Pandey, and others were present on the occasion. This is one of the 100 new branches announced by MD&CEO (IOB) Ajay Kumar Srivastava this year. The bank aims to expand its reach in the state and provide better services to its customers. Satpathy said IOB is known for its excellent customer service. At present, IOB is providing its banking services in 57 districts of Uttar Pradesh with a total of 219 branches.

PHARMACY INAUGURATED

Another pharmacy has been inaugurated at the Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences, specifically within the hospital's operation theater (OT) for the convenience of patients and attendants. The OT pharmacy was officially opened by RMLIMS director Prof CM Singh. "With the introduction of this pharmacy, attendants of patients scheduled for operations will no longer need to wait in line. All necessary materials for the patients' operation will now be available directly in the OT, eliminating the need to visit a pharmacy located in another building," Singh explained.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



NSS units of Navyug Kanya Mahavidyalaya organised a voter awareness campaign under the patronage of principal Prof Manjula Upadhyay, and Lucknow University Vice-Chancellor Prof Alok Kumar Rai on Thursday. The NSS volunteers adopted the slum 'Dhobi Ghat' in Aishbagh to ensure 100 per cent voting on May 20. The NSS volunteers, along with their programme officers Pratima Ghosh, Neha Agarwal and Shweta Upadhyay Dhar, visited the slum to make people aware of their voting rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Dr Dhiman awarded Padma Shri

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Dr Radha Krishna Dhiman was honoured with the Padma Shri at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, in recognition of his remarkable contributions. He is currently serving as the director of Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) and Kalyan Singh Superspecialty Cancer Institute in Lucknow. Born on June 4, 1960, Dr Dhiman has been recognised as a fellow by esteemed institutions such as the American College of Gastroenterology, American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases, Royal College of Physicians (London and Edinburgh), and the National Academy of Medical Sciences.

NOTICE

Smt. Manjulata and Smt. Priti Bajpai (Borrower) have agreed to create mortgage in respect of House built over Plot No. 52 situated at Part of Arazi No. 1083 Bairi Akbarpur Kanpur Nagar admeasuring 144 sq. Mts. With HDFC Bank Limited, that Original Lease deed dated 29/04/1986 executed by Shree Guru Nanak Sindh Co-Operative Housing Society Limited through Sri Govind Ram Pakhrani and Sri Takhatram in favour of Sri Vasudev which is registered in Book No. 1 Vol. No. 4303/4316 on pages 65/251 to 264 on 10415 on 29/10/1986 at the office of Sub Registrar Kanpur Nagar is lost. If any person having any claim against the said Property can contact to me, within 07 days. Bharat Bhatnagar, Advocate

COURT NOTICE

CITATION (BY ADVERTISEMENT) (Chapter XXX, Rule-21) IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD ORIGINAL JURISDICTION TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE JURISDICTION TESTAMENTARY CASE NO. 25 OF 2024 IN THE MATTER OF THE GOODS OF Late Kalimur Rahman Farooqi S/o Late Khalilur Rahman Farooqi R/o 161-A Rajapur, District-Prayagraj, Deceased. Rana Farooqi, Petitioner. WHEREAS an application has been made by Rana Farooqi W/o Late Kalimur Rahman Farooqi R/o 161-A Rajapur, District- Prayagraj, for the probate of the will (or Letters of Administration to the estate) of Late Kalimur Rahman Farooqi deceased, who died at Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital, Prayagraj Uttar Pradesh on 29.04.2021 AND WHEREAS, the hearing day of July, 2024 has been fixed for the said application. THIS CITATION is issued calling upon all persons claiming to have any interest to come and see the proceedings if they think fit and the grant of probate (or Letters of Administration). Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this 09th day of May, 2024. DEPUTY REGISTRAR HIGH COURT, ALLAHABAD Dr. Abida Syed Advocate Counsel for the Petitioner.

PPGCL

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

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited invites expression of interest (EOI) from eligible vendors for Title of Procurement: Hiring of Guest House (3 BHK) With Vehicle Services at Singrauli District (MP) For One Year of 3x660 MW Thermal Power Plant at Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited, Bara, Dist. Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India. Details of pre-qualification requirements, bid security, purchasing of tender document etc. may be downloaded using the URL-<https://www.ppgcl.co.in/tenders.php> Eligible vendors willing to participate may submit their expression of interest along with the tender fee for issue of bid document latest by 20th May 2024.

Ramrajya solution to challenges: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressed election rallies in Gorakhpur and Bahraich on Friday. He vehemently criticised the opposition parties, including Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party and Congress, labelled them as 'Ramdrohis'.

Chief Minister Yogi asserted that the opposition parties not only consider the Ram temple as "useless" for their political gains but also neglected the legacy of Maharaja Suheldev for seven decades post-Independence.

Yogi accompanied party candidate Ravi Kishan when he filed his nomination papers in Gorakhpur and later addressed the public at Mahant Digvijaynath Park. In Bahraich's Mahsi locality, he rallied in support of party candidate Dr Anand Kumar Gaur. Chief Minister Yogi said, "Ramrajya is the ultimate solution to the nation's challenges, and 'Baar Baar Modi Sarkar' is the only solution."

He reiterated the public's desire to re-elect leaders who embody the principles of Ramrajya. During the public address in Gorakhpur, Yogi vehemently criticised both SP and Congress for the statements made by certain leaders regarding the construction of the Shri Ram temple in Ayodhya. He said, "The opposition leaders, who seemed disheartened until the third voting phase, have begun commenting on Lord Ram.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with BJP's Gorakhpur Lok Sabha candidate Ravi Kishan on Friday

Some have deemed the Ram temple 'useless', while others question its public benefit. Those who support terrorists will undoubtedly feel bad about the Ram temple." Yogi stated, "Had the opposition, when in power, implemented stringent measures against those responsible for the terrorist attacks on Ram Janmabhoomi, similar to the current measures being taken nationwide, and against organ-

ised crime in Uttar Pradesh, then incidents like the terrorist attacks on Sankatmochan temple and courts could have been prevented." Chief Minister Yogi hit out against the policy of appeasement towards terrorism which resulted in the loss of thousands of lives in these attacks. He said, "The opposition's acceptance of defeat is evident as the Lok Sabha elections progress, with Congress, SP

and BSP conceding the electoral race." Yogi noted that he has had the opportunity to visit nine states during the campaign and a unified voice echoes throughout the country: "Ek Baar Fir Modi Sarkar". In a scathing attack on the opposition, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that Congress, SP and BSP did not give respect to the brave Maharaja Suheldev Rajbhar, who killed Somnath

temple culprit Ghazi Salar Masud and built his tomb in Bahraich, only for the vote bank as they feared losing the votes of Ghazi Salar Masud's "devotees"

He paid homage to the land of bravery of Maharaja Suheldev and the sacred land of freedom fighter Raja Balbhadr Singh as he greeted the gathering on the auspicious occasions of Akshaya Tritiya and Parshuram Jayanti. Yogi emphasised that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the state government not only constructed the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya but also took decisive measures to curb the influence of mafia elements, who were sowing seeds of chaos and disorder.

The chief minister said that a government that respects people's emotions, protects interests, and integrates development initiatives should be chosen repeatedly. "This not only improves the present but also creates new opportunities for the future," he added. Reflecting on the journey of India's development, Chief Minister Yogi noted the transformation from a decade ago when the nation grappled with terrorism, Naxalism, corruption in development projects, and rampant crime. "The poor died of hunger and youth migrated. Daughters and businessmen were not safe. There were riots and curfews everywhere. Attacks occurred in courts of Ayodhya, Varanasi, Lucknow, and CRPF camps," he added.

INDIA storm arriving; Modi won't become PM: Rahul



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav during a rally in Kannauj on Friday

PNS ■ KANNAUJ

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, on Friday, claimed that an INDIA bloc storm is arriving in Uttar Pradesh and asserted that Narendra Modi will not become the prime minister of the country this time.

Addressing a rally in Kannauj, from where Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav is contesting the Lok Sabha election, Rahul Gandhi said, "Take it in writing, Narendra Modi will not become the prime minister of India. It is over." "Aap likh ke le lo (take it in writing)," he said at the rally which was also addressed by Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and Aam Aadmi Party Member of Parliament Sanjay Singh. This was their first joint rally of the INDIA bloc in Kannauj. Congress and Samajwadi Party, both constituents of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), are contesting the Lok Sabha elections in alliance in Uttar Pradesh. Congress is contesting 17 of the 80 Lok Sabha seats in UP.

"The BJP is going to suffer its biggest defeat in UP... there is a storm blowing in favour of the INDIA bloc in the state," Rahul said. The INDIA bloc leaders appealed to the people to vote for the opposition alliance to power and listed all that they proposed to do for the people if they win. Rahul added that UP paves the way for the country and it has made up its mind to bring a change.

Countering Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that there was a nexus between the Congress and business tycoons Adani and Ambani, Rahul Gandhi said, "You have seen that in 10 years, Narendra Modi ji had not taken the

names of Adani and Ambani, but now he was taking the names of people who he thinks could save him. He said the BJP would try its best to "deviate" the attention of the people through different means in the next 10-15 days and warned the electorate not to fall in the saffron party's trap. "We must not get deviated.... Today, the only issue of utmost importance is to save the Constitution. This Constitution gives powers to the poor and the deprived," Rahul added.

Flashing a copy of the Constitution, the Congress leader said that the BJP had made up its mind to change the Constitution if it returned to power. "We will never allow any power to change the Constitution," he said. Rahul also accused the BJP of taking money from the Covid vaccine manufacturers in the form of electoral bonds.

"Modiji asked you people to clap and bang thalis during COVID-19.... While people were dying from lack of oxygen, he and his party took money from the vaccine maker," he alleged. Rahul Gandhi promised that one woman in every family would get Rs 1 lakh every year till the family rises above the poverty line. He also promised to increase MGNREGA wages and ensure apprenticeships for the youth in different streams. Addressing the rally, Akhilesh Yadav attacked the BJP by saying that the INDIA bloc was poised to win the Lok Sabha polls. He emphasised that, "Those who break the society must be punished."

"Kannauj never left me and I will never leave Kannauj," Akhilesh said, adding that Kannauj was taken to the heights of development by the earlier SP government in UP. He said people who travel the Agra-Lucknow Expressway know that it was built by the

'Samajwadis'. "We assure the people of Kannauj that we will work to enhance the fragrance of development which has stalled," he said, alluding to the region's perfume trade. "The BJP cleaned the chief minister's official residence in Lucknow with Gangli when I vacated it and now, they recently washed a temple after I prayed there. You should ensure that they get washed away this time," the SP chief said.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh claimed that the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh wanted to change the Constitution to end reservation. "We will get forfeited the election deposits of whoever is trying to destroy Babasaheb's Constitution," he said. He said that most of the top AAP leaders were in jail but this had not diminished their will to fight against the government.

Polling is slated in Kannauj on May 13 in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha elections. Addressing a rally in Kanpur, Rahul Gandhi asserted that the INDIA bloc would win at least 50 of the 80 Lok Sabha seats in UP. Gandhi was in Kanpur in support of the Congress candidate from Kanpur Alok Mishra. Addressing a rally in Kanpur, Rahul Gandhi asserted that the INDIA bloc would win at least 50 of the 80 Lok Sabha seats in UP. Gandhi was in Kanpur in support of the Congress candidate from Kanpur Alok Mishra. "Whatever we had to do, we have done. Now, you will see that in Uttar Pradesh, our alliance is going to get not less than 50 seats. We have stopped the BJP in other states," he said. Kanpur goes to polls in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha elections on May 13.

Yogi performs Rudrabhishek

Lucknow (PNS): On the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath performed Rudrabhishek at the Gorakhnath temple and offered prayers to Lord Shiva for the well-being and prosperity of the people of the state. The chief minister also extended his heartfelt wishes to the people on Akshaya Tritiya. At the Shakti temple situated on the first floor of the Gorakhnath temple, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath performed Rudrabhishek by offering bilva leaves, lotus flowers, durva and various other puja materials amidst the recitation of mantras. Following Rudrabhishek, the chief minister performed 'havan' and 'aarti'.

Yogi expressed his greetings on social media platform X, stating, "Best wishes to the people of the state on the auspicious festival of good fortune and prosperity, Akshaya Tritiya! I pray to Tribhuvan Swami Lord Shri Vishnu Ji and Maa Lakshmi Ji that everyone's life be filled with happiness, peace, prosperity and good health!" Akshaya Tritiya is also celebrated as the birth anniversary of Lord Parashuram. Chief Minister Yogi extended greetings on the X, stating, "Heartfelt wishes to the people of the state on the birth anniversary of Lord Parashuram, the eternal symbol of knowledge, bravery and power."

Upon spotting Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during his visit to the Gorakhnath temple complex, a large contingent of devotees from Maharashtra, who had come for the darshan of Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath, erupted in joy. They began chanting 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Yogi-Yogi'.

Mohanlalganj poised for keen contest

PRABHA SHANKER ■ LUCKNOW

The stage is set for a keen electoral contest in Mohanlalganj in the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections on May 20. Interestingly, the Mohanlalganj parliamentary constituency, which is dominated by Scheduled Caste voters, has never elected a candidate of Dalit leader Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party to the Lok Sabha till the date. The Mohanlalganj constituency is currently represented by Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Kaushal Kishore, is a reserved parliamentary seat comprising Sidhauri (Sitapur district), Malihabad, Bakshi Ka Talab, Sarojini Nagar and Mohanlalganj assembly segments.

In 1967, Ganga Devi from the Indian National Congress; in 1977, Ram Lal Kureel from Janata Party; in 1980, Kailash Pati from Indian National Congress; in 1984, Jagannath Prasad from Indian National Congress; in 1989, Sarju Prasad Saroj from Janata Dal; in 1991, Chhotey Lal from Bharatiya Janata Party; in 1996, Purnima Verma from BJP; and in 1998, Reena Choudhary; in 2004, Jai Prakash Rawat; in 2009, Sushila Saroj, all three from Samajwadi Party; and in 2014 and 2019, Kaushal Kishore from BJP were elected from Mohanlalganj.

All five assembly segments of the Mohanlalganj parliamentary constituency (Sidhauri, Malihabad, Bakshi Ka Talab, Sarojini Nagar and Mohanlalganj) were won by BJP in the last assembly election. Out of these five assembly segments, three - Sidhauri, Malihabad and Mohanlalganj - are reserved seats. While Kaushal Kishore of the BJP has been winning the Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha seat since 2014, he is getting a direct challenge from Samajwadi Party candidate RK Chaudhary. BSP's Rajesh

Kumar is a newcomer who contested the zila panchayat election in 2015 and is making the contest triangular this time. RK Chaudhary was mentored by BSP founder Kanshi Ram in his early days. He later switched to different political parties to give shape to his political career and last time he unsuccessfully contested the parliamentary election as a Congress candidate. The Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha constituency is dominated by Pasis, followed by Yadavs, Muslims, Jatavs, Thakurs, Brahmmins and Kurmis in terms of their numerical strength. It has been represented by the representatives of different political hues over the years.

In 2019, Kaushal Kishore secured victory by overcoming the challenge posed by the SP-BSP alliance, securing a victory with a margin of 90,204 votes. With a significant presence of Muslims and Yadavs, who are said to be traditionally aligned with the SP, and BSP retaining its Dalit voter base, the equation did not work in favour of the SP-BSP candidate in the last parliamentary election. For Kaushal Kishore, who belongs to the Pasi community, the stage is set for an interesting battle this time. Political analysts predict that the BJP has strategically consolidated the non-Dalit votes, which have been a key factor in determining the results in favour of the success of BJP candidate for two consecutive terms from Mohanlalganj and this will again be a validation of BJP think-tank's poll strategy in 2024 with the victory of Kaushal Kishore.

The first election in Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha constituency took place in 1962. So far, 15 elections have been held in the constituency. The Congress won this seat five times between 1962 and 1977 and three times consecutively between 1962 and 1977 and then the Janata Party won

it once in 1977. The political analysts say that the Congress has enough ground for representing this Lok Sabha seat for maximum times. However, over the years, regional parties have wooed the Congress vote bank.

"There are people who still remember the golden regime of Congress. Now we are contesting the election in coalition with Samajwadi Party which also had a strong hold on the voters and represented the constituency for three terms. So this time, the battle is not easy for the BJP as their false promises are a reason for anger against it," a leader said. The BJP won the Mohanlalganj seat in 1991 and then in 1996. However, from 1998 to 2009 the seat remained with the Samajwadi Party. In 2014, BJP wrested back the seat. Over the years the political dynamics changed and was rearranged in a way that in subsequent elections, the BJP and SP remained the key players. The BSP, despite having a significant Dalit vote share, has struggled to capture this seat while Congress has banked on the combination of Dalit-Muslim and upper caste votes for its victory from this Lok Sabha seat.

"Like the dominance of Dalit voters, the assertiveness of backward class voters also cost dear to the parties which overly attempted to woo Dalits and Muslims. The defeat of Congress in the 1989 by Janata Dal was majorly for this reason. This was again as the upper caste and non-Dalit votes largely consolidated in favour of BJP, which won the seat last time," political analysts say. They said in the 1990 and afterwards, the constituency emerged as the strongholds of the BJP and the SP.

"The BJP formulated a strategy in 2014 and gave ticket to popular leftist leader Kaushal Kishore who has secured the seat till date," they said.

Modi-Yogi freed UP from mafia, terrorists: Dhami

Ghazipur: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Friday claimed that the double engine government in Uttar Pradesh has freed the state of 'mafia' and terrorists, turning it into "uttam pradesh". Crediting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the UP's transformation, Dhami said criminals are moving out of the state due to the government's strict action, while industrialists are investing heavily in the state. "Following effective checks on extortions by goons, industrialists are setting up industries in the state in a big way. The double engine government led by Modi-Yogi has freed Uttar Pradesh of mafia and terrorists and has turned it into an 'uttam pradesh'," he said. Dhami accompanied Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Paras Rai as he filed his nomination papers from Ghazipur Lok Sabha seat on Friday. "When I was studying in Lucknow, criminals used to dominate. Besides committing

crimes, they used to extort money from businessmen and industrialists," Dhami told reporters. "Today criminals are migrating due to the strict action of the government. They are getting harsh punishment from the courts. Industrialists not only from the country but from all over the world are investing heavily in Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh and the country is marching towards development," he said. "Today is a very auspicious day as the doors of Baba Kedarnath Dham have opened and I have come directly from there for the nomination of party candidate Paras Rai ji," he said. The Uttarakhand chief minister also said there was a "wave" in the entire country in favour of the BJP and PM Modi. "The people of the country are voting to make him the prime minister for the third time. Due to this, the opposition's INDI alliance is in deep trouble and now its defeat is certain. BJP will win more than four hundred seats," he added. PTI

BJP leaders have love for Pakistan, Advani called Jinnah secular: Baghel

Rae Bareilly, May 10 (PTI) Hitting back at the BJP as a row erupted over Mani Shankar Aiyar's remarks, senior Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel on Friday claimed it is the ruling party's leaders that have "love for Pakistan" and cited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2015 surprise visit to the neighbouring country. In an interview with PTI here, the former Chhattisgarh chief minister also cited veteran BJP leader L K Advani's remarks during his 2005 visit to Pakistan, terming that country's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah "secular".

Asked about Aiyar's remarks on Pakistan and the BJP's allegation that it reflected the Congress' love for that country, Baghel said, "If we talk of 1948 or 1965 or 1971 be it the time of (Jawaharlal) Nehru, (Lal Bahadur) Shastri ji or Indira (Gandhi) ji... in Indira ji's time Pakistan was broken into two, so we cannot have Pakistan prem." "It is the leaders of the BJP that have Pakistan prem. When Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the prime minister he took a bus to Lahore, then deputy PM L K Advani went to the mazar of Jinnah and hailed him as secular," Baghel said.

"No PM has ever called a Pakistan prime minister or president for their swearing-in ceremony. Modi ji is the first PM to do so and without an invitation, he went to Pakistan to have biryani," the Congress leader said, referring to Modi's impromptu visit to Pakistan in 2015. The BJP's love for Pakistan is apparent, he claimed, adding all this is registered in the pages of history. "When did Mani Shankar Aiyar ji say this? I saw the video, he is wearing a sweater, it is an old video. If they are bringing up old things, then all these issues that I pointed out are also there," Baghel said.

Aiyar's remarks on Pakistan sparked a row on Friday, with his party quick to dissociate itself from the comments while the BJP latched on to those, accusing the grand old party of being an apologist for Pakistan and the terrorism emanating from its soil. Aiyar said the video was old and dredged up now as the BJP's election campaign is faltering. In comments that have gone viral on social media, Aiyar is heard saying that India should give respect to Pakistan as it is a sovereign nation and engage with it as it also possesses an atom bomb. Responding to a question

on how the Congress and INDIA bloc are placed after three phases of the Lok Sabha polls, Baghel claimed that as phases of Lok Sabha polls progressed, BJP leaders' self-confidence has been shaken and in their statements, they continue to lower the discourse. "It has become clear in the polls that for the BJP 'Dakshin mein saaf, Uttar Bharat mein half'," he claimed. Asked about the BJP leaders' Ram temple pitch during the polls and PM Modi's recent remarks claiming the Congress will reverse the Supreme Court verdict on Ram temple if voted to power, Baghel said the temple has been built and the consecration ceremony has also taken place. The matter is over, he said.

"But the PM and BJP leaders are now saying that they need 400 seats so that a mosque is not built there. Rajiv Gandhi had said the court's decision would be final. He had said that on record and the Congress party's stand has been that throughout, and it never budged from the stand that the court's decision is final." "When the Supreme Court's verdict has come, then making such remarks shows that the BJP has no issue now. How much

will they lie and try to mislead people?" the former Chhattisgarh chief minister asked.

His remarks come after Prime Minister Modi claimed the Congress will reverse the Supreme Court verdict on the Ram temple if voted to power just like the top court's landmark 1985 ruling in the Shah Bano case was overturned by the Rajiv Gandhi government as part of the party's appeasement politics.

On Prime Minister Modi's attacks at the Congress, including on the issue of 'wealth redistribution', Baghel said when the Congress' Nyay Patra was unveiled, Modi started claiming that the Muslim League agenda had been included in it. "Then he talked about mutton-fish and then mangalsutra. These things are nowhere there in the Congress manifesto. I would say that in a way, the PM propagated our manifesto. "As soon as he said Muslim League, people checked it out and it was found nowhere. The same thing happened when he talked of mangalsutra and people found that it was mentioned nowhere. It became clear that the prime minister was lying," he said. PTI

AAP workers jubilant after bail to Kejriwal

Lucknow (PNS): The Aam Aadmi Party leaders and workers in Uttar Pradesh were jubilant after Delhi Chief Minister and party convener Arvind Kejriwal was granted interim bail by the Supreme Court. AAP leader Sabhajeet Singh said the Bharatiya Janata Party's conspiracy to stop Arvind Kejriwal from campaigning in the elections failed finally with the apex court's order. At the AAP state office in Lucknow, the party workers expressed happiness by offering sweets to one another. Expressing happiness on this

occasion, Sabhajeet Singh said that truth can be troubled but not defeated. "The decision of the Supreme Court is welcomed. Now the dictatorship will end from the country," he said. "This is the victory of democracy and the result of the prayers and blessings of millions of people," he added. Singh said that now the Delhi chief minister would fight more strongly and vigorously to save democracy. "Arvind Kejriwal is not a person but a thought, now we will move forward with this thinking more rapidly," Singh said.

UPSIDA UTTAR PRADESH STATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
H.O.: A-1/4, Lakhnau Kanpur-208024

Notice for Public Objection/Suggestion on Layout Plan of Industrial Area Sandila Phase-II, District-Hardoi by which Industrial Plot No. D-84, D-85, D-89 & D-90 has been amalgamated and created a new Plot No. D-84/85-89/90 (Measuring-4000.00 Sq.m.).

- (a) The Layout Plan of Industrial Area Sandila Phase-II, Distt-Hardoi of Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) situated in District Hardoi has been prepared.
- (b) A Copy thereof will be available for inspection at the Regional Manager of the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority, HIG-66, Sector-E, Aliganj, District-Lucknow between 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on all working days till the date mentioned in Para 3 hereafter as well as website: www.onlineupsida.com
- Objections and Suggestions are hereby invited with respect of the Draft Amended Layout Plan.
- Objections and Suggestions shall be sent in writing to the office of Regional Manager, UPSIDA at HIG-66, Sector-E, Aliganj, District-Lucknow within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice mentioning subject as "Regarding Public Objections/Suggestions on draft partial amendment in Layout Plan of Industrial Area Sandila Phase-II, Distt-Hardoi". Any person marking the Suggestions or Objections should also give his/her full name & address, Email id and contact number. (Regional Manager) U.P. State Industrial Development Authority

Drone show displays Kashi's development story

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The development story of Kashi was displayed through drone laser show after the internationally famous Ganga aarti at the Dashashwamedh Ghat here on Thursday evening. This 15-minute-long show will be shown daily for four days till May 12, a day prior to the arrival of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who will take out a roadshow from the Malaviya statue near the BHU main gate to Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham on May 13 and file his nomination papers from Varanasi parliamentary seat on May 14, the last day of nomination.

After the Ganga Aarti at 7.40 pm when the sky started glowing with colourful LED lights from across the Ganga river, the atmosphere resonated with the slogans of 'Har Har Mahadev' and 'Phir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar' from the crowd present at the Dashashwamedh

Ghat. This grand event was witnessed by the visitors, including domestic and foreign tourists, as well as the dignitaries present at this mythological ghat. Even before the nom-



ination of Modi, the political temperature of Lok Sabha elections has risen in Kashi. Through this drone show, the development story of Kashi during the last 10 years was

depicted. 'Damru', 'Kamal', 'Namo Ghat', 'Maa Ganga', 'Vande Bharat Train', 'Cruise', 'Kashi Vishwanath Corridor' etc were shown through drone show. Besides, 'Phir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar', 'Kamal Ke Khile Phool', etc were also displayed.

The announcer was seen telling about various development works. At the same time, it was told how Kashi, wrapped in its ancient culture, is growing rapidly on the threshold of modernity as today Kashi is being praised everywhere and not just India, the entire world is eager to see the amazing transformation that has taken place in this holy city. Through the drone show, Modi's efforts in promoting technology was also highlighted telling the people how the PM brought 3D in his first term, gave focus on social media in the second term and now he is engaged in building the structure of developed India. Renowned vocalist Padma Shri Soma Ghosh,

who participated as the chief guest in the programme, said that she felt happy after seeing the show. "We all are overwhelmed to see such a beautiful use of technology", she said, adding that in the last 10 years, India is rapidly moving towards developed India as under the leadership of the PM, India is rapidly establishing new dimensions of development in every field. She said her entire family has come to Kashi for the last one month to participate in the great festival of democracy. Special guest and District Governor of Lions Club Balveer Singh Bagga said earlier when we used to go abroad, people used to ask what was there in India but in the last 10 years, our country has left even the developed countries behind in the field of technology. The organising committee of the event included Vaibhav Kapoor, Narsingh Das, Pawan Shukla, Amit Agarwal, Rohit Kapoor, Rajiv Sengar. The event was also attended by the guests Rohit Kapoor and Rajiv Sengar, Lok Sabha in charge of BJP Satish Dwivedi, former MLA Jagdish Patel, district and city in charge Arun Pathak, Mayor Ashok Tiwari, BJP national spokesperson KK Sharma, regional media in-charge Navratan Rathi, co-media in charge Santosh Solapurkar, corporator Narsingh Das, Shailendra Mishra etc.

INC, BSP candidates among four file nomination papers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A total of four candidates, including Ajay of Indian National Congress (INC) and Ather Jamal Lari of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) filed their nomination papers for the 77-Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency on the fourth day here on Friday. The other two who also joined the fray were Sanjay Kumar Tiwari (Independent) and Avachit Shamrao Sayam (Jansewa Godwana Party).

With this, so far a total of eight candidates have filed their nomination papers. On the first and second day, two candidates each filed papers while no candidate filed nomination paper on the third day of nomination. As the nomination proceedings will not be conducted due to Saturday and Sunday being public holidays, now only two more days are left for it i.e. May 13 and 14. Apart from four nominations during the day, Parvez Qadir Khan (Peace Party), Suresh Pal (Rashtriya Uday Party), Dr Hemant Kumar Yadav (Bharatiya Manav Party), Lalji Ram (Independent) and Santosh Kumar Sharma (Fundamental Rights Party) received nomina-



tion papers whereas people have also received 11 treasury challans. BSP candidate Ather Jamal Lari reached the Collectorate premises along with party supporters. However, the main attraction of the day was impressive nomination procession of INC candidate Ajay Rai. Though his nomination procession, Ajay Rai tried to show solidarity among the INDIA bloc partners and by riding a bicycle, he sent a message among the SP workers and supporters. In the city, SP organisation has a strong base as the party always posed strong fight to BJP in all elections right from Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha



located at Tulsi Udyan Mahmooorganj here on Friday. These campaign vehicles equipped with hoardings, party flags and banners of the PM are inviting the people of Kashi for the roadshow at major markets and crossings in the five assembly segments of Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency. On the occasion party's Lok Sabha convener Surendra Narayan Singh, state spokesperson Ashok Pandey, city president Vidyasagar Rai, Pradeep Agrahari, Hari Keshari, Rahul Singh, Rajesh Trivedi, regional media in-charge Navratan Rathi, Suresh Singh, co-media in charge Santosh Solapurkar, Madhup Singh were also present.

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India
 Branch Office : 169, Krishna Bihari Nagar, Fatehpur
 Regional Office : 117/11-1240, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur
 Head Office : 239, Vidhan Bhawan Marg, Nariman Point Mumbai

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Properties) Branch : Fatehpur Distt Fatehpur

Whereas The undersigned being the authorized officer of Union Bank of India, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors of account to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being of dues with contractual rate of interest within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount in full, notice is hereby given to the borrower/guarantor and public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him u/s. 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules. The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with property and any dealing with the property will subject to the charge of Union Bank of India, for an Amount and Interest thereon.

We also wish to draw kind attention of all concerned towards section 13(8) of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Sl. No.	Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property and O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand & Possession Notice Date
1.	Borrower : M/s Yash Traders, Proprietor : Shri Vinod Kumar S/o Shri Sawal Das, Address : Andauli Road, Power House, Radha Nagar, Distt. Fatehpur. Demand Notice Date: 02-03-2023 • Date of Constructive Possession: 09.05.2024 Property : Residential House at Part of Arazi No. 735 at Village Malaka, Pargana Tehsil & Distt. Fatehpur bearing house at Badanpur Chauraha, Malaka Road, Malaka, Fatehpur. Owner of Property : Shri Vinod Kumar S/o Shri Sawal Das, Area : 93 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North : Plot of Others, South : Malaka Road, East : Plot of Vendors, West : Plot of Others. Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 12,87,691.20 + Intt. + Others Charges
2.	Borrower : M/s Bombay Tyres, Proprietor : Shri Shah Nawaz Ali S/o Shri Qamar Ali, Address : Jwalaganj, G.T. Road, Near PNB, Fatehpur. Guarantor : Smt. Sahana Bano W/o Shri Mobin Khan, R/o : Village 84 Saura, Post Malwan, Distt. Fatehpur. Demand Notice Date: 04-01-2024 • Date of Constructive Possession: 09.05.2024 Property : Residential House at Part of Arazi No. 2835 at Narayan Das Kuti, Pargana Tehsil & Distt. Fatehpur Village Kasba Fatehpur South Pargana, Fatehpur. Owner of Property : Smt. Sahana Bano W/o Shri Mobin Khan, Area : 84 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North : Rasta Kachha 15 Ft., South : Arazi of Manoj Rastogi, East : Plot of Mukeem, West : Plot of Intiyaz Ali. Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 11,51,338.30 + Intt. + Others Charges
3.	Borrower : Shri Narendra Singh Kushwaha and Shri Jitendra Pratap Singh, Both S/o Shri Narpat Singh, Both R/o : Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg, Gas Godam, Sadipur, Distt. Fatehpur. Guarantor : Shri Kamal Narain Singh S/o Shri Hari Har Singh, R/o : House No. 41-A, Sadipur Khurd, Gas Godam Road, Fatehpur. Demand Notice Date: 04-01-2024 • Date of Constructive Possession: 09.05.2024 Property : Residential House at Part of Arazi No. 17, House No. 41-A, at Village Sadipur Khurd, Distt. Fatehpur. Owner of Property : Shri Narendra Singh Kushwaha S/o Shri Narpat Singh, Area : 112 Sq. Mtr., Bounded-North : Rasta 12 Ft., South : Plot of Shatrughan Singh S/o Rampal Singh now constructed House, East : Plot of Siddiqui now constructed House, West : Plot of House of Smt. Ranju Srivastava W/o Sushil Kumar Srivastava Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 15,19,446.84 + Intt. + Others Charges

Date : 10-05-2024 Place : Fatehpur Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India

Aarti at Adikeshav Temple for Modi's win

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The activists of Namami Gange offered prayers and performed aarti at Adikeshav Temple, the oldest temple of Kashi, on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya on Friday to make Narendra Modi, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate, prime minister again as he is engaged in the 'mahayagya' of giving a spiritual look to Kashi.

After worshipping the Adikeshav form of Lord Hari Narayan or Vishnu, they prayed for the victory of PM Modi. Taking the pictures of Modi, they offered bhog prasad to Lord Adikeshav. Regional

coordinator of Namami Gange (Kashi region) Rajesh Shukla said the programme was organised to seek blessings of the Almighty to make Modi PM for the third time so that he can help India become Vishwa Guru once again apart from self-reliant and developed India and fulfil the resolve of India becoming the world's third economic superpower in his third term. On the occasion the members conducted a cleanliness campaign at Adikeshav Ghat and wastes and garbage were taken out from the Ganga by offering 'shramdaan'. During it the message of cleanliness was given to the people present at Adikeshav Ghat. Shukla said

under the visionary leadership of the PM, India is developing rapidly as many bold decisions were taken by the PM in the interest of the country, which resulted in development and enhanced India's prestige in the international arena. "This development includes many important issues like GST, Women's Reservation Bill, construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya, gender inequalities, socio-economic progress due to abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir etc," he said. Temple Mahant Vinay Kumar Tripathi, city co-coordinator Bina Gupta, Bhawna Tripathi, Meera Tripathi, Dwakar Mishra, Suryanshu Shukla were also present.

Roadshow: 11 campaign vehicles flagged off

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is inviting the people of Kashi through various means for the roadshow of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to be held in the city on May 13. On one hand, public representatives and senior BJP office-bearers are distributing invitation cards door to door, while on the other hand, information is being given to the people of Kashi at major crossings and markets through campaign vehicles.

Lok Sabha coordinator of BJP and MLC Ashwani Tyagi flagged off 11 campaign vehicles from the Central Election Office of Varanasi Lok Sabha

located at Tulsi Udyan Mahmooorganj here on Friday. These campaign vehicles equipped with hoardings, party flags and banners of the PM are inviting the people of Kashi for the roadshow at major markets and crossings in the five assembly segments of Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency. On the occasion party's Lok Sabha convener Surendra Narayan Singh, state spokesperson Ashok Pandey, city president Vidyasagar Rai, Pradeep Agrahari, Hari Keshari, Rahul Singh, Rajesh Trivedi, regional media in-charge Navratan Rathi, Suresh Singh, co-media in charge Santosh Solapurkar, Madhup Singh were also present.

Voter awareness campaign inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A voter awareness campaign was inaugurated at Jai Narayan Vidya Mandir Inter College, Vikas Nagar, on Thursday. Under this three-day mega campaign launched in the area of Vikas Nagar, Panchhi Vihar and Lakhapur

residents of every house were urged for active participation in voting on May 13. To participate in this social initiative, under the leadership of Manager Prof Sunil Mishra, and Principal Dr Santram Dwivedi, over 400 students visited door to door and appealed to people for 100 per

cent voting. Vice-Principal Anil Kumar Tripathi, Ashutosh Satyam, Om Tiwari, Yuvraj Dwivedi, Bharat Dixit, Sushil Shukla, Geeta Bansal, Shailendra Shukla, Ajay Prakash Singh, Om Prakash Singh and Sushil Kumar Shukla were present in the programme.

SPSEC students enthusiastically take part in polling activities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A large number of students of ASir Padampat Singhania Education Centre (SPSEC) took part in the polling activities with enthusiasm on Thursday. The event aimed at providing a platform to pre-primary and primary class students to take part in polling activities. This not only inspired them to get acquainted with the democratic process but inculcated a sense of responsibility and participation. It was also an effort to increase their decision-making power by including them in the polling process.

Prior to starting the



Students of SPSEC take part in polling activities.

national symbols. The teachers briefed them about the importance of each symbol. Thereafter, students were asked to cast their votes to the national symbol of their choice by putting a tick with the marker. After the polling, teachers counted the votes and declared the result. The process also aimed at introducing students about different national symbols by including them in polling activities. Students were also apprised of the process of declaration of election, selection of candidates by different political parties and casting vote in EVM box. Principal Bhawna Gupta and other dignitaries were also present.

BJP workers leaving no stone unturned to woo voters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

To ensure victory in the elections to be held on Allahabad and Phulpur parliamentary seats, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers are leaving no stone unturned to woo voters at the booth level. The "Basti Sampark aur Chalo Chalen Basti Ki Ore" campaign is being run to bring the Dalit, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe voters living in the slums in favour of BJP.

The BJP workers are contacting the voters living in Dalit colonies and slums. Regarding slum public relations campaign, workers of Slum Cell and Scheduled Morcha have been associated with this campaign. BJP district spokesperson Rajesh Kesarwani said that under this campaign, 40 each contingents

have been deployed division wise in the Allahabad and Phulpur Lok Sabha. A team of one slum coordinator and 20 workers has been formed.

Under this campaign, BJP workers are doing public relations with the citizens living in slums and settlements to inform them about the beneficial schemes of Modi and Yogi governments and are working to solve their problems by organising chaupal. They are appealing to the masses to ensure that the Narendra Modi government is formed for the third time and also bless the BJP candidates for victory. They are also being invited to attend the conference to be organised on May 14 in Phaphamau assembly of Phulpur Lok Sabha constituency and on May 11 in Koraon assembly of Allahabad Lok Sabha.

Format C-1
(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)
Declaration about Criminal Cases
 (As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)
 Name and Address of Candidate: **Arvind Kumar Srivastava**
 R/o 66/106-A Kachhiyana Mohal, Hoolaganj, Thana: Harbans Mohal, Kanpur Nagar.
 Name of political party: **Independent Party**
 (Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)
 Name of Election : **43, Lok Sabha, Kanpur Nagar.**
 Name of constituency : **Arya Nagar, Vidhan Sabha, Kanpur Nagar.**
 I **Arvind Kumar Srivastava** a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:
(A) Pending criminal cases

Sl. No.	Name of Court	Cases No. and Dated	Status of Case(s)	Sections of Acts Concerned and brief Description of offence(s)
01	ACMM-09 Prayagraj	Crime No. 21/2016 Case No. 1245 Yr-17, Date:15.02.2016	Summon not issued	323, 504, 498-A, 506 and 3/4 DP Act,
02	ACMM-09 Prayagraj	Familism No. 323 Yr. 2016 Date:21.03.2016	Stayed by the Honorable High Court Allahabad	18/12 - Domestic Violence Act

(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences

Sl. No.	Name of Court & Date(s) of Order (s)	Description of Office(s) & Punishment imposed	Maximum Punishment imposed
01	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

In the case of election to council of states or election of legislative council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.

Akshaya Tritiya celebrated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Akshaya Tritiya was celebrated in Sangam city here on Friday. A huge crowd was seen at jewellery shops. After taking a dip in the Sangam - the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati, the devotees offered prayers as per rituals. A huge crowd also witnessed in the temples since morning here. Thousands of devotees took a dip in the Sangam and worshipped Bade Hanumanji, Ram Janaki and Lord Shiva located at Bundwa Sangam.

TOURNAMENT: The Open Badminton Tournament was inaugurated at SHUATS Badminton Court by Dr CJ Wesley, Joint Registrar and Chairman, Athletics Committee of SHUATS here. He dedicated the tournament to late Dr Devaraj Badugu for his contribution to the sports and games activities in the university.

Workshop on telemedicine & digital health

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Gangwal School of Medical Sciences and Technology (GSMST) at the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT-K) hosted a one-day workshop on "Telemedicine & Digital Health" at the Mehta Family Centre for Engineering in Medicine (MFCEM), IIT-K. This event served as a gathering of leading minds from the academia and the medical fraternity coming together to explore the intricacies of telemedicine. Distinguished visiting professors at GSMST IIT Kanpur, Prof K Ganapathy, Director of Apollo Telemedicine Networking Foundation and Apollo Tele Health Services, Chennai, Prof Jaideep Srivastava from the University of Minnesota, USA, and Prof Saroj Kanta Mishra from Dr RML Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow, graced the occasion, enriching the discussions with their

expertise. Prof S Ganesh, the GSMST Taskforce Chair and a Professor in the department of Biological Sciences & Bioengineering (BSBE) at IIT-K, delivered an engaging welcome address, highlighting the advancements and implications of telemedicine and digital health in today's healthcare landscape. Prof K Muralidhar from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT-K and Prof Amitabha Bandyopadhyay from the Department of BSBE, IIT-K shared updates on various R&D projects undertaken by the 11 Centres of Excellence (CoEs) at GSMST, providing valuable insights to the audience. Participants actively engaged in thought-provoking discussions and learned from insightful talks delivered by experts. Prof Sandeep Verma, Professor-in-Charge at GSMST, presented the concluding remarks. He emphasised the role of Gangwal School in innovation within the telemedicine and digital

health sectors by providing and fostering a conducive environment for knowledge exchange and cross-pollination of ideas. The workshop provided a dynamic platform for insightful discussions, lectures and valuable networking opportunities in the field of telemedicine.

INAUGURATED: The two-day 10th annual edition of Seth Anandram Jaipuria Model United Nations organised by the Seth Anandram Jaipuria Model United Nations Club was inaugurated on Friday. Chief guest for the opening ceremony was Dr Deepak Vohra (former ambassador of India to Poland). Principal Shikha Banerjee, inspired the participating delegates with an enlightening speech. Vice Principal (Senior School) Ganesh Prasad Tiwari, Headmaster MK Mishra, General Manager Shailendra Agnihotri and SAJMUN Coordinator Kavita Ojha Tiwari, teachers from the Social Studies department and Political Science department were present.

Thieves decamp with valuables

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Thieves broke into a house in Vivek Nagar under Naini police station area of Yamuna Nagar here and decamped with goods and valuables worth lakhs of rupees. The theft took place occurred when the family members had gone to Ayodhya.

The thieves broke the locks of the rooms and the main gate. When the family returned on Friday, they lodged a report at the Naini police station in this connection. Kishore Kumar Vaishya of Vivek Nagar, told the police that he had gone to Ayodhya with his family on May 7 and the house was locked. The thieves broke the locks of the main gate, two rooms, cupboard, locker etc and stole gold and silver jewellery, ₹1 lakh in cash, a laptop and other valuables from the house. The Naini police has started the investigation.

Opposition welcomes SC order granting interim bail to Kejriwal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition leaders on Friday welcomed the interim bail given to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the Supreme Court, saying the "fight to save democracy" will now be with more intensity. Congress leader Pawan Khera hoped former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren also gets due justice. "We welcome the intervention by the Supreme Court in granting bail to Arvind Kejriwal... We also hope that the prime minister gets enough time after June 4, when he becomes the former prime minister of India, to introspect sitting in Sabarmati Ashram the kind of politics he has indulged in," he said.

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee also welcomed the Supreme Court order, saying "I am very happy to see that Shri Arvind Kejriwal has got interim bail. It will be very helpful in the context of the current elections." Sharad Pawar, who heads the NCP (SP), said the country remains steadfast in the pursuit of democracy. "I welcome the interim bail order granted to the chief minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal by the SC. India remains steadfast in the pursuit of democracy," Pawar wrote on X. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi called it a "big win" for Kejriwal. "And big win for Arvind Kejriwal as SC steps in to grant him interim bail. The bid to silence the



opposition by BJP is backfiring on them. We Won't be silenced, won't bend, won't give in come what may. Bharat is watching, India is winning! Jai Hind!" she wrote on X. Another Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aadiya Thackeray said justice and relief to Kejriwal against the "dictatorial regime" in the country was a huge sign of winds of change. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said they will now fight the battle to save democracy with more intensity. "In a post on X, he said, 'Thanks to the Supreme Court... Now we will fight the battle to save democracy with more intensity... Arvind Kejriwal is not a person but a thought... And now will take this thought forward with greater momentum.'"

The AAP leaders in Punjab also hailed the Supreme Court decision to grant interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, saying truth always triumphs. Punjab Cabinet Minister Chetan Singh Jauramajra thanked the apex court for granting interim bail to the AAP supremo. "Truth always triumphs," said Jauramajra. Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said he was grateful to the top court for upholding justice. "Today's interim bail order for Arvind Kejriwal by Hon'ble Supreme Court reaffirms the honesty and integrity of the AAP. Grateful to the judiciary for upholding justice. Arvind Ji's presence among us will give all of us energy and vigour to fight

and win," said Cheema in a post on X. Another minister Balbir Singh said with Kejriwal getting interim bail, a wave of happiness has spread among party workers. "Millions of prayers have been answered. I thank the Supreme Court," said Singh as he accused the BJP of trying to suppress the truth. "But the truth has won," the health minister said. Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court granted interim bail to Kejriwal till June 1 to campaign in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. The Delhi chief minister was arrested in a case relating to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and execution of the Delhi government's now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-22.

Jaishankar slams Canada for backing Khalistanis

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

By allowing political space to Khalistani separatist elements, the Canadian government is sending a message that its vote bank is "more powerful" than its rule of law, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said. In an exclusive interview to PTI late Thursday, Jaishankar said India respects and practices freedom of speech, but that does not equate with freedom to threaten foreign diplomats, extend support to separatism or allow political space to elements advocating violence. The external affairs minister also wondered how people with dubious backgrounds are being allowed to enter and live in Canada, referring to Khalistani supporters among the Sikh migrants from Punjab. "In any rules-based society, you would imagine that you would check people's background, how they came, what passport they carried etc," he said. "If you have people whose presence there is itself on very dubi-



ous documents, what does it say about you? It actually says that your vote bank is more powerful than your rule of law," the minister said. The Indian diaspora in Canada is about 1.8 million strong and there are another one million Non Resident Indians residing in the country. The Indian diaspora, mostly of Sikh ethnicity, is considered an influential bloc in Canada's politics. Ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of

the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar. New Delhi rejected Trudeau's charges as "absurd". India has been maintaining that the main issue has been that of Canada giving space to pro-Khalistani elements operating from Canadian soil with impunity. "It is not so much a question of running out of options. What we have seen to our regret has been the direction of Canadian politics where separatists and extremist forces, many of whom openly advocate violence, have been given political space in that

country," Jaishankar said. "And there are people in positions of prominence today in Canadian politics who actually espouse that kind of separatism and extremism," he said. His remarks came in response to a question on how India plans to deal with challenges emanating from Canada and whether the options for New Delhi are running out. "We cannot for the good relations overlook that," he said during the freewheeling interview at PTI's headquarters. Jaishankar said Canada's response to India's concerns has been that it has freedom of speech. "Whenever we have taken this up with the Canadians... It is not a new issue... It has been going on almost for 10 years and they keep saying, oh 'we have freedom of speech'." "We also have freedom of speech in our country. But freedom of speech does not mean freedom to threaten foreign diplomats, freedom of speech does not mean the kind of positions and the kind of activities which people in Canada are doing

which does harm to our country because of its support for separatism," Jaishankar said. "And freedom of speech does not mean this kind of space which is also given to people of various dubious backgrounds - people associated with organised crime and so on," the external affairs minister added. In the last few months, India has been expressing concerns over the security of its diplomats in Canada and calling on Ottawa to ensure that they are able to carry out their responsibilities without fear. There have been instances of pro-Khalistani elements threatening to harm Indian diplomats. Days after Trudeau's allegations in September last, India asked Ottawa to downsize its diplomatic presence in the country to ensure parity. Canada subsequently withdrew 41 diplomats and their family members from India. India has been asserting that its "core issue" with Canada remains that of the space given to separatists, terrorists and anti-India elements in that country.

Sanjay Bhalla assumes charge as CoP of Indian Navy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla on Friday here assumed charge as Chief of Personnel (CoP) of Indian Navy. He was commissioned in the Indian Navy in 1989. In a career spanning 35 years, he has held a number of specialist, staff and operational appointments, both afloat and ashore, navy said. After completing his Specialisation Course in Communication and Electronic Warfare, Bhalla served as a specialist onboard several frontline warships. He subsequently had the privilege of holding challenging, fulfilling and eventful Commands at sea, which include, INS Nishank, INS Taragiri, INS Beas and the coveted appointment of Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet (FOCEF). During his tenure as FOCEF, he was the Officer in Tactical Command for the prestigious



President's Fleet Review (PFR - 22) and the Sea Phase of Indian Navy's flagship multinational exercise MILAN - 22, that witnessed an unprecedented participation from friendly foreign countries. Ashore, he has held important staff appointments at the Naval Headquarters including Assistant Chief of Personnel (Human Resource Development); headed Officers training at Naval Academy, and has held a diplomatic assignment overseas. Prior to assuming charge as the COP, he was

the Chief of Staff of the Western Naval Command. An alumnus of Royal College of Defence Studies, London, Naval War College and Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, his educational accomplishments include M Phil (Defence & Strategic Studies), Masters in International Security and Strategic Studies from the Kings College, London, M.Sc (Defence & Strategic Studies), Madras University and M.Sc (Telecom) from CUSAT.

AAP celebrates Kejriwal's freedom

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP and INDIA bloc leaders rejoiced in celebrations in the national capital on Friday after the Supreme Court granted interim bail to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal till June 1, saying his release from judicial custody will pave the way for "big changes" in the country. Jubilant workers danced and raised slogans such as "Jail ke taale toot gaye, Kejriwal ji choot gaye" (Locks of jail broken, Kejriwal is freed) outside the AAP's office in Delhi. The party thanked the Supreme Court for granting interim bail to the AAP chief. The former IRS officer and Kejriwal's wife Sunita, who has stepped into the limelight since her husband's arrest on March 21, said Kejriwal's release on interim bail is 'victory of democracy' and attributed the relief as the result of prayers and blessings of millions of people. "Hanuman ji ki jai. This is the victory of democracy. It is the result of the prayers and blessings of millions of people. Many thanks to everyone," Sunita said in a post on X (formerly

Twitter). At a joint press conference, senior AAP leader and Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj described the interim bail as a blessing of Lord Hanuman to his devotee Kejriwal. He said, "Kejriwal's interim bail after 40 days is no less than a miracle. There is also a divine hint that prevailing conditions are going to change in the country. His release will pave the way for big changes in the country." Following the apex court's decision, AAP cancelled all its meetings and programmes in the city ahead of the Lok Sabha 2024 elections, which is slated to be held in Delhi on May 25. MLA Dilip Pandey and AAP candidate for East Delhi Kuldeep Kumar's interaction with a group of doctors in Patparganj, MLA Ritiraj Jha's Sankalp sabha in Sangam Vihar, AAP Delhi Convenor and Delhi Minister Gopal Rai's Sankalp Sabha in Matiala and Vikaspuri and Senior AAP leader and Delhi Minister Atishi, MCD Mayor Shelly Oberoi, MLA Rakhir Birla and Women wing President Sarika Chaudhary's event of forming a human chain were in the list of pro-

grammes that were called off following the relief by Supreme Court. Party's Delhi unit convener Gopal Rai said all people in the country who love democracy are overjoyed with the top court's verdict and it is a ray of hope for them. "The SC verdict has not only provided interim bail to Kejriwal, it has also ensured victory of democracy and the constitution," he said. Senior AAP leader and Delhi Minister Atishi described the top court's decision as a victory for truth and democracy in the country and said, "I want to appeal to people that this is the last chance to save democracy through the power of vote and replace dictatorship in the country." Claiming that dictatorship will end, Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said, "Truth can be troubled but not defeated ('Satya pareshan ho sakta hai, parajit nahin'). The decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court is welcome. Dictatorship will end. Satyamev Jayate." Talking to the media, AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak said, "We welcome the Supreme Court order. Satyamev Jayate! The dictatorship will end."

Congress, AAP's alliance partner in Delhi, also welcomed the decision of the apex court stating this will boost the faith of the people in democracy. Delhi Congress Chief Devender Yadav said, "The BJP and its leaders have caged the establishments of democracy. Because of this, the sitting CMs were sent to jail. I appreciate the Supreme Court's order of granting (interim) bail to Arvind Kejriwal. This will boost the faith of people in democracy." The decision of the Supreme Court, for letting Kejriwal campaign for the upcoming Lok Sabha 2024 elections, will strengthen the alliance, he said. "We are into an alliance and in an alliance, wherever someone is needed, we have to stand with them. All the seven (Lok Sabha seats) are our responsibility. We will try that the joint campaign, which has got strength now, will get stronger by this decision," Yadav claimed. Congress candidate Kanhaiya Kumar from Northeast Delhi constituency welcomed the SC decision and said that the INDIA bloc's war for justice continues.

ICMAI seeks inclusion of Cost Accountants as auditors within Cooperative Societies Act

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICMAI) has sought inclusion of Cost Accountants as auditors within specific sections of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002. The proposal aims at enhancing the effectiveness of cooperative societies in India.

In response to this proposal, Dr Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Secretary Cooperation, assured the ICMAI delegation of giving thorough consideration to their proposal. Additionally, he also expressed his willingness to explore collaborative initiatives between the Ministry and the Institute, indicating openness to cooperation and partnership in this endeavor. This assurance from Dr Bhutani came during an event where he unveiled the inaugural edition of the Quarterly Journal



of the Cooperative Development Board (CDB) of the ICMAI. The event, organized by ICMAI in collaboration with the National Council for Cooperative Training (NCCT), also saw the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two entities. Dr Bhutani commended the collaborative efforts of ICMAI and NCCT, recognizing them as proactive think tanks and valuable knowledge repositories. He, along with Mohan Kumar Mishra, Secretary of NCCT, signed the first copy of the journal, highlighting the commitment of both

organizations to the growth and development of the cooperative sector in India. During the event, ICMAI and NCCT officials briefed Dr. Bhutani on their strategic roadmap, which encompassed four key pillars aimed at supporting the government's efforts in advancing the cooperative sector. According to the ICMAI officials, it is advocating for Cost Accountants to be recognized as auditors under two specific sections of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002. These are Section 72(1) under which Cost Accountants could potentially be appointed as auditors for such societies, allowing them to conduct audits and assess the financial performance and compliance of these organizations while Section 77(1) may relate to the appointment of special auditors for specific purposes or circumstances, such as investigations or special reports.

Bail does not amount to acquittal: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In an apparent reaction to the Supreme Court's decision to grant interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, senior BJP leader Vinay Sahasrabudde on Friday said "the lordships" have made themselves a part of the campaign by picking a side right in the middle of the elections. "By picking a side right in the middle of elections, the lordships that have made themselves a part of the campaign. When the billion ballots speak, they may not like it," he wrote on X. This comes after the Supreme Court granted interim bail to Kejriwal till June 1 to campaign in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Reacting to the decision, BJP spokesperson Shah Nawaz Hussain said bail does not amount to acquittal and asserted that Kejriwal's release will have no impact on the elections. The BJP will win

all seven seats in Delhi, he told reporters in Patna. Meanwhile, Delhi BJP said the bail is not proof of being innocent and sometimes even criminals are released on parole. BJP candidate from South Delhi Parliamentary seat and Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said the Supreme Court has only granted Arvind Kejriwal interim bail for 20 days. "Such bail is also granted to dangerous criminals for specific purposes. In the eyes of the Supreme Court, Kejriwal is an accused, hence several conditions have been imposed on him," he said. Bidhuri stated that the Aam Aadmi Party is celebrating Kejriwal's bail as though the court has exonerated him. Today, they are shouting the slogan "Satyamev Jayate" (truth alone triumphs), and from June 2, they will start claiming that the constitution is in danger because Kejriwal

has to return to jail. Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva said that while the BJP respects the Supreme Court's decision, getting interim bail does not mean that Delhi's Chief Minister is free of guilt. "Sometimes even criminals are released on parole, and this is a legal process, so it does not prove that Arvind Kejriwal, who was the main culprit in the multi-million rupee liquor scam, is innocent today," Sachdeva said. Further, Sachdeva asserted that truth can't be defeated. He said, "The truth may have been delayed but it's not defeated because the truth is that only Arvind Kejriwal is responsible for the liquor scam in Delhi, pushing youth into addiction, and bringing in a new liquor policy to fill his pockets." Attacking the AAP for "portraying that the AAP chief has been acquitted of his charges

in the alleged excise policy linked money laundering scam", Sachdeva said, "The way Aam Aadmi Party leaders are trying to portray that Arvind Kejriwal has been acquitted, they are once again misleading the people of Delhi and betraying them," adding that the people of Delhi understand that whether it is a liquor scam or other scandals in Delhi, Kejriwal is the mastermind behind all of them. Taking a jibe at AAP for creating a stir for jailed Chief Minister, he said, "AAP has no local issues for the elections because as a state government, they have done nothing in the last 10 years. So they created a stir in the name of Arvind Kejriwal being jailed and are now trying to create a deceptive atmosphere of coming out of jail, which the people of Delhi will not buy. BJP candidates will win all seven seats in the upcoming elections."

NGO moves SC asking EC to upload LS voter turnout data on website

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

An NGO has moved the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the Election Commission (EC) to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data in "absolute figures" on its website within 48 hours of conclusion of polling for each phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has filed an interim application in its 2019 PIL seeking directions to the poll panel that "scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded)" of all polling stations be uploaded immediately after the polls.

"Direct the Election Commission to provide tabulated polling station-wise data in absolute figures of the number of votes polled as recorded in Form 17C Part-I after each phase of polling in the ongoing 2024 Lok Sabha elections and also a tabulation of constituency-wise figures of voter turnout in absolute numbers in the on-going 2024 Lok Sabha elections," the NGO said. It said the plea was filed to ensure that the democratic process is not subverted by electoral irregu-



larities. "The voter turn-out data for the first two phases of the ongoing 2024 Lok Sabha elections published by EC on April 30 has been published after 11 days of the first phase of polling held on April 19 and 4 days after second phase of polling held on April 26. "The data as published by the EC in its press release dated April 30, 2024 shows a sharp increase (by about 5-6%) as compared to the initial percentages announced by EC as of 7 pm on the day of polling," the plea said. The petition said the "inordinate" delay in the release of final voter turnout data, coupled with the unusually high revision of over 5 per cent in the poll panels' press note of April 30, 2024 has raised con-

cerns and public suspicion regarding the correctness of the said data. The non-release of absolute number of votes polled, coupled with the "unreasonable delay" in release of votes polled data, has led to apprehensions in the mind of the electorate about the sharp increase between initial data and data released on April 30, it said. "These apprehensions must be addressed and put to rest. That in order to uphold the voter's confidence it is necessary that the EC be directed to disclose on its website scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded) of all polling stations which contains the authenticated figures for votes polled, within 48 hours of the close of polling," it said.

Coast Guard inks MoU with Hindalco

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Hindalco Industries has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here for the manufacturing and supply of indigenous marine-grade aluminum to Indian public and private shipyards for the construction of ships. Giving details here on Friday, defence ministry officials said the MOU inked on Thursday will also provide benefits such as quarterly pricing, priority in supplies and turnover discount. The ICG fleet is presently operating 67 ships with aluminum hull with capability of operating in shallow waters. To further boost coastal security, it has planned to induct more such vessels where the indigenously manufactured marine-grade aluminium will be utilised. The MoU was signed by Deputy Director General (Material & Maintenance), ICG IG HK Sharma and CEO, Downstream Aluminium Business, Hindalco Nitesh Koul in the presence of senior officials of the ICG.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Testing times

Stakes could not be higher in Haryana's political chess, with the outcome remaining anybody's guess

The recent developments in Haryana's political circles have again brought to the fore the intricacies of coalition dynamics. The Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), a key player in the State's politics, has decided to align with the Congress in demanding a floor test for the BJP-led Government in the Haryana Assembly. This comes on the heels of the withdrawal of support by three Independent MLAs to the ruling coalition, turning it into minority with 44 legislators in the House of 90. The Congress, buoyed by the latest developments and perhaps sensing an opportunity to tip the scales in its favour, has seized upon this moment to mount pressure on the BJP Government. However, in the backdrop of this high-stakes political manoeuvring, the JJP finds itself grappling with internal discord. Reports have emerged suggesting that three of its MLAs held clandestine meetings with former Chief Minister ML Khattar, raising eyebrows and fuelling speculation about potential defections. The apparent



dissonance within the JJP underscores the complex interplay of interests and ambitions that often characterises coalition politics. For a party like the JJP, which emerged as a key player following the fractured mandate in the last State elections, maintaining cohesion within its ranks while balancing competing demands from its coalition partners is no easy feat. To jog the memory, it was in Haryana that 'Aaya Ram Gaya Ram' culture started, which continues unabated. The outcome of this internal tug-of-war will not only shape the immediate political landscape in Haryana but also have far-reaching implications for the State's future.

As alliances shift and allegiances waver, the only constant is the relentless pursuit of power and the drive to stay one step ahead of the competition. With the House strength being 90 members, a political party needs the support of 46 MLAs to cross the halfway mark and form a Government. After the withdrawal of support by three Independents, the BJP is short of two MLAs to continue in the Government. The BJP now has 40 MLAs, besides the support of a lone Haryana Lokhit Party legislator and at least three Independents (earlier, it had six Independents in support), which brings to a total of 44 in the House. For the BJP, it is a double whammy, all this is happening days ahead of the Lok Sabha polls to the 10 Haryana seats on May 25. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP won seven of these seats in Haryana with a 35 per cent vote share. In 2019, the BJP won all 10 seats with a 58 per cent vote share. In the current situation, however, it might be a Herculean task. JJP's Dushyant Chautala has mounted pressure on the Nayab Singh Saini Government for a floor test, which he is likely to get the Chair's nod for. If the JJP breaks, it would give the BJP the much-needed elbow room but what is certain for now is that it is time for horse trading in Haryana.

PICTALK



A herd of elephants grazes near a village at Boko, in Kamrup district of Assam

Battle to save India's biodiversity

India's rich biodiversity is under severe threat due to climate change, as recent studies warn of potential economic losses and irreversible ecological damage



KAVIN KUMAR KANDASAMY

India, a land of diverse climates and rich ecosystems, is a global treasure trove of biodiversity. From the majestic Himalayan ranges to the vibrant coastal reefs, our country's biodiversity sustains countless life forms and plays a crucial role in regulating ecosystems. It's not just a vital resource for human sustenance, providing food, water, shelter and medicine, but also a critical indicator of our planet's health, a testament to our rich heritage and a responsibility we all share.

However, the delicate balance of India's biodiversity is now facing unprecedented threats from climate change. Recent studies warn that India may lose a staggering 35 per cent of its GDP by the year 2100 due to climate change, highlighting the deep interconnection between the nation's prosperity and its natural heritage. Rampant deforestation and habitat degradation, particularly in regions like the Western Ghats, are pushing carbon sinks towards becoming sources, exacerbating the climate crisis. The time for action is now.

Impact of Climate Change: A Looming Crisis

The repercussions of climate change are becoming quite evident in altering ecological balance, extreme weather events and increasing health risks. In an era marked by escalating environmental challenges, the climate crisis demands urgent and concerted action. According to a [i]United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, climate change is imperilling human well-being and planetary health, focusing strongly on interactions between climate, biodiversity and human society. The report suggests that the rise in extreme weather conditions has led to some irreversible impacts as natural and human systems are pushed beyond their ability to adapt. Not only this, a report by the Reserve Bank of India highlights how climate change poses challenges for monetary policy, with frequent weather shocks threatening economic growth and stability. Moreover, a recent



study predicts that climate change could cut global income by up to 19 per cent in the next 25 years, with the most vulnerable countries suffering the most severe impacts.

To overcome these challenges, India has embarked on a journey to mitigate climate change and safeguard its biodiversity. With the G20 presidency last year, India has positioned itself as the voice of the Global South to lead the way in climate action and leveraged this positioning to drive impactful outcomes in various realms related to climate action. Tackling deforestation, reducing emissions and restoring ecosystems are key strategies. With over 26 per cent of the country grappling with expanding drought conditions, urgent measures are being taken to build resilience against environmental degradation.

Pioneering Climate Action Tamil Nadu, a coastal State in the heart of southern India, is emerging as a beacon of hope and leading the charge in climate change efforts. The State has become a forerunner in climate action by announcing three major missions, name-



INDIA'S BIODIVERSITY, A VITAL RESOURCE AND INDICATOR OF PLANETARY HEALTH, FACES UNPRECEDENTED THREATS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE, NECESSITATING URGENT ACTION TO MITIGATE IMPACTS AND SAFEGUARD ITS RICH NATURAL HERITAGE

ly Climate Change; Biodiversity Conservation and Greening; and Wetlands. Through initiatives like the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity and Greening Project (TBGP), the State aims to achieve a 33 per cent forest and tree cover by 2031. With approximately \$90 million in investments, Tamil Nadu's Climate Change Mission, Green Tamil Nadu Mission and Tamil Nadu Wetlands Mission demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development and ecosystem restoration.

Driving Solutions: Addressing the climate crisis necessitates collaborative efforts from all stakeholders. Supported by startups and Government interventions, public-private partnerships are essential to drive innovation and scale climate solutions. Startups are pivotal in developing innovative technologies that reduce carbon footprints while contributing to economic growth. International collaboration, exemplified by agreements like the Paris Agreement, provides a framework for collective action on a global scale. India's leadership in renewable energy, particularly through

initiatives like the International Solar Alliance (ISA), underscores its commitment to driving sustainable development and fostering a harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. As India addresses the intertwined challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, the steps taken today will shape the legacy for future generations.

This demands reflection, unity and action to come up with sustainable solutions. In this crucial sustainability battle, India's role extends beyond its borders, contributing significantly to global biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation efforts. The recent Supreme Court ruling recognising the right against climate change as a fundamental right under Article 14 and Article 21 underscores India's steadfast commitment to climate action and environmental protection. This offers prospects for the Government, corporations and climate action companies to come together and work towards a sustainable future.

(The writer is the CEO of ProClimate; their views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EVOLUTION OF MONETARY POLICY

Madam — This refers to the article, 'Evolution of monetary policy', which was published on 8 May 2024. Even before India got freed from the Congress formed a committee to suggest the type of economic policy free India should adopt. The committee analysed and said the key infrastructure sector should be under the Public sector to help the investors with raw materials, power, transport and communication at a very economical cost. This helps domestic ventures to produce more. None of the rich in India had so much reserve to invest in big projects and returns from such projects take some years.

When Rajiv came to power he availed a small loan from the World Bank to develop mainly the telecom sector accepting the condition to open our door slightly for foreign goods to be marketed here. Though the country went bankrupt between 1980-1990, it is to be noted that the assets of the top richest families swelled from Rs 8000 CR to Rs 40,000 CR during the same period. So irrespective of parties the interests of the rich are well cared for and produced more than 200 billionaires in a short span under the present regime. This course continues and will go on to enrich the rich, the cost of the due share of the unprivileged section.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENTS

Madam — Apropos the editorial "The Name Game" published on 9th May, this is my response. There are guidelines issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs called "Endorsements know-hows" for celebrities, influencers and virtual influencers on social media platforms. The guidelines specify that celebrities must not endorse any product or service they have not personally used or experienced. Further, they are advised to be 'diligent' before endorsing any product or service i.e. extremely careful by analysing the pros and cons of it to save the health and money of lakhs of their followers. Some of them blindly accept and adopt what they say. An

War of words over industrialists



Apropos, "Modi questions Rahul's silence on Ambani, Adani," The Pioneer, May 9, this is my response. The phenomenal industrialists Ambani and Adani have become fodder for the political slugfest between the ruling and opposition parties in our country. They have been pilloried by Rahul Gandhi, Modi helped them grow. In contrast, this time Modi turned the tables

against Rahul, alleging a deal between the business tycoons and Congress has silenced Rahul. It's a sad commentary in a country that aspires to emerge as a developed nation and laying the red carpet for the industrialists seeking investments to facilitate employment generation and, thus, economic growth - has engaged in attacking entrepreneurs.

India needs to encourage more and more entrepreneurship and innovation bringing more firms into the sphere as a country where millions of people join the labour force every month which can't be absorbed by a few conglomerates. However, the Congress party was exposed with its hand in glove with businesses in the allocation of 2G spectrum and coal. At the same time, the Modi Government brought in reforms to enhance transparency in the allocation of natural resources and the overhauling of the country's bankruptcy laws.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

example of carelessly endorsing a harmful product is 'pan masala' that too on a sports channel during the live telecast of a cricket match watched by millions of youngsters, highly prone to its habit-forming usage. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has reiterated the above guidelines. The Government needs to punish the celebrities indulging in misleading promotions under the Consumer Protection Act by a jail term, not mere fines to instil responsibility in them as advocated by the Court.

O Prasada Rao | Hyderabad

FOOTBALL IS NUMBER ONE

Madam — Though top football-playing nations are restricted to Europe, Latin America and African countries, the beautiful game's popularity is unmatched in non-football-playing nations as well. The game is a universal language, to say so and has nicely flowered over the decades through champion players of diverse socio-economic milieus gathering together for a common cause: regale the fans with skill and perseverance. No surprise, the lovely game is viewed as a promoter of uni-

versal peace despite the onfield acrimony. The exhilaration of great players will captivate fans forever.

No game evokes such intense emotions that emanate after every goal is scored. Parallely, administrators and countries worldwide have displayed mostly unambiguous references towards the game. Now, in a huge honour to football, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has adopted a resolution proclaiming May 25 as "World Football Day". May 25 marks the 100th anniversary of the first ever Football tournament. As aptly described by a diplomat at the UNGA, football is the "number one game played and followed across the globe". Additionally, as the resolution stated, football creates a space for international cooperation. World Football Day is intended to encourage global peace, overall development and women and empowerment of women and girls.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Use of lighting in Indian architecture

Lighting greatly enhances India's architectural heritage, turning historic landmarks into captivating spectacles



ABHIJIT VAISH

India's architectural heritage reflects a blend of history, culture and tradition. In bustling urban environments, our heritage monuments stand as timeless witnesses to our rich past. However, these architectural marvels often fade into the background amidst the vibrant city scenes. Yet, through the strategic application of lighting, these structures are brought to life, captivating the imagination and enhancing their charm after dusk.

Enhancing Historical Significance Through Lighting

Carefully designed external lighting has the power to breathe new life into heritage landmarks, illuminating their intricate details and historical significance. Technology, renowned for its energy efficiency and controllability, offers a unique opportunity to showcase these monuments in a manner that respects their heritage while captivating modern audiences. By leveraging lighting solutions, cities across India are revitalizing their architectural treasures, ensuring they remain bea-



cons of cultural heritage for generations to come.

Transforming Indian Architectural Landscape with Lighting

From the majestic Sun Temple in Konark to the iconic Roomi Gate in Lucknow, lighting has transformed India's architectural scene, infusing these structures with renewed splendour and magnificence.

Sun Temple, Modhera: Nestled in the heart of Gujarat, the Sun Temple stands as a testament to ancient craftsmanship and architectural ingenuity. Through the application of dynamic lighting, the temple's intricate carvings and majestic outlines are brought to life after sunset. Visitors are mesmerized as the tem-

ple emerges as a radiant spectacle, inviting them to embark on a journey through time and history. **Roomi Gate, Lucknow:** As a symbol of Lucknow's rich Mughal heritage, Roomi Gate exudes grandeur and historical significance. Dynamic lighting accentuates the gate's intricate motifs and architectural features, casting a mesmerizing glow that captivates spectators. Illuminated against the night sky, Roomi Gate symbolizes the city's cultural legacy, inviting locals and tourists alike to marvel at its beauty. **Gujarat Bhawan:** Nestled in the heart of New Delhi, Gujarat Bhawan serves as a cultural hub representing the vibrant heritage of Gujarat. Through the integration of dynamic lighting, the Bhawan transforms, becoming a luminous tribute that honours the State's rich traditions. The interplay of light accentuates its distinctive features, creating a captivating visual narrative for visitors and passersby.

Signature Bridge: The Delhi Government's decision to illuminate the entire structure of the Signature Bridge

underscores the city's commitment to enhancing its architectural landmarks. Towering above the city's skyline, the bridge now glows at night, offering a spectacular view to visitors and residents alike. Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram International Airport, Ayodhya: This architectural marvel, features dynamic lighting that complements its unique design inspired by the Nagara style of temple architecture. Blending modern facilities with rich cultural heritage, the airport offers a captivating experience for travellers and visitors. Lighting greatly enhances India's architectural heritage, turning historic landmarks into captivating spectacles. Embracing this technology allows cities to showcase their cultural legacy and create vibrant public spaces, enriching the lives of residents and visitors. As India progresses, lighting signifies innovation, guiding towards a brighter future for its architectural landscape.

(The author is the executive director at Instapower Ltd, views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

TRAITS OF A SUCCESSFUL PERSON

He dares to defy convention and breathe life into audacious ideas



RAVI VALLURI

There is a part of us that will not let us be content until we become all that we are capable of being. Life is not about resting on our past achievements and laurels and residing in our comfort zone. It is an adventure from being ordinary to extraordinary. One's current situation may be good, but if a greater opportunity presents itself, one must be open to expanding. This does not mean you are to run away or violate your integrity.

Muscles stay strong and flexible only by use and stretching and so does our mind. The challenge is the way of the universe and showing us the path that the bigger we assume that form and shape. We should bless our dreams and our desires to identify the opportunity that is lurking as there would be several chances arising around the corner. We need the courage and humility to ask the Universe to provide such opportunities, leave behind all our limitations and step forward to live life as magnificent and gigantic as ordained by the Universe. Successful people stretch their hands and take up responsibility which empowers them to enter uncharted territories. This increases the level of their prana/chi, attention span and nature of work, adding a new dimension to the personality. Successful people are never straight-jacketed in their approach and revel in taking risks. Only risk-takers become game-changers.

Rahul Bajaj's sons Rajiv and Sanjiv embarked upon a fascinating idea to salvage the scrap of the decommissioned INS Vikrant to manufacture scooters. It was an innovative idea, utilizing scrap in a novel manner. While the bottom line of the exercise may be to generate profit, the unattainable thought is audacious. Therefore, successful entrepreneurs never kill an idea. An ingenious idea can be a platform for a radical discovery.



An awesome idea is breathtaking and amazing, stunning and awe-inspiring. When the idea germinates, something stupendous takes place. Think big and do not listen to people who tell you it can't be done. "Life is too short to think small", writes Tim Ferriss. The Universe listens to our deepest thoughts. If the thought is positive, we are blessed with positive results.

The cardinal principle in life is to ensure that we receive and circulate only positive thoughts. We should ensure that we are surrounded by efficacious people. Keep shouldering responsibility and ensure that we possess a YES MIND. Successful enterprises ensure that their workforce performs in harmony and synergy while working in teams. The Universe believes in the Laws of Attraction, the Laws of Abundance, the Laws of Gratefulness and the Laws of Spiralling Effect. All this gets transformed into what Darren Hardy calls the Compound Effect. Next, we ought to always feel blessed and have faith that a superior power is guiding us in our endeavours. There is a superior intelligence that is always creating wonderful opportunities for us and these should be grabbed and seized with humility.

A triumphant individual hinges his belief on the thought that the Divine will take care of everything and by simply reposing faith in that Superior Power. Successful People work on these principles where the football swerves like a parabola and enters the net and we are benumbed, giving a standing ovation. That is the miracle performed. Choose to call it the power of the Almighty or the architecture of the Universe. But this works on the premise of the power of positive thinking and becoming successful.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Precision agriculture: Key to food security



PARAG ACHARYA

The future of Indian agriculture hinges on a blend of tradition and innovation. Precision agriculture offers a crucial pathway to sustainably feed 1.7 billion people

India's population is projected to reach approximately 1.7 billion by 2050. It would be a significant challenge for Indian agriculture to meet the food demands of such a vast population amidst the emerging challenges of climate change. Additionally, the sector faces issues such as an ageing farmer population. Younger generations are increasingly veering away from taking over the family agricultural farm, choosing other, more lucrative and less labour-intensive career paths over agriculture. To address these challenges, the adoption of modern farming techniques like precision farming and digital smart agriculture becomes imperative to ensure sustainable food production and the future prosperity of Indian agriculture.

A recent parliamentary panel has emphasized the importance of promoting agricultural mechanization, particularly for small and marginal farmers and has advocated for the integration of tiny robots and Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Indian farm operations to address the challenges posed by fragmented land holdings. Furthermore, the panel recommended the establishment of a 'National Institute of Agricultural Robotics and Artificial Intelligence' to ensure that India remains at the forefront of agricultural development both domestically and internationally. On August 23, 2022, regarding Farm Mechanization, the Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education revealed that India's mechanisation level stands at 47 per cent, trailing China (59.5 per cent), Brazil (75 per cent) and the US (95 per cent). The level of mechanisation varies greatly by region inside India too. Northern States boast higher rates (70-80 per cent), driven by fertile land, labour decline and State backing. Southern and eastern States lag (35-45 per cent) due to fragmented land holdings. North-eastern States struggle due to terrain, equipment costs and socio-economic factors.

Certainly, agriculture has evolved steadily from a traditional, labour-intensive model to a sophisticated, technology-driven system. Key milestones include the establishment of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK). The development of high-yielding, cost-effective, disease/pest-resistant and climate-resilient varieties and technologies across crops, horticulture, animal husbandry and fisheries sciences by ICAR has significantly bolstered production and productivity. However, while acknowledging these strides, it's imperative to recognize that the pace of progress must match the urgency of our times.

Throughout history, people have always sought easier, faster and more efficient ways to get things done. This pursuit has sparked a technological revolution that merges age-old farming practices with cutting-edge innovations like the Internet of Things (IoT) known as Ag-IoT. It is a huge change in farming that could shake up how we grow, manage and protect our food. Its solutions are not merely about efficiency; they are about empowering farmers to achieve greater time efficiency, productivity and precision in their daily tasks. It's like having a super smart assistant that can take care of land, animals, crops and farms without needing humans to do everything. People also call it precision agriculture, smart agriculture, or digital agriculture.



THE INTERNET OF THINGS IS A HUGE CHANGE IN FARMING THAT COULD SHAKE UP HOW WE GROW, MANAGE AND PROTECT OUR FOOD. ITS SOLUTIONS ARE NOT MERELY ABOUT EFFICIENCY; THEY ARE ABOUT EMPOWERING FARMERS TO ACHIEVE GREATER TIME EFFICIENCY, PRODUCTIVITY AND PRECISION IN THEIR DAILY TASKS

It is like a big step forward in farming because it uses data to make decisions, making everything more efficient and productive. Through Ag-IoT, the very pulse of plant and animal needs can be sensed. The farmers can keep an eye on the soil all the time, control watering systems from afar and even check on the health of their animals without being right there. It's super handy because it can predict how much crops will grow accurately. In every aspect, Ag-IoT stands poised to revolutionize the landscape of crop management, insect and pest surveillance, food warehousing, livestock care, disease monitoring, dairy operations, supply chain logistics and beyond.

The evolution of drone technology has opened up boundless possibilities in the realm of crop assessment and monitoring. One such pioneering initiative, the NaMo Drone Didi Initiative, stands as a beacon of empowerment for rural women. In a momentous gesture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally handed over 1000 drones to 1000 Nammo Drone Didis across 10 locations nationwide at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in Pusa, New Delhi. These drones will help them do things like check on crops, spray fertilizers and plant seeds. Prime Minister Modi's announcement of the 'Drone Didi' yojana 2023-24 further underscores the Government's dedication to leveraging technology for the betterment of society. Significant financial allocations during 2020-21 and 2021-22, by the Indian Government including INR 1756.3 crores and INR 2422.7 crores respectively to States for the integration of cutting-edge technologies

like drones, artificial intelligence, blockchain, remote sensing and GIS into agriculture and INR 7302.50 crores and INR 7908.18 crores were made in the same periods to ICAR for R&D, further demonstrate the Government's dedication to modernizing agriculture.

Technological strides like RFID tags (radio frequency identification) and systems like NLIS (National Livestock Identification Scheme) and INAPH (Information Network for Animal Productivity & Health) have propelled Precision Dairy Farming.

With swift electronic scanning and data integration, farmers can efficiently manage cow health, productivity and records, marking a significant shift in the dairy industry towards precision and efficiency. Meanwhile, in the aquaculture industry, companies like Aquaconnect and Shrimbbox are leveraging technology to revolutionize shrimp farming. Aquaconnect employs artificial intelligence and satellite sensing technologies to monitor farm performance and provide advice to shrimp and fish farmers, predominantly small to medium-scale operations. Shrimbbox, on the other hand, specializes in shrimp farming in colder climates and landlocked areas, boasting impressive productivity with minimal water usage and without antibiotics. Cropin Technology, based in Bengaluru, has developed Aksara, an open-source microlanguage model tailored for climate-smart farming.

In India, the World Economic Forum's AI for Agriculture Innovation (AI4AI) initiative, led by C4IR India, is revolutionizing farm-

ing through AI. The 'Saagu Baagu' pilot in Telangana's Khammam district, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Digital Green, exemplifies this success. With over 7,000 farmers benefiting, chilli yields surged by 21 per cent, pesticide use decreased by 9 per cent, fertilizer usage dropped by 5 per cent and unit prices improved by 8 per cent. Consequently, farmers doubled their earnings, with incomes rising by over INR 66,000 per acre per crop cycle. Overall, AI interventions at 175 farms in India have boosted crop yields by 30 per cent, as per the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

In conclusion, the future of Indian agriculture hinges on a blend of tradition and innovation. With a burgeoning population and dwindling resources, precision agriculture offers a crucial pathway to sustainably feed 1.7 billion people. If established, the 'National Institute of Agricultural Robotics and Artificial Intelligence' would catapult Indian agriculture into unprecedented realms of excellence. The benefits of farm mechanization must permeate every corner of our nation, bridging divides and fostering inclusivity. We cannot afford to overlook those who are marginalized by the digital divide, particularly our small-scale farmers. As we look towards the future, let us remain committed to nurturing a vibrant, tech-enabled agrarian ecosystem that empowers farmers, preserves natural resources and ensures food security for generations to come.

(The writer is a scientist, at Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar; their views are personal)

Revisiting Rohith Vemula's death after eight years

As the dust settles, revelations by the Telangana Police shed new light on Vemula's untimely death

Rohith Vemula (26), a PhD scholar at the University of Hyderabad was found dead in his hostel room on 17 January 2016. Had he lived for another fortnight, he would have celebrated his 27th birthday on January 30. But he was called back by the Maker as it is said that He prefers the favourite ones to join Him ahead of others.

The untimely demise of Vemula opened a Pandora's Box all over India. Opposition parties led by the Congress staged a nationwide protest and agitation blaming the Narendra Modi Government at the Centre for the death of this young man. The CPI(M)'s frontal organization SFI called for education bundh the next day and



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

demanding the resignation of Smriti Irani, the then union minister for human resources development and Bandaru Dattatreya, a minister of State from the council of ministers blaming the duo for the death of Rohith Vemula. Poets affiliated with the CPI(M) and other Left organizations wrote poems and short stories based on the life and times of Vemula. The fact that Vemula belonged to the Harijan community

added to their ire and this was discernible from the power of the words with which they blamed the "communal and fascist" Government at the Centre. Many articles and features that appeared in regional newspapers and satellite TV channels blamed the doorsteps of Smriti Irani for Rohith Vemula's suicide. A major political outfit promoted by the all-powerful minority community had declared a solatium of Rs 25 lakh to the family of Vemula within days of his unfortunate death. Though it is more than eight years since he bade farewell to this world, his mother or brother has not been given the promised amount. When Radhika, the mother of Rohith

Vemula contacted the leadership of the said party, they feigned ignorance about the amount and the matter was given a silent burial. More than eight years after the suicide of Vemula, the Telangana Police which was entrusted with the probe of finding out matters that led Vemula to resort to the extreme measure concluded that Rohith Vemula was neither a member of the Harijan community nor any Other Backward Community (OBC) student as he had claimed. The fear that the university was likely to detect the truth behind his caste status which would put an end to his political aspirations had made him take the drastic step, said the police report. The unanswered question in



the whole episode is why the investigating officers failed to track the phone calls made by Vemula during the last few days of his life. This would have thrown more light on the reasons behind the suicide of the research scholar. Many of his colleagues attribute a failed love affair as the cause behind his suicide.

Months before he committed suicide, Vemula had led a demonstration under the auspices of the Ambedkar Students Association on the University Campus to protest the death penalty awarded to Yakub Memon, one of the Mumbai serial blasts of 1993 which claimed 260 lives. There were reports that the soft-spoken Vemula and his friends had bashed up a member of the rival union and the victim needed hospitalisation. Moreover, there were charges against the University of Hyderabad for non-payment of a monthly scholarship of Rs 25,000 to Vemula though the university authorities denied the allegation. Rohith Vemula was neither the first Harijan student in the

University of Hyderabad or any other universities in India who have committed suicide. Rajini Anand, an engineering college student in Kerala had jumped to death in 2004 following the callous approach of the ruling Congress-led Government in the State towards her plea for financial assistance to pay college fees. Sometime last year, a CPI(M) member of Rajya Sabha asked the Government of India to furnish the number of Harijan students who had committed suicide in the country since 2014. The MP's innuendo was that no Harijan students had committed suicide in the country before the swearing-in of Modi as Prime Minister. The kind of fire from the

opposition faced by Smriti Irani was unprecedented and strange. The Rohith Vemula affair cost her the office of the HRD ministry and she was relegated to minister of textiles. Opposition party leaders have all the right to criticize the Government and ministers for errors and omissions. But it should be restricted to the carelessness and irresponsibility of the concerned minister. For eight years, this young lady was crucified by her political rivals. Had they taken a little bit of time and gone through the releases issued by the Government of India, they would not have dared to throw mud at Smriti.

(The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

Sandeshkhali: NCW chief complains to EC against TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Mud and muck continued to fly thick and fast from all sides over the Sandeshkhali incident that hit the national headlines a few months ago showing how henchmen of Trinamool Congress leaders grabbed lands of the poor and sexually exploited their women in these riverine islands of the Sunderbans. This, even as a day after "fake FIR" reports emerged where some women of Sandeshkhali alleged that they were tricked by some BJP workers into signing blank papers which were later filled up with complaints of rape before being converted into FIRs. National Commission for Women (NCW) chief Rekha Sharma on Friday wrote to the Election

Commission of India (ECI), alleging how some women who were victims of sexual assault by men of arrested Trinamool Congress leader Sk Shahjahan were being forced to withdraw their complaints. Incidentally Sandeshkhali in Basirhat parliamentary constituency has a big electoral stake for both the BJP, Trinamool Congress. Expressing concern at the new development Sharma wrote, "the party workers are instilling fear among the women of Sandeshkhali to suppress the victims from coming forward with their complaints, potentially impacting the fairness of election process in the area," requesting the ECI to "ensure that women are not compelled to withdraw their complaints due to the threat from TMC



workers." Sharma's letter is very much in line with a common refrain raised by the Bengal BJP leaders who suggested that the TMC's sting teams were out with money and muscle to generate a counter-narrative on Sandeshkhali so as to offset the appeal of BJP which was trying to deal an electoral body blow to Mamata Banerjee on the woman-sensitive issue. Women and minorities have been the elect oral mainstay of the Chief Minister in the past a few years. Sharma's letter to the ECI is seen as a preemptive measure to offset a possible Trinamool Congress' move via which the Bengal outfit is planning to lodge a formal complaint with the ECI against the NCW chairperson for "misusing her

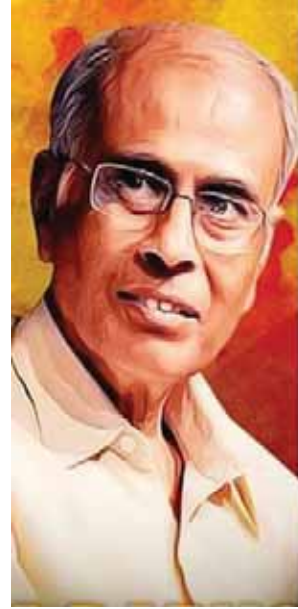
position" and "being one of the main instigators of the Sandeshkhali issue." Sharma had in the earlier months written to President Droupadi Murmu requesting her to imposing President's Rule in Bengal on grounds of atrocities on women. Before Sharma's letter Bengal Minister Shashi Panja had said that her party would move the ECI against the NCW chief for taking political stand on Sandeshkhali. She said how the NCW was politically biased and how some people "encouraged women of the area to make false allegations of sexual atrocities." "TMC will go to the Election Commission against Rekha Sharma, who is the chairperson of National Commission for Women," Panja said.

Earlier on Thursday some women complained that the police complaint that they were made to sign on blank sheets were not on rape but on non-payment of hundred days' work schemes. This, after purported videos emerged where some women alleged that local BJP leaders had tricked them into signing blank papers which were later with allegations of rape before being submitted to the police. "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.

Two get life imprisonment in activist Dabholkar murder case

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A Pune-based Special UAPA Court on Friday handed out life imprisonment to two accused and acquitted three others in the sensational daylight murder of rationalist Narendra Dabholkar in August 2013. Pronouncing verdict in the 11-year-old murder case which had created sensation across the country, Special UAPA Judge P. P. Jadhav convicted two accused sharpshooters -- Sharad B. Kalaskar and Sachin P. Andhure -- after holding them guilty of involvement in the crime, and awarded life imprisonment to them and imposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh each. The Judge noted that in the event of failure to pay the fine imposed on them, they would undergo an additional one year imprisonment. The court acquitted three other accused in the case -- Sanjeev Punhalekar, Dr. Virendra Tawade and Vikram Bhawe -- for lack of evidence. Welcoming the verdict in the case, children of Dr Dabholkar -- Hamid and Mukta -- said that they were relieved that the killers had finally been punished. "But, we will challenge the acquittal of the other three



accused in the Bombay High Court," they said. Hamid and Mukta wondered why the investigators had still not arrested the masterminds behind the killings "There are other lapses in the investigations into the case," they said. It may be recalled that following the failure of the state police having failed to make any headway in the investigations into the Dabholkar murder case, the Bombay High



Court had transferred the case to the CBI on May 9, 2014, after overruling the objections raised by the Maharashtra government. The CBI had registered a case on June 2, 2014, on the high court's orders. On September 7 2016, the CBI filed a charge-sheet in the Dabholkar murder case before a First Class Judicial Magistrate in Pune. The CBI officials arrested key accused Sachin Andhure from

Sudhna Ghondhalekar (39) -- and claimed to have foiled the attempts to engineer terror attacks in Mumbai, Pune, Satara, Solapur and Nala Sopara. During the raids, the investigators had seized a huge chunk of arms and ammunition and also unearthed a mini pistol assembling unit in the Nala Sopara residence of key accused Vaibhav Raut. The interrogation of the accused in the terror conspiracy case by the ATS revealed that Andhure and the accused in the terror conspiracy case Sharad Kalaskar were friends. It was Kalaskar who allegedly spilled the beans of Andhure's role in the Narendra Dabholkar's murder. All the five accused -- linked to Sanatan Sanstha organisation -- were arrested by the CBI from 2016 to 2019. The CBI, in close coordination with the Maharashtra ATS, had investigated the links among various right-wing organisations suspected to be involved in the killing of Dabholkar and others like Govind Pansare, M M Kalburgi and Gauri Lankesh, unravel their contacts elsewhere in the country, their other targets and modus operandi.

Raj Bhavan staffer to knock President door against Governor indecency

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

The contractual woman employee of Kolkata Raj Bhavan who had earlier lodged a police complaint -- containing allegations of sexual misdemeanor -- against Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose has raised objections to her CCTV footage being screened before the common public at the former's instance and said that she would take this up with President Droupadi Murmu. Saying that she could do nothing to the Governor who enjoyed constitutional immunity under Clause 2 of Article 361 the woman told media men that she could at least write to the President seeking her intervention into the matter. More so because the Police had no authority in the case. "I know that because of Constitutional immunity, nothing will happen to a sitting Governor. But what about the offence he committed? I have decided to write to the President seeking her intervention in the matter. I am



writing to her to get justice and nothing else," she said. She was likely to make a formal complaint to the police against the Governor for revealing her identity to the public against a standing order of the Apex Court. Earlier the Governor had invited 100 "common men" except Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the members of police force to show the CCTV footage in an apparent bid to make his position clear on the allegations of sexual misdemeanor leveled against him. The woman had earlier alleged in a television channel that she was asked for certain favours in lieu of good and permanent posting either as a University professor or some similar post.

BJP leader on the mat in...

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Police had recommended dropping the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act case against Brij Bhushan, but charged him with sexual harassment and stalking in a separate case lodged on the basis of a complaint by six women wrestlers. Police had recommended cancellation of the complaint involving the minor wrestler, saying "no corroborative evidence" was found. The POCSO Act provides for a minimum imprisonment of three years, depending on the sections under which a crime has been registered. The closure report notwithstanding, the court has to take a call on whether to accept it or order further investigation.

Fresh ED chargesheet against Kavitha

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday filed a fresh charge sheet in the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case naming BRS leader K Kavitha as an accused. The ED had arrested 46-year-old Kavitha, the daughter of former Telangana chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao, from her Banjara hills residence in Hyderabad on March 15. According to sources, the prosecution complaint was filed under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Kaveri Baweja, the special judge for CBI, ED cases, is likely to take up the charge sheet for cognisance on May 13. A similar complaint against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is expected to be filed next week. This is the seventh charge sheet by the ED in this case in which it has arrested 18 people so far including Kejriwal, who was given interim bail by the Supreme Court on Friday. The ED has alleged that Kavitha was a key member of the "South Group" that has been accused of paying the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) alleged kickbacks of Rs 100



crore in return for a big share of liquor licences in the national capital, as part of the excise policy for 2021-22 which has been scrapped following allegations of corruption and cartelisation of liquor traders. The agency earlier said Kavitha was "one of the kingpins, a key conspirator and beneficiary of the Delhi excise policy scam." "K Kavitha orchestrated a deal with Arvind Kejriwal, then deputy chief minister and minister of excise Manish Sisodia, wherein she along with other members of the South Group paid them kickbacks through a string of intermediaries and middlemen. "In exchange of the kickbacks paid to the leaders of AAP she had access to the policy formulation and was offered pro-

visions to ensure favourable position to her," the ED had claimed. It further alleged Kavitha was "involved" in various activities relating to proceeds of crime to the tune of at least Rs 292.8 crore. In a linked development, the Delhi High Court on Friday sought the stand of the ED on a bail plea moved by Kavitha in this case. She was also arrested by the CBI when she was under judicial custody in the ED case. While refusing to grant her relief, the trial court had said Kavitha's role "prima facie appears as that of key conspirator of the criminal conspiracy hatched for the purpose of collection and payment of upfront money to AAP through co-accused for getting favourable provisions in the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22." "Her role in demanding the upfront money and the alleged payment thereof for favourable provisions in the Excise Policy have also been highlighted in the course of arguments and as discussed in the preceding paragraphs," the trial court had noted. In her bail plea filed in the high court, the BRS leader said she has "nothing to do" with the excise policy and there is

a criminal conspiracy against her, "orchestrated by the ruling party at the Centre with the active connivance of the Enforcement Directorate". She submitted there is no case against her and she is being implicated on the basis of witness statements whose credibility is under serious doubt. The ED had alleged that Rs 45 crore "kickbacks", out of the Rs 100 crore "bribe" provided by the "South Group", were used by the AAP for the Goa assembly election campaign in 2022. The "South Group" liquor lobby allegedly includes Kavitha, TDP Ongole seat Lok Sabha candidate Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy, his son Raghav Reddy and others. The excise case pertains to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and execution of the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22, which was later scrapped. Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena recommended a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the alleged irregularities. Subsequently, the ED registered a case under the PMLA. The ED filed its money laundering case on August 22, 2022, taking cognisance of the CBI FIR that was lodged on August 17, 2022.



Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairperson Hariwansh with his spouse performed evening Aarti at the Saryu Ghat in Ayodhya on Friday. They also worshipped at the Ram Lalla Temple. Photo: The Pioneer

EC lashes out at Kharge's 'biased'...

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"Utterances from president of national political party attacking the very credibility of the electoral steps and processes can have a negative impact on voter participation and can be seen as a means to deter an elector from exercising their franchise and/or demoralising the huge number of election staff and machinery which is mainly drawn from the respective State Governments... Commission wishes you to appreciate that your comments/observations/allegations given in the aforesaid post borders on vitiating the constitutionally mandated work of ECI," Senior Principal Secretary Sumit Mukherjee in the EC wrote to Kharge in its response. Highlighting the factual timeline of voter turnout data release from the 2019 general elections onwards, the EC dismissed any suggestion of delay or mismanagement.

Aiyar back to help BJP...

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"Indian National Congress dissociates itself completely from and disagrees totally with some remarks made by Aiyar a few months back which have been revived today by the BJP in its attempt to deflect attention from Prime Minister Modi's daily goof ups. Aiyar does not speak for the party in any capacity whatsoever," said Khera. Uploading a video of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Khera said, "If old videos are to be used, here is a not so old video where the External Affairs Minister is publicly advising India to be afraid of China."

Storm lashes across...

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As per the IMD, a region undergoes a heatwave if the maximum temperature reaches at least 40 degrees Celsius or more for plains and at least 30 degrees Celsius or more for Hilly regions. Qualitatively speaking, heatwave is a condition of air temperature which becomes fatal to the human body when exposed. Earlier, the IMD had predicted that heatwave to severe heatwave conditions have taken its grip in various parts of India in recent months. Some parts of Gangetic West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Telangana saw maximum temperatures settling 3-5 degrees Celsius above normal. The mercury settled above 44 degrees Celsius in at least 10 places in these States last week. Prior to that, the Met Department had said above-normal maximum temperatures were likely over most parts of the country in May and a significantly high number of heatwave days expected over the northern plains, central region and adjoining areas of peninsular India. April witnessed record-smashing maximum temperatures in east, northeast and south peninsular India, prompting health warnings from government agencies and some states to suspend in-person classes in schools. The IMD data shows that heatwaves this April were far worse than in 2023, the warmest year on record so far. In Delhi, the weather department predicted rain for this week, even as the maximum temperature in the national Capital touched 42 degrees Celsius on Tuesday.

Delhi ready for Game of...

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"He will not make any comment with regard to his role in the present case; and will not interact with any of the witnesses and/or have access to any official files connected with the case," the top court said. "Given the importance, we reject the argument raised on behalf of the prosecution that grant of interim bail/release on this account would be giving a premium of placing the politicians in a beneficial position compared to ordinary citizens of this country. While examining

the question of grant of interim bail/release, the courts always take into consideration the peculiarities associated with the person in question and the surrounding circumstances. In fact, to ignore the same would be iniquitous and wrong," the bench said in its order. The apex court, while granting Kejriwal the relief said there is no doubt about the fact that serious accusations have been made against him but he has not been convicted yet." He does not have any criminal antecedents. He is not a threat to society,"

the bench said. "It is no gain saying that the general elections to the Lok Sabha are the most significant and important event this year, as they should be in a national election year. Between 650-700 million voters out of an electorate of about 970 million will cast their votes to elect the Government of this country for the next five years," the bench said. "The prosecution has rightly pointed out that the appellant - Kejriwal had failed to appear in spite of nine (9) notices/summons, first of

which was issued in October 2023. This is a negative factor, but there are several other facets which we are required to take into consideration. The appellant - Kejriwal is the Chief Minister of Delhi and a leader of one of the national parties. No doubt, serious accusations have been made, but he has not been convicted. He does not have any criminal antecedents. He is not a threat to society," it said. "The investigation in the present case has remained pending since August 2022.

Kejriwal was arrested, as noted above, on 21.03.2024. More importantly, legality and validity of the arrest itself is under challenge before this court and we are yet to finally pronounce on the same. The situation cannot be compared with harvesting crops or pleading to look after business affairs. In this background, once the matter is subjudice and the questions relating to legality of arrest are under consideration, a more holistic and libertarian view is justified, in the background that the

18th Lok Sabha General Elections are being held," it said. "Twenty-one days... should not make any difference," Justice Khanna noted, saying the ED case was registered in August 2022 while the Chief Minister was arrested on March 21 this year." He (Kejriwal) was out there for one-and-a-half-years. He could have been arrested earlier or after but nothing such thing happened," the bench told the ED. "The grant of interim bail will not be treated as an expression of opinion on the

merits of the case or the criminal appeal which is pending consideration before us," the bench said. "As the appeal is pending before us, we do not think it would be proper for us to direct the appellant - Kejriwal to approach the trial court for interim bail/release. This may not be apt in view of the legal issues and contentions that are under examination and consideration before us," it said. As soon as the bench assembled for pronouncing the

order, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta pointed out that radical preacher Amritpal Singh, who is currently lodged in Assam's Dibrugarh jail under the National Security Act, has approached the Government for contesting the elections. "Now we have been approached by Amritpal Singh. That's our concern. I could not find any precedent to assist the court on this (interim bail for poll campaigning). A person is being released for election campaigning," he told the bench.



Opposition wants to bury me alive, but people are my security shield: Modi

PIT ■ NANDURBAR (MAHARASHTRA)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said some in the opposition want to bury him alive, but people of the country are his security shield and they won't let any harm come to him. Lashing out at the opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) headed by former Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray, the BJP stalwart asserted the "nakli (fake) Shiv Sena" abuses him in such a way that it pleases its "favourite vote-bank". "The nakli Shiv Sena wants to bury me alive. They abuse me in such a way that it is liked by their favourite vote-bank. They also take a bomb blast accused for election campaigning," Modi said while addressing a campaign rally in north Maharashtra's Nandurbar in support of BJP



candidate Hina Gavit. The BJP on Thursday claimed 1993 serial bomb blasts accused Iqbal Musa alias Baba Chauhan was seen in a Lok Sabha campaign rally of Shiv Sena (UBT) Mumbai North West candidate Amol Kirtikar. The allegations were denied by Musa as well as Kirtikar, both of whom claimed they did not know each other. He maintained the opposition

has lost people's support and trust, and that is why their political space is shrinking. "People of India are my security cover. They can't bury me alive or dead," the PM told the crowd. He was apparently referring to Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut's alleged comments about "burying him (Modi) in Maharashtra just like Mughal emperor Aurangzeb". "The Congress says 'Modi teri kabar khudegi' (Modi, your grave will be dug). While abusing me they keep in mind voter appeasement. (Shiv Sena founder) Balasaheb Thackeray must be very sad," averred the BJP's star campaigner. The Congress is an ally of the Shiv Sena (UBT) in Maharashtra. Nandurbar is among 11 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra that will go to polls in the fourth phase on May 13.

INDIA Bloc seeped in corruption: Nadda

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

BJP chief J P Nadda on Friday lashed out at the opposition INDIA alliance, dubbing it an "assembly of corrupt" and asking the people to vote for the saffron outfit so that the country's march on the path of progress continues. At a roadshow in Haryana's Panchkula, Nadda also accused the opposition parties of promoting dynastic politics.

"Modi says remove corruption, they (opposition) say save the corrupt and make them flourish," he said at the roadshow in favour of BJP's Ambala candidate Banto Kataria.

"Is the Congress a party of scams or not. Is Lalu's (Yadav)'s party a party which indulged in scam. Did Mamata (Banerjee) indulge in scams or not? Did DMK Stalin's family indulge in scams or not? Did K Kavitha indulge in scam or not? Toh sare bhrashtachariyon ka



jamavda hai' (assembly of the corrupt)," Nadda said. He also noted that many opposition leaders are either in jail or on bail. "Where is Arvind Kejriwal today. Where is Manish Sisodia. Where is (AAP's) Satyendar Jain. Where is (SP leader) Azam Khan...Rahul is

on bail, Sonia is on bail, (B S) Hooda is on bail. Lalu is on bail. So, either these leaders are on jail or out on bail," the BJP leader said. Accusing the opposition parties of promoting dynastic politics, he claimed they have no concern for the people. "Farooq Abdullah wants his

son Omar to become chief minister. When (former Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh) Badal sahab was there (alive) he was busy making efforts for his son Sukhbir (Badal). Chautala family also tried the same. "Everywhere you see the same thing. After Mulayam (Singh Yadav), Akhilesh has come...(in Bihar) it is Tejashwi now, Mamata (Banerjee) sees (her nephew) Abhishek, KCR sees Kavitha, Sharad Pawar sees Supriya Sule, Uddhav sees Aadiya Thackeray...They are all dynastic parties," he said. He said India has to be made a developed nation and for this we have to strengthen the hands of the prime minister. Nadda also spoke at length about the various development programmes and schemes of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre. Polling for all the 10 seats in Haryana will be held in the sixth phase of elections on May 25.

Congress seeks Pakistan support to get votes, says Anurag

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Congress leaders live in India but speak the language of Pakistan, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said on Friday and alleged that the grand old party seeks Pakistan's support to get votes. "Leaders of opposition parties, especially the Congress, repeatedly make statements supporting Pakistan, crushing Sanatam Dharma and insulting the Hindu community, besides pleading for more resources for people with more wives and children," Thakur told reporters in Sujanpur.



The Congress indulges in politics of appeasement and seeks Pakistan's support to get votes, he alleged.

Sometimes, Congress leaders speak the language of China and vice-versa and it shows that the "hand of foreign powers" is with the Congress, Thakur claimed. "These people want to weaken the Army and destroy nuclear weapons," he said. Thakur questioned the Congress on "reducing" the quota for Other Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and "giving" it to Muslims and asked if it was a prelude to more such actions. He also asked why the Congress talks about "destroying" India's nuclear

weapons and why its language is in favour of Pakistan and vice-versa. Without naming National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah and Congress veteran Mani Shankar Aiyar for their comments on Pakistan "not wearing bangles" and having atom bombs, Thakur said, "I want to tell them that we are a nuclear power and our Army has the potential to conduct surgical strikes and kill enemies in their homes." "Our sisters who wear bangles and carry AK-47 rifles have the guts to kill infiltrators," he said. Thakur was in Sujanpur to

campaign for Rajinder Rana, the BJP candidate in the Assembly bypoll. Rana had defeated Thakur's father and former Himachal Pradesh chief minister PK Dhumal in the 2017 assembly elections from Sujanpur. He was among the six Congress MLAs who voted for the BJP in the Rajya Sabha elections and later joined the saffron party. Rana, who is contesting the assembly bypoll from Sujanpur on a BJP ticket, filed his nomination on Friday. "I have appealed to he people to vote for the BJP and a make double-engine Government," Thakur said.

Paras blames nephew Chirag for his non-participation in poll campaign in Hajipur



PTI ■ PATNA

Former Union Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras on Friday squarely blamed nephew Chirag Paswan for his non-participation in the poll campaign in Hajipur, the seat he currently represents but is now being contested by the latter. Paras also said Chirag, the son of late Ram Vilas Paswan, has "never bothered to come and seek blessings" from his uncle. "I have never been invited", was the curt reply of Paras, when he was asked about his absence in Hajipur from where Chirag has filed his nomination. The seat had earlier been represented by late Paswan nine times. Chirag's Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) has got five seats in Bihar as per the seat-sharing formula decided by the BJP-led coalition. The formula has left Paras high and dry and he has reacted by resigning from the Union cabinet but chosen to remain with the BJP-led NDA. "I stay just a few hundred metres away from the Patna airport where Chirag goes almost every day to catch his

helicopter. He has never bothered to come and seek my blessings even though I am older than him. My party leaders have been campaigning for NDA candidates in Bihar", said Paras who leads the Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party (RLJP). Chirag was the national president of Lok Janshakti Party, founded by late Paswan, until it was split in 2021. Paras had claimed that the split was a consequence of the "Chirag model", which had caused the NDA partner JD(U)'s tally to crash in the assembly polls held the year before. Chirag had earlier told PTI that he was "not sure whether even time will be able to heal the wounds" inflicted upon him by his uncle, while profusely thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "always standing" by him to the extent it was possible. Commenting on PM Modi's roadshow in Patna on May 12, Paras said, "It will be a grand roadshow by the PM in Patna. The NDA will win 400 plus seats in the country and all 40 seats in Bihar".

Visakhapatnam as capital: Will YSRCP proposal cut ice with voters?

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Known as the city of destiny, Visakhapatnam holds significant importance as a Lok Sabha constituency, especially with the incumbent YSR Congress Government proposing to designate it as the state's "executive capital" in the context of the "three capitals" concept. Presently, Amaravati is the capital of Andhra Pradesh. The ruling YSRCP wants to make Visakhapatnam as "executive capital", Amaravati the "legislative capital" and Kurnool as "judicial capital." The upcoming Parliament elections will see the YSRCP striving to retain the seat, while the opposition TDP, narrowly missing victory in 2019, is set to challenge its rival. MVV Satyanarayana of YSR Congress defeated his nearest TDP rival M Sribharat by a margin of over 4000 votes in the Parliament Elections in 2019. This time, Sribharat has been fielded again while the YSRCP chose to pit Botcha Jhansi Lakshmi, wife of minister Satyanarayana to take on the TDP pick. As the lone cosmopolitan city in the state, Vizag boasts of major infra and industries like a sea port, the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited and the HPCL refinery, contributing to its multicultural character. With nearly 20 lakh voters, the port city has seven assembly segments with TDP winning four in the 2019 assembly polls. However, one of them defected to the ruling party which also holds the mayoral position of the city. KSRK Raju, president of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) Visakhapatnam says, though the proposal to make the city as the executive capital is welcome, the government should have begun rolling out necessary infrastructure to sustain the growth. "We welcome the decision to make Visakhapatnam as capital. But before that, the government needs to study what kind of population growth is expected in the coming ten years and the kind of vehicular movement that will be witnessed in future and accordingly improve

infrastructure," Raju told PTI. According to him, in the absence of proper infra facilities, Vizag will also suffer like any other cities with drinking water problems and clogged roads. He further said there is still no major road connectivity to the upcoming international airport at Bhogapuram, about 40 KM from here. Welcoming the state government's proposal, AP Mechanised Fishing Boat Operators Association president Vasupalli Janakiram said once the city becomes capital, job opportunities will grow. He also said there are about three lakh voters belonging to the fishermen community in Vizag Lok Sabha constituency and that they may rally behind the ruling party. "The state government is constructing fishing harbours at various locations along the coast. The infrastructure would certainly help our community," he added. Retired IAS officer EAS Sharma, a prominent citizen of Visakhapatnam said decentralisation of buildings is not equal to decentralisation of government. He opined that once a city is declared capital, the land value goes up and accordingly taxes will also shoot up. "I agree that the whole thing is on paper. It does not help the common man...for a common man property taxes will go up. There will be water shortage, congestion and pollution. I don't see much of an advantage (if Vizag is made capital)," Sharma said. Sohan Hatangadi, Vice President, Greater Visakhapatnam Citizens Forum the move, is not good for Vizag citizens except some sections. "But largely, it will be distressing for most people, because of crowds and increased traffic things like that. Too many street corner protests, sirens. So on and so forth. We don't like it," Hattangadi said. According to Lakshmi Mukkavalli, president of Information Technology Association of Andhra Pradesh (ITAAP) there are about 25,000 employees dependent on the IT sector in the state, with majority of them in Visakhapatnam.

Man booked for beating Congress agent

PTI ■ DAHOD

The man arrested for live-streaming his bogus voting from a polling station in Dahod Lok Sabha constituency of Gujarat, has been booked in separate case of allegedly thrashing and intimidating a Congress party agent during the third phase of parliamentary elections on May 7, police said on Friday. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has declared null and void the voting that took place at Parthampur polling station in Mahisagar taluka in Mahisagar district, taking into account the report from the returning officer and observer regarding the irregularities, after the man's live streaming video went viral. As per the FIR lodged at Santrampur police station in the state's Mahisagar district that falls under the Dahod parliamentary constituency, accused Vijay Bhabhor, son of a local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, and three others allegedly confronted a Congress polling agent, Shana Taviad, at a polling station at Gothib village and threatened him. While leaving the polling station after the voting process, the accused confronted Taviad again and allegedly beat him up for not allowing him to cast his bogus vote, the FIR said. Bhabhor was arrested under sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 504 (insulting to threaten peace), 506 (2) (criminal intimidation) and 114 (present when offence is committed) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The complainant stated in his petition that when he was present at booth number 1 at Gothib village as a Congress agent, Bhabhor approached him along with three other persons identified as Prakash Katara, Pavan Agrawal, Piyush Bhavsar and asked to allow him to cast his bogus vote. When the complainant refused to do so, the accused persons abused him and threatened him with consequences.

JMM led alliance is in neck deep corruption, exploiting people: Rajnath

PTI ■ DUMKA (JHARKHAND)

Alleging that the JMM-led alliance in Jharkhand is "involved in neck-deep corruption" and exploiting people, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said the ruling coalition will be punished for atrocities on residents of the State. He also claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has worked tirelessly to make India a prosperous country and done "miraculous work to bring 25 crore people out of poverty," while "earlier PMs like Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi made hollow promises to alleviate poverty". "Corrupt JMM-led alliance is sucking the blood of innocent people. It is betraying them. The BJP believes in the politics of 'Insaf and Insaniyat (justice and humanity)'. The JMM-led coalition will be punished for atrocities on people," Singh said addressing a rally in Jharkhand's Dumka. "During the Manmohan



Singh regime at the Centre, India remained at the 11th position globally in economic prosperity, while the country secured the fifth place under the BJP-led rule, Singh said. "After the US and China, India would be the third prosperous country in times to come," the union minister said. Urging people to vote in favour of BJP candidate Sita Soren, Singh said that no one would be allowed to snatch reservations from people. Former Chief Minister Hemant Soren has put "Jharkhand's esteem at stake", he said, while appealing to

people to "take revenge by giving votes to 'lotus', the symbol of the BJP. During his address, the defence minister made a faux pas by calling Sita Soren as Kalpana Soren, wife of jailed former CM Hemant Soren, as the party candidate from Dumka. Sita Soren, the sister-in-law of Hemant Soren, was a JMM MLA from Jama and joined the BJP just before the Lok Sabha polls and is fighting against Nalin Soren of JMM. Sitting MP Sunil Soren was also present on the occasion.

Kannauj famous attar manufacturers, potato growers hope their concerns will not go unheard

PTI ■ KANNAUJ (UP)

As Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and BJP's Subrat Pathak lock horns in this high-profile seat, Kannauj's famous attar manufacturers and potato growers hope their concerns will not go unheard in the political battle. After filing his nomination for the May 13 polls, Yadav promised to spread Kannauj's fragrance. During their rallies, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah mentioned the importance given by the BJP to attar by gifting it to G20 guests last year. With campaigning at its peak and allegations and counter-allegations flying thick and fast, attar manufacturers of Bada Bazar want them to be heard. Perfume trader Sushil Kumar Jain said that during the SP's rule, ingredients gulkand and gulab jal were made tax free. "This provided a lot of relief to the traders. The BJP government has imposed tax

regime here in 2015. Perfumers Association president Pawan Trivedi said the first phase of the park is ready and 15 shops have been allotted. "The Rs 40-crore Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFDC) laboratory is also ready and packaging institute work is on," he said, adding gas pipeline work has been started to end use of hydro-distillation to extract scent from flowers using wood and cow dung cakes.

Lalit Maurya, another attar manufacturer, said the constituency has not witnessed any development in the past five years due to which people are angry. Potato growers of the city want a potato-based industry, which was promised by political parties earlier but did not see light of the day, so that their crops do not go waste. Vinay Dubey of Udaipur village said Kannauj produces maximum potatoes in the state. "In 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised a potato-based industry here but even after five years nothing has happened. We are disappointed," he said. Ahmad Ali, a farmer from Saiyapur village, said there are 200 cull storages in the city but there were times when they had to throw potatoes with bumper crop. Aditya Katiyar of Gukhru said the government should do something to ensure that they get due rates of their produce. Radhey Shyam Dohre of Narainpur says if potato chips or starch factories are

set up here, farmers would benefit. Besides, Yadav and Pathak, BSP's Imran Bin Jafar is also in the fray in the polls. Kannauj has five assembly segments — Chhibramau, Tirwa and Kannauj are in Kannauj while Bidhuna and Rasoolabad are in Auraya and Kanpur dehast districts respectively. Except for Bidhuna, where the SP emerged victorious, the BJP won four seats from here. Akhilesh made his political debut from the seat in 2000 by-election after which he held the seat in 2004, 2009. His wife Dimple won the seat in 2012 by-election unopposed after Akhilesh left the seat after becoming the chief minister. She retained the seat in 2014, but lot to Pathak in 2019. Socialist Ram Manohar Lohia won the seat for the first time in 1967. The constituency has about 19 lakh voters including about 3 lakh Muslims, 2.5 lakh Brahmans and Yadavs, and over 4 lakh Dalits.



on it. The government should give relief in GST, which is 18 per cent on essential oils so that small traders can move ahead. The government should also give subsidy for setting up perfume units so that small traders get benefit. Shops should be allotted to small traders in the perfume park," he said. The issue of delay in the perfume park taking shape is being raised by Akhilesh himself. The park was proposed during the SP

regime here in 2015. Perfumers Association president Pawan Trivedi said the first phase of the park is ready and 15 shops have been allotted. "The Rs 40-crore Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFDC) laboratory is also ready and packaging institute work is on," he said, adding gas pipeline work has been started to end use of hydro-distillation to extract scent from flowers using wood and cow dung cakes.

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Heavy fighting in Rafah keeps aid crossings closed

Over one lakh civilians flee

AP ■ RAFAH

Heavy fighting between Israeli troops and Palestinian militants on the outskirts of the southern Gaza city of Rafah has left crucial nearby aid crossings inaccessible and caused over 100,000 people to flee north, a United Nations official said Friday.

Israel's plans for a full-scale invasion of Rafah appear to be on hold for now, with the United States deeply opposed and stepping up pressure by threatening to withhold arms. But even the more limited incursion launched earlier this week threatens to worsen Gaza's humanitarian catastrophe.

Heavy fighting was also underway in northern Gaza, where Hamas appeared to have once again regrouped in an area where Israel has already

launched punishing assaults. Over a million Palestinians have fled to Rafah to escape fighting elsewhere, with many packed into UN-run shelters or squalid tent camps. The city on the border with Egypt is also a crucial hub for bringing in food, medicine, fuel and other goods. The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, known as OCHA, says about 110,000 people have fled Rafah and that food and fuel supplies in the city are critically low.

Georgios Petropoulos, an OCHA official working in Rafah, said the two main crossings near the city remain closed, cutting off supplies and preventing medical evacuations and the movement of humanitarian staff.

"Even if there were assurances to us being able to pass through a corridor, the proximity so close to a military involved in fighting is just not acceptable for something that has to be a humanitarian zone," he said. The UN's World Food



University students supporting Palestinian people stage a rally to demand a stop to the crackdown on demonstrators at rallies for Palestinians on the campus of U.S. universities, near the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, South Korea, Friday. AP/PTI

Programme will run out of food for distribution in southern Gaza by Saturday unless more aid arrives, Petropoulos said. He said about 30,000 people were leaving Rafah daily in search of safety, but that humanitarian workers had no supplies to help them set up camp in a new location.

"We simply have no tents, we have no blankets, no bedding, none of the items that you would expect a population on the move to be able to get from the humanitarian system," he said. Israeli troops captured the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing with Egypt on Tuesday, forcing it to shut down. Rafah was the

main point of entry for fuel needed to power vehicles, as well as the generators on which hospitals and water treatment plants rely. Israel says the nearby Kerem Shalom crossing — Gaza's main cargo terminal — is open on its side, but the UN says it remains inaccessible on the Gaza side because of ongoing fighting.

Israeli troops are battling Palestinian militants in eastern Rafah, not far from the crossings. An Associated Press reporter in the city heard heavy artillery and gunfire throughout the night into Friday. The military said in a statement that it had located several tunnels and eliminated militants "during close-quarters combat and with an aerial strike."

Hamas' military wing said it carried out a complex attack in which it struck a house where Israeli troops had taken up position, an armored personnel carrier and soldiers operating on foot. There was no comment from the Israeli military. It is not possible to indepen-

dently confirm battlefield accounts from either side. Hamas also said it launched a number of mortar rounds at the Kerem Shalom crossing, close to where Israeli troops are operating. The military said it intercepted two launches. The crossing was initially closed after a Hamas rocket attack last weekend that killed four Israeli soldiers. Israel says Rafah is the last Hamas stronghold in Gaza and key to its goal of dismantling the group's military and governing capabilities and returning scores of hostages captured in Hamas' October 7 attack that triggered the war.

But Hamas has repeatedly regrouped, even in the hardest-hit parts of Gaza. Heavy battles erupted this week in the Zeitoun area on the outskirts of Gaza City in the northern part of the territory. Northern Gaza was the first target of the ground offensive, and Israel said late last year that it had mostly dismantled Hamas there. The north remains largely isolated by Israeli troops, and

the UN says the estimated 300,000 people there are experiencing "full-blown famine."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to proceed with the offensive with or without US arms, saying "we will fight with our fingernails" if needed in a defiant statement late Thursday. The Israeli military says it has what it needs for the missions it has planned, including in Rafah.

The war began with Hamas' surprise attack into southern Israel last year, in which it killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took another 250 hostage. The militants are still holding some 100 captives and the remains of more than 30 after most of the rest were released during a cease-fire last year.

The war has killed over 34,800 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its figures.

Police dismantle pro-Palestinian camp at MIT

Boston (AP) — Police dismantled a pro-Palestinian tent encampment at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology early Friday and moved to clear protesters from University of Pennsylvania's campus in Philadelphia, hours after police tear-gassed protesters and took down an encampment at the University of Arizona. In Cambridge, Massachusetts, video showed police roaming through the MIT encampment. Police in riot gear arrived around 4 am, encircled the camp and gave protesters about 15 minutes to leave. Ten students who remained were arrested, the university's president said. A crowd outside the camp began gathering and chanting pro-Palestinian slogans but were dispersed by 6 am. At the University of Arizona in Tucson, campus police in riot gear fired tear gas late Thursday at protesters before tearing down an encampment that included wood and plastic barriers on campus. In a statement, the University of Arizona said it made the decision because the encampment violated school policy.

"A structure made from wooden pallets and other debris was erected on campus property after 5 pm in violation of the policy," the school said in a statement. "University officials issued warnings to remove the encampment and disperse. The warnings were ignored." The school also said that police vehicles were spiked, and rocks and water bottles thrown at officers and university staff. In Philadelphia early Friday, police detained people who were at an encampment that has been in place at the University of Pennsylvania for more than two weeks. Officers moved in after giving protesters a warning to leave campus or face possible arrest.

Tensions have ratcheted up in standoffs with protesters on campuses across the United States and in Europe. Some colleges cracked down immediately, while others have tolerated the demonstrations. Some have begun to lose patience and call in the police over concerns about disruptions to campus life and safety.

Suspected pirate attack in Gulf of Aden raises concerns

Jerusalem (AP) — A European naval force detained six suspected pirates on Friday after they opened fire on an oil tanker travelling through the Gulf of Aden, officials said, likely part of a growing number of piracy attacks emanating from Somalia. The attack on the Marshall Islands-flagged Chrystal Arctic comes as Yemen's Houthi rebels have also been attacking ships traveling through the crucial waterway, the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait connecting them. The assaults have slowed commercial traffic through the key maritime route onward to the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean Sea. The pirates shot at the tanker from a small ship "carrying weapons and ladders," according to the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre, which oversees Mideast shipping routes. The pirates opened fire first at the Chrystal Arctic, whose armed, onboard security team returned fire at them, the UKMTO said.

The pirates then abandoned their attempt to take the tanker, which continued on its way with all its crew safe, the UKMTO said. Hours later, the European Union naval force in the region known as Operation Atalanta said a frigate operating in the region detained six suspected pirates. The frigate seized the pirates given "the unsafe condition of their skiff" and said that some had "injuries of varied severity."

It wasn't immediately clear if those injured suffered gunshot wounds from the exchange of fire with the Chrystal Arctic. The EU force declined to elaborate "due to the security of the operations." Once-rampant piracy off the Somali coast diminished after a peak in 2011. That year, there were 237 reported attacks in waters off Somalia.

UN to vote on resolution for Palestine rights

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The UN General Assembly is expected to vote Friday on a resolution that would grant new "rights and privileges" to Palestine and call on the Security Council to favourably reconsider its request to become the 194th member of the United Nations. The United States vetoed a widely backed council resolution on April 18 that would have paved the way for full United Nations membership for Palestine, a goal the Palestinians have long sought and Israel has worked to prevent, and US deputy ambassador Robert Wood made clear Thursday the Biden administration is opposed to the assembly resolution.

Under the UN Charter, prospective members of the United Nations must be "peace-loving," and the Security Council must recommend their admission to the General Assembly for final approval. Palestine became a UN non-member observer state in 2012.

"We've been very clear from the beginning there is a process for obtaining full membership in the United Nations, and this effort by some of the Arab countries and the Palestinians is to try to go around that," Wood said Thursday. "We have said from the beginning the best way to ensure Palestinian full membership in the UN is to do that through negotiations with Israel. That remains our position."

But unlike the Security Council, there are no vetoes in the 193-member General Assembly and the resolution is expected to be approved by a large majority, according to three Western diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity because negotiations were private.

The draft resolution "determines" that a state of Palestine is qualified for membership — dropping the original language that in the General Assembly's judgment it is "a peace-loving state." It therefore recommends that the Security Council reconsider its request "favourably." The renewed

push for full Palestinian membership in the UN comes as the war in Gaza has put the more than 75-year-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict at center stage. At numerous council and assembly meetings, the humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinians in Gaza and the killing of more than 34,000 people in the territory, according to Gaza health officials, have generated outrage from many countries.

The original draft of the assembly resolution was changed significantly to address concerns not only by the US but also by Russia and China, the diplomats said. The first draft would have conferred on Palestine "the rights and privileges necessary to ensure its full and effective participation" in the assembly's sessions and UN conferences "on equal footing with member states." It also made no reference to whether Palestine could vote in the General Assembly.

According to the diplomats, Russia and China which are strong supporters of Palestine's

UN membership were concerned that granting the list of rights and privileges detailed in an annex to the resolution could set a precedent for other would-be UN members — with Russia concerned about Kosovo and China about Taiwan.

Under longstanding legislation by the US Congress, the United States is required to cut off funding to UN agencies that give full membership to a Palestinian state — which could mean a cutoff in dues and voluntary contributions to the UN from its largest contributor.

The final draft drops the language that would put Palestine on equal footing with member states. And to address Chinese and Russian concerns, it would decide "on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent" to adopt the rights and privileges in the annex. The draft also adds a provision in the annex on the issue of voting, stating categorically: "The state of Palestine, in its capacity as an observer state, does not have the right to vote in the General Assembly or to

put forward its candidature to United Nations organs."

The final list of rights and privileges in the draft annex includes giving Palestine the right to speak on all issues not just those related to the Palestinians and Middle East, the right to propose agenda items and reply in debates, and the right to be elected as officers in the assembly's main committees.

It would give the Palestinians the right to participate in UN and international conferences convened by the United Nations — but it drops their "right to vote" which was in the original draft. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas first delivered the Palestinian Authority's application for UN membership in 2011. It failed because the Palestinians didn't get the required minimum support of nine of the Security Council's 15 members. They went to the General Assembly and succeeded by more than a two-thirds majority in having their status raised from a UN observer to a non-member observer state.

'Muslims in Singapore distressed by Gaza conflict'

Singapore (PTI) — Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has said that he understands that Muslims in the multi-national-multi-racial country are distressed by the "unconscionable and inhuman" conflict in Gaza but underlined that Singaporeans have to work together to acknowledge these feelings and provide help to the Palestinians in a practical manner. The conflict in Gaza was triggered by the unprecedented attacks against Israel by Hamas militants on October 7 that killed around 1,200 people. Israel has launched a massive counter-offensive against the Islamic militant group that has ruled Gaza since 2007. More than 34,900 people have been killed in Gaza in Israeli action, according to the territory's Hamas-run health ministry.

Trump Hush Money trial enters 3rd week, awaits Michael Cohen testimony

AP ■ NEW YORK

The third week of testimony in Donald Trump's hush money trial draws to a close Friday after jurors heard the dramatic, if not downright seamy, account of porn actor Stormy Daniels, while prosecutors gear up for their most crucial witness: Michael Cohen, Trump's former attorney.

Daniels' story of an alleged sexual encounter with Trump was a crucial building block for prosecutors, who are seeking to show that the Republican and his allies buried unflattering stories in the waning weeks of the 2016 presidential election in an effort to illegally influence the race. Trump, who denies the sexual encounter ever happened, walked out of the court in a rage Thursday, angrily telling reporters, "I'm innocent." His attorneys pushed for



a mistrial over the level of tawdry details Daniels went into on the witness stand, but Judge Juan M. Merchan denied the request. Over more than 7½ hours of testimony, Daniels relayed in graphic detail what she says happened after the two met at a celebrity golf outing at Lake Tahoe where sponsors included the adult film studio where she worked. Daniels

explained how she felt surprise, fear and discomfort, even as she consented to sex with Trump. During combative cross-examination, Trump's lawyers sought to paint Daniels as a liar and extortionist who's trying to take down the former president after drawing money and fame from her claims.

Trump attorney Susan Necheles pressed Daniels on

why she accepted the payout to keep quiet instead of going public, and the two women traded barbs over what Necheles said were inconsistencies in Daniels' story over the years.

"You made all this up, right?" Necheles asked Daniels.

"No," Daniels shot back.

The defence has sought to show that the hush money payments made on his behalf were an effort to protect his reputation and family — not his campaign — by shielding them from embarrassing stories about his personal life.

After Daniels stepped down from the stand Thursday, Trump's attorneys pressed the judge to amend the gag order that prevents him from talking about witnesses in the case so he could publicly respond to what she told jurors. The judge denied that request too.

Australian judge extends ban on X, sharing video of bishop's stabbing

AP ■ MELBOURNE

An Australian judge on Friday extended a ban on X allowing videos of the stabbing of a Sydney bishop in his church last month after government lawyers condemned the social media company's free speech argument for keeping the graphic images circulating.

Australian Federal Court Justice Geoffrey Kennett extended his order that X Corp., the company rebranded by billionaire Elon Musk when he bought Twitter last year, block users from sharing videos of the April 15 attack. The attack led to terrorism-related charges for the alleged attacker, a teenager, and triggered a riot outside the church. The order has existed since April 22 and Kennett will

decide on Monday whether it will continue in its current form. X is alone among social media platforms in fighting a notice from Australia's eSafety Commission, which describes itself as the world's first government agency dedicated to keeping people safer online, to take down the video of the attack during an Assyrian Orthodox service streamed online.

A bishop and priest were injured but both survived. Musk has accused Australia of censorship and has applied to the Federal Court to overturn the eSafety notice. The court will sit on Wednesday to consider setting a hearing date for X's application. X has geoblocked Australian users from the content, but eSafety argues the video can be still accessed from Australia through Virtual

Private Networks. VPNs are services that allow users to access sites in other countries that are blocked in their own nation. The regulator wants a worldwide ban on the video.

An eSafety lawyer, Tim Begbie, described X in court on Friday as a "market leader in proliferating and distributing violent content and violent and extremist material." Begbie said Australia could not be expected to conform to X's "pro-free speech stance."

"The fact is that that stance is in large measure illusory. Because X doesn't stand for global removal is bad' in some pure sense," Begbie said. X's own policies repeatedly refer to circumstances in which the platform will elect to remove content globally, Begbie said.

Prince Harry and Meghan in Nigeria

AP ■ ABUJA

Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, arrived in Nigeria on Friday to champion mental health for young people affected by conflicts and to promote the Invictus Games, which the prince founded to aid the rehabilitation of wounded and sick servicemembers and veterans.

The couple, in the West African nation for the first time on the invitation of its military, visited the Lightway Academy college which receives support from their Archewell foundation to educate and train young girls affected by conflicts in Nigeria. Harry and Meghan will also be meeting with wounded soldiers and their families in what Nigerian officials have said is a show of support to improve the morale of the soldiers, including those fighting a 14-year war against Islamic extremists in the country's northeast. "This engagement with Invictus is giving us the opportunity for the recovery of our



soldiers," Abidemi Marquis, the director of sports at Nigeria's Defence Headquarters, told reporters on Thursday. Harry served in Afghanistan as an Apache helicopter copilot gunner, after which he founded the Invictus Games in 2014 to offer wounded veterans and servicemembers the challenge of competing in sports events similar to the Paralympics. Nigeria was among the nations

that participated in last year's edition of the games.

The couple were received at the Abuja school by a dancing troupe and a crowd of excited students and teachers. Student Nnenna Okorie couldn't hide her excitement at meeting the couple. "She is the prettiest human being ever," said Okorie, a senior student at the school. "I admire her so much and then Harry, I love how he is so supportive," she said.

During their stay, Harry and Meghan will attend basketball and volleyball matches and will meet with local non-governmental organisations in Abuja and Lagos that are receiving support from them. Meghan will also co-host an event on women in leadership with Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director General of the World Trade Organisation, according to their spokesman Charlie Gipson.

The news of Meghan's visit excited some in Nigeria where her life — and association with the British royal family — is closely followed. Meghan has also said in the past that she found out through a genealogy test that she was 43 per cent Nigerian. The Nigerian military has touted the Invictus Games as one which could help the recovery of thousands of its personnel who have been fighting the homegrown Boko Haram Islamic extremists and their factions since 2009 when they launched an insurgency.

Polish farmers march against EU policies

AP ■ WARSAW

Tens of thousands of disgruntled Polish farmers marched through downtown Warsaw on Friday to protest the European Union's climate policies and oppose the pro-EU government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk. The march under the slogan "Down with the Green Deal," a farmers' trade union that is strongly opposed to the EU's farming policies, in particular a policy known as the Green Deal which aims to make agriculture more climate friendly. The farmers say it interferes with their work and imposes high costs on them.

"We are protesting because we don't want to become slaves on our own land," said dairy farmer Grazyna Gasowska from eastern Poland. "According to the Green Deal we are supposed to grow what they tell us to, when they tell us to," Gasowska said as she held a national white-and-red flag.



"All those diversification requirements are very difficult for the farmers." The noisy march stopped at the EU Warsaw office and then at parliament. "Let Brussels eat worms, we prefer pork chops and potatoes," said one banner, referring to a general belief that the EU will advise eating insects and worms rather than cattle meat. The demonstration came as Poland's political parties campaign ahead of elec-

tions next month for the European Parliament. The protest was supported by Polish right-wing opposition party Law and Justice, which held power from 2015 until late last year and is looking to regain political momentum. With an eye to the election, Tusk on Friday announced a reshuffle of his Cabinet to replace four ministers running for the European Parliament next month. The changes are also

seen as a chance to bring new energy into Tusk's government, which took office in December and embarked on deep reforms in many areas, including justice, foreign policy and the media.

"Today comes the time of bringing order and this is one of the reasons for which we jointly decided to have these changes," Tusk said. He said there will be more changes in the future that would be dictated by the "interest of the state."

Tusk's pro-European Union government has embarked on a wide reversal of the policies of the Law and Justice party, which put Poland on a collision course with the 27-member EU during its administration. Tusk's team is taking steps to free the judiciary and the state media from the political control that Law and Justice tried to impose, and bring to account those responsible for mismanagement and loss of funds by state-owned companies.



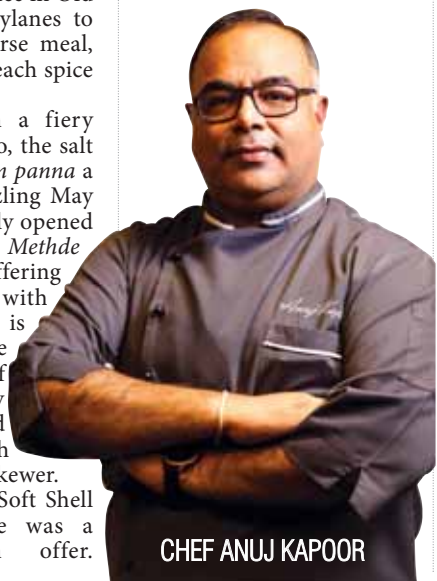
ON BOARD THE DILLI-AWADH EXPRESS

There is little to complain if the ancient gastronomic delights from the bustling streets of Dilli 6 intersect with the regal fare of Lucknow's Awadhi Chowk, right in the heart of modern Delhi. It is a rare symphony, says **SHOBORI GANGULI**

For ages, food critics and connoisseurs have engaged in passionate discourses on how the royal Mughlai cuisine of Dilli stands out in sharp contrast to its regal Awadhi counterpart in Lucknow, a debate that rages on. While both define North India's rich culinary heritage and both spilt out of the ancient quarters of royal kitchens to occupy modern-day street food outlets of these two historic cities, it takes a magician to synchronise the two.

With Chapter 4 of Farage: Northern Meanders, Chef Anuj Kapoor, Director of Culinary at Radisson Blu Hotel in Greater Noida, delivers this impossible magic of harmony with precision. From the bustling chaos of Old Delhi's streets to the serene ambience of Awadhi's royal courts, Chef Kapoor employs his nostalgia of childhood and college years spent in Lucknow and his enviable professional experience in Old Delhi's Mughlai lanes and bylanes to curate an innovative six-course meal, meticulous attention paid to each spice and ingredient.

The meal started off with a fiery welcome shot of *Tikha Mango*, the salt and chili rimmed glass of *aam panna* a welcome relief in Delhi's sizzling May heat. The *Amuse Bouche* gently opened the gates to *Dilli 6 ki Nagori*, *Methde Aloo*, *Kachalu*, a delectable offering of a *golgappa* sized *puri* with filling. A real taste of Delhi is incomplete without some wholesome *Chaat*. So Chef Kapoor had a platter ready with *Kulle ki Chaat* served with a not-too-soor *Kanjhi* with a jalapeno and *Ram Laddoo* skewer. The *Nakkhas Masala* Panko Soft Shell Crab Aragula and Orange was a tantalising appetizer on offer.



CHEF ANUJ KAPOOR

in which Chef Kapoor refined and redefined the decadent *Nalli Nihari* to a level of sophistication difficult to match. The *Chowk ka Nalli Nihari Wellington* indeed transported one to an epicurean heaven. A clear winner, this masterpiece blended the iconic Wellington-style pastry with the refined flavours of pulled *Nalli Nihari* mutton. This innovative dish symbolised Chef Kapoor's unique gift of framing culinary history in a contemporary context. There was *Jumbo Prawn Khorma* on offer alongside the vegetarian *Aminabad Masala Portobello*, *Gucchi*, *Qar-e-Pukhtan*.

Chef Kapoor has a signature inaugural, informal talk before laying out the table for his patrons. At the beginning of each Farage, he talks about the inspiration informing the menu, of how Dilli 6 is better known for its vegetarian fare considering the Old City has a fair share of vegetarian traders and merchants, and similar such priceless nuggets of culinary history. I left the venue with the taste of an extremely flavourful and aromatic *Chowk ki Gilouri*, transporting me to the bylanes of Lucknow that I remember only too well.

FACTSHEET

Farage Chapter 4: Northern Meanders
Venue: Satin, Radisson Blu, Greater Noida
Date: May 10th & May 11th, 2024

Unfortunately, for Delhi, seafood meanders its way into kitchens through freezers, compromising its freshness. While the taste of the crab and the crispiness of the batter worked well on the palate, it is my personal observation that deep fried Indian food, North to South, East to West, is difficult to master in large kitchens. They tend to get fried and re-fried, leaving that slight hint of used oil. These are best left to home kitchens or road side eateries. The vegetarian option of *Ambi*, *Hari Mirch Ganderi Paneer Tinka* may perhaps have been a better choice. That said, the Entrée opened the floodgates of gastronomic indulgence. The *Gosh ki Galawat* served atop a *Biscooti Roti* that Chef Kapoor had quite obviously paid personal attention to, was an amazingly innovative combination. The taste lingered on long after the meal was over. For the vegetarians there was, of course, the *Chakundar ki Galawat*. This was followed by the main course

Padharo Mhare Desh



The ongoing Rangeelo Rajasthan food festival at the Crowne Plaza in Delhi takes its guests on an exotic culinary odyssey, writes **SHOBORI GANGULI**

Rajasthan never ceases to inspire. Be it the food, the clothes, the colours, the mesmerizing deserts, the people, its music, this region's appeal is immortal and forever irresistible. Little wonder then that the majestic Rangeelo Rajasthan food festival at Crowne Plaza's Infinity in the heart of Delhi has drawn well-deserved attention. Showcasing Rajasthan's regal culinary heritage, *Panch Rang Panch Nagar* is the leitmotif of the festival that draws inspiration from the diverse palates and cuisines of the five towns of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Udaipur, and Bikaner. We are told that the chefs engaged in this epic effort have journeyed to the royal kitchens spread across Rajasthan to collate secret recipes and traditions while bringing in local cooks to ensure the authenticity of regional flavours.

In order to remain faithful to the festival's thematic emphasis, the venue has been draped in the architectural hues of the five chosen cities, where guests can effortlessly surrender to the rustic charm and authenticity of village-style piping hot *Jowar*, *Bajra* and *Bejar rotis* prepared by local women, travelling straight out of their earthen *chulhas* to the plate. Playing the perfect host, Executive Chef Roushan Sharma is quick to bring in some local starters like the *kachodi kadhi* and *samosa kadh*, the crispy fried goodies gently crushed into a warm bowl of silk smooth gravy. This came with a sharp and tangy garlic and *kutty mirch* chutney and fiery *Mirchi ke Tapore*. Clearly, Ghee is the real star of a traditional Rajasthani food

spread so there was no dearth of this cooking medium in the dishes that arrived at the table. Sharing his experience of travelling to Rajasthan for the curation of the festival's menu, Chef Sharma says, "Our culinary expedition to Rajasthan was a blend of royalty and authenticity. Spending a day with Thakur Kunal Singh Sa graciously unravelled the secrets of royal recipes, while our interactions with local villagers added depth to our



culinary pool that has its origins in the arid and resource-starved agrarian ecosystem of the region for centuries. Indeed, each element of the menu was an eye-opening vehicle of transport to Rajasthan's culinary heartland. Now, a bit about the décor. Painstakingly set up to recreate the rustic charm and village-style dining experience of *Padharo Mhare Desh* one could opt to dine under the stars (not recommended in this May heat) or enjoy the interiors with live folk performances, including vibrant *Kathputli* puppetry and a spirited *Ghoda Gadi*. The venue has even recreated the vibrant energy of a traditional *Rangrez Bazaar*, complete with stalls offering local handicrafts and entertainment.

Pankaj Gupta, the Area General Manager, underscored the significance of such an experience amid the dynamic culinary landscape today: "In a world where dining options abound, we believe in offering our guests more than just a meal. The Rangeelo Rajasthan Food Extravaganza is not merely a culinary event; it's a journey of discovery and delight, where every dish and every performance tell a story of Rajasthan's rich heritage and culture." And indeed, it does.

FACT SHEET

Venue: Infinity, Crowne Plaza Delhi
Date: May 3rd to May 12th, 2024
Time: 7:00 PM to 11:00 PM
Price: Rs 2599 plus taxes per person
Contact: 8860605588, 8860634435

What's cooking this weekend!

Lucknow meets Hyderabad at Westin



The Westin Gurgaon is hosting a 10-day culinary pop up, with Kangan from The Westin Mumbai Garden City from May 17th till May 26th, 2024. Showcasing Kangan's convergence of the regal flavours of Lucknow and the fiery essence of Hyderabad, Guest Chef Mohammad Shaheed Qureshi from Kangan and Multi Property Executive Chef Amit Dash would be at the helm of this pop-up.

The pop-up promises a gastronomic journey celebrating Lucknowi and Hyderabadi flavours. Kangan is a contemporary interpretation of rustic Indian flavours mainly from the North-West Frontier region of Peshawar. Being showcased at The Westin's all-day dining restaurant, Seasonal Tastes, the pop-up menu at Kangan explores progressive ideas in Indian cuisine while maintaining the traditional culinary integrity of signature dishes.

From traditional kebabs to rich *biryanis*, the spread brings out many undiscovered facets with its unique use of time tested ingredients transformed by eclectic combinations and modern presentations. For instance, the *Sikanderi Raan*, *Banno kebabs*, *Khaliyas*, *Kormas*, *Niharis*, and *Gacche Gosht ki Biryani*. Chef Dash says, "Hosting pop-up events has transformed our business, boosting revenue and enhancing guest experiences. Diversifying our offerings and

collaborating with renowned restaurants have attracted new audiences, bolstering our position in the hospitality industry," adding that "Experimentation with cuisines, chefs, and concepts has showcased our adaptability and innovation, keeping us ahead of trends and reinforcing our reputation. From a business perspective, these pop-ups have allowed us to expand our offerings which aligns with the exploratory culinary demands of our patrons. This strategic approach has led to increased profitability and recognition, highlighting the importance of collaboration and innovation in hospitality."

Venue: Seasonal Tastes, The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi
Date: May 17th - May, 2024, for dinner buffet everyday; Sunday brunches on 18th and 25th May 25th respectively.



Chef Mohammad Shaheed Qureshi

Indori Zyaka at Crowne Plaza, New Delhi

Edesia, the renowned global cuisine restaurant at Crowne Plaza New Delhi will showcase an unprecedented culinary extravaganza through the exquisite flavours of Malwa Cuisine from Indore. This unprecedented food festival promises to unravel the hidden treasures of Indore's culinary heritage, offering a delectable array of dishes. From May 10th to May 19th, 2024, guests are invited to indulge in an unparalleled dining experience as Edesia unveils a plethora of culinary delights, carefully curated to exemplify the essence of Indore's gastronomy. On offer will be an assortment of mouthwatering delicacies, including the iconic *Poha Jalebi*, irresistible *Indori Shikanji*, flavourful *Bhutte ki Kees*, comforting *Sabudana Khichdi*, crispy Baked *Samosa*, savoury *Moong Dal Bhajiyas*, and the quintessential *Pani Puri* served with six unique types of water. Other highlights include *Chole Tikki*, succulent *Kadak Nath*, aromatic *Khassi ka Meat*, fragrant *Subz Methi Pulao*, hearty *Sev Tamatar ki Subji*, decadent *Mawa Bati*, traditional *Lancha*, and baked *Kalakand*. The culinary journey will conclude on a sweet note,



with the divine flavours of *Aam Ras*, creamy *Shrikhand*, and wholesome *Dal Bafla*.

To complement this gastronomic odyssey, beverages have been meticulously crafted to elevate the buffet experience. Guests can quench their thirst with a variety of invigorating drinks, including the revitalizing *Shikanji*, the tangy *Ananas ki Panna*, the unique *Anti Soda*, the classic

Lassi, and the refreshing *Kairi Pana*. As Shuvendu Banerjee, General Manager of Crowne Plaza puts it, "This festival is a celebration of culinary diversity and a testament to our commitment to offering unparalleled dining experiences. We invite food enthusiasts to join us on this gastronomic journey as we explore the vibrant flavours of Indore."

Venue: Edesia at Crowne Plaza, New Delhi Okhla.
Date: May 10th - 19th, 2024
Time: 7:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Price: Rs 2,799 plus taxes



KKR TARGET PLAYOFF BERTH AT HOME

PTI ■ KOLKATA

In red-hot form, two-time former champions Kolkata Knight Riders will look to seal an IPL playoff berth for the first time in three years when they take on the struggling Mumbai Indians in their final home match of the season, here on Saturday.

The return of their two-time title-winning skipper Gautam Gambhir as team mentor has done wonders for the side which has found ways to win games from difficult situations this season.

Sitting at the top of the 10-team standings with eight wins from 11 matches, another win will guarantee them the playoff berth as the Shah Rukh Khan-owned franchise will look to end on a high, its campaign at the home venue of Eden Gardens.

Gambhir's ploy to back Sunil Narine as an opener along with World No.2 T20I batter Phil Salt has been a masterstroke. The duo have scored bulk of the team's runs, giving it the perfect platform in powerplays to post six 200-plus totals from eight matches batting first.

With 32 sixes to his name, Narine is also the second in the list behind Abhishek Sharma (35). The consistency with which

MI SEEK TO SALVAGE PRIDE



Narine keeps churning out high scores match after match has been phenomenal. With one century and three fifties, the Trinidadian has also been their leading run-getter, amassing 461 runs at a strike-rate of 183.66. Englishman Salt has scored 429 runs at a strike-rate of 183.33. The duo's explosive form has also meant that the likes of Andre Russell and Rinku

Singh, who have been their designated finishers, have not got enough opportunities. Their performance has also covered up the team's bowling profligacy, particularly that of Mitchell Starc. The young Angkrish Raghuvanshi at No.3 has also proved his worth, while Ramanand Singh has been spectacular at the death. In contrast, five-time

champions Mumbai Indians, under Hardik Pandya, became the first team to be knocked out after Sunrisers Hyderabad demolished Lucknow Super Giants the other day. Coming on the back of a morale-boosting win over SRH, MI will look to salvage some pride. Fresh from his knocks of 56 and 102 not out, Suryakumar Yadav has been in scintillating

form which augurs well for Team India ahead of the T20 World Cup in less than a month. At the same time, Team India fans will hope that Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya also return among runs. The India captain has four single-digit scores and one 11 in last five games, while Pandya's best this season has been 46. The struggling all-

rounder has failed to cross 10 in his last six innings. Pandya would be desperate to strike form given that it would be crucial to India's chances in the T20 World Cup next month

TEAMS (FROM):
Kolkata Knight Riders: Shreyas Iyer (c), KS Bharat (wk), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Rinku Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Sherfane Rutherford, Manish Pandey, Andre Russell, Nitish Rana, Venkatesh Iyer, Anukul Roy, Ramanand Singh, Varun Chakravarthy, Sunil Narine, Vaibhav Arora, Chetan Sakariya, Harshit Rana, Suyash Sharma, Mitchell Starc, Dushmantha Chameera, Sakib Hussain, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Gus Atkinson, Allah Ghazanfar and Phil Salt.
Mumbai Indians: Hardik Pandya (c), Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Dewald Brevis, Jasprit Bumrah, Piyush Chawla, Gerald Coetzee, Tim David, Shreyas Gopal, Ishan Kishan (wk), Anshul Kamboj, Kumar Kartikeya, Akash Madhwal, Kwena Maphaka, Mohammad Nabi, Shams Mulani, Naman Dhir, Shivalik Sharma, Romario Shepherd, Arjun Tendulkar, Nuwan Thushara, Tilak Varma, Harvik Desai (wk), Nehal Wadhwa and Luke Wood.

Gill, Sudharsan keep GT's playoff hopes alive

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Captain Shubman Gill cracked a blistering century while B Sai Sudharsan hit his maiden IPL ton as Gujarat Titans kept themselves in the play-offs race with a 35-run win over Chennai Super Kings here on Friday.

Sudharsan (103 off 51 balls) stroke for stroke as the two openers notched up destructive centuries to propel GT to 231/3.

The home team's bowlers then stopped the defending champions for 196/8 despite fighting fifties from Daryl Mitchell (63) and Moeen Ali (56).

Sent into bat, Gill and Sudharsan put up a six-hitting exhibition as they notched up a 210-run stand, the highest partnership for any wicket in the IPL this season.

The two also equalled Quinton de Kock and KL Rahul's highest-ever IPL opening partnership.

While Gill's remarkable innings was punctuated by nine fours and six maximums, Sudharsan's maiden IPL hundred was peppered with five boundaries and seven sixes.

In contrast, the CSK openers were back in the hut with just two runs on the board. Their best batter this season, skipper Rituraj Gaikwad (0) was also sent packing with Rashid Khan completing a brilliant catch on the boundary with the defending champions reeling at 10/3.

Mitchell and Moeen steadied the ship with some counter attacking play, stitching a 109-run partnership. The duo targeted the Afghan spin duo of Rashid and Noor Ahmad.

While Moeen clobbered three sixes on the trot off Noor in the 11th over, Mitchell hit a boundary and a six in the next over off Rashid to bring down the equation to 113 runs off the last 48 balls.

But veteran Mohit Sharma (3/31) struck off his very first ball, dismissing Mitchell and then came back to take the scalps of Moeen and Shivam Dube (21).

Rashid soon joined the party, getting rid of Ravindra Jadeja

(18) and Mitchell Santner (0). Mahendra Singh Dhoni (26 not out) got the fans excited with three sixes, including back-to-back maximums in the last over but it was in a lost cause.

The win lifted GT from the bottom of the table to the eighth spot. They have 10 points from 12 games.

While CSK remain on fourth with 12 points, their net run rate took a hit, dropping from +0.700 to +0.491.

Earlier invited to bat first, Gill timed to perfection an over pitched Santner delivery for GT's first boundary of the innings. He then lofted the ball over mid on for a maximum, setting the tone of the game.

Gill's lazy elegance was on full display as he hit an effortless six off a Srimangal Singh delivery over long on into the stands in the sixth over.

At the other end, after a relatively slow start, Sudarsan, who was elevated to the role of an opener, too accelerated. He went down on his knees to hit a slog sweep off star spinner Ravindra Jadeja to get his fifty in 32-balls.

A couple of overs later, Gill too reached his half-century with a top edge that went the distance.

The CSK bowlers, barring Shardul Thakur (0/25), who was the most economical, could do little to stop the onslaught by Gill and Sudharsan.

CSK's effort in the field was also found wanting, besides general sloppiness, the defending champions, dropped Gill at the boundary. Tushar Deshpande (2/33) misjudged a miss-hit by Gill and dropped the GT skipper on 72. To add salt to the wounds, not only the dropped catch went for a six, the Daryl Mitchell over yielded 19 runs.

Gill soon brought up his fourth IPL hundred by sending a Srimangal full toss through square leg for four. It was the 100th ton in the history of the IPL and the youngster celebrated rather animatedly.

Sudharsan followed his skipper as he sent a length ball soaring over the fence to bring up his first-ever IPL hundred in style.

Virat Kohli should open in T20 WC: Ganguly

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Former Indian captain Sourav Ganguly on Friday said the Indian team management should make Virat Kohli open in next month's T20 World Cup to exploit the star batter's rich vein of form in the ongoing Indian Premier League.

Kohli is the current Orange Cap holder in this IPL with 634 runs from 12 matches, averaging 70.44 and at an impressive strike-rate of 153.51, which is significantly higher than his career rate of 134.31.

"Virat is playing exceptionally well. The way Kohli batted last night — 90 in quick time, you need to use him as opener in T20 World Cup. He should open, evidenced by his last few

IPL innings which have been outstanding," Ganguly told PTI here on the sidelines of a promotional event.

Ganguly said India have picked a balanced squad for the T20 World Cup which has the wherewithal to land the trophy after a gap of 17 years. India's lone triumph in the T20 World Cup came in 2007, the inaugural edition held in South Africa.

"This is an excellent squad. I think they have picked the best possible squad. Apart from batting depth, bowling looks excellent.

"Bumrah is the best fast bowler in the world at the moment. We have experience in this ideal combination we have this time," said Ganguly.

This edition of the IPL has

seen teams breaching the 250-run mark quite effortlessly, and the 51-year-old said the trend would continue in the future as well.

"This is going to be the trend in the years to come. T20 cricket has become a power-oriented game and that's what it is going to be.

"I was reading Sanju Samson's comments the other day, where he said there's no time to settle down in modern T20s. You just have to hit, and that's the way it is going to be," said Ganguly.

The Kolkataan, himself no stranger to hitting some monster sixes during his playing days, identified the evolved mindset of batters and Impact Player rule as the main reasons behind such mammoth totals in the IPL.

"Now, in IPL we are seeing scores like 240, 250 regularly. The main reasons are good batting wickets and the grounds are also not big in India. In the last game between Delhi Capitals and Rajasthan (Royals), 26 sixes were hit in a 40-over game, which is almost one six every over.

"That's how this game has gone and that's how the players have started approaching the game. The Impact Player rule, where every team has the possibility of adding another batsman, has also added another dimension to it," he detailed.

Ganguly said the bowlers need to upskill themselves to counter the ruthless march of batters in T20s, and cited the example of pacer Jasprit Bumrah. Amidst the general

ruins of bowlers, Bumrah stood tall, grabbing 18 wickets from 12 matches and his economy rate of 6.20 is the best among regular bowlers.

"The bowlers need to be really more skillful, we have some skillful bowlers around, to be more successful. Look at Bumrah, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, all of them bowl superbly in all formats of the game and in the IPL.

"I don't believe in formats. I believe in skills. These are exemplary players who will thrive in all formats," he noted.

Does he think the power-hitting will take the elegance and artistry away, making cricket robotic?

"Not at all. Demands of different formats are different. Everything evolves, sports is

not an exception. You will still see elegance and artistry in Test cricket. Test matches will always be Test matches.

"Look, quality players will be successful in all formats of the game. Look at Virat Kohli...the best players will adjust to all formats," he added.

Recently, Dinesh Karthik had expressed his desire to return to the Indian side in the context of the T20 World Cup, but Ganguly said the selectors made the right choice by selecting Rishabh Pant and Sanju Samson as wicketkeeper batters.

"Dinesh played well but there are better players than Dinesh. I don't think you can leave Sanju or Rishabh out. There are better players than Dinesh Karthik at the moment," said Ganguly.

OTHER SPORTS

Rafael Nadal shows he is not quite ready for retirement in a comeback win at Italian Open

AP ■ ROME

For a brief stretch on Thursday, Rafael Nadal looked every bit of a weary 37-year-old player nearing retirement.

Struggling to produce pace off both sides with his groundstrokes, committing an uncharacteristically high number of unforced errors and unable to stay in rallies, Nadal dropped the first set of his first-round match at the Italian Open against Belgian qualifier Zizou Bergs.

Then the fist-pumping, virtually-unbeatable-on-clay, 22-time Grand Slam champion version of Nadal emerged and the Spaniard rallied for a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory before an adoring crowd in what will likely be his final tournament at the Foro Italico.

Nadal was playing only his 10th match this year after missing nearly all of 2023 with a hip injury that required surgery. He's hoping to be competitive one last time at the French Open, where he is the record 14-time champion.

"That was not my best match. I was practicing better than how I played today, without a doubt. But I found a way to win," Nadal said. "My game is more unpredictable than before. I didn't play much tennis for the last two years. So I'm up and down, on and off, but I think I can do it much better than what I did today."

Rome, where he is a record 10-



time champion, is Nadal's last big warmup tournament before Roland Garros starts on May 26.

Nadal noted that after overcoming his hip and abdominal issues, the time has come "to prove myself if I am able to push my body to the limit that I need to push to feel myself ready for what's coming."

"I am not talking only about Roland Garros. I am talking about the next match. I need to lose this fear," Nadal said. "Matches like today help. Some moments I was moving faster. Some moments not. I need to get used to that, to take that risk. ... I feel more ready to try it than before."

During his 70th win in the Italian capital, the Campo Centrale crowd serenaded Nadal with chants of "Ole, Ole,

Ole, Na-dal, Na-dal."

"I've always been emotional to play here, these kind of events are the most important events in my tennis career," Nadal said. "The crowd has been always amazing with me, supporting me since the beginning of my tennis career. So I'm super excited to be able to play one more time here."

Nadal was coming off a straight-set loss to 31st-ranked Jiri Lehecka in the fourth round of the Madrid Open. But he has never lost consecutive matches on clay in his entire career and now that impressive statistic remains intact during what he has indicated is his final season on tour.

Nadal got out to a strong start, unleashing a 95 mph (153 kph) forehand winner en route to an early break and a 3-1 lead in

the first set. But he gave the break right back in the next game when he missed three weak groundstrokes into the net.

Then at 4-4, Nadal double-faulted twice and was broken again to give the 108th-ranked Bergs a 5-4 lead and a chance to serve out the set.

In the first set, Nadal committed 16 unforced errors to Bergs' 10.

During the first game of the second set, the match was briefly suspended when a spectator in the stands required medical treatment. That allowed Nadal to chat with Carlos Moya, his coach.

After the 10-minute suspension of play, Nadal raced out to a 3-0 lead in the second set as he upped the power on his shots and became more aggressive.

During the third set, Nadal managed to win a point after he fell to the red clay, quickly getting up to resume the rally and then producing a delicate drop-shot winner. Then he blasted a forehand cross-court winner to break for a 3-1 lead and unleashed a double-clutch fist pump.

There were more fist pumps when Nadal rallied from 0-40 on his serve to hold for a 4-2 lead in the third.

Nadal's mother and sister sitting behind the court shouted encouragement and his 1-year-old son was also court-side - sitting on the lap of Nadal's father.

Gukesh storms back, Praggnanandhaa moves to joint third; Carlsen

PTI ■ WARSAW

World Championship challenger D Gukesh bounced back from a sedate start to defeat compatriot R Praggnanandhaa and Germany's Vincent Keymer before holding world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen after round six of the Superbet rapid and blitz tournament here on Friday.

However, Praggnanandhaa produced a strong fifth round, defeating Holland's Anish Giri and he followed it with a win over Keymer in the sixth round.

Norway's Carlsen shares the lead with Wei Yi of China with eight points apiece while Praggnanandhaa and Shevchenko share the third spot on seven points each.

Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan, Gukesh and Arjun Erigaisi are joint fifth on 6 points, a full point ahead of local star Duda Jan-Krzysztof.



With four points, Keymer is in ninth spot in the \$175,000 prize money tournament, a point clear of Giri.

However, the dream run of Romanian Kirill Shevchenko was ended by Erigaisi, who scored his first victory in the event. Starting with losses in the first two rounds followed by a lone draw, Gukesh showed follow to prevail over Praggnanandhaa in the fourth round in 41 moves.

The middle game arising out of a double

fianchetto by white did not offer much scope for Gukesh and his position worsened as Praggnanandhaa launched a King side attack by advancing his pawns.

The pressure was immense on both and despite getting close to a winning position Praggnanandhaa could not keep his nerves and let Gukesh come back strongly. In the next round, Praggnanandhaa was on target with some difficult moves to grind down Giri in just 21 moves out of an irregular Queen pawn game.

Giri fell prey to a brilliant rook manoeuvre and blundered early.

Gukesh made most of the chances to crush Keymer who played white. The tactical complications led to a wild position in the middle game wherein Keymer found his king going for a long walk.

It was hard to recover for him from there and Gukesh finished the game with a queen sacrifice.

Leverkusen rallies late in draw with Roma to preserve unbeaten record and reach Europa League final

AP ■ LEVERKUSEN (GERMANY)

Bayer Leverkusen had a double reason to celebrate in stoppage time on Thursday. Not only did it reach the Europa League final and keep its unbeaten streak to 49 matches.

Leverkusen advanced 4-2 on aggregate and will face another Italian team on May 22 in Dublin after Atalanta beat Marseille 3-0 to advance 4-1 on aggregate.

"It's pure goosebumps!" Granit Xhaka told German television RTL. "You dream of

the night and 2-2 on aggregate. But an own goal by Roma defender Gianluca Mancini eight minutes from time and Stanišić's equalizer saw Leverkusen stretch its unbeaten streak to 49 matches.

Leverkusen advanced 4-2 on aggregate and will face another Italian team on May 22 in Dublin after Atalanta beat Marseille 3-0 to advance 4-1 on aggregate.

"It's pure goosebumps!" Granit Xhaka told German television RTL. "You dream of



an atmosphere like this. You dream of games like this. As a kid, you want to be in these games and then when you equalize just before the end and get to the final, it's incredible."

The fact that its unbeaten record was preserved about 30 seconds away from coming to an end was another improbable finale in an impressive season for Xabi Alonso's team, which has already won the Bundesliga title and also reached the German Cup final.

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