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'NATIONAL MOVEMENT'

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EVACUATIONS IN RAFAH

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ROW AGAINST DC

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## KEJRIWAL SPIRIT BACK IN DELHI

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Filled with energy and high political spirit ever since he walked out from Tihar Jail on Saturday, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal while addressing his enthused party workers launched a scathing attack at the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of crushing his and other Opposition parties. Kejriwal, who has launched his Lok Sabha campaign for the May 25 Delhi schedule, alleged that the BJP is on a mission to bring about dictatorship in the country.

Besides the "one nation, one leader" jibe, the AAP convenor also accused the BJP of shielding corrupt leaders and asked them if they would live up to the rule of retirement at the age of 75 that was brought about by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Kejriwal further claimed that the Prime Minister wants Amit Shah to succeed is his acknowledgement that the party is set to retain power for a third straight term.

At the same time Kejriwal also asserted the BJP will not return to power and said the INDIA Bloc will form the Government on June 4. "In the last 20 hours after release from jail, I talked to poll experts and people and got to know the BJP is not going to form the Government. The AAP will be part of the Government at the Centre. We will get full Statehood for Delhi and it shall have a people's Governor, not a man from Gujarat," he said, while adding that according to his assessment that the BJP is not getting more than 220-230 seats.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal addresses a press conference Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

Earlier in the morning, Kejriwal along with his wife Sunita and Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann offered prayers at the Hanuman temple in central Delhi's Connaught Place. Hours after the visit, the Chief Minister posted on X about his temple visit. Reciting a verse from Hanuman Chalisa, "Sab sukha lahe tumhari sarna, tum rakshak kahu ko darr na," he said in the post in Hindi, "Reached the ancient Hanuman temple in Connaught Place and received the blessings of Hanuman ji. I prayed to Mahadev in Shiva temple and worshiped Shanidev Maharaj. I

prayed to God for happiness and prosperity of the country and to give strength to free the country from dictatorship. God bless everyone."

"The BJP sent four of our top leaders to jail - Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh and Satyendar Jain. This was an attempt by them to crush us. PM Modi wants to crush the AAP because he knows that we can bring about a bright future for the country. All Opposition leaders including West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin, Shiv

Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and RJD leader Tejashvi Yadav, will be in jail if BJP wins Lok Sabha polls," Kejriwal said addressing media, a first after his release on bail in the multi crore liquor scam.

Kejriwal claimed that PM Modi has not spared his own party's popular leader and will remove Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath from his post if the saffron party wins again. "Modi ji has a very dangerous plan - the plan of One Nation One Leader. He doesn't want anyone else to be popular. If they win the Lok Sabha polls, they will change the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in two months. They have tried to crush all the popular leaders in their party. Look at Vasundhara Raje and Shivraj Singh Chauhan. I am sure that Yogi Adityanath is the next," he added.

Party workers and supporters gathered in big numbers to welcome Kejriwal after he was granted an interim bail by the Supreme Court till June 1. A supporter was seen standing on the tree at the office with the picture of Bhagat Singh and a copy of the Constitution of India shouting the slogan "Jail k tale toot gaye, Kejriwal choot gaye". Many others adorned party flags and t-shirts that has "I am also Kejriwal" written on them. This was Kejriwal's first such presser following his release from jail after 50 days.

Further, he said that the reason why he did not resign from Chief Minister's post was because he didn't want to give in to the 'dirty politics' of BJP.

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## Stars power Phase IV polls

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

From cricketer Yusuf Pathan to Akhilesh Yadav and Asaduddin Owaisi to Shatrughan Sinha, five Union Ministers, two World Cup winning cricketers and two Bollywood stars are among the 1,717 candidates for the 96 Lok Sabha constituencies spread across 10 States and one Union Territory to contest in the phase 4, for which campaigning ended on Saturday. The polling will be held on May 13.

With the completion of each phase, political leaders, including the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, are turning up the heat with all kinds of rhetoric, communal charges, slandering of rivals, and much more. Political barbs like racist slur on Indian people, Pakistan's atom bomb to Balakot strike to Pulwama attack and "humara siddhant hai, hum ghar me ghus ke mareng" (It is our principle to take the attack home), to "Rambhaktis in every street", and "15 seconds the brothers would not know from where they came and where they went", dominated during the fourth phase of campaigning.

The stakes are high for the BJP and its allies in the fourth phase polling. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP leaders raised the issues of racist slur on Indian people by Indian Overseas Congress president Sam Pitroda, Pakistan's atom bomb by Mani Shankar Aiyer, "ghar mein ghus kar mareng" during the poll campaign and tried to corner the grand old party saying the Congress tries to instil fear in their own countrymen.

In previous rallies, the Prime Minister launched scathing attacks against the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, claiming that he may have some "deal" with "Adani-Ambani".

Continued on page 5

### LOK SABHA ELECTION PHASE IV SEATS

2024 LS voting concludes for States marked in red on May 13

STATES	NO. OF SEATS	CONSTITUENCY
ANDHRA PRADESH	25	Araku (ST), Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Anakapalle, Kakinada, Amalapuram (SC), Rajahmundry, Narsapuram, Eluru, Machilipatnam, Vijayawada, Guntur, Narasaraopet, Bapatla (SC), Ongole, Nandyal, Kurnool, Nellore, Thirupathi (SC), Rajampet, Chittoor (SC), Anantapur, Hindupur, Kadapa.
Bihar	5	Darbhanga, Ujjarpur, Samastipur (SC), Begusarai, Munger
Jammu & Kashmir	1	Srinagar
MADHYA PRADESH	8	Dewas, Ujjain, Mandsour, Ratlam, Dhar, Indore, Khargone (ST), Khandwa
Maharashtra	11	Nandurbar (SC), Jalgaon, Raver, Jalna, Aurangabad, Maval, Pune, Shirur, Ahmednagar, Shirdi, Beed
Odisha	4	Kalahandi, Nabarangpur (ST), Berhampur, Koraput (ST)
TELANGANA	17	Adilabad (ST), Peddapalle (SC), Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Zahirabad, Medak, Malkajgiri, Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Chevella, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Nagarkurnool (SC), Bhongir, Warangal (SC), Mahabubabad (ST), Khammam
Uttar Pradesh	13	Shahjahanpur, Kheri, Dhaurahra, Sitapur, Hardoi, Misrikh, Unnao, Farrukhabad, Etawah, Kannauj, Kanpur, Akbarpur, Bahraich (SC)
West Bengal	8	Baharampur, Krishnanagar, Ranaghat, Bardhaman Purba, Bardhaman -Durgapur, Asansol, Bolpur, Birbhum
Jharkhand	4	Singbhum (ST), Khunti (SC), Lohardaga (ST), Palamau (SC)



## Dust storm, gusty winds claim two lives in Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

At least two people were killed and 23 injured in storm-related incidents as strong winds uprooted trees, electricity poles and led to portions of walls collapsing across Delhi. Power was also disrupted in many areas as the dust storm swept the national Capital late Friday night.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has advised people to stay indoors, close windows and doors and avoid travel if possible. Take safe shelters, do not take shelter under trees and do not lean on concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls, the IMD said predicting strong wind/hail which may damage plantation, horticulture and standing crops. Hail may injure people and cattle at open places, it said. Nine flights were also diverted at the Delhi airport late Friday evening due to bad weather, an official said. Rain and thunderstorms were witnessed in many areas of Rajasthan as well due to the impact of a western disturbance during the last 24 hours, the local weather office said on Saturday. Thunderstorm activities are likely to continue till May 14, due to which the maximum temperature may fall in most parts.

In West Delhi's Vikaspuri, a person on a two-wheeler died after a branch of a tree fell on him near Janakpuri flyover. Police said the branch was removed with the help of cranes and the victim, Jaiprakash, was rushed to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival. A car was also damaged in the incident but its occupants were unhurt, a police officer said. In the other incident, a labourer got trapped under a tree which fell on him near IB Block at KN Katju Marg around 11 PM. Hariom was taken to a nearby hospital but the doctors said he was already dead. The police officer said in this incident also a car was damaged but its occupants were safe.

Continued on page 5

## Akhilesh in Kannauj to avenge wife's defeat

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ KANNAUJ

In the heartland of Uttar Pradesh, the stage is set for a political spectacle as former Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav braces himself for an electoral showdown in Kannauj. This battleground holds more than just electoral significance; it is a symbolic arena where familial legacies clash, and political destinies are determined.

At the core of this unfolding drama lies a deeply personal quest for redemption. Akhilesh's decision to contest from Kannauj is not merely a strategic move but a poignant attempt to avenge his wife Dimple Yadav's defeat in the previous elections. The sting of that loss still resonates, propelling Akhilesh with a fervent resolve to reclaim Kannauj for the Samajwadi Party (SP), a stronghold nurtured by his father, Mulayam Singh Yadav. "The wounds of defeat run deep, but so does our determination," declares Akhilesh, his voice echoing with unwavering resolve. "Kannauj embodies our legacy, and we will not allow it to slip away."

In the 1990s, Mulayam strategically expanded his influence in Kannauj, a constituency dominated by Yadavs and Muslims, transforming it into a bastion for the SP's first family. Over 16 elections held in Kannauj since 1967, Mulayam-affiliated candidates emerged victorious 10 times, while non-Yadav candidates



Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav during his campaign for Lok Sabha elections, in Kannauj district, on Saturday PTI Photo

secured victory on six occasions. Notably, the SP clinched victory in this seat seven times, solidifying its significance in Uttar Pradesh's political landscape.

On the opposing side, BJP's Subrat Pathak is preparing for what he terms a "high-voltage contest," drawing parallels to an India-Pakistan cricket match. "I am prepared to employ every tactic in the book," asserts Pathak, exuding confidence in his ability to thwart Akhilesh's aspirations.

Local observers depict a grudge match, where past defeats fuel present ambitions. "Akhilesh's candidacy this time is fueled by a desire to avenge his wife's loss in the last elections," notes Ram Mani

Mishra, a seasoned journalist in Kannauj. Indeed, the stakes could not be higher. Kannauj, steeped in political history, has long been synonymous with the SP's dominance. For decades, the Yadav family has wielded influence, transforming it into a formidable bastion of their political power. However, cracks surfaced in this fortress in 2019 when Pathak, a BJP candidate, dealt a significant blow by defeating Dimple, disrupting the family's winning streak. The loss reverberated through the Yadav clan, marking a turning point in their political fortunes. Mulayam, the patriarch of the family, witnessed this setback bore his passing in 2022, leaving behind a legacy tainted by defeat.

Continued on page 5

## Rahul dares Modi to US style Presidential debate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Lauding the initiative for a public debate on the Lok Sabha elections, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said he or party chief Mallikarjun Kharge would be pleased to participate in such a discussion and expressed hope that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would also take part.

"It would be a positive initiative for the major parties to present their vision to the country from one platform for a healthy democracy," Rahul said in a social media post. He also added that the nation expects Modi to participate in the debate. There is yet any response on the subject from the BJP.

The Congress leader shared on social media his reply to Justice (Retd) Madan B Lokur, Justice (Retd) Ajit P Shah and N Ram, who had written to him and the prime minister earlier this week, inviting them to a platform for a debate on the key election issues.

In their letter addressed to the



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addressing an election rally in Andhra Pradesh on Saturday canvassing for Kadapa candidate Sharmila YSR, daughter of former Chief Minister late Y Rajashekhar Reddy

country's leaders, the trio had stated that the proposal for the debate was non-partisan and in the broader interest of every citizen.

Rahul said he discussed the invitation with Kharge and they agreed that such a debate would help people understand "our respective vision and enable them to make an informed choice." "It is also critical to put to rest any unsubstantiated allegations

attributed to our respective parties. As the principal parties fighting the election, the public deserve to hear from their leaders directly," he said in his letter replying to the invitation.

"Accordingly, either myself or the Congress president would be pleased to participate in such a debate," he added. The former Congress chief also said he looks forward to participating in a productive and historic debate.

"Please do let us know if and when the Prime Minister agrees to participate, following which we can discuss the details and format of the debate," he added.

In his post, accompanied by the letter, the Gandhi scion said, "Congress welcomes this initiative and accepts the invitation for discussion. The country also expects the Prime Minister to take part in this dialogue."

At an event in Lucknow on Friday, answering a question from a member of the audience, Rahul said he was "100 per cent" prepared to take on Modi in a debate and added that he knew the Prime Minister would not agree.

## Miss Universe India sees beauty in diversity

SAKSHI PRIYA ■ NEW DELHI

To accommodate more competitors and reflect the diverse nature of the nation, the organisers of the Miss Universe India beauty pageant have announced significant changes in the specifications for the competition, including the elimination of age and height limits. This move aims to open up opportunities for a broader range of women to participate and showcase their talents on the global stage.

The announcement was made by Miss Universe 2023 Sheynnis Palacios, Miss Universe Vice President Mario Buraco, and Miss Universe India Director Nikhil Anand. In the midst of these changes, it's worth noting the historical context of the Miss

Universe pageant. Since its inception in 1952, the age limit for participation has been set at 18 to 28 years, with a minimum height requirement of 5 feet 3 inches without heels. These criteria, although intended to uphold certain standards of beauty and eligibility, have also been limiting for many talented individuals.

"Simply having a short height prevents many talented girls from moving forward. For talent, we have made this competition even easier," Anand announced at a Press conference last week releasing significant changes for Miss Universe India 2024. He further added that, State-level competitions will be held in all states of India, and the winner will represent India on the global stage. This year, state director



State-level competitions will now be held across all Indian states, ensuring wider participation and representation. This move removes the barrier of limited local audiences and provides a platform for talent regardless of location. The appointment of a state director in each region allows for a more grassroots approach; ensuring local engagement and sighting hidden gems on a national scale. Palacios, the first Nicaraguan to win the Miss Universe title, expressed her admiration for India saying she has spent only a short time in India, but the people here are so lovely where it feels having known them for years.

"India is a confluence of great cultures; I feel very at home here," she added, praising Indian

cuisine, particularly butter chicken masala. Mario highlighted the Miss Universe stage's significance in connecting countries worldwide and providing a platform for the exchange of cultures. He emphasised that preparations are underway for a unique event for this year's Miss Universe competition.

After seven years, a non-Indian Miss Universe titleholder has visited India. Palacios's visit aimed to inaugurate the Miss Universe India competition under the new management of the Glamour Group. The 2024 Miss Universe competition will be held in Mexico.

These changes in the Miss Universe India competition are not just about eliminating age and height limits; they represent

a broader shift towards inclusivity and diversity in beauty pageants. By removing these barriers, the competition aims to provide a platform for women of all ages and heights to showcase their beauty, talent, and intelligence.

The decision to introduce state-level competitions in all states of India is also a significant step towards decentralising the pageant and providing opportunities for women from diverse backgrounds to participate. By eliminating age and height limits, introducing State-level competitions, and appointing State directors, the competition is setting a new standard for beauty pageants, one that celebrates the diversity and talent of women from all walks of life.



# 'Jan sabhas' keep BJP's Mohanlalganj pick busy

**SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW**  
At 11 am on Saturday, the BJP organises a 'jan sabha' for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Kaushal Kishore, the BJP candidate from Mohanlalganj constituency, addresses the gathering amidst a busy schedule of 'jan sabhas' lined up in Malihabad, Chinhat,

and BKT for the day. Kishore, a two-time winner from this constituency, has opted for 'jan sabhas' as his primary mode of connecting with people and seeking votes. "He is too senior a leader to be going door to door campaigning for votes. This work is being done by other party members," a BJP worker remarks before the 'jan sabha' begins. Prior to the event, Kaushal Kishore also meets several people at his residence. Kishore describes his campaign routine, stating, "I start campaigning from morning till 10 at night. In the morning, a large crowd gathers at my residence. I listen to their problems and begin my campaign around 8 am or sometimes around 9 am." Despite the heat, Kishore remains undeterred. "Heat is no deterrent; we are sons of the soil and can bear it with ease," he remarks. Regarding his sustenance during campaigning, Kishore says, "I keep 'laiyya-chana' with me. Sometimes I opt for snake gourds and cucumbers to hydrate myself. People also offer eatables, but I prefer 'laiyya chana'." Kishore shares the feedback he receives from the public, noting a surge in support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The recent statement by a Pakistani minister suggesting Rahul Gandhi as prime minister is impacting voters to stand more firmly



BJP's Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha candidate Kaushal Kishore at a 'jan sabha' on Saturday

with Narendra Modi," he explains. Responding to opponents' claims of no development in Mohanlalganj, Kishore hits back, "It is their job to oppose. Before my tenure, electricity was supplied for only eight hours; now it's 24 hours. I've built roads, facilitated housing, and infrastructure like overbridges and underpasses. We've developed a textile park and secured projects like the BrahMos missile workshop."

Kishore affirms his commitment to 'Viksit Bharat', promising to tackle emerging challenges swiftly. "Our pace of development matches the rate of emerging issues," he says. Addressing farmer concerns in Malihabad, Kishore emphasises, "We've provided ample facilities, including electricity for private tubewells and improved water supply." Regarding voter enthusiasm,

Kishore observes a rising trend since the first election phase, projecting a targeted win of 80 seats for the BJP. "The wave in support of PM Modi is growing, and we aim to secure all 80 seats," he adds. While discussing potential vote margins, Kishore expresses confidence in a substantial victory. "In the last election, I secured 6,29,999 votes, and this time, we anticipate a threefold increase," he says.

# Pahadi community to support Rajnath Singh

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

The Pahadi community expressed its support for Defence Minister and BJP candidate Rajnath Singh on Saturday by organising a programme at the Ramlila ground. General secretary of Parvatiya Mahaparishad Mahendra Rawat highlighted their demands and expectations for proper representation within the BJP in Lucknow based on their population. "We have already secured representation with the mayor's post, where Sushma Kharakwal from our community was selected by the BJP. Now, we seek further representation as MLAs, and we will vote for the party that offers us this opportunity," he stated. Rawat mentioned that their community comprises 5-7 lakh people in the state capital and also desires tickets for the local body elections. In addition to political representation, they have requested the construction of the Mahaparishad Bhawan and have submitted a proposal to Chief Minister Yogi for funding ranging from Rs 1.5 crore to Rs 2.5 crore. "Furthermore, we aim to have Badrinath and Kedarnath temples built in the Sanskritik Upan of the city. We also seek the installation of a statue of Govind Vallabh Pant at the



**"We have already secured representation with the mayor's post, where Sushma Kharakwal from our community was selected by the BJP. Now, we seek further representation as MLAs, and we will vote for the party that offers us this opportunity?"**

park near the Khatu Shyam temple," he added. Rawat emphasised the community's extensive social contributions during the Covid pandemic, including distributing food, clothing, medicines, and oxygen cylinders. "We collect a daily fund of ₹1 from each community member to assist people with various needs, such as funding for weddings," he said, adding, "Our flagship event is the Kauthig Mela." He discussed the journey of the Parvatiya Mahaparishad in becoming a prominent pressure group. "Previously, we simply voted without seeing

our issues resolved or receiving adequate representation. Realising this, we transformed into a pressure group, advocating for our concerns on larger platforms. Our efforts are now yielding results," he noted. Rawat highlighted that many community members reside in areas like Kanpur Road, Cantonment, Lucknow East, Indiranagar, Mahanagar, Purvanchalnagar, Gontinagar, Telibagh, and the outer regions of Lucknow. "The Pahadi community is not affluent and typically works in jobs after acquiring land in the city's outskirts," he added.

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**NOTICE**  
This is to inform that I Fuzaila Fatima UID:8475944 is requesting a correction to my date of birth is currently is 1 January 2009 while the correct date of birth is 15 January 2010

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

**NOTICE**  
Be it known to all that the name of my daughter Shambhavi has been changed to SHAMBHAVI DAKSSH. In future she shall be known as SHAMBHAVI DAKSSH for all purpose. Vivek Kumar Daksh, S/o Late Raghunath Singh, Resident B-1/7, Sector - Aliganj, Lucknow - 226024

**NOTICE**  
Please be informed that my name has been wrongly Written as Archana Devi & DOB 1 January 1985 in some records due to some error. My actual name is Archana Kumari & DOB 15 May 1984. Archana Kumari W/O Ajeet Jha R/O 78, Gali No. -2, Sahinor Colony, Nilmatha, Lucknow, UP.

**NOTICE**  
I, YANNAM RANGAMANI W/o Army No. 14449724L Rank Hav PRASAD YANNAM Unit 641 (SATA) BTY of C/o 56 APO. I have changed my name from RANGAMANI to YANNAM RANGAMANI due to wrong declaration signed. Both name RANGAMANI and YANNAM RANGAMANI pertains to one and the same person.

**NOTICE**  
I Ashwini Kumar Shukla F/o Anshika Shukla studying in class 12th in S.K.D Academy School, C-Block Rajajipuram Lucknow, by mistake in her school records her father's name is wrongly mentioned as "Ashwini Shukla" but her correct father's name is "Ashwani Kumar Shukla".

**NOTICE**  
My mother's name has been recorded as Sameena Khan in my intermediate mark sheet, which is wrong. The correct name recorded in the high school mark sheet is Shaheena Khatoon, which is correct. It should be recorded. Mo. Shadab Khan s/o Shakeel Ahmad Khan Village-Jaburna, Tehsil-Jamana, District-Gazipur

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**सूचना**  
सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मकान सं. 105/39, जवाहर लाल नेहरू रोड, जार्जटाउन, जो नजूल भूखण्ड सं. 7 के अन्वितान्त सं. 7/14 जार्जटाउन (अब प्रो-होल्ड) के जूज भाग पर स्थित है, के जूज भाग का पंजीकृत विक्रय अनुबन्ध उसके स्वामी स्व. बानी प्रसाद साह्याल द्वारा मेरे हक में किया गया है। इस सम्पत्ति के सम्बन्ध में इलाहाबाद जनपद न्यायालय में मुकदमे दर्जराशिन है। अतः यदि उक्त सम्पत्ति का क्रय-विक्रय कोई व्यक्ति व/या संस्था करती है तो वह पूर्णरूप से विधि के प्रतिकूल है, जिसके लिए वह स्वयं जिम्मेदार होगा।  
(डॉ० रमेश चन्द्र सच्चान)  
स्व० बनी प्रसाद साह्याल  
निवासी-164बी, टैगोर टाउन प्रयागराज।

# Businessman duped of ₹38 lakh on pretext of awarding franchise

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

A group of individuals claiming to be managing director and representatives of a fashion, luxury, and lifestyle company have been accused of defrauding a city businessman of over Rs 38 lakh by offering him a franchise to open a salon and spa in the city. The victim, Manoj Kumar Agarwal from Shalimar Gallant in Mahanagar, was only able to have the case registered after the court directed the Gomti Nagar Extension police to take action. The accused have been identified as Kashif Khan (MD), Dushyant Singh, Priyesh Jain, and Hardik Gaur, all from Mumbai. Manoj alleged that he was initially duped of Rs 18 lakh on the pretext of being awarded a franchise by the company. He encountered Dushyant Singh, Priyesh Jain, and Hardik Gaur through an advertisement in November 2022 when he was seeking

opportunities in the fashion industry. They promised Manoj an 85% profit on his investment, assured promotion of his business, and claimed exclusivity for his salon and spa in the city. As discussions progressed, the fraudsters convinced Manoj to invest in opening a salon and spa. "I wanted to expand my business, so I accepted their proposal. I paid them Rs 20.65 lakh for opening the salon, and Kashif Khan even visited the city during the deal. I had no idea they were deceiving me," Manoj lamented. Manoj said he became suspicious when he learned that the same franchise was being offered to another businessman. He confronted them but they refused to refund the money. The police have registered a case based on Manoj's complaint. Meanwhile, an impostor duped a man of Rs 1.18 lakh by emotionally manipulating him with false claims of being an army

personnel in Gomti Nagar Extension police station area on Saturday. According to reports, the victim, Sarthak Srivastava, had advertised online to rent out the upper portion of his house in the area. He received a call from an individual claiming to be a rifleman in the Indian Army stationed in Kanpur. The caller expressed interest in renting the accommodation and proposed to book the house by making an online payment since he would visit Lucknow on the weekend. Aware of fraud cases, Sarthak declined online payment and insisted on receiving payment in person when the caller visited the city. The caller expressed disappointment at this and attempted to gain trust by showing his Aadhaar & PAN cards, army ID & canteen cards as proofs of his military service. Convinced by these documents, Sarthak was persuaded when the caller explained that army payments

are made through a "reversal account" and asked Sarthak to provide a bank account number to generate a token for the transaction. Sarthak fell victim to the scam and paid Rs 12,995 online to the provided bank account but did not receive the promised refund. The fraudster claimed that the token had expired due to Sarthak's delay and requested another payment of Rs 25,990 for a new token, which also did not result in a refund. This pattern continued with Sarthak sending additional sums of Rs 39,000, Rs 21,990, and Rs 49,999 respectively, each time being told the refund process failed due to delay. The fraudster exploited Sarthak's emotions by alleging that civilians distrust army personnel who sacrifice their lives for public safety, eventually persuading Sarthak to send money under false pretenses. The police have registered a case and initiated an investigation into the incident.

# Constable booked for not returning service pistol

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

In a serious breach of protocol regarding the return of weapons after duty, a constable failed to deposit his service pistol upon returning from election duty at Gomti Nagar police station. Station House Officer Deepak Pandey filed a complaint under sections of criminal breach of trust of the Indian Penal Code against Vishal Tyagi, the constable in question. The incident took place on May 9 when Vishal returned from election duty. He had been deployed for election duty from the first phase on April 15 to the third phase. During this duty, he was issued a service pistol and ten cartridges. Upon his return, Vishal returned the cartridges but did not deposit the service pistol. "He failed to return the

pistol, causing it to go missing. A case of criminal breach of trust has been registered against the constable," the SHO stated. Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Police (ADCP), East, Amit Kumawat confirmed that the department has requested the suspension of the constable. A letter has been sent to the Election Commission recommending action against the constable, and a departmental inquiry has been initiated to determine how and under what circumstances the constable violated protocol. The incident has raised concerns among police officers regarding discipline and security. "While the risk of misuse of the pistol is considered low, all possibilities will be investigated during the course of the inquiry," sources said.

# Retired clerk shoots self in head, dies on the spot

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

A retired clerk from the Indian Postal department allegedly shot himself in the head with a licensed double-barrel gun at a park in front of his house in Rajajipuram (E Block) under Talkatora police station on Friday night. He died on the spot. Locals informed police and family members after they heard the gunshot and saw him lying in a pool of blood. According to police, Lakshmi Narayan Trivedi (61), had retired from the post of clerk in the Indian Postal department six months ago. His son Shiva said Trivedi had been suffering from depression for the last few months. "Trivedi had a fight with his wife Rekha and their son Shiva on Friday night. During the fight, Trivedi beat up his wife and son. Enraged over this, Rekha went to her parents' house at Barha Colony in Alambagh while Shiva went to an acquaintance's house in the colony. At night, Trivedi picked up the double-barrel gun kept in his room, went to the park in front of the house and shot himself in the head," the police elaborated. He was rushed to a nearby hospital where doctors pronounced him dead. The police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigations into the case.

# UP prepares plan to propel Namo Drone Didi scheme

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

The Uttar Pradesh government headed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has prepared an action plan to propel Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious Namo Drone Didi in the state. In this regard, various departments have been tasked with responsibilities, and committees have been formed at district levels to implement the action plan. Additionally, a proposal to establish committees at the state level is underway, along with the nomination of the Rural Development department as the nodal agency at the state level. The Namo Drone Didi scheme, an innovative scheme of the Narendra Modi government, has been earnestly adopted by the Yogi government in UP. The objective of this scheme is to empower women and foster self-reliance by offering training in skills such as drone flying, data analysis and drone maintenance. Furthermore, the utilisation of drones in agriculture is expected to result in savings in fertilisers, and agro-chemicals, saving water and reduction in spraying expenses. Under the scheme, the Rural Development department has been entrusted with the responsibility of selecting National Rural Livelihood (NRLM) women's groups in selected clusters. Additionally, one member of the selected women's group will also be chosen for drone

# UP to promote agri startups, introduce AI in farming

Lucknow (PNS): With the objective of boosting the rural economy, Uttar Pradesh, in association with the food processing and allied agriculture industry, has decided to promote the agriculture startups and introduce artificial intelligence (AI) in farming and related activities. The government is also planning to host a global farmers' summit - Krishi Bharat - in November 2024 in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). Delegations of farmers and agricultural experts from countries like the US, Germany, Brazil, Italy, Poland, France, Spain, Indonesia and Kenya will participate in the four-day mega event in Lucknow. The state is looking to host the farm summit on the same scale as the UP Global Investors' Summit (GIS) held in February 2023, which fetched the state more than 19,000 investment proposals to the tune of Rs 40 lakh crore from domestic and multinational companies. While UP is among the leading agricultural producers, the state suffers from lower per hectare yield and sub-optimal food processing. This translates to lower farm incomes and higher farm wastage. The farm summit will encompass various agriculture startups, venture companies and global venture capitalists looking for opportunities to invest in the domestic agricultural value chain.

# CITY BRIEFS



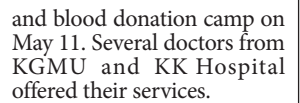
**LU ORGANISES VOTER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**  
Lucknow University conducted a voter awareness campaign on its second campus in Jankipuram. The campaign included a 'padayatra' starting from the university's second campus, where the importance of voting was explained to passersby and shopkeepers, urging them to participate in the upcoming elections on May 20. The journey from the university gate through Jankipuram crossing culminated at the university, with students chanting slogans. Present at the event were Lucknow University Vice-Chancellor Prof Alok Kumar Rai, DSW Prof Sangeeta Sahu, and Dean of College Dr Awadhesh Tripathi among others. Another voter awareness campaign was conducted at Nepalgur crossing in Sitapur. It was led by the vice-chancellor. Students from Shri Krishna College, Sacred Heart College, and RMP College participated in this campaign. RMP College students also staged a street play to raise awareness among voters. Rai visited Shri Krishna College, addressing students and making them aware about the significance of voting. Following this, the vice-chancellor, registrar, and other faculty members from LU visited

given away awards. KGMU Vice-Chancellor Professor Soniya Nityanand was the chief guest, who addressed the gathering, underscoring the significance of the nursing profession.

**HEALTH CAMP**  
The Lucknow Public Collegiate organised a free health and dental check-up on May 10

**LAMP LIGHTING CEREMONY**  
KGMU College of Nursing in Lucknow organised a 'Lamp Lighting Ceremony' for BSc and GNM Nursing students on Saturday, coinciding with the celebration of International Nurses' Day. Dean of Faculty of Nursing Prof Punita Manik presented the annual report of the College of Nursing. BSc Nursing students performed a choreography depicting the life of Florence Nightingale. Newly trained nurses participated in the traditional ceremony, passing candles, taking the pledge, and singing melodious songs. Dr Radha K, Principal of the College of Nursing at SGPGI, was the guest of honour and keynote speaker. In her address, she emphasised the importance of the nursing profession and cost-effective patient care. Dean of Academics Dr Amita Jain addressed the gathering, inspiring the newly trained nurses with words of wisdom. Meritorious students were

and blood donation camp on May 11. Several doctors from KGMU and KK Hospital offered their services.



**AXIS BANK LTD.**  
**CORRIGENDUM**  
PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS  
Please refer to our earlier advertisement of "PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS" published in this newspaper on Friday, 10 May 2024. It is to be noted that at the time of printing the final version a typographical printing error has inadvertently happened wherein the Customer Name Shri Chand Gupta (Sr. No. 10) Gross Weight should be read as '61,000' & Net Weight should be read as 46,500.  
This corrigendum should be read in continuation of the said publication and all other terms shall remain unchanged.  
Date: 12-05-2024. Sd/- (Authorized Official),  
Place: Uttar Pradesh Axis Bank Ltd.

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**NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**  
Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited invites expression of interest (EOI) from eligible vendors for "Procurement of NCDT Annual Overhauling Spares" for 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 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.

**कार्यालय, प्राचार्य, डीए-वीओ कालेज, कानपुर-208001**  
दूरभाष संख्या- 0512-2305534, 2306687  
पत्रांक- 51/निविदा/2024-25 निविदा सूचना तिथि: 11.05.2024  
डीए-वीओ कालेज, कानपुर के मुख्य भवन, प्रशासनिक भवन, मुख्य द्वार, बरामदे गैरली, गुम्बद एवं समस्त विभागों के भवन की बाहरी दीवारों की मरम्मत, रंगाई-पुनर्गठन एवं अन्य आवश्यक कार्य हेतु इच्छुक फर्मों से निर्धारित प्रश्न पर सौलंबद निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। कार्यालय में रुपये 500/- जमा कर दिनांक 18 मई, 2024 को अपरान्ह 3.00 बजे तक निविदा फार्म प्राप्त व जमा कर सकते हैं। निर्धारित तिथि के उपरान्ह/विनाश से प्राप्त किसी भी निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। समस्त कार्यों का विवरण एवं अन्य विस्तृत जानकारी कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। बिना कारण बताये किसी भी निविदा को निरस्त करने का अधिकार अद्योहस्ताक्षरी के पास सुरक्षित रहेगा। प्राचार्य



# Akhilesh could not find a candidate for Kannauj: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the last day of campaigning for the third phase of Lok Sabha elections on Saturday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressed public meetings in Kannauj, Kanpur and Unnao and appealed to voters to cast maximum votes for Bharatiya Janata Party candidates.

Taking a dig at Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, Chief Minister Yogi said, "The INDI Alliance could not find a candidate for Kannauj yet they are contesting the election. They initially nominated one person, only to withdraw the candidacy later. Subsequently, another candidate was named, but was withdrawn as well. Even the third nominee declined to participate. When faced with the absence of contenders, the SP chief expressed his intention to personally serve."

The chief minister urged the people to ensure victory for Subrat Pathak, Ramesh Awasthi, Sakshi Maharaj and Devendra Singh 'Bhole' on all three Lok Sabha seats, respectively.

In Kannauj, the chief minister appealed to the public to go door-to-door and tell people that we want 'Ram devotees' and not 'Ramdrohis'. He said that when the SP had the opportunity, it was busy in spoiling the essence of Kannauj's perfume. "They used to invite rioters to the chief minister's residence and glorify them," he added.

He further mentioned that the BJP had promised to build the Ram temple in Ayodhya, but when the SP was in power, it opened fire at Ram devotees.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other BJP leaders during an election rally in Kanpur on Saturday

"During SP's tenure, there was a terrorist attack in Ayodhya. These people used to withdraw cases against terrorists," he said. "Congress jeopardised the nation's security while the SP compromised the security of Uttar Pradesh's residents. Now, they seek to repeat this pattern together. While Congress aims to further its own enrichment and the SP's Saifai family interests, the BJP is contesting the elections for the national welfare. Under the SP government, the state witnessed rampant hooliganism to the extent that daughters of the state felt

compelled to seek refuge with relatives or in hostels," Yogi remarked. Chief Minister Yogi took a swipe at SP president Akhilesh Yadav, suggesting that his allegiance lies not with the Ram temple, India, Ram devotees, or the common people, but with the mafia and those who oppose India. During his visit to Kanpur, the chief minister urged voters to support Ramesh Awasthi. He warned that if the INDI Alliance comes to power, the country will witness a resurgence of terrorism and

Naxalism. He directed criticism at the Congress, accusing it of spreading fear about constitutional amendments and being the first to undermine freedom of expression by amending the Indian Constitution. He said that Kanpur was blessed with the blessings of Mother Ganga, which had nurtured its prosperity and entrepreneurship. Along with being the land of revolution, Kanpur is also the land of energy for the country's development, he added. Attacking the opposition, Chief Minister Yogi said that the INDI Alliance was losing its

credibility due to negative politics. "They are more concerned about Pakistan's interests. Instead of addressing the issues of terrorism and Naxalism, they are kept on withdrawing cases against terrorists. They worked towards preventing the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya at all costs," he stated. "Before 2014, innocent people and soldiers used to be martyred in terrorist attacks in the country. Now, this cannot happen because the Narendra Modi government has struck at the core of terrorism," Yogi added.

## SP chief terms LS polls 'national movement'

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday termed the ongoing Lok Sabha elections as a "national movement" for the cause of the Constitution and to protect reservations as he called upon his party members to join it to change the fate of the country.

"The 2024 Lok Sabha elections is a historic election. It's an election to safeguard the Constitution and socialist values. Therefore, your additional active cooperation is expected and requested in this election," Yadav said in a post in Hindi addressed to 'samajwadis' on X.

His post came on the last day of the campaigning for the fourth phase of voting, scheduled on May 13. Yadav is contesting from the Kannauj Lok Sabha constituency, which will also go to the polls in this phase. "This election is a new national movement for the cause of the Constitution, socialist values, reservation and dignity-pride-honour. The

nation and society are calling upon you, rise and become a part of the movement to change the fate and future of the country," Yadav said in the post, adding that 'samajwadis' should not succumb to any fear or pressure from those in power. The SP chief also appealed to all the party's office bearers to support the candidates of the INDIA bloc with full dedication and resolve in the upcoming phases and contribute more than they did in the previous phases. "The victory of the INDIA bloc will be the victory of your struggles so far for socialist principles and also a true tribute to other constitutional fighters like (B R) Ambedkar ji, (Ram Manohar) Lohia ji, Janeshwar Mishra ji, and Neta ji (Mulayam Singh Yadav), who dedicated their lives to social justice," Yadav said a day after he and former Congress president Rahul Gandhi addressed joint election rallies in Kannauj and Kanpur. "In the last three phases, by

voting and getting others to vote in a way that made INDIA bloc win, you have laid the foundation of a big victory. On the same strong foundation, the building of the INDIA bloc government is going to be strengthened in the upcoming phases," he said. Addressing the 'samajwadis', the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister in his post on X said that for the upliftment of the nation and society, they should come out in big numbers and cast their votes and encourage others to do the same with the thought that "if not now, then never".

He also warned them against people who might try to oppress voters and said "send the names and photographs of these oppressive people directly to the Election Commission for complaints or contact the 'samajwadi' soldiers around you. Also, remember our appeal and call -- 'matdaan bhi, saavdhaan bhi' (voting with caution)!" PTI

In Unnao, Chief Minister Yogi said that the politics of Ram devotees was for the nation, while the politics of 'Ramdrohis' was for their families. 'Ramdrohis' think of nothing beyond their family, he added. "The SP has given tickets to its own family members. Currently, they are contesting on five seats. Their children and

grandchildren will also contest elections. They suck the blood of the public," he said. Contrary to this, he stated, when politics is for the nation then the country is respected in the world. "Congress intellectuals say that Ram temple should not have been built inside the country, SP says Ram temple is useless. Can they say the same

for any mosque?" he asked. "No, they cannot because they do not have the courage. Those who point fingers at the Ram temple are 'Ramdrohis'. Today, festivals like Deepotsav in Ayodhya, Rangotsav in Mathura-Vrindavan, and Dev Deepawali in Kashi are being celebrated with great pomp and show," Yogi said.

## Arvind Kejriwal criticised for his remarks on Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Social media users strongly criticised Arvind Kejriwal, who is out on bail in the liquor scam case, for his remarks on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

On social media platform X, users attacked Kejriwal for sidelining Anna Hazare as well as his party leaders like Prashant Bhushan, Ashutosh and Kumar Vishwas.

One of the social media platform users wrote, "The BJP is a cadre-based party where even an ordinary worker can rise to the top position through hard work. The chemistry between PM Modi and CM Yogi is having an impact across the entire country. Arvind Kejriwal's statement is an indication that even the opposition now recognises that the Modi government is returning to power at the Centre while UP zeroes in to achieve CM Yogi's target of 80 out of 80 seats."

It is worth mentioning here that Arvind Kejriwal, who was released on interim bail in the liquor scam, said in a press conference on Saturday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would remove Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath from office after

the elections. His statement has drawn widespread criticism on social media. Hundreds of users have strongly reacted, showing Kejriwal a mirror to his past actions.

One user, Vijendra Kumar, wrote, "The man who betrayed his father-like Anna Hazare, veterans like Kumar Vishwas, Yogendra Yadav, Prashant Bhushan, is now questioning Yogi Adityanath."

Another user, Dr Surjeet, wrote, "The man not only betrayed Anna Hazare and Kumar Vishwas but also did not spare his children. Everyone knows who sidelined Anna, Yogendra Yadav, Prashant Bhushan, Ashutosh, etc." Amit Yadav wrote, "Focus on your CM's chair; we have many capable leaders like Yogi Adityanath. BJP can make anyone the chief minister as per their wish."

Similarly, another user wrote, "BJP is a cadre-based party where any ordinary worker can rise from booth level to the top level. It is not like the Aam Aadmi Party, where as soon as Kejriwal goes to jail, Sunita Kejriwal takes the second position." Shivraj Singh Dabi wrote: "One party, One Leader works for you, where the wife takes the place of the husband. It works

in Congress where the son replaces the grandmother or father. It works in SP, DMK and RJD where the son is given the place of the father. There is only one BJP where equal opportunities are available through democratic means."

Praising Chief Minister Yogi's UP model, a user named Ganesh remarked that Arvind Kejriwal predicts future events. He knows that in the times to come, he will have to face Chief Minister Yogi because everyone knows how Yogi governs and tackles corrupt systems. Avnish Sinha stated that this declaration simply implies that even opposition leaders acknowledge that Prime Minister Modi will return to power and that the public is overwhelmingly supporting Yogi with a mandate of 80 out of 80 seats.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's interview given to a private TV channel was a topic of much discussion on the social media platform X on Saturday. The hashtag related to this '#YogiAdityanathinAdal' was among the top trends. Till late evening, thousands of people had discussed this interview of Chief Minister Yogi on this hashtag.

## Campaigning ends for 13 LS seats in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Election campaigning in 13 Lok Sabha constituencies going to polls in the fourth phase of elections on May 13 ended on Saturday evening, with leaders of various political parties making a last-minute appeal to voters to vote for their respective party candidates.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressed election rallies in Unnao, Kannauj and Kanpur on Saturday, while the Samajwadi Party held a public outreach programme in Kannauj Lok Sabha constituency from where party chief Akhilesh Yadav is contesting the polls. Polling for the by-election to Dadra assembly constituency in Shahjahanpur district will also be held along with the polls in 13 Lok Sabha seats on May 13.

The Lok Sabha constituencies going to polls in the fourth phase include Shahjahanpur (SC), Kheri, Dhaurahra, Sitapur, Hardoi (SC), Misrikh (SC), Unnao, Farrukhabad, Etawah (SC), Kannauj, Kanpur, Akbarpur and Bahraich (SC), spread in 13 districts. A total of 130 candidates are in the poll fray in this phase. Of particular interest in the fourth phase polls is the Kannauj Lok Sabha constituency from where SP chief and

leader of opposition in UP assembly Akhilesh Yadav is seeking election to Lok Sabha and is facing challenge from sitting Bharatiya Janata Party MP Subrat Pathak and Bahujan Samaj Party's Imran Bin Zafar. The prestige of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra Tani, who is eyeing a hat-trick from Kheri, is also at stake in the fourth phase of polling. The key constituencies going to polls in the fourth phase are Kannauj where Akhilesh Yadav replaced his nephew Tej Pratap Yadav as the SP candidate. He will be involved in a tough contest with BJP's Subrat Pathak, who won from the seat in the 2019 general election with a margin of over 12,000 votes, defeating Dimple Yadav.

The SP chief had won the Kannauj Lok Sabha seat first in 2000 and later in 2004 as well as in 2009. He had vacated the seat after he became the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh in 2012, and his wife Dimple Yadav won the by-election unopposed. In 2014 too, Dimple had won from Kannauj but she lost the seat to BJP's Pathak in 2019.

Unnao Lok Sabha constituency, positioned between capital Lucknow and the industrial city of Kanpur, holds great importance. The BJP has fielded Rajesh Kashyap with Jyotsana Gond. Arun Kumar Sagar has

been fielded by the BJP while Daudram Verma is the BSP candidate from this constituency. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Arun Kumar Sagar had emerged victorious from the Shahjahanpur constituency. He secured 6,88,990 votes, while Amar Chandra Jauhar of the BSP secured 4,20,572 votes. Sagar won by an impressive margin of 2,68,418 votes. The industrial city of Kanpur will see a fight between BJP's Ramesh Awasthi, Congress candidate Alok Mishra and BSP nominee Kuldeep Bhadauria. Satyadev Pachauri, the sitting BJP MP from Kanpur, won in 2019 Lok Sabha elections by polling over 4.68 lakh votes while Sriprakash Jaiswal of Congress polled over 3.13 lakh votes. Satyadev Pachauri had achieved a landslide victory with a remarkable margin of 1,55,934 votes.

Of the 13 parliamentary constituencies going to polls in the fourth phase, the BJP has reposed its faith on 11 sitting MPs by giving them tickets, while it has fielded new candidates Ramesh Awasthi from Kanpur and Anand Kumar from the Bahraich (SC) constituencies.

In the INDIA bloc, the SP has fielded candidates from 11 Lok Sabha seats in this phase, while on two seats — Kanpur (Alok

Misra) and Sitapur (Rakesh Rathor) — candidates of the Congress are in the fray. As many as four BJP candidates — Union minister Ajay Mishra Tani (Kheri), Rekha Verma (Dhaurahra), Mukesh Rajput (Farrukhabad) and Devendra Singh alias Bhole (Akbarpur) — are eyeing a hat-trick of wins, while Rajesh Verma is eyeing a fifth term from Sitapur. Ashok Kumar Rawat and Ram Shankar Katheria are eyeing a fourth term from Misrikh (SC) and Etawah (SC) respectively. Sitting MP from Hardoi (SC) Jai Prakash and incumbent from Unnao Sakshi Maharaj are eyeing a sixth term in the Lok Sabha. Meanwhile UP's Chief Electoral Officer Navdeep Rinwa said that returning officers in all 13 Lok Sabha seats had been directed to ensure that polling parties were despatched to respective polling stations by Sunday evening. He said the returning officers had been directed to provide all necessary facilities to the polling staff and the voters in polling stations and polling booths. He said the polling staff had been provided medical kits for prevention from heat stroke.

Over 2.46 crore voters will be eligible to exercise their voting rights in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha polls in the state.

## Maneka says Varun's writings critical of govt may have cost him ticket

Sultanpur: BJP leader Maneka Gandhi on Saturday indicated that her son Varun Gandhi's writings that were sometimes critical of the government may have cost him the party's Lok Sabha ticket from Pilibhit but asserted that he would do very well even without it.

In an exclusive interview with PTI at her residence here, the former Union minister and BJP's Sultanpur candidate also said Varun Gandhi wants to come and campaign for her but a decision on that hasn't been taken yet. The Sultanpur seat in Uttar Pradesh goes to polls on May 25 in the sixth round of the seven-phase general elections. Polling was held in Pilibhit in the first phase on April 19. On Varun Gandhi being denied a ticket and if she felt bad as a mother, Maneka Gandhi said, "Well I can't say I was delighted but I am sure Varun will do very well even without a ticket." Asked about calls from Pilibhit that he should have been fielded from there this time also, she said, "Yes, he should have been there but the party has taken a decision and that's it. On whether in future Varun Gandhi may switch to Sultanpur like earlier or Pilibhit was his 'karmabhoomi' now, Maneka

Gandhi said that "at the moment, of course, Pilibhit, and India is his karmabhoomi, let him work all over."

Asked if his writings on certain subjects that were critical of the government cost him the ticket, she said, "I can't think of one other reason."

On whether Varun Gandhi will campaign for her in Sultanpur, Maneka Gandhi said he is happy to come and has been asking to come "but we haven't decided on it as yet". "I don't want to put everybody through this," she added. The eight-time MP also asserted that in her elections she only talks about local issues. "It is just about work that has been done and work that will be done because that interests people much more than national issues," she told PTI. On how she is placed this time as compared to the last time when she won by over 14,000 votes, she said, "I have settled in and the election seems to be going well and hopefully we will do much better."

On her late husband Sanjay Gandhi's development works in the region and its towering impact on the minds of the people, she said that "the family is remembered and he is remem-

bered a lot". Asked about the Ram temple being a dominant theme of the BJP narrative in Uttar Pradesh, she said that in Sultanpur, perhaps, it is less important even though it is next to Ayodhya. "People are very happy about the Ayodhya temple, (but) it is not part of the narrative of the election. It may be in everybody's heart but it is not part of the spoken narrative," the former Union minister said. Maneka Gandhi also hit out at Congress leader Sam Pitroda for raking up the inheritance tax issue. "It was inappropriate of him to raise it. Sitting in America, you can't really sound off if you are a responsible member of your own party. Personally, I am totally against inheritance tax," she said. Asked about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claims on the issue of "redistribution of wealth", the BJP leader said, "I think he was just reacting to what Pitroda said." Talking about the government schemes that have made a difference on the ground, Maneka Gandhi said giving people rations has certainly helped and one of the wonderful things that has happened is people getting "pucca" houses. This has impacted a lot, she said.

## BJP's theatrics not going to work in LS polls this time: Maya

Shravasti: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Saturday said none of the theatrics and catch-phrases of the BJP is going to work in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls.

Addressing a rally in support of Haji Daddan Khan, the BSP candidate from Shravasti, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said the people of the country "have understood the BJP". She said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has made innumerable promises regarding good days for the poor, weak, middle class and other working sections of the society but in reality, not even a quarter of those have been fulfilled.

"None of its old and new theatrics, statements and guarantees will be of any use in the election this time," she added. Mayawati reiterated that the BSP is the only political party in the country that has not taken money from any capitalist through electoral bonds. "The BJP has spent most of its

time and energy to make its favourite capitalists more rich, giving concessions to them and protecting them at every level. With financial support from them, this party and other parties run their organisations and contest elections," she said.

Training her guns on the Congress, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said the grand old party ruled the country and most of the states for years since independence, but was thrown out of power due to its wrong policies and functioning. "Same is the situation with its allies too," she added. "It appears that this time, the BJP is also not going to come back to power at the Centre provided that the polls are free and fair and there are no irregularities in the voting machines," Mayawati said. Shravasti is scheduled to go to polls in the sixth phase of the seven-phase election on May 25 and the counting of votes will be taken up on June 4. PTI

## Will win Amethi, Rae Bareilly by big margins: Bhupesh Baghel

Rae Bareilly: BJP's Smriti Irani has carved her identity by opposing Rahul Gandhi but cannot do so in Amethi this time and will face defeat, Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel has said, exuding confidence that his party will win both the Amethi and Rae Bareilly seats in Uttar Pradesh by "big margin" in the Lok Sabha polls.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, who lost Amethi to Irani in the 2019 elections, has this time been fielded by the Congress from Rae Bareilly and is contesting against BJP's Dinesh Pratap Singh. Gandhi family aide Kishori Lal Sharma is taking on Irani in Amethi. Both the seats have had close ties with the Gandhi family since Indira Gandhi contested and then Sanjay Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have all fought the polls from either of these two constituencies, Baghel said. "They have familial ties with every household here. The decision (of fielding Rahul Gandhi from Rae Bareilly) was of the high command and our leaders have already spoken about it. We are fighting both the seats. Kishori Lal Sharma ji has been serving people for over 40 years. He also has had ties with every house-

hold," Baghel told PTI in an interview here. The former Chhattisgarh chief minister pointed out that Sharma has been here as an MP representative. "The other side is scared, especially Smriti Irani because her identity has been carved only through opposing Rahul Gandhi. Now who will she oppose? She has been caught in a trap now and will face defeat," Baghel said.

Baghel is here as a senior All India Congress Committee (AICC) observer for the Rae Bareilly seat and will be holding a series of public outreach programmes as well. "Kishori Lal Sharma will defeat her by a big margin of votes. We will win both the seats by a big margin," he said. Baghel also hit back at the BJP for taking jibes at Sharma and calling him "Gandhi family's peon" and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's "clerk", saying it shows the party's "feudal mindset". "As far as fighting elections is concerned, (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi ji himself came to Varanasi but hails from Gujarat. Many people fight from different places. Atal Bihari Vajpayee fought from Lucknow but is from Gwalior,"

Baghel said, rebutting the BJP's charge that Sharma is an outsider as he hails from Ludhiana. On Irani's attack that Rahul Gandhi had run away from Amethi, Baghel said it is not appropriate to make such comments about the Gandhi family.

"They fear no one, and members of this family have sacrificed their lives for this country. Saying such things about such a family, you are doing politics but one should not lower the discourse to this level," Baghel said. In 2019, Rahul Gandhi had contested the Lok Sabha polls from Wayanad in Kerala and Amethi. He had won from Wayanad. The Congress earlier this week appointed former chief ministers Baghel and Ashok Gehlot as AICC senior observers for the Rae Bareilly and Amethi parliamentary constituencies, respectively. Priyanka Gandhi has taken command of the campaign in the two constituencies. She will be holding hundreds of 'nukkad sabhas', meetings and door-to-door campaign programmes. The Amethi and Rae Bareilly seats will go to polls on May 20 in the fifth round of the seven-phase general election. PTI



# 'Kashi will give message of unity in diversity'

PM roadshow proposed on May 13

PNS ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh's Minister of State for AYUSH, Food Safety and Drug Administration (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' said that through the proposed roadshow of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 13, Kashi would give the message of unity in diversity as people of various regions living in the city since long would join it in their traditional costumes. Prime Minister Modi will file his nomination papers as Bharatiya Janata Party candidate from Varanasi parliamentary constituency on May 14. Dayashankar Mishra was addressing the members of various social organisations and societies, including Maheshwari Samaj, Jain Samaj, Yadav Samaj, Varanasi Sports

Association, Shri Govardhan Mata Utsav Samiti, Bhumihar Samaj, Marwari Samaj, Kendriya Brahmin Sabha, Rotary Club, Kinnar Samaj and others here on Saturday. Inviting the participants to join the proposed roadshow of the prime minister, Mishra said that preparations for this mega event were in full swing. "During the roadshow, a glimpse of 'Mini India' will be seen from Malviya Statue (Lanka) to Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham as people from many states will welcome Prime Minister Modi," he said. He added that as Kashi resides in the heart of the prime minister, he (Modi) has done amazing work for the development of this holy city. "It is our good fortune that Modiji has again chosen Kashi as his parliamentary constituency for the third time," the minister said and added that in the roadshow the representatives of various social organisations and societies will remain present at different points and "it is our responsibility to make the best possible arrangements there". "On the roadshow route, people belonging to different communities will represent their communities through their costumes and will attract the attention of the prime minister through the sound of conch shell and damru, dance, music and flower shower," Mishra said.



UP Minister Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' addressing different social organisations in Varanasi on Saturday

ability to make the best possible arrangements there". "On the roadshow route, people belonging to different communities will represent their communities through their

costumes and will attract the attention of the prime minister through the sound of conch shell and damru, dance, music and flower shower," Mishra said.

Prominent among those present in the meeting were RK Chaudhary, Sanjeev Shah, Pradeep Tulsyan, Dr Hardatt Shukla, Gaurav Rathi, Rajesh Baheti, Govind Kejriwal,

Deepak Bajaj, Gauri Shankar Never, Anuj Didwania, Yogendra Singh Nahar, Neelu Mishra, Jagjitan Pandey, Jagatguru Shivpujan Shastri, Dr Ajay Tiwari and others.

# Pvt hospitals adopt 51 DSTB patients

PNS ■ VARANASI

Under the TB-Mukt Bharat Abhiyan, private hospitals of the district are continuously coming forward to adopt tuberculosis patients. In April, six private hospitals adopted 51 new patients of Drug Sensitive Tuberculosis (DSTB) and will assist in their treatment and nutrition. Apart from this, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including Health department officials are also adopting TB patients and providing them treatment and nutrition as well as emotional support. Besides, the Varanasi branch of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has claimed to assist in the nutrition of 25 new patients by adopting them. Nishant Parasar, a member of Heal Foundation and a resident of Kuwait, has also been inspired and has resolved to help in the nutrition of five patients of Bhelupur TB Unit by adopting them. Deputy Chief Medical Officer Dr Moizuddin Hashmi has also adopted 10 TB patients. Regular adoption of TB patients is going on by Chief Medical Officer Dr Sandeep Chaudhary and District Tuberculosis Officer Dr Piyush Rai. The CMO has adopted 10 TB patients and DTO five TB patients.

Treatment of all these patients continues for six months. During this time they are also provided with nutrition packets. As soon as the treatment of the adopted patients is completed, the CMO and DTO adopt other patients and help them in their treatment and nutrition. Apart from this, on the Nikshay Diwas observed on the 15th of every month, they meet the adopted patients and give them emotional support. The CMO said that treatment of TB was possible but for this regular medicine intake and care was very important. "TB testing facilities are available in all urban and rural health centres and hospitals," he said. The DTO said that with the increase in TB notifications, it was also necessary to complete the treatment of patients successfully. At present the TB success rate of the district is 91 per cent. Currently 7,674 TB patients are on treatment. The number of Nikshay Mitras is 2,535. In the last seven months, 60 new Nikshay Mitras have been registered. Out of the treated TB patients, 5,662 have been adopted by Nikshay Mitras, which includes 375 TB patients up to the age of 14 years and 5,287 TB patients above 15 years of age. The process of adoption of the remaining TB patients is underway.

# Modi always encourages players: MLC

PNS ■ VARANASI

Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency coordinator of Bharatiya Janata Party and MLC Ashwani Tyagi asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always encouraged sports and players at the national and international level. He was addressing players at the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency central office of the party in Mahmooorgan area here on Friday while appealing to the sportspersons to take part in the proposed roadshow of Prime Minister Modi here on May 13. Tyagi also praised the prime minister for modernisation of the Srigra Stadium for the development of sports in his parliamentary constituency, Varanasi. He also hailed the prime minister for providing an international cricket stadium in Ganjari to fulfill the dreams of local cricket players. He said that more than 3,000 players were being given assistance of Rs 50,000 per month by the prime minister under the Khelo India Games for their development and lakhs of players were taking training in



BJP's Lok Sabha seat coordinator Ashwani Tyagi addressing sportspersons in Varanasi on Friday

about 1,000 Khelo India centres at the grassroots level. "The prime minister has emphasised the role of sports in promoting the spirit of strong determination and perseverance among the youth," Tyagi said, appealing to partic-

ipating national and international level players to thank their biggest well-wisher prime minister by participating in the proposed roadshow in large numbers with zeal and enthusiasm. Mayor Ashok Tiwari said that all the young players

should wear their sports attire during the roadshow. Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency convener Surendra Narayan Singh thanked the players for participating in the meeting. Dr Avinash Singh, Dr Subodh

Singh, Sanjay Singh, Rakesh Pandey, Sarvesh Pandey, Vinod Singh, Rahul Singh, Saurabh Singh, Anand Vikram Singh, Sunil Yadav, Abhishek Pandey, Abhimanyu Rai and many others were also present in the meeting.

# Nurses Day to be celebrated today

PNS ■ VARANASI

International Nurses Day will be celebrated at the KN Udupa Auditorium of the Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) here at 4 pm on Sunday. IMS-BHU Director Prof SN Sankhwar will be the chief guest at the function and Medical Superintendent of Sir Sunderlal Hospital Prof Kailash Kumar will preside over it.

# POSTER PRESENTED

Dr Ritusha Mishra, associate professor in the Radiotherapy and Radiation Medicine Department of IMS-BHU presented the poster on her research on 'Efficacy and toxicity of two-fractions in one application during HDR brachytherapy in cancer cervix' in the prestigious European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology (ESTRO) conference held at Glasgow, Scotland, UK from May 3 to 7. The theme of the conference was 'Radiation oncology: Bridging the care gap'.

# Three men arrested for involvement in multiple loot cases

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Police announced the arrest of three men allegedly involved in multiple loot incidents across the city. Acting on a tip-off from an informer in the Kareli area, officers apprehended the suspects on Saturday. The items recovered included silver and gold ornaments, three stolen motorcycles, two pistols with ammunition. During interrogation, the suspects confessed to seven incidents of theft and robbery. DCP Deepak Bhukar stated they had prior intelligence on the suspects, which led

Inspector, Kareli, Amarnath Rai to coordinate their arrest. Authorities also seized 12 rings, 11 nose rings, eight earrings, and other jewellery items, along with Rs 1,35,000 in cash. ACP, Atarasiya, Pushkar Verma mentioned the gang's modus operandi involved recce in Kareli and other areas. The accused targeted homes when families were away and robbed lone nighttime travellers. The arrested accused have been identified as Atishaan, Kaish, and Sinaul aka Sanaulah Shaikh, hailing from different locations.

# Former MLA of SP quits party



Varanasi (PNS): Om Prakash 'Baba' Dubey, a popular leader from Purvanchal (eastern UP) and former MLA from Badlapur assembly constituency in Jaunpur district, announced his resignation from the primary member-

ship of the Samajwadi Party. Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Dubey said, "I have decided to sever ties with the party due to the violation of political principles and purity." The former MLA said he had

informed SP national president Akhilesh Yadav about his decision in a letter. He further said that he had taken the step as the SP had made Babu Singh Kushwaha its candidate from Jaunpur constituency by bringing him from Banda. "Dozens of corruption and criminal cases were registered against Babu Singh Kushwaha and he went to jail during the Congress rule at the Centre and the Akhilesh Yadav-led SP government in the state," Dubey said. He added that there is a lot of public outrage in Jaunpur over Kushwaha, who is out on bail, as he has been fielded by both SP and Congress as the joint candidate of INDIA.

# National Technology Day celebrated

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Institute Innovation Council (IIC-IIT Allahabad) celebrated National Technology Day on Jhalwa campus with a focus on fostering entrepreneurship among students. The event, themed 'School to Startup', was organised in collaboration with Vigyan Bharti, IAPT, and IEEE Photonic Society. Dr Vibha Mishra, chairperson of the Skill India Programme, highlighted various government schemes supporting startups and business development in India. Acting Director of IIT-A Prof OP Vyas emphasised the importance of entrepreneurial endeavours, particularly amidst India's burgeoning startup landscape. He urged attendees to adopt a problem-solving approach to contribute meaningfully to society. Prof Shekhar Verma elaborated on the transformation of small ideas into successful businesses, citing examples like motion pictures and Tesla's innovations. Dr Ranjna Vyas discussed IIT-A's startup culture and how it empowers students to devel-

op innovative business ideas, emphasising that age is not a barrier to entrepreneurship. Dr Pramod Kumar proposed a vote of thanks on behalf of IIC-IIT-A to conclude the event.

# YOUTH CONFERENCE

At a youth conference in Uruva of Meja Assembly, Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) National President Tejashvi Surya urged support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Surya emphasised the importance of national security and development under Modi's leadership, citing improved safety across communities. He highlighted the upcoming election's significance in choosing India's prime minister and urged attendees to vote for BJP candidate Neeraj Tripathi. Surya credited Modi's tenure for a decline in terrorist activities, contrasting it with previous instances of terror during Hindu festivals. The speech underscored BJP's narrative on security and development, positioning Modi's leadership as pivotal for India's future.

# Special paediatric care for Prayagraj residents

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prayagraj residents can now access specialised pediatric care, as Medanta Lucknow's paediatric specialists have commenced services in the city. Dr Anil Gupta, Associate Director of Paediatric CCS at Medanta Lucknow, announced the launch during a press conference. He highlighted the unique treatment requirements for children, emphasising the importance of paediatricians in their care. The discussion included insights on anaphylaxis and paediatric urinary tract infections (UTI), underscoring medical advancements in children's healthcare. Dr Anvesha Chakraborty, consultant, paediatric surgery and paediatric urology at Medanta Lucknow, elaborated on successful surgeries for children, addressing causes, symptoms, and treatments of paediatric UTI. The initiative aims to address the specific healthcare needs of children in Prayagraj.

# CONCERN OVER RISE IN HEART ATTACKS AMONG YOUTH

Dr Abhishek Sachdeva, Associate Professor of Cardiology at Motilal Nehru Medical College, highlighted a concerning rise in heart attacks among young people. Dr Sachdeva announced an upcoming seminar at AMA Hall in Prayagraj on Sunday to discuss the causes and treatment of heart attacks. He emphasised lifestyle factors such as poor diet, lack of exercise, stress, smoking, and alcohol as significant contributors to heart disease among youth. The doctor urged individuals not to ignore symptoms like chest pain, stressing the importance of seeking immediate medical attention. Dr Sachdeva emphasised that prompt treatment is crucial and encouraged individuals experiencing symptoms to seek medical help promptly.

# One labourer killed, 6 hurt as brick kiln wall collapses

Maharajan: A labourer was killed and six others were injured on Saturday when the wall of a brick kiln collapsed on them in a village here, police said. Upon receiving information, the police and the administrative officers rushed to the spot and took the injured to a local hospital, they said. The deceased was identified as Ashok Sahni (35) of Kushinagar, Circle Officer (Sadar) Abha Singh said. "This morning information was received that some people were buried under the debris of a collapsed wall at a brick kiln in the Kamhariya Khurd village under the Bhitauli police station area. The labourers buried under the wall were soon rescued using JCB machines," the CO said. The incident occurred when the labourers were sitting near the weak wall, the circle officer said. "Based on the investigation, we will take further action in the case," the CO added.

Office of the Superintending Engineer  
3<sup>rd</sup> Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh  
Email : sepwddph@rediffmail.com

Letter No. : 2181 / 208C (Yata 'D')-03/2024 Dated : 10/05/2024

**National Competitive E-Tender Notice**  
The Superintending Engineer 3rd Circle, Public Works Department Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of "Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand" for following works. All other information will be available online from date 15-05-2024 at 5.00 PM onward on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Earnest Money (in Lac)	Cost of Tender (in Rs.)	Validity of Tender (day)	Period of Completion (months)	Contractor's Category of Registration
1	Upgradation work of Circuit House Building located in Champawat.	10.50	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	09	Category 'A' and above for Building works, in any state Govt./Govt. of India /Govt. undertaking.

# Railway Board member inspects Banaras station

PNS ■ VARANASI

Railway Board's Additional Member (Marketing and Business Development) Rajesh Pathak inspected the commercial services and passenger amenities available at Banaras railway station of North Eastern Railway (Varanasi Division) here on Saturday. On this occasion, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Sheikh Rehman, Assistant Commercial Manager Pushkar Singh Rawat, Assistant Operations Manager (Coaching) Heera Lal, Station Superintendent Vivek Kumar Singh, Deputy Station

Superintendent (Commerce) Sarvesh Pandey and senior officers of various departments, supervisors and employees were present. Pathak made a thorough inspection of various modern facilities available in the general passenger hall located at the second entry of Banaras railway station, water fountains displaying the form of Shiv Ganga, stalls of the newly established Jan Aushadhi Kendra in the passenger hall, Banarasi sarees and black pottery stalls under 'One Station One Product' scheme along with enquiry counters, digital charting system, UTS counters, ATM



kiosks and other amenities. During his inspection, Pathak, along with senior railway officials, also inspected the water

vending machines, bottle crusher machines, water coolers, passenger waiting rooms of various categories, air-condi-

tioned lounge, general passenger hall, IRCTC-run and licensed food stalls and Jan Aahar centres, cleanliness and rate list of pay and use toilets, booking register and lifting scales in parcel office, arrangement of digital payment at PRS and UTS ticket counters and other offices. He gave many instructions regarding boosting railway revenue. Pathak also thoroughly inspected the passenger accommodation, retiring rooms and dormitory located on the first floor of Banaras railway station and directed the officers concerned to take comprehensive steps to promote online booking.



# Priyanka ups the ante against Modi in rally in Maharashtra

TN RAGHUNATHA ■  
MUMBAI

Pitching her brother Rahul Gandhi as the "real challenger" to Prime Minister Narendra Modi who was more interested in power politics than the welfare of the people, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi on Saturday advised Modi to learn lessons of courage and determination from her grandmother and late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who divided Pakistan into two.

Upping the ante against Modi who she said during his electioneering "cries like a kid and complains that he is being abused by his opponents", Priyanka said that even during the election time, the Prime Minister did not have courage to spell out to people across the country the achievements of his government during the last 10 years. Addressing an election rally at the tribal dominated Nandurbar in north Maharashtra where Modi had addressed a rally on Friday, Priyanka said: "Modi ji says I

am fighting corruption alone. How can you say that? The entire government machinery and resources are with you. Your own people say that you are the tallest leader in the word and you hobnob with Prime Ministers and Presidents across the globe. But, when elections come, you start crying like a child. You complain that your opponents are heaping abuses on you," she said.

"Modi ji, show some courage. You should be courageous because you are in public life. Learn from Indira ji. She was a woman like Goddess Durga. She divided Pakistan into two. She was so brave and courageous. Learn from her what courage, determination and bravery are all about. But, you do not want to learn from a great woman leader like Indira ji, who laid down her life for the country, because you call her traitor," Priyanka said.

Accusing Modi of bringing down the stature of the Prime Minister's post, Priyanka said: "The Prime Minister's post has stature and dignity. We



have tall leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Manmohan Singh and A B Vajpayee who conducted themselves so well as Prime Ministers and whom we respect. But, you have brought down the stature and dignity of the office of the

Prime Minister. Even at the time of elections, you do not have the courage to spell out to people the achievements of your government during the last 10 years," Priyanka, who spoke at length about the much-discussed poll promises made by the

Opposition Congress, pitched her brother Rahul Gandhi as the "real challenger" to Prime Minister Modi, who did not know how to respect the people.

"Tell me who do you want as your leader? You need such a leader who took the trouble

of walking 4,000 kilometers, reached out to people at their doorsteps and tried to understand their problems. You need a leader who is clean and who wants to be amidst you and who wipes your tears or a leader who sheds crocodile tears from the stage," Priyanka said, as she compared her brother with Modi.

"Do you want a leader who understands and lists your problems, who does not get deterred of being disqualified as an MP or against whom people foist false cases in courts. Or a leader who mouths lies after lies while talking to people," she asked.

"Do you want such a leader who practises value-based politics and who commits to serve people? Or do you want such a leader who practises power politics all the time, who is more interested in glamour and power that the office brings to him and a leader who is more interested about himself and does not know how to honour or respect the people," Priyanka went on to ask.

Drawing a comparison

between Modi and Indira Gandhi, Priyanka said that whenever he is on the stage, no leader dares to go near him. "He never goes to meet people at their homes. You would have seen photographs of Indira ji inside the homes of people... See the difference, the greatest among the prime ministers visited your homes and bowed down her head and listened to your problems. Here is a leader (Modi) who has been the Prime Minister for the past ten years but has never visited any home," the Congress general secretary said.

Alluding to a statement made by Modi at a public rally on Friday that he was a worshipper of Shabri, Priyanka said: "Modi ji says he is a worshipper of Shabri. How can Lord Ram who honoured Shabri be compared to Modiji who chose to remain silent when hundreds of Shabris were being subjected to atrocities. His government helped those who perpetrated crimes against women."

Accusing Modi of protecting and patronising such people

who indulged in atrocities against women, Priyanka said: "Modi ji did not step out of the prime minister's resident when the victims of sexual assault in UP's Hathras and Unnao died or when India's women wrestlers complained about sexual assault. He kept quiet. Where is Lord Ram and Shabri and where is Modi who protected the perpetrators of sexual crimes and gave tickets to the son of the accused. Modi's words are hollow. They do not carry any weight," Priyanka also lamented that the Narendra Modi government treated President Droupadi Murum, a tribal woman, badly. "Murum is a tribal woman. She has done so much work. Her work has been recognised and she has become the President. She was not invited to inaugurate the new Rashtrapati Bhavan or for the inauguration of Ram Mandir. The government only speaks about honouring tribals. But, when it comes to honouring the Adivasis, they go on the backfoot," Priyanka said.

## Modi will continue to lead country post-2024: Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD

Led by Home Minister Amit Shah BJP on Saturday said that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's claim that the Prime Minister wants Amit Shah to succeed is his acknowledgement that the party is set to retain power for a third straight term. Mounting a counter-charge on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader following his stinging attack on his party, the ruling party said in a jibe that Kejriwal is speaking of his party's succession plan but could not have trust in any of his AAP colleagues to succeed him despite being jailed on money laundering charges.

At a rally in Hyderabad, Amit Shah asserted Prime Minister Narendra Modi will continue to lead the country post 2024 Lok Sabha polls and hit out at Kejriwal for claiming the PM was seeking votes for making Shah his successor, citing the 75 years age 'rule'. There was nothing written in the BJP's constitution on any such age ceiling, Shah told reporters here. There was no confusion in the BJP over the matter.

Shah was responding to Kejriwal's claim that Modi was asking for votes for the Union Home Minister to make him PM as the prime minister



would turn 75 next year. "I would like to tell Arvind Kejriwal and company and the whole Indi alliance, Modi becomes 75, there is no need for you to feel happy. It is not written anywhere in BJP's constitution. Modi will complete the term and will continue to lead the country. There is no confusion in BJP on this," Shah said.

He also said if Kejriwal thinks that Supreme Court's interim bail is a clean chit, then his understanding with regard to law is poor. The home minister also expressed confidence that the BJP would emerge as the largest party in South India in terms of Lok Sabha seats. The BJP is confident of winning more than 10 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana, he said.

BJP spokesman and Rajya Sabha MP Sudhanshu Trivedi said with Kejriwal throwing the dictatorship barb at Prime Minister Modi, it was a case of pot calling the kettle black. Trivedi noted that Kejriwal threw out many of his colleagues like Prashant Bhusan, Yogendra Yadav, Kumar Vishwas and Kiran Bedi and discarded the principles he espoused while joining politics. So many people have been abusive towards Modi and continue to do so, he said. As someone high on liquor at times reveals the truth, so has Kejriwal after being involved in the liquor "scam" and jailed for this, Trivedi said mockingly. Kejriwal has acknowledged, willingly or unwillingly, that Modi is coming back to power.

## NIA conducts raids at six locations in Jammu in terror conspiracy case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
JAMMU

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Saturday conducted surprise raids at six locations across Jammu province in the Pakistan-backed conspiracy to spread terror in the region. The searches were aimed at dismantling the terror network in the Jammu region and scuttling the plans of the banned terrorist organizations to disturb the peace and communal harmony in J&K by radicalizing local youth and mobilizing overground workers.

According to a statement issued by the NIA spokesman, "Extensive searches were conducted in Doda, Ramban and Kishtwar districts of Jammu province by NIA teams in the case RC-05/2022/NIA/JMU, relating to the conspiracy by banned terrorist organizations and their offshoots to carry out violent attacks with sticky bombs, IEDs and small arms etc in Jammu and Kashmir".

The searches led to the seizure of incriminating material including digital devices, documents etc. from premises linked with hybrid terror-



ists, Overground Workers (OGWs), sympathisers and cadres linked with the newly-formed offshoots and affiliates of proscribed terrorist outfits, the statement read. These include Laskhar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Al-Badr, Al-Qaeda, etc.

NIA had registered a suo moto case on 21st June 2022 to dismantle the terror network operated by these outfits, as well as their newly launched offshoots, such as The Resistance Front (TRF), United Liberation Front Jammu & Kashmir (ULFJ&K), Mujahideen Gazwat-ul-Hind (MGH), Jammu & Kashmir Freedom Fighters (JKFF), Kashmir Tigers, PAAF and others.

## India to host Bharat Parv for first time at 77th Cannes Film Festival

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

India for the first time will host a "Bharat Parv" at the 77th Cannes Film Festival for eminent dignitaries and delegates from around the world to showcase the myriad creative opportunities in the country.

At the prestigious film gala, a delegation consisting representatives from central and state governments as well as members of the industry will showcase India's creative economy in Marche du Films through a series of significant initiatives, the Information and Broadcasting ministry said on Friday.

It will be for the first time that the country will host a "Bharat Parv" at the Cannes Film Festival to engage with film celebrities, filmmakers, directors, producers, buyers and sales agents from across the world and showcase the creative opportunities and a rich bank of creative talent.

The official poster and trailer of the 55th India International Film Festival (IFFI), to be held in Goa on November 20 to 28, will also be unveiled at the Bharat Parv, the release stated.

At the Bharat Parv, the delegation will also see the release of the "Save the Date" for the first edition of the World Audio-Visual and



Entertainment Summit (WAVES), which will take place alongside the 55th IFFI. The Bharat Pavilion, which serves as a platform for the Indian film community to engage in various activities, at the 77th Cannes Film Festival at 108 village International Riviera will be inaugurated on May 15 in the presence of eminent celebrities.

The Pavilion will be organized by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) as industry partner. A 'Bharat Stall' will be put in the Marche du Cannes through the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The Bharat Pavilion has been designed by the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. It is christened on 'The Sutradhara' for depicting this year's theme of "Create in India".

At the internationally recognised festival, several Indian movies and productions will be showcased. The highlight will be filmmaker Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light", which has been selected in the Competition section, where it will vie for the top prize Palme d'Or.

British-Indian filmmaker Sandhya Suri's "Santoshi" will be showcased at the 77th edition under the Un Certain Regard section.

"Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know", a short film by the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) students, has been shortlisted in the La Cinef Competitive section. Karan Kandhari's "Sister Midnight" will be screened in Directors' Fortnight and Maisam Ali's compelling "In Retreat" in L'Acid.

## Dust storm, gusty winds claim two lives...

From Page 1

According to officials, they received 152 calls, including 130 made to the Delhi Fire Service (DFS), regarding incidents of uprooting of trees, electricity poles and hoardings. They said 55 calls were also received about collapse of portions of buildings and structures in the city. Additionally, the officials said that 202 calls were received regarding power disruptions during the storms in the national Capital, the officials said.

## Stars power Phase...

From Page 1

Similarly, BJP leader raised the issue "Rambhaktis in every street" and "15 seconds the brothers would not know from where they came and where they went", during campaign which created a controversy later.

The Prime Minister's rally held for the four Mahayuti candidates drew quite the attention as he targeted Sharad Pawar, describing him as a "bhakti atma (wandering soul)". The NDA is eyeing its third consecutive term this general election, with echoes of "abki baar 400 paar", while the Opposition INDIA bloc is taking an economical approach to their campaign, promising MSP for farmers and cash handouts to women in their manifesto.

The States in the fourth phase are Andhra Pradesh (25), Bihar (5), Jammu and Kashmir (1), Jharkhand (4), Madhya Pradesh (8), Maharashtra (11), Odisha (4), Telangana (17), Uttar

Pradesh (13), and West Bengal (8). This includes the entire regions of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Additionally, this phase marks the commencement of polling in Jharkhand and Odisha. Andhra Pradesh will also conduct Assembly elections on May 13.

Two World Cup-winning cricketers will be testing the political pitch in Bengal. The 65-year-old former Indian cricketer Kirti Azad, who was part of the 1983 World Cup winning squad is contesting from Bardhaman-Durgapur Lok Sabha Constituency while Yusuf Pathan, 41-year-old former member of the Indian cricket team that won the World Cup in 2011, is testing political waters from Baharampur seat in Murshidabad. While Pathan is new in politics, Azad has got some previous experience. But both of them are facing the charge of being "outsiders". Moreover their opponents are heavyweights. Chowdhury is a seven-time MP while Ghosh is also an MP and former State president. They are also ready to bet their political career on this election.

The big fight in this phase is between Owaisi of the AIMIM party and Madhvi Latha of the BJP party for the Hyderabad seat. Although Latha has been active on

social media and on the ground, it won't be easy for her to defeat Owaisi. Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra, who was expelled from Lok Sabha in December 2023, is in the race to win the Krishnanagar constituency in West Bengal for a second time. Up against her is BJP leader Amrita Roy, the Rajmata of the Krishnanagar royal family. For the INDIA bloc, SM Saadi of CPI (M) will be contesting the election. Trinamool candidate Shatrughan Sinha, also known as the "Bihari Babu" of the Indian film industry, will face BJP candidate Surinderjeet Singh Ahluwalia from West Bengal's Asansol. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Babul Supriyo, a popular singer, who was then with the BJP won the seat.

Voting is scheduled on Monday in Begusarai and Ujiarpur, represented by Giriraj Singh, the Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, and Nityanand Rai, the Minister of State for Home, respectively. Both BJP leaders seek to retain their seats.

One of Bihar's pivotal Lok Sabha constituencies, Begusarai is a general seat not reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs). It is currently represented by Singh. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections,

Singh defeated CPI leader Kanhaiya Kumar (now a Congress leader) by a substantial margin. Before 2004, this seat was a stronghold of the Congress. The INDIA bloc has fielded Awadhesh Kumar Rai as their joint candidate against Singh. Union Minister Nityanand Rai is contesting from Ujiarpur. Three of the seats are currently held by the BJP and the party is optimistic following the rallies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Darbhanga and Munger, which is held by ally JD (U) but where the PM had also called Singh and sought votes for his cabinet colleague. Andhra Pradesh Congress President YS Sharmila, daughter of former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy, and sister of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, will contest from Kadapa Lok Sabha seat in Andhra Pradesh. Kadapa has been a YS family bastion since 1989. Sharmila will lock horns with her cousin and YSRC MP Avinash Reddy. YSRC president and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy (Pulivendla), TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu (Kuppam) and Janasena chief and actor Pawan Kalyan (Pithapuram), among others, are in the Assembly poll race.

## KEJRIWAL SPIRIT...

From Page 1

"I don't have any love for posts. When I became the Chief Minister for the first time, I resigned within 49 days. However, everyone keeps asking as to why I never resigned when I was arrested? The AAP has won in Delhi with unprecedented margins. They know they cannot defeat us even for the next 20 years. They conspired so that I would resign and the AAP Govt will fall. I said that I won't resign and will run the government from jail," he said while adding that even former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren shouldn't have resigned.

## Akhilesh in Kannauj to...

From Page 1

Now, as Akhilesh returns to Kannauj for the fourth time, he faces a Herculean task to reclaim what was once his family's stronghold. It is a battle not just for political supremacy but for the preservation of Mulayam legacy, a legacy hanging in the balance.

"I see this as a fight for our very identity," remarks Vijay Singh Yadav, a veteran in the SP. "Kannauj is synonymous with the Yadav family, and we cannot afford to lose it."

But the road to redemption is riddled with challenges. BJP's Pathak, hailed as a 'giant killer', leaves no stone unturned in his bid to retain the constituency. With the BJP's formidable machinery backing him, Pathak poses a formidable obstacle to Akhilesh's ambitions.

"It may come down to a razor-thin margin deciding the winner and the loser," remarks Dharendra Mishra, a

prominent 'attar trader. In the 2014 election, Dimple secured victory over Pathak by a significant margin of 18,107 votes. However, in 2019, Pathak turned the tables, narrowly defeating Dimple by a margin of 12,353 votes.

Yet, amidst the political jousting, the spirit of Kannauj remains undaunted. The fragrance of its famed perfume industry permeates the air, a testament to the region's resilience amidst changing political tides. For generations, Kannauj's perfume makers have persevered, their craft transcending the transient nature of politics.

"In Kannauj, our roots run deep," asserts Shailendra Saxena, a local eatery owner. "Regardless of political affiliations, our allegiance lies with those who uphold our values and traditions."

Polling in Kannauj is scheduled for May 13th.

## International Nurses Day 2024 celebrated in Army Hospital



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

International Nurses Day 2024 was celebrated here on Saturday at Ayurvigyan Auditorium, Army Hospital (R & R) Major General Kanwarjit Singh Offg Commandant Army Hospital (R&R) attended the occasion as the Chief Guest. Major General Sheena P D, Principal Matron welcomed the gathering.

International Nurses Day is celebrated across the world, every year on the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale to mark the contributions of nurses towards society. International Council of Nurses has declared the theme for this year as 'Our Nurses Our Future. The Economic Power of Care' and the theme was unveiled by Major General I D Flora, Additional DGMNS.

To commemorate the occasion, a debate on 'Artificial

Intelligence in Nursing: Boon or a Bane' and a panel discussion on the theme was conducted. The eminent panelists discussed various aspects including challenges in the nursing profession, approaches to empower nurses, the leadership role of nurses, nursing education, digitalization in health care and nurse burn out.

The Chief Guest felicitated the panelists and awarded the meritorious Nursing Officers with Appreciation certificates. Captain Deepa Shajan was awarded with the Pushpanjan Award.

The Chief Guest also addressed the gathering and motivated them to uphold the professional standards and ethos set by Military Nursing Officers. He complimented the MNS Officers for working tirelessly in endless shifts taking care of patients with utmost compassion and empathy.



# BJP questions Rahul knowledge, standing to debate against Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday made light of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's readiness for a debate with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it questioned his knowledge of issues and his standing, noting that he is neither the president of his party nor the leader of the Opposition. Making this assertion in a news conference here BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi also took a swipe at Rahul Gandhi over his claim that the Opposition INDIA bloc will win the Lok Sabha polls, saying someone who could not file his nomination from Amethi is speaking about forming government at the Centre. "Phenomenon" his name is Rahul Gandhi," he said mockingly.



Trivedi asked that in what capacity Rahul is looking to debate with Modi as he is merely an MP of his party. In the Congress, one MP heads a yatra while its leaders in both the Houses of Parliament stand behind him. While Mallikarjun Kharge is its president, Rahul's posters are visible, he said, jeering at the opposition party.

Some prominent citizens, including a former Supreme Court judge, had recently written to Modi and Rahul, urging them to engage in a public debate on the Lok Sabha elections. The former Congress president said he was ready for such a debate and claimed that the prime minister would not agree to it.

Targeting Rahul, Trivedi told reporters that he recently dragged the issue of upper castes and Dalit representation while speaking about IITs, which, the BJP leader said, were set up by Jawaharlal Nehru in collaboration with different foreign countries.

Whether one can debate with him can be understood with the level of his knowledge on

leader alleged that Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole had insulted President Droupadi Murmu, who comes from a tribal community, with his comments that the Ram mandir will be purified once the opposition comes to power. Patole had accused Modi of violating religious protocol in the temple's inauguration. Trivedi said his comments have come soon after Murmu has visited the temple. It is a deep insult of Murmu and has brought forth the malice the Congress has for the deprived community, he alleged.

With Patole referring to the critical remarks of some Shankaracharyas about the inauguration ceremony, Trivedi said all religious leaders drawn from across the country had supported the demand for a Ram temple at a "Dharam Sansad" in 1989 and that one of the persons chosen for the "shilanyas" ceremony was a Dalit. The Congress opposed these developments, he added. It is organisations with similar ideological bent as the BJP which worked to promote and preserve the culture and traditions of the disadvantaged communities, Trivedi said.

# EC responded to my letter to INDIA Block, ignored my complaints: Kharge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday said it is surprising that the Election Commission (EC) chose to respond to a letter he wrote to INDIA Block leaders but ignored several other complaints he raised directly to it. In a letter addressed to the CEC and other election commissioners, he said the poll panel is showing no urgency in dealing with "blatantly communal and casteist" statements being made by leaders of the ruling party and this is puzzling.

In response to the letter written by Kharge to INDIA bloc leaders expressing concerns over EC's delay in releasing voter turnout figures for first two phases of polls, the Commission had on Friday called it an attempt to push a biased narrative under the guise of seeking clarifications.

Kharge, in his response, said it was an open letter clearly addressed to the alliance partners and not to the Commission. "It is surprising that the Election Commission of India



wanted to respond to this letter while ignoring several other complaints given directly to it. I have certain misgivings about the language of the letter, but I will not press on that issue as I understand the pressures they are working under," Kharge said in his letter sent to the EC on Saturday.

He said the EC letter on the one hand says the Commission respects citizens' right to ask questions and on the other hand, "threatens citizens in the form of an

advise to exercise caution". The Congress chief also said he is puzzled by the need to write that the Commission is "not legally bound to publish any voter turnout data at aggregate level of a constituency or state", even though it is factual. The Election Commission in its statement had dubbed Kharge's letter an "aggression on the vitals of live conduct of elections". In a five-page response with a series of annexures, the poll panel rejected charges of mismanagement and delay in

the release of voter turnout data in the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections and termed Kharge's allegations "unwarranted", "without facts" and "reflective of a biased and deliberate attempt to spread confusion".

In his letter to INDIA bloc leaders, Kharge had said "apart from the delay, the voter turnout data released by the Commission does not mention crucial yet related figures, such as the votes polled in each parliamentary constituency and in the respective assembly constituencies".

He also said if the voter turnout data was published within 24 hours of voting along with the crucial figures, then people would have known if the increase of "5 per cent" had been witnessed across constituencies or only in constituencies where the ruling regime had not performed well in the 2019 elections.

Opposition leaders had also met the EC top brass on Friday and raised the issue of voter turnout figures and the complaints given by them on various incidents of model code violation by ruling party leaders.

# Congress has soft approach towards terrorism: Sitharaman

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday attacked the Congress, saying the approach of the party towards terrorism has been "soft".

"You saw it during the ten years of UPA rule led by the Congress how terror attacks were tolerated... Proper response was not given," the senior BJP leader here said. "They believed in sending dossiers to Pakistan to the extent that you will recall that handlers of the Mumbai attack are still not punished," she said after an interaction with youths from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana here. "So, the attitude and approach of the Congress party towards terror has always been weak and soft," Sitharaman said.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the Congress of not taking swift action after the 26/11 terror attacks over fears that their "vote bank" will shift. He also said the people of Jammu and Kashmir have



struggled for decades because of the Congress' "weak mindset". "India will never forget the times when the country used to suffer frequent terrorist attacks and the Congress leaders would sit with the perpetrators of terrorism," he said.

During her interaction with youths, Sitharaman answered various questions including on her journey to the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and how she could not complete her PhD as she took up a job overseas. She also talked about the

Startup ecosystem in the country and various other initiatives taken by the present BJP government to make India the third-largest economy in the world. Currently, India is the fifth largest economy, with the highest rate of growth among the large economies of the world. Saturday was the last day for campaigning in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly election and voting will take place on Monday, coinciding with polling in all 17 parliamentary seats in Telangana and 25 in Andhra Pradesh.

# BJP will win all four LS seats in Himachal: Thakur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ SHIMLA/NEW DELHI

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Saturday said the BJP will hit a four and six in Himachal Pradesh by winning all the four Lok Sabha seats and bypolls in six Assembly constituencies in the State.

Thakur, the BJP candidate from Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat, said that people were happy with the performance of the BJP led government at the Centre and wanted to make Narendra Modi the prime minister for the third term.

"We constructed the Ram Mandir. The Congress says it will build a mosque. The opposition parties said that they would crush Sanatan and equated it with HIV Aids and malaria," Thakur said addressing a huge gathering at Gandhi Chowk in Hamirpur. "Like the Mughals and Britishers came and left, the Congress is also going. Sanatan tha, sanatan hai and sanatan rahega", he added.

Thakur said the Congress says Pakistan has nuclear bomb, but the truth is that Islamabad is struggling for



food as the grand old party is struggling for votes. "We defeated Pakistan in 1965, 1971 and the Kargil war and if Pakistan would raise eye on India we will not take time to raise it to the ground," said Thakur and dubbed the Congress as Pakistan stating that it would be defeated again. They say that Pakistan is 'not wearing bangles' and let me tell you that our sisters who wear bangles and carry AK-47 rifles have the guts to

kill infiltrators," he added. Thakur said the BJP never changed its ideology and kept its promise. The BJP leader said the people of the country ousted the "corrupt" Congress in 2014 and made a tea seller Narendra Modi the country's prime minister. Launching a scathing attack on the Congress government in the state, Thakur said that 15 months have passed but Rs 1,500 per month as promised by the party on the eve of the

last assembly polls has neither been deposited in the banks of the women nor it will be deposited and accused it of cheating the public. He asked the youth whether they got five lakh jobs as promised or not and whether the Congress government bought milk for Rs 100 per litre and cow dung for Rs 2 per kg or not. Thakur, the BJP candidate from Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat, said the love of his people is his earning of 20 years.

Former chief ministers Prem Kumar Dhumal and Jai Ram Thakur shared the stage with Thakur along with state BJP chief Rajeev Bindal and state party in-charge Saudan Singh. Jai Ram Thakur, the Leader of Opposition, said that the results would be announced on June 4 but the people have already expected Modi as the prime minister and Anurag Thakur will win from Hamirpur with a margin of over five lakhs. Bindal exhorted the party workers to go to every household to ensure the BJP's victory. Earlier, Anurag Thakur took out a massive roadshow 'Vijay Sankalp Yatra' in Hamirpur district and said the enthusiasm of the people

clearly suggests that they have made up their mind to vote for the BJP. Thakur, a four time MP from Hamirpur, started his programme in the early morning hours and visited the Kuldevi -Awahdevi temple to seek blessings for himself and the party. He also took blessings from his parents. He took out the roadshow in an open jeep from Awahdevi to Hamirpur. He also offered prayers at the Shiva temple where hundreds of local party leaders and workers were present. The BJP flags, banners and hoardings were seen all around the town. Carrying placards and photos of Thakur in their hands, the BJP workers and supporters raised slogans in support of the minister and the party. Thousands of men, women and youngsters from Una, Bilaspur, Mandi and Kangra districts also joined the procession. The procession was so large that commuters faced difficulty crossing through Hamirpur town. The roadshow was organized a day after a show of strength by the Congress after its candidate Satpal Raizada filed his nomination papers from the Hamirpur seat on Friday.

# CDS stresses need for expediting jointness process



Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan has stressed the need for expediting the jointness process to create multi domain response capable Indian armed forces. He made this assertion during the two-day "Parivartan Chintan II" held here on May 09 - 10. The event was attended by the officers from the three Services Headquarters, Department of Military Affairs, Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff and members of various sub-committees of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), mandated to oversee the initiatives undertaken and to generate novel ideas to give impetus to the ongoing process of theaterisation.

The CDS initiated the 'Chintan' on both days by addressing various committees. He

emphasized the need for expediting the progress of the initiatives as these were to pave the way to theaterisation and hence creation of a Multi Domain Response capable Indian Armed Forces. General Chauhan expressed confidence that such brainstorming would help the Armed Forces evolve into a theaterized force capable of Multi-Domain Operations and strengthen the resolve and capability to safeguard our territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

Various COSC Sub-Committees gave an update on the progress of initiatives considered imperative for Jointness and Integration. There was active deliberation on the vital reforms critical towards the fruition of the goals envisioned to achieve the desired "Joint & Integrated" end state towards transformation.

# India to host Bharat Parv at 77th Cannes Film Festival for first time

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India for the first time will host a 'Bharat Parv' at the 77th Cannes Film Festival for eminent dignitaries and delegates from around the world to showcase the myriad creative opportunities in the country. At the prestigious film gala, a delegation consisting representatives from central and state governments as well as members of the industry will showcase India's creative economy in Marche du Films through a series of significant initiatives, the Information and Broadcasting ministry said on Friday.

It will be for the first time that the country will host a "Bharat Parv" at the Cannes Film Festival to engage with film celebrities, filmmakers, directors, producers, buyers and sales agents from across the world and showcase the creative opportunities and a rich bank of creative talent.

The official poster and trailer of the 55th India International Film Festival (IFFI), to be held in Goa on November 20 to 28, will also be unveiled at the Bharat Parv, the release stated.

At the Bharat Parv, the delegation will also see the release of the "Save the Date" for the first edition of the World Audio-Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES), which will take place alongside the 55th IFFI. The Bharat Pavilion, which serves as a platform for the Indian film community to



engage in various activities, at the 77th Cannes Film Festival at 108 village International Riviera will be inaugurated on May 15 in the presence of eminent celebrities.

The Pavilion will be organized by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) as industry partner. A Bharat Stall will be put in the Marche du Cannes through the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The Bharat Pavilion has been designed by the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. It is christened on "The Sutradhara" for depicting this year's theme of "Create in India".

At the internationally recognised festival, several Indian movies and productions will be showcased. The highlight will be filmmaker Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light", which has been selected in the Competition section, where it will vie for the top

prize Palme d'Or. British-Indian filmmaker Sandhya Suri's "Santosh" will be showcased at the 77th edition under the Un Certain Regard section. "Sunflowers Were the First Ones to Know", a short film by the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) students, has been shortlisted in the La Cinef Competitive section. Karan Kandhari's "Sister Midnight" will be screened in Directors' Fortnight and Maisam Ali's compelling "In Retreat" in L'Acid. A restored version of veteran filmmaker Shyam Benegal's 1976 film "Manthan" will be screened under Cannes Classics, a section created 20 years ago which features celebrations, restored prints and documentaries. National Award-winning cinematographer Santosh Sivan will be the recipient of the prestigious Pierre Angenieux tribute at the festival, where he will also deliver a masterclass, becoming the first Indian to be recognised with the honour.

# Sharp pain, numbness may signal nerve damage condition: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Feeling sharp, pricking pain and numbness in your hands and feet may signal a nerve damage condition, according to a study. The condition known as neuropathy can lead to falls, infection and even amputation. The findings, published in the journal Neurology, showed that even after being very common, it often goes underdiagnosed. Conducted by researchers from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, US, the study aimed to elucidate the prevalence of neuropathy and its associated risk factors, particularly in individuals with diabetes, a known risk factor for the condition.

The research involved 169 participants, half of whom had diabetes. Among this group, a staggering 73% were diagnosed with neuropathy. What's more alarming is that 75% of those diagnosed had not been previously identified with the condition, underscoring the likelihood of underdiagnosis in clinical settings.

One of the key findings of the study was the significant association between neuropathy and metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome, characterized by excess abdominal fat and other risk factors such as hypertension, elevated triglycerides, diabetes, and low levels

of HDL (good) cholesterol, was found to increase the risk of neuropathy more than fourfold. This highlights the intricate interplay between metabolic health and nerve function, emphasizing the need for comprehensive management of metabolic risk factors to mitigate neuropathic complications. The implications of neuropathy are profound, extending beyond mere discomfort to potentially life-threatening consequences. Individuals with neuropathy face an elevated risk of falls, infections, and even limb amputation, underscoring the urgency of early detection and intervention. Melissa A. Elafros, one of the researchers involved in the study, emphasized the critical importance of identifying and treating neuropathy promptly to prevent these adverse outcomes and improve patients' quality of life.

In summary, the study underscores the pervasive nature of neuropathy, its underdiagnosis in clinical practice, and its significant association with metabolic syndrome. By elucidating these connections, the research highlights the imperative for proactive screening, comprehensive management of metabolic risk factors, and early intervention to mitigate the debilitating effects of neuropathy and enhance patient outcomes.

# Media associations ask ECI to hold press conference after every phase



Media associations demanded on Saturday that the Election Commission (EC) hold press conferences after every voting phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. Media associations Press Club of India, Indian Women Press Corps, Press Association, Foreign Correspondents Club and Delhi Union of Journalists also asked the poll authority to release the entire election data, including the absolute number of votes cast in each phase and percentage of voting, by the next day of the polling date. "It should be noted that at press conferences, the journalists get their doubts and confusions, if any, cleared which helps them report and write error-free copy for their readers," the media associations said in a joint statement.

They noted that till the 2019 general election, it was normal practice for the EC to hold press conferences after each phase of voting.



# Israel orders new evacuations in Rafah

AP ■ RAFAH

Israel ordered new evacuations in Gaza's southern city of Rafah on Saturday, forcing tens of thousands more people to move as it prepares to expand its operation and adding that it is also moving into an area in northern Gaza where Hamas has regrouped. Israel has now evacuated the eastern third of Rafah, pushing the operation to the edges of the heavily populated central area, although Israel's move into the city has so far been short of the full-scale invasion that it planned.

The order comes in the face of heavy international opposition and criticism. US President Joe Biden has already said he will not provide offensive weapons to Israel for Rafah,

and on Friday the US said there was "reasonable" evidence that Israel had breached international law protecting civilians in the way it conducted its war against Hamas — the strongest statement that the Biden administration has yet made on the matter. The United Nations and other agencies have warned for weeks that an Israeli assault on Rafah, which borders Egypt near the main aid entry points, would cripple humanitarian operations and cause a disastrous surge in civilian casualties. More than 1.4 million Palestinians — half of Gaza's population — have been sheltering in Rafah, most after fleeing Israel's offensives elsewhere. Considered the last refuge in the strip, the evacuations are forcing people to

return north where areas are devastated by previous Israeli attacks. Aid agencies estimate that 110,000 had done so before Saturday's order that adds a further 40,000 to that number. People have been displaced multiple times and there are few places left in the embattled strip to move to. Those fleeing earlier this week erected new tent camps in the city of Khan Younis — which was half destroyed in an earlier Israeli offensive — and the city of Deir al-Balah, straining infrastructure. Georgios Petropoulos, an official with the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Rafah, said humanitarian workers had no supplies to help them set up in new locations. "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 have captured the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing with Egypt, forcing it to shut down. Rafah was the main point of entry for fuel. The World Food Program has warned that it will run out of food for distribution in southern Gaza by Saturday, Petropoulos said. Aid groups have said fuel will also be depleted soon, forcing hospitals to shut down critical operations and bringing to a halt trucks delivering aid across south and central Gaza. Heavy fighting is also underway in northern Gaza, where Hamas appeared to have once again regrouped in an area

where Israel has already launched punishing assaults. Israeli Army spokesman Avichay Adraee told Palestinians in Jabaliya and Beit Lahiya cities and the surrounding areas to leave their homes and head to shelters in the west of Gaza City, warning that people were in "a dangerous combat zone" and that Israel was going to strike with "great force." Battles erupted this week in the Zeitoun area on the outskirts of Gaza City. Northern Gaza was the first target of the ground offensive. Israel said late last year that it had mostly dismantled Hamas in the area. The United Nations agency supporting people in Gaza, known as UNRWA, said that some 300,000 people have been affected by evacuation

orders in Rafah and Jabaliya, but the numbers could likely be more as these are very built-up areas. "We're extremely concerned that these evacuation orders have come both towards central Rafah and Jabaliya," Louise Wateridge, UNRWA spokesperson in Rafah, told The Associated Press. In Rafah's Shaboura neighbourhood, Palestinians were busy packing their belongings, readying to flee the area. Palestinians are being sent to what Israel has called humanitarian safe zones along the Muwasi coastal strip in Gaza. But the zone is already packed with some 450,000 people and conditions there are squalid with the garbage-strewn camp lacking basic facilities.

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# Pak President Zardari gets immunity in two corruption cases

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday received immunity from prosecution as a head of state in two cases of alleged corruption. The Park Lane and Toshakhana cases were filed against him by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), the national anti-corruption watchdog. Islamabad-based Express Tribune reported that Zardari, 68, had sought immunity in the two cases and the judge issued a written decision on the president's petition and halted all proceedings against him. Zardari, co-chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was elected in March as the 14th President of Pakistan for five years. The judge noted that the president sought immunity under Article 248 (2) of the Constitution, following which no case can be registered or action taken against the petitioner. The prosecution did not object to the president's plea, hence it was approved and case proceedings were halted until the end of Zardari's tenure as president of Pakistan, according to the written order. The Park Lane case accused Zardari of influencing relevant authorities during his



tenure as the president during his first term from 2008 to 2013 allegedly obtaining loans for his front companies and allegedly causing a loss of Rs 3.77 billion to the country. The Toshakhana case was about Zardari purchasing vehicles from the state repository where all pricey items gifted by foreign countries to Pakistani leaders are deposited. However, the leaders who are given those gifts can buy the same from the Toshakhana under certain conditions. It was alleged that the government of Yusuf Raza Gilani of Zardari's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had relaxed rules for his benefits to purchase vehicles, an allegation denied by Zardari. Earlier, NAB on April 22 had submitted a report to an accountability court that Zardari enjoyed presidential immunity in Thatta water supply case under Article 248 of the Constitution. The case was about illegally awarding the Thatta water supply scheme contract to a private contractor.

# Flash floods kill hundreds, injure many in Afghanistan, Taliban says

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

Flash floods from seasonal rains in Afghanistan have killed hundreds of people and injured a "substantial number," a Taliban official said Saturday, without giving exact figures. The floods hit mostly the northern region of the country. The province of Baghlan bore the brunt of the deluges Friday with officials preliminary reporting at least 50 people dead and properties destroyed in multiple districts. In neighbouring Takhar province, state-owned media outlets reported the floods



killing at least 20 people. Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief spokesman for the Taliban government posted on social media platform X on Saturday, saying that "hundreds ... have succumbed to these calamitous floods, while a substantial number have sustained injuries." Mujahid underscored the provinces of Badakhshan, Baghlan, Ghor and Herat as the worst hit. He added that "the extensive devastation" has resulted in "significant financial losses." He also said the government had ordered all available resources mobilized to rescue

people, transport the injured and recover the bodies of the deceased. The Taliban defence ministry said in a statement Saturday that the country's air force has already begun evacuating people in Baghlan and has so far rescued a large number of people stuck in flooded and transported a hundred injured people to military hospitals in the region. Officials previously said that in April, before Friday's floods, at least 70 people died from heavy rains and flash flooding in the country. About 2,000 homes, three mosques, and four schools were also damaged.

# Russian offensive on Ukraine's Kharkiv forces about 1700 civilians to evacuate

AP ■ KYIV

Russian forces began a renewed ground assault on Ukraine's northeast, killing and injuring several and forcing more than 1,700 civilians to evacuate from the Kharkiv region, local officials said on Saturday. Artillery, mortar, and aerial bombardments hit more than 30 different towns and villages, leaving at least three people dead and five others injured, said Kharkiv governor, Oleh Syniehubov. Ukraine rushed reinforcements to the Kharkiv region on Friday to hold off a Russian attempt to breach local defences, author-

ities said. Russian forces stepped up their bombardment of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, in late March. Friday's attack signalled a tactical switch in the war by Moscow that Ukrainian officials had been expecting for weeks. Russian military bloggers said the assault could mark the start of a Russian attempt to carve out a "buffer zone" that President Vladimir Putin vowed to create earlier this year to halt frequent Ukrainian attacks on Belgorod and other Russian border regions. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed on Friday evening that

Russian forces were expanding their operations. He also called on the country's Western allies to ensure that promised deliveries of military aid would swiftly reach the country's frontlines. "It is critical that partners support our warriors and Ukrainian resilience with timely deliveries. Truly timely ones," he said in a video statement on X. "A package that truly helps is the actual delivery of weapons to Ukraine, rather than just the announcement of a package." The Kremlin's forces have repeatedly sought to exploit Ukraine's shortages of ammunition and manpower as the flow

of Western military aid to Kyiv has tapered off in recent months, with promised new support still yet to arrive. Ukraine previously said it was aware that Russia was assembling thousands of troops along the northeastern border, close to the Kharkiv and Sumy regions. Intelligence officials also said they had expected an attack there though Russia's most recent ground offensive had been focused on parts of eastern Ukraine farther south. While Russia's gains in the region have so far been limited, analysts at the US think tank Institute of the Study of War (ISW) described them Friday as "tactically significant."

# Kate is 'doing well', says Prince Williams

PTI ■ LONDON

Prince William, the heir apparent to the British throne, on Friday said his wife Catherine is "doing well", one of the royal's few comments about her condition since her cancer diagnosis. The Prince of Wales made the remarks about Kate Middleton, Princess of Wales, during a visit to St Mary's Community Hospital on the Isles of Scilly. He was told about a new health and social care facility being built on Duchy land near the hospital. The prince said his children, George, Charlotte and Louis, were "very jealous"

of his trip, and he may bring them to Cornwall later in the year. He was given a letter by matron Lynda McHale, written by her granddaughter, that wished the Princess of Wales and King Charles well in their respective cancer recoveries. The trip marks William's first official visit to the Isles of Scilly since becoming Duke of Cornwall, a title he holds in addition to his Prince of Wales title. The 42-year-old Princess of Wales appealed for her family to have time, space and privacy when she announced her diagnosis of an undisclosed form of cancer on March 22.

# Hardliners firmly in charge of Iran's parliament

AP ■ DUBAI

Iran's hard-liners won most of the remaining seats in an election run-off to give them full control over the country's parliament, authorities said Saturday, while not sharing any details on the turnout. The result, and that of the previous vote in March, gives hard-liners 233 of the 290 seats in Iran's parliament, according to an Associated Press tally. Hard-liners seek more cultural and social restrictions based on Islamic sharia, including demanding that women wear the Islamic veil in public. They also express enmity toward

the West, particularly the United States. Those politicians calling for change in the country's government, known broadly as reformists, were generally barred from running in the election. Those calling for radical reforms or for abandoning Iran's theocratic system were also banned or didn't bother to register as candidates. Vote counting began after the ballots closed late Friday, with the election authority publishing the names of the winners the day after. Interior minister Ahmad Vahidi said Saturday the election saw "good participation", without elaborating.

# Alleged Rushdie attacker could still face federal charges

AP ■ MAVILLE

The lawyer for the New Jersey man charged with stabbing author Salman Rushdie is in talks with county and federal prosecutors to try to resolve existing charges of attempted murder without a trial — as well as potential terrorism-related charges that could still be coming, he said Friday. Hadi Matar, 26, has been held without bail since his 2022 arrest, immediately after allegedly attacking the Mumbai-born writer in front of a stunned audience he was about to address at the Chautauqua Institution in western New York. Rushdie was blinded in one eye, and moderator Henry Reese also was wounded. Matar pleaded not guilty to assault and attempted murder after being indicted by a Chautauqua County grand jury shortly after the attack. The US Justice Department continues to consider separate federal charges against Matar, though none have yet been

filed, according to public defender Nathaniel Barone, who said he is in contact with federal prosecutors. "They're looking at it from a whole different perspective," Barone said. "Any statute you're dealing with federally could be terrorist-based," he added, without providing details, "and the exposure is much more significant for my client than the state charges." A spokeswoman for the US Attorney's Office said it does not confirm or deny investigations. If Matar agrees to plead guilty in the state and a potential federal case, Barone said, he would want a shorter state prison sentence in return, something Chautauqua County District Attorney Jason Schmidt is unwilling to consider. Barone said Matar faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted of attempted murder, and he has proposed a maximum of 20 years instead — otherwise, "there's no carrot to plead here." Schmidt said he would not sign off on less than the maximum,



given the nature of the crime, regardless of whether the Justice Department brings a case. "It's not just Salman Rushdie," he said. "It's freedom of speech. It's the fact that this occurred in front of thousands of people and it was recorded, and it's also a recognition that some people should be held to the top

charge." Rushdie, 76, spent years in hiding after the Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa, or edict, in 1989 calling for his death due to his novel "The Satanic Verses," which some Muslims consider blasphemous. Over the past two decades, Rushdie has travelled freely. The prolific British-

American author detailed the near-fatal attack and painful recovery in a memoir: "Knife: Meditations After an Attempted Murder," released in April. In it, Rushdie wrote that he saw a man running toward him and described the knife plunging into his hand, severing tendons and nerves, as he raised it in self-defense. "After that there are many blows, to my neck, to my chest, to my eye, everywhere," he wrote. "I feel my legs give way, and I fall." Rushdie does not use his attacker's name in the book, referring to him as "The A," short for "The As" (or "Asinine man"). The author, whose works also include "Midnight's Children" and "Victory City," is on the witness list for Matar's trial in Chautauqua County, scheduled for September. Matar was born in the US but holds dual citizenship in Lebanon, where his parents were born. His mother has said that her son changed, becoming withdrawn and moody, after visiting his father in Lebanon in 2018.

# Pakistan's Dy PM Dar to visit China next week

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's newly-appointed Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar will embark on a three-day official visit to China on May 13, during which he will meet top Chinese leaders and comprehensively review bilateral relations, including the upgradation of the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. Dar, who is also the foreign minister, will co-chair the 5th Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on Saturday. "The two sides will comprehensively review Pakistan-China bilateral relations including economic and trade cooperation; high-level exchanges and visits; upgradation of China-Pakistan Economic

Corridor and future connectivity initiatives," the statement said. The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is opposed by India as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Dar and Wang will also exchange views on the unfolding regional geopolitical landscape and bilateral cooperation at the multilateral forum. During his visit from May 13-16, Dar is also expected to meet Chinese leaders, senior ministers and leading corporate executives, the statement said. Dar's visit to Beijing comes amid reports that Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to visit China in the coming weeks. Dar's visit is part of "regular high-level exchanges" between Pakistan and China, reflecting the "importance attached by

the two countries to further deepening the 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, reaffirming mutual support on issues of core interest; enhancing economic and trade cooperation including CPEC; and reinforcing joint commitment to regional peace and development," it said. China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian on Friday said that Beijing is willing to work with Islamabad to take Dar's visit "as an opportunity to further implement the important consensus of the leaders of the two countries," The Express Tribune newspaper reported. Asserting that the China-Pakistan friendship had become stronger over the years, Lin said that both countries joined hands to cope with changes in the international and regional situation, deepening mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation.

# Dutch contestant kicked out of Eurovision hours before final

AP ■ MALMO (SWEDEN)

It's time for many people to don sequins and spangles — and for others to pick up protest banners and Palestinian flags — for Saturday's final of the 68th Eurovision Song Contest. The competition that pits nations against one another for pop music glory is reaching its conclusion in the Swedish city of Malmo, with Croatia and Switzerland among those tipped to take the trophy, and Israel at the centre of a political storm. Hours before the final, Dutch contestant Joost Klein was dramati-

ly booted out by organisers over a backstage incident. He had failed to perform at two dress rehearsals on Friday, and contest organiser the European Broadcasting Union said it was investigating an "incident." The EBU said Swedish police were investigating "a complaint made by a female member of the production crew" and it would not be appropriate for Klein to participate while the legal process was underway. Though rumours had been flying about the incident was connected to Israel's delegation, organisers said the incident "did not involve any other performer or delegation member."

Though the contest's motto is "united by music," this year's event has attracted large protests from Palestinians and their supporters, who say Israel should be excluded because of its conduct of the war against Hamas. Thousands of people are expected to march for the second time this week through Sweden's third-largest city, which has a large Muslim population, to demand a boycott of Israel and a cease-fire in the seven-month war. In Finland, a group of about 40 protesters stormed the headquarters of public broadcaster YLE on Saturday morning, demanding it withdraw

from the song contest because of Israel's participation. Several miles (kilometres) from central Malmo at the Malmo Arena, 25 acts — narrowed from 37 entrants by two semi-final runoffs — are due to perform three-minute songs in front of a live audience of thousands and an estimated 180 million viewers around the world. It all makes for a messy climax to an event that draws both adoration and derision with its campy, kitschy ethos and passion for pop. Dean Vuletic, an expert on the history of the contest, says that despite this year's divisions, "there is no other cultural event which brings

Europeans together quite like Eurovision does." "Just this moment where everyone is watching the same television show, which is being broadcast live across 37 countries — that's something very special." This year's entries range from emotional to eccentric. They include the goofy 1990s nostalgia of Finland's Windows95man, who emerges from a giant onstage egg wearing very little clothing. Ireland's Bambie Thug summons witchy spirits onstage and has brought a scream coach to Malmo, while Spain's Nebulossa boldly reclaims a term used as a slur on women in "Zorra."

The favourites include Swiss singer Nemo — who would be the first nonbinary Eurovision winner if their operatic song "The Code" tops the voting — and Croatia's Baby Lasagna. His song "Rim Tim Tagi Dim" is a rollicking rock number that tackles the issue of young Croats leaving the country in search of a better life. Vuletic says that despite the contest's reputation for disposable bubblegum pop, Eurovision often tackles "political and social issues such as feminism, European integration, gender identity." "And I think they're the very interesting songs to look out for, especial-

ly because they're the most highly ranked by the bookies," he said. Sometimes, though, songs run afoul of the contest's ban on openly "political" statements. Eurovision organisers told Israel to change the original title of its song, "October Rain" — an apparent reference to the October 7 Hamas attack that killed about 1,200 Israelis and triggered the Gaza war. Israeli singer Eden Golan has shot up the odds since performing the power ballad, now titled "Hurricane," in Thursday's semifinal. Golan faced some booing at dress rehearsals, but was voted into the final by viewers around the world.





# In form RCB eye fifth win in a row against Pant-less DC

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Pushed into a tight corner, Royal Challengers Bengaluru rose above their frailties to notch four wins on the trot to stay alive in the race to play-offs, but Delhi Capitals even sans their suspended skipper Rishabh Pant offer them a different challenge in the IPL match here on Sunday. Pant was suspended for one match and handed a fine of Rs 30 lakh for maintaining slow over rate against Rajasthan Royals at Delhi on May 7. It was DC's third offence of the season; hence the suspension came in vogue immediately leading to Pant missing the match against RCB. While the absence of Pant will certainly give RCB an edge, they can't get themselves lulled into a comfort zone. In the run-up to this match, RCB defeated Gujarat Titans twice, Punjab Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad once

each. While the victory over SRH was valiant, RCB did not face much challenge from the floundering Titans and Kings. But the Capitals are a team unlike any other as they have oscillated between brilliant and ordinary in the span of a few days. On April 27, the Pant-led side posted a hefty 257/4 in their 10-run win over Mumbai Indians and on April 29, they made a lowly 153/9 while capitulating against Kolkata Knight Riders. The RCB, currently seventh with 10 points from 12 matches, will desperately hope not to run into that brilliant Capitals as a defeat can undo their good work in the last four matches. But their confidence will be high, courtesy strong and consistent batting effort led by talisman Virat Kohli. Kohli is the leading run-getter in this IPL with 634 runs but more importantly, those runs

have come at a brisk rate of 153, giving RCB early momentum while setting or chasing targets. Along with Kohli, additional runs from skipper Faf du Plessis, Rajat Patidar, Cameron Green and Dinesh Karthik have provided their bowlers, who have responded to the call splendidly, with a cushion. The transformation of RCB bowlers in the last four matches have been nothing short of remarkable. Mohammed Siraj has found his mojo after a 10-day break, and he has received excellent backing from fellow pacer Yash Dayal and left-arm spinner Swapnil Singh. After the match against PBKS, the overall run-rate of Siraj (9.4) and Dayal (9) have gone under 10 for the first time this season, not a mean feat in a tournament where runs were scored at a breakneck pace. Their skills will be tested first by Jack Fraser-McGurk, who has teed off to make 309 runs



from seven matches at an impressive strike-rate of 235.87. McGurk took the opener's slot once David Warner - 167 runs from 7 matches at a strike rate

of 135 - had to sit out with an injury, and he has not made the absence of the veteran felt even once. His opening partner Abhishek Porel too has made runs at 157

strike rate, though the DC management will be happier to see him adding more consistency to his game. Pant and Tristan Stubbs too have been among runs made at

a fair clip but now without the skipper the DC middle-order will further lean on Stubbs for momentum. But in the bowling department, DC will feel that they might have a slight edge. Spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel have been thrifty while sharing 24 wickets among them as they have maintained economy rates of 8.2 and 7.3 respectively - gold dust while others have gone above 10. Their combined eight overs will have a massive say in the match, as the wrist-spinner and his left-arm comrade will have to contain the free-flowing RCB batters in the middle phase. If pacers Khaleel Ahmed (14 wickets, 9.68) and Mukesh Kumar (15 wickets, 10.94) can inflict some blows upfront, DC can hope to contain the home side.

**Delhi Capitals:** Prithvi Shaw, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Abhishek Porel, Shai Hope, Rishabh Pant (wk/c, suspended and unavailable), Sumit Kumar, Tristan Stubbs, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mukesh Kumar, Ishant Sharma, Khaleel Ahmed, Kumar Kushagra, Praveen Dube, Lalit Yadav, Lizaad Williams, David Warner, Jhye Richardson, Anrich Nortje, Yash Dhill, Mitchell Marsh, Ricky Bhui, Rasikh Dar Salam, Vicky Ostwal, Swastik Chikara.

**TEAMS (FROM):**  
**Royal Challengers Bengaluru:** Faf du Plessis (c),



## CSK look to rekindle playoffs hopes against a strong but hurt RR

PTI ■ CHENNAI

In need of a win to firm-up their position in the IPL playoff race, Chennai Super Kings have the heavy task of nullifying a deeply hurt and frustrated Rajasthan Royals here on Sunday. Let's take a quick assessment of the two protagonists' situations. The Super Kings are currently fourth in the standings with 12 points from as many games but the defeat against Gujarat Titans on Friday has added dollops of pressure on them, and now they need victory in their remaining two matches. The Royals, on the other hand, are second with 16 points but they are smarting from two successive defeats against Sunrisers Hyderabad, which was by just a run, and Delhi Capitals. They are in no real danger of missing the playoff spot, but the Sanju Samson-led side will be eager to return to the winning ways at the earliest and enter the knockouts. What had hurt CSK against GT was the malfunction of their top-order consisting Ajinkya Rahane, Rachin Ravindra and skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and they would be desperate to regain the momentum in Chepauk.

Ravindra might be given another go against Royals, but it could be a make-or-break situation for him. Although it was pleasing to see Daryl Mitchell and Moeen Ali among runs, Shivam Dube, who has been CSK's bulwark this season, has gone silent ever since he was selected to the Indian team for the upcoming T20 World Cup. Having scored a 13-ball 21 against GT, he has twin causes to fire — to justify his selection for the World Cup and carry his team closer to the playoffs. As for the CSK's bowling, Tushar Deshpande once again fired against GT while Shardul Thakur surprised all with his economical outing. However, the Chennai bowlers are expected to buckle up and do well in this fixture at home, their strong area. The low amount of dew in this afternoon clash might help CSK spinners. On the other hand, desperate to end the losing streak, Rajasthan could not have asked for a more suitable opponent than an unsteady CSK. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has not been at his best this season, will be desperate to prove his mettle before travelling to the Americas for the T20 World Cup.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

With the sheer momentum they had in the first half of IPL 2024, Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Donovan Ferreira said on Saturday the team should have qualified for the playoffs by now but with three more games still remaining, the side had a great chance to make the top-two. The Royals, who were leading the IPL table till just a few days back, have slipped to second spot following two consecutive defeats and would be desperate to get back to winning ways when they take on defending champion Chennai Super Kings here on Sunday. "We should have already qualified for the playoffs by now. But, the IPL is a long tournament, and obviously, the second half is important," said Ferreira during a pre-match press conference here on Saturday. The Royals are currently on 16 points, the same as leaders Kolkata Knight Riders but the latter have a far

# RR should have qualified for playoffs by now: Ferreira ahead of CSK tie

superior net run rate. "We had set out nicely by winning most of the games in the first half, and this game (against CSK) is quite important. We have three games left, but we don't want to leave it too late and put pressure on ourselves," he added. After they play CSK on Sunday, Royals have games against Punjab Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders. "If we win this game, it will give us an even better chance of finishing first or second. Anyone playing against Chennai knows they are a good team. The past few games have been close, and these small margins can go either way. But hopefully, we can get over the line tomorrow by playing the brand of cricket that we have been



playing." The Royals' middle order is a bit of a concern as it has not been tested much this season but Ferreira said the training intensity had ensured all the batters were in good shape. "It's (middle order) not much of a concern. We are grateful that our top

order has put us in good positions and got us over the line. But, we have got capable batters and a deep batting line-up to pull us through. "We just need to keep backing ourselves. With three games to go, we don't want to test ourselves but keep the momentum going. It's about training with the match intensity with the middle order so that when the moment arrives, your skills are sharpened, and you back yourself to pull the game through." Sunday's fixture will be the first afternoon game at Chepauk this season, and the South African reckoned that spin would play a crucial role, especially with R. Ashwin returning at his home venue.

## GT can make it to play offs, miracles do happen: Skipper Gill

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill is optimistic about sneaking into the IPL play-offs, even though odds are heavily against them despite the 35-run win over Chennai Super Kings here. Gill (104 off 55b) and B Sai Sudharsan (103 off 51b) notched up destructive centuries to propel GT to 231/3 and then restricted the defending champions to 196/8 to stay alive in the play-off race. The win lifted GT from the bottom of the table to the eighth spot. They have 10 points from 12 games, while CSK remained fourth with 12 points. "The chances of us qualifying was 0.1 or 1 per cent. I think all of us, all 25-30 of us, believe that we can still make it into the play-offs. "Because I have seen miracles happen with this team in the past couple of years and we all do believe in that," Gill said in the post-match press conference on Friday night. Gill, however, felt that GT were some runs short despite piling up a huge total. "When I got out, I was a bit frustrated. I thought as a batting unit, we left 10-25 runs out there. At one point we were 195/0 in 15 overs, so I thought that 250 was a pretty gettable score and I was thinking about that. "It is as satisfactory as any hundred. We lost our last three games and it was important for us to win this one and that is what me and Sai were



discussing. We were trying to maximise every opportunity and every challenge that was thrown at us." The young skipper also had words of appreciation for his opening partner Sudharsan. "Last year he (Sudharsan) missed a hundred in the final, having come back and the way he played in the middle overs is exceptional. "He is someone who works very hard on his game and for someone like him to be able to execute those shots was just magnificent," Gill said. Talking about the talismanic Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who played a 11-ball 26-run cameo with three sixes, and his fan following, Gill said, "Wherever Mahi bhai plays, it is their (CSK) home ground, so nothing different with that. "But at least, when we were scoring, people were cheering for us and when we visited Chepauk, it was complete silence when we hit boundaries or took a wicket," he concluded.

## Calm under pressure Sudharsan needs to be spoken about more: Smith, Moody

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

B Sai Sudharsan broke away from the mould of anchor with a brilliantly crafted hundred against Chennai Super Kings, and the "calm under pressure" demeanour of the Gujarat Titans' opener has left stalwarts Graeme Smith and Tom Moody impressed. Till the match on Friday, Sudharsan struck runs at a moderate strike rate of 131.67 while coming at No. 3, but the promotion to the opener's slot seemed to have liberated him. Against CSK, the Tamil Nadu left-hander made 103 off 51 balls (5x4s, 7x6s) and his strike-rate read 201.96. Smith said Sudharsan should be given more opportunities. "Sudharsan is so under the radar, he is the leading run-scorer for GT this season, the fastest Indian to a thousand IPL runs with a difference of six innings. He needs to start being spoken about a bit more," said Smith on JIO Cinema.



Former Australian all-rounder and a revered coach Tom Moody praised Sudharsan for maintaining his composure in the match against a tough opponent. "The way this young player goes about his business is a joy to watch. He seems so calm under pressure. He seems to have the right answers at the right time.

"He knows when to go big to look for that boundary to take pressure out of an over and he seems to be able to keep pace with the game," Moody told Star Sports Cricket Live show. Former South Africa skipper Smith lauded the partnership between Sudharsan and Shubman Gill that was worth 210 runs, joint highest for the opening wicket this season. "The partnership was excellent, left-hand-right-hand combination, they ran between the wickets well; they picked their targets, and their matchups were just outstanding," he added. Moody also underscored the importance of the alliance between Gill and Sudharsan. "The partnership was nothing short of extraordinary. They complemented each other exceptionally well, evident in their visible enjoyment on the field, as Gill expressed during the post-match presentation. "This camaraderie is crucial for any backing and partnership," added Moody.

## Pant to miss RCB game due to suspension for slow over rate

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant will miss Sunday's crucial match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru after he was handed a one-match suspension for maintaining a slow over-rate for the third time this IPL season. Pant was also fined Rs 30 lakh for the Code of Conduct breach that took place during DC's 20-run win against Rajasthan Royals on May 7 here. DC were 10 minutes behind time at the start of the final over in that game. "Mr Rishabh Pant, Captain, Delhi Capitals has been fined has been fined and suspended for one match for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct after his team maintained a slow over-rate against Rajasthan Royals at the Arun Jaitley



Stadium, Delhi on May 07, 2024," an IPL statement read. The Capitals had been found guilty of maintaining slow over rates against Chennai Super Kings (March 31) and Kolkata Knight Riders (April 3) earlier in the season. "As it was his team's third offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences,

Rishabh Pant was fined INR 30 lakh and suspended for one match." All other DC players were also penalised. "The rest of the members of the Playing XI, including the Impact Player, were each individually fined either INR 12 lakh or 50 per cent of their respective match fees, whichever is lesser." DC filed an appeal challenging this ruling of the match referee which was referred to the BCCI Ombudsman for review. The Ombudsman conducted a virtual hearing and stated that the decision of the match referee is final and binding. "As per Article 8 of the IPL Code of Conduct, the Delhi Capitals filed an appeal challenging the ruling of the Match Referee. Following this, the appeal was referred to the BCCI Ombudsman for review.



## High calibre batting from Gill, Sudharsan disrupted our plans: CSK coach Fleming

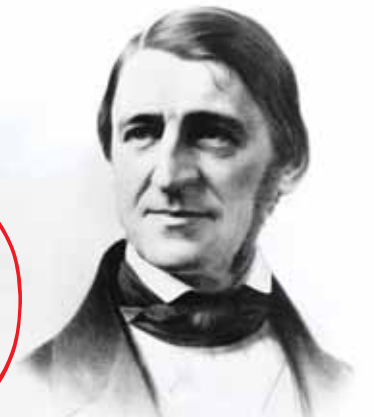
PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming said the defending champions were undone by the "high calibre" batting effort of Gujarat Titans' openers — skipper Shubman Gill and B Sai Sudharsan — during their 35-run defeat in an IPL match here. Gill (104 off 55b) and Sudharsan (103 off 51b) notched up destructive centuries in an opening stand of 210 runs to propel GT to 231/3 and then restricted the defending champions to 196/8 to stay alive in the play-off race. The win lifted GT from the bottom of the table to the eighth spot. They have 10 points from 12 games, while CSK remained fourth with 12 points. "It was a good onslaught and the batting was of the highest calibre. Right from the first over they disrupted our plans. It wasn't till the latter stages we got some control," Fleming said at the post-match press

conference on Friday night. "We didn't execute as well as we could but the other part was the sublime batting from two very good players." The former New Zealand captain praised Sudharsan for his effort. "In the final last year, he (Sudharsan) played beautifully, he got 96. I have watched him closely, he has got good connections around the Chennai area. He is a wonderful player and today he proved that." Fleming said CSK were put under immense pressure by the onslaught of GT openers, resulting in errors in bowling and fielding. "We were a little bit handicapped by the absence of some players. The players who were playing today did really well in the last game, so the confidence was high. "Sometimes you do all the right things but good batting can put you under pressure. It was some high calibre hitting, just the pressure of that onslaught made us a bit sloppy," he said.



"Though we travel  
the world over to find  
the beautiful, we must  
carry it with us or  
we find it not"  
— Ralph Waldo Emerson



Of the 150 villages that exist in West Garo Hills of Meghalaya, only 13 to 15 are Songsarek villages. In these, only five or six houses continue to uphold the ancient Garo traditions and follow the rituals related to the animist society. Wangala dance, brewing of Chubitchi being a few, writes **NAVNEET MENDIRATTA**

# VIBING TO THE DANCE OF A 100 DRUMS

It is clearly the road less travelled. The West Garo Hills of Meghalaya in Northeast India may not have attracted the fancy of the tourists as their Khasi hills counterparts (yet), but that could well be a blessing in disguise for a region that is holding on to the last bit of ancient Garo traditions — the Songsarek practices. Songsarek is a pre-Christian animist religion that is fast losing out to conversions to Christianity, that spread in the region in the second half of the nineteenth century and intensified throughout the twentieth century. Currently, of the 150 villages that exist in the region, only 13 to 15 are Songsarek villages. In these, only five or six houses continue to actively practise the rituals related to the ancient Garo society.

A narrow hill road leads us to the Songsarek village of Gondenggre. Located in the Rongram subdivision of West Garo Hills district in Meghalaya, the village is located 18 kms from sub-district headquarter Rongram and some 36 kms from district headquarter of Tura. Our entourage comprises a group of nine Royal Enfield bikers and content crew who are here to document the living heritage of the communities in these regions as part of a unique partnership between Royal Enfield and UNESCO.

The project titled, The Great Himalayan Exploration, involves engaging with Royal Enfield's motorcycling community and inspiring them to come forward to not just explore the landscape but to help preserve and promote the living heritage of the communities in these regions. Documentation is the first step in this direction.

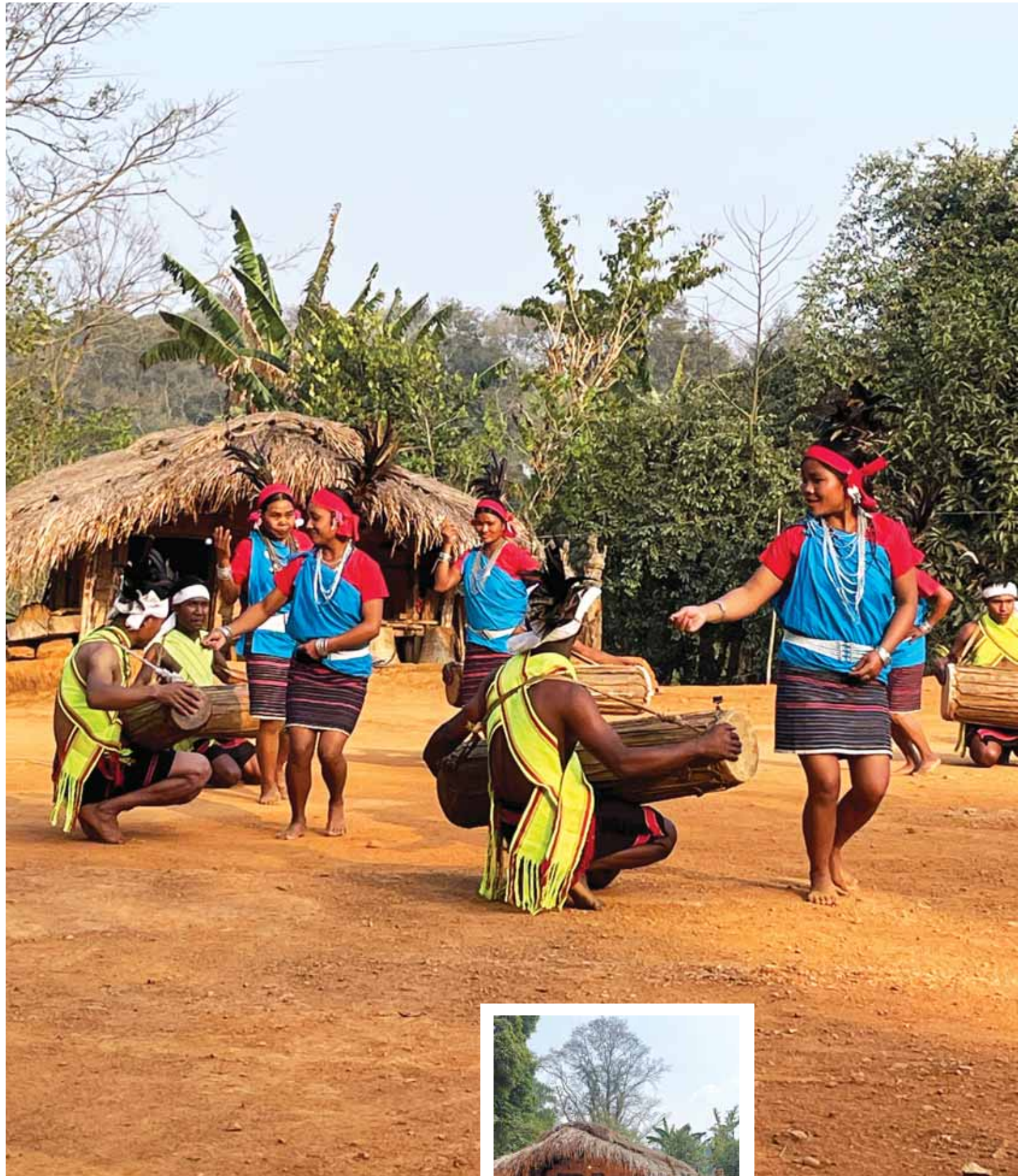
These practices range from performing arts (dance forms, songs, etc) to tangible crafts (handmade paper from tree bark, specific types of hats, etc), food practices (preservation techniques, culinary cultures), agricultural practices, local medicinal practices, body art and even indigenous spiritual and social systems.

#### KEEPERS OF THE TRADITION

Upon reaching the village, we are greeted by the Nokma or the village headman with a generous serving of *Chubitchi* or

the traditionally fermented (but weak) alcoholic rice beverage that is poured right into our mouths from an *abet* or a hollowed dried bottle gourd. It is the locals' way of welcoming the guests and must be accepted by them as a mark of honour. *Chubitchi* flows freely in Garo villages. There is no age or stigma attached to its consumption. It is an important part of every Garo celebration — be it religious rituals, meetings, social gatherings, birth, marriage, during *Wangala* (harvest festival) or even a house warming ceremony. It is said that in pre-modern era, the Garos would serve the drink before taking off for a hunt or to fight enemies. The traditional ways of making *Chubitchi* are said to have been passed down orally among the Garos until the arrival of Baptist American Missionaries. In the present day, though the knowledge of brewing *Chubitchi* continues to be shared in the interiors of Garo Hills, it is no longer a preferred practice in urban areas. Songsareks of Gondenggre are friendly albeit private people. Curiously is writ large on their faces as language holds them back from communicating freely with the outsiders. Rakkan M Sangma, Joint Secretary of the 100 Drums Wangala Festival Committee and Secretary of Garo Heritage Village plays interpreter and takes us through the rituals and practices of the villagers.

"*Song* in the local language means village or a native place and *Warek* means houses built in a line. By that definition, *Gondenggre* is a spread out village with houses that are built in a single line," says Sangma. "About 5-7 kms from the village, there exists a strong sacred grove called *A Song Kosi*. It is a special place where outsiders are forbidden from entering. No one is allowed to speak in that forest let alone pluck a single leaf. No one, not even a member of our tribe, can cause any harm to the trees, flowers, or animals there," he shared. Cleanliness is a buzzword in most parts of Meghalaya. Made from bamboo, Garo houses typically last for about four to five years. The kitchen is usually located outside the house. A complete set up comprising kitchen and dining space at the entrance of the village is meant



to be used by the community for celebrations and meetings. The rooms are usually spread out. According to Sangma, a lot of taboos including "untouchability" *vis-a-vis* the outsiders are practiced even today. The outsiders are not allowed to enter or touch anything inside the Garo spaces. Sacrifice remains an inherent part of Songsarek practices. There is a sacrifice to mark everything that is considered important — it could be a wedding or any celebration, a big announcement, to appease the Gods, to ward off evil or even to fight a disease. The blood marks are like trophies in the village. The Songsareks believe in keeping their Gods happy.

#### DANCING TO A HUNDRED DRUMS

*Wangala*, the Garo traditional dance dedicated to their main Deity and the God of Sun, crops and fertility, *Misti-Saaljong*, features as an Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) practice. Inspired by the wagtail bird, the dance imitates the bird's behaviour, using musical instruments such as a flute made from buffalo horn and drums. It is a group dance where pairs of men and women wearing wagtail feathers in their headgear line up and move along a circle in short, slow but forceful steps. The dance is led by the Nokma who sings the traditional songs in a high pitch while the rest of the men play the drums. The Garo women folk make traditional dance gestures imitating the bird or even animals and clap. The women wear skirts made from handwoven cloth woven on looms. The typical pattern is that of the eye of the Goddess of wealth, *Susime*, resembling a diamond. Wagtail bird holds a special meaning in the Songsarek beliefs. The villagers closely observe the flight of the bird

“SONG IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE MEANS VILLAGE OR A NATIVE PLACE AND WAREK MEANS HOUSES BUILT IN A LINE. BY THAT DEFINITION, GONDENGGRE IS A SPREAD OUT VILLAGE WITH HOUSES THAT ARE BUILT IN A SINGLE LINE”



to predict the waterfall for the season. Every *Wangala* or the harvest festival, the Songsareks put handprints on their doors (using three fingers) with rice flour indicating the water level and for good harvest. These imprints are usually made by the male members of the community outside the house of the Nokma, where most rituals are conducted. The Garos are a matrilineal, matrilineal and matrifocal society. They continue to carry forward the surname of the women of the family. The boys live with their parents till they reach puberty and then shift into a dormitory style bachelor home in the village till they get married into a girl's family. While the matrilineal aspect remains strong, the rules surrounding bachelor homes are somewhat easing out, shares Sangma.

#### THE GREAT HIMALAYAN EXPLORATION PROJECT

Royal Enfield's partnership project with UNESCO, The Great Himalayan Exploration, draws rider-researchers to document the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Himalayas.

"The aim is to document and safeguard the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Himalayas and thereby, raise awareness about the living treasures that make up the beating heart of India," says Bidisha Dey, Executive Director, Eicher Group Foundation — the CSR and Sustainability arm of Royal Enfield.

According to her, over two editions and 16 curated rides, 119 rider-researchers have already documented 66 practices across the Eastern Himalayan states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, North Bengal, Sikkim and Tripura. "We are now set to extend our exploration to the Western Himalayas in 2024," says Dey.

"We conduct a detailed on-ground reece before rolling out the riders to ensure the assent of the locals and as respect for their privacy. We are especially careful to follow the community protocols on how to approach the community and then conduct capacity building programmes to educate the rider researchers before they set out on their journeys," she shares.

Among the practices recorded are: The black pottery of Tyr Shang village in the West Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya, *Muga* silk threads of Assam, *Mon Shugy*, the ancient art of making paper of Arunachal Pradesh, living roots bridges of Meghalaya, handmade mask art of Majuli island, Assam.

"For us, the partnership is not just about the documentation. It's also about creating awareness about the intangible cultural heritage practices," concludes Dey.



# ENCALM'S WARM EMBRACE OF ATITHI DAIVO BHAVA



In an informative tête-à-tête with **SHOBORI GANGULI**, Encalm Hospitality CEO **VIKAS SHARMA** outlines his vision of revolutionising the world of airport hospitality

**P**ossibly never before in history has the global hospitality industry and its ecosystem been as severely hit as it was during the 2021 Pandemic. Not even the two World Wars in the last century left nations gasping for breath as Covid did, with its lethal tentacles paralysing MSMEs, travel and tourism businesses, and their subsidiary industries. Unannounced lockdowns and travel restrictions drilled unparalleled fear into the human psyche, with no end in sight. But, as Charles Dickens put it in *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair." Clawing back for survival under such adversity, the hospitality industry was quick to innovate. Mr Vikas Sharma, the Chief Executive Officer of Encalm Hospitality, entered this volatile world as a beacon of hope in the year 2021, in a territory unexplored and uncharted and at a time when fear of human contact reigned supreme.

Armed with the vision to infuse fresh life into the business of hospitality, and, of course, with an enviable arsenal of 25 years of experience in the trade, Sharma went about restructuring the landscape of airport hospitality through an unparalleled experience — much like the American Pioneer who wanted "to go where no man has gone before." Air travel, even for those going business class, has its attendant share of anxiety and restlessness. Seeking to ease this, Mr Sharma, through Encalm, concretised a novel definition of airport services. "Hospitality" is the key word in this endeavour, says a proud Sharma.

In a short span of three years, Sharma today heads a 200 plus team which, according to him, is crucial in taking the organisation's long term objectives forward through "strategic thinking and effective communication."

At a time when most airlines provide their Business Class passengers with state of the art lounges and customized relaxation plans without overheads, what does



VIKAS sharma, CEO, ENCALM HOSPITALITY PVT LTD

Encalm bring to the table, especially if the passenger has to pay for it? Sharma is quick to enumerate that, "Encalm Hospitality has become synonymous with exceptional hospitality and top-of-the-line services right from Atithya to the

Encalm Lounges and Spa." Available in all three terminals of the Delhi Airport, Encalm Lounges are also available in Hyderabad and Goa. To ensure an "elevated airport experience" Sharma lists out the services the company has on offer.

Penetrating into the luxury realm of a regular lounge and Spa, Encalm's services and hospitality combine a range of assisted services, incorporating basic non-aviation chores such as assistance service, buggy services, and porter assistance. The company's offerings go beyond the aesthetics of bespoke carved lounges and Spas with a personalised "Atithya Meet and Greet" — constructed on the foundation of *Atithi Daivo Bhava* (Guests are equivalent to the Almighty), taking airport experience to another level altogether.

As the Encalm CEO proudly asserts, his knowledge and experiences help synergise the operational and management foundations of the Encalm brand. Needless to add, he has an impressive portfolio having served as the General Manager of Sheraton Hotel and Resorts, Director of Operations at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company and the Director of F&B at Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts. Operations, sales and marketing, finance and revenue management are his core competence. He was felicitated as the General Manager of the Year 2019 award by HOSI in association with Sheraton Hotel and Resorts, and Leadership Excellence Award by Marriott Hotel, again in 2019. An MBA graduate from INSEAD, Sharma has a bachelor's degree from IHM, Gwalior.

Interestingly, Sharma is also an avid cricket follower of cricket and badminton, the former fruitifying into reality when Encalm became the Hospitality partner with the Delhi Capitals for IPL 2024. Talking about the partnership Sharma says, "As a lifelong cricket enthusiast, the sport embodies more than mere competition — it's a fervent passion fostering camaraderie and excitement. Partnering with Delhi Capitals underscores my enduring dedication to cricket and its profound community impact. Through Encalm Hospitality's alliance with this dynamic IPL team, we embrace cricket's essence, engaging with fans authentically and enriching the sport's vibrant legacy."

**PAWAN SONI** pens down his personal experience at the airport with Encalm's services to provide a 360 degree view of what this innovation brings to the table

**T**he hustle and bustle of travel can often leave one weary and longing for a moment of respite. Gone are the days when travelling was mundane. We are at a time when journeys in fact can be as exhilarating as the destination themselves.

During my recent trip to Italy, while passing through Terminal 3 (T3) International Airport in New Delhi, I stumbled upon the Encalm Prive Lounge — a sanctuary of luxury and comfort that undoubtedly ranks among the world's finest.

With a staggering capacity of over 550 guests, the Encalm Prive Lounge caters exclusively to business travelers, accessible either through business class tickets or higher with various airlines, or by paying an entry fee. Unlike other lounges, complimentary card benefits do not apply here; however, cardholders can access another Encalm lounge, albeit not as lavish as the Prive lounge.

Culinary delights await at the extensive buffet which is rivalling with the leading star hotels selection and offers separate selections for both vegetarians and non-vegetarians. I loved the watermelon cheese as a canape, prawns and garlic cream kebabs, Chicken biryani and even the simple but tasty beetroot halwa. The lounge's leaf-shaped bar is a visual delight, offering a range of complimentary and paid options that cater to every palate. Given current Delhi's excise policy issue, there were many brands including Prosecco that weren't available at the time of my visit.

The lounge boasts of four sleeping pods, providing weary travellers with a private sanctuary to rest and rejuvenate before their next journey. Of course this is a paid facility at ₹1000 plus taxes per hour.

One of the standout features of the Encalm Prive Lounge is its expansive conference room, which doubles as a personal dining room, perfect for business travelers or senior bureaucrats and VIPs looking to conduct meetings or enjoy a meal in a private setting. For those looking for entertainment, the lounge offers a small gaming zone and a dedicated kids area, ensuring that travellers of all ages have something to enjoy during their visit. The virtual gaming zone and Xbox games comes as a chargeable feature separate from the lounge charge though it can be availed by only the lounge users. A small fitness centre and kids play area comes complimentary along with the lounge facility.

In addition to its luxurious amenities, the Encalm Prive Lounge also offers



excellent spa services. I had the pleasure of trying their 30-minute foot massage, which left me feeling relaxed and rejuvenated, ready to embark on the next leg of my journey. Currently this 30-minute spa came complimentary by using my DreamFolks card; else one will have to shell out ₹1500 for using this facility. Had there been a provision of complimentary foot massage machines and the massage chairs like at Singapore airport, I would have rated Encalm Prive lounge the best in the world without even blinking an eye.

While the lounge service came complimentary with my flight tickets, Encalm has another facility called Atithya Meet and Greet Service. So if you are a first time traveller or just worried about your parents or kids traveling alone, just avail this service from their portal that comes in various options — Silver, Gold and Elite. This service provides you with a guest manager who will escort you from the entrance without having to wait in the queue, help you through check-in and immigration services. They try to help you go through business class immigration service but it depends upon the government official to allow it. And then they help you get the buggy till your boarding gate. If you have a business class ticket or are planning to use the lounge through credit cards, in my opinion, Silver tier option gives you the best value for money.

Overall, my experience at the Encalm Prive Lounge and Atithya Meet and Greet service was nothing short of exceptional. From its elegant ambiance to its impeccable service, the lounge sets a new standard for airport hospitality. Next time you travel, consider experiencing the luxury and comfort of Atithya Meet and Greet Service and Encalm Prive Lounge apart from the usual shopping.

(Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com)

## Splendid Expedition Across Switzerland

Switzerland calls out to travelers with a taste for stunning mountain views, picturesque landmarks, and unique adventures. Step onto the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland for an incredible voyage through the country's rich culture and breathtaking landscapes. This train journey guarantees an unforgettable encounter with Switzerland's captivating charm

BY AKANKSHA DEAN

**A**s travelers, we set off to find new horizons, discover new cultures, savor delicious foods, and create lasting memories. Switzerland is a great choice for explorers, with stunning mountain views and charming villages that become part of every traveler's dream vacation. While Switzerland offers many ways to explore, taking a train journey is a truly magical experience. The Grand Train Tour of Switzerland is an adventure not to be missed. This remarkable trip reveals the beauty of Switzerland's mountains and its rich history. You can start and end your journey wherever you please, with destinations like Zermatt, St. Moritz, Lucerne, and Lugano awaiting your exploration. For those eager to visit every stop on the journey, the Swiss Travel Pass is the perfect solution. This ticket gives you access to all the destinations along the route. Covering 1,280 kilometers, passing by 11 serene lakes, and revealing five UNESCO World Heritage Sites set against the stunning alpine backdrop, this train journey ensures an engaging and unforgettable experience.



**MOST POPULAR TRAIN JOURNEYS THAT ARE A PART OF THE GRAND ROUTE**  
Hop on the Glacier Express, a legendary trip winding through the breathtaking Swiss Alps from Zermatt to St. Moritz. Take a journey on the Bernina Express to discover the Bernina Pass, Bernina Range, and the UNESCO World Heritage Rhaetian Railway. Travel along the Golden Pass Line, linking Lucerne to Montreux through stunning scenery. Enjoy the

Gotthard Panorama Express as it traverses the famous Gotthard Pass. Lastly, ride the Lucerne-Interlaken Express for captivating views of the Jungfrau region.

**MUST KNOW**  
Switzerland presents a rich array of experiences, from enchanting urban centers to tranquil mountain hamlets, crystal-clear lakes to towering peaks, and from ancient vineyards to fine dining destinations. The Swiss Travel

System offers a smooth, comfortable, and upscale way for tourists to discover this enchanting nation. With the Swiss Travel Pass, visitors gain access to Switzerland's comprehensive public transportation network, enabling them to seamlessly traverse the country by train, bus, boat, or mountain railway.

Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer

## LET'S GOA...

BY PAWAN SONI

**G**oa remains an ever-popular destination, with its property prices soaring post-COVID and a surge in demand for new eateries and nightspots. Each visit to Goa reveals new experiences, making it a perennial favorite. During a brief 3-day break from work, my wife and I opted for a villa stay over a traditional hotel, choosing the relatively new Villa Heliconia in Siolim.

### LOCATION

Villa Heliconia is conveniently located near the MOPA airport, making it easily accessible from most places in North Goa. Situated close to the buzzing spots in North Goa, it even shares a wall with the popular restaurant Hosa, known for its innovative take on traditional South Indian cuisine. I recommend trying Hosa for its exquisite interiors, great cocktails, and inventive dishes. However, ensure you have a reservation to avoid disappointment, as we found ourselves seated at an inconvenient high bar table for the last minute booking.

### AMENITIES

The villa is spacious, boasting two large living areas and six rooms, along with a swimming pool and lifts. Ideal for groups of friends or extended families, the private



pool is definitely a highlight. Decent-sized rooms, with at least two rooms featuring personal balconies ensures accommodation for kids and elderly as well.

### HOUSEKEEPING

We were impressed by the attentive housekeeper, Shuvendu Kashyap, whose knowledge extended beyond housekeeping to include coffee and a variety of subjects. The entire team was polite and eager to please.

### FOOD

One of the highlights was the option to have the staff

### FACT SHEET

Villa Heliconia, 9 Ground Floor, Landmark, Plot No Syno.329, Vaddy, near the church, Siolim, Goa  
Phone Number: 9350009000

prepare food of your choice, perfect for when you want a break from outside meals. I particularly enjoyed their dal, paneer, and tawa roti. Breakfast offered a variety of options, including eggs,

paranths, cut fruits, poori-aloo, and poha apart from beverages like fresh juice, tea and coffee. During my visit, I discovered that the owner, Abhishek Aggarwal, and I are both from Gurgaon. I reached out to him to share my pleasant experience with the villa. Abhishek, an excellent hospitality professional turned real estate entrepreneur, shared his journey of success. His hard work and good fortune not only led to the opening of Villa Heliconia but also to several upcoming luxury projects in Goa, including a 4-bedroom villa in Morjim, a 5-bedroom super luxury Bali-themed villa in Siolim, and a 10-bedroom boutique property in Calangute, which will be rented out as individual rooms rather than a villa. Villa Heliconia, a dream fulfilled for Abhishek, is a testament to the fact that some dreams do come true.

(Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com)



# SAVING THE GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

The Great Indian Bustard critically endangered and integral to India's wildlife heritage, faces multifaceted threats including habitat loss, collisions with infrastructure, and poaching. As efforts to safeguard the species intensify, the imperative to reconcile competing interests between development and conservation grows more urgent



**BKP SINHA**



**ARVIND K JHA**

**The WII had already identified ten potential locations for GIB breeding centres in 2017, setting the stage for proactive conservation measures. Drawing on expertise beyond borders, the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC) from Abu Dhabi was enlisted as a technical partner due to its successful track record in breeding other bustard species. The collective efforts resulted in the establishment of two breeding centres in Rajasthan, housing a total of 29 GIBs, bolstering hopes for the species' survival**

The Supreme Court of India in *MK Ranjitsinh and Ors vs. Union of India* has constituted a seven-member committee and tasked it with addressing the delicate balance between conservation initiatives for the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) and the installation of renewable energy projects in its habitat. This decision follows the Court's acknowledgement of the challenges posed by its April 2021 directive mandating the burial of all power lines within the GIB habitat, a measure claimed to be expensive and impractical over extensive distances by Power companies and the Central Government. With the complex interplay between development and conservation at the forefront, the committee has to assess primarily the viability of reducing the area banned for overhead powerlines from 80,000 to 13,663 square kilometres. The GIB figures in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, in Appendix I of CITES and is classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Included in the National Wildlife Action Plan, it has been earmarked for a recovery program under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India. During the Mughal and British periods, the GIB was one of the top game birds. Historical accounts suggest that tribal Bhils used to set fire to the bushes surrounding their nests to trap females. The species has been facing numerous threats to its survival including occasional poaching, collisions with high-tension electric wires, fast-moving vehicles, and free-ranging dogs in villages. Additionally, habitat loss and alteration due to the diversion of grasslands and scrublands, extensive agricultural expansion, mechanized farming practices, and infrastructural developments such as irrigation systems, roads, and windmills pose significant challenges.

Weighing approximately 15 kilograms each, their bulk poses a challenge when navigating around electricity lines or windmills, often resulting in fatalities or injuries. The dry semi-desert regions where the bustard once thrived, particularly in parts of Rajasthan, have also undergone significant transformation due to irrigation canals, converting the landscape into highly cultivated areas. Present-day threats include further expansion of linear infrastructure such as roads and electric power transmission lines leading to collision-related mortality. The proposed expansion of renewable energy infrastructure, including large-scale deployment of solar panels across desert and grassland areas, further jeopardizes the bird's habitat.

In its historical range, the great Indian bustard once existed across Western India, spanning 11 states, including parts of Pakistan, with strongholds in the Thar desert and the Deccan plateau. Known for its preference for flat, open landscapes with minimal disturbance, it thrives in grasslands. Their numbers, however, have dwindled dramatically, with only around 150 individuals estimated to survive as of 2018, down from around 250 in 2011. Most of the population, estimated at around 120, is concentrated in the arid grasslands of Thar, Rajasthan, particularly in the Desert National Park and the Pokhran Field Firing Range, with smaller populations reportedly scattered elsewhere in the country. In Maharashtra, two individuals had been reported in Nanaj, Solapur district, where the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is actively involved in conservation efforts. Concerningly, however, the absence of the great Indian bustard in Nanaj in Maharashtra as well as in the Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh for the past few years suggests a looming risk of local-level extinctions.

Known for their slow reproductive rate, GIBs lay only a few eggs and invest nearly a year in caring for their chicks. Establishing a founder population requires a minimum of 20 breeding females and 5 to 10 breeding males. In the relatively better populated Thar region, specifically focused upon in the



Supreme Court case, the looming risks of the maze of infrastructural development, food insecurity, conflicts, and climate change-induced impacts exacerbate the challenges faced by them.

As regards actions taken to safeguard the dwindling population of the GIB, the MoEFCC, Rajasthan Forest Department, and Wildlife Institute of India (WII), came together in 2018 to initiate conservation breeding programs and conduct scientific research for GIB's conservation.

Notably, the WII had already identified ten potential locations for GIB breeding centres in 2017, setting the stage for proactive conservation measures. Drawing on expertise beyond borders, the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC) from Abu Dhabi was enlisted as a technical partner due to its successful track record in breeding other bustard species. The collective efforts resulted in the establishment of two breeding centres in Rajasthan, housing a total of 29 GIBs, bolstering hopes for the species' survival. Further support poured in from WWF-India, which helped in crafting guidelines for a comprehensive State Action Plan for Resident Bustard Recovery Programme and backed future expansion plans in Gujarat. In Karnataka's Siruguppa taluka, the Ballari Forest division proposed a Detailed Project Report with an

investment of INR 24 crores for a research centre dedicated to the GIB cause. In Maharashtra, with GIB sighted in recent years neither in Nanaj of Solapur nor in Warora of Vidarbha region, a proposed collaboration with Rajasthan aims to exchange tigers for GIBs, with plans to establish a breeding centre in Nanaj. Assessment of the overall strength, budgetary outlay, and position of the MoEFCC and forest departments in decision-making in the Government reflects that the effectiveness of efforts to secure the future of the GIB is just inadequate. The weakening of statutory instruments and establishments related to forest and wildlife conservation in the recent past is quite revealing in this regard. In the case of GIB also, on an uneven field, stakeholders grapple with the urgent need to balance developmental agendas with conservation imperatives, claiming to be providing a sustainable coexistence for this emblematic avian species. However, amidst endeavours by some professional foresters, a pressing challenge looms large today. About 66,337 sq. km of land for overhead transmission lines are considered despite WII's recommendation that mitigation of powerline-linked mortality required a ban on high tension wires,

undergrounding of <66 kv wires, and retrofitting of existing wires with bird diverters. WII's findings also underscored the perilous predicament, with an estimated 16 GIB fatalities annually due to collisions with high-tension lines in the Thar region alone. Such alarming mortality rates, validated by tagging efforts by WII, are in sharp contrast to the indication of the number of recorded mortality cases as insignificant before the highest court. Using a lower number of collision deaths as a basis for allowing a network of overhead powerlines in GIB habitats will be akin to advocating the discontinuance of medicines in a pandemic situation where due to a reduced number of survivors, deaths per day may be lowered.

An approach of balancing conservation and development by permitting power projects, in a critically endangered species' habitat with just about 140 survivors, currently less polluting than non-renewable resources deserves perhaps a second look. The idea of development and its impact created and sold by the most selfish species on earth pitted against the right to life of a species at the brink of extinction needs to adopt a much wider and multi-sectoral perspective. India's insolation data in many areas, not natural habitats of GIB, presents

similar ranges as in Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Annual Mean Daily Global Solar Radiation (AMDGR) map indicates 6.8 to 5.6 kWh/ m<sup>2</sup>/ day in different parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat; 6.0 to 5.8 in Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Ladakh; and 5.8 to 5.6 in states like Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu. India's solar power generation capacity having reached about 76 GW in FY24, is concentrated in Rajasthan and Gujarat with 17.8 GW and 10.1 GW. Large states like MP and UR are major disappointments. Authorities should consider the country-wide spread and benefits, site-specific costs on infrastructure, and the capacity utilization factor (CUF) figures reported to be 20 for Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh; 19 for Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh; and 18 for Gujarat. Considering this scenario, any honest concern for balancing conservation and development must, instead of compromising GIB's future, explore and exploit the potential spread out in the country for solar projects. That would be true climate justice! (The writers are Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra; views are personal)







**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week promises a wealth of positive developments. A surge of spiritual energy is set to enhance your awareness, enveloping you in a glowing aura. Listen closely to your intuition—it will guide you confidently forward. Expect a time rich in affection, joyous celebrations, and meaningful connections. Inspirational creativity and artistic achievements will flourish, alongside significant personal milestones and unexpected blessings. The care and attention from others will deepen your experience of heartfelt connections. Your life will be enriched by the realization of your deepest aspirations. Your adept handling of situations in love, friendship, or career will seem almost magical. This period also offers a perfect opportunity to delve into new learning and refine your abilities across various disciplines. Embrace this time of growth and fulfillment.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Mustard  
Lucky day Monday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

The week begins on a challenging note, particularly in your personal connections. High hopes might lead to emotional reactions due to unexpected behaviors from close ones, compelling a desire for solitude. As the week progresses, obstacles persist, demanding sharp focus and keen observation to stay aligned with your ambitions. Travel could become necessary, possibly involving leisure trips with loved ones, blending routine with refreshing experiences. Your demeanor shifts from serene to vibrant as the week advances, rejuvenating your spirit and approach to life. At home, you'll exhibit care and attentiveness, while in professional settings, you'll show dynamism and fairness. This balanced approach fosters respect from peers and admiration from superiors. By the week's end, a sense of harmony pervades all aspects of life, leading to financial upliftment.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Green  
Lucky day Wednesday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

You have a vibrant energy and a keen interest in acquiring new skills, with a practical focus on financial stability. Prioritize clear communication about practical matters and values. A new venture or project is on the horizon, so it's important to stay organized by taking detailed notes and maintaining secure records. Your dedication and patience will enhance your awareness and personal growth. Mid-week brings opportunities for advancement, possibly including job offers or new income sources, and even potential romantic connections. However, exercise caution as the week ends; challenges and disagreements in professional settings may arise, potentially causing frustration. Despite these obstacles, support from a family member will be a bright spot, offering help or a cherished gift. Expect positive outcomes from any health evaluations.

Lucky number 21 | Lucky colour Yellow  
Lucky day Monday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

You have a knack for confronting reality, even when it's tough, and you can assess circumstances quickly. Your innate ability to perceive the underlying intentions and wishes of others is remarkable. You have a direct, clever, and pragmatic approach to matters. You have little patience for deceit or frivolity. However, achieving a healthier internal equilibrium is crucial, including finding the right mix of activity and rest, maintaining good health practices, and managing your emotions. It's important to make discerning choices that align with your best interests. In any legal situations, anticipate a fair resolution. You'll find that your dedication often leads to public praise and appreciation. In scenarios that once seemed disordered, you will find yourself in control, bringing order and clarity.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Silver  
Lucky day Thursday



**VRIGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This period invites you to deepen your connections with those you hold dear. As your relationships bloom, you'll find increased stability and emotional satisfaction, making it an ideal time to let go of any lingering doubts. Your career, too, is poised for growth. As the week progresses, you'll feel a strong desire for personal autonomy and recognition. You shine as a nurturing presence in the lives of those you care about, provided your leadership is respected. Your attributes of ambition, resilience, and discipline steer you towards positive outcomes, making it a favorable period for making sound decisions and reaping the rewards of diligent effort. However, as the week closes, unexpected challenges might disrupt your peace. Reassess these situations carefully.

Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Blue  
Lucky day Saturday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

You are on the brink of gaining fresh insights into a pressing concern. Embracing intellectual achievement is worthwhile, as the power of thought holds immense potential. However, it's important to balance sharp intellect with empathy. Your determination to pursue your aspirations is unyielding, despite the numerous obstacles and opposition you may encounter. At your workplace, you'll find others showing interest in your projects, creating a competitive environment. Tensions at home might escalate, making communication challenging and leaving you contemplating a drastic decision to leave. However, remain patient, as positive changes are on the horizon. With determination and thoughtful strategy, no challenge is too great to overcome. Influential guidance, possibly from a mentor or a family member like a father or elder brother, will significantly enhance your ability to realize your goals.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Black  
Lucky day Saturday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Sharing your work with a like-minded and diligent partner could prove beneficial for you. You may find yourself engaging with more tasks and projects, which will keep you actively occupied. Effective teamwork, involving strategizing and leveraging collective skills, is crucial for achieving objectives. Your emotional equilibrium allows you to access deeper insights and understanding. This period emphasizes your nurturing side; you offer support through empathetic actions and soothing words, contributing positively to others' well-being. Your composed demeanor helps you maintain a steady approach in various situations, reinforcing your influence in professional settings where structure is appreciated. Potential travel may be on the horizon, reflecting a readiness to embrace new experiences. This phase is marked by a commitment to personal and spiritual development, as you engage in meditative practices, yoga, and participate in communal spiritual gatherings.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Red  
Lucky day Tuesday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week, you will experience profound fulfillment as your efforts begin to bear fruit. Deep connections and emotional openness may lead to significant new bonds. Your dreams align with reality, bringing satisfaction and contentment. You may feel torn between emotions and logic, yet you'll successfully navigate towards your goals. Mid-week, a sense of adventure could inspire a new project or journey, pushing you to step out of your comfort zone. Your energy levels remain high, fueling your pursuits. As the week ends, you'll enjoy a harmonious balance, reaping rewards across all life facets—social, financial, and personal, culminating in a deep sense of fulfillment and well-being. The weekend promises relaxation and a vibrant social life, enhancing your overall joy.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Orange  
Lucky day Thursday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

You feel emotionally balanced and exhibit confidence and generosity, often caring deeply for others. Your natural charisma makes you an engaging diplomat and an enchanting partner, whether in conversations or relationships. However, it's crucial to avoid the extremes of your passionate or emotional sides. Leaning too heavily towards passion might lead to self-inflicted stress, whereas excessive emotionality could leave you feeling submerged and lost. This week, the atmosphere at work might become challenging, marked by fierce competition and potential conflicts. Be vigilant as colleagues might attempt to take credit for your efforts. Stay focused on your professional responsibilities, requiring much creativity and attention. Opt for tactful interactions and embrace diverse perspectives rather than using force. Accountability is key; avoid placing blame on others for setbacks.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Off White  
Lucky day Wednesday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week, you stand at a crossroads, facing a significant choice that will influence your path forward. As you navigate this decision, the key lies in recognizing the hidden opportunities that may initially appear as setbacks. Trusting in the strong, balanced bond you share with those around you will empower you and bring clarity to your decisions. Your innate confidence and dynamic presence will guide you in executing your plans effectively. Social interactions, particularly celebrations or gatherings, will prove beneficial, enhancing your connections and opening doors to new possibilities. As the week draws to a close, expect to receive affirmations of your efforts and achievements. An unexpected acknowledgment or positive news will highlight your success, fostering further growth in areas that align with your best interests.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour White  
Lucky day Friday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week finds you deeply attuned to your spiritual ambitions, seeking a mentor to enhance your connection with the higher realms. Your commitment transcends specific beliefs, embracing a collective spirit through community engagement. Midweek, your attention shifts to professional endeavors where dynamic interactions and bold initiatives pave the way for success. Your efforts are characterized by determination and are likely to yield professional advancement and harmonious interactions with colleagues. Presently, you embody kindness and authority, garnering respect and influence. A strong sense of self-awareness guides you, as your inner wisdom steers you towards beneficial decisions. Overall, your approach to life is well-rounded and thoughtful, positioning you ideally to navigate choices that align closely with your values and goals.

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Pink  
Lucky day Friday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

You are enveloped in a nurturing atmosphere of love and unity, with strong connections enhancing your environment with joy and solidarity. Creativity enriches your interactions, making family time rewarding, especially as younger members excel. Those hoping to expand their family may soon receive joyful news, and a significant celebration could further uplift spirits. This week encourages a structured approach in your personal and professional life, urging optimal organization and efficiency. It's a crucial period to assertively pursue your ambitions while maintaining a balanced perspective. Embrace this as a chance for personal growth and transformation, perhaps by shedding outdated habits. This focused approach will not only advance your goals but also stabilize your inner sense of security.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Fuchsia  
Lucky day Sunday

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Shape your destiny through conscious efforts

What is in store of my son's destiny? How far he will study? Will he land up in a good job? Someone came asking a couple of years back. He informed that his son was insistent on pursuing engineering course. But given his performance at school, it looks difficult. He was advised an easier option of pursuing Commerce. For, with lesser efforts, he could take the course to its logical end, which may at least secure him a decent job. But he won't listen. At the outset, let me assure you that your son is a potential guy. Don't underestimate him. His performance would not have been up to mark so far. Should he address his few weaknesses, following the process suggested, his positives will bloom out in full, which is immense. In fact, he carries the potential to complete higher studies. For, 4th cusp sub-lord Venus, identified with graduate studies is tenanted in the nakshatra owned by Rahu occupying the 9th house, marked with higher studies. 9th sub-lord Mars is again in the 9th house and posited in the nakshatra owned by 9th lord

Sun. Such a close connect of the houses referred promises higher education. Benevolent Jupiter is beautifully aligned with the Sun. It implies that he is a responsible guy who is promised an honourable and dignified life. He enjoys good executive ability and can hold a position of trust. Even more because Karmic Saturn extends its benefic aspect on the Sun, which grants him with excellent organising skill having his eyes even on finer details. Intelligence signifying Mercury is well aligned to intellectually ordained Uranus. That offers him a scientific bent of mind and is highly intelligent. Mercury being well disposed of towards Mars grants him analytical abilities worth pursuing Engineering. He could do well particularly in Computer Science, as would Saturn and Ketu, together placed in the 3rd house marked with his basal instincts mean. What further adds to his potential is that 3rd cusp sub-lord Venus is posited in the nakshatra owned by Rahu in the 9th house, both occupying Mercury owned sign Virgo. He does also carry the



potential to do well in commerce as 10th lord Venus has benefic association with mind signifying Moon. But it will be still better if he pursues Computer Engineering. Now it is up to him to take the final call.

How well your son utilises the above virtues will define his future course of destiny. "I feel good to hear about my son's indwelling potential. Why then it doesn't reflect in his performance as

on date?" Countered the man. Well, if he carries positive qualities, there are enough of inherent weaknesses also that stand in way of his potential side from blooming out in full. Mind signifying Moon, incidentally the 8th lord makes him habitually suspicious even of his own worth. Still more because Saturn is ill-disposed off to Moon, which further creates self-doubt. Moon is placed adverse to Mercury, which implies that he lacks focus. He would be engaged in conflicting thoughts and has a worrisome mind. Jupiter placed adverse to Venus makes him comfort loving. If that would not be enough, Saturn and Ketu together also bring in an escapist tendency, which may not allow him taking timely initiatives. Mars and Rahu together in a Mercury owned sign makes him dissipate his energies towards varied unproductive ends. "Sir, is it possible to change his habit tendencies, as they die hard?" Asked the man. Don't forget that human beings enjoy the exclusive privilege to guide their action by choice and discrimination. It is, however, equally

true that choice option carries equal probability of use and misuse. That's the premise on which destiny stands. But here again, the choice option also enjoins upon a being to self-reflect, identify one's own weaknesses, acknowledge them, and then address them by making conscientious choice. One more good thing about your son is that his spiritual quotient is quite high. For, the lagna sub-lord Mars happens to be the 9th sub-lord as well, which is conjunct Rahu, the 5th sub-lord. When guided properly, he will be keen to pursue meditative technique suggested. If he does that especially before he sits for studies, he will be able to remain focused for long. With time, his mind will stabilise and will be able to overcome his inherent weaknesses. His indwelling potential will then play out unhindered to his full advantage. He may then be able to do justice to whatever discipline he opts for.

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