



OPINION 6 AMBEDKAR'S WARNING ON DEMOCRACY RINGS TRUE

WORLD 9 BODIES OF 3 MORE HOSTAGES RECOVERED FROM GAZA

MONEY 10 MARKETS END LOWER AFTER SCALING RECORD PEAKS

Published From DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol.160 Issue 140 Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, SATURDAY MAY 25, 2024; PAGES 12 13



the pioneer Established 1864

www.dailypioneer.com



DK BOOSTED ME WHEN I STRUGGLED IN IPL 2022: KOHLI 12 SPORTS

DELHI ON KARTAVYA PATH

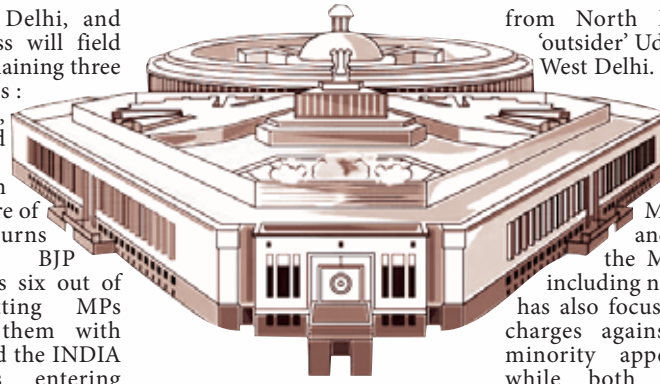
Unique affair as CM on bail; Cong, AAP fight in sync

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

A sort of history will be created when the national Capital votes in the Lok Sabha elections on Friday. Firstly, the voting will occur while the Delhi Chief Minister is out on interim bail after serving 50 days in judicial custody and is set to return to Tihar Jail on June 2. Secondly, it will be for the first time that Congress and AAP have united to challenge BJP's dominance in Delhi. In the last two Lok Sabha elections — 2014 and 2019 — the BJP retained all seven seats in Delhi. So far there used to be a direct fight between the Congress and BJP with Aam Admi Party (AAP) being the third entrant but the 2024 general elections will give chance to the electorates to vote for BJP candidates or combined candidates of Congress and AAP. Interestingly AAP had dislodged the 15 years of Congress Government-led by late Sheila Dikshit on charges of corruption and the incumbent Kejriwal-led AAP Government is facing charges in multi-crore liquor scam. Since 2013, AAP has replaced Congress as a major political force in Delhi. A total of 1.52 crore voters, including 82 lakh male and 69 lakh female voters as well as 1,228 third gender, are eligible to cast their votes at more than 13,000

polling booths in 2,627 places across the seven seats. The weather department has sounded a yellow alert on the polling day with maximum temperature expected around 44 degrees Celsius. The national Capital is always a battle of prestige and not numbers. Delhi has only seven parliamentary constituencies but it has high stakes. Interestingly, despite winning all seats in two consecutive parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2019, the BJP has not been able to snatch Delhi from AAP in the Assembly polls. In late February, Congress and AAP reached a seat-sharing agreement after weeks of negotiations. Under this agreement, AAP will contest in four constituencies: East Delhi,

West Delhi, South Delhi, and New Delhi. Congress will field candidates in the remaining three constituencies: Chandni Chowk, North East Delhi, and North West Delhi. The electoral battle in Delhi had its fair share of twists and turns with the BJP dropping its six out of seven sitting MPs replacing them with freshers and the INDIA constituents entering into a seat-sharing agreement. The AAP faced a major jolt with its national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal being arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case, hardly a week after announcement of the polls, on March 21. After 50 days, Kejriwal was granted an interim bail by the Supreme Court to campaign. He came out of



Tihar on May 10 energising his party cadre and supporters with a whirlwind tour of the city in the road shows and public meetings in favour of not only the AAP candidates but also its ally, the Congress. The Congress also faced a revolt. Arvinder Singh Lovely resigned as Congress chief protesting the party's move to name former JNU Students Union president Kanhaiya Kumar

from North East Delhi and 'outsider' Udit Raj from North West Delhi. BJP is banking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charisma and works done by the Modi Government including national security. It has also focused on corruption charges against Kejriwal and minority appeasement issues while both AAP and the Congress have focused on dictatorship of Modi and misuse of ED, CBI against Opposition leaders. The entire election in Delhi is focused between two personalities- Modi vs Kejriwal. AAP has fielded Kuldeep Kumar from East Delhi seat, Mahabali Mishra from West Delhi, Somnath Bharti from New Delhi and Sahi Ram Pahalwan from South Delhi. The Congress has

fielded JP Agarwal from Chandni Chowk, Kanhaiya Kumar from North East Delhi and Udit Raj from North West Delhi constituency. BJP candidates include Manoj Tiwari from North East Delhi, the only sitting MP from Delhi fielded by the party again; Ramvir Singh Bidhuri from South Delhi, Bansuri Swaraj from New Delhi, Harsh Deep Malhotra from East Delhi, Yogendra Chandolia from North West Delhi, Praveen Khandelwal from Chandni Chowk and Kamaljeet Sehrawat from West Delhi. The BJP has fielded two women candidates in the national Capital. Campaigners included Modi, BJP chief JP Nadda, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Piyush Goyal

among others; Chief Ministers of BJP ruled States including Yogi Adityanath of UP, Himanta Biswa Sarma of Assam, Pushkar Singh Dhami of Uttarakhand, Pramod Sawant of Goa and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis among others. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi held three public meetings for the party candidates. Besides, Kejriwal and his wife Sunita Kejriwal, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Delhi government ministers Atishi, Saurabh Bharadwaj, Gopal Rai, Kailash Gahlot also campaigned for the AAP candidates. Several dignitaries and eminent personalities, including President of India Droupadi Murmu, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul, Kejriwal and Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri are also voters of the city. With 13,637 and four auxiliary - including 2,891 critical - polling stations in Delhi, 70 pink booths will also be set up, which will be handled by women officials only. Along with this, 70 model polling booths have been set up. The maximum number of voters is in the West Delhi seat at 25.87 lakh followed by West Delhi seat (25.67 lakh), North East Delhi seat (24.63 lakh), South Delhi seat (22.91 lakh), East Delhi seat (21.20 lakh), Chandni Chowk seat (16.45 lakh) and New Delhi seat (15.25 lakh).



Poll preparations reach fever pitch

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With urban apathy continuing through the first five rounds of polling, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday reminded urban voters of their right and duty to vote, urging them to break this trend despite the extreme heatwave and high humidity. Over 11.13 crore voters, including 5.29 crore women, will cast their votes for the 58 Parliamentary constituency seats in six States and Union Territories on Saturday. The commission has called upon voters to turn out in greater numbers at polling stations and to vote with responsibility and pride. Voters of Parliamentary constituencies in urban centres like Delhi, Gurugram and Faridabad are specially reminded about their right and duty to vote and break the trend of urban apathy. After the five rounds of voting on May 20, the EC lamented the lower voter turnout in urban cities such as Mumbai, Thane, Jaipur, Lucknow, Chennai, Jhansi, Thiruvananthapuram, Howrah, and Madurai compared to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, calling it urban apathy. An analysis of turnout shows that of the 409 seats where data can be compared with 2019, nearly two-thirds, or 258, have witnessed a lower percentage turnout this year and 88 (more than one in five) have seen even the absolute number of votes drop from five years ago. The EC had noted that in the past, these cities have "suffered" from urban apathy as far as voting is concerned. On May 3 too, while referring to voter turnout in phase two, the commission had said it was "disappointed" with the turnout level in some metropolitan cities. Last month, the EC assembled many metro commissioners here to devise a strategy to combat voter apathy. Urban and youth apathy is described as a phenomenon when young voters and those living in metros fail to turn up at polling stations on the election day. Besides urban apathy, heatwave in poll bound States and UTs are major concerns to the authorities to improve voter turnout. According to the weather department, the maximum temperature is expected to be around 44 to 45 degrees Celsius which is likely to give feelings of over 50-52 degrees Celsius. In a statement issued on Friday,

Table titled 'STARS IN FRAY' listing candidates and parties for various constituencies in Delhi.

witnessed a voter turnout of approximately 62.19 per cent. In the corresponding phase during the 2019 polls, a voter turnout of 64.16 per cent was recorded as 51 seats across seven States went to the polls. The Congress did not win even one of these 58 seats in the 2019 elections. In contrast, the BJP's stakes are high as it had won 40, securing a vote share of more than 40 per cent on 47 seats in the last elections. This clearly shows Congress doesn't have any strongholds in this phase. What makes this phase particularly interesting is that all seven seats in Delhi and all the 10 seats in Haryana will go to polls. Of the 58 Parliamentary constituencies, the BJP has a stronghold in five, Biju Janata Dal on four, and Trinamool Congress on two. The BJP is a strong contender in 30 seats. This means the party won the seat at least twice in the last three elections. There are six seats where the victory margin was more than 35 per cent in the 2019 election, and the BJP won all of them. The other four seats with less than one per cent victory margin in the last election are Shrawasti in UP, Rohtak in Haryana, Sambalpur in Odisha, and Jhargram in West Bengal. In West Bengal, voting will be held in the tribal belt Jangalmahal region, spanning five districts. A hotspot for identity politics, the region sends eight representatives to Lok Sabha from Tamluk, Kanthi, Ghatol, Jhargram, Medinipur, Purulia, Bankura, and Bishnupur seats. Out of the eight seats, the BJP won five and TMC bagged three in the 2019 polls. The seats going to the polls in Uttar Pradesh are Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Phulpur, Allahabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Shrawasti, Domariyaganj, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Lalganj, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Machhlisahr and Bhadohi. From Sultanpur, BJP candidate Maneka Gandhi is seeking her ninth entry into the Lok Sabha. The former Union Minister is up against the Samajwadi Party's Ram Bhuai Nishad and the Bahujan Samaj Party's (BSP) Uday Raj Verma. In Azamgarh, incumbent MP Dinesh Lal Yadav Nirahua will be hoping to retain the seat for the BJP against the Samajwadi Party's Dharmendra Yadav. Jaunpur will witness former Maharashtra Minister Kripashankar Singh of the BJP taking on Samajwadi Party candidate Babu Singh Khushwaha and the incumbent MP Shyam Singh Yadav of the BSP.

the poll panel said the India Meteorological Department has predicted "no adverse impact" of cyclone in poll-going constituencies. But it gave no details. Polling for the Anantnag-Rajouri seat in Jammu and Kashmir will also be held on Saturday. The election there was postponed from phase three to six due to logistical issues owing to adverse weather conditions. Among the key contestants are Dharmendra Pradhan (BJP) from Sambalpur (Odisha), Manoj Tiwari (BJP) and Kanhaiya Kumar (Congress) from North East Delhi, Bansuri Swaraj from New Delhi Maneka Gandhi (BJP) from Sultanpur (Uttar Pradesh), Mehbooba Mufti (PDP) from Anantnag-Rajouri (Jammu & Kashmir), Abhijit Gangopadhyay (BJP) from Tamluk (West Bengal), and BJP's Manohar Lal Khattar (Karnal, Haryana), Naveen Jindal (Kurukshetra) Raj Babbar (Gurugram) Dinesh Lal Yadav alias Nirahua (Azamgarh) and Rao Inderjit Singh (Gurgaon). So far, polling has been completed in 428 constituencies across 25 States and Union Territories. Phase V



Fitness first for Chardham Yatra

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

More than 50 pilgrims have died so far since the start of the Chardham Yatra in Uttarakhand nearly a fortnight ago on May 10. Garhwal Commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey said, "Fifty two Chardham pilgrims

have died so far, mostly due to heart attacks. Most of them were above 60 years." Three devotees died in Gangotri, 12 in Yamunotri, 14 in Badrinath and 23 in Kedarnath, he said. Medical screening for devotees above 50 years of age has been made mandatory. The

screening is being done en route to the Himalayan temples, and pilgrims are being advised not to travel if they are not found medically fit enough, he said. However, if they still insist on continuing the yatra, they are allowed to go further after filling up a form. Continuous

efforts are being made to further improve the Chardham Yatra arrangements, he said, adding that so far nine lakh 67 thousand 302 devotees have visited the Chardham. The yatra is going on smoothly at all the four pilgrimages, Pandey said.

Youth offer a distinct outlook

SAUMYA SHUKLA/SAMAR PANDEY ■ NEW DELHI

During the election season, The Pioneer spoke with youngsters from various parts of the country, who flock to the national Capital, to study at the prestigious Delhi University. Filled with hopes and aspirations, these students express concerns that surprisingly differ from those of their elders. Education, sports facilities, and rising communal tensions were the primary issues they want their Government to address. Moreover, unlike traditional responses, when asked about their favourite leaders, youngsters mentioned Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar, Minister of Road, Transport, and Highways Nitin Gadkari, and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Ankit, a 20-year-old boy from Ramjas College, said he likes Jaishankar's personality and fearless attitude. Puja, a specially-abled 23-year-old girl from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Varanasi said while developmental projects have taken place under the BJP's rule in her hometown, she would want places to be accessible for people like her. Elaborating on the development projects, she said, "Roads have been a lot better. Kashi corridor was a really great project undertaken by Modi. The infrastructure of our primary level schools has become better and education of girls is being promoted by decreasing their fees." She also talked about steps she wants the Government, which coined the term divyang for people like her, to take and said, "I would like if our infrastructure is more accessible for people like me. We don't get good facilities in



File Photo

educational institutions or even roads for that matter." Two 20-year-old boys from Rajasthan's Bharatpur said they will vote for NOTA since they don't like any candidate. "I will vote for the betterment of my constituency. There is crime in my place. There are governance issues. There are no facilities for sports. In fact in a few years there will be a water crisis too," they said, adding that since they find no one working for them they will vote for NOTA. A 21-year-old Kirti, who hails from Mathura, said she has witnessed development in the constituency of actress turned politician Hema Malini. "It is likely she will be re-elected again in my hometown. However I would want more focus on opening new educational institutions in my area," she said. A Delhi voter and a law student, Arzu, 22, said she feels that when it comes to women empowerment not just the Government but society needs to work in tandem with their aspirations. "As a woman I think while our society wants us to pursue our studies and work keeping us at par with men, the burden of home falls on us alone. We are pressured to marry early," she

shared. Explaining what her issues are, she said, "The issues for me this election will be lack of infrastructure when it comes to our legal system and in education too. I think if we build more courts and have more vacancies, so many lawyers and advocates can get jobs. A resident of North West Delhi's Kirari, she said she will vote for Congress and INDIA Bloc in her constituency Rituraj, a 22-year-old student of Faculty of Law College, vociferously questioned why developmental projects haven't taken place in Bihar from where 39 MPs were voted to power in 2019 to BJP-led NDA Government. He said, "I believe that even though BJP-led NDA went on to secure 39 seats in Bihar, developmental projects in the State weren't focused upon. Even Gujarat doesn't give so many seats to them and yet nobody works for Bihar. There are migrant workers from Bihar in Gujarat. We are facing a brain drain in our State. We need a leader from Bihar who can understand our problems and work on them at a fast pace." "However, we have to choose the best from the worst. First of all, even though Tejashwi

Yadav has taken over, his father is still there. They still do caste politics. The JD(U) and NDA Government has done some good work. For example, my mother benefitted from the loan women self help groups get with no interest for work. Toilets installed by the Government to make India open defecation free was an important initiative. The EWS scheme has made the lives of general people like me a bit better. I come from the Bhumihar caste and even though they belong to the general caste, the census done in Bihar shows that they are among the most poor. The NDA Government was bringing the farm laws which I believe would have been helpful to the farmers of Bihar since we don't have mandis like the one in Punjab but then they took it back," he said while talking about who he will consider to vote for. Shreya, a 20-year-old native of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's Gorakhpur constituency, said, "Developmental projects did take place in Gorakhpur after the Yogi Government came into power. AIMS was opened in my hometown. In regard to women safety, we were given counselling about which places we can find help from the police. They impose curfews also to maintain law and order from time to time at night." Further, she expressed her concerns about rising communal tensions and said, "I think privatisation affects the working force in the government sector. My parents are in Government services. I also feel that politics based on Hindu Muslim should be contained. Communalism in the country has gone up I believe."

Allahabad University Students' Union a missing factor in LS polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Student politics, which once formed a key element of any election in and around Prayagraj, is no longer an attraction. The reason, many feel, is the Allahabad University discontinuing its students' union in 2018, citing a slew of violent events ahead of the university polls even though the demand for its revival comes across groups. The Allahabad University Students' Union (AUSU) was established in 1923 and it was actively involved in the Quit India Movement (1942) against the British rule so much so that the Empire even had the AUSU dissolved but it was revived again in 1945-46. Shyam Krishna Pandey noted in his book 'Youth's Initiative: Struggle and India's Freedom'. Social activist and Allahabad High Court lawyer KK Roy, who led the Allahabad University Students' Union as the president from 1988 to 1991, said the AUSU worked like a primary school for future parliamentarians and to establish a permanent voice assessing the government of the day. "Several youth organisations not only here but in other parts of North India established a culture of progressive youth politics. Student politics is like primary school of democracy which produced politicians, thinkers, civil servants, journalists and luminaries in many other walks of life," Roy told PTI. "But ever since 2014, all such institutions which voiced any opposition and criticism, were ended in the country like trade unions and four

significant changes were brought in the labour laws also. The existence of students' union in Uttar Pradesh has been eliminated," the former student leader alleged. Roy recalled that students during that era felt familial relations with former prime ministers, particularly VP Singh and Chandra Shekhar, who even visited the university to meet them. "The brunt of not having the students union is being bore by the youth. Today, unemployment is a major issue. Had the students union been there, then from 2017 to 2023, there would not have been paper leaks. The boys would have knocked on the doors of Lucknow's Vidhan Sabha and Delhi's Parliament," he added. Veteran Congress leader Abhay 'Baba' Awasthi, who was the union's vice-president from 1988-91, said inflation, unemployment and corruption were today issues of discussion and not issues of voting, adding that these issues do not have any reflection on election and that is because of lack of any student politics. "It was a whole workshop on developing a thought, mobilising people and organising agitation on issues. When that idea was validated, it attracted youth for people's movements. Today when you see laws like Right to Information, Right to Education, these all are result of people's movements," Awasthi said. The students' union had such an influence that Chandra Shekhar visited the university when he was the PM soon after his government was formed and assured the students of central support, he

said. Abhinav Mishra, a fourth year BA LLB student at the university and associated with the RSS' student wing Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), said the student union was like a nursery not only for politics but also for comprehensive development of the students. "Student union provides the students with a platform through which they put forth their thoughts on any issue. Today, like we are here at the Allahabad University in Prayagraj, we can see there are several issues concerning the students that do not reach the management and it gets buried," Mishra said. "Administrative arbitrariness peaks in places that do not have students' union and a live example of it can be seen here," he added. Mishra said the student unions were very important as they helped not only the students but the entire country because when educated people entered politics and had some experience, it helped them work better. "The students' union here has been closed since 2018 and there is a state of no dialogue between the students and the university administration. Small issues like library should be opened 24 hours. A notification was issued that it will stay open till 9 pm, but right now the students are turned away at 6 pm only," Mishra said. "Students grievances are not being heard and that is because they do not have any platform like the students' union which could take up such cause," he added. Sunil Mourya, a former unionist student and now asso-

ciated with Revolutionary Youth Association, the youth wing of CPI (Marxist-Leninist), said student politics was earlier known for producing leaders not only in Allahabad but across the country. "There are no student union elections largely in UP's universities, and its not only student groups, students but entire society has to bear its consequences because student unions had a role in expressing issues and leading movements. All this has stopped now since the students' union no longer exists," he said. Mourya said Prayagraj hosts a large number of youth and students who come here for education and unions have always taken up their cause to the extent that some student leaders even faced police cases and spent time behind bars. "Had there been a student union, the administration would have to face its pressure over issues like unemployment and perhaps some students who died by suicide might not have taken the extreme step," he added. On impact of student politics in electoral politics, Mourya said that earlier the parties kept an eye on youth leaders who could help them. "Student leaders used to be a force in Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha candidates, they had a major influence on the society. All that has collapsed now," he added. Prayagraj, which is spread across two parliamentary constituencies of Allahabad and Phulpur, goes to Lok Sabha polls on May 25. Both seats were won by the BJP in 2014 and 2019. The election results are due on June 4.

Gangster sells his car from jail, probe on

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a strange case of how criminals are freely operating from jail, a gangster, Vikas Sinha, who is in jail in a case of forgery in Gorakhpur, sold his luxury car while in prison. Circle Officer of Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority (GIDA), who is investigating the matter, has sought information from the regional transport officer about how the vehicle was transferred when the owner

was behind the bars. The investigation has revealed that on the date the car was sold, no one had gone to meet the gangster in jail officially. The other way to sell a car without signature is by giving the OTP received on the mobile, which is not possible in jail. Now in this entire investigation, along with the act of the gangster, the regional transport office is also under question. At present, the investigation of the case is still going

on. According to information, hospital operator Vikas Sinha was arrested by the police in October 2023 on charges of forgery and extortion. He had grabbed Rs 63 lakh from eight people. Victim Intiaz's wife Shaiba had filed a complaint against him. As soon as he went to jail, the accused realised that the police could confiscate his property. Even after going to jail, his forgery did not stop. In a hurry to avoid seizure, he sold his Fortuner car while he was

in jail. Shaiba has complained about this to Gorakhpur's Senior Superintendent of Police Dr Gaurav Grover. The SSP has handed over the investigation of the case to CO GIDA. Now after many more facts have come to light, the police have sought information from the RTO. SSP Dr Gaurav Grover said that CO GIDA was investigating the entire case and action would be taken on the basis of investigation and evidence.

Nurse found dead in hotel room, family alleges rape, murder

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 22-year-old nurse was found dead in a hotel room in Shahjahanpur, with her family alleging that she was raped and then strangled, police said on Friday. The body of the victim, who worked at a private hospital, was found inside the room by a hotel staff on Thursday evening. Superintendent of Police Ashok Kumar Meena said. An FIR has been registered and the police are investigating the incident. According to the FIR, the deceased arrived at the hotel room with Shubham Shukla, who later left the room. "It has been alleged by the family members of the deceased that she was raped and then strangled to death by Shubham Shukla. Based on the complaint, we have registered a case of murder (302 IPC) and rape (376 IPC) against Shukla," a senior police

officer said. The body of the victim was sent for post-mortem. Three teams have been formed to arrest the accused, according to the police. Meanwhile in another incident reported on Friday morning, two teenage lovers ended their lives. Their bodies were found hanging and both were holding each other's hand. When the villagers saw the bodies, they alerted the families. As soon as the information was received, the police reached the spot. The police have gathered information by interrogating the family members. The incident took place in Majra Trilokpur of Mudousi gram sabha under Kishani police station of Mainpuri. Ankit Kumar (20) son of Charan Singh Yadav and Nidhi (18) daughter of Indrapal Yadav, both local residents, went missing late Thursday night. The villagers launched a hunt and found their bodies

hanging from an acacia tree outside the village only on Friday morning. The villagers claimed that the love affair between the two was going on for about two years. The family members were also aware of this. The girl's family was not ready for marriage. The lovers had also put a story on Facebook at around 12 o'clock in the night on Thursday. It also has photos of both of them. Nidhi's family had gone to a hospital in Mainpuri as their elder daughter Madhu was in labour pain. Nidhi was alone in the house. Ankit returned home driving a tractor from somewhere in the night. After that, both of them committed suicide by hanging themselves from an acacia tree outside the village. On receiving the information, Inspector-in-charge Anil Kumar Singh reached the spot along with a police team. The police brought down both the bodies and sent them for post-

mortem. In Mathura, two teenagers and a woman died after they were hit by a train on Friday morning. Police reached the spot and sent the bodies for post-mortem. The incident happened near Bajna bridge on Mathura-Agra railway track. The victims could not be identified. Police said that they appeared to be mother and daughters and for some reason, they have committed suicide together. Efforts are being made to identify the deceased. According to the gangman team working on the railway track, a woman and two teenagers came walking from Bhuteshwar. They stood on the track near pillar number 1402/5A ahead of Bajna bridge. At the same time a goods train came and all three were hit. The woman is about 35 years old. The age of one teenager is 12 years and the age of the other is about 14 years.

Yogi hails Calcutta HC decision on OBC-Muslim quota 'Constitution never allows reservation on basis of religion'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Friday, welcomed the decision of Calcutta High Court regarding OBC-Muslim reservation, saying that the Constitution of India never allows reservation on the basis of religion. Speaking to the media at his official residence here, Yogi commented: "The TMC government of West Bengal, driven by political appeasement, introduced this reservation in 2010 by forcibly including 118 Muslim castes into the OBC category. This

approach of prioritising political interests over national welfare by the INDI Alliance must be denounced and exposed." He criticised the Mamata Banerjee government of West Bengal for forcefully encroaching upon the rights of OBCs. "The Honorable High Courts reversal of the TMC government's unconstitutional action is a significant rebuke. Such unconstitutional acts cannot be tolerated. Dr BR Ambedkar reiterated this point numerous times in the Constituent Assembly." He explained that in India,

reservation provisions were established for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and after the Mandal Commission, the reservation was instituted for Other Backward Classes, taking into account their social and economic backwardness. "The Constitution of India never allows reservation on the basis of religion. Baba Saheb had repeatedly warned the country that the country was divided on the basis of religion and we should not create any such situation which would push the country towards par-

titution." Describing the decision of the Calcutta High Court as an 'example', the chief minister emphasised that even in Karnataka, the Congress government has made similar encroachments on the rights of OBCs by providing reservations to Muslims. "Similar actions have been taken in Andhra Pradesh as well. It is crucial to strongly oppose all such measures. Any unconstitutional act that threatens to divide India and weaken its foundation should not be accepted at all," he said.

Man ends life in Indira Nagar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A man ended his life in Indira Nagar on Friday. The man, identified as Pramod Kumar of Sai Vihar, was allegedly being emotionally blackmailed by his wife, Diviya, to register their house in her name. As the deceased did not want to register the house in her name as he suspected this would create a difference and division in the family, he kept ignoring his wife's demand. "For past few months, Diviya was very forceful in her demand to register the house in her name. She used to fight with Pramod and did not cook food, prepare tea and do household work. She threw tantrums every now and then and my brother chose to end her life as he could not bear the

mental tension," the deceased's brother Sikander alleged. He alleged that Diviya was assisted by her parents in torturing Pramod, who was in favour of a joint family. Police sent the body for autopsy and started the investigation. In another incident, a 30-year-old man working in a temple and a plywood shop was found hanging in a room at Akhada temple in Naka police area on Friday. As per reports, the man, identified as Suraj of Sultanpur, was living in a small room of the temple in Fatehganj Galla Mandi. He also worked at a plywood shop close to the temple. He used to clean the temple. Alkesh Singh, who informed the police about the incident, said he visited the

temple in the morning and found Suraj unresponsive when he called him. He said he drew the curtain and found Suraj hanging from the ceiling with a bed sheet tied around his neck. Police later rushed Suraj to a hospital where doctors pronounced him dead. Police sent the body for autopsy and started the investigation. Meanwhile, a man, identified as Vipin Rawat of Tiwariganj, ended his life at his house in BBD University police station area while a 23-year-old youth identified as Mohammed Adnan of Rajjaganj in Thakurganj ended his life in a room of his home in the area on Thursday night. Vinay was an e-rickshaw driver while Adnan worked at a mobile repair shop in the area.

CM expresses grief over death of Santosh Gangwar's wife

Lucknow (PNS): Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed his condolences to the family of former Union minister Santosh Gangwar, who was an eight-time MP from Bareilly, on the demise of his wife. Chief Minister Yogi wrote on his X handle, "The demise of the wife of former Union minister and senior BJP member, MP Santosh Gangwar, is extremely sad. My condolences are with the grieving family. I pray to Lord Ram to grant the departed soul a place at His feet and give the bereaved family the strength to bear this immense sorrow. Om Shanti."

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I am Ram Chandra s/o Late Devi Deen H.No: A-7, Avash Vikash Colony Indira Nagar Raebareilly. I purchased a house owner khalid Latif Faruki Registry No: 2273+2274 dated 2/7/2001, this doc. lost anywhere by me.

NOTICE

I Pankaj Kumar Pushkar, Service No.14942442M Rank NK declare that in my army record my daughter's name has been mentioned Avika Pushkar which is wrong while the correct name of my daughter is Anshi Pushkar. Hence, in all my documents the correct name of my daughter Anshi Pushkar will be written and known. Pankaj Kumar Pushkar S/O Mahavir Prasad R/O Village Mohkampr, Post-Parsada, Tehseel-Mishrikh, District-Sitapur

NOTICE

My name Murlidhar, as mentioned in official and other documents, is not correct. My correct name is Murlidhar Ahuja which should accordingly be recorded. I should be known and identified by the name of Murlidhar Ahuja in future. Murlidhar Ahuja s/o Late Sirimal Ahuja, H.No.126/H/11A, Govind Nagar, Kanpur Nagar.

NOTICE

To inform the general public that both Vivek Bajpai and Vivek Kumar Bajpai are the same person. Hence known by both the names Vivek Bajpai and Vivek Kumar Bajpai. And be recognized. Vill + Post - Nisgar Tahseel - Lalganj , Police Station - Sareni District - Raebareilly Pin code - 229202

NOTICE

I No. 9486078N NK(TS) Sukhdev Singh declared that name of my daughter and her DOB were wrongly endorsed in my service documents as Nilam Kumari and DOB 02/03/1980, whereas her correct name and DOB are Neelam Kumari and 28/08/1980 for future perposes.

NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name From MOHAMMAD DANISH To MOHAMMAD DANISH SIDDIQUI. S/o MOHAMMAD SHAFIQ SIDDIQUI R/o 105/145 Mohammad Ali Park Chamanganj Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

I informed that my name Abdur Rahman Khan is printed in abbreviated form as A.R. Khan in academic certificates of my daughters Mohsina Khan & Bushra Khan and my Mohd Kamran Khan. While in all my certificates and official documents my full name is recorded as Abdur Rahman Khan. This is notified for all purposes. Abdur Rahman Khan, 92, Kachcha Hata, Aminabad, Lucknow-226018

NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name From RUMMAN FIRDAUS To MOHAMMAD RUMMAN FIRDAUS. S/o MOHAMMAD RAFIQUE R/o 387-C Block Rafique Villa Iqbal Street Jajmau Kanpur Nagar



Municipal commissioner listening to problems of citizens at the House tax camp organised at Lucknow Nagar Nigam head office on Friday

DGP orders stern action against human trafficking, begging

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Strict action will be taken against the anti-social elements running human trafficking and begging rackets in the state. Director General of Police Prashant Kumar, in a circular on Friday, has instructed police officials to identify such criminal elements and take stern action against them. In the instructions issued to the subordinates in this regard, the DGP said that attempts were often made to deploy children to clean the glass of vehicles and sell small items at the intersections. He said in many cases, it had come to light that these children were kidnapped in an organised manner and put to work like begging. "Taking incidents like human trafficking and kidnapping of children seriously,

disclosure, arrest and recovery should be made. Interrogation reports should be prepared under the leadership of gazetted officers, so that information can be obtained about the methods of such incidents, money trail, gangs etc. Hot spots of such incidents should be identified and CCTVs should be installed," the instructions say. The DGP said that the pattern of incidents that happened in the last 10 years should be analysed. He said to stop child begging, the public should also be made aware along with taking cooperation from District Child Protection Unit, Child Line, NGOs, voluntary organisations etc. He said authorised voluntary organisations and individuals doing excellent work in preventing begging should be honoured.

Farmer killed while trying to intervene in a fight

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A farmer was killed while trying to intervene in a fight between two groups in the Gosaiganj area of the city. The victim was identified as Harish Chandra, 45, of Baburiya Khara under Gosaiganj police station. The residents, on Thursday, protested by keeping the body on the road, demanding the arrest of the killers, including prime accused Mukesh Kumar Rawat and ex gratia for the family of the victim. Lucknow police on Friday arrested five men who were at large after the fight. Police identified the accused as

Virendra (30), Surendra (35), Arjun (20), Karan (20) and Shiv Shankar (35), all residents of Lucknow. "An FIR was filed on Thursday under sections 147 (rioting), 304 (culpable homicide), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) of the Indian Penal Code, among other sections on the complaint given by the deceased's son Rajkumar," said Tej Swaroop Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South). According to police, on Wednesday, prime accused Mukesh of Naval Kheda village had organised a party to celebrate his marriage anniversary. After getting drunk, he reached Baburiakheda village

on a motorcycle with his brother Virendra where a youth named Dilip came across their way and this led to a fight. Harishchandra came to intervene and the men started fighting with him. Both brothers called their supporters and they came armed with sticks and beat Harishchandra. "He was first taken to CHC Gosaiganj from where he was referred to the Civil Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries," the DCP said. According to police, the attackers created ruckus in the village for about three and a half hours and vandalised three-four motorcycles parked outside the house.

Three drug peddlers held by STF in Chinhat area

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Three drug peddlers of a gang active at international level were nabbed by a team of Special Task Force which was trailing the gang and its members. The arrested drug peddlers were identified as Sahil aka Haider Ali and Mohammad Ainaf aka Danish, both of Madheganj, and Abdullah Suhail of Hasanganj. They were arrested on a tip-off from near the gate of Tata Telco company in Chinhat police station area on Friday. The STF recovered 13,500

tablets of drugs (psychotropic substance), three mobile phones, a scooter and over Rs 3,000 in cash from the miscreants, who disclosed details of their gang's network in the city, UP, other states of the country and even in foreign countries. Police said Sahil led the gang in the city and he, along with the other two, was going to meet the carriers to hand over the consignment to them and collect money from them at the time of their arrest. The trio owned their crime and disclosed the modus operandi of the gang. As per their confession, Sahil

and Abdullah used to collect data of customers through Dark Web and White Web, sites where customers get themselves registered for availing drugs. Both Sahil and Abdullah collected the data of the customers in the country, and the US and other countries and contacted them to deliver drugs. They then contacted the customers using some app which helped them in hiding themselves from the eyes of agencies keeping tabs on drug peddlers. They accepted the money in e-wallets before handing over the drugs to the customers.

E-AUCTION NOTICE
FIRE DAMAGED BUILDING, PLANT & MACHINERY ETC.
FOR SALE

Online bids, separately for each Lot, are invited for sale of Two Lots of Fire damaged building, plant & machinery etc., comprising as under :

Lot No.	Estimated Weight	EMD (Rs.)
1	726000 Kg	20,00,000
2	448755 Kg	12,00,000

The abovesaid Lots of materials shall be sold on **LUMP SUM WHOLE LOT BASIS** and **"AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"** which belong to **M/s M.H. Polymers Pvt. Ltd.**, B-14, B-15, D-23 & E-115, Site B, Surajpur Industrial Area, Greater Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, Bids can be done at portal <https://www.indiaengineerin.com/multiid> after submitting the Earnest Money Deposit by Demand Draft/RTGS for each lot separately, in favour of **M/s M.H. Polymers Pvt. Ltd.**, payable at **Greater Noida**, on or before 5.00 P.M. on 11.06.2024 at the address given below. The E-Auction will be conducted from 03:00 PM onwards on 12.06.2024. Details of items and its Terms & Conditions of E-Auction can be obtained at free of cost, which are available at site and the following address:
A) M/s Synise Technologies Ltd., 14th Floor, Antriksh Bhawan, 22, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-01. Contact for Registration & participation in E-Auction: Mr. Ashish/Lalit 9811907274/9773836114 E-mail: ashishk@synise.com
B) Rohit Kumar & Co., Insurance Surveyors, 507, Indra Prakash, Barakamba Road, New Delhi - 110001. Mobile Nos. : 98971904532, 09810109369 E-mail : rohits4@gmail.com
C) At Site : For both Lot # 1 & Lot # 2 : Mobile Nos. : 9810063768, 9810159975

Stage set for sixth phase polling in UP today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

All arrangements are in place to conduct free and fair elections in 14 Lok Sabha constituencies going to polls on Saturday in the sixth phase in Uttar Pradesh. Elaborate security is in place with around two lakh security personnel, including over 230 companies of Central forces, deployed on election duty for this phase. The Elections Commission of India will hold the by-election to Gansadi assembly constituency in Balrampur district along with the polls in 14 Lok Sabha constituencies. The 14 constituencies going to polls on Saturday in the sixth phase include Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Phulpur, Allahabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Shravasti, Domariyaganj, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Lalganj, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Machhlishahr and Bhadohi. Uttar Pradesh's Chief Electoral Officer Navdeep Rinwa said here on Friday that elaborate arrangements were in place to conduct free and fair polls. He said polling parties had already started reaching their polling booths.

He said over 2.70 crore voters – over 1.43 crore male and 1.27 crore female voters and 1,256 third gender voters – were expected to exercise their franchise in the sixth phase of polling. Sant Kabir Nagar has the highest number of voters and Allahabad the lowest. To keep vigil on the voting, the ECI has deployed three special observers, 14 general observers, eight police observers and 18 expenditure observers. Besides, 2,192 sector magistrates, 282 zonal magistrates, 24 static magistrates and 2,833 micro observers have also been deployed. Live webcasting has been arranged at more than 50 per cent of polling places (14,480 polling places) and it will be supervised at three levels – district election officer, chief electoral officer, and the Election Commission of India. Apart from the above, arrangements for videography have also been made at 5,057 polling places. There are 162 candidates in the fray – 146 male and 16 female candidates – in the sixth phase elections. In the sixth phase election, maximum 26 candidates are



contesting from Pratapgarh Lok Sabha constituency and lowest six candidates in Domariyaganj. For the sixth phase polling, 17,113 polling stations have been set up. The number of polling booths is 28,171 of which 3,978 booths have been identified as critical. In Sultanpur, the electoral contest features Maneka Gandhi from the Bharatiya Janata Party, Bhim Nishad representing the Samajwadi Party and Udiraj Verma. Pratapgarh witnesses a contest between Sangam Lal Gupta of the BJP and SP Singh Patel from the SP. Allahabad showcases a battle between Neeraj Tripathi of the BJP and Ujjwal Reoti Raman

Singh of the Congress. Ambedkar Nagar presents a contest between Ritesh Pandey of the BJP and sitting SP MLA Lalji Verma. Domariyaganj sees a contest between Jagdambika Pal representing the BJP and Khwaja Shamsuddin from the Bahujan Samaj Party. In the Basti Lok Sabha constituency, Harish Dwivedi (BJP) is locked in a direct contest with Ram Prasad Chaudhary of the SP. In Lalganj, Neelam Sonkar from the BJP and Daroga Saroj representing the SP are the main contenders. Azamgarh sets the stage for a fierce contest between Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' of the BJP and Dharmendra Yadav from the SP. In Jaunpur, Kripashankar Singh of the BJP is locked in a triangular contest with Babu Singh Kushwaha of the SP and Shyam Singh Yadav of BSP. In Bhadohi, Vinod Kumar Bind from the BJP is facing Lalitesh Pati Tripathi of the Mamta Banarjee-led Trinamool Congress. These electoral matchups showcase the diverse political landscape and the fervour of democracy in Uttar Pradesh.

INDIA Bloc wants to rob quota of SCs, STs, OBCs to appease Muslims: Nadda

PTI ■ KUSHINAGAR/BALLIA

Hitting out at the INDIA Bloc, Bharatiya Janata Party president JP Nadda on Friday alleged that the "ghamandia" (arrogant) alliance was against the Dalits, tribals and backwards because it wanted to rob the reservation of these sections and appease Muslims. The BJP chief also alleged that the "arrogant alliance" is "anti-Sanatan" and "anti-national". Nadda was addressing an election rally organised in Kushinagar in support of the local BJP candidate and sitting MP Vijay Dubey. Later, he also addressed a rally in Ballia. In Kushinagar, Nadda appealed to the people to vote in favour of the BJP and claimed that if Narendra Modi becomes the prime minister for the third time, India will become the third largest economy. Taking a jibe at the INDIA Bloc, Nadda alleged that the INDIA Bloc is against the SCs, STs, OBCs and extremely backward classes because they want to favour Muslims by robbing the reservation of these sections of the society. "This alliance wants to rob the reservation of Dalits, Advadis and backward communities for Muslim appeasement," he



said. Praising the work of Prime Minister Modi, Nadda said, "Today, despite being hit by COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, India has jumped from the 11th position to become the fifth largest economy in the world under the leadership of Narendra Modi. If Narendra Modi becomes the prime minister for the third time, India will become the third largest economy of the world." Making an appeal to the people to vote in favour of the BJP candidate, he said, "If the button is pressed at the right place, development takes place. But if the button is pressed at the wrong place, the honour of

daughters-in-law is put in danger and businessmen are forced to flee." He said, "Seeing the people's excitement, enthusiasm, happiness and energy, I am convinced that you have made up your mind to send Vijay Dubey to the Lok Sabha again. The question is not about Dubey but about making Narendra Modi the prime minister." Nadda also praised Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The BJP chief said, "Once upon time, Uttar Pradesh was known for mafia where daughters-in-law were not safe, businessmen were migrating and the mafia used to kill anyone in broad daylight. Today in the same Uttar Pradesh, with the bless-

INDIA Bloc sweeping last two phases in UP: Akhilesh

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday said the INDIA Bloc was going to win all the 27 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh that were going to poll in the sixth and seventh phases of the parliamentary elections. In a statement issued in Lucknow on the eve of the polling in the sixth phase on Saturday, Akhilesh Yadav said the Bharatiya Janata Party's "farewell" in Uttar Pradesh was certain in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. He claimed the BJP's graph has gone downwards in the five phases of polls held so far and the party will be completely wiped out from Purvanchal,

the eastern region of Uttar Pradesh. "The manner in which the Samajwadi-PDA family, along with the INDIA Bloc, is destroying the BJP, clearly shows that the INDIA Bloc is going to create history by winning 27 out of the 27 Lok Sabha seats in the sixth and seventh phases of elections (in UP)," he said. The sixth phase of elections will cover 14 seats: Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Phulpur, Allahabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Shravasti, Domariyaganj, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Lalganj (SC), Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Machhlishahr and Bhadohi. Voting in the sixth phase will be held on May 25. The seventh and final phase of

polling will be held on June 1, and among the seats it will cover are Varanasi (represented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi), and Gorakhpur, the pocket borough of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The other constituencies that will go to polls in the seventh phase are Maharajganj, Kushinagar, Deoria, Bansaogaon (SC), Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Mirzapur and Robertsonganj (SC). The counting of votes will be held on June 4. Yadav said that ever since the Congress and SP joined hands under the INDIA Bloc, the double-engines — the BJP governments at Delhi and Lucknow — had started colliding with each other.

Priyanka, Dimple to hold roadshow in Varanasi today

PTI ■ VARANASI

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple Yadav will hold a joint roadshow in Varanasi on Saturday in support of INDIA Bloc candidate Ajay Rai. Congress spokesperson Shailendra Singh said the roadshow would start from Durgakund temple and come to end after paying obeisance at Ravidas temple. During the roadshow, Priyanka and Dimple will also garland the statue of Madan Mohan Malviya at Singhdwar of Benaras Hindu University. The event is expected to start at 4 pm. Varanasi district Congress leader Raghavendra Choubey said after landing at Babatpur airport, Priyanka Gandhi and Dimple Yadav may visit Baba Shri Kashi Vishwanath before the roadshow. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a third consecutive term from Varanasi. Voting in the holy city will take place in the seventh and the last phase on June 1. Congress nominee Ajay Rai told PTI that the event will prove to be a "game changer" in the polls. Rai is supported by the SP, a partner in the INDIA bloc, on the seat. Besides Modi and Rai, Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party has fielded Athar Jamal Lari as its candidate from the seat.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addresses a public meeting for Lok Sabha elections in Gorakhpur on Friday. BJP candidate from Gorakhpur constituency Ravi Kishan is also seen. PTI

Azamgarh braces for a triangular contest

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

The Azamgarh Lok Sabha constituency in Uttar Pradesh has a unique electoral dynamic, prominently featuring an alliance between Muslims and Yadavs, known as the M-Y combination. This alliance has been a winning formula in 17 out of the last 20 elections held in this constituency, underscoring its effectiveness in the region. In the current election, scheduled for May 25, this proven strategy is again at play. Two Yadav candidates are the primary contenders: Bharatiya Janata Party's Dinesh Lal Yadav, popularly known as Nirahua, and Samajwadi Party's Dharmendra Yadav, cousin of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav. Adding to the competition, the Bahujan Samaj Party has fielded Mashood Ahmed, making it a triangular contest among nine candidates. Azamgarh, a district renowned for its literary figures like Ayodhya Singh Upadhyay, Mahapandit Rahul Sanskritayan and Kaifi Azmi, has also faced infamy for its

alleged links to terrorism, notably the Batla House encounter in Delhi. Despite its controversial past, the district has seen progress and development in recent years. The affection of the Muslim community for the Mulayam Singh Yadav family has made the election particularly intriguing. BJP's Nirahua, who won the last by-election against Dharmendra Yadav, faces a tough challenge this time. The SP's prospects have been bolstered by Shah Alam, alias Guddu Jamal, who joined the party after securing over 2.66 lakh votes in the 2014 elections against Mulayam Singh Yadav. In the previous by-election, Guddu Jamal's significant vote bank played a crucial role in the outcome. This time, his support for the SP could disrupt BJP's calculations. Meanwhile, BSP's Mashood Ahmed aims to attract both Muslim voters and the BSP's traditional vote base. The Azamgarh Lok Sabha constituency, after the 2009 delimitation, includes Azamgarh Sadar, Gopalpur, Sagdi, Mubarakpur and Mehnagar

assembly segments, all currently represented by SP MLAs. Despite the strong BJP wave in other parts of Uttar Pradesh, the M-Y alliance helped the SP win all ten assembly seats in Azamgarh in the 2022 elections. The district is divided into two Lok Sabha constituencies – Azamgarh and Lalganj. Historically, the Congress was a dominant force in Azamgarh until 1984, after which the rise of 'Mandal-Kamandal' politics shifted the landscape. The BSP first won this seat in 1989, followed by a series of victories for the SP and BSP until the BJP's breakthrough in 2009. Mulayam Singh Yadav reclaimed the seat for the SP in 2014, and his son Akhilesh Yadav won it in 2019 before vacating it, leading to Nirahua's victory in the subsequent by-election. Unemployment remains a significant issue in this election. Both Akhilesh Yadav and Nirahua have made notable contributions to the district's development. The constituency's caste demographics include 24 per cent Dalits, 20 per cent Yadavs and 12 per cent Muslims.

Indian Bank

इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD

Zonal Office Lucknow, New Building, 2nd Floor, Hazratganj, Lucknow-226001, Ph. 0522-2286272, 2287283, Fax: 0522-2288033, E-mail id: zolucknow@indianbank.co.in

NOTICE OF SALE E-AUCTION

Notice in intended sale under rule 8(6) of The Security Interest (Enforcement Rules) 2002 under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002

Whereas, the Authorized Officer of Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank) had taken constructive possession of the following property /ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of The Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same of "AS IS WHERE IS, AS IS WHAT IS, AS IS WHATEVER THERE IS" basis for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act platform provided by the Service Provider, contact & detail for Symbolic Possession of property is available at present.

Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)/Proprietor/Partners/Director(s)/Guarantor(s)	Description of the Immovable Property mortgaged	DL of Demand Notice	a) Reserve Price	Date & Time for submission of EMD
			Out Amt. as per Demand Notice	b) Earnest Money for EMD	Date & Time of E-Auction
Branch: Rajkamal Road					
1.	M/s S R Enterprises, (Pro- Mrs Deepa Joshi W/o Bhupendra Joshi) (Borrower, Add-1): Nabiganj, Palhari Chauraha, Faizabad Road, Barabanki-225001 Add-2): Plot no- 7 (House no- ANR/426), Mohalla Ashutosh Nagar, Ward -Chitra Gupta Nagar, District- Lucknow, Pin-226023	All that part and parcel of the property consisting at Kharsa No 2174/13/1m1, 2188/1/2m1, 2188/2/3, Plot no 7 (House No ANR/426), Mohalla Ashutosh Nagar, ward Chitra Gupta Nagar) Vill Kanausi, Pargana, Tehsil and District Lucknow, Area 227.69 Sq Mtr in name of Mr Bhupendra Kumar Joshi, Bounded by:-North: 12 Ft Lane, South: 60 Ft Wide Road, East: Plot No 8, West: Plot No 6	19.02.2024	a) Rs. 1,26,44,000/-	Till 28.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
			15.05.2024	b) Rs. 12,70,000/-	
			Rs. 33,31,001.00 as on 19.02.2024 with further interest Cost other Charges & expenses thereon		29.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
			c) 6127853725 IFSC: IDIB000H561 Hazratganj Branch d) Rs. 10,000/-		
Branch: Jankipuram					
2.	1. Mr Mudit Rastogi S/o Girraj Dharan Rastogi (Borrower & Guarantor) (a). 441/RC/51, Railway Colony, Jal Nigam Road, Balaganj Lucknow. (b). E-4110, Awasthi Colony, Rajajipuram, Lucknow 2. Mrs. Saumya Rastogi W/o Mudit Rastogi (Borrower, Mortgagor & Guarantor) (a) 441/RC/51, Railway Colony Jal Nigam Road, Balaganj Lucknow (b) E-4110, Awasthi Colony Rajajipuram, Lucknow	All that part and parcel of the residential house property no. E-4110 measuring area 36.75 sq. mtrs situated at ward Kunwar Jyoti Prasad, Mohalla Rajajipuram, District Lucknow registered in the office of sub registrar -V - Lucknow in Book No. 1, Khand no. 9037, pages no 319 to 356 at serial no. 11841 dated 24.10.2013 in the name of Smt. Saumya Rastogi W/o Shri Mudit Rastogi, Bounded by:-North: Road 6 mtr wide, South: House No E-4014, East: House No E-4108, West: House No E-4112	02.11.2023	a) Rs. 34,13,000/-	Till 28.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
			23.04.2024	b) Rs. 3,41,300/-	
			Rs. 8,61,215.00 as on 02.11.2023 with further interest Cost other Charges & expenses thereon		29.06.2024 at 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM
			c) 6127853725 IFSC: IDIB000H561 Hazratganj Branch d) Rs. 10,000/-		

For verification about document, property & inspection thereof, the intending bidders may contact Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank), above mentioned Branch, Lucknow during office hours before on 27.06.2024 and for auction related query intending bidders may contact above mentioned Branch.

For downloading further details and Terms & conditions, please visit : (1) <http://www.ibapi.in> (2) <https://www.mstccomerce.com> THE BORROWER(S)/GUARANTOR(S) ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED ABOUT THE SALE NOTICE UNDER THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002

Place : Lucknow, Date : 25.05.2024 **INDIAN BANK (erstwhile Allahabad Bank)**

SOUTH ASIAN ENTERPRISES LIMITED

Regd. Office: Ground Floor, Flat No.GF-13,14, Vrindavan Residency, Plot No.834, K Block, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur -208013 (U.P.)
Corp. Office: 90, Okhla Industrial Estate, Phase-III, New Delhi-110 020, Ph. No. 011-46656666, Fax No. 011-46656699
CIN No.L91990UP1990PLC011753, Website: www.sael.co.in, Email: southasianenterprises@gmail.com

STATEMENT OF STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2024

S. No.	Particulars	STANDALONE						CONSOLIDATED					
		Quarter Ended		Year Ended		Quarter Ended		Year Ended					
		31.03.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2023	31.03.2024	31.03.2024	31.12.2023	31.03.2023	31.03.2024	31.03.2023			
		(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Audited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Audited)	(Audited)			
1	Total Income	34.33	22.68	22.57	102.51	64.11	153.83	145.56	157.00	587.15	610.57		
2	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional Items and/or extraordinary items)	(6.95)	(2.98)	(1.09)	(13.12)	(24.54)	(39.71)	(19.53)	(44.29)	(134.73)	(188.30)		
3	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before Tax (After Exceptional Items and/or Extraordinary items)	(6.95)	(2.98)	(1.09)	(13.12)	(24.54)	(39.71)	(19.53)	(44.29)	(134.73)	(188.30)		
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after Tax (After exceptional Items and/or Extraordinary items)	(6.29)	(2.96)	(0.11)	(13.10)	(25.53)	(42.04)	(18.92)	(50.09)	(136.50)	(182.55)		
5	Total Comprehensive Income [(Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	(2.85)	(2.72)	1.45	(9.35)	(24.58)	(38.25)	(19.13)	(50.17)	(133.35)	(184.04)		
6	Paid up Share Capital	399.91	399.91	399.91	399.91	399.91	399.91	399.91	399.91	399.91	399.91		
7	Other Equity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
8	Earnings Per Share from continuing operations (F.V. of Rs.10/- each)	(0.16)	(0.07)	(0.00)	(0.33)	(0.64)	(0.70)	(0.32)	(0.76)	(2.19)	(3.01)		
Basic and Diluted													

NOTES:
1 The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/ Yearly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange's website at <http://www.bseindia.com> and also on the Company's website at www.sael.co.in.
2 Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items (if any) have been adjusted in the Statement of Profit and Loss in accordance with Ind AS Rules.
3 The consolidated financial results include the financial results of the subsidiary viz. Chai Thela Private Limited. The Consolidated financial results have been prepared as per IND AS 110 on Consolidated Financial Statements.
4 The above audited financial results for the quarter and year ended 31.03.2024 were approved and taken on record in the Board meeting held on 24.05.2024 after being reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee on the same date and have been subjected to limited review by the statutory auditors of the Company.
5 Corresponding figures of the previous period have been regrouped / rearranged, wherever necessary.

Place: New Delhi
Date: 24/05/2024

For and on behalf of the Board
(T. B. Gupta)
Managing Director
DIN: 0106181

Cong, SP 'sinking ship': MLC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District president of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma compared the Congress and Samajwadi Party (SP) to a 'sinking ship' as their party workers are running away. He was addressing a meeting at BJP's election office at Mahmoorganj here on Friday in which several Congress and SP leaders joined the party. "Today, the leaders of Congress and SP are dreaming of occupying the throne of power through part-time politics, which is impossible because the people of the country have recognised their real face", he said.

He said today under the able leadership of the PM, the country is continuously moving forward on the path of progress and the whole world is aware of this. "Only the opposition leaders are not seeing the development work and the declining trend as their own party workers are abandoning them", he said. Varanasi Lok Sabha convenor and former MLA Surendra Narayan Singh 'Audhe' said most of the lead-



Congress, SP workers joining BJP in the presence of MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma and ex-MP Dr Rajesh Mishra in Varanasi on Friday.

ers and workers of opposition parties are joining BJP today as 'Prince' Rahul Gandhi of Congress or 'Sultan' Akhilesh Yadav of SP come out only during the election season. "Both try unsuccessfully to create differences among the people and practice appeasement politics, but the present day public has become hi-tech and understands their every move very well", he said, adding that the public has full faith in the Modi government and this faith will help us in achieving the target of crossing 400.

Among those who joined the BJP include former gram pradhan Bechan Yadav, Chaitanya Yadav, Darshan Yadav, Lokendra Mishra, Yogendra Yadav, Abhay Singh, advocate Vishnu Swaroop

Tripathi, Sunil Sharma, Nagendra Nath Giri, Sushil Pandey, Manish Pandey, Narendra Vishwakarma, Anil Giri, Raju Pal, Asad Khan, Avnish Patel, Prateek Singh and some others. The function was also attended by former MP Dr Rajesh Mishra, regional media in-charge Navratan Rathi, Shailendra Mishra etc.

Meanwhile, as the voting date is approaching, the series of frequent visits of big BJP leaders and star campaigners in Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency is starting from Saturday when Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will address a big public meeting on May 25 at Assi Ghat under Varanasi Cantt assembly area at 5.30 pm. In the same direction, Madhya Pradesh CM Dr Mohan Yadav

will address a public meeting at Seer Govardhan in Rohania assembly on May 26 at 5 pm. Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak will address a public meeting at Ramnagar Chowk under Cantt assembly at 5 pm and at Ashirwad Vatika located at Prahlad Ghat in City South assembly at 7 pm. Besides, Foreign Minister Dr S Jaishankar will arrive at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Babatpur at 10 am on May 26 on his two-day stay from where he will leave for Taj, Nadesar Palace. Dr Jaishankar will attend a meeting with educationists and teachers of private schools to be organised at Sunbeam School Varuna from 11.30 am on the same day. He will hold an informal meeting with people of Tamil community organised by Tamil Sangamam Kashi at Kanchi Kamakoti Temple at 4 pm and then participate in the programme 'India Rises in Global Diplomacy' to be organised by social organisations and clubs at Banaras Club Kachari from 6 pm onwards. Dr Jaishankar will rest for the night in Kashi and leave for Delhi at 10.30 am on the second day.

Madhavi Rajee Scindia's ashes immersed in Sangam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The ashes of Madhavi Rajee Scindia, mother of BJP leader and union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, were immersed in Sangam on Friday. Rana Karan Singh, Sardar Sangram Singh, Prabhat Sharma, Indrajit Shinde had come with the ashes here. They are close to the Scindia family. Sardar Sangram Singh is the secretary of Scindia Devasthan Trust. He told reporters that as per the tradition the ashes are immersed in Sangam 10 days after the death. Accordingly they came to Sangam with the ashes. He said after reaching Gwalior Kotli in Rambagh around 10 am the urn was kept there for about an hour. After that, the process of immersing it in Sangam was completed as per the rituals.

Voting in Allahabad, Phulpur today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ



Polling officials organise EVMs and other election material at MNNT in the eve of the sixth phase of Lok Sabha elections in Prayagraj on Friday. PTI

Preparations have been completed for voting in Allahabad and Phulpur parliamentary seats on Saturday. On Friday polling parties left with EVMs etc. For this, four centres have been set up in the city, from here the polling personnel reached their respective polling stations on Friday itself.

District Election Officer (DEO) Navneet Singh Chahal has fixed the responsibilities of the officers concerned. Polling parties left from Parade Ground, KP Inter College, MNNT campus and Northern Regional Institute of Printing and Technology (NRIPT) grounds. The maximum crowd was at the Parade Ground because polling personnel engaged in five assembly constituencies left from here. From Parade Ground—polling personnel left for Meja, Karchana, Bara, Koraon, Pratappur and Handia, from KP College—for Allahabad West, North and South, from MNNT College—for Phaphamau and Soraon and for Phulpur from NRIPT grounds. In view of the voting in Prayagraj on Saturday, route march of PAC, RAF besides

police and paramilitary forces was done on Friday. Along with all the areas of the city, the force did flag march and route march in villages, towns and markets. Central Police Force, BSE, CRPF have been stationed in schools and colleges of the city and rural areas. The force conducted a flag march in the sensitive Kareli area under the leadership of CRPF 95 Battalion F Company Commander Shiv Mohan Dixit. The force moved from Baba Tiraha, Mastan Market Tiraha, Unity Public School (polling station), Mahavir Chauraha (Jamuna Valley Inter College polling station), Nurullah Road Tulsipur, Badi Masjid, Atala Chauraha,

Majidia Islamia Inter College (polling station) to Barrier Chauraha Kareli. After this, it returned to Kareli police station via Askari Tiraha, Riddhi Siddhi Road, RBM Inter College, Power House.

Similarly, the police along with paramilitary force conducted flag march around villages, towns, markets, tehsils, railway stations of Ganga Nagar and Yamuna Nagar. Security arrangements were made under the leadership of DCP (City) Deepak Bhukar, DCP (Yamuna Nagar) Shradha Pandey and DCP (Ganga Nagar) Abhishek Bharti. These officers were also patrolling the areas on foot to instil a sense of security in people. Everyone is being told that they should go to vote without any fear. In areas like Jhunsi, Naini, Mauaima, Phulpur, Handia, Chakhga, Ghurpur, Koraon, Soraon, Airport Thana, Bamrauli, Dhoomanganj etc, vehicle checking was undertaken by cordoning off check posts and barriers. A total of 43 check posts have been set up at sensitive places within the city as well. Special pickets have been deployed at the check posts.

Neither Ganga cleaned, nor Kashi became Kyoto: Cong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

All India Congress Committee (AICC) spokesperson Abhay Dubey said that neither the Ganga river was cleaned, nor Kashi became Kyoto. "Loud speeches and abundance of lies, this is how the Modi government was for 10 years", he alleged while talking to reporters at party's election office here on Friday, along with chief of UPCC media department and former minister Dr CP Rai, AICC media coordinator Garima Mehra Dasouni, state spokespersons Sanjeev Singh and Shailendra Kumar Singh, Abhimanyu Tyagi, Rahul Rajbhar and Dr Nripendra Narayan Singh. "Ten years ago, when Modi (the PM) came to Varanasi to contest his first election in 2014, his first sentence was that Maa Ganga has called him, making big promises of cleaning Ganga river. Then Modi claimed that he

would convert Kashi into Kyoto and build a port in Varanasi which would provide employment to thousands of people", Dubey said adding that all these claims of the PM proved



Congress spokesman Abhay Dubey addressing a press conference in Varanasi on Friday.

wrong. The Congress spokesman further said the PM adopted many villages under the Adarsh Sansad Gram Yojana and made many 'lofty' promises like providing water, roads, toilets, housing to all etc there but their condition themselves reveal the reality. "Now after 10 years as Modi is again contesting elections from Varanasi so the people should

know the gap between promises and reality of the PM", he said. According to him, to convert Kashi into Kyoto, the PM visited Japan in August-September 2014, where a Partner City Affiliation Agreement was signed between Kashi and Kyoto with the Government of Japan in which claims were made to beautify the art, culture, education and heritage of Kashi and to modernise the city. "It was said that with the help of Japanese experts and technology for water, waste and traffic management and sewerage system, Kashi will be transformed into Kyoto", Dubey said and added that the Modi government made a lot of headlines in the name of converting Kashi into Kyoto but now it is surprising that the PM does not even take the name of Kyoto. "Recently, the Allahabad High Court has made serious comments on the BJP government regarding the cleaning of Ganga. Even before

this, the Supreme Court had made a serious comment saying that not even a drop of Ganga has been cleaned", he said, adding that before the last Magh Mela, the government itself told the court that 40 per cent of sewer water is still released directly into the Ganga. According to him, when recently some journalists visited the villages adopted by the PM, they found that the people of the villages were facing drinking water crisis and many of them have no roof on their houses and after the publication of the report, the local body officials constituted an inquiry committee in this direction. "The unfortunate thing is that the PM increased the MNREGA wages in Uttar Pradesh from ₹230 to ₹237 whereas the Parliamentary Committee had asked to increase it to ₹375 per day", Dubey said, adding that the Congress has promised to give ₹400 per day in its Nyay Patra.

AJAY CONTINUES CAMPAIGNING

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Congress candidate from Varanasi Lok Sabha seat Ajay Rai continued his poll campaigning here on Friday and reached Surya Sarovar in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) and met morning walkers. During his public relations, he said this leading Indian Railways production unit was built by the Congress government for providing employment to many. On the occasion, Congress, SP, AAP and Communist workers of the area present in BLW premises to welcome Ajay Rai who was accompanied by Prof Satish Rai, Raghavendra Choubey, Dr OP Rai, Vakil Ansari, Anuradha Yadav, Shaista and others. Earlier, in a meeting organised by the UP Udyog Vyapar cell of the Congress at its office in Lahurabir, the participants flayed the Modi government for 'destroying' industries due to wrong economic and trade policies.

3 children drown in Ganga

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Three children of a family drowned in Ganga river in Ankinpurwa village under Araul police station area on Friday morning. On getting information the police also rushed to the spot and carried out investigation. The Children were identified as Ekta (6), daughter of Phool Chand Gautam, Pranshi alias Priya (10) and Gyan alias Krishna (6) daughter and son of Phool Chand's brother, Hari Prasad of Ankin Purwa village.

ACP Bilhaar Ajay Kumar Trivedi said around 9.30 am on Friday the Araul police had received information about the drowning of some children in the Ganga. SHO Araul Akhilesh Kumar Pal along with force and divers rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies of all the children. Further action was being initiated in the matter, he said.

In another incident, out of the three youths who had drowned in Ganga at the Khereshwar Ghat, Shivrajpur, on Friday morning one of them was rescued while the body of another was recovered. Efforts are on to trace the third youth. Shloak Awasthi (16) son of Anand Awasthi, Deep Bajpai (17) son of Raghvendra Bajpai and Saksham, son of Anand of Ward No.5, Shivrajpur, had gone to Khereshwar Ghat for bathing and suddenly started drowning in the water. The residents rescued Saksham while Shloak and Deep slipped into the area where water was deep. After some time, the divers recovered the body of Shloak. Shivrajpur SO said efforts are on to trace Deep.

Besides, a seven-year old boy drowned in a pond in Gopalpur under Ghatampur police station area. He had gone to hear Bhagwat Katha on Thursday evening and drowned while bathing in a

nearby pond. When the boy did not return home till Friday morning, kin started looking for him and found his body floating in the pond. SO PK Singh carried out a probe in the matter and sent the body for an autopsy. The deceased was identified as Divyansu (7), son of Raju Sankhwar of Gopalpur village.

GODOWN CATCHES FIRE: A plastic godown situated near Chacha Nehru Hospital caught fire in Raipurwa police station area early on Friday morning. As many as eight fire tenders from Latouche Road, Meerpur, Kidwai Nagar and Jajmau fire stations rushed to the spot and extinguished the fire after around two-and-half hours. The incident took place around 4 am when people saw the fire and raised an alarm. CFO Deepak Kumar said goods worth lakhs of rupees were gutted. However, no casualty was reported in the incident, he added.

Ram Madhav's appeal to make democracy victorious

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Union Bank of India | Regional Office : 117/HI-1/240, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur | Head Office : 239, Vidhan Bhawan Marg, Nariman Point Mumbai

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY | Date of e-Auction : 26-06-2024

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable assets under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the authorized officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is Where is", "As is What is", and "Whatever there is" on the date mentioned below, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price & the Earnest Money Deposit or also mentioned hereunder.

Branch Name : Jhansi Main, Jhansi • Address : Elite Chauraha, Civil Lines, Jhansi, Branch Head : Shri Shiv Sen • Mob. : 9649578999

Borrower : Smt. Sangeeta Kishwaha W/o Shri Mohan Lal, R/o : F-21, Growth Center, Bijoli Jhansi, Tehsil & Distt. Jhansi. Guarantor : Shri Mohan Lal S/o Shri Bala Deep, R/o : F-21, Growth Center, Bijoli Jhansi, Tehsil & Distt. Jhansi.

Property : Residential Plot Situated at Arazi No. 3188, Mauza Bijoli, Ward No. 15, (New Ward No. 22), Opposite UPSIDC Office, Way Opposite BPCL Petrol Pump, Near New Village School, Block Babina, Jhansi Lalitpur Marg Se Hatkar 6.10 Mtr. Gate, Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Smt. Sangeeta Kishwaha W/o Shri Mohan Lal, Area : 2400 Sq. Ft. / 223.05 Sq. Mtr. **Bounded - North :** Plot of Smt. Malli. **South :** Plot of Seller, **East :** Plot of Other, **West :** Rasta 6.10 Mtr. **O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 16,45,585.31 + Intt. + Other Charges. Date & Time of E-Auction : 26-06-2024 at 11.00 am to 4.00 pm. Reserve Price : Rs. 11.86 Lac. Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1.19 Lac. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendeViewAllAuction.aspx>**

For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit <https://www.mssteccommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp>

Date : 24-05-2024 Place : Jhansi Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India

15 dustbins provided

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Union Bank of India | Regional Office : 117/HI-1/240, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur | Head Office : 239, Vidhan Bhawan Marg, Nariman Point Mumbai

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES | Date of e-Auction : 12-06-2024

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable assets under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the authorized officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is Where is", "As is What is", and "Whatever there is" on the date mentioned below, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price & the Earnest Money Deposit or also mentioned hereunder.

Branch Name : Jhansi Main, Jhansi • Address : Elite Chauraha, Civil Lines, Jhansi, Branch Head : Shri Shiv Sen • Mob. : 9649578999

Borrower : Mohd. Iqbal S/o Mohd. Ismail and Mohd. Ismail S/o Shri Dulle Khan, Both R/o : 1045, Out Side Datia Gate, (Out Side Ali Goal) Distt. Jhansi. Guarantor : Mohd. Kamal R/o : 1062/1-A, Out Side Datia Gate, Distt. Jhansi. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 15,30,089.80 + Intt. + Other Expenses

Property : Residential House situated at Arazi No. 3531, Mauza Jhansi Khas Abadi Out Side Datia Gate, (Out Side Ali Gola Khidki) Tehsil & Distt. Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Mohd. Ismail S/o Shri Dulle Khan. Area : 1247 Sq. Ft. **Bounded :** North-Plot Asif, South : Plot Anwar, East-Plot of Hafiz Akhtar, West : Rasta 23 Ft. **Date & Time of E-Auction : 12-06-2024 at 11.00 am to 4.00 pm**

Reserve Price : Rs. 12.96 Lac. Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1.30 Lac. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendeViewAllAuction.aspx>

Branch Name : Sadar Bazar, Jhansi • Address : 341-G, Sadar Bazar, Jhansi, Branch Head : Shri Naresh Ratnakar • Mob. : 9506849123

Borrower : Shri Mokam Singh S/o Shri Veeran Singh, R/o : 31, Village Lakara-Bhojla, Distt. Jhansi. Guarantor : Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh S/o Shri Veeran Singh, R/o : 31, Village Lakara-Bhojla, Distt. Jhansi. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 15,46,730.00 + Intt. + Other Charges

Property : Plot No. C-7, Situated at Mauza Shiv Parivar Colony, Outside Unnao Gate, Distt. Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Shri Mokam Singh S/o Shri Veeran Singh. Area : 167.17 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded :** North-9 Mtr. Road, South : Plot No. C-27 & C-28, East-Plot No. C-8, West : Plot No. C-6

Date & Time of E-Auction : 12-06-2024 at 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

Reserve Price : Rs. 44.55 Lac. Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 4.46 Lac. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendeViewAllAuction.aspx>

Borrower : Shri Jitendra Parihar S/o Shri Babu Lal, R/o : 381, Ekta Public School, Bhatta Gaon, Near Nala (Govt. Toilet) Jhansi. Guarantor : Shri Rajkumar S/o Shri Ghan Shyam, R/o : 307, Outside Sayanar Gate, Jhansi

O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 4,41,050.37 + Intt. + Other Charges

Property : Land & Building situated at Ward No. 4, Mauza Talpura Abadi, Bhatta Gaon, Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Shri Jitendra Parihar S/o Shri Babu Lal. Area : 754 Sq. Ft., **Bounded :** North-Plot Seller, South : Rasta, East-Plot Smt. Rani, West : Rasta.

Date & Time of E-Auction : 12-06-2024 at 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

Reserve Price : Rs. 8.36 Lac. Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 0.84 Lac. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendeViewAllAuction.aspx>

Borrower : Shri Subhash Chand S/o Shri Deep Chand & Smt. Rama Devi W/o Shri Subhash Chand and Shri Deep Chand S/o Shri Lala Ram, All R/o : 58, Idgah, Puliya No. 9, Near Power House, Tehsil & Distt. Jhansi. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 9,30,387.70 + Intt. + Other Charges

Property : Residential House No. 58, Idgah, Puliya No. 9, Distt. Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Shri Deep Chand S/o Shri Lala Ram, Area : 61.68 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded :** North-Rasta 5 Ft., South : House of Ram Swaroop Kansoria, East-Kachha Rasta 10 Mtr., West : Rasta 5 Ft.

Date & Time of E-Auction : 12-06-2024 at 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

Reserve Price : Rs. 13.77 Lac. Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1.38 Lac. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendeViewAllAuction.aspx>

Borrower : Shri Jaipal Singh S/o Shri Than Singh, R/o : Near Vipesh Inter College, Rashgarh, Jhansi. Guarantor : Shri Prabh Dayal S/o Shri Ganesh Prasad, R/o : 538, Indra Nagar, BHEL, Jhansi. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 3,49,172.00 + Intt. + Other Charges

Property : Residential House situated at Rashgarh, Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Shri Jaipal Singh S/o Shri Than Singh, Area : 1296 Sq. Ft., **Bounded :** North-Plot of Garibey, South : 10 Ft. Wide Rasta, East-Plot of Seller, West : House of Devi & Jagdish

Date & Time of E-Auction : 12-06-2024 at 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

Reserve Price : Rs. 10.55 Lac. Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1.06 Lac. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendeViewAllAuction.aspx>

For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit <https://www.mssteccommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp>

Date : 24-05-2024 Place : Jhansi Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India

15 dustbins provided

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The NTPC Auraiya handed over 15 dustbins to Phaphund railway station (in Auraiya) on Thursday as part of the Swachhta Pakhwada initiative. The handing over was done by Jayadev Parida, Head of Project, NTPC Auraiya to Alok Dwivedi, Traffic Inspector, Phaphund railway station which falls under NCR. Tanmoy Dutta, Head of HR, NTPC Auraiya was also present.

SUICIDE: A woman committed suicide before a train near Rajepur crossing on Kanpur-Farrukhabad railway track in Bilhar police station area on Friday morning after being beaten up by her drunk husband. The police sent the body for autopsy. Prem Chand Gautam of Shivduttapur is a rickshaw puller. Due to his alcohol addiction, he often argued with his wife Ram Sakhi (40). On Friday morning too, he beat up his wife. Thereafter, she left the house and committed suicide by jumping before the train going towards Kanpur.

Successful management of rare case of caesarean scar pregnancy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Health with the hope of preserving her uterus and fertility. Dr Shalini Singh, Gynecological Endoscopic Surgery and Infertility, led the evaluation process, which included thorough imaging studies.

"Through evaluation, including MRI imaging, confirmed the diagnosis of scar site placenta praecreta. This minimally invasive procedure involves no significant incisions or deep cuts on the skin, resulting in a quicker recovery time for patients. Regency Health's success in managing a case of caesarean scar pregnancy with placenta praecreta underscores the complexity and severity of this condition. Placenta praecreta, a rare but severe form of the placenta accreta spectrum disorders, involves the infiltration of placental tissue through the myometrium, posing significant risks to both maternal and foetal health.

This challenging diagnosis highlights the critical need for advanced medical expertise and specialised care.

15 dustbins provided

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Regency Health here achieved a significant milestone in the field of obstetrics and gynaecology with the successful management of a rare case of caesarean scar pregnancy (CSP) with placenta praecreta laparoscopically. Under the expert care of the medical team, 30-year-old patient's fertility was preserved marking a triumph in advanced laparoscopic surgery.

A patient with a history of caesarean delivery underwent a dilation and curettage (D/C) procedure for her second pregnancy which was unwanted and at 16 weeks gestation at another hospital. However, she experienced persistent heavy bleeding following the procedure. Subsequent ultrasound examinations revealed a morbidly adherent placenta (placenta praecreta) at the scar site from her previous caesarean section. Despite being advised hysterectomy during several consultations elsewhere, she sought out care at Regency

15 dustbins provided

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

India is non-aligned, but present India is friendly to everyone in the world considering its public interest paramount. In the end, the speaker discussed the widespread changes within the religious systems of the country. He while quoting Annie Besant, said that if the religion of this country ends, India will end. Mahant Bharat Bhushan of Sant Ravidas Temple as the special guest said the nation should be such where everyone's stomach can be fed and there should be a feeling of harmony in all. Special guest and leading physician Padma Shri Dr KK Tripathi said democratic systems are described even in the Vedic period. "Through our voting, we should give birth to such a tradition which will increase the respect of Kashi in the entire country", he said. While presiding over the programme, renowned vocalist Padma Shri Rajeshwar Acharya said every person of Kashi knows his/her democratic duty and rights.

The seminar was conducted by Dr Harendra Rai while the vote of thanks was given by coordinator Rahul Singh.

VISITING FELLOW-SHIP: Prof Ravindra Nath Singh, an alumnus of Department of AIHC & Archaeology in BHU has been awarded prestigious Visiting Fellowship of the Magdalen College, University of Oxford for Trinity Term 2024. During his tenure at the University of Oxford, Prof Singh will be conducting research on 'Environmental Archaeology particularly, environmental change and its impact on Indus Civilisation: Emerging Perspective from Northwest India'. Before joining as Visiting Fellow at the University of Oxford, Prof Singh was associated with the Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge as the Smuts Commonwealth fellow for nine months during 2023-24.

MEA serves show-cause notice to Revanna

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has served a show-cause notice to suspended JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna asking why his diplomatic passport should not be cancelled as sought by the Karnataka government in view of allegations of sexual abuse against him, it was learnt here on Friday. Official sources on Thursday had said the MEA is processing the Karnataka government's request to cancel Prajwal's diplomatic passport. Currently, he is believed to be in Germany. The show-cause notice has been served on Prajwal as part of the process initiated to cancel his passport, they said. It is learnt that the show-cause notice was served through email. Prajwal, the grandson of former prime minister H D Deve Gowda, is at the centre of a mass sexual abuse case and the Hassan MP left India on April 27, a day after voting for the Lok Sabha elections took place in his constituency. The MEA is undertaking the process to cancel Prajwal's diplomatic passport under the provisions of the Passports Act of 1967 as well



as related regulations, sources said. If the passport is cancelled, then Prajwal's stay abroad will be illegal and he may face legal action by concerned authorities in the country he is staying, a person familiar with the matter said. On Wednesday, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah wrote a second letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to take "prompt and necessary" actions to cancel Prajwal's diplomatic passport. The chief minister sent a similar letter to the prime minister on May 1. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up by the Karnataka government to probe the sexual abuse

charges against Prajwal wrote the MEA to cancel his diplomatic passport after an arrest warrant was issued against him by a local court. A 'Blue Corner Notice' seeking information on Revanna's whereabouts has already been issued by the Interpol following a request by the SIT. Earlier this month, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Prajwal travelled to Germany on a diplomatic passport and he did not seek political clearance for the trip. "No political clearance was either sought from or issued by MEA in respect of the travel of the said MP to Germany," Jaiswal had said. "Obviously, no visa note was issued either. No visa is

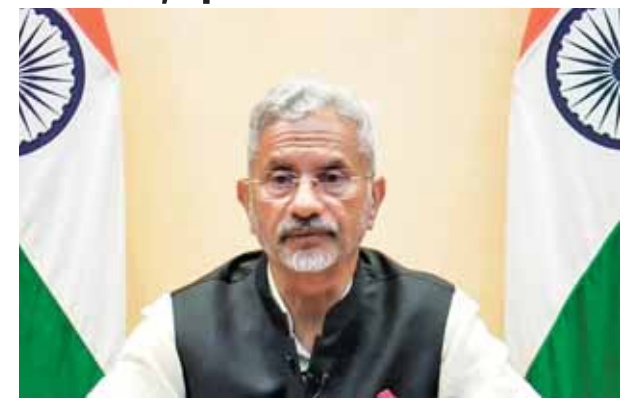
required for diplomatic passport holders to travel to Germany. The Ministry has not issued visa note for any other country," the MEA spokesperson said. On Friday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar also addressed questions about Revanna's diplomatic passport cancellation while speaking to the media. "MEA got this request from the Karnataka Government only on the 21st of May. People were saying a lot of things to the press. I don't know how other governments/state governments function. We in MEA at least function as per the law," he said. Incidentally, Janata Dal Secular (JDS) supremo H D Deve Gowda on Thursday issued a stern warning to his grandson Prajwal Revanna, asking him to return to India, surrender to the police or face his wrath. He also said he should be given the harshest punishment if the accusations against him turn out to be true. The former prime minister took to X (formerly Twitter) and posted a letter to Prajwal and captioned it saying "I have issued a warning to @PrajwalRevanna to return immediately from wherever

he is and subject himself to the legal process. He should not test my patience any further." Deve Gowda's warning, in a two-page letter dated May 23 with the title 'My Warning to Prajwal Revanna', said "I spoke to the media about Prajwal Revanna on May 18, when I was headed to the temple to offer pooja (prayers). It took me some time to recover from the shock and pain he (Revanna) has inflicted on me, my entire family, my colleagues, friends and party workers". Deve Gowda further went on to say he was of the view that Prajwal Revanna should be subject to the 'harshest of punishments', and that his son and former Karnataka Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy also advocated his stance on the matter. Deve Gowda also told Prajwal that not listening to family members will lead to total isolation. "If he does not heed to this warning, he will have to face my anger and anger of all his family members. The law will take care of the accusations against him, but not listening to the family will ensure his total isolation. If he has any respect left for me, he has to return immediately," he added.

India's growing weight will ensure overall global balance remains in favour of freedom, openness: EAM Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's growing weight will ensure that the overall balance in the world order remains in favour of freedom, openness, transparency and a rules-based order, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday. In a virtual address at the Nikkei Asia Future of Asia Forum, he said the challenge of supply chain and the use of economic coercion by states have put a premium on resilience, in comments that came amid China's attempt to become an economic hegemon. Jaishankar said the world is undergoing a flux, driven by geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-technological developments and that the global order today is visibly under stress, with Asia and the Indo-Pacific very much part of this transformation. "But it is not just change we are seeing; there is also much greater risk-taking. It is visible in the conflict in Ukraine, in violence in the Middle East and the disregard for international law and agreements in Asia and the Indo-Pacific," he said. This has economic facets, perhaps even more concerning. The supply chain challenge,



over-concentrations stemming from globalization and the use of economic coercion by states have put a premium on resilience and redundancy," he said. The minister said equally important is the technology challenge that has created a new level of inter-penetration and interdependence. "As a result, the era of AI, EVs (electric vehicles), green and clean technologies have brought both hope and anxiety in equal measure. "As both market shares and data harnessing are leveraged, national security has become crucial to many economic transactions," he said. Jaishankar said the transformation of India is critical to strengthening multipolarity in

Asia itself, which is a prerequisite for a multipolar world. "India's growing weight will ensure that the overall balance in the world order remains in favour of freedom, openness, transparency and a rules-based order," he said. "Equally, its greater sense of responsibility and more contributions are also making a difference. Indian naval ships are currently operating in the Red Sea to protect maritime shipping," he noted. "India has been a First Responder for natural disasters across the Indian Ocean, sometimes even beyond. Its initiatives ranging from solar energy to disaster resilience and bio-diversity have been recognised across the world," he said.

Ensure well being of Indian students in Kyrgyzstan: Students' association to EAM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A students' association of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday wrote to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and requested that "proactive measures" be taken immediately to ensure well-being of the Indian students in Kyrgyzstan. This comes days after mobs targeted the foreigners in capital city Bishkek triggering concerns about their safety. Jammu and Kashmir Students Association in its letter also said that students from the Kashmir Valley studying there are "waiting to return to their homeland" after the incident. Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy in Kyrgyz Republic on Friday said the situation in Bishkek "continues to remain calm". "However, upon request of Indian medical students, the Embassy is working with Medical Universities in the Kyrgyz Republic to arrange for their transport to the nearest international airport to address their concerns," it posted on X. Ambassador Arun K Chatterjee had met the Indian medical students at International Higher School of Medicine (IHSM) in Bishkek on May 22 and as part of its outreach activity, some embassy officials had also met with various Indian medical students at Royal Metropolitan University. Jammu and Kashmir



Students Association in its letter said several Kashmiri students and their parents have "reached out to us, expressing their fear and anxiety following a series of troubling events". The Indian students, particularly those from Kashmir in Kyrgyzstan's capital city, Bishkek, were "caught unaware of the mob violence" and are "desperate to return home", it said. "Given the gravity of the situation and the urgency of ensuring the safety and well-being of our fellow citizens, we earnestly request the Ministry of External Affairs to take immediate steps to facilitate the evacuation of Indian students stranded in Kyrgyzstan. Their safe return home should be a priority to prevent any further distress or potential harm," the letter said. "We trust in the prompt and decisive action of the Ministry in safeguarding the interests and security of Indian citizens in Kyrgyzstan. We request that

proactive measures be taken immediately to ensure the well-being of these students," it added. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) should "collaborate closely" with the respective government and diplomatic mission to "facilitate the safe passage of Indian students out of harm's way", the association said. "Your swift intervention in this matter will be greatly appreciated by the students, their families, and the students' body," it added. The Indian Embassy had on Thursday also posted on X that the "situation in and around Bishkek is normal and stable today. Flights to India are operational". "Embassy is in contact with Medical Universities in Kyrgyzstan to address concerns of Indian students. They can reach out to the Embassy for any assistance at 0555710041 and 0555005538," it said.

Army Chief exhorts NDA cadets to further spirit of jointness

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Army chief General Manoj Pandey on Friday exhorted National Defence Academy (NDA) cadets to further the spirit of jointness as they grow in service and also emphasised about the revolution in military affairs which are mostly driven by technology. He made this assertion while reviewing the Passing Out Parade of 146th Course of National Defence Academy at Khetarpal Parade Ground, NDA, Khadakwasla. A total of 1,265 cadets participated in the parade of which 337 cadets were from the passing out course. This included 199 Army Cadets, 38 Naval Cadets and 100 Air Force cadets including 19 cadets from Friendly Foreign Countries including Bhutan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Maldives. A contingent of 24 female cadets, presently in their third and fourth term of training also took part in the parade. Known as the cradle of military leadership, the NDA is the country's premier Joint Services Training Institution. The 146th course was inducted in June 2021 and after completion of three years of rigorous military training the cadets passed out in a grand ceremonial event. The cadets will now join their respective Pre-Commissioning Training



Academics. Battalion Cadet Captain (BCC) Shobhit Gupta won the President's Gold Medal for standing first in the overall order of merit, Academy Cadet Adjutant (ACA) Manik Tarun won the President's Silver Medal for standing second in the overall order of merit and BCC Anni Nehra won the President's Bronze Medal for standing third in the overall order of merit. Golf Squadron bagged the prestigious 'Chiefs of Staff Banner', for being the Champion Squadron which was presented during the parade. General Pandey congratulated the passing out course cadets, medal winners and the Champion Squadron for their hard work and overwhelming performances. He conveyed his sincere grat-

itude to the proud parents of the passing out course for sending their motivated wards to join the Armed Forces. In a solemn ceremony at the Hut of Remembrance, National Defence Academy which followed this Passing Out Parade, the Army chief paid homage to the brave hearts whose names are etched in the hallowed precincts. The Hut of Remembrance was constructed by the cadets of 10th to 17th Course NDA and has since then been a symbol of bravery, courage and selfless services. The walls of this hallowed memorial recite the sagas of undaunted courage, valour and innumerable sacrifices made by the alumnus of National Defence Academy over the last 75 years.

India would have progressed at much faster pace had borders been more secure: NSA Doval

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval said here on Friday India would have progressed at a much faster pace if its borders had been more secure, defined and not in "adversarial dispossession." He also underlined that the country's power has grown immensely in the last 10 years. Delivering the Rustamji Memorial Lecture organised by the Border Security Force (BSF) on its 21st investiture ceremony, Doval said India's economic progress would have been much faster if "we had more secure borders". "In the foreseeable future, I don't think our borders are going to be as secure as we will require for our fast economic growth. So, the responsibility on border guarding forces has become very, very heavy. They have got to remain on alert 24x7 in perpetuity. They have got to see that our national interests and country are protected," he said. Borders are important because that is the limit which "defines our sovereignty", he said. "Jameen par jo kabja hai wo apna hai, baki to sab adalat aur kachehri ka kaam hai, usse farak nahi padta (The land which is in our possession is ours, the rest is the matter of courts and that is immaterial)," Doval said.



The government has paid very, very high attention to border security during the last 10 years, a period in which "our comprehensive national power has grown immensely," Doval said on Friday. The NSA said India is changing very fast and, in the next 10 years, "we will be a USD 10 trillion economy and the third largest economy" that he called a "major achievement". He said India will have one of the largest workforces and be a hub of high-technology artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum computing and various other areas of defence and security manufacturing. The country, which was an importer of arms, exported USD 2.5 billion worth of arms until March 31, emerging as a big exporter because of the government's policy of self-reliance and Atmanirbhar Bharat, Doval said. In this changing India, prosperity guarantees security to some extent and increases vulnerability in much larger areas, he said.

Its criticism of Agnipath scheme within MCC: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the Election Commission (EC) asked the Congress not to "politicise" the armed forces, the party Friday said its criticism of the Agnipath military recruitment scheme was within the Model Code of Conduct, and alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was "taking the support" of the poll watchdog. Congress' ex-Servicemen Department chief Colonel (retired) Rohit Chaudhry said the model code states that the "criticism of other political parties when made shall be confined to their policies, programmes, past records and work". The armed forces are doing a great job in protecting the country, and the Congress was only talking about the policy of the government when it made statements on the Agnipath scheme, Chaudhry told a press conference at the AICC headquarters here. He said the Modi government has weakened the army by introducing the Agnipath scheme. "We are challenging the scheme which is not in the interest of the country, the army and the soldiers." Chaudhry said the Election Commission has written to Congress President

Mallikarjun Kharge that the party's star campaigners should not talk about the operational matters of the defense forces. "Whenever Modiji gets into trouble, he looks for some support. Earlier, he used to hide behind the defence forces. Now he is taking the support of the Election Commission," the Congress leader said. "If our government is formed, the Agnipath scheme will be scrapped." This scheme has created discrimination in the Army and is also weakening the security of the country, Chaudhry alleged. The EC has asked the party not to politicise defence forces and make potentially divisive statements regarding the socioeconomic composition of the armed forces. The Commission was referring to remarks made by top Congress leaders on the Agnipath scheme. The government rolled out the Agnipath recruitment scheme in June 2022 for short-term induction of personnel with an aim to bring down the age profile of the three services. It provides for recruiting youngsters between the age bracket of 17-and-half years and 21 for four years with a provision to retain 25 per cent of them for 15 more years.

At least 20 per cent cancer patients in India below age of 40, says study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indicating a significant rise in cancer diagnoses among the younger generation in the country, a study has said at least 20 per cent of cancer cases in the country are detected in patients below the age of 40 years, with 60 per cent being male and 40 per cent female. The study was conducted by the Cancer Mukh Bharat Foundation's National Cancer across 1368 cancer patients who reached out to the Cancer Helpline Number. It pointed out that this shift in demographics mirrors a global trend highlighted by the American Cancer Society, showing a rising number of cancer diagnoses among middle-aged individuals. The study also sheds light on the prevalence of different cancer types, with head and neck cancer being the most common (26 per cent), followed by GI cancers (16 per cent), breast cancer (15 per cent), and blood cancers (9 per cent). Alarmingly, 63 per cent of cases are diagnosed in stage 3 or 4, underlining the urgent need for early detection and intervention.



The launch of the National Cancer Helpline Number, offering free consultations with leading oncologists, has emerged as a crucial support system for cancer patients across India, said Dr. Ashish Gupta, Principal Investigator of the Cancer Mukh Bharat Campaign. He emphasised on the importance of education and early detection in combating cancer. Lifestyle modifications, vaccinations, and regular screenings are vital in preventing and detecting cancer at an early stage, he added. The study also highlighted the diverse treatment landscape in India, with 67 per cent of patients seeking treatment from private hospitals and 33 per cent from government hospitals. This

inclusive approach ensures that patients from all socioeconomic backgrounds have access to crucial support and guidance. Dr. Gupta underscored the need for lifestyle changes to curb the rising cancer rates, emphasizing the importance of a healthy lifestyle, avoiding tobacco and alcohol, and promoting physical activity. According to reports, in 2020, India reported an estimated 1.39 million cases of cancer which rose to 1.42 million and 1.46 million in the years 2021 and 2022, respectively. Studies have estimated a 12.8 per cent increase in the number of annual cancer cases by the year 2025, which would be around 1.57 million.

AMR infections threatening millions of lives globally, says Lancet study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) threatens millions of lives annually, with bacterial infections claiming one in every eight global deaths, said a study published in The Lancet, painting a grim picture of a world where 50 lakh lives are lost each year due to bacteria resistant to antibiotics. It said up to 7.5 lakh AMR-related deaths annually in low middle income countries could be prevented by improving infection prevention measures, including hand hygiene, sanitation, and vaccination, said the authors and have called for support in providing sustainable access to antibiotics to be central to ambitious and actionable targets for tackling AMR. "Access to effective antibiotics is essential to patients worldwide. A failure to provide these antibiotics puts us at risk for not meeting the UN sustainable development goals on child survival and health ageing," said series co-author, Iruka Okeke of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Okeke said that effective antibiotics prolong lives, reduce disabilities, limit healthcare costs and enable other life-saving medical actions such as



surgery. "However, antimicrobial resistance is on the rise - accelerated by inappropriate use of antibiotics during the COVID-19 pandemic - threatening the backbone of modern medicine and already leading to deaths and disease which would have once been prevented," said Okeke. Existing infection prevention methods can prevent AMR-associated deaths, according to modelling analysis undertaken for putting together the series of papers. Up to 3.37 lakh deaths a year could be saved by improving infection prevention and control in healthcare facilities while around 2.5 lakh deaths could be avoided yearly by providing universal access to safe drinking water and effective sanitation in community settings. Further, 1.82 lakh deaths a year could be saved by expanding

the rollout of some paediatric vaccines, such as pneumococcal vaccines which help protect against pneumonia and meningitis, along with introducing new ones, such as RSV vaccines for pregnant women, the researchers found. "Our findings highlight how public health actions to prevent infections in the first place should be prioritised as a strategy to tackle AMR as these methods have the potential to drastically reduce the number of deaths from AMR-associated infections," said co-author Yewande Alimi of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "If we can focus on improving infection control methods, water and sanitation and vaccination in LMICs then it should be possible to reduce the number of deaths linked with AMR by 10 per cent by 2030," said Alimi. Along with preventing infections in the first place, the authors also looked at evidence for preventing resistance emerging in bacteria. Antibiotic stewardship (reducing the use of antibiotics when the benefit to patients is limited) is thought to reduce the selection pressure on bacteria to develop resistance, however, there is a lack of research in this area.



www.dailypioneer.com

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

PAPER WITH PASSION

Market's thumbs-up

There is jubilation in economic circles, signalling positive investor sentiment in Govt fate

It is not every day that the market breaches new records just days ahead of the Lok Sabha poll results. Both Sensex and Nifty are shooting northwards, especially since the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) declared a huge dividend bonanza for the Government. The stock market has witnessed a historic surge, with the benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hitting lifetime highs two consecutive days. With the RBI also recently announcing a record dividend for the Government, this confluence of events has fostered an atmosphere of positive investor sentiment, largely driven by optimistic expectations from election outcomes. The RBI's decision to transfer a record dividend of Rs87,416 crore to the Government has been a crucial factor in this financial upturn. This move not only bolsters the Government's fiscal position but also signals robust economic health and prudent management by the Central bank. Such a hefty dividend payout is expected to provide the Government with additional fiscal space to boost public spending, invest in infrastructure projects and support social welfare programmes. The substantial RBI dividend is seen as a sign of economic stability and strong fundamentals, encouraging both domestic and foreign investors to pour capital into the market. Following the dividend announcement, both Sensex and Nifty have experienced unprecedented highs. Sensex soared past the 62,000-mark while Nifty breached the 18,600-level.



This surge reflects investor confidence in Indian economy's resilience and growth potential. The interplay between the RBI's dividend announcement and the buoyant stock market creates a positive feedback loop. Another critical driver of this market exuberance is the

anticipation of favourable election outcomes. Investors often view political stability as a key determinant of economic policies and growth trajectories. This growth prospect attracts more investment, driving the stock markets higher and creating a cycle of optimism and financial prosperity. The prevailing sentiment suggests that the election results will lead to a continuation of pro-business and market-friendly policies. Historical trends indicate that markets typically react positively to clear and stable election results, which are seen as conducive to consistent and predictable economic governance. The interplay between the RBI's dividend announcement and the buoyant stock market creates a positive feedback loop. The additional fiscal resources enable the Government to undertake more significant developmental initiatives, which in turn stimulate economic growth. This alignment of fiscal prudence, economic strategy and political expectations bodes well for the nation's future. As the election comes to an end shortly and a new Government takes over, a positive sentiment among investors is likely to reinforce market stability and growth. However, the market does not reflect the state of the economy. The indices are more speculative and driven by positive sentiments rather than actual ground realities.

PICTALK



Buddhist devotees stand in a queue to light butter lamps during Buddha Jayanti, in Kathmandu

Ambedkar's warning on democracy rings true



BHOPIINDER SINGH

India backslides on global democracy indexes and exhibits resistance to internal party democracy, starkly contrasting with the political culture of the UK

In 1936, Dr BR Ambedkar wrote an undelivered speech, 'Annihilation of Caste, where he forewarned, "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realise that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil which is essentially undemocratic." This sharp but sage observation was well before the Constitution of India was formally framed and adopted under his leadership. Eighty-eight years since the speech that was considered too controversial to be delivered, the issues of caste, constitutional impropriety and his controversial but astute insistence that "Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on India soil which is essentially undemocratic" resonates loud and clear with the proceedings (rather, regressions) in the ensuing Lok Sabha elections.

Amongst the most invoked, galvanising and feared concerns in the ongoing election pitch are still, caste and religion. Beyond the trumpeting label of 'world's largest democracy' which we proudly accept and acknowledge, is the damning backsliding on various Democracy 'indexes' - which we equally readily slam as vested, unfair, or even 'anti-national'. An unmistakably think-skinned spirit and hypersensitivity about the unflattering reportage abounds, which does not help build credentials of a mature, confident and progressive democracy. The 'mother of democracy' simply cannot be selectively entertaining of all praise and simultaneously small-spirited against criticism. However, beyond the multiple and well-known afflictions like dynastic tendencies, majoritarianism, ethnic-casteist-regional assertions, muscle power, money power et al, lies yet another serious curse of the complete lack of, or even any pretence of an 'internal democracy' in any political party, national or regional. We seem to be partaking in the exercise of democracy with a rather regrettable set of undemocratic parties.

Beyond the obvious threats of the 'carrot-and-stick' nature (with murmurs of the infamous 'wash-



ing machine' phenomenon) that may have made many opposition politicians jump ships - there is yet another loud concern expressed of unapproachability, remaining essentially unheard, or even of inaccessibility attributed to political leadership that leads to members to leave political parties for greener pastures. All Indian political parties have their exclusive leadership cocooned, isolated and protected from lesser leaders - this seemingly helps build leadership aura, mystique and even fear of the respective 'high commands'. The top leadership is only for taking the 'final call' and all others must robotically comply with the same, as described in the uniquely Indian expression of subservience, "as disciplined soldiers of the party". Such obsequious and diktat-filled frameworks are more suggestive of autocracies rather than participative democracies. This suffocating, intolerant and illiberal normalcy of Indian political culture is in stark contrast to that of its progenitor, British-Westminster politics. In the UK, there have always been divisions within party ranks (on issues), expressed ambition for top roles and public expression of dissenting positions e.g., Brexit. All these individualistic or non-conformist positions do not warrant the automatic



THERE ARE NO PERMANENT GODS IN BRITISH POLITICAL PARTIES, UNLIKE IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT, WHERE A FEW INDIVIDUALS RULE THE ROOST WITHOUT GETTING SUBJECTED TO ANY INTERNAL CHALLENGE, QUESTIONING OR CHANGE

expulsion or diminishment of an individual from party ranks. The ruling Conservative Party has many active and known 'camps' that may or may not agree with the policies and decisions of their Partyman as the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak. It has always been so with divides amongst social liberals and social democrats, modernisers and traditionalists and Brexiters of various sides and shades etc.. Therefore, even though the Conservative Party has ruled uninterrupted since 2010 (then by David Cameron), it has since had five different Prime Ministers i.e., David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and now, Rishi Sunak. Even now the jostling within the Tories continues with apparently Boris Johnson planning a comeback to David Cameron having staged a dramatic comeback as the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, under Rishi Sunak!

It is the same concept of 'internal democracy' that has seen a similar leadership change in the principal opposition party i.e., the Labour Party. Since 2010 under Gordon Brown, it has seen a constant change in leadership Harriet Harman, Ed Miliband, Jeremy Corbyn to now Sir Keir Starmer. Each of these individual leaders has

reflected the topical preference of the party cadres and leaders. Now with Keir Starmer sure to get elected as the Prime Minister of the UK, he couldn't be more unlike his party predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, both in person and policies. Starmer continues to consult both the former Labour Prime Minister i.e., Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, though neither has any outsized political relevance. In short, there are no permanent Gods in British political parties, unlike the Indian context where a few individuals rule the roost without getting subjected to any internal challenge, questioning or change. The rules and circumstances for leadership can be made to change overnight to suit certain individuals or dynasties which essentially seek to perpetuate the leadership composition, that has existed for years.

As Winston Churchill once said, "The opposition occupies the benches in front of you, but the enemy sits behind you" implying in his party ranks - that such internal competition can never be a sign of weakness but of ensuring that only one with the most competitive, compelling and winning credentials leads the party.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONTROL PLASTIC USE

Madam — Although the central and State Governments have imposed a complete ban on polythene covers of thickness less than 125 microns in the State, it is not seen in practice. The viscosity of polythene bags is too high. 75-micron-thick bags, which were once banned, are still being used today. A large number of polythene covers are used in vegetable, tiffin, grocery, big shops and wholesale shops. As authorities have failed to ban polythene covers, they are seen everywhere on roads and canals. Cattle are falling sick by eating the wastes dumped in these covers in front of the houses and on the road. Criticisms are being heard that even though so many mishaps are happening, the concerned authorities are not paying attention. The authorities should clamp down on the sale of banned polythene bags which harm the environment and take strict action against those selling them. The authorities should make an effort to inform the people about the disadvantages caused by the use of banned polythene bags and to organise awareness programmes to encourage people to use eco-friendly clothing as an alternative.

Appanna Gonapa | Visakhapatnam

WORKPLACE GASLIGHTING HARMS

Madam — It refers to 'Deleterious Effects of Workplace Gaslighting' (May 23). Gaslighting within the organisational setting presents a significant threat to employee well-being and overall organisational effectiveness. This form of psychological manipulation, characterised by the deliberate undermining of an individual's perceptions, beliefs and reality, fosters a detrimental work environment with far-reaching consequences. The erosion of employee confidence and self-esteem, heightened anxiety and paranoia, social isolation and withdrawal and manifestations in physical health are some of the critical impacts of gaslighting in the workplace. Gaslighting through denial, blame-shifting and criticism erodes employees' self-worth and competence, causing isolation, stress,

Recognise Palestinian sovereignty



Madam — In a world where stress is often demonised, reframing it as a friend can transform your relationship with it. Most people think that stress makes them sick; it increases the risk of everything from the common cold to cardiovascular disease. Basically, we have turned stress into our enemy. One study found that people who

Guterres said that the Hamas attack did not take place in a vacuum. His comment was as right as the observation that the Indian Rebellion of 1857 did not take place in a vacuum.

There were acts of terrorism against British civilians like Kennedy ladies during the British Raj in India. Khudiram Bose and his friend Prafulla Chaki threw a bomb at a carriage thinking that the district magistrate of Muzaffarpur, Douglas Kingsford, was in the carriage. However, Kingsford was seated in a different carriage and the bomb killed two British women. Can such attacks on the British civilians justify the Jallianwala Bagh massacre? Had the British still been ruling India, would the world have lent moral support to the colonial regime against the freedom fighters? Gaza massacre put Jallianwala Bagh to shame. More than 35,000 Palestinians, including nearly half of them children and elderly, have been killed in Gaza.

Sujit De | Kolkata

decreased productivity and physical health issues like headaches and sleep disturbances. Address gaslighting by documenting interactions, building support, prioritising self-care, limiting exposure and seeking intervention. Organisations must cultivate a supportive work environment through awareness campaigns, clear reporting mechanisms, robust anti-bullying policies, respectful communication practices and training for managers to identify and address gaslighting. By empowering employees and fostering a supportive culture, organisations can combat gaslighting effectively and build a healthier workplace for all.

Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribagh

MAKE STRESS YOUR FRIEND

Madam — In a world where stress is often demonised, reframing it as a friend can transform your relationship with it. Most people think that stress makes them sick; it increases the risk of everything from the common cold to cardiovascular disease. Basically, we have turned stress into our enemy. One study found that people who

experienced a lot of stress in the previous year had a 43 per cent increased risk of dying, but that was only true for people who believed that stress was harmful to their health.

The researchers estimated that the people who died prematurely died not from stress but from the belief that stress was bad for them. Cultivate a mindset shift: view stress as a sign that your body is energised and ready to tackle tasks. Embrace the physiological changes, like an increased heart rate, as your body gears up for action. If you're breathing faster, there is no problem; it's getting more oxygen to your brain. Over a lifetime of stressful experiences, this one biological change could be the difference between a stress-induced heart attack at age 50 and living well into your 90s. Ultimately, by reframing stress as a friend rather than a foe, you no longer need to get rid of your stress; instead, make yourself better at it.

Harshita Dhakad | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

New-to-credit users drive financial inclusion

New-to-credit users have become one of the fastest-growing segments over the past three years but they also present challenges

New-to-credit (NTC) users or first-time users of credit products were one of the fastest-growing consumer segments in the lending category in the last three years, driving sustainable financial inclusion and economic growth in India. Industry data suggests that India currently has around 200 million active credit users and around 800,000 NTC consumers are being added to this pool every year. Over the last few years, these consumers driven by easy access to credit cards and short-term personal loans (STPL) grew the retail credit category at a rapid pace. Rapid digitisation of the lending process gave a boost to the rise in NTC customers but also resulted in challenges in background checks and client's repayment capacity. It took the RBI to step in by increasing risk weightage to control the uncontrolled growth in this category. As a result, the supply has been curtailed with first-time users increasingly finding it difficult to get easy access to credit products. However, there are



some specially co-created credit cards for first-time users, helping them to build a good credit history before getting access to other credit products. In such a situation, managing debt smartly has become important for first-time consumers. For them, using a credit card responsibly is crucial for building a positive credit history and avoiding debt. Here are some financial tips:

Understand your need for a credit card: For new users, it is very important to understand the terms and conditions of your credit card. These include interest rates, fees, grace periods and rewards programs if applicable. We often make the mistake of activating the

credit card without understanding the finer details of credit card usage. This mistake may cost you a bad debt and a bad financial history, limiting your access to credit in the future.

Start small: There is always a temptation to overspend with a credit card, especially if you are a first-time user. So, it is advisable to begin with a low credit limit to avoid overspending and to ease into managing credit responsibly.

Always pay on time and in full: Always pay your credit card bill on time and in full to avoid late fees and interest charges. Setting up automatic payments can help ensure you never miss a due date.

Monitor your spending: Keep track of your credit card transactions to stay within your budget and avoid overspending. Many credit card companies offer online or mobile banking apps to help you monitor your spending in real time. Keep utilisation low: Aim to keep your credit utilisation ratio—the amount of credit you're using compared to your total credit limit—below

30 per cent. This shows lenders that you're using credit responsibly and can help improve your credit score.

Avoid cash advances: Cash advances often come with high fees and interest rates, so it's best to avoid using your credit card for cash withdrawals unless necessary.

Regularly check your credit report: Monitor your credit report for any errors or unauthorised activity. You're entitled to a free credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian and TransUnion) once a year. Build an emergency fund: Having an emergency fund can help cover unexpected expenses without relying solely on credit cards, reducing the risk of accumulating debt. Having a financial discipline is very important towards a good financial future. For NTC consumers the early they start is good for a healthy future but with a bit of discipline and consciousness.

(The writer is a co-founder Zet-fintech platform; views are personal)



MANISH SHARA



FIRST COLUMN

TRUST IN THE SUPREME BEING!

The writer ponders the true nature of belief and the role of religion in our lives



SANJAY CHANDRA

I am not an atheist! But I do believe that there is a supreme power that guides us through the journey that we call life. Yet, there are questions that the rational mind refuses to subdue. One such dilemma that I have not been able to resolve is that we cannot be the only living beings in this vast universe. There have to be others. Would they also look like us?

Probably not my mother was a firm believer in the Gods of the faith that I was born in. She would make it a point to visit the nearby temples every week, accompanied by our father and the three of us children. We would watch her from outside the temple folding her hands in supplication before each God, praying for our wellbeing. I never asked my father the reason that he would stand at the entry to the temple, not accompanying his wife inside. Maybe it was to keep a watch on my mother's footwear, which had to be left outside.

Even a temple was not immune to missing slippers or sandals or shoes — others were more in need of the accessory. It also might have been because it was a little difficult to untie and then retie the laces on our shoes. As I grew up, I was intrigued by the increase in traffic at the temples, particularly at examination times. Young boys and also girls, could be seen touching the holy steps and then bowing to the deities, sometimes even putting their books reverentially at the feet of the Gods. I asked a friend, who smirked at my naiveté, before explaining that this helped in securing good marks. I also saw young unmarried women fasting and then visiting the temple on specific days of the week in the hope of getting a suitable husband.



I do not know if they lived a happily thereafter life. As I grew older, I too felt the need to visit the temple, particularly when facing a difficult time — initially when I was a student and then during my professional life. And then I realised the power of trust in a supreme being. It was this implicit faith, that the Lord above will not forsake me in my tough times, that gave me the confidence. It was a trust in my capabilities, reinforced by faith, that kept me going and kept me working. It sounds clichéd, but I also understood that my God resides within me; I do not need to visit a temple to pray to my God. I can do it wherever I am, whenever I need to. There was an interesting episode in my life recently. I got trolled on the WhatsApp group of my society by the same people who had only in the morning appreciated my writing. My fault — I had sinned opposing the construction of a temple inside the gated community. I felt there were more pressing issues to be attended. I smiled as I was called an elitist — the gentleman probably wanted to call me a pseudo-intellectual. These are the persons who have chosen, like me, to live out their lives in this complex — and hence, by default, they are the extended family. Relationships went for a toss. Which brings me to the query of the rational me. If there is a life after death and if there is life on many distant planets, then, I might be reborn in another form somewhere else. In that other life, I might pray to the supreme being in another form or shape. Then, is it really important for us to wear our religion on our sleeves or even to let it divide?

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)

Political messaging in Indian elections



SAIDEEP KAR

The current election cycle witnesses a proliferation of digital misinformation campaigns, presenting new challenges for the authorities and citizens alike



A prominent film programmer and writer David Schwartz has rightly quoted, "Political commercials pretend to be like documentaries, but they use all the techniques of fiction filmmaking, including scripts, performances and music." This could be quite apt to ponder on the current general election and political communication in India. The use of technologies including deep fakes is attempting to make this election distinct from the 2019 general election.

Political communication is the production and influence of persuasive political messages, campaigns and advertisements, often involving the mass media. It is an interdisciplinary field that uses communication, journalism and political science. Political communication concerns ideas such as information flow, political influence, decision-making, news and impact on citizens. Since the advent of the World Wide Web, the amount of data to be analysed has increased and researchers are turning to computational methods to study the dynamics of political communication. This can be quite relevant in the light of Parliamentary elections, 2024 in India.

The parliamentary elections in India have started from 19 April and will continue up to 1 June in seven phases to elect all 543 members of the Lok Sabha. This is the longest election in history, surpassing the previous election of 44 days, second only to the Indian general election of 1951-52. Approximately 970 million of the 1.4 billion people are eligible to vote, that is 70 per cent of the total population. In the States of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha and Sikkim, parliamentary elections will be held simultaneously with general elections and by-elections to 25 constituencies in 12 legislative assemblies. The votes will be counted and the results announced on June 4. Current Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has completed his second term, is running for a third consecutive term.



THE FRAUD PULSE HAS FOUND A NEW, MORE ENTHUSIASTIC CHANNEL IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS. LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ARE WARNING LOUDER THAN EVER THAT THE AVERAGE INDIAN VOTER IN 2024 IS MOST AT RISK OF BEING MISINFORMED ABOUT THE ELECTION

Social media in the political domain

Social media has become an increasingly important tool for political communication. For certain demographics, it is one of the main platforms where people get their news and interact with it by commenting and sharing. Social media has dramatically changed the way modern political campaigns are run. As more and more digitally native citizens vote, social media has become an important tool for politicians to establish themselves and communicate with voters.

The experience of using social media depends largely on the user, as the platform's algorithms tailor the consumer experience to each user. This leads to each person seeing more like-minded people due to increased digital social behaviour. In addition, social media changed politics because it gave politicians a direct way to inform their constituents and people to speak directly to politicians. This unofficial nature can lead to misinformation because it is not subject to the same "fact-checking processes as institutional journalism". Moreover, social media platforms serve as democratising agents, empowering individuals to participate in political conversations irrespective of geographical or socio-economic barriers. Citizens can voice their perspectives, amplify marginalised narratives and mobilise collective action, thereby enriching the democratic fabric of society. Concurrently, social media's interactive nature engenders heightened transparency and accountability within political institutions, as public scrutiny intensifies and feedback mechanisms proliferate.

AI Deepfakes: A new era

Technological implications are increasingly becoming imperative in the current election in India about political communication. This election season, misinformation has a new face. This time, India smiles, talks and woos the voters with a wisdom that is hard to start and harder to regulate. The 2019 election was no stranger to hate and misinformation campaigns, but the technology that enables this ecosystem has changed the rate of misrepresentation. The fraud pulse has found a new, more enthusiastic channel in the last five years. Law enforcement agencies are warning louder than ever that the average Indian voter in 2024 is most at risk of being misinformed about the election. There are gaps in people's ability to distinguish between real and artificial intelligence, leaving them vulnerable to fraud and unauthorised access. Social media companies struggle to curb fake news and propaganda; The Indian Government is updating existing legislation to better address the spread of online counterfeiting. The 2019 election took place on social media. Researchers identified sophisticated campaigns that used WhatsApp messaging and massive deployment of IT bots to distribute cropped photos, post coordinated content and publish fake videos on Facebook during the 2024 general elections. The pressing question now is how digital platforms tag, identify and contextualise such media. Even in the era of generative AI, such enforcement measures were nascent or seasonal at best. Now, cheap or free tools allow even amateurs to create deep fakes without content filters to prevent fake or illegal content from

spreading. This means that technology platforms have to act stronger against criminals and break the chain of disinformation faster than they do. One of the biggest changes in social media after the 2019 elections in India is the absence of Twitter (Now X), the platform used by India's controlled politicians and Government agencies to broadcast official information to the country's media.

A way forward

In today's world, understanding politics means delving into how political actors communicate and navigate various media channels. These channels not only reflect but also shape political messages and images. Just as political systems influence media through policies and decisions, media structures profoundly impact political communication processes. Easy-to-make AI videos with near-perfect shadows and hand gestures can sometimes confuse even the digitally literate. But the risks are greater in a country where many of its 1.4 billion people are technologically challenged and where manipulated content can easily stoke sectarian tensions, especially during elections. The Election Commission of India recently warned political parties against using artificial intelligence to spread misinformation, issuing seven provisions of IT and other laws that carry up to three years in prison for offences including forgery, rumour and hostility. Looking forward to a free and fair election this time!

(The author is from Journalism and Mass Communication, Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar; views are personal)

Millennium City says 'no development, no vote'

Frustrated by poor infrastructure despite high taxes, Gurgaon residents are shunning election candidates

This month Gurgaon has seen protests in several localities with frustrated and disillusioned residents announcing 'Election candidates not welcome, no development, no vote'.

Gurgaon residents are piqued that despite paying taxes (the highest share in the State), they are getting a raw deal. Sensing the mood of the public, both BJP stalwart and five-time MP, Rao Inderjit Singh and Congress candidate Raj Babbar, have made development their poll plank. Interestingly though it is a national election, focus remains on local issues, especially in the absence of a central national poll theme. Gurgaon may have fancy



VINOD BEHL

tags of 'Millennium City' and 'Cyber City' but the city which has made a global mark, lacks badly on physical and social infrastructure. It presents an ugly face with city waste besides construction debris lying all over, posing a serious health hazard.

It is not just Gurgaon, even the new sectors of the city which are grappling with poorly maintained roads (leading to accidents and dust pollution), inadequate drinking water, power and sewerage infrastructure. In the absence of proper drainage. Failure of civic authorities has made matters worse.

The lack of an adequate metro network in the city has created a traffic mess on



the roads. The lack of proper parking infrastructure has only made matters worse. A lot of the city's civic infra woes are because of the flawed development model of real estate development preceding infrastructure

development. Moreover, unlike in neighbouring Noida where there is a single development authority, Gurgaon lacks on this front. GMDA (Gurgaon Metropolitan Development Authority) constituted to

put an end to a multiplicity of development authorities, has proved to be an eyewash with MCG (Municipal Corporation Gurgaon) and HSVP (Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran) around. Seeking vote on development, Rao Inderjit Singh takes credit for initiating the mega infrastructure and connectivity projects like KMP Expressway, Delhi-Mumbai Expressway (passing through Gurgaon), Sohna Elevated Expressway, Dwarka Expressway, Metro Expansion, Gurgaon Railway Station upgradation.

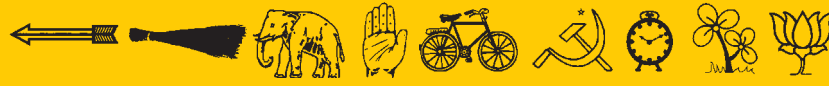
In rural and Muslim-dominated Nuh, he is telling voters about the development gains of key infrastructure projects like the Delhi-

Mumbai Expressway and Orbital Rail. Raj Babbar, on the other hand, is also playing the development card to counter Rao Inderjit, pointing to shoddy development with several civic issues plaguing the city, turning it into a slum. Long delays in metro expansion, Lack of an Inter-State Bus Terminus and the absence of a suitable Civil Hospital are among the issues he has been raking up among the voters, demanding a fair share of development. He is promising the transformation of Gurgaon.

Though Rao Inderjit Singh may be facing anti-incumbency he has an obvious advantage of a well-oiled organisation besides the Modi factor. On the other

hand, Raj Babbar faces the challenge of being an outsider. Besides he has the disadvantage of being a late starter due to a delay in announcing his nomination. The Gurgaon electorate seems to be in a mood to give another chance to the BJP, banking on the strong pro-development credentials of Modi. However, they have also shown their displeasure with the political parties. Indeed Gurgaon's infrastructure is not up to the mark and needs an immediate attention. Besides, their anger has led politicians to take notice of their woes and have now started showing interest in infrastructure upgradation.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)



Mehbooba aiming for hat-trick in Anantnag Rajouri LS constituency

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A high-stakes battle is on the cards in the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency as Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti is aiming for a hat-trick amid several roadblocks. She first won the seat in 2004, then for the second time in 2014, and now a decade later in 2024, she is again giving a tough fight to her rival candidates in the fray. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference has fielded Mian Altaf Ahmad, one of the tallest Gujjar leaders, to prevent her from reaching the milestone. In a multi-corner contest on the high-profile seat, the Bharatiya Janta Party is not staying away due to the absence of their party candidate in the fray. The

party is lending its support to Zaffar Iqbal Mangas (a member of the Pahari community) of Jammu and Kashmir APNI party. In a video message posted on X (earlier Twitter), Mehbooba Mufti made a passionate appeal to the voters, "Tomorrow you all will go to vote. I request you to think before casting your vote about who has supported you in difficult times," the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said in a video message on X. Mehbooba Mufti said her family, her party, and she had paid a huge price for advocating the cause of the people. "Despite that, I rose above caste and religion, and raised my voice for justice and will continue to do so," she added. "By supporting me and voting for me, you will allow me to be your advocate in the

Parliament and portray the issues we are facing," she added. Ahead of the polling day, the two rival parties traded barbs. Hitting out at Mehbooba Mufti, Omar also reminded her "Mehbooba Ji is from Bijbehara, Anantnag. Doesn't Mian Sahab have relatives in Rajouri or Kokernag? If Mian Sahab isn't from here, then please explain to me, Mehbooba Ji, when I was contesting my second parliament election from Srinagar, and you were my rival candidate, how were you considered local then and Mian Sahab is not now? "Can you accuse him of taking a single penny as a bribe, abusing anyone, or taking anyone's land or job? Wherever Mian Sahab has served, he has done so with dedication to the people." JKNC Vice President Omar Abdullah



said at Noorabad on Thursday. Over 18.36 lakh voters will decide the fate of 20 candidates on May 25. The constituency was originally going to polls on May 7. Still,

it was deferred by the Election Commission of India at the request of BJP and other parties, to May 25 citing inclement weather conditions. Meanwhile, elaborate security

arrangements have been made to ensure incident-free and peaceful polling across 18 Assembly segments spread between five districts, three in the Kashmir valley and two in the Jammu region. Of 18 assembly segments — 11 fall in Kashmir's Anantnag, Kulgam, and Shopian districts, and seven in Jammu's Poonch and Rajouri districts across the mighty Pir Panjal range. The ECI has set up 2,338 polling stations across the Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary Constituency. South Kashmir used to be an erstwhile bastion of PDP. Before launching his own regional political party, Mufti Mohd Sayeed won the 1998 Lok Sabha polls from Anantnag. Between 1967 - 1977 Mohd Shafi Qureshi of the congress party retained the seat for three consecutive

terms. Begum Akbar Jahan Abdullah won the seat in 1984. A Kashmiri Pandit Piyare Lal Handoo won the seat on JKNC ticket in 1989. Mohd Maqbool Dar won the seat on Janta Dal ticket in 1996. The NC won the seat in 1999, 2009 and 2019, PDP emerged winner in 2004 and 2014. In the last Lok Sabha election, the Anantnag Lok Sabha constituency had recorded a low voter turn of 9 percent voting while the Rajouri-Poonch area, which was part of Jammu Lok Sabha seat, recorded over 72 percent voting. In 2014, the Anantnag Lok Sabha seat saw a turnout of 28 percent. While the polls in Baramulla and Srinagar were peaceful, authorities have a security challenge in the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency. Last week terrorists carried

out two back-to-back attacks in south Kashmir in which a former sarpanch associated with the BJP was shot dead and a tourist couple was wounded in a separate attack. While the terrorist-related violence and law and order situations have reached their lowest ebb in Kashmir after August 5, 2019 — the day when J&K's special status was abrogated — the terrorist handlers have spread the arc of terror towards the Pir Panjal districts of the Poonch-Rajouri. The last few years have witnessed a series of deadly attacks on the Army in the twin districts of Poonch-Rajouri that left several soldiers dead. Three weeks back, on May 4, foreign terrorists killed an IAF official and injured four others in a brazen attack in Poonch before vanishing into the forests.

Modi: Talabaaz sarkar in HP shut recruitment commission

PTI ■ SHIMLA/NAHAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday called the Congress government in Himachal Pradesh a "talabaaz sarkar" for shutting down the staff selection commission and said the party also intends to put a "tala", or lock, on Ayodhya's Ram temple. Addressing an election programme in Nahan in Sirmour district, he claimed a conspiracy is being hatched to snatch the reservation from the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and give it to Muslims. As Modi took to the stage, he chanted 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and evoked local deities. Coming to Sirmour felt like a homecoming, he said. "Neither Nahan nor Sirmour is new for me but I have to say that today's atmosphere is new as I have never witnessed such a historic rally in Nahan," he told the crowd at the BJP's 'Vijay Sankalp' rally. "I have come here to seek your blessings for a third term for the BJP, not for myself or my family but for a developed nation and developed Himachal." The prime minister said the people of Himachal Pradesh live along the border and know the value of a strong nation. "I assure you that I won't let any harm come to you," he said. "Main jaaun ki baji laga dunga per Himachal per sankat nahin aane dunga." Modi said he has visited every nook and corner of Himachal Pradesh during his days in the party organisation and he considers the state his second home.



Hitting out at the Congress over the dissolution of the Himachal Pradesh Staff Selection Commission (HPSSC), Modi said let alone giving one lakh jobs to the youth, the "talabaaz sarkar" of the Congress put a lock on the recruitment commission. In February last year, the Sukhu government disbanded the HPSSC whose functioning was suspended after a paper leak was detected in December 2022. In October last year, the state government notified the Himachal Pradesh Rajya Chayan Aayog (HPRCA) to replace the Hamirpur-based HPSSC. Modi further said, "The Congress opposed the Ram temple and mocked us with slogans like 'mandir wahin banayenge, tareekh nahin btayenge' (Will build the temple there only, but won't tell the date)." "We not only declared the date but also performed the Pran Pratishtha (of the Ram temple) and the Congress

boycotted it to appease its vote bank." The prime minister claimed that an aide of a top Congress leader has said that a conspiracy is being hatched to put a lock on the Ram temple in Ayodhya and shift Ram Lalla to a tent again if the party wins the Lok Sabha polls. Modi also alleged that a conspiracy is being hatched to snatch the reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs and give it to Muslims. The Congress has already done it in Karnataka, he said. The Calcutta High Court has quashed OBC certificates conferred on 77 classes of Muslims to please the Muslim vote bank but West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is not honouring the court order, he said. The HC on Wednesday struck down as illegal the OBC status of several classes in West Bengal granted since 2010, observing that the inclusion of 77 classes of Muslims in the list of

backward categories was to "treat them as vote bank". There are poor people in upper castes as well, Modi said, adding his government has provided a 10 per cent quota for the upper caste poor without snatching it from any other caste. Modi also targeted the Congress for not accepting the demand for 'one rank one pension (OROP)' and said his government not only implemented the promise made to ex-servicemen but has so far disbursed Rs 1.25 lakh crore for it. He said the Congress did not accept the demand for OROP for 40 years but after he declared at a rally of ex-servicemen in Jhajjar, Haryana in the run-up to the 2014 Lok Sabha polls that the BJP would do it, the Congress "insulted" the veterans by earmarking just Rs 500 crore for the scheme. Earlier, Pakistan used to commit excesses ("sar pe naachta tha") and the "weak" Congress government looked at other countries for help. "But, today we fight our own battle and kill the enemy by in their own territory." Appealing to the 2.50 lakh people of Hatti community of the Trans Gori area of Sirmour district, the PM said the Centre has given them tribal status but the Congress-led state government has failed to extend them the benefits. "When the people of Himachal Pradesh know the Congress is not going to form a government in Delhi, why should anybody vote for them? The people of Himachal Pradesh are very intelligent and they will not waste their votes," he said.

Polling in Haryana for 10 LS seats today; former CM Khattar, Union Ministers in fray

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Polling in the 10 Lok Sabha constituencies in Haryana and for the Karnal assembly bypoll will be held on Saturday that will decide the fate of 223 candidates, including big guns like former chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Congress' Kumari Selja. A total of 223 candidates — 207 men and 16 women — are in the fray in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha polls and more than 2 crore people are eligible to vote in the state. Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini is contesting the Karnal byelection. Voting will be held from 7 am to 6 pm. The BJP had won all 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana in the 2019 general elections. For the Lok Sabha elections, Union ministers Rao Inderjit Singh and Krishan Pal Gurjar, former chief minister Manohar Lal and Congress heavyweights Kumari Selja and Deepender Singh Hooda are among the candidates. Khattar, the BJP candidate from Karnal, is facing Haryana Youth Congress president Divyanshu Budhiraja. Haryana is witnessing a direct fight between the ruling BJP and opposition Congress on most seats. However, seats like Hisar are witnessing a multi-cornered contest. From Hisar, Power Minister Ranjit Singh Chautala, an Independent MLA who joined the BJP ahead of the polls, is pitted against two members of the Chautala clan — JJP's Naina Chautala and INLD's Sunaina Chautala. Congress' Jai Prakash is also in the fray. The BJP has fielded industrialist and former Congress MP Naveen Jindal from Kurukshetra. He is



facing AAP's state unit chief Sushil Gupta and INLD's Abhay Singh Chautala. Union minister Inderjit Singh and Krishan Pal Gurjar are seeking re-election from Gurugram and Faridabad seats, respectively. The Congress has fielded its senior leader Raj Babbar from Gurugram. Congress' Kumari Selja and BJP's Ashok Tanwar are contesting from Sirsa. In Rohtak, Deepender Singh Hooda is up against BJP's Arvind Sharma. During the high-pitched campaigning for the sixth phase, which ended on Thursday evening, BJP leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gadkari, and INDIA bloc leaders Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Arvind Kejriwal made all-out efforts to garner support for candidates of their parties. Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) have also fielded their candidates in the Lok Sabha polls. JJP's 10, BSP's nine and INLD's seven candidates are contesting the polls. A few sitting MLAs are also in the fray, including INLD's Kurukshetra candidate Abhay Singh Chautala. Congress' sitting MLAs Varun

Chaudhary and Rao Dan Singh are contesting from Ambala and Bhiwani-Mahendragar seats, respectively. BJP MLA Mohan Lal Badoli is contesting from Sonapat and JJP's Naina Chautala from Hisar. Saini, who is also the state BJP chief and the sitting Kurukshetra MP, was sworn in as the chief minister on March 12, replacing Khattar. He contesting the Karnal assembly bypoll. There are nine candidates in the fray for the bypoll which was necessitated by Khattar's resignation as MLA. There are 2,00,76,768 registered voters in the state, including 94,23,956 women and 467 transgender voters, Haryana's Chief Electoral Officer Anurag Agarwal said. A total of 45,576 EVMs will be used in the state for the Lok Sabha elections and the assembly bypoll. Along with this, 24,039 control units and 26,040 VVPAT machines will be used, Chief Electoral Officer Anurag Agarwal said. A total of 20,031 polling stations have been set up in Haryana, including 19,812 permanent and 219 auxiliary. While 5,470 polling stations have been set up in urban areas, 14,342 have been set up in rural areas, he said. As many as 99 polling stations will be operated entirely by women staff. Apart from this, 96 polling stations will be manned by youth employees and 71 by PwD (Persons with Disabilities) employees, he said. Agarwal said polling parties in the state will depart for their respective polling stations on Friday. Foolproof security arrangements have been made for smooth conduct of the elections, said Director General of Police Shatruej Kapur.

BJP hits out at Congress Government in Karnataka

PTI ■ BANGALURU

Hitting out at the Congress government in Karnataka for the alleged "deteriorating law and order situation" in the state, the BJP termed the Silicon City as "Uda Bengaluru" and alleged the city is becoming the "adda" for narcotic substances and rave parties. Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Friday said it was not right on the part of the opposition to say Bengaluru is becoming "Uda Bengaluru" and should not cast aspersions. The development comes after the Bengaluru Police busted a rave party at a farmhouse here recently which was allegedly attended by 103 people. Of them, 86 individuals, including a Telugu film actress, tested positive for narcotics, according to police, citing medical tests. "Taking to 'X', the BJP has alleged that since the Congress government came to power in Karnataka, "immoral gatherings" were happening everywhere in Bengaluru. "Law and order has deteriorated, government chaos has been exposed. After the Congress government came to power, immoral gatherings are happening everywhere in Bengaluru. Silicon City is now full of drugs, cannabis drug rave parties," BJP Karnataka said in a post in Kannada. The BJP also used a poster featuring Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar with the hashtags #BadBengaluru and #CongressFailsKarnataka to hit out at the state government.

Lalu neither worked for welfare of backward classes nor Yadavs: Shah



PTI ■ ARRAH (BIHAR)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a blistering attack on Lalu Prasad, alleging that the RJD chief neither worked for the welfare of backward classes nor the people belonging to his caste 'Yadav'. While addressing an election rally in favour of senior BJP leader and Union Minister R K Singh in Arrah, Shah said if Prasad, as part of the "arrogant" INDIA bloc, comes to power, "jungle raj, abduction, and gang war will return to Bihar". "People don't want the return of 'jungle raj', gang war and abduction industry in Bihar.

OBCs and give such benefits to Muslims." "The NDA under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji will not allow this to happen. Congress, Lalu Prasad and Mamata Banerjee are against reservations to backward classes," he alleged. "They have been exposed," he said, referring to a Calcutta High Court order that cancelled OBC certificates issued in the state since 2010. The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday struck down as illegal the OBC status of several classes in West Bengal granted since 2010, sparking a political debate in the middle of the Lok Sabha elections. The court observed that the inclusion of 77 classes of Muslims in the list of backward categories was to "treat them as a vote bank" Shah also said, "If CPI-ML (Liberation) candidate wins from Arrah Lok Sabha seat, Naxalism will once again return to Bihar." RK Singh, as a BJP candidate, is seeking re-election from the Arrah Lok Sabha constituency, while CPI-ML (Liberation) nominated Sudama Prasad as a "Mahagathbandhan" candidate.

was barely Rs 25,000 crore. PM Narendra Modi enhanced it to Rs 1.25 lakh crore in 10 years," he said. The BJP leader alleged that cattle smuggling was rampant in Jharkhand and promised to make it 'zero' like Assam. Shah was campaigning for BJP candidate Sita Soren who is contesting from the Dumka Lok Sabha seat. Later addressing a rally in Deoghar, he attacked the opposition INDIA bloc claiming that it does not have 'neta, niti or neeyat' (leader, policy or intention) and only Narendra Modi is fit to become the country's PM. He also alleged that INDIA bloc leaders favoured dynastic politics. "Lalu Prasad wants his son to become CM, Uddhav Thackeray wants his son to be CM, Sharad Pawar wants his daughter to be CM, Mamata Didi wants her nephew to be CM, Stalin wants his son to be CM and Sonia Gandhi wants to make her son Rahul Gandhi as PM," he said. The BJP will abolish reservations given to Muslims and hand them over to SCs/STs and OBCs, he added.

For Congress, Jharkhand is ATM of corruption, says Home Minister

PTI ■ JAMTARA/DEOGHAR (JHARKHAND)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a scathing attack on Congress, alleging that the grand old party sees Jharkhand as an "ATM of corruption". He also alleged that Congress and Hemant Soren's JMM are competing with each other on corruption in the state. "For Congress, Jharkhand is its vote bank, property, land bank and ATM of corruption... Corrupt JMM leaders, including Hemant Soren, are sitting on Congress' lap," Shah said while addressing a rally at Jamtara. Claiming to have secured 310 seats in the first five phases of Lok Sabha polls, the BJP leader urged people to make it cross the 400 mark in order to make the country a "developed" one under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He claimed that PM Modi not only freed the country from Naxals, including red rebels in Jharkhand's Budha Pahad, and did "justice to tribals". "The budget for tribals during the Sonia-Manmohan regime

was barely Rs 25,000 crore. PM Narendra Modi enhanced it to Rs 1.25 lakh crore in 10 years," he said. The BJP leader alleged that cattle smuggling was rampant in Jharkhand and promised to make it 'zero' like Assam. Shah was campaigning for BJP candidate Sita Soren who is contesting from the Dumka Lok Sabha seat. Later addressing a rally in Deoghar, he attacked the opposition INDIA bloc claiming that it does not have 'neta, niti or neeyat' (leader, policy or intention) and only Narendra Modi is fit to become the country's PM. He also alleged that INDIA bloc leaders favoured dynastic politics. "Lalu Prasad wants his son to become CM, Uddhav Thackeray wants his son to be CM, Sharad Pawar wants his daughter to be CM, Mamata Didi wants her nephew to be CM, Stalin wants his son to be CM and Sonia Gandhi wants to make her son Rahul Gandhi as PM," he said. The BJP will abolish reservations given to Muslims and hand them over to SCs/STs and OBCs, he added.

SC refuses to direct EC to upload voter turnout data amid LS polls

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused an NGO's plea to issue the Election Commission directions to upload polling station-wise voter turnout data on its website during the Lok Sabha polls, saying a "hands-off approach" needs to be adopted during the elections. A vacation bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma said it cannot issue any such directions at the moment as five phases of polling have concluded and two remain and it would be difficult for the poll panel to mobilise manpower. The top court adjourned the interlocutory application (IA) filed by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) to be listed before the regular bench after the elections and pointed out that prima facie it appears the prayers in the application are similar to the main petition pending since 2019 on the issue. "This (IA) has to be taken with the pending writ petition because in between the elections, a hands-off approach has to be adopted," it said and pointed out that it would be difficult for the EC to mobilise manpower for uploading the voter turnout data on its website. "Granting any relief in IA will amount to granting relief in the main petition which is pending," the bench said. It said it needs to understand the ground reality and not overburden the poll panel by changing the process midway. On May 17, the top court had sought within a week the EC's response on the NGO's plea seeking a direction to upload polling station-



wise voter turnout data on its website within 48 hours of the conclusion of polling for each phase of the Lok Sabha elections. The ADR has filed an interim application in its 2019 PIL seeking directions to the poll panel that "scanned legible copies of Form 17C Part-I (Account of Votes Recorded)" of all polling stations be uploaded immediately after the polls. In its affidavit, the poll panel opposed the NGO's demand, stating that it will "vitiate" the electoral space and cause "chaos" in the poll machinery in the midst of the general elections. The poll panel has said that there is no legal mandate to provide Form 17C to any person other than the candidate or his agent. It has said that public posting of Form 17C — which gives the number of votes polled in a polling station — is not provided in the statutory framework and could lead to mischief and vitiation of the entire electoral space as it increases the possibility of the images being morphed.

UN court orders Israel to halt Rafah military op

AP ■ THE HAGUE

The top United Nations court ordered Israel on Friday to immediately halt its military operations in the southern Gaza city of Rafah. While Israel is unlikely to comply with any such order, it will ratchet up the pressure on the increasingly isolated country. Criticism of Israel's conduct in the war in Gaza has been growing — even from its closest ally, the United States, which warned against an invasion of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have sought shelter from fighting elsewhere. And this week alone, three European countries announced they would recognise a Palestinian state, and the chief prosecutor for another UN court requested arrest warrants for Israeli leaders, along with Hamas officials.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is also under heavy pressure at home to end the war, which

was triggered when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel, killing 1,200 people, most civilians, and taking some 250 captive. Thousands of Israelis have joined weekly demonstrations calling on the government to reach a deal to bring the hostages home, fearing that time is running out.

While the ruling by the International Court of Justice is a blow to Israel's international standing, the court does not have a police force to enforce its orders. In another case on its docket, Russia has so far ignored a 2022 order by the court to halt its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Israel signalled it, too, would brush off an ICJ order to stop its operations. "No power on earth will stop Israel from protecting its citizens and going after Hamas in Gaza," Avi Hyman, the government spokesperson, said in a press briefing Thursday. The court's president, Nawaf

Salam, read out the ruling, as a small group of pro-Palestinian protesters demonstrated outside. Fears expressed earlier "with respect to the developments in Rafah have materialised and that the humanitarian situation is now to be characterised as disastrous," the ruling said. The court did not call for a full cease-fire throughout Gaza as South Africa had requested at hearings last week. The cease-fire request is part of a case filed late last year by South Africa accusing Israel of committing genocide during its Gaza campaign. Israel vehemently denies the allegations. The case will take years to resolve, but South Africa wants interim orders to protect Palestinians while the legal wrangling continues. At public hearings last week at the International Court of Justice, South Africa's ambassador to the Netherlands, Vusumuzi Madonsela, urged the panel of 15 international judges to order Israel to

Bodies of 3 more hostages recovered

AP ■ TEL AVIV

The bodies of three more hostages killed on October 7 were recovered overnight from Gaza, Israel's army said on Friday, as the top United Nations court prepares to rule on whether Israel must halt its military operations and withdraw from the enclave. The bodies of Hanan Yablonka, Michel Nisenbaum, and Orion Hernandez Radoux were found and their families have been notified. The army said they were killed on the day of the attack at the Mefalsim intersection and their bodies were taken to Gaza. The announcement comes less

"totally and unconditionally withdraw" from the Gaza Strip.

The court has already found that Israel's military operations pose a "real and imminent risk" to the Palestinian

than a week after the army said it found the bodies of three other Israeli hostages killed on October 7. Hamas-led militants killed around 1,200 people, mainly civilians, and abducted around 250 others in the October 7 attack. Around half of those hostages have since been freed, most in swaps for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel during a weeklong cease-fire in November. Israel says around 100 hostages are still captive in Gaza, along with the bodies of at least 39 more, while 17 bodies of hostages have been recovered.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to both eliminate Hamas and bring all the hostages back, but he's made little progress. He faces pressure to resign, and the US has threatened to scale back its support over the humanitarian situation in Gaza. On Friday, Netanyahu said the country had a duty to do everything to return those abducted, both those killed and those who are alive. In a post on X Friday, French President Emmanuel Macron gave condolences to the family of Hernandez-Radoux, a French-Mexican citizen, saying France remains committed to releasing the hostages.

The operation has obliterated entire neighbourhoods, sent hundreds of thousands of people fleeing their homes, and pushed parts of the territory into famine.

The U.S. military worked with the U.N. and Israeli officials to select safer alternate routes for trucks coming from the pier, U.S. Vice Admiral Brad Cooper told reporters Thursday.

As a result, the U.S. pier on Wednesday accounted for 27 of the 70 total trucks of aid that the U.N. was able to round up from all land and sea crossings into Gaza for distribution to civilians, the United States said.

'More aid getting from US pier to people in Gaza after troubled launch'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

A six-day-old U.S. pier project in Gaza is starting to get more aid to Palestinians in need but conditions are challenging, U.S. officials said Thursday. That reflects the larger problems bringing food and other supplies to starving people in the besieged territory.

The floating pier had a troubled launch, with crowds overrunning some of the first trucks coming from the new U.S.-led sea route and taking its contents over the weekend. One man in the crowd was shot dead in still-unexplained circumstances. It led to a two-day suspension of aid distribution.

The U.S. military worked with the U.N. and Israeli officials to select safer alternate routes for trucks coming from the pier, U.S. Vice Admiral Brad Cooper told reporters Thursday.

As a result, the U.S. pier on Wednesday accounted for 27 of the 70 total trucks of aid that the U.N. was able to round up from all land and sea crossings into Gaza for distribution to civilians, the United States said.

That's a fraction of the 150 truckloads of food, emergency nutrition treatment and other supplies that U.S. officials aim to bring in when the sea route is working at maximum capacity.

Plus, Gaza needs 600 trucks entering each day, according to the U.S. Agency for International Development, to curb a famine that the heads of USAID and the U.N. World Food Program have said has begun in the north and to keep it from spreading south. Only one of the 54 trucks that came from the pier Tuesday and Wednesday encountered any security issues on their way to aid warehouses and distribution points, U.S. officials said. They called the issues "minor"

but gave no details. A deepening Israeli offensive in the southern city of Rafah has made it impossible for aid shipments to get through the crossing there, which is a key source for fuel and food coming into Gaza. Israel says it is bringing aid in through another border crossing, Kerem Shalom, but humanitarian organizations say Israeli military operations make it difficult for them to retrieve the aid there for distribution.

The Biden administration last week launched the \$320 million floating pier for a new maritime aid route into Gaza as the seven-month-old Israel-Hamas war and Israeli restrictions on land crossings have severely limited food deliveries to 2.3 million Palestinians.

For all humanitarian efforts, "the risks are manifold," Daniel Dieckhaus, USAID's response director for Gaza, said at a briefing with Cooper. "This is an active conflict with deteriorating conditions."

Dieckhaus rejected charges from some aid groups that the pier is diverting attention from what the U.S., U.N. and relief workers say is the essential need for Israel to allow full access to land crossings for humanitarian shipments.

For instance, Jeremy Konyndyk, a former USAID official now leading Refugees International, tweeted that "the pier is humanitarian theater."

"I would not call, within a couple of days, getting enough food and other supplies for tens of thousands of people for a month theater," Dieckhaus said Thursday when asked about the criticism. At maximum capacity, the pier would bring in enough food for 500,000 of Gaza's people. US officials stressed the need for flow through open land crossings for the remaining 1.8 million.

SIA to continue review safety processes after turbulence incident

Singapore (PTI) In-flight meal services will now be suspended when the seatbelt sign lights up on a Singapore Airlines plane to better manage turbulence in the air, an airline spokesperson has said, days after severe weather forced a flight to make an emergency landing in Bangkok with one dead and 60 injured.

Singapore Airlines (SIA) said it will continue to review inflight security processes, giving utmost importance to the safety of passengers and crew following last Tuesday's incident. "The SIA will continue to review our processes as the safety of our passengers and crew is of utmost importance," The Straits Times quoted a spokesman for the flag carrier as saying on Thursday.

In-flight meal services will now be suspended when the seat-belt sign lights up on a Singapore Airlines plane as part of efforts to take a more cautious approach to managing turbulence in the air, the spokesperson said.

Cabin crew will also sit down and fasten their seat belts when the seat-belt sign is lit, the SIA said on May 23. Unlike in the past, when only hot drinks would be cut off during turbulence, the new measures would require all meal and drink services to stop when the ride gets bumpy.

Other existing safety measures that kick in during poor weather conditions, including getting crew members to secure loose items in the cabin, advising passengers to return to their seats and buckle up, and monitoring, will remain in place. On May 21, Flight SQ321, which was heading to Singapore from London, experienced sudden severe turbulence over the Irrawaddy Basin in Myanmar during the breakfast service. One passenger — 73-year-old Briton Geoffrey Kitchen — died, and dozens were injured. The pilot declared a medical emergency and diverted the Boeing 777-300ER carrying 211 passengers and 18 crew members to Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, where the plane made an emergency landing at 3.45 pm (4.45 pm Singapore time).

It is the first SIA aviation accident involving a fatality since the SQ006 crash in Taiwan in

October 2000. Meanwhile, SIA has apologised to the injured passengers who say they had no information from the airline. Keith Davis, an Australian passenger, on May 23 complained to the media that he had not heard from any SIA staff since he was hospitalised, according to local reports.

Another Singaporean, who was previously in the Intensive Care Unit at a Bangkok hospital, has been discharged while 48 passengers from Flight SQ321 remain warded.

According to an update from Samitivej Srinakarin Hospital, 34 passengers remain warded in its premises as of noon on May 24, with another 12 at the Samitivej Sukhumvit Hospital and two at the Bangkok Hospital.

The 34 warded at Samitivej Srinakarin Hospital — comprising 14 males and 20 females — are from countries such as Australia, Britain, Malaysia, and the Philippines, according to media reports.

Singapore Transport Minister Chee Hong Tat said on Friday he was relieved that passengers who were injured when the Singapore Airlines plane encountered severe turbulence were recovering and that some had already been discharged from the hospital and returned home.

He said investigators from Singapore's Transport Safety Investigation Bureau (TSIB) were going through data from the cockpit voice recorder and the flight data recorder. "We await the investigation findings to understand what happened during those moments," the Singapore Daily quoted Chee as saying.

Investigators from TSIB, a department of the Transport Ministry responsible for investigating air, marine and rail accidents and incidents, had arrived in Bangkok on the night of May 21.

Asked what support the government is providing to the Singaporeans who remain in Bangkok, Chee said: "We will continue to provide whatever support and assistance that is necessary, working closely with the SIA and also the Thai authorities to bring the passengers and crew home as soon as possible."

More than 100 people believed killed by landslide in PNG

AP ■ MELBOURNE

More than 100 people are believed to have been killed Friday in a landslide that buried a village in a remote, mountainous part of Papua New Guinea, and an emergency response is underway, the South Pacific island nation's leader and news media said. The landslide hit Kaokalam village in Enga province, about 600 kilometers (370 miles) northwest of the capital, Port Moresby, at roughly 3 am, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) reported.

Residents said estimates of the death toll were above 100, although authorities have not confirmed that figure. Villagers said the number of people killed could be much higher. Prime Minister James Marape said authorities were responding and he would release information about the destruction and loss of life when it was available.

"I am yet to be fully briefed on the situation. However, I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the landslide disaster in the early hours of this morning," Marape said in a statement. "We are sending in disaster officials, PNG Defense Force, and the Department of Works and Highways to ... start relief work, recovery of bodies, and reconstruction of infrastructure," he added.

Australia, a near neighbor and Papua New Guinea's most generous provider of foreign aid, said the government stood ready to help. "We send our heartfelt sympathies to the people of PNG following the landslide at Kaokalam village," Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong posted on social media. "The loss of life and destruction is devastating," she added. "As friends and partners, Australia stands ready to assist in relief and recovery efforts."

Videos on social media showed residents pulling out bodies buried under rocks and trees. Elizabeth Laruma, who runs a women's business association in Porgera, a town in the same province near the Porgera Gold Mine, said houses were flattened when the side of a mountain gave way. "It has occurred when people were still asleep in the early hours, and the entire village has gone down," Laruma told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. "From what I can presume, it's about 100-plus people who are buried beneath the ground."

The landslide blocked the road between Porgera and the village, she said, raising concerns about the town's supply of fuel and goods. Village resident Ninga Role, who was away when the landslide struck, expects that at least four of his relatives died.

"There are some huge stones and plants, trees. The buildings collapsed," Role said. "These things are making it hard to find the bodies."

Belinda Kora, a Port Moresby-based ABC reporter, said helicopters were the only way of accessing the village, which is in the mountainous interior region known as the Highlands, with the main road closed. Papua New Guinea is a diverse, developing nation of mostly subsistence farmers with 800 languages. There are few roads outside the larger cities. With 10 million people, it is also the most populous South Pacific nation after Australia, which is home to some 27 million. Telecommunications are poor, particularly outside Port Moresby where government data show 56 per cent of the nation's social media users reside. Only 1.66 million people across the country use the internet and 85 per cent of the population lives in rural areas.

The decision to call an election was entirely Sunak's. But before he could do so, the king had to grant permission to dissolve Parliament early. Technically, the king still has the power to refuse a dissolution request if he believes an election would be detrimental to the nation.

But the last time this happened was in 1835. Ignoring that precedent "would expose the monarch to allegations of political interference of an undemocratic nature, even if the intention of the refusal was to preserve the good functioning of democracy," according to the Institute for Government, an independent think tank.

UK's general election: Impact on India FTA, Indo-Pacific tilt

PTI ■ LONDON

As the campaign for the UK general election gathers momentum after British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak surprised many this week with a snap summer poll on July 4, exactly a month after India's election results on June 4, the prospect of an India-UK free trade agreement (FTA) has been kicked into the long grass.

While political analysts and strategic experts have expressed confidence that very little should change on the bilateral relationship front whatever the outcome in either election, the very small window that was open for a deal being clinched by the Sunak-led Tory government has now been swept away in the election wave of both countries.

The Opposition Labour Party, in the lead in most pre-election surveys, has committed itself to "finish the job" but the timelines will remain uncertain for some time. "Rishi Sunak's shock poll date announcement of July 4 has skewed any prospect of the finalisation of the long-awaited and much-anticipated FTA with India by a Conservative government," said Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, Senior Fellow for South and Central Asian Defence, Strategy and Diplomacy at the London-based think tank International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). The Labour Party, widely expected to form the next government in the UK, has maintained steadfast

King Charles III to limit public appearances during six weeks of election campaign

London (AP): King Charles III won't be out and about much over the next six weeks — and it's not because of his ongoing cancer treatments. Shortly after UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called an early parliamentary election for July 4, Buckingham Palace said that all members of the royal family were cancelling most public engagements until after the vote to avoid doing anything that might divert attention from the campaign.

That announcement is just one of the ways that Charles will seek to play his part as a unifying head of state during the election, without violating a constitutional ban on interfering in politics. While the king's role in government is largely ceremonial, it's bound up by traditions that embody the way royal powers were gradually transferred to Parliament over the last 800 years. Here's a look at the monarch's role in the run up to the election, including a few dos and don'ts.

The decision to call an election was entirely Sunak's. But before he could do so, the king had to grant permission to dissolve Parliament early. Technically, the king still has the power to refuse a dissolution request if he believes an election would be detrimental to the nation.

But the last time this happened was in 1835. Ignoring that precedent "would expose the monarch to allegations of political interference of an undemocratic nature, even if the intention of the refusal was to preserve the good functioning of democracy," according to the Institute for Government, an independent think tank.

Dr Chietigj Bajpae, Senior Research Fellow for South Asia, Asia-Pacific Programme at Chatham House, described the FTA as a "key watchpoint" for its broader strategic significance in terms of deepening the bilateral relationship. "There should be a high degree of continuity in UK-India relations, irrespective

of who wins the UK election. Under Keir Starmer's leadership, the Labour Party has tried to reset relations with India, which had deteriorated under [former leader] Jeremy Corbyn," said Bajpae.

"The UK's outreach to India also needs to be seen in the broader context of the UK's Indo-Pacific pivot. There are questions on the UK's ability to sustain this in the context of fiscal constraints and preoccupation with other foreign policy priorities — wars in Ukraine and Gaza, and reviving relations with the EU," he said. A key aspect of this UK election will be that the country's first Indian-origin Prime Minister, who took over in the wake of political turmoil within the governing Conservative Party in October 2022, will now be taking his record at Downing Street to the voters. The British Future think tank has already forecast that the next UK Parliament is set to be the most diverse yet based on candidate selections by the major political parties, with at least 10 more MPs of ethnic minority background being elected to the House of Commons.

support for such a deal, subject to an examination of the 'fine print' once it comes into office. The prospect for such a trade deal appears positive, providing an early boost to relations between the two new governments — the Labour and the widely expected third Modi government," he said.

Wang Wenbin said Friday that the charges were "an act of political manipulation in the name of national security". "It seriously infringed on the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese nationals in the UK, gravely undermined China-UK relations, seriously violated the principles of international law and the basic norms of international relations and badly harmed the image of the UK," he told reporters. In Hong Kong, a government spokesman said the city's Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Algernon Yau, met with Britain's deputy consul-general in Hong Kong on Friday to reiterate concerns about the case.

Boise (US): Idaho Democrats on Thursday selected Joe Biden as their nominee for the White House, giving the president more delegates after he already clinched his party's 2024 nomination. The caucus was structured a bit differently than previous Democratic caucuses. Instead of listening to speeches and moving to various parts of the room to show their support for a candidate, voters were given ballots to fill out their choices. Only registered Democrats and unaffiliated voters were allowed to participate in the Democratic caucus.

Unaffiliated voters first had to sign a pledge saying they are participating as Democrats and have not participated in any other presidential nomination contest this year. Voters who are 17 years old are allowed to caucus as long as they will turn 18 before the general election on Nov. 5. That is different from Idaho's Republican caucus, held earlier this year. The Republican caucus allowed only registered Republicans to vote, and they had to be at least 18 at the time of the caucus. Former President Donald Trump won all of Idaho's 32 GOP delegates at the March 2 event. Biden will face a steep hill to climb for Idaho's general election. The Republican presidential candidate has won the deep-red state in every election since 1968. Democrats in Idaho utilized caucuses for years but switched the presidential contest to a primary for 2020. Biden won with about 49% of the vote, compared with roughly 42% that went to US Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont. Both the Republican and the Democratic parties had to caucus this year, however, after state lawmakers inadvertently scrapped the state's primaries during the 2023 legislative session. The error happened when lawmakers were trying to change the date of the state's primary from March to May, but the new date wasn't included in the bill. AP



A couple take photograph outside the Houses of Parliament in London, Thursday.

Two men to go on trial for aiding HK authorities in UK intelligence gathering

AP ■ LONDON

The office manager of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in London and another man will go on trial in February for allegedly helping Hong Kong authorities gather intelligence in the UK, a judge said on Friday.

Chung Biu Yuen, 63, and Chi Leung Peter Wai, 38, appeared at London's Central Criminal Court for a preliminary hearing, charged with agreeing to undertake information gathering, surveillance and acts of deception that were likely to materially assist a foreign intelligence service between December 2023 and May 2. Hong Kong authorities have confirmed that Yuen was the

office manager of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in London. A third suspect, Briton Matthew Trickett, was also charged in the case, but he was found dead Sunday in a park under what police said were unexplained circumstances.

Prosecutor Kashif Malik said during an earlier hearing that Trickett, reportedly a UK immigration enforcement officer and a former Royal Marine, had attempted suicide after being charged. He was also the director of a security company. Justice Jeremy Baker set a trial date for February 10, set to last for about five weeks. The judge said the men were granted bail on condition that they observe a set curfew and other restric-

tions. The three men were charged under Britain's National Security Act after an investigation by the Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command. Prosecutors allege that the suspects also forced entry into a UK residential address.

They were arrested earlier this month in London and Yorkshire in northern England by counterterrorism police, using provisions of a new law that allows suspects in national security and espionage cases to be detained without warrant. The case drew strong criticism from officials in Beijing and Hong Kong, a former British colony that returned to Chinese control in 1997. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman

Wang Wenbin said Friday that the charges were "an act of political manipulation in the name of national security". "It seriously infringed on the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese nationals in the UK, gravely undermined China-UK relations, seriously violated the principles of international law and the basic norms of international relations and badly harmed the image of the UK," he told reporters. In Hong Kong, a government spokesman said the city's Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Algernon Yau, met with Britain's deputy consul-general in Hong Kong on Friday to reiterate concerns about the case.

Markets end lower after scaling record peaks

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed marginally lower on Friday as investors booked profit in FMCG, IT and healthcare stocks after the BSE Sensex and Nifty hit fresh lifetime highs in intra-day deals. The 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 7.65 points or 0.01 per cent to settle at 75,410.39. During the day, it rallied 218.46 points or 0.28 per cent to hit its all-time intra-day high of 75,636.50. The NSE Nifty breached the 23,000 mark for the first time in early trade. During the day, the benchmark



climbed 58.75 points or 0.25 per cent to hit its lifetime peak of 23,026.40. However, it pared all the gains and ended with a marginal decline of 10.55 points or 0.05 per cent at 22,957.10. Markets were on a

record-breaking rally for the second straight day ahead of the results of Lok Sabha polls. The results of the ongoing general elections will be declared on June 4. From the Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, Asian Paints, Tata Consultancy Services, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, JSW Steel and ITC were among the major laggards. On the other hand, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, Larsen & Toubro, NTPC, Axis Bank and UltraTech Cement were the major gainers. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Thursday after days of

offloading equities. They bought equities worth Rs 4,670.95 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower. European markets were trading with cuts. Wall Street ended in negative territory on Thursday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.73 per cent to USD 80.77 a barrel. With nearly a fortnight left for the results of Lok Sabha polls, benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty zoomed more than 1.6 per cent to close at lifetime high levels on Thursday.

Windfall RBI dividend positive, usage to signal new Government's fiscal priorities: Ratings agencies

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Global rating agencies on Friday said windfall of Rs 2.1 lakh crore dividend from the RBI is positive for the country's fiscal metrics and its usage will provide a signal around the new government's fiscal priorities. The board of India's central bank earlier this week decided to pay Rs 2.1 lakh crore dividend to the government from the profits earned in 2023-24. This is more than double of Rs 1.02 lakh crore that was budgeted by the government.

Fitch Ratings Asia-Pacific Sovereigns Director Jeremy Zook said sustained deficit reduction, particularly if underpinned by durable revenue-raising reforms, would be positive for India's rating fundamentals over the medium-term.

"The use of the dividend — whether it is saved or used for additional spending — could provide a signal around the government's fiscal priorities," Zook told PTI in an email response.

Fitch has a 'BBB-' rating on India with a stable outlook. In January, the rating agency had affirmed India's rating on robust growth outlook, but had said that weak public finances continue to constraint the rating.



Another rating agency Moody's Ratings said the fiscal impact of much higher-than-expected dividend transfer by the RBI will be determined by what the incoming government decides to do with these additional resources. Moody's Ratings Senior Vice President Christian de Guzman said on one hand, the government could observe expenditure restraint and facilitate further progress towards meeting its deficit target. This would lower the borrowing requirements that could in turn free up liquidity in the market for other purposes. He said the government could also deploy these extra funds towards new policies and initiatives. "The impact of much higher-than-expected transfers from the RBI will ultimately be determined by what the incoming government decides

to do with these additional resources," Guzman said in an email response to the fiscal impact of RBI dividend transfer. The general elections are currently underway and a new government would be formed sometime next month. A full budget for 2024-25 fiscal would be tabled in July. Fitch in its response further said that while higher dividend is supportive of near-term fiscal performance, its one-off nature, however, means the medium-term impact of this windfall on India's consolidation and debt path will be limited. The larger-than-expected RBI dividend to the government is likely positive for fiscal metrics, helping to ensure that the fiscal deficit target of 5.1 per cent of GDP will be met and could be utilized to lower the deficit beyond the current target, Zook said.

The interim budget presented in Parliament earlier in the year had set a fiscal deficit target of 5.1 per cent of the GDP for 2024-25, down from 5.8 per cent in 2023-24. As per the fiscal consolidation roadmap, the deficit — the difference between government expenditure and revenue — would be brought down to 4.5 per cent by 2025-26.

Another global rating agency S&P Global Ratings on Thursday said the additional dividends from the RBI are around 0.35 per cent of GDP and India can get a 'rating support' over time, if it utilises the windfall dividend to reduce fiscal deficit.

"The additional dividends may not necessarily lead to a full decrease of the deficit, due to potential revenue shortfalls in areas like divestment receipts or additional allocation to expenditures in the final budget. If it does lead to a full decrease of the deficit, we believe it will lead to a faster path of fiscal consolidation that, in turn, will provide rating support over time," S&P Global Ratings Analyst YeeFarn Phua had told PTI.

All three global rating agencies — Fitch, S&P and Moody's — have the lowest investment grade rating on India with a stable outlook.

Bengaluru, Hyderabad see jump in IT sector job opportunities in April: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Even as overall job opportunities in the IT sector declined by 3.6 per cent nationwide, openings gained traction in technology hubs Bengaluru and Hyderabad that saw a growth of 24 per cent and 41.5 per cent, respectively, during April, a report said on Friday. According to data from Indeed, job postings in the IT sector have increased by 41.5 per cent in Hyderabad and 24 per cent in Bengaluru, highlighting the growing prominence of these cities as

top destinations for IT professionals. There has also been a significant growth in job seekers interest in Hyderabad and an 80 per cent increase in Bengaluru, the report added. Overall, there has been a decrease in IT job opportunities nationally, with job postings declining by 3.6 per cent, indicating that tech companies are being cautious in hiring due to the uncertain global economic climate, said the report. The report is based on data

related to job postings and job clicks on Indeed's platform in April compared to that of the corresponding month in 2023. The report further revealed that the rise in top five job postings are for skills in analysis, agile, APIs, javascript and SQL. "Software and IT positions seem to be highly sought after, not just by those currently working in the field but also by individuals looking for new career opportunities. Despite the layoffs, the appeal of IT jobs has risen.

Lava reijgs board, excludes former chairman Hari Rai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Homegrown mobile phone maker Lava International has restructured the company's board in which it has excluded former chairman and managing director Hari Om Rai, according to a company statement.

Rai resigned from his position in February and does not hold any directorial position in the company. He is under judicial custody in an alleged money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate.

NHPC bags awards



New Delhi: NHPC has been conferred with the prestigious 'The Economic Times HR Future Ready Organisation Award 2024-25'. The Award was received by Uttam Lal, Director (Personnel), NHPC along with Lucas Guria, Executive Director (HR) and a team of NHPC officers at a glittering Awards Ceremony held in Mumbai on 23rd May 2024. PNS

India should impose tax on ultra wealthy to tackle wealth inequality: Study

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India needs to impose a 2 per cent tax on net wealth exceeding Rs 10 crore and a 33 per cent inheritance tax to deal with the problem of rising inequality in the country, a new research paper co-authored by economist Thomas Piketty has suggested. The paper titled 'Proposals for a Wealth Tax Package to Tackle Extreme Inequalities in India' propose a comprehensive tax package on the ultra-wealthy to tackle the massive concentration at

the very top of the wealth distribution and create valuable fiscal space for crucial social sector investments. "Raise phenomenally large tax revenues while leaving 99.96 per cent of the adults unaffected by the tax. "In a baseline scenario, a 2 per cent annual tax on net wealth exceeding Rs 10 crore and a 33 per cent inheritance tax on estates exceeding Rs 10 crore in valuation would generate a massive 2.73 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in revenues," the paper suggested.

The paper said that the taxation proposal needs to be accompanied by explicit redistributive policies to support the poor, lower castes, and middle classes. "For example, the baseline scenario would allow nearly doubling the current public spending on education, which has stagnated at 2.9 per cent of GDP over the past 15 years, well below -- less than half -- the 6 per cent target set by the government's own National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)," it said. The paper noted that the taxation proposal needs to be

extensively debated, with a consensus on specific details of the design emerging from a broader democratic debate on tax justice and wealth redistribution in India. The paper has been authored by Thomas Piketty (Paris School of Economics and World Inequality Lab), Lucas Chancel (Harvard Kennedy School and World Inequality Lab) and Nitin Kumar Bharti (New York University and World Inequality Lab). According to the paper, debates on income and wealth inequality in India have gained

momentum in recent weeks, partly following the release of our study 'Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj', which revealed that economic disparities in India have reached historical highs. These extreme inequalities and their close link with social injustice can no longer be ignored, it said. The authors in their working paper released on March 20 had said inequality in India has skyrocketed since the early 2000s, with the income and wealth share of the top 1

per cent population rising to 22.6 per cent and 40.1 per cent, respectively, in 2022-23. "Between 2014-15 and 2022-23, the rise of top-end inequality has been particularly pronounced in terms of wealth concentration. "By 2022-23, top 1 per cent income and wealth shares (22.6 per cent and 40.1 per cent) are at their highest historical levels and India's top 1 per cent income share is among the very highest in the world, higher than even South Africa, Brazil, and the US," the paper had said.

VIT-AP University Celebrates 7th University Day



Amaravati: VIT-AP University celebrated its 7th University Day with grandeur and enthusiasm. The event was graced by guests, including the Chief Guest, Justice CT Ravi Kumar, Judge of the Supreme Court of India, and the Guest of Honour Amit Chaudhry, Director of Data Platforms at Microsoft, Bangalore. PNS

JLR to produce Range Rover, Range Rover Sport in India; prices set to fall up to 22 per cent

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Tata Motors owned Jaguar Land Rover will start producing its Range Rover and Range Rover Sport in India, marking a first for the iconic models in their 54-year long history, to be rolled out from a country outside of the UK. Till now the two models were only produced in Jaguar Land Rover's Solihull plant in the UK and then exported to around 121 markets globally, including India. With enhanced localisation, the Marquee British brand aims to make the two products better in terms of pricing to cater to a larger set of customers in India. The price of two models is set to come down in the range of 18-22 per cent with the local production. Tata Group Chairman N

Chandrasekaran lauded Tata Sons Chairman Emeritus Ratan Tata for bringing the JLR brand to the Tata family 15 years ago. "The Range Rover will be manufactured right here in India is just a super feeling..Its a very very special moment and I feel proud," he said. He noted that the company would see an increase in sales in the country going ahead. "We will sell more, I am very confident that it's going to be a great journey from here," Chandrasekaran said. And the manufacturing here should really send a signal and show the confidence that the company has in this market, he added. In an interaction with PTI, JLR India Managing Director Rajan Amba said the local production is a big step for the company to make the two models accessible to a wider set of customers in the

country. "For the first time in the history of the company, the Range Rover and Range Rover Sport will also now be produced in India...This is a huge announcement for us as these are our flagship cars and have only been produced in Solihull in their 54 years long history," Amba said. He noted that the step is also an indication of the kind of market India is developing when it comes to premium products. "This (local assembly) will allow us to take the benefit of the duty structure and to bring the price down of the two models by about 18 to 22 per cent," Amba said. The dip in prices will help in making the models affordable and enhance sales, he added. JLR India reported an 81 per cent increase in retail sales last fiscal in India at 4,436 units.



Amba said the company has calibrated expansion plans to grow business in the country. "Our intent is to double our business in the next three years. We will bring innovative products, leverage the Tata Group ecosystem and

bring in the latest innovative products to the country," he said. JLR also plans to introduce six new battery electric vehicles in India over the next four years, Amba noted. With local production, the

price of Range Rover Sport, which would be available for deliveries in August this year, would come down to Rs 1.4 crore as compared with Rs 1.9 crore currently, Amba said. Similarly, the price of Range Rover which will be available

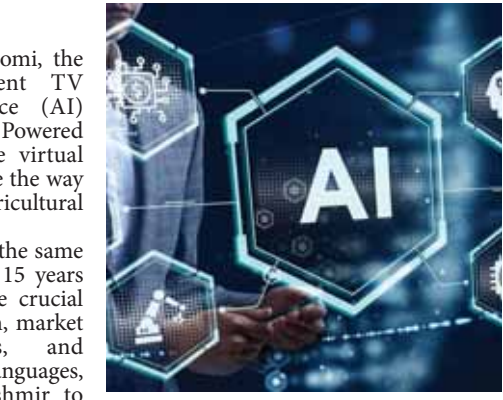
in the market from this month-end, would cost Rs 2.6 crore for the Autobiography version which is currently tagged at around Rs 3.3 crore, he added. "So the products remain very premium but more in a price range where we can capture that aspiration and desire to be affiliated to the brand," Amba said. The local production would also help over the next year to bring down the waiting period on the two SUVs, he stated. With the addition of the two models, JLR India will now be rolling out a total of six models from the Pune-based facility it shares with Tata Motors. JLR currently has an installed production capacity of around 10,000 units per annum at the plant. The company already assembles Range Rover Velar, Range Rover Evoque, Jaguar

F-PACE and Discovery Sport in Pune. JLR Chief Commercial Officer Lennard Hoornik said that over the last few years, India has witnessed steady and spectacular economic growth and is poised to grow consistently in the near future as well. This growth has resulted in tremendous opportunities to localise product offerings for Indian customers, he stated. Local manufacturing of the Range Rover and Range Rover Sport in India is the next significant step towards the brand consolidating its position as the most desirable modern luxury SUV family in the country, Hoornik said. Range Rover MD Geraldine Ingham said retail sales in India have surged and the local manufacturing of the Range Rover will enable the brand to respond to this growing demand.

AI anchors to helm DD Kisan relaunch on May 26

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Meet AI Krish and AI Bhoomi, the world's first Government TV channel Artificial Intelligence (AI) anchors on Doordarshan Kisan. Powered by artificial intelligence, these virtual presenters are poised to redefine the way farmers across India receive agricultural information. Scheduled to debut on May 26, the same day the channel was launched 15 years ago, these anchors will provide crucial updates on agricultural research, market trends, weather forecasts, and government schemes in fifty languages, catering to viewers from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu and Gujarat to Arunachal Pradesh. What will set these new presenters apart will be their capability of tirelessly delivering news 24/7 without fatigue as they will provide crucial updates on agricultural research, weather forecasts, and government schemes in fifty languages, catering to viewers from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu and Gujarat to Arunachal Pradesh. This unparalleled linguistic versatility ensures that crucial agricultural information reaches every corner of the country, empowering farmers with



knowledge and insights to make informed decisions. With AI Krish and AI Bhoomi leading the charge, DD Kisan is hoping to pioneer a revolution in agricultural communication, ushering in an era of accessibility, efficiency, and inclusivity. These AI anchors epitomize the channel's commitment to serving farmers and advancing the agricultural sector in India, said an official from the DD Kisan. "The DD Kisan is committed to promoting balanced farming, animal husbandry, and plantation, thus fostering a comprehensive approach to agriculture.

As it embarks on this new chapter with AI anchors, DD Kisan continues its journey towards uplifting and empowering the agricultural sector, contributing to the holistic development of rural India," the official added. Commenting on DD Kisan's initiative in the AI sector, Dr. Subi Chaturvedi, global AI expert and Chief Corporate Affairs and Public Policy Officer at InMobi, welcomed the move, which she said, is in keeping with the Centre's vision of 'Digital India'. "This highlights the transformative potential of AI, emphasizing its capacity to revolutionize every sector," she said, stressing the importance of understanding AI's applications and potential use cases. Dr Chaturvedi also pointed out that with changing times, AI is not merely an option but an essential opportunity for any country aspiring to become an economic powerhouse. The AI in Agriculture Market is projected to grow from USD1.7 billion in 2023 to USD4.7 billion by 2028, highlighting the pivotal role of advanced technologies in this sector. DD Kisan is the only TV channel in the country, which has been established by the central Government and dedicated to the farmers.

Power Quiz 2024 ends



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

NTPC proudly hosted the National Finals of the Power Quiz 2024 and Medha Pratiyogita 2024 at the Power Management Institute (PMI), Noida, celebrating a remarkable journey of learning, knowledge sharing, and healthy competition among employees and their families. A total of 1820 teams participated in these events, with 570 teams competing in the Power Quiz 2024 and 1250 teams competing in Medha Pratiyogita 2024.

Zee seeks USD 90 million termination fee from Sony for calling off merger

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Zee Entertainment Enterprises has sought a termination fee of USD 90 million (around Rs 748.7 crore) from the Sony Group for calling off the USD 10 billion merger deal in January this year. It has sought termination fees from two Sony Group entities — Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI), now known as Culver Max Entertainment, and Bangla Entertainment (BEPL), according to a regulatory filing from Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) on Thursday. ZEEL has, on account of Culver Max's and BEPL's breaches under the Merger Cooperation agreement (MCA), terminated the MCA by issuing a letter dated May 23, 2024. The company has sought a

termination fee from Culver Max and BEPL under the provisions of the MCA, it said. "Culver Max and BEPL have failed to comply with their obligations under the MCA. Therefore, the company has terminated the MCA and called upon Culver Max and BEPL to pay the termination fee i.e. The aggregate amount equal to USD 90 million in accordance with the MCA," it said. Earlier on January 22, 2024, Sony Group Corporation (SGC) had said that ZEEL did not satisfy the merger conditions and initiated arbitration proceedings before the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) claiming USD 90 million as termination fee. This was contested by ZEEL before the SIAC, which denied any interim relief to the Sony group against the

Indian broadcaster. ZEEL had moved the National Company Law Tribunal seeking implementation of the proposed merger and later withdrew its plea. "We hereby wish to inform you that the company has, on account of Culver Max's and BEPL's breaches under the MCA," the filing said. ZEEL and SPNI had entered into an agreement to merge on December 22, 2021. On August 10, 2023 the Mumbai bench of NCLT approved the scheme of merger of ZEEL with Sony group entities Culver Max Entertainment and BEPL, which could have created a USD 10 billion media entity.

INDIA SQUAD FOR FIFA WC QUALIFIER AGAINST KUWAIT: GOGOI, HAMMAD MISS OUT DUE TO INJURIES

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Forward Parthib Gogoi and defender Muhammad Hammad were left out due to injuries as India announced a 27-member squad for the World Cup qualifying match against Kuwait on June 6 which would mark the end of long-serving captain and ace striker Sunil Chhetri's international career. The squad for the game to be held in Kolkata was announced by head coach Igor Stimac. A total of 32 players had been camping in Bhubaneswar, out of which five — Phurba Lachenpa, Parthib, Imran Khan, Hammad and Jithin MS — have been released from the camp. "All of them were very professional and hard-working. The competition is really strong amongst them, especially in the positions of Jithin and Parthib," Stimac said in a media release. "Parthib and Hammad suffered minor injuries a few days back and will need 7-14 days of rest," he added without specifying the nature of injuries. The remaining players will



continue to train in Bhubaneswar until May 29 when they will travel to Kolkata. The Blue Tigers will face Kuwait at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan on

June 6. Following the match against Kuwait, India will travel to take on Qatar on June 11 in their last two matches of Group A. India are currently placed second in the group, with four

points from four matches. The top two teams in the group will qualify for Round 3 of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers and book their berth at the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027.

Chhetri, 39, announced his decision to retire from international football on May 17. The match against Kuwait will bring the curtains down on a glittering 19-year career during

which he became India's top goal-scorer with 94 strikes. He will leave the scene as India's most-capped player after competing in 151 matches at the end of his swansong contest. Chhetri will bow out third in the list of goal scorers among active players behind Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. He currently sits fourth in the all-time list of international goal-scorers.

THE SQUAD:

Goalkeepers: Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Amrinder Singh, Vishal Kaith.
Defenders: Amey Ranawade, Anwar Ali, Jay Gupta, Lalchungnunga, Mehtab Singh, Narender, Nikhil Poojary, Rahul Bheke, Subhasish Bose.
Midfielders: Anirudh Thapa, Brandon Fernandes, Edmund Lalrindika, Jeakson Singh Thounaojam, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Liston Colaco, Mahesh Singh Naorem, Nandhakumar Sekar, Sahal Abdul Samad, Suresh Singh Wangjam.
Forwards: David Lalhlansanga, Manvir Singh, Rahim Ali, Sunil Chhetri, Vikram Partap Singh.



Indian lose 1-4 to Belgium in FIH Pro League

PTI ■ ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

Defensive lapses cost the Indian men's hockey team as it went down 1-4 to hosts and world no.3 Belgium in the European leg of the FIH Pro League here. The Harmanpreet Singh-led side had defeated Argentina 5-4 in shootout after both the teams were locked at 2-2 at the end of regulation time in the opening match here on Wednesday.

After a barren first quarter, Belgium took the lead in the 22nd minute through a field goal by skipper Felix Denayer. Four minutes after half-time, the home side doubled its lead through a penalty corner conversion by Alexander Hendrickx.

The Indian defence was relentlessly caught off guard by the brisk passing and skillful play of the Belgians as they extended their lead in the 49th minute through another fine field goal by Cedric Charlier. Young striker Abhishek pulled one back for India from a field effort but Belgium looked too strong as they sealed the affair in the final minute of the game when Hendrickx sounded the board from a penalty stroke.

The Indian defence looked in disarray from the word go as they failed to counter Belgium's relentless attacks with veteran custodian PR Sreejesh cutting a lonely figure at the back. India too had their chances and secured their first penalty corner in the 18th minute but skipper Harmanpreet's flick was saved by Belgium goalkeeper Loick van Doren. Two minutes later, India secured back-to-back penalty corners but an off-colour Harmanpreet failed to utilise the chances. Belgium eventually took the lead in the 22nd minute when captain Denayer guided the ball into the goal after Sreejesh blocked the first shot from Florent van Aubel. Belgium doubled their lead four minutes into the third quarter from a blistering counter-attack from Tanguy Cosyns, Denayer and Nicolas de Kerpel to eventually win a penalty corner, which was converted by Hendrickx through Sreejesh's feet. Charlier made it 3-0 in favour of Belgium in the 49th minute after receiving a long cross-field pass from Denayer, finding the bottom-right corner of Sreejesh's goal. India drew one back five minutes from the final hooter with a superb reverse hit strike from Abhishek to beat Van Doren. It was not to be India's day as they conceded a penalty stroke just before the hooter for not being 5m away when a Belgian player was receiving the ball inside the circle, and Hendrickx stepped up to seal the deal. India skipper Harmanpreet was understandably disappointed with the performance. "We did some good things, but the finishing wasn't there. Defensively we need to improve, man-to-man marking needs to get better. Excited to play them again on Saturday, looking forward to improve game-by-game," he said after the match on Thursday night.

AP ■ PARIS

If this is Rafael Nadal's last French Open, it should be similar to Serena Williams last US Open

If this is, as expected, Rafael Nadal's final French Open, it will be one that everyone — the 37-year-old Spaniard included — surely will remember vividly. No matter how healthy the guy everyone calls "Rafa" might be. No matter how long his stay in Paris lasts. No matter whether he somehow adds another championship at Roland Garros to the record 14 he owns. Narrator: Not even Nadal truly believes that is possible. Indeed, it wasn't even certain that he would be in the field until his name was placed in the bracket on Thursday — and he was drawn to face No. 4 seed Alexander Zverev — although Nadal has been practicing all week on site. "I am not negative," he explained. "I am just realistic." Think back just a couple of years ago to Serena Williams' farewell at the U.S. Open. That's the sort of atmosphere and adoration likely to be on display whenever Nadal swings a racket or simply strolls around the compact-for-a-Grand-Slam-grounds in the southwest section of the

French capital where the clay-court tournament begins Sunday. "I cannot predict what kind of emotions I am going to have there," said Nadal, who has been saving for a while that he thinks 2024 will be his final season before retirement. "I just want to enjoy every day." That's been difficult lately because of hip and abdominal muscle injuries that limited him to 20 matches, and a 9-11 record, over the past 20 months. Nadal missed nearly all of 2023 after hurting his hip during a loss at the Australian Open that January. He had surgery almost exactly a year ago and sat out the French Open for the first time since making his debut there in 2005, when, naturally, he claimed the trophy at age 19. A torn hip muscle this January forced Nadal to miss the Australian Open; an ab problem sidelined him later. He returned in April, but in three places he's won a total of



27 titles — Barcelona, Madrid, Rome — Nadal made it no further than the fourth round anywhere and called himself "unpredictable." That stretch was capped by a 6-1, 6-3 loss to Hubert Hurkacz at the Italian Open, a result so dispiriting that Nadal wondered aloud whether he should bother showing up at Roland Garros, although did say he was reluctant to skip "the most important event of my tennis career." The 22-time major champion

is not able to run at full speed or compete with full force. He does not have the match-readiness required to succeed. "For him to feel like he's going in with his 'C' game — not 'B' game; 'C' game — and maybe fearing almost that he could lose first or second round?" said Chris Evert, who won seven of her 18 Grand Slam titles in Paris. "He's been such a perfectionist on that surface, why would he want to expose himself at that level?" No man has won even half as

many French Opens as Nadal. His winning percentage there is .974. He had streaks of five championships in a row, four in a row and three in a row. This says it all: There's already a statue of him near the main stadium. "It's really a paramount challenge to play him in Roland Garros," said Novak Djokovic, whose 24 major trophies make him the only man with more than Nadal. "He's an incredible athlete. The tenacity and intensity he brings on the court, particularly there, is something that was very rarely seen. I think, in the history of this sport." Djokovic — who formed, with Nadal and the now-retired Roger Federer, the so-called Big Three — and Iga Swiatek are the defending champions in France and both are ranked No. 1. Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner are the emerging stars of men's tennis; Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff have that status in the women's

game. But all eyes — of spectators and of other athletes — will be on Nadal for however long he stays in the field. "He's probably the only player that when I practice on the court next to him, I would literally zone out of my practice to watch him," said Gauff, the 20-year-old American who won last year's U.S. Open. "The way he carries himself is just great. His legacy is going to be something that is almost unmatched when it comes to just the intensity in which he approaches everything. That's something that the players will miss and the fans will miss." So this represents a chance to say "Merci" and "Au revoir." No one — maybe not even Nadal himself — knows how many more times he will play, whether at Roland Garros, which also is set to host tennis at the Summer Olympics (he already owns singles and doubles golds), or anywhere else.

Indian compound mixed team enters final

PTI ■ YEGHEON (SOUTH KOREA)

Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Priyansh advanced to the compound mixed team final, confirming India's second medal, while Deepika Kumari brightened the country's gloomy recurve campaign, reaching to her second successive Archery World Cup semifinals after her comeback in the Stage 2 of the event, here on Friday. The compound women's team of Jyothi, Parneet Kaur and Aditi Swami had assured India's first medal by making the final on Wednesday.

DEEPIKA IN SUCCESSIVE ARCHERY WC SEMIFINALS AFTER COMEBACK



Indian recurve archer in the medal hunt. Deepika will face home favourite and world No. 2 Lim Sihyeon in Sunday's semi-final, four weeks after the rising South Korean 20-year-old won the Shanghai Stage 1 gold by in a ruthless straight set victory. Starting at fourth in the qualifications, Deepika overcame early jitters when she pipped Slovenian teenager Tinkara Kardinar in the shoot-off after 1-3 down in a dramatic first round clash. Deepika started out shooting twice in the red ring (8-8) to total 26 and lost the first set by two points. She drew level in the second set, shooting 27, and came on her own in the third where she dropped just a point to win the set 29-25. Deepika won the fourth set 28-24 as pressure began to mount on the 18-year-old opponent. But there was more drama as Tinkara won the fifth set 28-27 to force a shoot-off that the Indian won 9-8. Deepika then went on defeat Loc Thi Dao of Vietnam (6-2), Lisa Barbelin of France (6-0), Elif Berra Gokkir of Turkey (6-

4) in her journey to the semifinal. In other recurve women's individual matches, Bhajan Kaur lost in the first round, while Ankita Bhakat could not cross the second round hurdle. In the men's individual recurve section, veteran Tarundeep Rai and Mrinal Chauhan suffered first round exits, while Dhiraj Bommadevara and Pravin Jadhav fell short in the second round. The recurve mixed team of Deepika and Tarundeep Rai, who have more than 34 years of combined international experience between them, also returned empty-handed after going down in the quarterfinals. Having qualified as second seed, the pair lost to 10th seeds Spain 2-6 (33-37, 36-38, 39-34, 34-36) following a miserable start. The Indians shot in the red-ring twice (7 and 8) to drop seven points in the first set and went on to lose the second set too. From 0-4 down, they won the third but they continued their inconsistent run as the Spaniards sealed the match in the fourth set.

Sindhu enters semifinals of Malaysia Masters, Ashmita loses

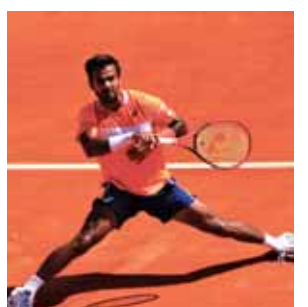
PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Double Olympic medallist P V Sindhu took a giant stride towards securing a title at the Malaysia Masters after progressing to the semifinals with a hard-fought win over top seed Han Yue of China here on Friday. World No. 15 Sindhu recovered from a mid-game slump to outwit Han, ranked sixth, 21-13 14-21 21-12 in a 55-minute quarterfinal battle to avenge her loss to the Chinese in their last meeting at the Asia Badminton Championships in Ningbo last month. Sindhu, a former world champion, will now square off against either Indonesia's Putri Kusuma Wardani or Thailand's Busanong Ongbamrungphan in the last



four stage. In other results, Ashmita Chaliha's fine run ended in the quarterfinals with a 10-21 15-21 loss to sixth seed Zhang Yi Man of China. Sindhu, who last won the Singapore Open

in 2022, gave a good account of herself during the 55-minute match as she broke off from 3-3 in the opening game to take a 11-5 cushion at the break. The Chinese slowly made her way to 13-16 but Sindhu reeled off the remaining five straight points to take the opening game. Stung by the reversal, Han zoomed to a 5-0 lead after the change of sides. She continued to dominate the proceedings as Sindhu struggled. The result was she jumped to a massive 15-2 advantage and despite some fightback from the Indian, Han comfortably took the match to the decider. Sindhu gathered her wits in the third game to open up a massive 11-3 lead at the break, which proved decisive as Han just couldn't bridge the gap.



Nagal drawn against world number 18 Khachanov in French Open 1st round

PTI ■ PARIS

India's top-ranked singles player Sumit Nagal was handed a tough opening round at the French Open as he is set to face world number 18 Karen Khachanov of Russia here on Sunday. World No. 94 Nagal earned a direct entry into the main draw of the Grand Slam after his consistent performances on the tour. He became the first Indian male player to qualify for the French Open main draw since Prajnesh Gunneswaran in 2019. Nagal, though, has not been in the best of form leading up to the clay Grand Slam. He lost to Holger Rune in the third round of the Monte Carlo Masters, before missing the Madrid and Rome Masters. The 26-year-old then made first round exits from the Bordeaux Challenger and Geneva Open earlier this month. On the other hand, Khachanov who has been seeded 18th, had reached the quarterfinals last year. He won the Qatar Open 250 in February and enjoys an impressive 21-7 record this season.

Record breaking gymnast Oksana Chusovitina bid for ninth Olympics ends with injury

AP ■ TASHKENT (UZBEKISTAN)

Record-breaking 48-year-old gymnast Oksana Chusovitina says an injury has ended her attempt to qualify for what would have been her ninth Olympics. Chusovitina said in a statement on Instagram that she had been injured while practicing her floor exercise ahead of the Asian championships in her home country of Uzbekistan. That was Chusovitina's last opportunity to qualify for the upcoming Paris Olympics. "I will not be able to take part and I am very upset as I have been preparing for a long time," Chusovitina said in the statement Thursday. The competition was starting



Friday, and Chusovitina said she would be there to support the rest of the Uzbekistan team. Chusovitina's long career is all the more striking in gymnastics, a sport where medalists are often in their teens and elite-level careers rarely last long. She has previously competed alongside

gymnasts a third of her age. Chusovitina won an Olympic gold medal in 1992 with the Unified Team of athletes from post-Soviet nations and a silver in the vault in 2008 representing Germany, where she lived at the time. Chusovitina is one of the last remaining active athletes in any sport to have represented

the Soviet Union, for which she won world championship gold in 1991 at the age of 16. Only one female Olympian has competed at the Games more times than Chusovitina. Georgian shooter Nino Salukvadze marked her ninth Olympic appearance in Tokyo in 2021 and has qualified for this year's Games in Paris. Chusovitina has repeatedly retired and un-retired over the decades and made no statement on her future following her latest injury. She has previously left open the possibility she might carry on competing even if she misses the Paris Olympics. "If next year I can't qualify," Chusovitina said in September at the Asian Games, "maybe I will give up my career."

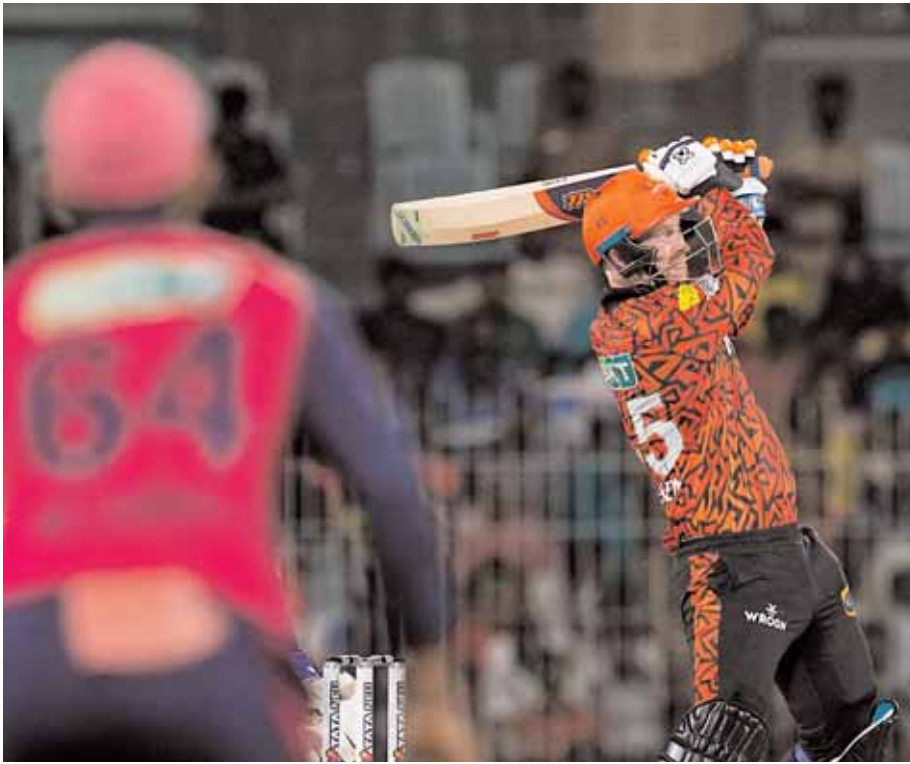


SRH END RR'S DREAM, FACE KKR IN FINAL RE-MATCH

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Rajasthan Royals' talented pretenders miserably failed in a 'Slow Track Test' as Sunrisers Hyderabad's unfancied spin twins Abhishek Sharma and Shahbaz Ahmed spun a web to set-up a 36-run win in the Qualifier 2 and an IPL summit date with Kolkata Knight Riders here on Friday. The title clash will be played here on Sunday. Chasing a target of 176, Royals were restricted to 139 for 7 ensuring a third IPL final for SRH after 2016 and 2018. On a slow track that offered significant turn and grip as the evening progressed and no dew to help batters, Abhishek (2/24 in 4 overs) and Shahbaz (3/23 in 4 overs) forced the Yashasvi Jaiswals, Sanju Samsons and Riyan Parags to press the unwanted 'Harakiri button' in 15 minutes of pure brain fade

that ended their hopes of a third final. Their combined figures of 5 for 47 in 8 overs completely overshadowed the celebrated duo of Ravichandran Ashwin (0/43 in 4 overs) and Yuzvendra Chahal (0/34 in 4 overs), who gave away 77 runs in their quota of overs. That difference also became the difference between the two sides eventually. From a comfortable 65 for 1 in 7.4 overs, it suddenly became 79 for 5 by the end of the 12th over. Abhishek, who had bowled only three overs in 15 games prior to this night, suddenly got the ball to dip and turn while Shahbaz's deliveries gripped and one such saw the back of Samson, who waited for an eternity to pull over the cow corner. Jaiswal and for that matter Parag also couldn't simply get the distance as the ball stopped on them. The humidity was around 80 percent and hence the



absence of dew only made matters worse. Dhruv Jurel (56 not out off 35 balls) tried his bit but save Jaiswal (42 off 21 balls) all others flattered to deceive. It must be mentioned that the highly-rated Samson, again failed to score on days when it mattered. Samson's failures on big days have been his biggest undoing and Royals expected a much better effort from their skipper. It was imperative after Sandeep Sharma, the master operator on tacky surfaces, put his skill-sets to optimum use while restricting Hyderabad to a decent yet manageable 175 for 9. The Royals bowling could be segregated into three distinct parts despite Heinrich Klaasen's half-century (50, 34b) that had four maximums. Trent Boult (3/45) started the slide in the Powerplays, Sandeep choked the 'Orange Army' batters in the middle overs while Avesh Khan 2.0

was as menacing at the death (3/27) as he has been throughout the tournament. But it was the canny Sandeep (2/25 in 4 overs), who took pace off his deliveries as Sunrisers batters were literally 'Short Third-Manned' with four batters failing to clear the fielder stationed at the edge of the 30-yard circle. Chahal manning the slot took three catches while Ashwin also got one at the same position. The problem SRH batters, including the in-form Travis Head (34 off 28 balls), faced was the lack of pace in the surface that became a hindrance while using it for the traditional T20 ramp scoops. Abhishek (12) at the start became indiscreet when he played one shot too many off Boult and was holed out. The ploy to use Ashwin (0/43 in 4 overs) with the new ball because of his familiarity with Chepauk didn't work as Rahul Tripathi (37 off 15 balls) hit

the senior off-spinner out of the attack. Just when it seemed that he was taking control on a day when Head wasn't getting his timing right, his poor shot selection while trying to hit Boult over short third became his undoing. Aiden Markram's re-entry in playing XI didn't pay dividends as he was out slashing at short third-man. However with Klaasen for company, SRH were clawing back at 99 for 3 when Head paid for his profligacy with Sandeep rolling his fingers over. Klaasen understood that the ball wasn't coming onto the bat and only went for the jugular to the deliveries that were in his arc as he got one of his better half-centuries in difficult conditions before a slower delivery on the blockhole rattled the furniture. With Klaasen's departure, the chances of getting past 200 also went through the window.

No reason for Dhoni to stop playing: Kaif

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India batter Mohammad Kaif feels there is no reason why Mahendra Singh Dhoni should not play the next season of the IPL, given his form, fitness and ability to play big shots with ease. Speculation has been rife that Dhoni, who has led CSK to five IPL titles, could have played his last IPL season. The former CSK skipper, who had undergone surgery to treat a knee injury issue last year, scored 161 runs in 73 balls at a strike rate of 220.55 this season. He was also good behind the stumps. Kaif thinks Dhoni has enough left in the tank to keep playing. "Personally, I don't think he's done, he could not win the game (last league match against RCB). In the last over after hitting a six, he got out. You could make out seeing his



body language that he seemed very disappointed not winning the game for CSK," Kaif, a cricket expert with Star Sports, told PTI Videos. "Why he should not come back? He is fit, he is scoring runs and hitting sixes, and there's no reason to stop playing... It's up to him, we can't say with Dhoni what's his plan," added Kaif, regarded as one of India's greatest fielders.

20 points. "He (Iyer) missed the whole IPL last year and KKR probably missed his captaincy in 2023. The way he is changing the bowlers, and picking his playing XI, he looks very calm under pressure. "In a tournament like the IPL, you have to be very composed, you have to know what's happening in the game and Iyer has come a long way. He has become a much better captain now," opined Kaif. Experts are also attributing KKR's success this season to Gautam Gambhir returning to the side as the team mentor but Kaif said the team's superb run had got a lot to do with how Iyer marshals his boys on the field. "We always talk about (Gautam) Gambhir, but he can't enter the field... In the rope with the players. Iyer has also been there with the players

and it will help him grow as a person and player. "He missed out on the (T20) World Cup this year (beginning in the US and West Indies next month), but certainly it's great learning for him, captaining the team, leading it to the finals. He has a great future ahead," said Kaif. Kaif said KKR were the overwhelming favourites to lift the IPL trophy this season given that they have quality bowlers and a balanced side, the two ingredients required to win. "I think KKR is a very well-balanced side. Tournament-winning team has to have good bowlers, KKR has got the bowlers. You saw how (Mitchell) Starc bowled against (SRH in Qualifier 1), it's a balanced side. KKR has got all bases covered in terms of batting and bowling. They are the team to beat in IPL, they are way ahead."

DK BOOSTED ME WHEN I STRUGGLED IN IPL 2022: KOHLI

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Premier India batter Virat Kohli has paid tribute to Dinesh Karthik after his retirement at the end of RCB's IPL campaign, describing the veteran wicketkeeper-batter as a wise and honest person who lifted his spirits during a phase of struggle in the league's 2022 season.

go and speak to anyone about things that he really feels about. And that, I think, is the most special thing for me when it comes to Dinesh. "And that's something that I've always cherished about him. And that's why we get along really, really well." "A CORRECT PLAYER": Kohli also hailed Karthik as a technically "correct" and versatile batter.



The 38-year-old, who joined Royal Challengers Bengaluru from Kolkata Knight Riders in 2022 for his second stint after 2015, played his last IPL match on Wednesday when RCB were eliminated by Rajasthan Royals in the playoffs. "Off the field, I have had some really nice and interesting conversations with him. He is a wise man, and has great knowledge about a lot of things, not just cricket," Kohli said in a special tribute video posted by RCB. The little over 11-minute video features tributes from Karthik's wife, Dipika Pallikal Karthik; his personal mentor, Abhishek Nayyar; RCB assistant coach, Malolan Rangarajan; and fitness coach, Shanker Basu. Kohli recalled the 2022 season when he averaged just 22.73 scoring 341 runs from 16 matches as they missed the final bus losing to Rajasthan Royals in the second qualifier. "I have thoroughly enjoyed my conversations with him. Even in that phase in 2022 when I did not have a great IPL season, I was really struggling for confidence," he recalled. "He sat me down a couple of times and just gave me a very honest explanation of how he saw things and maybe I am not able to see them myself," Kohli added. A veteran campaigner in the IPL, Karthik has been involved in all the editions of the league since the inaugural 2008 season and has represented six franchises, including leading KKR to the playoffs in 2018. He ended with 4,842 runs in 257 matches with 22 fifties. "I just like his honesty, his courage to

"I always looked at Dinesh and felt like he was such a correct player technically that he could adapt to any kind of role that's been given to him, and I remember watching him in the 2013 season where he got 600 runs or something and he batted brilliantly at three. "I saw him play shots which were like 'wow'. I think he's done brilliantly to switch and become a renowned finisher. "...I wish him all the very best for all his future endeavours moving forward." Kohli hoped that Karthik would stay connected to the RCB franchise in some capacity. "...Because his expertise when it comes to cricket is priceless. I think he's of great value to this franchise," he said. "HYPERACTIVE, CONFUSED PERSON": Recalling his first meeting with Karthik during India's tour of South Africa in 2009, Kohli said at first, he found him to be a hyperactive and confused person moving all over the place. "The first time I met him, I remember we were playing in South Africa if I am not wrong in the Champions Trophy 2009. It was the first time I shared the change room with Dinesh, and I found him to be very amusing, very... I would say hyperactive, confused person. "Most of the time, he was moving all over the place, never stopping. That was my first impression of Dinesh. "He is an outstanding talent, brilliant batter to watch and my first impression and the present-day impression are not far — just that he has become wiser and calmed down a lot," Kohli added.

OTHER SPORTS

Indian junior men hockey team loses 4-5 against Dutch local club

PTI ■ ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

Indian men's hockey team will hope to iron out the flaws ahead of the Paris Olympics, while the women's team under new skipper Salima Tete will look to overcome the disappointment of not qualifying for the Summer Games, when the gruelling European leg of the FIH Pro League commences here with matches against Argentina on Wednesday. The men's team under drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh is coming into the tournament following a 0-5 Test series whitewash at the hands of Australia and would look to make the most of the opportunity in Europe to get back to winning ways ahead of the Paris Games. "Undoubtedly, we are focused on the Olympics but we also need to give our best to finish as champions (in Pro League) and secure direct qualification for the 2026 Hockey World Cup as well," said Harmanpreet, whose team is currently placed third with 15 points from eight Pro League games. Netherlands are leading the charts with 26 points (12 matches), while Australia are on 20 points (8 matches). "To achieve both these targets (doing well ahead of Olympics and secure direct qualification for 2026 World Cup), we will strive to give our all on the pitch and win all our matches," the skipper added. Besides Argentina, the Indian men's team will also test their



Olympic preparations against Belgium, Germany and Great Britain. The Indian women, currently placed sixth on the Pro League table, have a chance to climb up the table when they take on world No.7 Argentina on Wednesday. The world No.6 side has earned eight points from an equal number of games in the Pro League home leg, registering victories against the United States and Australia. Newly-appointed captain Salima said the friendlies against South Africa (in India) earlier this month had helped her team prepare for the European leg of the Pro League. "We played practice matches against South Africa (in India) to prepare for these Hockey Pro League matches. The point difference between us and second-placed China is just seven points," said Tete in a Hockey India release. "We (will) aim to close this gap in the remaining matches against Argentina, Belgium, Germany, and Great Britain in a bid to finish as high as we can," she added. China are placed second on the table with 15 points from eight games, while leaders Netherlands are on 36 points with an all-win record in 12 games.

Delhi HC appoints administrative committee for Equestrian Federation of India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has appointed an ad-hoc administrative committee under its retired judge to run the affairs of the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) following allegations of "impropriety" in its functioning. Justice Tara V Ganju said, ordinarily, a court does not interfere in the administration of a national sports federation but when there is "clear impropriety" and the administration is being carried

on in an "arbitrary" or "perverse" manner, the situation cannot be ignored. The court said the ad-hoc administrative committee (AAC) shall have former high court judge Justice Najmi Waziri as its chairperson, former Chief Election Commissioner S Y Quraishi as observer/member and advocate Rohini Musa as member. The order came on a petition by Rajasthan Equestrian Association. "Pending the conduct of elections, EFI cannot be left

Atwal, Jeev open with 69s at seniors PGA Championships

PTI ■ BENTON HARBOR (US)

Indian golfers Arjun Atwal and Jeev Milkha Singh opened with identical rounds of 2-under 69 each and were Tied-19th at the end of the first round at the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship, one of the Majors for the Seniors, on the Champions Tour here. As the Indian duo began strongly, leading the field in the USD 3.5 million seniors' event (over-50s), were Australian Richard Green and Englishman Richard Bland, who shot 7-under 64 each at Harbor Shores. Green hit all 13 fairways and 17 of the 18 greens in regulation en route to the 64. Green shared the lead with Englishman Richard Bland, playing his first over-50s event. Bland showed great overall



seventh to ninth to turn in an impressive 4-under. On the back, he missed a couple of birdie chances but was hit by a double bogey on Par-4 12th and no more birdies or bogeys to finish with 69. Atwal, the only Indian to have won on the main PGA TOUR, began on the 10th with a birdie and added a second on the 12th. He dropped three shots in a row from 16th to 18th and turned in 1-over. On the back nine, Atwal birdied the first, third and the ninth and bogeyed Par-4 sixth to finish in 69, while his playing partners Jake Reeves (89) and Kirk Triplett (75) struggled through the day. Presidents Cup International team captain Mike Weir mixed six birdies with one bogey to open in 5-under 66 and was T-4. He played alongside Darren Clarke (67) and Ernie Els (70).

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