



**CITY 3**  
CONGRESS DID NOT  
ALLOW OROP: MODI

**WORLD 7**  
CAR BOMB IN SYRIAN  
CAPITAL KILLS ONE

**SPORT 12**  
KKR FACE SUNRISERS  
HYDERABAD IN MEGA IPL FINAL

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

LUCKNOW, SUNDAY MAY 26, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

# Established 1864 sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



## RAJKOT GAMING ZONE CHARS 22 PEOPLE TO DEATH

PTI ■ RAJKOT

At least 22 persons, including children, were killed and three others injured in a massive fire on Saturday evening that raged in a game zone teeming with people enjoying a summer vacation outing in Gujarat's Rajkot city. Rescue operations are underway at the affected TRP game zone for more than four hours after the blaze erupted at a fibre dome constructed for gaming activities at around 4:30 pm, officials said.

According to officials, the structure collapsed due to the huge fire. Several persons including children were playing games when the blaze erupted. "The fire control room received a call at around 4:30 pm regarding the blaze at the game zone. Fire tenders and ambulances rushed to the spot to douse the flames. The fire caused the collapse of the structure, and debris is being cleared. So far we have received a figure of 16 deaths," said Rajkot

Collector Prabhav Joshi. Several persons, including children, were present at the spot due to the ongoing summer vacation and weekend and playing games when the tragedy struck. After the fire broke out, Rajkot Police Commissioner Raju Bhargav told media persons that the cause of the blaze would be investigated and that a message had been issued to all the gaming zones in the city to close operations. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel



tweeted that the city administration has been instructed to carry out immediate rescue and relief operations in the fire incident at the game zone in Rajkot. "Instructions have been given to the Municipal Corporation and the administration for immediate rescue and relief operations in the fire incident in the game zone in Rajkot. It has been instructed to prioritise arrangements for immediate treatment of the injured," Patel tweeted.

## 46°C fails to deter Delhi

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With the beginning of 'Nautapa', a nine-day period of extreme heat from Saturday, Delhi on Saturday recorded a voter turnout of 54.27 per cent till 6 pm in the sixth phase of Lok Sabha election. The highest turnout of 58.30 per cent was recorded in the North East Delhi constituency, while the New Delhi seat had the lowest voting percentage at 51.54. North West Delhi recorded at 54.90 per cent, West Delhi at 54.90 per cent, East Delhi at 54.37 per cent, Chandni Chowk at 53.27 per cent, South Delhi at 52.83 per cent. According to the poll body, this is a tentative figure. The Delhi Chief Electoral Office said there were no reports of technical snags or delays in the commencement of voting at any polling station. The national Capital saw a



President Droupadi Murmu shows her finger marked with indelible ink after casting vote at Dr Rajendra Prasad Kendriya Vidyalyaya, President's Estate, during the sixth phase of Lok Sabha elections, in New Delhi, on Saturday PTI

BJP clean sweep in both the 2014 and 2019 elections, pushing opponents AAP and Congress to the periphery. Delhi had witnessed 60.52 per cent voting in the 2019 general election when the BJP had swept all the seats. President Draupadi Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep

Dhankar, Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, were among the early voters to cast their votes in the Capital. All contesting candidates, including Bansuri Swaraj from New

Delhi, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and Sahiram Pahelwan from South Delhi, Mahabal Mishra and Kamaljeet Sehrawat from West Delhi were among the early voters. This is the first Lok Sabha election in Delhi in which AAP and the Congress have fielded joint candidates. Posh colonies such as Greater Kailash, Vasant Vihar, Mehendru Enclave, Civil Lines, Defence Colonies and New Friends' Colony and villages in outer Delhi areas witnessed lower turnout of voters while unauthorised colonies and minority communities dominated areas recorded higher turnout. Many people were seen queuing up outside the more than 13,000 polling booths across the seven constituencies even before voting began at 7 am to avoid the blazing sun later in the day at the peak of summer. The temperature soared to 43.3 degrees Celsius in the

afternoon which gave the feel of 52-55 degrees Celsius. Najafgarh and Mungeshpur recorded 46 degrees Celsius, highest in North India. As per the EC's voter turnout app, the voter turnout was recorded highest at 58.42 per cent in Shakur Basti Assembly seat while lowest at 46.69 per cent in Model Town in Chandni Chowk constituency. In East Delhi, the lowest turnout was recorded at 50.05 per cent in Laxmi Nagar while the maximum turnout stood at 57.35 per cent in Krishna Nagar. Similarly, the lowest turnout was recorded at 48.28 per cent in Kasturba Nagar while the maximum turnout at 56.07 per cent in Moti Nagar in New Delhi constituency. In North-East Delhi, the lowest turnout was recorded at 53.60 per cent in Burari while the maximum turnout at 62.05 per cent in Babarpur, according to the EC.

Continued on Page 6

## Bengal shows the way, rest of India just votes

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

With 'urban apathy' casting its shadow on the sixth phase of polling, the voter turnout stood at 60 per cent as of 8 pm on Saturday in 58 constituencies in six States and two Union Territories amid adverse weather. West Bengal recorded the highest turnout at 78.19 per cent amid sporadic incidents of violence reported from some areas while Jammu and Kashmir recorded voter turnout at 52.28 per cent, highest in the last 35 years. In the 2019 last general elections, the erstwhile Anantnag seat saw a meagre turnout of 8.9 per cent. However, the boundaries of the constituency extended across the Pir Panjal to include Jammu's Rajouri and Poonch. The three parliamentary



People wait in a queue to cast their votes at a polling booth during the sixth phase of Lok Sabha elections, in South Kashmir, on Saturday PTI

constituencies in the valley namely Srinagar (38.49 per cent), Baramulla (59.1 per cent) and Anantnag-Rajouri (51.35 per cent as of 5 pm) recorded voter turnout which is highest in many decades. Healthy polling continued in Anantnag and Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir which

recorded 44.41 percent. Encouraged by the voter turnout in Jammu and Kashmir the Chief Election Commission Rajiv Kumar said the Election Commission will "very soon" initiate the process of holding assembly polls in the Union Territory.

Continued on Page 6

## THE PIONEER REPORTS FROM GROUND ZERO

### UTTAR PRADESH

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A voter turnout of 43.95 per cent was recorded till 3 pm in Uttar Pradesh where polling is underway in 14 constituencies in the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha elections. According to the Election Commission, Ambedkar Nagar recorded 50.01 per cent turnout till 3 pm, Basti 47.03 per cent, Azamgarh 45.38 per cent, Sultanpur 45.31 per cent, Lalgaon 44.63 per cent, Domariaganj 43.96 per cent and 43.75 per cent in Jaunpur. The turnout in Machhlishahar was 43.89 per cent, Shrawasti 43.50 per cent, Sant Kabir Nagar 43.49 per cent, Bhadohi 42.39 per cent, Pratapgarh 41.87 per cent, Allahabad 41.04 per cent and Phulpur 39.46 per cent. The polling percentage recorded in the Gainsari assembly bypoll was 42.38 per cent till 3 pm. Repolling is also underway at polling booth number 343 under the Farrukhabad Lok Sabha constituency. The



repolling was necessitated after the EC took note of a viral video on social media purportedly showing a minor casting multiple votes. Polling began at 7 am and will go on till 6 pm. In Sultanpur, BJP candidate Maneka Gandhi is seeking a ninth term as an MP. The former Union Minister is up against the Samajwadi Party's (SP) Ram Bhual Nishad and the Bahujan Samaj Party's (BSP) Uday Raj Verma.

### JAMMU & KASHMIR

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary constituency of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday recorded over 52 per cent voter turnout in the sixth phase of polling amid unprecedented security arrangements in the region. This is the highest voter turnout recorded in the newly carved out Anantnag-Rajouri seat — earlier known as Anantnag — since the 1984 general elections when it recorded 70 per cent polling. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, only a 9 per cent voter turnout was recorded in Anantnag while Rajouri and Poonch polled 72 per cent votes. Barring one incident of the clash reported between supporters of two candidates outside a polling station in Mendhar subdivision of Poonch, the polling passed off peacefully. An FIR was registered by police and further investigation is on, the officials said. The high-profile seat witnessed a three-way contest in the first election after the abrogation of Article 370 and the redrawing of its political map. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti is pitted against Mian Altaf of the National Conference, and Zafar Iqbal Manhas of the Apni Party from this seat. The BJP has supported the Apni Party candidate and has not fielded any candidate in this constituency.

Continued on Page 6

### ODISHA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha recorded 59.60 per cent voter turnout till 5 pm in the six Lok Sabha constituencies and 42 Assembly segments on Saturday, officials said. Voting was held in Sambalpur, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar and Puri parliamentary constituencies, along with 42 Assembly segments within the jurisdiction of these Lok Sabha seats. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik walked to the Aerodrome Upper Primary School near his residence here to cast his vote. "We will form a stable Government in the State," he told reporters. Odisha's chief electoral officer NB Dhal said voting was peaceful so far in the 10,581 polling stations, barring some reports of EVM glitches. Till 5 pm, 59.60 per cent of the over 94.48 lakh electorate exercised their franchise, said officials, adding that the highest 65.91 per cent voting was recorded in Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat followed by Keonjhar (62.43 per cent), Puri (61.17 per cent), Dhenkanal (60.88 per cent), Cuttack (54.36 per cent) and Bhubaneswar (53.54 per cent.) Among the 42 Assembly segments, Pallahara Vidhan Sabha recorded the highest 73.86 per cent voter turnout while the lowest 42.10 per cent was registered at Barabati Cuttack segment by 5 pm, officials said.



Agarwal earlier said. According to EC data, Sirsa had the highest turnout till 5 pm at 59.57 per cent followed by Ambala at 58.44 per cent and 58.38 per cent in Kurukshetra.

Continued on Page 6

### HARYANA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ CHANDIGARH

A voter turnout of 55.93 per cent was recorded in Haryana till 5 pm in its 10 Lok Sabha seats and polling remained peaceful on Saturday, officials said. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the overall poll percentage stood at 70 per cent when the BJP had swept Haryana, winning all 10 Lok Sabha seats. Voting was also held for the bypoll to the Karnal Assembly seat where Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini is in the fray. The bypoll was necessitated by his predecessor Manohar Lal Khattar's resignation. Official data showed that till 3 pm, the Assembly seat had recorded a turnout of 41 per cent. According to Election Commission (EC) data, after polling began at 7 am, the overall turnout till 9 am was 8.31 per cent, and it then increased to 36.48 per cent at 1 pm and 55.93 per cent at 5 pm. Officials said polling went on smoothly across the State. There are 2,00,76,768 registered voters, including 94,23,956 women and 467 people from the transgender community, Chief Electoral Officer Anurag Agarwal earlier said. According to EC data, Sirsa had the highest turnout till 5 pm at 59.57 per cent followed by Ambala at 58.44 per cent and 58.38 per cent in Kurukshetra.

Continued on Page 6

### WEST BENGAL

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ TAMLUK KOLKATA

Violence and rigging apart, the sixth round of elections in West Bengal also witnessed a higher percentage of polling which stood at about 77.99 per cent — compared to 73-74 per cent in the previous rounds — till 5 pm on Saturday, sources in the Election Commission said, adding polling percentage could go up as many people were still standing in the queues. Politicians were likely to keep their fingers crossed considering the higher polling percentage compared to earlier phases, sources said. At the end of the elections while Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who complained of booth capture by Opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari's men in his home turn at East Midnapore, the BJP leader sounded pretty confident with a one-liner that sixth phase had ensured "a new saffron sunrise in Bengal". Cut to the electoral battlefield a TMC worker and a former panchayat member SK



Moibul was allegedly murdered by the BJP men at Mahishadal in Tamluk constituency, said sources, adding the police have arrested five people in that connection. The incident took place on Saturday. Saturday's murder comes a day after a BJP woman worker was killed by TMC men. At Tamluk from where retired Calcutta High Court Judge Abhijit Ganguli is blockaded in a tri-cornered contest against TMC's Debangshu Bhattacharya and CPI(M)'s Sayan Banerjee, the former Jogs was gheraoed and slogans were raised against him when he went to various booths after receiving complaints of booth capture. Mamata too faced similar slogans at various places by angry TMC men.

Continued on Page 6

## Pune teen's kin try to plant driver in case, held

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a stark reminder of Delhi's BMW hit-and-run case, a similar incident in Pune, Maharashtra, has recently caught attention. This comes a week after the case took an interesting turn, with the latest developments occurring on Saturday. The Pune police on Saturday arrested Surendra Kumar Agarwal, grandfather of the accused minor boy who mowed down two IT professionals on May 19. Surendra has been booked for allegedly threatening and



confining the family driver Gangaram Poojari and forcing him to take the blame for the Porsche car accident on his head in return for a monetary consideration. Poojari is a witness in the

case. Earlier, Vishal Agarwal - the father of the minor boy was arrested on Tuesday. He is being investigated for offences registered under sections 75 (wilful neglect of a child, or exposing a child to mental or physical illnesses) and 77 of the Juvenile Justice Act (supplying a child with intoxicating liquor or drugs). The Agarwal family owns the Brahma Group, a real estate and construction company, which was founded by Brahmatt Agarwal, in Pune.

Continued on Page 6

## Kejriwal cuts nosy Pak ex-Minister to size

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday chastised former Pakistan Minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain after he called for the defeat of "forces of hate and extremism" in the Lok Sabha elections, saying the polls are India's internal matter and that India will not tolerate interference by the "biggest sponsors of terrorism". In the sixth of the seven-phase elections, 58 parliamentary constituencies, including seven in Delhi, went to polls on Saturday. After casting his vote, Kejriwal, who is the AAP's national convenor, shared a picture on X of his family members showing fingers marked in



ink and said he voted against "dictatorship, inflation and unemployment". Sharing Kejriwal's post on X with the hashtags "MorePower" and "IndiaElection2024", Hussain said, "May peace and harmony defeat forces of hate and extremism." Minutes after Hussain's post, Kejriwal hit back at him, saying his post was

unnecessary. "Chaudhry Sahib, the people of my country and I are fully capable of handling our issues. Your comment is not needed. The situation in Pakistan is very bad right now. You take care of your country," Kejriwal said on X. In another post, the Chief Minister said the elections are India's internal matter and the country will "not tolerate interference by the biggest sponsors of terrorism". Responding to Kejriwal's posts, Hussain said, "CM sb! Indeed electioneering is your own issue but hope you will appreciate extremism be it in Pakistan or India is a borderless phenomenon and dangerous for everyone be it BD (Bangladesh), India or Pakistan so everyone with some conscience must be concerned..." (sic)."

"The situation in Pakistan is very far from ideal but individuals must strive for a better society wherever they are," he said. Hitting out at Kejriwal, the BJP alleged that Pakistan has also jumped in support of the AAP leader's politics of corruption. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said his party has been saying "Kejriwal is hand in glove with the country's enemies". "Chaudhry Fawad Hussain is speaking now. He had also written a social media post on Kejriwal's release. Five phases of elections have already been conducted but no remarks were made, when polls are now being held in Delhi, the statement from Pakistan has come. This shows Kejriwal has the backing of Pakistan," Sachdeva told reporters.

Continued on Page 6



# Maximum temperature to rise in central, southern UP

**PNS** ■ **LUCKNOW**

There appears to be no respite from the hot weather conditions because the Met department has forecast an increase in the maximum temperature in parts of Uttar Pradesh, Met department senior scientist Mohammed Danish said that the humidity levels were very high which also made the heat unbearable. "This is because of the easterly winds," he added. Danish said that the maximum temperature would rise by 2-3 degrees in the central and southern parts of UP. "With the maximum temper-

ture rising and the minimum temperature already high, the combined effect will be an increase in the hot weather conditions," he said. Meanwhile, the Health department has made several preparations to deal with heat wave conditions and awareness is being spread amongst people for protection against heat and heat waves.

An official from the office of chief medical officer said that people need not panic. "In all government hospitals, arrangements for cold rooms, cold packs, ORS packets, pure cold drinking water, fans and coolers etc. are in place and availability of medicines in

adequate quantity has been ensured for the management of the effects of heat and the diseases caused by it," he said. He said that they had issued an advisory for people not to step out of the house unnecessarily between 12 noon and 3 pm.

"If it is very important to go out, cover your head with a wet cloth while going out of the house. Use an umbrella and carry drinking water with you. Wear light coloured clothes that absorb sweat and stay in an open and airy room. It is important to put curtains on the windows and doors of the room. One should drink lots of water, even if one is not



thirsty. Drink mango panna, bael sherbet, juicy fruits like orange, watermelon, muskmelon, cucumber, buttermilk, pineapple, coconut water, lemonade, homemade

lassi and ORS solution. As far as possible, stay on the ground floor of the house during the day. Keep animals in shady places. Give them enough water to drink," he said.

The advisory further tells people not to consume tea, coffee, carbonated soft drinks, alcohol, etc. as they cause dehydration in the body.

"For prevention against heat wave, the staff of all urban and rural community health centres, primary health centres have been trained through Zoom. Guidelines have been issued for the general public to take necessary precautions in weddings and other functions. Necessary preparations

have been made in all private medical institutions for protection against heat waves. Temporary shelters have been constructed at the main gate of medical institutions and coolers, fans and pure drinking water have been arranged there along with essential medicines and trained staff," he said.

In public interest, free ORS and clean wet clothes for wiping the body have been arranged.

Various institutions and organisations are also cooperating with this. Uttar Pradesh Housing Development Council has directed the subordinate officers and employ-

ees to issue guidelines to the resident welfare associations for protection from heat and heat wave. The volunteers of Rotary Club have been instructed to make people aware about taking measures to protect against the heat. “People are being made aware to protect themselves from heat waves through jingles at bus stops. The municipal corporation is making people aware of protecting themselves from heat waves through hoardings and LED displays at various places in the district. District basic education department is making its subordinates aware online,” he added.

# Mango production to be low this year in UP

**PNS** ■ **LUCKNOW**

Mango production in the state will be less this year as compared to last year. Giving details, senior scientist PK Shukla from the Central Institute of Subtropical Horticulture said that the mango production would be only 33-35 per cent of the normal production. He said that as compared to last year the production will be 65 per cent of the last year's production. Giving the reasons for the low production, he said that starting out in January, cloudy weather had prevailed for 20-25 days which decreased the amount of sunlight received by the trees. "The result was that

the panicle emergence was delayed and those panicles which emerged later in the month of March could not bear fruits because of the hot weather conditions," he said. Regarding how heat impacted the mango, he pointed out that the pollination takes place best at 35 and 36 degrees Celsius but heat impacts pollination. "If the temperature increases further the pollination does not take place because of which fruit set is not satisfactory this year. The high heat impacted the mango production," he said. He said that they had issued an advisory for the farmers and also suggested early harvesting. "This is because the tree has to save its energy for the next

fruiting and the new panicle emergence in the fresh crop is necessary which would help in the growth of the plant," he added.

However, he pointed out that with one negative there was also one positive aspect which had emerged which was that there were no thunderstorms this year. "The thunderstorms impact the mango fruit badly wherein 25 per cent of the fruit gets lost," he said.

He further pointed out that whatever fruit is left on the tree is of high quality. "There are fewer fruits hence the quality is good. The temperature which is prevailing at 42 degree Celsius will also have a good impact on the fruit. This temperature is good for mango growth," he said.

He said that physiologically, the mango will ripen by June 1 although the farmers have started harvesting it. "The mangoes should come to the market after June 5 and June 10 is the mango availability time. We issue advisories every week to the farmers as per the requirements," he added.

# Retired IAS officer's wife murdered, house looted

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

Wife of a retired IAS officers, who held the post of district magistrate of Rae Bareilly and commissioner of Prayagraj division, was murdered and ornaments and other household belongings were looted from their Sector 20, Indira Nagar house under Ghazipur police station area on Saturday morning, sending the Lucknow police in a tizzy.

Senior police officers, including Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Akash Kulhari, inspected the crime scene and were monitoring the investigation. Later, Lucknow's commissioner of police also inspected the crime scene.

Giving details to newsmen at the crime scene, the JCP said the woman, Mohini Dubey, was the second wife of retired IAS officer Devendra Nath Dubey. "Dubey had gone to play golf and he had left the house around 7:15 am. Around 10 am, he returned and found the doors lying ajar. He thought Mohini would be in the kitchen and went there but did not find her there. He later went to a room and found Mohini lying dead," the police officer said.

He said Mohini was strangled to death by the unidentified assailant(s).

He further said Dubey wrote in the complaint about loot of ornaments and other household belongings. "The miscreants took away the DVR of the CCTV from the scene," the JCP said.



File photo of Mohini Dubey

He said the exact cause of death would be ascertained by autopsy and the body had been sent for post-mortem.

He said Dubey had employed two drivers, servants, a gardener and a maid for household work. "Their maid usually comes at around 8 am but she was on leave on Saturday. The milkman supplying milk at the house visited around 7 am on Saturday. The crime scene was scanned by the forensic team and fingerprint experts. The milk which the milkman had given was put in a utensil and was unboiled," he said.

Sources said the fingerprints lifted from the scene of crime were found to be of different persons, giving credence to the suspicion of involvement of more than two persons in the crime. They said the police were probing the maid's credentials and also if she really needed leave.

"It is strange that so many staff were present at the house and

# Police probing case from four angles

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

Sector 20 of Indira Nagar is among the posh areas of the city. Most of the IAS, IFS and senior officers reside in the locality and it witnesses a strict vigil. For any commoner except those working at the houses as domestic help or maid or mechanic or electrician, it is not easy to enter this locality. Some of the bureaucrats living here have retired, while others are still in service. Almost all the house owners have employed servants and drivers. There are even servant quarters in the houses. CCTV's are installed in most of the houses. Many houses even have modern locks. The colony is completely safe. In such a situation, it is not easy to enter a house and kill the owner. Police are investigating the case from four angles. Police are probing if Devendra Nath Dubey had gone to play golf on Saturday. He used to go to play golf every day. Apart from the retired IAS and his wife, there were some servants who were living in the house. The servants and people associated with them are under suspicion and police are preparing their records.

Police are also investigating the robbery angle also but sources privy to investigation said robbery in such a short period of time seemed beyond comprehension.

Devendra Nath Dubey is originally from Kannauj. He became IAS after being promoted from PCS. He has been held post of magistrate of Rae Bareilly. He also held the post of Commissioner of Prayagraj division. Dubey goes to play golf every day at the club on 5 Kalidas Marg. The driver working for Dubey said when he returned with his employer, he found the gate open.

Ravi Yadav, the retired officer's driver, told newsmen that he had gone with 'saheb' at around 7 in the morning and returned home with 'sir' at 9:30 am.


He said the main gate was open. "We thought the sweeper might be doing some work. Sir went upstairs and I went to keep the keys of the car. Saheb shouted and called me to come quickly. When we went, madam was lying there. Sir then called madam's brother who lives in Sadar Bazaar of Lucknow. Saheb said dial 112 and call the police. Then we informed the police," the driver told police.

The police are also probing some insider's role.

the miscreants executed the crime," the sources said. The JCP said it was basically an open ended case for police and they were probing it from all possible angles. "We are at the start of the investigation and can't tell exactly the number of miscreants involved in the crime, the

motive behind the murder and the brain behind the murder," he said. The officer said Mohini was Dubey's second wife and they had no children. "Dubey has two children from his first wife. One of them lives in Noida while the other stays in Lucknow but not at this address," he said. He said

Dubey along with Mohini and their staff were staying at the house. Dubey retired in 2009 and he had married the second time with Mohini in 2007, two years before his retirement. His family was non-committal in endorsing his second marriage.


**the pioneer**  
**CLASSIFIEDS**

## NOTICE

I have changed my name from **SAFIYA SAHAB** to **SAFIYA SULTANA** W/o Shahabuddin R/o H.No.105/591, Bhannanapurwa, Kanpur Nagar for all Future Purpose

## NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name Spelling From **FARAHA JABEEN** To **FARAH JABEEN**. W/o **MOHAMMAD DANISH SIDDIQUI** R/o 105/145 Mohammad Ali Park Chamanganj Kanpur Nagar

## सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेरी फर्म गुप्ता ट्रेडर्स 281/46 मिलरोड मवेया लखनऊ के 02 फार्म-C नं 2016078 -2016079 कहीं खो गये हैं। यदि किसी को प्राप्त हो तो मुझे वापस करने की कृपा करें

## सूचना

सूचित किया जाता है कि उपराना श्रीवास्तव मुनुर के पक्ष में दिनांक 14.12.2009 प्रपत्र नं. 1 जिल्द नं.2999 के क्रम संख्या 10100 के पृष्ठ संख्या 591/ 606 दिनांक 21. 11. 1984 का मकान नं. 4/289 विवेकखंड गोमतीनगर लखनऊ के मूल लीज डीड का पेज नंबर 1, 2 व 3 कहीं खो गया है जिसका FIR कर दिया गया है FIR नंबर 20240000436300 दिनांक 25-05-2024 है किसी भी व्यक्ति को प्राप्त हो तो कृपया शाखा यंत्रक भारतीय स्टेट बैंक निशागंज लखनऊ में संपर्क करें 9415341804

## सूचना

सूचना-बैनेना जो जैनव द्वारा निष्पादित मोहम्मद मुनुर के पक्ष में दिनांक 14.12.2009 प्रपत्र संख्या 5793 एवं मोहम्मद मुनुर द्वारा निष्पादित फातिमा के पक्ष में दिनांक 03.12.2012 प्रपत्र संख्या 5949 को पत्र निवेक कार्यालय लखनुर में दर्ज है, जिसकी मूल प्रति वापस में कहीं खो गयी है जिसकी एएआर/आर तबीर थाने में दर्ज है जिसकी मता संख्या 383/292 ग्राम करहरा है जिस किसी भी व्यक्ति को कोई आपति है सूचना के 30 दिन के अंदर सम्बन्धित न्यायालय में अपनी आपति दर्ज करना सकता है। राशरथ राम पुत्र अंगुर राम निवारी मोहल्ला इस्लामपुर,थाना- तबीर, तहसील-नहरपुर, जिला-सीतापुर मो.9452192471

## NOTICE

NOTICE

I, Prakash Singh Son of Late Rakshpal Singh, owner of Plot no 6 part of Kharsa No. 899B measuring 174.795 sq mtr at Village Chhotla Bharwar, Vigyan Khand-1, Chinhat, Lucknow which was purchased by me through sale deed registered on 06.11.2015 vide Book No. 01 Volume 17475 pages 251 to 276 serial 17115 at Sub Registrar-1 Lucknow. The sale deed of plot in original stands stolen and FIR has been lodged on 22.05.2024. Any person using the said sale deed will be illegal and necessary action will be taken against such person. Mo 7985856007

## NOTICE

I Raj Bahadur Rai S/o Late Purkey Rai R/O Vill-Labdh Division, PO-Mungpo, Disst-Darjeeling, West Bengal-734313. In my son's (Army No- 9425264N, Rank- Hav Rajiv Rai Unit-7/11 GR) service records my DOB is mention as 07/09/1951 by mistake. Whereas my correct DOB is 30/11/1954, please correct it for future.

## NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that in the mark sheet and migration certificate of student Munir Alam, Class 12, Roll Number 23611842, Year 2022, the names of the mother Husna Bano and father Nafees Ahmed have been incorrectly recorded. The correct name of the mother is HUSNA KHATOON and the correct name of the father is NAFEEES AHMAD. This information is completely accurate

## NOTICE

I Rajesh singh R/o village sadipur POST Gokulpura Distt MAU, UP (Pin - 276402). In my service record (No 15366612H, Rank - N/KMT) my wife's name spelling is written Punam Singh & DOB 10.1.1970 which is wrong In other Documents my wife name spelling is Whitten Poonam singh & DOB 1.1.1970, which is correct. This should be considered correct.

## NOTICE

I, Hakiqat Saraf s/o Kishan Lal Saraf, Residing at 124/168 B, Block No. 12, Govind Nagar, Kanpur Nagar U.P.- 208006, India, change my name from Hakikat Saraf to Hakiqat Saraf vide Affidavit dated 21/05/2024 Sworn before Notary R.K. Kushwaha at Kanpur, Henceforth, I shall be Known as Hakiqat Saraf for all purposes.

## NOTICE

I, Sheetal Saraf w/o Hakiqat Saraf, Residing at 124/168 B, Block No. 12, Govind Nagar, Kanpur Nagar U.P.- 208006, India, change my name from Sheetu Saraf to Sheetal Saraf vide Affidavit dated 21/05/2024 Sworn before Notary R.K. Kushwaha at Kanpur, Henceforth, I shall be Known as Sheetal Saraf for all purposes.

## NOTICE

I, Sandeep Kumar Singh s/o Sarwati Yadav, R/O 127/230, Jhup Gausalha, Jhup, Kanpur U.P.-208014 changed my name from Sandip Singh Yadav to Sandeep Kumar singh vide Affidavit dated 23/5/2024 sworn before Notary Syed Imam Haider at Kanpur, Henceforth, I shall be Known as Sandeep Kumar Singh for all purposes.

## Red Rose School felicitates students

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Red Rose Group of Schools hosted a vibrant felicitation ceremony to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of its students of the three CBSE affiliated branches.

The ceremony, held on Friday, buzzed with pride and excitement, as 35 students with highest marks in class 10 and 41 students with highest marks in class 12 were honoured.

School's founder manager RC Mishra, managing director Dr Prashant Kumar Mishra, chairperson Smita Mishra, academic coordinator Anupama Shukla and principals of all three branches – Varsha Pandey, Deepali Makhiya and Anita Pratap – were present in the ceremony. Adding to the inspiration, the chairperson delivered a motivating speech, commending the students and teachers for their excellent performance on achieving 100 per cent results in class 10 and

Two cars collided on Nishatgani overbridge in Lucknow on Saturday, causing a huge traffic jam.

## Pioneer

# UP STF busts gang defrauding people, arrests kingpin

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

The Special Task Force of Uttar Pradesh Police arrested the kingpin of an organised gang along with five other members of the gang which was involved in defrauding gullible people in the city. The gang used to dupe people by opening fake call centres and obtaining fake Telegram IDs through a website operated by foreign hackers and cyber fraudsters and creating online gambling games and sharing in the defrauded amount by providing fake corporate bank accounts on rent. Those arrested were identified as Dheeraj Kumar Singh of Vijay Nagar Neelmata, Lucknow, Tarun Purushottam Gavari of Indira Nagar, Lucknow, Abhishek of Barabanki, Sarjeet Singh of Barabanki, Rashid Khan of Barabanki and Aman Yadav of Barabanki. The police recovered five fake and forged Aadhaar cards, four pre-activated SIM cards, 58

SIM cards, three cheque books of various corporate bank accounts, two debit cards, six mobile phones, one four-wheeler and a two-wheeler from the accused who were arrested from Safedabad crossing in Barabanki district. The police said they worked on the case and raided the place on a tip-off from an informer. The police said the gang cheated innocent people by making calls to them from fake call centres and obtaining fake Telegram IDs through a website operated by foreign hackers and cyber fraudsters and created online gambling games. They used bank accounts to hoard the money they obtained through cheating and paid a cut to the bank account holders. Dheeraj, Tarun and Sarvjeet told police that they used corporate bank accounts of Rashid, Aman and Abhishek from various banks, their cheque books, debit cards and SIM cards, which they gave to Raj and Shukla. "These people were connected

to us through Telegram. They took accounts from us and asked for crores of rupees for online gaming. After running for two-three days, these accounts were frozen by the banks. We also bought blank and activated SIM cards and gave them to Raj and Shukla. These people cloned the SIM cards and committed fraud," they said. The miscreants said they used fake Aadhaar cards for buying SIM cards and booking rooms in hotels. The miscreants further disclosed that Shukla and Raj gave them five per cent of the money that came into these accounts from fraud. They disclosed that they had taken help from one Aman and Abhishek in the past too. The police said they found chats regarding transactions of many accounts and photographs of the accounts in Telegram and Whatsapp. They disclosed that the 58 recovered SIM cards were provided to them by one Daksh, of Irrigation Department Colony in Barabanki.

## Gaurav Khanna awarded 'Apoorva Samman'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Gaurav Khanna was awarded 'Apoorva Samman 2024' for his incomparable contribution in the field of para-badminton in a programme organised at Chhargab railway station on Saturday.

Prashant Kumar, Station Director of Northern Railway, Lucknow, chaired the function while the programme was conducted by Sanjay Malhotra. Professor Ravi Bhatt was present as the chief guest on this occasion.

Dr Sudha Mishra, while addressing the programme, said that Gaurav Khanna was

true to his name as he had set a record. Prashant Kumar praised the works of Gaurav Khanna and Professor Ravindra Bhatt described the works of Apoorva and Gaurav Khanna as a source of inspiration for the society. In this felicitation ceremony, Gaurav Khanna expressed his gratitude to Apoorva and the railway family. Apoorva organisation also honoured Prashant Kumar for working in the interests of passengers and railway employees. Officials of Apoorva organisation, including Vandana, Archana Singh, Somina Bajaj, and railway workers were also present.

<b>कार्यालय प्रार्थना, डी०बी०एस० कॉलेज, कानपुर - 208001</b> <b>दूरभाष संख्या 2651730, 2650314</b>	
<b>:: निविदा सूचना ::</b>	
<b>पत्रांक - डीबीएस 5157/ दिनांक/2024-25</b> डी०बी०एस० कॉलेज, कानपुर में शिक्षा सत्र 2024-25 में विभिन्न कक्षाओं में ऑनलाइन प्रवेश प्रक्रिया डिजिटल माध्यम से कराये जाने का निर्णय महाविद्यालय प्रशासन द्वारा लिया गया है। इस कार्य (Fee Management Software with Cloud Support) हेतु इच्छुक पंजीकृत फर्मों से निविदा प्राप्त पर सीलबंद निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। कार्यालय में रुपये 500/- जमा कर दिनांक 31.05.2024 को अपरान्ह 3.00 बजे तक निविदा फार्म प्राप्त व जमा कर सकेगा। निविदा लिखित निकाय के उपरान्त / विलंब से प्राप्त किसी भी निविदा पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा। विस्तृत जानकारी कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। बिना कारण बताये किसी भी निविदा को निरस्त करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरी के पास सुरक्षित रहेगा।	<b>दिनांक 25.05.2024</b>
<b>प्राचार्य</b>	

<b>HDFC BANK</b> We understand your world	<b>HDFC Bank Ltd., 2nd Floor, Experio Building,          Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226010.</b>
--	---

**POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV [RULE 81i]**

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the HDFC Bank Ltd. under the Secularization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued under dated notice dated 19-02-2024 calling upon the borrower(s) 1. **Mr. Arun Kumar S/o Kunwar Bahadur Singh (Borrower & Mortgagor) 2. Mrs. Neelam Devi W/o Mr. Arun Kumar (Co-Borrower)** to pay the amount mentioned in the notice **Rs.38,58,029/- (Rupees Thirty-Eight Lakhs Fifty-Eight Thousand and Twenty-Nine Only/-)** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the said Act on the read with rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules, on this 21st MAY 2024

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The borrower in possession and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge and charges levied on the amount of notice **Rs.38,58,029/- (Rupees Thirty-Eight Lakhs Fifty-Eight thousand and Twenty-Nine Only/-)** and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc. less amount paid, if any.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

House No. 638 B/2 Built On Plot Over Kharsa No.379 Min. Admeasuring 98.97 Sq.Mts., Situated At 'Shyama Shyam Dham', North City Enclave, Gram- Chandan, Ward-Indira Priyadarshini, Tehsil & Dist-Lucknow, (property Owned By Mr./Arun Kumar), Bounded As Under: North: 20 Ft Wide Road South: Nala East: House No.638 B/2B Of Seller:west: House No. 638/B/1

**Date: 21.05.2024, Place: Lucknow**

**Authorised Officer, For HDFC Bank Ltd.**



# Congress did not allow OROP, it was implemented by Modi: PM

PNS ■ GHAZIPUR

In a powerful address in Ghazipur, Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured a large gathering of his commitment to a ‘Viksit Bharat’ (Developed India), pledging to overcome any obstacles posed by the opposition. He also launched a blistering attack on the Congress, accusing the party of not allowing the soldiers to get ‘One Rank, One Pension’.

Prime Minister Modi began his speech by recalling a painful memory from the past, saying, “Whenever I come to Ghazipur, I am reminded of a betrayal. After independence, Congress had sworn not to develop this area, forcing its people to live in suffocating poverty. This incident stands as a testament to how the INDI Alliance has consistently let Ghazipur down.”

The prime minister highlighted the stark contrast between past and present governance, emphasising the transformative changes brought about by his administration. “Today, I feel immense satisfaction knowing our government provides free ration to every poor household. Even during the severe crisis of corona (COVID-19), we ensured no one slept hungry. Modi’s government is spending lakhs of crores on this free ration scheme, ensuring no one faces the hardships experienced during the Congress-Samajwadi Party rule.”

Prime Minister Modi engaged



in an open dialogue with the audience, drawing a clear distinction between past and present leadership. He underscored the significant progress made under his tenure, stating, “Congress mastered the art of delaying work and denying rights, even neglecting our soldiers’ One Rank One Pension (OROP) demand. It was under Modi that OROP was implemented. While the dynastic leaders built palaces, the poor, the farmers, the labourers, the Dalits and the deprived struggled. Modi’s government has changed lives. In 10 years, 25 crore people rose from poverty through empowering schemes. We have turned the

PM Awas dream into reality, opened bank accounts, electrified every village, provided water to every household, and ensured no poor person sells land for treatment with Ayushman cards. Now, Modi guarantees free treatment for all elderly above 70 years.”

Highlighting the transformative impact of the current administration, Prime Minister Modi stated, “In the SP era, mafias roamed freely, flaunting their power in open jeeps, and gunning down opponents with impunity. Riots defined UP, with two to three major riots every month, causing immense loss to the poor and shopkeepers. Under Yogiji’s government,

riots and rioters have been stopped. SP-Congress will do anything for votes and power. The SP shehzade once vowed to banish mafias but ended up bowing to them, even giving them tickets. Someone who cannot keep his word can never fight your battle.”

Prime Minister Modi also warned of the grave threat posed by the INDI Alliance to the rights of Dalits and backward classes. “The INDI Alliance is looting the reservations meant for Dalits and backward classes, conspiring to allocate them based on religion instead. They aim to strip reservations from castes like Pasi, Jatav, Lonia, Kurmi, Yadav,

Bind, Nishad, and Patel. In Karnataka, they have already diverted OBC reservations to Muslims. Their scheme in Bengal has been exposed by the Calcutta High Court just two days ago. Nearly all OBC reservations in Bengal were being given to Muslims and infiltrators. Congress, Samajwadi Party, Trinamool Congress – all are complicit in this assault on SC-ST-OBC reservations.”

In a bold declaration, Prime Minister Modi emphasised the threat of the INDI Alliance’s promise to reinstate Article 370 in Kashmir. “This move threatens to reignite terrorism and embolden Pakistan. But Ghazipur stands firm against such perilous propositions. Witnessing its own transformation, Ghazipur now symbolises hope for Kashmir’s development. The people of Ghazipur reject regression; they embrace progress,” he said.

Concluding his speech, Prime Minister Modi urged the people of Ghazipur to support his vision of a Viksit Bharat. He also called on the crowd to help spread his message by visiting every doorstep.

“Together, we will build a developed India,” he declared, leaving the crowd inspired and hopeful for a brighter future.

In the Ghazipur Lok Sabha constituency, the main contest is between Afzal Ansari of the Samajwadi Party and Paras Nath Rai of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Voting for the seat will take place in the seventh phase on June 1.

# CM Yogi lauds Modi govt for curbing terrorism effectively

PNS/PTI ■ VARANASI/BALLIA

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath hailed the Narendra Modi government for effectively curbing terrorism in the country during the last 10 years.

Addressing an election meeting at Assi Ghat in Varanasi on Saturday evening, Yogi said that prior to 2014, terrorist incidents took place frequently and even in Kashi bombs were exploded at Sankat Mochan temple, court premises, ghat etc. “Explosions also took place in Ayodhya, Lucknow and other places,” he pointed out.

Yogi said that before 2014, the country faced severe security issues with frequent terrorist incidents creating an atmosphere of fear among people, but Congress remained a mute spectator to this. “In contrast, there has not been a single terrorist incident in the last 10 years,” he asserted.

“Today, Pakistan rushes to give explanations, denying involvement even when a firecracker goes off. Once a sponsor of terrorism, Pakistan is now unable to protect itself,” he stated.

Prior to this, while addressing a public meeting in Mughalsarai area under Chandauli Lok Sabha constituency in favour of Union Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey, Yogi said that today Chandauli was setting new records of development as the residents of this trans-Ganga district were getting the maximum benefit from the waterway.

“The memorial built here in the name of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay is a living example of this. The beautification of Lord Markandeya Dham

along with Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Kashi is attracting everyone. A medical college in the name of Baba Keena Ram is ready in Chandauli,” he said, adding that the roads are being built on four loans and a network of flyovers and bridges is being constructed in the district.

Yogi said that as Chandauli was an agriculture dominated area and the farmers were being given the benefit of new facilities for irrigation. Addressing a rally in Ballia on Saturday, Yogi alleged that the previous Samajwadi Party and Congress governments were negligent in dealing with terrorism due to vote bank and appeasement politics.

He made these remarks while addressing an election rally in Maniyar in Ballia district in support of BJP candidate from Salempur Lok Sabha constituency Ravindra Kushwaha.

“When we asked the then government to deal with terrorism, they used to say – How! Due to vote bank and appeasement politics, they were negligent in dealing with terrorism,” he said.

“When the SP was in power in UP and the Congress was in power at the Centre, there were bomb blasts in Kashi, Ayodhya and in Lucknow. There was no corner of the country left where bomb blasts did not occur,” he added.

He said the Congress government then used to make excuses for not taking strict action against terrorists. “They lacked the will to take action. They were negligent because of appeasement and vote bank,” he added.

“It is clear from the enthusiasm of the common people in the trends of the sixth phase that once again the Modi government is going to be formed on June 4 and the target of crossing 400 is going to be achieved,” Yogi said.



# INDI Alliance engaged in anti-Hindu politics: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a strong reaction to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee’s controversial remarks about globally renowned Sanatani spiritual institutions like Bharat Sevashram Sangha and Ramakrishna Mission, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the entire INDI Alliance, including the Congress, Trinamool Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Samajwadi Party and others, engaged in anti-Hindu politics.

Talking to the media in the Gorakhnath temple complex before leaving for Ballia to campaign for the Lok Sabha elections on Saturday morning, Chief Minister Yogi accused the INDI Alliance of prioritising power over nation. “These parties want power at the cost of the country and no Indian will accept this,” he remarked.

Referring to the controversial statement made by TMC chief Mamata Banerjee against Bharat Sevashram Sangha and Ramakrishna Mission in West

Bengal, Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that both organisations are esteemed religious and spiritual institutions in India.

He praised Ramakrishna Mission, which follows the ideals of Swami Vivekananda, for its commendable work in promoting the values and principles of Sanatan Dharma and India’s spiritual heritage across the country and the world.

“Similarly, Bharat Sevashram Sangha is an influential spiritual organisation, which has done commendable work in promoting the values and principles of Sanatan Dharma both within India and globally, following the ideals of Swami Pranavananda. Both organisations have also advanced numerous service projects worldwide,” he stated.

Chief Minister Yogi further pointed that opposing Sanatan Dharma and Hindus was the foundation of the politics of the INDI Alliance and all its constituents, including Congress, SP, TMC, RJD and Aam Aadmi Party, and the statements made

by its leaders, including Mamata Banerjee, reflected their frustration over impending defeat.

Praising Ramakrishna Mission and Bharat Sevashram Sangha for their extensive efforts in promoting spirituality and culture through commendable service projects both in India and around the world, Chief Minister Yogi cited Swami Vivekananda, who had proudly declared, “We should say with pride that we are Hindus.”

Chief Minister Yogi stated that the followers and devotees of these esteemed organisations will give a befitting reply to Congress, TMC and the INDI Alliance. He compared the current situation to the era of Ravana when sages were threatened, asserting that Sanatan Dharma will not be intimidated by such provocations and will respond decisively.

Chief Minister Yogi stated that while the INDI Alliance parties are threatening Hindu religious and spiritual institutions, they are also undermining the rights of backward

caste people.

He pointed out that in 2010, the TMC government in West Bengal diluted OBC reservations by including 118 Muslim castes in the OBC category, depriving millions of individuals from backward castes of reservation benefits over the past 14 years. Yogi demanded an apology from Mamata Banerjee’s TMC government and Congress for this injustice meted out to the OBC community. He emphasised that taking away the rights of youth and citizens is unacceptable and contrary to the principles of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, who clearly stated that reservations should not be based on religion.

The UP chief minister stated that implementing reservations based on religion is part of a conspiracy to further divide India. He praised the Kolkata High Court’s decision, calling it highly commendable. This ruling, he added, is a strong rebuke to the TMC, Congress, and other INDI Alliance parties.

PNS ■ VARANASI

Thousands of people thronged the roadsides as Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Dimple Yadav, the sitting MP and wife of Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, took out an impressive roadshow here on Saturday evening in favour of Congress candidate from Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency Ajay Rai.

Priyanka was attired in sky blue salwar-kameez while Dimple was wearing a purple coloured saree.

This roadshow was a reply by two women campaigners of INDIA Bloc to the recent roadshow of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate from Varanasi, Narendra Modi, who a week later, also addressed a women’s conference here.

The roadshow started from Durga Mandir in the evening, covering the areas in southern parts of the city while passing through two assembly segments of this parliamentary constituency. The entire route was flooded with Congress and SP posters.

The top female star campaigners of Congress and SP landed at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport at Babatpur and from there, they first visited Kal Bhairav temple, where they offered prayers. A day prior to his nomination, Modi culminated his roadshow at Kashi Vishwanath temple.

Priyanka and Dimple adopted a different route than that of



Modi except Lanka. Modi’s roadshow mainly passed through the densely-populated old city areas parallel to river Ganga but Priyanka and Dimple passed through many new colonies.

After offering prayers at Kal Bhairav temple, they reached a leading temple of Shakti (Goddess Durga) as it is a temple of Maa Kushmanda, fourth form of Goddess Durga. After offering prayers at Durga Mandir, Priyanka and Dimple started their roadshow and after passing through Tulsi Manas Mandir, Tridev Mandir and Sankatmochan Temple road, they reached Sant Ravidas Gate. Then crossing the entire Lanka market, they paid trib-

ute to Mahamana’s statue near BHU main gate. From there, along with BHU boundary walls and passing through Trauma Centre, Bhagwanpur and Chittapur, they reached Seer Govardhan to have a darshan at Sant Ravidas Janam Sthan Mandir.

Throughout this four-kilometre-long roadshow of Priyanka and Dimple, hundreds of Congress and SP workers and thousands of residents were present at roadsides and at many places to greet the two star campaigners, who were on a vehicle along with Ajay Rai. At many places, the party supporters threw flower petals on the two campaigners.

Elaborate security arrangements were made throughout

the roadshow route apart from imposing several traffic restrictions.

Earlier, while addressing the public meetings, including at Lamhi Maidan and Susuvahi of Bajardiha, the Congress candidate said that the interests of Kashi and the identity of Kashi were affected by the dominance of Gujarat culture here during the last 10 years.

Ajay Rai said that no factories except one or two very small plants were set up and even there almost all the permanent employment was given to the Gujaratis because most of the construction companies were of Gujaratis. “Banaras is in trouble for employment and the local people want a change,” he said.

# Akhilesh mocks BJP over its ‘400 paar’ slogan

PTI ■ DEORIA/GORAKHPUR

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday claimed the BJP’s “400 paar” slogan for the Lok Sabha polls would fall flat and the party would yearn to win even 140 seats.

He also claimed the companies that donated heavily to the BJP through electoral bonds have been recovering the money by increasing prices of commodities, leading to high inflation across the nation.

Addressing a joint rally here in support of the Congress’ Deoria Lok Sabha candidate Akhilesh Pratap Singh and SP candidate Ajay Kumar Singh from Kushinagar, Yadav claimed a “wind of change is blowing in Uttar Pradesh.”

“Witnessing the huge support for the INDIA bloc, I am confident that when the votes are counted on June 4, the BJP will definitely be wiped out from Uttar Pradesh,” the SP chief said, adding not just the government at the Centre, the media would also undergo change after the Lok Sabha poll results.

Attacking the BJP over its “400-par” slogan, he said, “Those raising the slogan are going to lose 400 (seats).”

In a swipe at the ruling party, Yadav asked the gathering how many seats beyond 400 are left out of 543 (the total Lok Sabha seats in the country). On receiving the reply, he said, “I want to tell those who are dreaming of 143 seats that 140 crore people will make them yearn even to get 140 seats.”

“The people of Purvanchal welcome us with great enthusiasm and also bid



farewell with pomp and show. Those who came here in 2014, their departure is certain in 2024.”

The Samajwadi Party chief asked people to beware of temptations while casting votes and advised them, “Wherever you see BJP people, ask them why does the party want to change the Constitution and why does it want to end reservation.”

“Every word and every promise of the BJP turned out to be false. Far from getting the facilities that should have been made available in a 10-year central and seven-year state government, the future of farmers and youth is in danger.”

“The poor want a government that works,” Yadav said at the rally, adding the Agniveer scheme will be scrapped if the INDIA bloc forms government at the Centre.

Voting in Deoria, Gorakhpur and Kushinagar will be held in the seventh phase on June 1.

# Mayawati targets BJP and Cong

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Saturday claimed that people have abandoned the BJP and the Congress because of their bad policies.

Addressing an election rally in Gorakhpur in support of BSP candidate Javed Simnani, Mayawati alleged that the BJP was following wrong policies just like the Congress.

The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said the “atrocities against the minorities under the guise of Hindutva have reached their peak.”

“Along with this, the condition of poor people belonging to the upper castes is also not very good. Especially, the Brahmin community is being harassed on a large scale in the entire state,” Mayawati said. She urged people to not let the BJP or the Congress win the Lok Sabha elections, asserting if the BSP is voted to power then it would ensure welfare for all.

“If the BSP comes to power at the Centre, it will work on the policy of ‘sarvajan hitaya, sarvajan sukhay’ (welfare for all). By doing this, the unfulfilled dream of BSP founder Kanshi Ram ji can be fulfilled,” she said.

Referring to the Central government’s free ration scheme, Mayawati said, “The little free ration being given to you will not benefit you permanently. I want to tell you that the ration given to you for free does not come from the pockets of the BJP and the RSS people but from your tax money.”

Mayawati also hit out at the Samajwadi Party.

“When the SP was in power, it changed the names of districts and institutions which we made in the names of our saints and gurus. This shows their (SP’s) bad intentions towards these saints and gurus. In such conditions, I believe that you will not vote for the SP,” she said.

# Priyanka flays PM for ‘mujra’ remark

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Saturday hit out PM Narendra Modi for his ‘mujra’ remark to target the INDIA bloc, and said no prime minister has ever used such words for opposition leaders in the history of the country.

She said the entire country respects the post of prime minister and it is his responsibility to maintain the dignity of the post.

The prime minister has become nervous and has forgotten he is a representative of the country and of people, and such words should not have come out of his mouth, Vadra said here.

Earlier in the day, addressing rallies in neighbouring Bihar, Modi asserted he will foil opposition INDIA bloc’s ‘plans’ to

rob SCs, STs and OBCs of their quota and divert these to Muslims. “They (the opposition bloc) may remain enslaved and perform ‘mujra’ to please their vote bank,” the PM said.

Vadra responded to his statement at a joint election rally with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav in Gorakhpur in support of INDIA bloc candidate Kajal Nishad and Bansgaon candidate Sadal Prasad.

“Modi ji gave a speech in Bihar and uttered such words for opposition leaders which no prime minister in the history of the country would have said,” Vadra asserted as she greeted the crowd with “*Raua sabhe ke Ram-Ram*” in Bhojpuri.

“Your faith and your hopes were once attached to Narendra Modi, but isn’t it the responsibility of the prime minister to maintain the dignity of the post?” she added.

Reciting a composition of famous saint Baba Gorakhnath, the Congress general secretary said, “The entire country respects the post of prime minister and we also respect him.”

“But the way he (Modi) is speaking today, the sad thing is that his reality has been exposed.”

She said the prime minister calls the entire country his family, but it does not reflect in his words. “Family members always have respect for each other (*anko ki sharam*) that should not be lost, that should always be kept,” she said.

At his rally in Bihar, PM Modi launched a scathing attack on the opposition alliance ‘INDIA’ and accused it of doing “slavery” and “mujra” for the Muslim vote bank.

“Bihar is the land which has given a new direction to the fight for social justice. I want to

announce on its soil that I will foil the plans of the ‘INDI’ coalition to loot the rights of SC, ST and OBC and give them to Muslims. They can remain slaves and do ‘mujra’ to please their vote bank.”

At her rally in Gorakhpur, Vadra said it is the land of Mahatma Buddha, Saint Kabir, Guru Matsyendra Nath, Guru Gorakhnath and “I feel very proud to be here.”

“This land is a sacred land, the message of love, justice and harmony has always gone from here to the entire country. This message is the foundation of the Constitution, this is the foundation of our society, our culture and this is the foundation of our country’s democracy,” she said.

She said the unemployment in the country today is the highest in 45 years and it the “biggest problem.”



# Prominent leaders exercise franchise



Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya shows his finger marked with indelible ink after casting his vote at a polling station during the sixth phase of the Lok Sabha elections, in Prayagraj on Saturday PTI



Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate from Allahabad constituency Neeraj Tripathi and wife Kavita Tripathi show their fingers marked with indelible ink after casting vote at a polling booth in Prayagraj on Saturday PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Several prominent leaders, including Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya cast his vote at Jwala Devi Inter College polling booth here on Saturday along with his wife, Raj Kumari Devi Maurya. He said, "Voting is our right on this important festival of democracy. It is also our duty. I am also a voter of Phulpur Lok Sabha. That is why I have come to vote with my family. I appeal to everyone that everyone must go to vote".

Cabinet minister Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi' cast his vote with his family. In a conversation with reporters outside the polling booth, he said, "The opposition will have to mourn after June 4, because the NDA government is going to be formed for the third time under the leadership of Narendra Modi". He claimed that this time the public is voting on the issue of development only, irre-

## Only one vote cast at booth

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Only one vote was cast at the polling booth of Umapur Kala village of Meja assembly constituency of Allahabad Lok Sabha constituency. The villagers here had boycotted the voting demanding an overbridge.

Reports received here said that despite the persuasion of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Neeraj Tripathi and all the officials, including Chief Development Officer (CDO) Gaurav Kumar, the villagers did not agree to vote. The chief

development officer was present here for several hours. After the voting time ended at 6 pm the CDO said that only one vote was cast here.

A total of 989 voters are registered at booth number 176 of Umapur Kala polling station. In this, the people of the village had boycotted the voting demanding an overbridge. There was no agent of any party at the booth. The chief development officer stayed in the village for three and a half hours and kept requesting the villagers continuously, but the villagers did

not listen and insisted on voting only after written assurance. The villagers said that the district magistrate should come to the spot and give a written assurance.

Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Neeraj Tripathi agreed with the problem of villagers and called their demands justified. He also appealed to vote, but the villagers did not listen.

The officials tried to convince them since morning but the villagers were not ready to listen. Only one vote was cast at this booth.

Kavita Tripathi and BJP Phulpur Lok Sabha candidate Praveen Patel at a primary school at Jhunsu Andawa. MP Rita Bahuguna Joshi also cast her vote at the Boys' High School and College polling booth.

Beside MP Kesari Devi Patel cast her vote at Mary Lucas Inter College, Mayor Umesh Chandra Kesarwani at KN Katju Inter College, MLA Siddharth Nath Singh at Jwala Devi Inter College and MLA Harshvardhan at Sewa Samiti

Inter College.

A unique initiative was taken to attract voters at a sweets shop located in Rajapur here. Two days ago, the proprietor of the establishment had announced that those who come here after voting will be given free Rasmalai. Ink was seen on the finger of the people who were being given Rasmalai here. After giving Rasmalai, a seal of the shop was also put on their hands.

There are 12 assembly seats in Allahabad and Phulpur parliamentary constituencies. But two assembly seats in this, Pratappur and Handia, both of these come in Bhadohi Lok Sabha constituency. There are a total of 18,25,730 voters in Allahabad parliamentary constituency. In which 9,88,343 are male, 837,149 are female and 238 are transgender voters.

Similarly, there are a total of 20,67,043 voters in Phulpur parliamentary constituency. In this, 11,22,020 are male,

## Polling in Pindra assembly area held peacefully



District Magistrate S Rajalingam inspecting voting at a polling centre of Pindra area under Machhalishahr Lok Sabha seat in Varanasi on Saturday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate/ District Election Officer S Rajalingam inspected the critical booths of Subhadra Kumar Inter College (Basni) polling station in Pindra assembly area of Machhalishahr (SC) Lok Sabha seat during the sixth phase of voting of Lok Sabha General Election 2024 on Saturday. As per the State Election report, the polling percent in Pindra was 56.28 per cent whereas overall voting percentage in Machhalishahr Lok Sabha seat was 54.43 per cent, including 55.65 per cent in Kerakat assembly segment, 52.19 per cent in Machhalishahr, 54.00 per cent in Mariyahu and 54.05 per cent in Zafrabad. All the other assembly segments except Pindra of Machhalishahr are in Jaunpur district.

During the visit, he saw booth numbers 341 to 345 and learned about the voting situation. By 2.45 pm, out of 999 votes, 247 male and 228 female votes had been cast at this booth. Apart from this, the district election officer also inspected the pink booth at Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Inter College located in Siswan Bazar, where he saw booth numbers 220 to 223 and inquired about voting. At this polling station, out of 1,177 votes, 497 votes had been cast till 2.55 pm.

He also inquired about necessary arrangements like adequate tents, seating and pure drinking water etc at the polling stations. Overall, the polling in Pindra assembly area was held peacefully and rush of voters was seen at some polling centres despite scorching heat.

## Expose lies of opposition: Nadda



BJP president JP Nadda addressing party workers in Varanasi on Friday night.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president JP Nadda strongly criticised the opposition for playing a negative politics, saying while Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi has put the country in the leading place in the world, the opposition wants to take the country backward by continuously adopting negativity and spreading lies. In a

meeting with senior office-bearers of BJP at the party's central election office here on Friday night, Nadda called upon the party leaders to expose the lies of the opposition.

"The opposition leaders are saying that if they get a chance they will restore Article 370 and they also opposed the construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya and government deci-

sion on triple talaq apart from raising the demand for reservation on the basis of religion", he said, calling upon the workers to highlight these negative thinking of the opposition among the common people and expose their lies harming the integrity and unity of the country. Appreciating the hard work of the workers and their strategy in Varanasi, he asked the party workers to contact the

voters by going door to door. "The people of the city have immense love for the PM as Kashi's development model is an example for everyone", he said, adding that with the support of the public, we have to create a record in this election.

The meeting was conducted by Varanasi Lok Sabha convenor and former MLA Surendra Narayan Singh 'Audhe'.

Prominent among those present in the meeting were Lok Sabha coordinator Ashwini Tyagi, Gujarat Organisation general secretary Ratnakar, MLC Arun Pathak, Uttar Pradesh Ministers Ravindra Jaiswal and Dr Dayashankar Mishra, Mayor Ashok Tiwari, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya, MLAs Dr Neelkanth Tiwari, Saurabh Srivastava and Dr Sunil Patel, district Bharatiya Janata Party president and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma, city chief Vidyasagar Rai, MLCs Ashok Dhawan and Dharmendra Rai, state BJP secretaries Archana Mishra and Meena Choubey, national party spokesperson KK Sharma, former MP Dr Rajesh Mishra, ex-Mayors Ram Gopal Mohle and Mridula Jaiswal and regional media in-charge Navratan Rathi.

## Emphasis on 100 per cent voting



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

An awareness towards 100 per cent voting was raised through environmental protection at Mumukshu Bhavan in Assi area here on Saturday on the guidance of Commandant of 95 CRPF Battalion under the leadership of brand ambassador of Ganga Haritima Abhiyan and President of Srijan Samajik Vikas Nyas Anil Kumar Singh. The event was attended by several Dandiswami Sadhus. A seminar was also organised in

which environmental protection and water conservation were the main subjects of discussion. The chief guest of the seminar was Assistant Commandant of 95 CRPF Battalion Gyan Ranjan Rai while special guests were social workers Sudhir Singh and Madan Ram Chaurasia. Srijan chief, while presiding over the event, motivated everyone to vote and appealed to the people to keep their lifestyle close to nature as per Indian culture, just like the saints of our country do welfare of the society by

keeping themselves in close proximity to nature. Chief guest Gyan Ranjan Rai administered oath to everyone for 100 per cent voting and said that the country has to be protected by planting as many saplings as possible while facing natural challenges. Madan Ram Chaurasia, Technical Advisor of Srijan, appealed to everyone to protect the environment. On the occasion, saplings were planted along with everyone, Sudhir Singh and others. Praveen Singh of CRPF along with the team were also present

and they gave call for 100 per cent voting and plantation and raised slogan of 'Swachh Kashi, Sunder Kashi',

**PAS ANNUAL MEETING:** Prof Kaushalendra Kumar Singh and Sanjiv Singh of Department of Statistics, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) attended the Population Association of Singapore (PAS) 2024 annual meeting, held in conjunction with CFP's 10th anniversary celebration recently. They presented their paper entitled 'Determinants of Husbands Engagement in Family Planning as Partner: Evidence from a District-Level Study in Uttar Pradesh, India', in the Population Association of Singapore's annual conference at the National University of Singapore. Study highlights that joint effect of positive attitude and media exposure made a more significant contribution in determining the husbands' engagement in family planning in the region. A particular strength of this study is that the results of this study will help to understand the mechanics of male involvement in family planning in the country. This study is a baseline study and will help policy makers in assessing effects of on-going policies regarding family planning in future.

## BHU constitutes committee to review bed allocation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The ongoing hunger strike by Prof Om Shankar, head of Cardiology department, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) took a twist when the BHU administration has constituted a committee under the chairmanship of a former Director of AIIMS, New Delhi for review of bed allocation in its hospital system so as to optimise the resources for best patient care. Now the BHU administration has also replaced Prof Om Shankar from the headship of Cardiology department. Prof Om Shankar is on hunger strike for over two weeks in protest against the less number of beds allotted to the heart patients in Sir Sunderlal Hospital (SSH) which is against the guidelines of

National Health Commission (NHC) whereas this leading hospital serves huge population of the region.

As the parliamentary elections are going on across the nation these days, the hunger strike of the reputed cardiologist received good political support, especially from non-ruling parties or social groups because the matter is related to the treatment of poor patients. The BHU's recent move indicates how it feels the growing pressure. According to BHU's release, the committee will consider the NMC guidelines, the best practices in other premier medical institutions, manpower and infrastructure and the patient load. The committee is requested to provide its recommendation within 15 days. The release also says, "It is the persistent effort of the univer-

sity administration to maximise the facilities for medical research, academics and patient care. It is important to mention that IMS ranks among the best five medical institutions of India from the last 10 years and with such efforts, the institute is expected to rank among the top three medical institutions of India and may provide the best facilities for the patient care". Meanwhile, another BHU release has informed that due to non-availability of Prof Om Shankar to discharge his duties as head of the Department of Cardiology because of his ongoing hunger strike and on the recommendation of Director, IMS-BHU the Vice-Chancellor has appointed Prof Vikas Agarwal to take the charge of Head of the Cardiology department in IMS-BHU with immediate effect till further orders.

Earlier, more than two dozen social workers associated with organisations like Right to Health Campaign, Sanjha Sanskritik Manch, Banaras Nagar Samaj etc gathered at Shastri Ghat near Varanapuri and took out a procession till the district headquarters in support of the demands of Prof Om Shankar. They submitted their memorandum addressed to the President of India to the District Magistrate's representative, ADM (City). They urged the President to take immediate cognizance of the demands raised by Prof Om Shankar. Prominent among those who were present in the delegation were Dr Anand Prakash Tiwari, Father Anand, Jagannath Kushwaha, Vallabhacharya Pandey, Jagriti Rahi, Ram Janam, Satish Singh, Dr Anoop Shramik and Manish Sharma.

## Street play for creating awareness among passengers staged at Banaras station

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A street play for creating awareness among the passengers and others towards environmental protection and global warming was staged at Banaras railway station here on Saturday under Mission LiFE. Similarly, cleanliness and other programmes were organised at the circulating area of Ballia railway station during the day apart from many other railway stations of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER).

Earlier, a public awareness campaign was organised on lifestyle for environment at Banaras and other stations. At Banaras station, chief commercial inspector (CHI) Dr D Narayan and health inspector Kamlesh Singh inspected the catering units to maintain hygiene in food items and checked the food licenses of the stalls and medical certificates of



Awareness programme under Mission LiFE being held at Banaras station on Saturday.

the vendors. In the drive, passengers were motivated to maintain cleanliness, adopt an environmentally friendly lifestyle and save natural resources.

Under the mission, on the guidance of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava and Senior Divisional Mechanical

Engineer (EnHM) Apoorva Swarnkar, before the World Environment Day, such awareness programmes are being organised to protect the environment and make the general public aware to face the climate change. In this sequence, a public awareness rally was taken out under Mission LiFE at Ghazipur City station. The

participants made the passengers and others aware of their responsibilities for the protection of the environment. Along with this, the food and beverage items sold at the food stalls at the station were inspected by CHI Usha Kumari. Apart from this, a public awareness rally was also organised at Azamgarh railway station to make the common people aware about taking steps to improve the environment. CHI Sanjay Kumar gave cotton bags to the passengers and suggested not to use plastic in daily work. Along with this, a seminar was organised at the station and information was given about the disadvantages of not recycling plastic and how it affects the environment. Along with this, the CHI administered an oath to railway employees and railway passengers to adopt environment friendly lifestyle.



# Will soon start process of holding Assembly polls in JK: EC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Given the healthy trend of voting in Jammu and Kashmir in the Lok Sabha polls, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said here on Saturday the poll body will "very soon" initiate the process of holding Assembly polls in the Union Territory. He also said the people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve their Government. Responding to a question on the turnout in various seats of Jammu and Kashmir and if assembly elections could be held soon, Chief Election Commissioner said the poll panel is very encouraged by people's participation in the Parliamentary polls. "It's music to (my) ears. People -- youth, women -- are happily turning out in large numbers (to vote). The roots of democracy are being further strengthened, people are participating," he said. They



deserve their government. We will initiate that process very soon ... very encouraged to do this," the CEC added. Announcing the schedule for the Lok Sabha elections in March, Kumar said holding assembly and parliamentary elections simultaneously was not practical due to logistical and security reasons. Whenever Assembly elections are held in Jammu and Kashmir, they will be the first since the August 2019 abrogation of Article 370 of the

Constitution and the division of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories. The electoral exercise in Jammu and Kashmir is usually spread over a month. Following a delimitation exercise, the number of assembly seats has gone up from 83 to 90, excluding those allocated to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. In December, the Supreme Court directed the poll panel to hold assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir by September 30.

# CPM, CPI leaders vote, urge voters to exercise franchise

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Leaders from the Left parties LCPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, polit bureau members Brinda Karat and Prakash Karat, and CPI leader Annie Raja were among the leaders who cast their votes in Delhi on Saturday and appealed to voters to exercise their franchise. The Left leaders also expressed confidence in the Opposition INDIA Bloc emerging victorious in the ongoing polls. "I voted for India, for my country. I voted for democracy, unity of my country and my Constitution. The people of India will win. Therefore India will win. That is what I hope, I expect, and am sure of. The Prime Minister of India himself, every day he speaks only to sharpen communal polarisation... The Election Commission has to take cognisance. Unfortunately, it is not doing so. But the people of India are opposing it," said Yechury. Annie Raja, who is in the fray from Kerala's Wayanad seat

against Congress' Rahul Gandhi, cast her vote at a polling booth in New Delhi's Sanchar Bhawan. "This election is a crucial election for the country, the people and their constitutional rights. So it is a historic election in that way... Now few seats are left, but in those constituencies, I appeal to the voters that they all vote for the INDIA alliance candidates," Annie Raja said. "The INDIA alliance is hoping and we are working to defeat the present communal, fascist government, and we are pretty confident we will win the election and form the government," she said, adding that the Left Front is also looking at increasing its tally, including in Kerala where Congress-led United Democratic Front is its main Opposition. Brinda Karat, who cast her vote at a polling station at St Columba's School in New Delhi, said she had to wait for almost an hour to cast her vote as the battery of the EVM control unit at her polling booth "drained out". Karat had gone to cast her vote at a polling booth set up at St Columba's School in the New Delhi constituency. She said she had to wait for around 50 minutes before she could cast her ballot, expressing concerns over arrangements made by the Election Commission.

er, said voting was halted only for 15 minutes due to the battery issue and was resumed later. Raising concerns over the arrangements Brinda Karat said, "I have written a complaint here. How is it that in the morning at 9 am the battery of the machine is down? What are the arrangements that they have made?" she said. Former CPI (M) general secretary and politburo member Prakash Karat said, "I voted today in defence of democracy, and against dictatorship because this is a very important election for the country," he said. Brinda alleged she had to wait for almost an hour to cast her vote as the battery of the EVM control unit at her polling booth "drained out". Karat had gone to cast her vote at a polling booth set up at St Columba's School in the New Delhi constituency. She said she had to wait for around 50 minutes before she could cast her ballot, expressing concerns over arrangements made by the Election Commission.

# Priyanka confident of INDIA Bloc win

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday said unemployment and price rise are the "biggest issues" in the country and exuded confidence that the INDIA bloc will emerge victorious in the Lok Sabha elections, with an undercurrent in its favour. She made the remarks here after casting her ballot in the morning. Exuding confidence that the Opposition INDIA bloc will emerge victorious in the elections, she said price rise and unemployment are the "biggest issues" for everyone in the country. Asked about Congress leaders voting for AAP candidates and vice versa, she said, "Setting aside our differences, we are voting for our Constitution and democracy. I am proud of it." Later, she told reporters that there is an undercurrent and people have the feeling that their concerns have not been

looked into. "BJP leaders talk about all kinds of things but do not discuss the main issues of unemployment and price rise. People are fed up now," the Congress general secretary said. Asked what is working in favour of the Congress, Priyanka Gandhi said, "We are talking about people's issues since the beginning and this is what we have been campaigning on and our manifesto also talks about." Priyanka Gandhi's husband Robert Vadra, their daughter Miraya Vadra and son Raihan Vadra also cast their ballots. "I want people to come and vote, that's my only message," Miraya Vadra said after casting her vote for the first time. Voting for the sixth and penultimate phase of the Lok Sabha elections are being held on Saturday in 58 constituencies in six states and two Union Territories, including all seven seats in Delhi and the Jangal Mahal region of West Bengal.

# Vice Admiral Gurcharan takes over as NDA Commandant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Vice Admiral Gurcharan Singh assumed the appointment of Commandant, National Defence Academy (NDA) on Saturday from Vice Admiral Ajay Kocchar. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy (Khadakwasla), he was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1990, defence ministry said here. The Flag Officer has held several appointments, both afloat and ashore. As a specialist in Gunnery and Missiles, he has served onboard Indian Naval Ships Ranjit and Prahar. He holds the distinction of being part of the commissioning crew of three Indian constructed warships, viz, INS Brahmaputra/ as Gunnery Officer, INS Shivalik/ as Executive Officer, and INS Kochi/ as Commanding Officer. He has also commanded INS Vidyut and INS Khukri. He has been an instructor at INS Dronacharya (Gunnery School) and the Deputy



Commandant of Naval War College, Goa. His staff tenures include appointments at Directorate of Personnel/ NHQ, as the Assistant Chief of Personnel (HRD), Directorate of Naval Intelligence/ NHQ and Indian Naval Work-up Team. On 29 November 2022, he took over as the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet. During this tenure, the fleet maintained high tempo of

operational preparedness with a laser sharp focus on the mission of 'Ordnance on Target. On elevation to the rank of Vice Admiral on 15 Jan 2024, the flag Officer was appointed as Controller Personnel Service wherein various initiatives were undertaken to improve working condition of personnel and naval community. He was awarded the Admiral Katar? Trophy for standing

'First in Overall Order of Merit of his batch during ab initio training. Under his command, INS Khukri was awarded the Chief of Naval Staff 'Unit Citation' in December 2011 for overall operational effectiveness and successful conduct of anti-piracy operations. He has also been awarded the FOC-in-C Commendation (2002), the Nao Sena Medal (2020), and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (2024). His academic qualifications include an MSc and MPhil (Defence & Strategic Studies). In addition to the Staff Course at DSSC Wellington, Higher Command at Naval War College, and NDC courses in India, he has attended the Maritime Intelligence Course at National Intelligence University (NIU), Washington, and the United Nations Staff Officers Course (UNSOC) at Stockholm, Sweden. With Vice Admiral Gurcharan Singh at the helm of affairs, the National Defence Academy will gain immensely from his vast experience and exposure in all arenas of operations, training, and human resource management.

# Chauhan bats for joint efforts to utilise resources for training

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan visited Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment (ASTE) and Air Force Test Pilots School (AFTPS) in Bengaluru and underscored the need to further enhance the joint efforts to efficiently utilise the scarce resources of the nation for training. He also urged all officers to continue exhibiting professional excellence towards bolstering the operational might of the nation, Defence Ministry said here on Saturday while giving details about the CDS visit on Friday. As part of his tour, General Chauhan was briefed on the ongoing trials at ASTE and flight test training activities of AFTPS alongside aspects of the organisational roles of these unique institutions of IAF. He was conducted around the facilities available at ASTE and AFTPS with the demon-



stration of major indigenous projects as part of Aatmnirbharata and the training infrastructure. The CDS also visited the well-archived ASTE museum which houses artifacts depicting significant historical milestones along the five-decade-long journey of ASTE and AFTPS. The CDS presided over the valedictory function of the 46 Flight Test Course, which was conducted at AFTPS. A total of 17 students have graduated.

This event was hosted by the ASTE as the traditional Suranjan Das Dinner where not only the graduating students but also their spouses were given a certificate of qualification. Five students were also awarded trophies for their outstanding performance under various categories. The students who were awarded were Sqn Ldr A Berwal with the Suranjan Das Trophy for best Test Pilot, Sqn Ldr Kapil

Yadav - CAS Trophy for best flight evaluation, Sqn Ldr V Supriya - Maharaja Hanumanth Singhji Sword for best FTE, Sqn Ldr Rajnish Rai - Kapil Bhargava Trophy for best in ground subjects and Lt Cdr Gaurav Tyagi - Dunlop Trophy for most promising FTE and flight evaluation. In his valedictory address, the CDS complimented Commandant ASTE and all staff of AFTPS for maintaining the highest standards of training in this niche field and their crucial role in capability building and modernisation of the Indian Air Force, including the upgradation of the military aviation environment of the nation. He congratulated the graduating officers, emphasising the importance of professional competence to meet the quality and safety requirements for operational preparedness, and extolled them to continue to strive hard to achieve higher professional capability in their journey as test crew.

# Actively monitoring cyclonic storm Remal progress, says ICG



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is actively monitoring the development of cyclonic storm "Remal" originating in the Central Bay of Bengal which is expected to escalate into a Severe Cyclonic Storm by Saturday, officials said here on Friday. They said the system is likely to make landfall at North/ North-West Bay of Bengal near West Bengal Coast on the night of May 26/27. The ICG has initiated comprehensive preemptive measures to ensure minimal loss of life and property at sea. Coordination efforts are underway with concerned state administrations and stakeholders to facilitate a synchronized response to potential contingencies arising from the cyclonic storm. All pertinent information regarding the evolving situation has been disseminated to stakeholders to facilitate preparedness and coordinated action. To ensure the safety of maritime traffic, the ICG's Remote Operating Stations at Haldia and Paradip are broadcasting regular and mul-

tiling VHF alerts, advising transit merchant mariners to take necessary precautions. Additionally, ICG ships and aircraft are conducting surveillance along the projected path of the cyclonic storm to provide timely assistance and support. Merchant vessels at anchorages have been alerted, and respective port authorities have been advised to take appropriate actions. Despite the fishing ban in force, the Fisheries Department has been cautioned to inform country boats in their respective areas about the developing situation. In a collaborative effort, the ICG has notified Bangladesh Coast Guard authorities, urging them to undertake necessary preparations and disseminate alerts to Bangladeshi fishermen and merchant marine vessels. Moreover, ICG ships and aircraft are on standby for immediate deployment in search and rescue missions as required. Nine disaster relief teams have been positioned at strategic locations including Haldia, Paradip, Gopalpur, and Frazerganj, ready to provide immediate assistance in the event of an emergency.

# Badshahpur Assembly MLA Rakesh Daultabad dies of cardiac arrest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ GURUGRAM

Badshahpur assembly MLA Band Haryana Agro Industries Corporation (HAIC) chairman Rakesh Jhangu alias Rakesh Daultabad died on Saturday at 10.30 am due to cardiac arrest, a family member said. He was 45. Rakesh Daultabad, who was elected as an independent MLA ticket in the 2019 Assembly polls, developed uneasiness and was immediately shifted to a private hospital in the city on Saturday morning. Daultabad is survived by his two sons aged 16 and 21 and

his wife. His younger brother died in 2021 due to COVID-19. "Rakesh's condition had deteriorated at his Sector -22 home and he was shifted to a private hospital. After an initial check-up, he was admitted to the ICU and the doctor provided him with heart attack treatment but he could not respond and expired," Sombir brother of Rakesh Daultabad said. Local politicians had rushed to the hospital to enquire about Daultabad's health. He was the founder of Parivartan Sangh, an organisation that aims at facilitating healthcare, improving education levels, empowering women and taking several

other community initiatives. Rakesh had lost the assembly election twice in 2009 and 2014. In the 2019 assembly election, he fought as an independent candidate and won the election. Congress leaders took to social media to express their grief over the sitting MLA's demise. Meanwhile, Manipal Hospital Palam Vihar, Gurugram in a statement said a member of a legislative assembly, Rakesh Daultabad presented to the ER at 09:05 am with acute chest pain, the ECG was done immediately which showed ST elevation large myocardial infarction (extensive antero-lateral myocardial infarction), just

after the ECG the patient had a massive cardiac arrest and collapsed at 09:15 am. The cardiac massage (CPR) was started immediately, which continued for approx. 45 minutes. There was a recovery of the rhythm and blood pressure around 10:00 am therefore a collective decision was taken immediately for the definite cardiac procedure, he was shifted to the Cath lab, where it was found that the main artery was 100% occluded, which was opened, but due to refractory cardiogenic shock, he could not sustain and could not be revived despite all measures and was declared at 12:45 pm.

# Discovery regarding immune response to VL disease holds immense promise for India

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A discovery by international researchers regarding the immune response to visceral leishmaniasis (VL) holds tremendous promise for India's efforts to combat this deadly disease also known as Kala Azar. As one of the countries most affected by VL, with a significant number of cases reported annually, India has been actively working towards controlling and eliminating the disease. VL is caused by protozoan parasites transmitted by the bite of an infected female phlebotomine sand fly. It is characterised by irregular bouts of fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen and liver, and anaemia. In over 95 per cent of cases, the disease is fatal if left untreated. The discovery of a new CD4 T cell population and its role in combating the Leishmania parasite by the team of scientists by Institut national de la



recherche scientifique (INRS) and McGill University offers opportunities for enhancing India's VL elimination strategies which had missed elimination deadline three times. This discovery, published in the journal Cell Reports, sheds light on a surprising immune mechanism linked to

chronic VL, potentially paving the way for new therapeutic approaches. CD4 T cells are pivotal in defending the body against infections, but maintaining their functionality becomes challenging in chronic infections like leishmaniasis. The newly discovered CD4 T cell

population exhibits unique properties, including self-renewal and differentiation into effector or regulatory cells. This population appears to play a crucial role in preventing the exhaustion of naive CD4 T cells during chronic VL, thereby boosting the immune response against the parasite, said the study. "We have discovered a new CD4 T cell population in mice infected with the parasite responsible for visceral leishmaniasis. These T cells have interesting properties," said Stäger, expert in immunology of infectious diseases. By observing these novel cells, the scientists noticed that they increase in number during the chronic phase of the disease and also that, like progenitor cells, they are capable of self-renewal or differentiation into other effector cells responsible for eliminating the parasite, or regulatory cells that inhibit the host's response. Professor Stäger pointed out

that CD4 T cells normally differentiate into effector cells from "naive" CD4 T cells. But during chronic infections, because of the constant need to generate effector cells, naive CD4 T cells are highly solicited and may become exhausted. "We believe that in the chronic phase of visceral leishmaniasis, the new population we have identified is responsible for generating effector and regulatory cells. This would allow the host to prevent exhaustion of its existing pool of naive CD4 T cells for a certain antigen," explained first author of the study, Sharada Swaminathan. Furthermore, the implications of this discovery extend beyond VL. Similar cell populations have been observed in other chronic infections, suggesting broader therapeutic potential. This opens up possibilities for developing innovative treatments not only for leishmaniasis but also for other chronic infec-

tious diseases prevalent in India, such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. The new lymphocyte population discovered by the INRS team could be a decisive immune booster, taking over from over-solicited naive CD4 T cells. "If we can figure out how to direct this new lymphocyte population to differentiate into a protective effector cell, it could help the host get rid of the Leishmania parasite," added Stäger. Each year, between 700,000 and 1.7 million new cases are reported. The initial target year for the elimination of the disease in India was 2010. This was later extended to 2015, then 2017, and 2020. In October 2023, Bangladesh became the first country in the world to be officially validated by the WHO for eliminating kala azar as a public health problem. Besides India, most cases occur in Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Nepal, and Sudan.



Gurugram registered the lowest turnout at 51.75 per cent. Bhiwani-Mahendragarh recorded a turnout of 56.11 per cent, Faridabad 53.64 per cent, Hisar 53.85 per cent, Karnal 55.71 per cent, Rohtak 58.28 per cent and Sonapat 55.49 per cent. A total of 223 candidates, including Khattar, two Union Ministers and Congress stalwart Kumari Selja, were in the Lok Sabha election fray in Haryana. These include 207 men and 16 women. From the Karnal Assembly seat, nine candidates were in the fray.



# Egypt agrees to send aid trucks through Israeli crossing to Gaza

AP ■ TEK AVIV

Egypt said Friday it has agreed to send United Nations humanitarian aid trucks through Israel's main crossing into Gaza, but it was unclear if they will be able to enter the territory as fighting raged in the southern city of Rafah amid Israel's escalating offensive there. Meanwhile, the bodies of three more hostages killed on Oct 7 were recovered overnight from Gaza, Israel's army said Friday. The CIA chief met in Paris with Israeli and Qatari officials, trying to revive negotiations for a cease-fire and a hostage release. Gaza's humanitarian crisis has spiralled as the UN and other aid agencies say the entry of food and other supplies to them has plunged dramatically since Israel's Rafah offensive began more than two weeks ago. On Friday, the top UN court - the International Court of Justice - ordered Israel to halt the Rafah offensive, though Israel is unlikely to comply. At the heart of the problem lie the two main crossings through which around 300 trucks of aid a day had been flowing into Gaza before the offensive began.

Israeli troops seized the Rafah crossing into Egypt, which has been inoperative since. The nearby Kerem Shalom crossing between Israel and Gaza has remained open, and Israel says it has been sending hundreds of trucks a day into it. But while commercial trucks have successfully crossed, the UN says it cannot reach Kerem Shalom to pick up aid as it enters because fighting in the area makes it too dangerous. As a result, the UN says it has received only 143 trucks from the crossing in the past 19 days. Hundreds of truckloads have been sitting on the Gaza side of the crossing unretrieved, according to Israeli officials, who say UN manpower limitations are to blame. UN and other aid agencies had to rely on the far smaller number of trucks entering daily from a single crossing in northern Gaza and via a US-built pier bringing supplies by sea. Humanitarian groups are scrambling to get food to Palestinians as some 900,000 people flee Rafah, scattering across central and southern Gaza. Aid workers warn Gaza is near famine. UNRWA, the main UN agency

in the humanitarian effort, had to halt food distribution in Rafah city because it had run out of supplies. The Egyptian announcement appeared to resolve a political obstacle on one side of the border. Israel says it has kept the Rafah crossing open and asked Egypt to coordinate with it on sending aid convoys through it. Egypt refused, fearing the Israeli hold will remain permanent, and demanded Palestinians be put back in charge of the facility. The White House has been pressing Egypt to resume the flow of trucks. In a phone call with US President Joe Biden on Friday, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi agreed to allow trucks carrying humanitarian aid and fuel to go to the Kerem Shalom crossing until a solution is found for the Rafah crossing, el-Sissi's office said in a statement. But it remained unclear whether the UN will be able to access additional trucks coming from Egypt. UNRWA did not immediately reply to requests for comment. In a post on social media outlet X on Thursday, it said, "We

could resume (food distribution in Rafah) tomorrow if the crossing reopened; we were provided with safe routes." Mercy Corps, an aid group operating in Gaza, said in a statement Friday that the offensive had caused the "functional closure...of the two main lifelines" of aid and "has brought the humanitarian system to its knees". "If dramatic changes do not occur, including opening all border crossings to safely surge aid into these areas, we fear that a wave of secondary mortality will result, with people succumbing to the combination of hunger, lack of clean water and sanitation, and the spread of disease in areas where there is little medical care," it said. Fighting appeared to escalate in Rafah. Bombardment intensified Friday in eastern parts of the city, near Kerem Shalom, but shelling was also taking place in central, southern and western districts closer to the Rafah crossing, witnesses said. Israeli leaders have said they must uproot Hamas fighters from Rafah to complete the destruction of the group after its Oct 7 attack.

# UN court order on Gaza offensive further isolates US position

AP ■ WASHINGTON

A ruling by the top United Nations court ordering Israel to halt its military offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah has deepened its disconnect with the United States over an operation that faces mounting international condemnation but that American officials describe, at least for now, as limited and targeted. The decision Friday by the International Court of Justice in The Hague adds to the pressure facing an increasingly isolated Israel, coming just days after Norway, Ireland and Spain said they would recognize a Palestinian state, and the chief prosecutor of a separate international court sought arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as leaders of Hamas. The Biden administration stands apart from the global community — though it is opposed to a major offensive in Rafah, the administration also insists that the steps its close ally Israel has taken so far have not crossed red lines. Administration officials so far

have appeared determined to press on with military and political support for Israel following the deadly Hamas attack it endured last October, while also pressuring its ally to avoid a full-scale military operation in densely populated Rafah. "What we have seen so far in terms of Israel's military operations in that area has been more targeted and limited, has not involved major military operations into the heart of dense urban areas," national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters at a White House briefing this week. But, he added, "We now have to see what unfolds from here." A State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity to describe the administration's internal assessment of the situation, said the operation in Gaza had "not yet moved into the core heart of Rafah that gets us to the densest of dense areas." Earlier this month, the White House announced it was pausing a shipment of some 3,500 bombs, including massive 2,000-pound explosives that the Biden administration said

were leading to civilian deaths. President Joe Biden warned during a CNN interview that "if they go into Rafah, I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah." US officials in pressuring Israel had suggested that a major operation was a red line that would undermine stalled negotiations on a deal to return Israeli hostages taken by Hamas and would lead Biden to further dial back what weaponry he would send Israel. But the tone at the White House seemed to take a notable shift this week after Sullivan returned from a visit to Israel, where he said he had been briefed on "refinements" in the Israeli plan to root out Hamas in Rafah, and to Saudi Arabia. During Sullivan's talks with Netanyahu and other officials during the trip, the Israeli side addressed many of Biden's concerns about its plans for Rafah, according to a senior administration official who requested anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter. The official said the administration stopped short of green-

lighting the Israeli plan but Israeli officials' altered planning suggested they were taking Biden's concerns seriously. That assessment may be of little consolation to Palestinians still trapped in Rafah - the southernmost part of the Gaza Strip on the border with Egypt, and the site of a critical crossing for aid. More than 1 million people sought refuge there in recent months after escaping fighting elsewhere but some 900,000 have since fled the city. Israel has brought hundreds of trucks in through the other main border crossing, Kerem Shalom, but the UN and aid groups say Israeli military operations make it dangerous for them to pick up food, water and other supplies for starving Palestinians. The US Agency for International Development says Gaza requires a steady flow of 600 trucks a day of food and other aid to reverse the onset of what the heads of USAID and the U.N. World Food Program call famine in the north and to keep it from spreading to the south.

# Zelenskyy says Ukraine has taken back control in areas Kharkiv

AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian forces have secured "combat control" of areas where Russian troops entered the northeastern Kharkiv region earlier this month, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. "Our soldiers have now managed to take combat control of the border area where the Russian occupiers entered," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address on Friday evening. Zelenskyy's comments appeared to be at odds with those made by Russian officials. Viktor Vodolatskiy, a member of Russia's lower house of parliament, said Russian forces now controlled more than half of the town of Vovchansk, three miles (five kilometres) inside the border, Russian state news agency Tass reported Friday. Vovchansk has been a flash-

point for fighting since Russia launched an offensive in the Kharkiv region on May 10. Vodolatskiy was also quoted as saying that, once Vovchansk was secured, Russian forces would target the cities of Sloviansk, Kramatorsk and Pokrovsk in the neighbouring Donetsk region. No independent confirmation of the claims was immediately possible. Russia's Kharkiv push appears to be a coordinated new offensive that includes testing Ukrainian defences in the Donetsk region further south, while also launching incursions in the northern Sumy and Chernihiv regions. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the Kremlin's army is attempting to create a "buffer zone" in the Kharkiv region to prevent Ukrainian cross-border attacks. The city of Kharkiv, which is the capital of the region of the

same name, is about 20 kilometres (12 miles) from the Russian border. Moscow's troops have in recent weeks captured villages in the area as part of a broad push, and analysts say they may be trying to get within artillery range of the city. Ukrainian authorities have evacuated more than 11,000 people from the region since the start of the offensive. The Russian push is shaping up to be Ukraine's biggest test since Moscow's full-scale invasion in February 2022, with outnumbered and outgunned Ukrainian forces being pressed at several points along the about 1,000-kilometre (620-mile) front line that snakes from north to south in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine's problems have been mounting in recent months as it tries to hold out against its much bigger foe, and the war appears to be at a critical juncture.

# UK PM Rishi Sunak takes time away amid mass exodus of MPs

PTI ■ LONDON

After declaring a general election for July 4, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is reportedly spending his first Saturday with his closest advisers as he takes an "unusual step" of a day away from public events over the first weekend of the campaign. The 44-year-old Indian-origin leader is taking some private time out with his aides and family amid a mass exodus of senior members of Parliament from his embattled Conservative Party. Cabinet ministers Michael Gove and Andrea Leadsom became the latest Tory frontliners to announce their decision to not stand for re-election in this summer's polls, taking the number of party members quitting the race to as many as 78. Gove's announcement in a let-

ter released on social media on Friday evening had been anticipated amid strong challenges to incumbent Tories in constituencies around the country. Leadsom released her own letter shortly after, writing to Sunak: "After careful reflection, I have decided not to stand as a candidate in the forthcoming election." In his letter, Housing Minister Gove wrote that he knew "the toll office can take, as do those closest to me...No one in politics is a conscript. We are volunteers who willingly choose our fate. And the chance to serve is wonderful. But there comes a moment when you know that it is time to leave. That a new generation should lead." Former prime minister Theresa May is also among the senior MPs stepping away, with former defence minister Ben Wallace already having

announced his decision to leave frontline politics. According to sources quoted by the Guardian newspaper, Sunak is taking the "unusual step" of a day away from public events over the first weekend of the election campaign and instead will spend it in discussion on election strategy with his closest advisers. While one source was quoted as saying that the idea that Sunak was hoping to reset his campaign was "ridiculous", another campaign operative claimed that "prime ministers don't normally spend the first weekend of the campaign at home talking to their advisers". The reports prompted Opposition Labour MP Stella Creasy to post on social media: "Sunak is already in need of a duvet day. Britain is already in need of a different government." However, the claims were soon

rubbished, saying he was spending the day campaigning in his north England constituency of Yorkshire. Conservative minister Bim Afolami intervened to brand criticisms of the Sunak campaign made by the Opposition. "I think a lot of those things are fluff...I think that the important thing is that we frame this election correctly," he said. It came as Sunak visited the Titanic Quarter in Belfast on Friday, where the world's largest attraction themed around the ship is located, prompting one reporter to ask if he is "captaining a sinking ship going into this election". Opposition Labour leader Keir Starmer is also in full campaign swing planning to use the day at public events designed to focus on his argument that the Conservatives have damaged the economy and raised living costs.

# Car bomb in Syrian capital kills one

AP ■ BEIRUT

A bomb attached to a car exploded early Saturday in the western part of the Syrian capital that is home to several diplomatic missions, killing one person and causing material damage, state media reported. Damascus' Mazze neighbourhood houses the Iranian consulate, destroyed last month in a strike blamed on Israel. The attack at the time killed seven people including two Iranian generals and a member of Lebanon's militant group Hezbollah and triggered a direct Iranian military assault on Israel for the first time, sparking fears of a regionwide war. Several airstrikes have hit the tightly-secured neighbourhood over the past months, mostly targeting Iranian officials. State news agency, SANA, didn't say who the person killed was but said the blast set two other cars ablaze.

# NASA will soon train Indian astronauts for joint mission to ISS: Garcetti

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

NASA will soon provide advanced training to Indian astronauts to send a joint mission to the International Space Station this year or shortly thereafter, US envoy to India Eric Garcetti has said. Garcetti made these remarks while speaking at the "US-India Commercial Space Conference: Unlocking Opportunities for US & Indian Space Startups," hosted by the US-India Business Council (USIBC) and the US Commercial Service (USCS) in Bengaluru on Friday. "NASA will soon provide advanced training to Indian astronauts, with the goal of mounting a joint effort to the International Space Station, hopefully, this year or shortly thereafter, which was one of the promises of our leaders' visit together," Garcetti said. "And soon we will launch the NISAR satellite from ISRO's

Satish Dhawan Space Center to monitor all resources, including ecosystems, the Earth's surface, natural hazards, sea level rise, and the cryosphere," Garcetti said, according to a USIBC press statement issued here. NISAR is a joint Earth-observing mission between NASA and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). "You see whether it's the pursuit of peace and the peaceful use of space, things like the Artemis Accord, we are hand in hand, arm in arm. When it comes to prosperity and jobs, which is a big part of this conference today, it can be produced by startups in this sector, good-paying, high-tech jobs for Indians and for Americans. Space is right there," Garcetti said. The Artemis Accords lay out a framework for collaborating nations' safe exploration of the moon and beyond. The day-long event in Bengaluru saw the participa-

tion from senior officials from both the US and Indian governments, including Garcetti, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Dr. S Somanath, representatives from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Government of India, as well as prominent leaders from the commercial space industry, industry stakeholders, venture capitalists, and market analysts. "I must salute the visionary leadership that we have in both nations in India and the US for engaging in such an accord which looks at the moon as a sustainable place for all of us to come and work together," Somanath said in his remarks. "The connection between the Indian partners and also the US partners in critical technologies and specifically in the space sector is really becoming stronger. And I'm very

happy about that type of engagement and the options available to the industries and the US business indigenous to connect with India in the emerging space sector as well," he said. Expressing optimism about the prospects of US-India collaboration in space, USIBC president Atul Keshap described it as a new chapter in the US-India space partnership. This week has been particularly fruitful, with USIBC and USCS joining forces to champion these two iCET space deliverables, he said. "The conference highlights the deepening synergy between our two free nations in pioneering space exploration and innovation by the leading democracies. Through strategic alliances and collaborative efforts, we're on the brink of achieving extraordinary milestones and expanding the horizons of space exploration beyond what we once imagined," Keshap said.

# Sharif to visit China for formal launch of next phase of CPEC

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will visit China in the first week of next month to join the formal launching of the second phase of the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, according to a media report on Saturday. A source in the Prime Minister's Office told the Dawn newspaper that Prime Minister Sharif was scheduled to leave for China on June 4, but the date of the visit could slightly be changed. The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is opposed by India as it is being laid through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Infrastructure and energy projects were part of the CPEC's first phase. In CPEC-II, both countries will focus on agriculture, Main Line-I of Pakistan Railways, businessmen-to-busi-

nessmen deals and realignment of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) etc. While presiding over a meeting of representatives of Chinese companies on Friday, the prime minister said that Pakistan wanted to benefit from Chinese experiences to promote its IT sector and boost exports. "China has an important role in Pakistan's development. It has always helped Pakistan in difficult times for which the entire nation, including me, is grateful to the Chinese leadership and the people," he said. He assured the Chinese firms that the security and protection of Chinese workers and citizens was the top priority of the government. Thousands of Chinese personnel are working in Pakistan on several projects being carried out under the aegis of the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Some have been attacked in recent years by militants who accuse them of exploiting mineral resources.

"The government has taken all possible measures to ensure foolproof security of the Chinese citizens in Pakistan," he told the meeting, adding that a comprehensive plan had been prepared on this. Sharif said that Pakistan was an agricultural country and wanted to utilise China's modern technology in this sector. He invited Chinese companies to invest in Pakistan's electric, hybrid auto sector and other sectors. Meanwhile, the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan reported that Minister for Planning, Development Ahsan Iqbal and China's Vice Chairman of the National Development Reform Commission Li Chunlin co-chaired a meeting of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), where the Pakistan side appreciated the vision of Chinese leadership to upgrade the second phase of CPEC with the inclusion of new corridors.

# Chinese military ends drills around Taiwan

PTI ■ BEIJING

The Chinese military has ended its two-day joint drills surrounding Taiwan, stated to be the biggest and closest exercises held around the prosperous self-ruled island that China claims to be part of its mainland. The drills on Thursday and Friday were held in retaliation to Taiwan's new President Lai Ching-te's remarks rejecting Beijing's sovereignty claims over the island and tested the Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA) ability to seize power. China views Taiwan as a rebel province that must be reunified with the mainland even by force. While there was no official announcement that the drills ended, the Chinese social media WeChat account of the PLA's Eastern Theatre Command on Saturday said the exercises lasted two days from Thursday. It said the exercises by land, navy, air force and missile forces were "punishment" for "Taiwan separatists" and a "severe warning" to outside forces intent on interference and provocation. The drills, called Joint Sword-2024A, involved "advancing," "besieging," "blockading," "attacking," "destroying" and "cutting off", the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post quoted the WeChat post. Observers said the drills were the biggest and closest exercises ever held near Taiwan. Lieutenant Colonel Zhang Chi, an associate professor at the National Defence University of the PLA, told state broadcaster CCTV that such drills could become a new norm for the mainland, the Post reported. State news agency Xinhua quoted Meng Xiangqing, from the same university, as saying the vessels involved in the exercises were "unprecedentedly close to the coast of Taiwan".

# SIA passengers endured 62 seconds of extreme turbulence

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

The Singapore Airlines (SIA) Flight SQ321 that was rocked by severe turbulence on Tuesday climbed and descended rapidly twice in 62 seconds, stunning the passengers with one dying of heart attack, as the aircraft flew over the Irrawaddy Delta region of Myanmar, it emerged on Saturday. One passenger — 73-year-old Briton Geoffrey Kitchen — died, and dozens were injured in the incident. It is the first SIA aviation accident involving a fatality since the SQ006 crash in Taiwan in October 2000. As the flight, which was heading to Singapore from London, experienced sudden severe turbulence over the Irrawaddy Basin during the

breakfast service, the pilot declared a medical emergency and diverted the plane 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). Granular flight data from flight tracking website Flightradar24 shows that the Boeing 777-300ER climbed and descended rapidly twice in 62 seconds, starting from 3:49 pm Singapore time, as the plane was nearing the end of a non-stop flight from London to Singapore, the Straits Times newspaper reported. During this time, the plane climbed from its cruise altitude of 37,000 feet to 37,400 feet and then dropped to 36,975 feet before settling back onto its cruise altitude.

This indicates that it was the rapid transition between the climb and descent caused by the turbulence — and not the actual change in altitude itself, which was relatively minor — that caused pandemonium in the cabin. The Flightradar24 data — derived from a global network of ground-based receivers, satellites and radars that receive flight data from aircraft transponders — contradicts some earlier reports, which pinpointed the aircraft descending from 37,000 feet to 31,000 feet between 4:06 pm and 4:10 pm as the cause of the injuries. This latter transition appears to be the pilots carrying out a controlled descent, most likely to assess the situation before diverting to Bangkok, according to the broadsheet report

citing a commercial pilot who has flown both civil and military multi-engine passenger aircraft for more than 20 years. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the pilot said the rapid climb would have introduced positive G-forces onto passengers, causing sitting passengers to feel like they have been pinned down in their seats. The subsequent rapid descent would have resulted in negative G-forces, which would have sent unrestrained passengers and other loose items hurtling upwards onto the ceiling of the cabin, he added. The embattled plane went through another cycle of rapid climb and descent, causing more damage and injuries, with some passengers and objects hitting the roof panels and

overhead lockers before being flung back down. This is reflected in the accounts of passengers on board SQ321 who reported being thrown onto the cabin roof, with Australian passenger Teandra Tukhunen recounting that she was abruptly woken up when she was thrown to the roof and then to the floor. The G-force data would have been captured by the quick access recorder fitted onboard the aircraft. This is a flight data recorder designed to provide quick and easy access to raw flight data through means such as USB or mobile phone networks. The Flightradar24 data showed that the Boeing 777 first attained a climb rate of 1,664 feet per minute (fpm) — or 507m per minute, double the

height of 52-storey Capital Tower — before descending at 1,536fpm six seconds later. It rapidly returned to a climb rate of 900fpm a mere three seconds later, and then descended at 1,536 fpm after another 10 seconds. Transport Minister Chee Hong Tat said on Friday that investigators from Singapore's Transport Safety Investigation Bureau are going through data from the cockpit voice recorder and the flight data recorder. The United States National Transportation Safety Board's data from 2009 to 2018 showed that passengers injured in turbulence-related accidents were most often using, waiting for or walking to or from the toilet. The second-most common group was passengers who were seated but not belted up.



“Until you dig a hole,  
you plant a tree, you  
water it and make it  
survive, you haven't  
done a thing. You are  
just talking”  
— Swami Vivekananda



As we navigate life’s twists and turns, we can draw inspiration from the timeless wisdom from nature to embrace the changes that come our way, always making room for new growth and opportunities, write **BKP SINHA** and **ARVIND KUMAR JHA**

# GENESIS OF GROWTH FROM BUD TO BRANCH

As you stand beneath the towering majesty of a tree, your gaze is naturally drawn upwards, captivated by the intricate network of branches that crisscross the sky. Each branch, unique in pattern and structure, defines the tree's character and beauty. Yet, behind this awe-inspiring spectacle lies a more fascinating tale of growth and transformation. The narrative unfolds with the emergence of a bud from the tree's trunk. Given the right balance of sunlight, water, and nutrients, this bud slowly grows and develops into a mature branch. The genesis of a bud, or bud set, is initiated in regions of the plant rich in meristematic cells. These cells, found at the tips of stems and roots, have the unique ability to divide and differentiate into various types of plant cells, leading to the formation of new organs such as leaves, flowers, and branches. When these meristematic cells, or apical buds, are exposed to sunlight, they initiate new growth. This is where the plant hormones auxin and cytokinin come into play. Auxin, originating from the shoot apex, inhibits the outgrowth of axillary buds, allowing the apical bud to grow faster and taller. This phenomenon, known as apical dominance, ensures that the central stem of the plant grows more strongly than the side stems. Cytokinin, on the other hand, which is stimulated by the removal of the shoot apex, promotes the outgrowth of axillary buds by providing them with more nutrients.

This tug-of-war between auxin and cytokinin is crucial for the plant's growth strategy. It allows the plant to adapt to its environment, growing taller to reach for sunlight or spreading out its branches to occupy more space. As the bud grows, the meristematic cells divide and differentiate, giving rise to different types of cells that constitute the branch. Some cells form the outer layer, transforming into bark cells, while others form the wood, turning into the xylem and phloem. As the cells continue to divide and differentiate, the bud gradually elongates, evolving into a twig. Over time, the twig undergoes lignification, a process involving the deposition of lignin, a complex organic polymer that provides rigidity to the plant's cell walls. This process gradually transforms the flexible, green twig into a hard, brown branch. Lignin is a key component of the plant's defense mechanism. It forms a physical barrier in the cell walls that protects the plant against pathogens and pests. This barrier also makes the plant resistant to decay, thereby increasing its lifespan. Moreover, lignin is essential for the plant's water transport system. It makes the plant's vascular tissues waterproof, preventing the leakage of water and nutrients, and facilitating their upward movement from the roots to the leaves. This waterproofing property also prevents the absorption of excess water, protecting the plant from waterlogging and associated diseases.

The anatomy of a branch reveals a marvel of plant architecture. At its very base lies the branch collar, a swollen area where the branch attaches to the main trunk. This specialized structure houses tissues that are instrumental in wound healing and act as a protective shield against the invasion of pathogens.

Progressing from the branch collar, we come across the branch junction. This crucial juncture signifies the point where the branch diverges from the trunk, paving the way for the branch's outward expansion. From this point, the branch unfurls, giving rise to lateral shoots known as secondary branches or twigs.

These offshoots, in



BKP SINHA



ARVIND K JHA

“OVER TIME, THE TWIG UNDERGOES LIGNIFICATION, A PROCESS INVOLVING THE DEPOSITION OF LIGNIN, A COMPLEX ORGANIC POLYMER THAT PROVIDES RIGIDITY TO THE PLANT'S CELL WALLS. THIS PROCESS GRADUALLY TRANSFORMS THE FLEXIBLE, GREEN TWIG INTO A HARD, BROWN BRANCH. LIGNIN IS A KEY COMPONENT OF THE PLANT'S DEFENSE MECHANISM. IT FORMS A PHYSICAL BARRIER IN THE CELL WALLS THAT PROTECTS THE PLANT AGAINST PATHOGENS AND PESTS



branch out into finer limbs, culminating in the production of leaves, flowers, or fruits. Branching patterns in trees are an intriguing aspect of plant biology, reflecting both the genetic makeup of the species and the environmental conditions in which they grow. One such pattern is 'alternate branching', seen in certain species. In this arrangement, branches are staggered along the main stem, reducing overlap and creating spaces between branches. This results in a more open canopy structure, which is not only an architectural marvel but also a strategic adaptation. The open structure allows sunlight to penetrate evenly, reaching the lower branches and the forest floor. This not only benefits the tree itself by ensuring all parts receive adequate sunlight for photosynthesis but also nurtures the understory plants with filtered light. However, this strategy is not without its challenges.

The staggered arrangement of branches creates a less rigid framework, which, while potentially allowing for more movement during wind events, might also increase the tree's susceptibility to structural damage in severe storms. On the other hand, some species showcase 'opposite branching', with pairs of branches sprouting in symmetrical opposition. Trees with opposite branching patterns often experience higher levels of shading within their canopies due to the symmetrical arrangement of branches.

This leads to a denser and overlapping canopy structure, akin to a natural umbrella that provides shade and conserves moisture. The increased density results in shading between opposite branches, limiting the penetration of sunlight to lower branches and the interior of the canopy. However, this denser structure often provides increased mechanical stability against wind or storms. Branches inherently exhibit negative geotropism, meaning they grow in the opposite direction of gravity, reaching upwards and outwards for sunlight. This strategic adaptation enables them to maximise their exposure to sunlight and secure their place in the fierce competition for resources. In dense forests, where sunlight is scarce, trees adopt a different strategy known as 'self-shading avoidance'. They grow more vertically to minimize the shading of their lower leaves and reach toward the scant light available in the canopy. Wind, the invisible sculptor, also plays a significant role in shaping tree growth. In windy environments, trees often adopt narrower branching angles, resulting in a more streamlined shape that reduces wind resistance.

These branches, often perceived as mere offshoots, are in fact, the vital lifelines of trees. Much like arteries in the human body, branches serve as crucial conduits within the arboreal world, playing an indispensable role in the survival and well-being of the tree. They perform the critical function of transporting water and nutrients from the roots to the leaves, while also carrying back the sugars produced during photosynthesis from the leaves to the rest of the tree. They also provide habitat and support for a diverse range of organisms. Birds build nests on them, insects and lichen find refuge on the bark and leaves, and mammals use branches for shelter and as a pathway for movement. This biodiversity creates a mini-ecosystem within the branches themselves, contributing significantly to the overall health of the tree and the complex web of life that surrounds it.

Many trees have flowers and fruit on their branches, which are essential for reproduction. Flowers attract pollinators, and fruits, containing seeds, are eaten by animals who then disperse the seeds in their droppings, aiding in the spread of the tree species. Some seeds are even equipped with wings or fluff, enabling them to be carried by the wind, thus allowing plants to disperse

their offspring over a wide area.

In some remarkable instances, branches themselves become the genesis of new life. This is observed in the process of vegetative propagation, where fragments of branches can give birth to entirely new trees. This form of asexual reproduction results in a new tree that is genetically identical to the parent tree. Trees, in their wisdom, are active architects of their growth. They strategically shed lower branches that are no longer efficient at photosynthesis. This calculated act of self-pruning allows trees to channel their energy and resources toward the higher branches, which are better positioned to capture more sunlight.

But how does the tree accomplish this? When a branch becomes unproductive, the tree gradually severs its supply of water and nutrients. The branch then loses its bark and becomes frail and susceptible to fungi. Eventually, the branch falls off, leaving behind a stump that is sealed by resins or gums. This seal protects the tree from harmful pathogens that could infect the wounded area and jeopardize its health. As the fallen branch decomposes, it bestows its accumulated nutrients back into the soil, a final act of nourishment for the tree that once gave it life.

This process enriches the surrounding ecosystem, fostering new life and affirming that in every ending, there is a new beginning. This ongoing cycle of growth and retreat mirrors life's profound truth: Change is the only constant. It serves as a reminder that life isn't merely about relentless growth, but also about the wisdom of knowing when to let go. Much like a tree that sheds an unproductive branch to conserve energy for new growth, we too should find the courage to let go of what no longer serves us. As we navigate life's twists and turns, we can draw inspiration from this timeless wisdom from nature to embrace the changes that come our way, always making room for new growth and opportunities.

(Former Principal Chief Conservators of  
Forests, UP and Maharashtra)





# A SYMPHONY OF DREAMS, LOSS AND A NATION'S AWAKENING

**KAMINI PURI'S** words breathe life into the pages of *The Red Munia* as she intricately interweaves the personal and the political, offering readers an exploration of love, loss and the human spirit amidst India's transformative history, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

**T**he *Red Munia* by renowned author Kamini Puri delves into the history of India, beautifully exploring the themes of family, love, Indian history and loss amidst a transforming nation. Puri's novel is a compelling journey of self-discovery set against the vibrant landscapes of India. The story is as much about the characters as it is about the cultural and natural beauty that surrounds them. The novel reflects contemporary reality, illustrating how "Politics is something we are unknowingly growing up on without even understanding the meaning of it." The novel's charm lies in its rich descriptions and the deep emotional resonance of its characters as they navigate the complexities of love, identity, and freedom. In the prologue, Puri introduces the *red munia* bird, an enchanting creature with deep red wings speckled with brown and white. This bird, despite its beauty is often captured and caged, symbolising India's own history of being subjugated for its riches and splendour. The red munia's plight mirrors the nation's suffering under British rule establishing a resonant and evocative framework for the story. Laila, the vibrant heart of the novel, takes readers on a voyage from her

childhood in Kapurthala, Punjab. Her determination is well-portrayed by Puri, showcasing her dreams and emotional connection with her sister. As Laila grows up, she leaves her sheltered life in Kapurthala to pursue journalism in Bombay. Her quest for independence and self-expression leads her to London, where she dreams of meeting the Queen of England. In London, she meets Jai, whose carefree attitude and understanding of love transform her perspective on life. Their romance faces numerous challenges, reflecting the complexities of cultural integration and personal ambitions. The first chapter, 'Childhood Bliss,' introduces readers to the blissful world of Laila in 1942 Kapurthala, Punjab. Laila, her sister Dia, and their friend Maya live a life filled with joy and adventure epitomised by their games, horse riding and the warmth of family traditions. The vivid descriptions of their home, particularly the beloved divan in the verandah, evoke a sense of nostalgia and comfort. Laila's narration brings to life the household dynamics, with Papaji's morning rituals and Biji's attachment to old furniture adding layers of authenticity to the family portrait. The playful interactions between Laila and Dia, their mimicry of Papaji's shaving routine and their

**THE RED MUNIA**  
Author: Kamini Puri  
Publisher: ?????????  
Price: ₹349



uncontrollable laughter highlight the innocence and joy of childhood. However, beneath this idyllic surface, there are hints of the larger political context. Laila's awareness of her father's concerns about the anarchic state of India adds a layer of depth to her character, foreshadowing her eventual journey toward personal and political awakening. At 18, Laila leaves her hometown to pursue journalism in Bombay (Mumbai), a decision that marks the beginning of her journey toward self-discovery. The portrayal of Bombay in the 1940s is vivid and immersive, showcasing the city's bustling streets, diverse culture, and vibrant atmosphere. The chapter 'Bombay Dreams' is particularly special for every reader as it captures Laila living in the city of dreams to pursue her ambitions. Through Laila's experiences, Puri masterfully captures the essence of the city, highlighting its role as a melting pot of dreams and aspirations. One of the novel's most compelling aspects is Laila's relationship with her family. Despite her physical distance from them, Laila's emotional connection to her family, particularly with her sister Dia, is heartwarming, as it serves as a source of strength and support for both sisters as they navigate life's challenges.

Central to the novel is the theme of grief, portrayed with raw honesty and sensitivity. The protagonist's struggles to come to terms with loss, both personal and collective, is depicted with heartbreaking realism. Puri explores different facets of grief - anger, denial and eventual acceptance — with nuance, making it a deeply relatable and poignant read. In the chapter 'Unforgettable Meeting,' where Laila interviews Jawaharlal Nehru, her achievement is significant, yet she misses the sharing that comes from a soulful relationship. This moment describes the emotional depth of the book, as she has no one to share her accomplishment with apart from her father, highlighting the emptiness she feels despite her success. The novel also shines in its portrayal of the impact of historical events on individual lives. Through the protagonist's journey, Puri illuminates how larger political events, such as India's struggle for Independence and the assassination of Gandhi, reverberate in the lives of ordinary people, shaping their choices and beliefs. Character development is another strong suit of the novel. The protagonist's growth and transformation are beautifully rendered, making them fully realised and empathetic characters

The novel is more than just a personal journey, as it explores the complexities of finding your voice and chasing your dreams amidst societal constraints. Laila's burning ambition to become a journalist is juxtaposed against the expectations placed upon young women of her times. This internal conflict is further amplified as she grapples with the cultural shifts and social changes sweeping across India. The titular red munia bird emerges as a powerful symbol. Is it a representation of the freedom and resilience that Laila aspires to? Or perhaps, a reminder of the beauty and fragility of her homeland? The ambiguity adds depth to the story, inviting readers to contemplate the symbolism throughout the narrative. Arguably, *The Red Munia* is a beautifully written novel that offers a compelling portrait of pre-Independence India. Through its vivid imagery, well-developed characters and touching storytelling, Kamini Puri creates a narrative that is both appealing and thought-provoking. It is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring power of hope and determination, making it a must-read for anyone interested in journeys of self-discovery and the rich history and culture of India.

## At His Majesty's Service

Chander Lall's book offers a panoramic view of the Constitution, the history of India's Independence movement, and the social milieu of that era in an inimitable style, writes **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

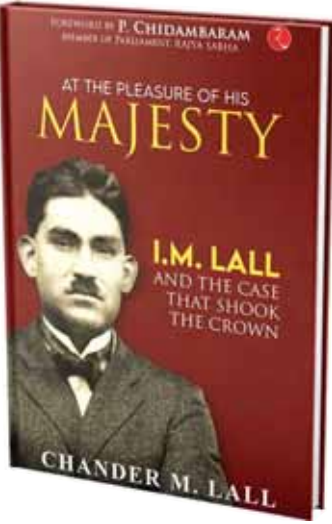
**H**aving worked with Central Government Establishments for close to a decade and a half, this writer has come to the conclusion that a Government job is a safe haven for those with an IQ below par. Apart from the obvious security and regular salaries that accompany such a job, it also leads to some individuals barely doing any work worth its name. In fact, it is this sense of security that draws countless aspirants to seek a position in State/Central Government departments. Recently, I came across the case file of a driver employed with the Andaman Lakshadweep Harbour Works whose service was terminated following unauthorised absence from duty for a period of eight years. It took years for the Central Administrative Tribunal to concur with his superiors that his continuous absence from duty for such a long period was devoid of any justification and uphold their decision to terminate his services. This is just one such instance of the freedom enjoyed by Government servants who are blissfully unaware of the landmine-paved paths of the private sector. While modern-day Government employees are fortunate to enjoy complete freedom at their work places, things were not as smooth during the tenure of the British administration. Anyone, including officers of the high profile and elite Indian Civil Services, could be relieved of their responsibilities for the most innocuous of reasons. It took a daredevil ICS officer like Inder Mohan Lall to take on the British administration by the horns and tutor them on the fact that there is due procedure to be followed in taking disciplinary

action against any errant Government officer or lower staff. The Civil Service Regulations had given enough power to the then Federal Public Service Commission as well as the Government of India's Home Department under the Government of India act 1935 to "fire" anyone accused of misconduct while in service. The draconian rule did not have any provision to furnish the accused with a chargesheet, his version of the story holding no relevance. This rule was challenged by Lall, taking on His Majesty's Government from 1939 to 1948. The case culminated in Lall's victory as the Court ordered that the Government of India Act should have Article 311 which ensures that "no person who is a member of the civil service of the Union or an all India Service or a civil service of a State shall be dismissed or removed by an authority subordinate to that by which he was appointed." No such person as aforesaid shall be dismissed or removed or reduced in rank except after an enquiry in which he has been informed of the charges against him and given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in respect of those charges, the Court ordered. Lall had faced a series of charges for his decision to appoint Sundar Das, his wife's nephew, as a subordinate staff in the court where he worked as district judge of the Hoshiarpur district. This antagonized some of the junior staff members who had eyed the post for themselves. Lall had taken stringent action against many Government employees for their corrupt practices so they were waiting for an opportunity to strike back. Sundar Das came served as the right opportunity for them to take it up with the Secretary of

State. The latter appointed two commissions of enquiry, one after another, to foist cases on Lall in order to get rid of him from His Majesty's Service. The enquiries and the ensuing legal battle form the plot of his book. What author Chander M Lall has done is to chronicle the events in a reader-friendly manner. He commences with his family history that includes Lall's life as a soldier in the British Indian Army during the First World War and how he made it to the ICS from where he was removed, based on the reports submitted by the enquiry commissions. We seldom go into the details of a new legislation enacted by law making

bodies like the Parliament or legislative assemblies. However, each and every law enacted addresses a specific concern. The first time the Constitution was amended was to address certain difficulties arising out of rulings by the Supreme Court. Famous cases like Golak Nath versus State of Punjab or Keshavananda Bharati versus State of Kerala were a follow up to the restrictions placed on the land ownership of individuals. Henry and William Golak Nath, two brothers, owned hundreds of acres of prime land in Jalandhar. But the Punjab Government declared that each brother could own only 30 acres of land and declared the rest as surplus land. The brothers challenged the Act and the apex court upheld the decision of the State of Punjab. Similarly, Keshavananda Bharati, the pontiff of Edneer Mutt, challenged the Kerala Government's move to take over vast stretches of land owned by the Mutt (monastery) as per the Land Reforms Act. A constitutional Bench in a split verdict upheld the Kerala Government decision but ruled that Parliament cannot amend the basic structure of the Constitution while making such legislations. The Kerala Government's action was a specific move against Hindus as it left untouched thousands of acres of plantations belonging to other communities. No surprise that the title of Fali Nariman's last book was, *You Must Know Your Constitution*. Chander Lall's *At the Pleasure of His Majesty* is an important work. It offers the readers a panoramic view of the Constitution, history about India's Independence movement, and the social milieu of that era in a truly splendid style.

**AT THE PLEASURE OF HIS MAJESTY**  
Author: Chander M Lall  
Publisher: RUPA  
Price: ₹295

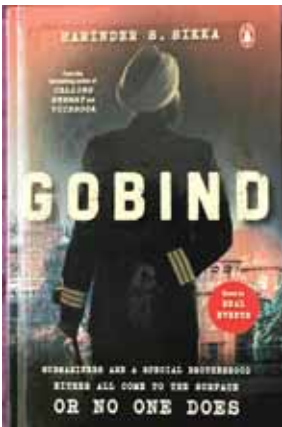


## TALE OF VALOUR, LOVE, AND REDEMPTION

**HARINDER SIKKA** tells Gobind's story with rare passion and candor, highlighting the protagonist's ability to uphold his promises, says **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

**H**arinder Sikka, the acclaimed author whose book *Calling Sehmat* inspired the 2018 film *Raazi* starring Alia Bhatt, explores the depths of human emotion and resilience in his latest novel, *Gobind*. This compelling story is set against the dual backdrops of Bihar's poverty and the valorous spirit of the Indian Navy. Through a rich narrative, Sikka delves into themes of love, loyalty, and redemption, offering readers a deeply personal and stirring literary experience. For Sikka, *Gobind* is more than just a story; it is a personal literary voyage that weaves together themes of love, selflessness, and unwavering determination," he explains. The novel is based on true events that transpired between the late 1970s and early 1990s, providing a rare and profound insight into the disciplined and highly motivated Armed Forces of India, particularly the Indian Navy. Through meticulous storytelling, Sikka highlights the rigorous training, passion, and dedication of naval officers, weaving in shocking incidents that occurred in St Petersburg, Russia, and India. *Gobind* centres around its titular character, a man born into abject poverty to parents who held deep faith in Guru Gobind Singh. Named after the revered saint, Gobind realises early on that it is up to him to change his family's circumstances. With no means or support beyond the values instilled by his parents, Gobind works tirelessly to gain admission to the Indian Military Academy (IMA), eventually qualifying for recruitment into

**CALLING SEHMAT**  
Author: Harinder Sikka  
Publisher: Penguin  
Price: ₹499



the Indian Navy. Although Gobind achieves professional success, his personal life is marred by tragedy. The girl he loves commits suicide after her landlord father arranges her marriage to another man. This devastating loss leaves Gobind shattered, despite being celebrated in his village for his professional achievements. Yet, he rises from this personal devastation with renewed determination. Gobind's journey takes him to Russia as part of a team tasked with purchasing submarines for the Indian Navy. Despite the immense responsibility, he performs his duties with unwavering diligence. His integrity shines through when a

senior officer, compromised by a Russian honey trap, approves the quality check on a submarine. Gobind refuses to concur, standing firm in his commitment to duty and integrity. His moral fortitude is further tested when he falls in love with a Russian girl, a relationship that challenges his fundamental rights. Sikka tells Gobind's story with rare passion and candour, highlighting the protagonist's ability to uphold his promises and appeal to the higher principles of those around him. Through Gobind's journey, Sikka presents a thrilling yet deeply sensitive narrative that provokes thought while delivering a profound message. The story inspires and entertains, making it a multifaceted read. *Gobind*, published by Penguin, was recently launched and has already garnered significant attention. Harinder Sikka, who was commissioned into the Indian Navy in January 1981 and took premature retirement in 1993 as a Lieutenant Commander, brings his firsthand experience and insights into the narrative. Besides *Calling Sehmat*, Sikka has also authored *Vichhoda*, further establishing his prowess in weaving powerful stories. In *Gobind*, readers will find a powerful tale of a man who dared to challenge the world for the principles he stood for. Sikka's narrative not only tells the story of a determined naval officer but also explores the broader themes of love, selflessness, and unwavering determination, offering a deeply enriching reading.





# EXPLORING THE GARDEN OF JADE

**PAWAN SONI**  
embarks on a  
delightful journey  
through Chinese  
cuisine  
with innovative twists  
adding a new  
dimension to the  
experience



**R**eminiscing about my unforgettable dining experience at Jade under the mastery of Chef Vivek Rana, I recently revisited this iconic Chinese restaurant, now under the stewardship of Chef Ankur Gulati. The restaurant has undergone a transformation, now boasting a spacious layout flooded with natural light, offering a refreshing and open ambience. As I settled into one of the three Personal Dining Rooms (PDRs), I pondered if the meal would succeed in replicating my prior experience. Skipping drinks and soup, we dove straight into the Golden Fried Prawns,

**FACT SHEET**  
Address: Jade, 102, The Claridges, 12, Dr APJ Kalam Road, New Delhi Phone: 011-39550000  
**RATINGS**  
Food: 4.25/5 | Service: 4/5 | Ambience: 4.5/5 | Overall: 4.25/5



a new addition to the menu of this classic dish. The large sized prawns were perfectly chunky, coated in a light batter of potato starch, and paired excellently with a spicy-sweet pineapple chili sauce. A variety of dim sum followed, each a masterpiece in its own right. The soupy pork and ginger, steamed lobster and scallop, lettuce wrapped prawn, truffle mushroom, and cream cheese in a carrot-shaped skin were all exquisite. The lettuce wrapped prawn stood out for its subtle flavors, although the chicken dim sum in coconut milk-based broth, while delicious, seemed more suited to Thai cuisine. The lamb chops, a departure from traditional cumin based Chinese fare, were a surprising delight. Paired with a Chinese-style sauce featuring butter, garlic, ginger, and a hint of ketchup, they offered a unique and satisfying blend of flavors. For the mains, the steamed Chilean seabass in a wine-based soy sauce was a standout, offering a light yet flavorful experience. The mushroom crab, while promising, fell short due to the use of frozen crab meat, which compromised its sweetness and freshness. The meal concluded with a serving of coconut ice cream accompanied by liquid jaggery, a sweet yet refreshing end to a memorable dining experience. However, the single scoop served for Rs 695 felt slightly lacking, and I would have appreciated a larger portion. The meal at Jade was a delightful journey through Chinese cuisine, with Chef Ankur Gulati's innovative twists adding a new dimension to the experience. The ambience, now more spacious and airy, complements the culinary offerings, making Jade a must-visit destination for aficionados of Chinese cuisine.

## Home Chefs push Food Frontiers

FOODFREAK



PAWAN SONI



**I**n the dynamic world of gastronomy, a fascinating trend is unfolding: the ascent of home chefs transitioning into the professional sphere, offering a taste of home to professionals far from their roots. This trend not only reshapes the culinary landscape but also enriches the dining experience for food enthusiasts globally. Eleven years ago, recognising the talent of home chefs and bakers, I created a platform through our awards — The Big F Awards. While most awards still focus on restaurants and hotels due to their financial considerations, the role of home-based chefs is gaining recognition, with professional platforms like ChefPin becoming the Zomato of the home chef arena. ChefPin app help diners discover hidden talents by using the app that can be downloaded from Android playstore and Apple Appstore. Rocky Mohan, founder of ChefPin says, "Platforms like ChefPin are leading this culinary revolution, dedicated to discovering and showcasing talents from home kitchens. Through ChefPin's innovative approach, home chefs not only display their culinary skills but also immerse themselves in the world of professional cooking. Collaborating with seasoned chefs in renowned hotels such as Shangri-La, these aspiring cooks learn high-end cuisine intricacies, refine their techniques, and gain invaluable experience." I have personally attended many of these pop-ups at hotels, particularly Shangri-La, and have been impressed by the regional cuisines they offer. Recently, I experienced a pop-up by home chef Sai Priya, unveiling hidden Oriya cuisine dishes. Past events featured Rekha Rigo's South Indian flavours, Surabhi Bhandari's vegetarian Marwadi cuisine, including traditional gluten-free dishes, mango peel-based delicacies, and

Gul Ali's Awadhi dishes. Such pop-ups help document many unknown dishes, preserving their heritage. Abhishek Sadhoo, General Manager at Shangri-La Eros, New Delhi, highlights, "As a part of bringing the World on a Platter at Tamra, these collaborations not only allow a gourmet of multiple cuisines of home food for our guests but also enhances culinary team members to explore new regional cuisines, techniques, and ingredients, enriching their culinary knowledge and adding a new dimension to their expertise." Furthermore, these pop-up events offer hotel guests a unique dining experience, indulging in homely, traditional dishes prepared with love and care by home chefs. This break from the standard hotel menus not only enhances the hotel's appeal but also creates a buzz among food enthusiasts, attracting more guests to experience this culinary fusion. Over the years, I have witnessed many home chefs grow and achieve professional success. One such example is Abhilasha Jain, also known as *Marwadi Khana*. From preparing authentic Rajasthani cuisine at home, she now operates a small professional setup, offering deliveries, *laddoos*, *gujiya*, and stylish catering while maintaining a homely touch. The emergence of home chefs in the professional culinary scene, facilitated by platforms such as ChefPin, demonstrates the evolving nature of gastronomy. It breaks barriers, fosters cultural exchange, and redefines the food experience. As this trend continues, it promises to bring new levels of creativity and diversity to the world of fine dining.

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

## DREAMY DARJEELING

# Serene Himalayan Hideaway

For many years, filmmakers have been captivated by the enchanting allure of DARJEELING nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas. It possesses a charming blend of grandeur, cinematic appeal, and intimacy, making it ideal for both visual storytelling and as a muse for writers seeking creative inspiration.



BY **AKANKSHA DEAN**

**S**ince childhood, I dreamed of visiting Darjeeling. Nestled in the Himalayan foothills in West Bengal, India, it captivates with lush tea gardens stretching over rolling hills, set against snow-capped mountains. Perched high at 6,710 feet, towering above its neighbouring regions. I imagined myself enjoying tea amidst the mountains, enveloped by the serene beauty of nature. After a two-hour flight and a two-hour drive from steamy Delhi, I find myself in Ghoom, where staff dressed in charming smiles graciously serves me delightful tea besides breath-taking views of the Kanchenjunga, India's loftiest peak at 28,169 feet (8,586 meters) at this lavish 6.4-acre haven aka The Sterling Darjeeling, just steps from Yiga Choeling Monastery, making it a dreamy retreat for my getaway. To my surprise, Darjeeling's history wasn't always intertwined with tea.



Back in 1835, the British obtained the lofty ridge, standing tall at 7,000 feet (2,134 meters), from the rulers of Sikkim. Initially intended as a sanctuary to rejuvenate weary colonialists fatigued by the plains' sweltering heat, this haven quickly transformed into a popular destination for the elite British community from Kolkata (Calcutta), seeking respite and breath-taking views of Kanchenjunga. The infusion of tea culture didn't grace Darjeeling until the 1840s, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Campbell, a Scottish physician who introduced tea bushes from China to the region.

### PLAYING TOURIST

Apart from being located at an amazing location with brilliant services, The Sterling Darjeeling boasting 101 rooms has easy access to a number of tourist attractions. My Privilege Suite at the Sterling has a valley view that I never get tired of rising to, while giving the warmth of a heritage hotel with the luxuries of a slicker. Embarking on a holiday at Sterling also means a delightful array of exclusive Discoveries & Experiences, both within the resort's confines and beyond, allowing you to immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of local art, culture, cuisine, history, nature, and activities. From

savouring authentic culinary delights to embarking on enlightening culture trails, Sterling is dedicated to providing guests with a multitude of avenues to enjoy a distinctive and memorable holiday experience. As I begin my day at the bustling Batasia Loop Market, I find myself mesmerized by the vibrant displays of jewellery and colourful clothing that flank the Gorkha War Memorial and Batasia Eco Garden. Immersing myself in the local culture, I embark on a nostalgic journey aboard the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, known fondly as the Toy Train, evoking precious

childhood memories that inspire me to capture the essence in my writing. Thrill-seekers can opt for a thrilling rafting adventure on the Teesta River, while history enthusiasts will be enchanted by the remarkable architecture of Zang Dhok Palri Phodang perched on Durpin Hill.

### CHILL ZONE

Chowrasta, the lively hub situated on Nehru Road in the old town became our favourite haunt and we would go there literally every evening. This bustling area features a promenade where visitors and locals gather to shop, dine, or simply enjoy the scenery. Seizing the opportunity to observe people, I savour a cup of tea amid the vibrant atmosphere. As Bollywood tunes filled the air and families interact with vendors, I soak in the sights and sounds of the bustling streets. Amidst the fragrant pine trees, I encounter women vendors selling corn on the cob. Engaging with one, I learn about Chowrasta's significance: symbolizing an intersection, the four roads branching out from the mall lead in different directions. The days gracefully wind down at Glenary's bakery and café, where we watch the sun set beyond the panoramic windows, savouring a comforting cup of tea as we reflect on the remarkable experiences of the day. Back at the Sterling Resort, in the evenings the Holiday Activity



Centre offers a plethora of entertainment options, from engaging in table tennis and carrom to diving into board and fun group games. Upon my request, I am treated to enchanting themed nights and have the pleasure of attending events at the charming amphitheatre, adding a touch of magic to my stay.

### THE LAST LEG

For those seeking to delve into Darjeeling's tea culture, a stay at upscale tea estates like the Glenburn Tea Estate offers an unrivalled retreat steeped in rich heritage. Beginning from its 1860 inception under the stewardship of the esteemed Prakash family,

this working tea estate seamlessly blends tradition with modern luxury. Nature envelops you here, with 1,000 acres of private forest and two rivers meandering through the estate. Choose between the Burra Bungalow and the Water Lily Bungalow, each offering four elegant suites. We enjoy our days hiking, fishing, and exploring the tea-growing process and embracing the tranquillity with a book and a calming cup of tea. Crossing to Sikkim via a charming hanging bridge unveils a world of ancient forests and village life awaiting exploration. While winding our way back to the airport, we pause at Timboor on the Trail, renowned for its Nepalese cuisine amidst a garden ablaze with azaleas and petunias. Yearning for a taste of traditional Nepalese thali, I sought to revisit cherished meals from my travels among Nepalese friends. Perfect ending to my Darjeeling trip. Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category.





**YOUR  
WEEK  
AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week, focus on clearing any outstanding debts or loans. You may be approached by someone close seeking financial help for personal events. Fortunately, you're in a position to offer support, whether financial or emotional. Additionally, consider engaging in charitable activities. Enjoy the stability that allows for a lavish lifestyle, but beware of mid-week distractions and daydreams that could lead to indecisiveness. You might find yourself toggling between desires for various pleasures, from dining and fashion to entertainment. This could disrupt your happiness. To avoid losing direction, set concrete goals. A clear focus will not only bring fulfillment but also pave the way for a balanced life enriched with health and prosperity.

**Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour** Lavender  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

You possess a commanding presence and a strong desire to see things done your way, often setting high standards that surpass even your own expectations. You fill your surroundings with an undeniable energy and a dynamic sense of action, which can sometimes lead to tension if not managed well. It's important to remember that an excess of any trait can lead to discord and unpleasantness, potentially causing colleagues to either avoid you or engage in confrontations. There might be disagreements or verbal disputes that challenge the harmony of your workplace. Redirecting your abundant energy towards productive endeavors can be beneficial. You have been endowed with health, authority, and a leadership position, and you excel in competitive environments. However, strive for a more harmonious environment to truly enhance your achievements.

**Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour** Magenta  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you may encounter a situation that necessitates rest and recuperation, possibly due to health concerns that require careful attention. Fortunately, you won't be alone during this time, as your partner will provide unwavering support and comfort. Embrace this period as an opportunity to deepen your spiritual connections. Engaging in reflective practices can bring you peace and reinvigorate your spirit. This is an ideal time to immerse yourself in meditative pursuits and explore deeper truths, which can help in regaining your balance and perspective. Family relationships will strengthen as you open up more with your loved ones, sharing thoughts and feelings. You might find yourself drawn to peaceful, nurturing activities. By week's end, you'll likely feel rejuvenated, ready to resume your usual activities with a renewed sense of calm and clarity.

**Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour** Teal  
**Lucky day** Friday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week, you may find yourself in a position of influence, wielding authority through your communication style, attitude, and behavior toward your colleagues. Your organizational and leadership skills shine, earning you recognition in your professional circle. You intuitively grasp the needs of those around you, addressing them with empathy and understanding. However, be aware that not everyone may appreciate your methods. A faction may emerge that disagrees with your approach, potentially undermining your efforts. They might attempt to sway outcomes that you've worked towards, such as projects or decisions. As the week draws to a close, the burden of responsibilities may weigh heavily on you, leading to feelings of isolation. It would be wise to consider sharing tasks and responsibilities; this strategy could enhance your efficiency and reduce stress, making your workload more manageable.

**Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour** Scarlet  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week heralds a phase of abundance and emotional richness. Financial gains from diverse sources enhance your sense of security, making you feel successful in a material sense. You'll find joy in leisure activities, luxuries, and satisfying personal desires, which contributes to a harmonious home life. Midweek shifts your focus towards achieving personal emotional aspirations. Expect positive developments in personal relationships, including romantic gestures or deeper connections with your partner. However, a period of uncertainty may soon arise, challenging your sense of stability and affection. As the week closes, you'll find yourself adapting to new perspectives, understanding the importance of evolving with time. Letting go of outdated practices is crucial; embrace new ways of thinking and adapt to face future challenges with renewed confidence.

**Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour** Turquoise  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This period may present several challenges across various aspects of your life, creating emotional disturbances. Despite your intentions to offer care and support, certain circumstances, possibly including health concerns, may complicate matters. It's crucial to manage your finances prudently during this time, focusing on budgeting to navigate these obstacles effectively. As the week progresses, adopting a methodical and intelligent approach will be essential. Paying attention to maintaining a balanced diet and a disciplined lifestyle will be beneficial. Towards the week's end, you can anticipate a positive shift, particularly in your professional life. You may notice an increase in your financial situation, with potential multiple sources of income boosting your overall well-being. This phase could also be favorable for significant investments, like purchasing a property, leading to a sense of fulfillment and prosperity.

**Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour** Olive  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Last week brought success, yet the coming days advise caution, as workplace challenges loom. You may encounter opposition from a confident colleague who may complicate your routine with criticism and competitiveness. Midweek introduces a dubious influence, someone whose principles may not align with societal norms, pushing you towards uncomfortable situations. Despite these trials, your resolve remains unshaken. With determination, you navigate these obstacles skillfully. By week's end, your integrity and commitment to doing what's right earn you well-deserved recognition and respect. This period, though fraught with tension, ultimately reinforces your reputation, culminating in a rewarding acknowledgment of your efforts and a renewed sense of accomplishment. Embrace this journey as a valuable lesson in resilience and personal growth.

**Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour** Amber  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

At this juncture, you stand in a position where recognition, success, and life's pleasures are within your reach. Surrounded by an aura of achievement, it's your perseverance and the grace that have elevated you to these heights. Your fair and generous nature, combined with your strong leadership skills, truly set you apart. You possess a pure and altruistic spirit, gracefully adapting to the changing currents of life. Your empathetic and caring approach captures hearts, inspiring others to seek your guidance. Whether leading your family or team, your efforts are valued by those close to you. However, approach the end of the week with caution, as there may be a risk of financial setbacks or health concerns. It's wise to be proactive rather than reactive—heed this advice.

**Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour** Indigo  
**Lucky day** Friday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week begins with the necessity for firm decisions in a crucial area of your life. It's essential to approach these choices with clarity and fairness, as they could significantly impact you or someone close to you. Expect a competitive environment at work, where standing your ground is crucial, yet strive to maintain diplomacy to avoid conflicts. Mid-week, you might face criticism or feel undermined by a superior, leading to a dip in morale. This is a crucial time to engage in calming practices like meditation or yoga to restore your confidence and mental equilibrium. As the week progresses, the atmosphere will lighten, allowing for more positive experiences. Issues begin to resolve, and you may receive joyful news related to personal relationships, setting the stage for promising developments.

**Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour** Peach  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week starts with a surge of energy, focusing your attention away from feelings and towards decisive actions. The early part of the week presents a pivotal opportunity in your professional sphere that demands immediate engagement and a sharp set of skills. This initiative could shape your future success, emphasizing the necessity of proactive efforts. Mid-week brings significant financial transactions and a chance to give back through charitable endeavors. As emotions begin to surface more strongly, it's a good period for introspection and settling any outstanding debts. Towards the weekend, a new agreement, possibly involving a partnership, may come into play, fostering deeper emotional connections. For those in relationships, this time could strengthen bonds, while singles might find themselves stepping into a new romantic chapter.

**Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour** Emerald  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

As demands on your time increase, it's essential to acknowledge the need for a break. Both professionals and students alike are feeling the weight of their responsibilities. This period calls for self-care to rejuvenate and prepare for upcoming challenges. Overexertion can lead to emotional and mental strain, potentially causing irritability. Some might experience health fluctuations, highlighting the importance of regular wellness checks and rest. There's also a potential for tension in professional relationships, particularly with authority figures. Managing your emotional response and dedicating time to refresh yourself is crucial. Striking a balance between work and leisure is necessary to maintain both your health and professional relationships during this busy time.

**Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour** Coral  
**Lucky day** Monday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week brims with youthful vigor and a robust capacity for work. However, without clear goals, your efforts might not yield the desired outcomes. Define your objectives and channel your creative energy constructively. Your family requires your presence and support. Neglecting health issues could lead to significant financial setbacks, so preventive measures are crucial. Midweek could see some facing personal and financial separations, souring relationships. Yet, resilience and mental fortitude can serve as your pillars of strength. By week's end, opportunities will emerge, though you might be too self-engaged to notice them. Your interest in discussions, travels, and communications could heighten, primarily serving your emotional needs. Those in relationships might find a deeper mutual understanding, and you could see financial gains from multiple avenues.

**Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour** Violet  
**Lucky day** Sunday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Redefine thought process to pick up the right lead

Someone who consulted me sought two clarifications against my observation on his chart: "Is being ambitious and dreaming a good future an illusion? You have talked about my inflated ego. Would it mean that I am groundless and an ungrateful brat?" There is nothing wrong in being ambitious and nursing dreams. In fact, dreams are necessary for reaching heights one is capable of. For, they serve a focus to reach an objective. Since time immemorial the Moon fascinated and evoked man's curiosity, seen every day – yet unknown. A longing to know and understand it led scientists to send man on the Moon. All creative persons are dreamers – Scientists, Philosophers, Poets, Artists, Writers. In fact, dreams drive their innovative ideas and creative spirit. It's, however, equally important to note that not everybody's dreams get fulfilled. Non-realization often brings in frustrating experiences. Would it mean that we are so helplessly fated? Not exactly. More often, it is an individual failure on various counts. External factors do also play spoiler at times. Blindly pursuing fanciful wild

dreams, distanced from ground realities, will lead you nowhere. Only well-reasoned dreams can prove fruitful. It would be therefore, desirable to first discriminate whether the dreams nursed are worth pursuing, especially in view of one's individual worthiness and ground realities. Second, one needs to be well geared up to pursue the dreams in right earnest. Also, quality efforts need to be put in to successfully make it to the desired destination. Third, one should be alert enough to intelligently combat impending challenges posed by external factors. All these would need an orderly mind. The irony, however, is that blinded to dream perception, seldom does one remain conscious about addressing inherent infirmities beforehand. The result is obvious. Now coming to the question of ego, it needs to be appreciated here no ordinary mortal could be ever devoid of ego. For, it is a necessary constituent of the mind that brings in the sense of 'I', which holds the key to how we steer our lives. Any good or bad decision, it is ego's call. But then ego doesn't act on its own. It is



prompted by thought feed parked within mind or the ones picked up from the external influences. Invariably, ego identifies itself with the inherent mind trends and then passionately pursue them as if that

would be its end game. In the process, it doesn't feel the necessity to invoke Buddhi (the faculty of discriminate intelligence) for due diligence. Often, those with inflated ego become vulnerable to get stuck to the callings

of one's preconditioned mind. Caught up in this hang seldom does one care to invoke Buddhi for a reality check before jumping into action. So, the probability of failure becomes higher. Evidently, if you look at life within the frame of such a restricted vision, you may also miss out better opportunities if any available. If, however, one remains conscious about invoking Buddhi, an exclusive human privilege before taking a call, greater chances are that ego may lead you towards a better tomorrow. So, ego is not necessarily a compulsive spoiler. It can take either turn - fruitful or self-defeating - depending on how we use it, and which depends on how orderly our mind is. On both counts, it becomes incumbent upon us to watch out our mind-trends. Identify and acknowledge the fault-lines. Accordingly, make necessary corrections. Having thus purified the mind, one may look at issues in hand in wider perspective, filter off the undesirables, and pick up the most appropriate lead. Recently, someone with an inflated ego, as would eighth aspect of Mars on

Jupiter imply, got into self-undoing act because of his mental inconsistencies, which cost him heavily. The Sun placed adverse to Saturn speaks of a negative mindset charged with sense of fear and insecurity, also having an identity crisis. The Sun conjunct Mars is placed adverse to delusatory Neptune and Moon. It implies, in the first place that he would be stuck to his fanciful perceptions, distanced from ground realities. He may not acknowledge the truth on its first appearance and continue pursuing his line of thinking till pushed to the wall. Second, he is irritable and temperamental who may blow up on slightest provocation. In the heat of moment he may lose sense of purpose and direction. If that would not be enough, his selfish streak playing heavy in mind, doesn't allowing him space to care for other's sensibilities and concerns. And the result is there to see. .

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com



# Kolkata Knight Riders face spirited Sunrisers Hyderabad in mega IPL final

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Tactician par excellence Gautam Gambhir couldn't have envisaged a battle of brains with a more different kind of adversary than the smiling yet ruthless Pat Cummins as Kolkata Knight Riders face a spirited Sunrisers Hyderabad in a mega IPL final here on Sunday.

Marquee sporting clashes always pit one leader against another but this IPL final will be about Gambhir's brain, which is always ticking against a captain who has transcended boundaries to turn into a leader of men.

Somewhere along the line, KKR's Shreyas Iyer, who is playing his second final as captain, has turned into bit of a side-show as a global cricketing royalty in Cummins faces an IPL czar in Gambhir. A decade ago, no one would have placed a bet on Cummins being a captain and winning the ODI World Cup, World Test Championship and Ashes in a space of six months, and now, leading SRH to their maiden IPL title would be the icing on the cake.

"A very practical guy, very humble, very empathetic to his fellow teammates and coaching staff. He is into the

statistics and gets the information that he needs against a particular opposition in certain conditions," SRH assistant coach Simon Helmot described the skipper in a nutshell after the team's win against Rajasthan Royals in the second Qualifier.

"He doesn't waste time in (team) meetings. Our team meeting today was 35 seconds. But, a lot of information has already been spoken about," he said.

The two teams met in the first qualifier in which KKR outwitted SRH with clever bowling plans on a massive Motera ground and in Chennai, Iyer's men will again start as favourites.

The last time KKR played an IPL final in Chennai, it was against Chennai Super Kings in 2012 in one of the most epic contests, which established Gambhir's credentials as an astute leader of men.

He not only had the right game plan but also had his heart in the right place during those heady years.

Gambhir went on to win another title in 2014, which made him a sentimental favourite and now he is on the cusp of becoming the man, who as captain and mentor has won the IPL trophy for the



same team. Obviously a bigger perk in Indian head coach's assignment awaits Gambhir and a trophy would not only burnish his credentials but also raise the demand to have him in that Indian dressing.

If one looks at man-to-man comparison, KKR tick more boxes in terms of overall match-winners with Sunil Narine, Andre Russell, Rinku Singh, the two Iyers — Shreyas and Venkatesh — the two Ranas — Nitish and Harshit —

and spinner Varun Chakravarthy in their ranks. However, SRH's uncapped domestic stars like Abhishek Sharma, Nitish Reddy have done really well along with out-of-favour India internationals such as

Bhuvneshwar Kumar, T Natarajan and Jaydev Unadkat. SRH's 36-run win over Royals on a difficult track will certainly boost their confidence but they also must realise that the Chepauk wicket will be tailor made for Varun

(20 wickets) and Narine (16 wickets), who have been in stellar form through the season.

SRH's spin department might be short on confidence but not in terms of heart as Abhishek and Shahbaz Ahmed showed during their cumulative haul of 5 for 37 in 8 overs, which changed the course of the second qualifier.

Any target between 180 to 200 could be a very competitive one if the pressure of playing the final is also factored in.

Travis Head and Heinrich Klaasen did get runs on a tricky surface but the likes of Abhishek, Rahul Tripathi and Reddy would need to play the match of their lives for SRH to emerge triumphant.

On a track where taking the pace off deliveries will be the key, young KKR pacers Harshit and Vaibhav Arora will have to think out of the box against Head, who has so far amassed 567 runs.

One interesting aspect of the IPL final is that the match features no member from India's main T20 World Cup squad. The only Indian player associated with the final will be Rinku Singh, who is in the reserves.

That again tells a story that IPL is now mostly by teams where

'Orange Cap' or 'Purple Cap' doesn't get much precedence in the face of team culture developed by Gambhir and Cummins.

**TEAMS (FROM):**

**Sunrisers Hyderabad:** Abhishek Sharma, Travis Head, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Aiden Markram, Abdul Samad, Nitish Reddy, Shahbaz Ahmed, Pat Cummins (c), Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jaydev Unadkat, T Natarajan, Mayank Markande, Umran Malik, Anmolpreet Singh, Glenn Phillips (wk), Rahul Tripathi, Washington Sundar, Upendra Yadav (wk), Jhathavedh Subramanyan, Sanvir Singh, Vijayakanth Vijayakanth, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Marco Jansen, Akash Maharaj Singh, Mayank Agarwal.

**Kolkata Knight Riders:** Shreyas Iyer (c), KS Bharat, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Rinku Singh, Angkrish Raghuvanshi, Shereane Rutherford, Manish Pandey, Andre Russell, Nitish Rana, Venkatesh Iyer, Anukul Roy, Ramandeep Singh, Varun Chakravarthy, Sunil Narine, Vaibhav Arora, Chetan Sakariya, Harshit Rana, Suyash Sharma, Mitchell Starc, Dushmantha Chameera, Sakib Hussain and Mujeeb Ur Rahman.



## KKR will be favourites in IPL title clash, say Hayden and Pietersen

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Kolkata Knight Riders are better equipped to lift the IPL title on Sunday because of a superior spin attack and a better record against their rivals Sunrisers Hyderabad, reckon experts Matthew Hayden and Kevin Pietersen. KKR had trumped SRH in league stage matches and it will give them an edge going into Sunday's summit clash, they say.

"I'm very confident that KKR are going to win here, as having a few days off, having the ability to watch this match, and understanding what the strengths and weaknesses of Sunrisers Hyderabad are will be helpful," Hayden said on Star Sports Cricket Live.

"KKR, having defeated SRH, is going to have great momentum. I also just feel that the quality spin of (Sunil) Narine and Varun Chakravarthy on the red clay is going to make a difference." The 52-year-old former Australia opener believes a strong mentality of players and team is important to win a rigorous tournament like the IPL.

"It's about just getting it right, really as simple as that. You've done all the hard work, traversed the country, been in and out of planes, buses, different hotels, and different beds. It's a really challenging, rigorous tournament, and only the strong-hearted get a chance to lift that trophy at the end.

"Luck will always play a little role in a sportsperson's life, no question, but more than anything, it's about making sure you're committed to your team on the day. What I saw from Rajasthan Royals was that while they were committed on one side of the match, they didn't fully believe when it came to batting (on Friday)," he said.

"They felt the strain and tension, and they succumbed to it. On the other hand, Sunrisers Hyderabad bounced back. It's not easy to bounce back in big matches after a loss. We were just talking about that with India and Pakistan. Finals are not about retreating into your shell. "Finals are about sticking your chest out, owning your space, understanding your role, and going for the jugular. That's the mentality you need in a final. It's a hunt, and you need to be in it to win it," he added.

Former England cricketer Kevin Pietersen too believes KKR are front-runners to win the IPL crown this time.

"I didn't like the way the Sunrisers threw in the towel the other evening in Ahmedabad, and I think it's going to put them on the back foot for the start on Sunday. "The way they just finished that game off, Pat Cummins gave Travis Head the ball, and Shreyas Iyer just went bang, bang, bang. It'll give KKR a lot of confidence going into the finals knowing that they've already beaten SRH a couple of days ago," Pietersen said.

"So it's going to be really hard for the Sunrisers to get up, but I think they will because they won the SA20, so they know how to win. They've got a structure that knows how to win, and when you've got that belief within the franchise, that belief within the ownership, then momentum has its own way."

Pietersen feels toss will play a crucial factor but KKR's positive mindset will definitely hand them an edge over SRH.

"The toss is 50-50. I actually think that you have to consider the possibility of dew and also be prepared if it doesn't come. It's all about the mindset and confidence coming into this fixture.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Riding on skipper Pat Cummins' cricket smarts, Sunrisers Hyderabad will come back all guns blazing against Kolkata Knight Riders in the final of Indian Premier League, asserted the team's assistant coach Simon Helmot.

Emboldened by their 36-run win over Rajasthan Royals in the Qualifier 2 on a slow track here on Friday, Helmot said there won't be any change to the team's style of play in the summit showdown against KKR. The final will be played at Chepauk on Sunday.

"We must stick to our philosophy. We have done it all season, and it has got us into the situation we are now. There won't be any change in our method in the final," Helmot said at the post-match presser.

"I'm very proud of the way the team has taken into that even under pressure, and Rahul Tripathi upheld that today. He, Trav, and Klaasen continued that momentum throughout the innings."

Travis Head, Rahul Tripathi and Heinrich Klaasen shone with the bat as SRH posted 175/9 after batting first. The total proved to be enough as they restricted RR to 139/7 in the stipulated 20 overs.

SRH, who finished in the top two, had failed in Qualifier 1

## There will not be any change in our method in final, says SRH assistant coach Helmot



against KKR before prevailing in Qualifier 2 against Rajasthan Royals. Speaking about the track, he said, "The wicket looked good and shiny. We got to a fairly good start, and we probably

lost an extra wicket. "As the innings got on, the slower off-cutters and bouncers started working. We got that information into the second innings. "We wanted the ball to get a bit

older and bowl it hard into the wicket so that we might get some reaction. And obviously, the spin came into play." Rajasthan Royals' talented batters miserably failed as SRH's unfancied spin twins

Abhishek Sharma and Shahbaz Ahmed spun a web to set-up a 36-run win.

Helmot praised skipper Cummins for his decision-making abilities and relationship with head coach Daniel Vettori.

"The credit goes to the captain. He made decisions at a time when he felt that conditions were conducive to spin.

"There were two right-handers at the time, and he felt that a left-arm orthodox spinner would be a good option. As for Abhishek, it might have been his gut feeling, and if it is, what a wonderful decision it was because it changed the complexion of the game.

"Pat and Dan have a very good relationship and are keen to explore different ideas. They give the players the freedom to do what they want to do on the field, and we saw that today."

Speaking further on Cummins, Helmot said he loves to give freedom to his teammates and doesn't engage much in team meetings.

"A very practical guy, very humble, very empathetic to his fellow teammates and

coaching staff. He is into the statistics and gets the information that he needs against a particular opposition in certain conditions.

"He doesn't waste time in (team) meetings. Our team meeting today was 35 seconds. But a lot of information has already been spoken about.

"There has been a lot of one-on-one with the fielding coach, bowling coach and the batting coach. We try to limit the large group meetings."

**THE DECISION-MAKERS WERE VERY WISE IN MAKING SHAHBAZ AHMED'S TRADE:** All-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed has been a top acquisition by SRH this season and Helmot hailed him as a multi-skilled player.

"Don't know the background about how it was done, but I do know he is a multi-skilled player, very experienced, bats at the top of the order, or the middle order, and can bowl nearly anywhere in the innings.

"I think when the opportunity (to trade) was presented, the decision-makers were very wise in making that trade.

"He's played a lot of games for us and has been an important element, besides being a versatile one alongside Nitish Reddy, which makes it easier when it comes to squad balance," Helmot said off.

### OTHER SPORTS

## Sindhu one step away from Malaysia Masters title



PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Double Olympic medallist P V Sindhu on Saturday earned a shot at the USD 420,000 Malaysia Masters crown after entering the women's singles finals with a come-from-behind win over Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan here.

Fifth seed Sindhu, who has not won a title in two years, rallied to prevail 13-21 21-16 21-12 against world number 20 Busanan in a marathon semifinal that lasted 88 minutes to close in on the BWF

World Tour Super 500 crown at the Axiata Arena. Sindhu had won the 2022 Singapore Open and finished runner-up at Madrid Spain Masters last year.

It was her 18th win over Busanan, who has beaten the Indian only once in her career way back in 2019 Hong Kong Open.

World No. 15 Sindhu, who will be eyeing her third Olympic medal at the Paris Games in two months time, will face second seed and world no. 7 Wang Zhi Yi of China in the summit clash.

## Man United pips City for FA Cup

AP ■ LONDON

Manchester United won the FA Cup after stunning defending champion Manchester City 2-1 in the final at Wembley on Saturday.

United's first silverware of the season deprived crosstown rival City of the first back-to-back English league-cup doubles. United also qualified for the Europa League next season. The final was a repeat of last year's which City won 2-1, and Pep Guardiola's team did not give up its trophy without a fight.

Alejandro Garnacho opened the scoring in the 30th minute after mistakes from City defender Josko Gvardiol and goalkeeper Stefan Ortega.

Kobbie Mainoo then added a second goal in the 39th to spark passionate celebrations from manager Erik ten Hag, whose job was under intense scrutiny going into the final.

United was in control at halftime but City piled the

pressure on in the second half and eventually got back into the game through substitute Jeremy Doku's long range shot into the bottom corner in the 87th.

By that point Erling Haaland had hit the bar, Kyle Walker had forced goalkeeper Andre Onana into two outstretched saves, and substitute Julian Alvarez missed the target from close range with only the keeper to beat.

It is United's 13th FA Cup, one behind Arsenal's record of 14. And it is Ten Hag's second trophy in as many years at the club after winning the League Cup last year.

Speculation about Ten Hag's future dominated the buildup and it was widely anticipated he would lose his job regardless of the result after overseeing United's worst league season in 34 years.

Players and staff embraced him on the field after the final whistle as the Dutchman managed to end a troubled campaign on a high.

## Indian men lose to Belgium

PTI ■ ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

The Indian men's hockey team produced a vastly improved performance than its previous match as it lost to reigning Olympic champions Belgium in the shootout after the two sides were locked 2-2 in the regulation time in the FIH Pro League here on Saturday.

India, ranked sixth in the world, lost 1-3 in the shootout to take one point. World number three Belgium secured two points, including the bonus point for winning the shootout.

Arajeet Singh Hundal put India in the lead in the 11th minute with a fine field goal before Felix Denayer (30th minute) restored parity just a few seconds before half time off a penalty corner. Florent Van Aubel put Belgium ahead for the first time in the match with a 50th minute goal from a penalty corner but Sukhjeet Singh (57th) equalised three minutes before the end of regulation time.

In the shootout, only Sukhjeet Singh scored for India, while Vivek Sagar Prasad, Abhishek and Arajeet Singh Hundal missed. India had lost to the same opponents 1-4 in their earlier match on Friday. Before that, the Indian side had defeated Argentina 5-4 in shootout on Wednesday.



**KANPUR INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
Affiliated to CSJM University, Kanpur U.P.

**REQUIRES FACULTY FOR**  
**Computer Application (BCA)**  
Qualification: MCA & NET / Ph.D.

**Qualification, Experience & Pay Scale as per UGC Norms.**  
**Interested candidates must apply online through E-mail: hr@kit.ac.in**

**A-1, UPSIDC INDUSTRIAL AREA, ROOMA, KANPUR - 208001 (U.P.)**  
**7705011891 | info.kihe@kit.ac.in | www.kit.ac.in | www.facebook.com/KIT165**