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UNDER ATTACK IN BENGAL

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SA PRESIDENT CONFIDENT
OF RETURNING TO POWER

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STOCK MARKETS FALL FOR
FOURTH DAY ON PROFIT TAKING

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12 SPORTS

Baked Delhi waits to exhale

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

It's raining fire in the national Capital as the city recorded its highest temperature of 46.8 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, surpassing its 79-year-old record of 46.4 degrees Celsius set in 1945. While Mungeshpur logged the highest ever temperature in the city at 52.9 degrees Celsius, 13 degrees above normal, areas like Narela and Najafgarh saw temperatures reaching 49 degrees Celsius. To get relief, heat-stricken residents were seen drinking ORS-laced drinks, using wet towels, and taking multiple baths a day.

Delhi broke all previous records in the country as the previous highest temperature in India was recorded in Rajasthan's Phalodi in 2016 at 51 degrees Celsius. It is also just 3.8 degrees behind the highest temperature ever recorded on Earth of 56.7 degrees Celsius at the Greenland Ranch in California's Death Valley, which is now aptly referred to as the Furnace Creek Ranch. The maximum temperature in Delhi was recorded at 46.8 degrees Celsius, which is six degrees above the normal, while the minimum temperature settled at 29.4 degrees Celsius.

However, the weather



Reprieve, heat, repeat

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Northwest and Central India, which have been in the grip of unprecedented heatwave conditions in the last few days, may get some respite gradually from Thursday. However, don't breathe a sigh of relief as unfortunately, after the respite, the region will again witness a higher number of heatwave days in June.

"Normally, northwest India

and the adjoining areas record two to three heatwave days in June. But this time, we expect four to six days of heatwave in this region," said IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra. The IMD has issued a red warning for six States in the region — Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi-NCR, East Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh — indicating severe heatwave conditions. It downgraded the red alert to an orange alert over these

States on May 30 but it will persist in Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi-NCR until May 31, as per the IMD. Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions are very likely in most/much parts of Punjab, Haryana-Chandigarh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh on May 29 and gradual reduction thereafter with heatwave conditions in isolated/some parts till June 1, 2024, as per the IMD. **Contd on Page 2**

experienced a sudden change on Wednesday evening as the sky turned cloudy and witnessed light drizzling in some parts, providing short relief to Delhiites. But the short respite was followed by more discomfort due to the humidity caused by light rain. The roasting heat has led to the Delhiites taking several measures to ensure their well being along with trying to stay indoors as much as possible. However, some residents said it is not easy to be indoors all the time as one has to go and earn a livelihood. People were seen flocking air conditioned buses and preferring the metro for their journey while also spending their time inside air-conditioned shopping malls. In Delhi's ITO metro station, many, who came to get their passports from the office nearby, were seen taking refuge in the station to beat the heat amid long queues. A 40-year-old woman sitting at the entry passage said it is the best way she could escape the scorching summer heat. With temperatures nearing 50 degrees Celsius in Mungeshpur and Najafgarh in the last few days, residents said they have been constantly falling ill despite taking many measures to beat the heat.

Continued on Page 2



SC cold to Kejriwal bail extension plea

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a major setback to AAP convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Supreme Court registry on Wednesday refused to list his plea to extend his interim bail by a week to undergo certain medical tests. During their campaign, the BJP questioned Kejriwal for seeking yet another relief from the court. They took a jibe at the AAP leader, stating that he can campaign in the Lok Sabha polls in intense heat but complains of illness when mandated by the judiciary to surrender soon after the campaign ends.

The development comes a day after a vacation bench refused to allow the urgent hearing, saying it would be appropriate if the Chief Justice of India takes a call on this. Kejriwal is out on bail in the liquor policy linked money laundering case and the same will expire on June 1. Kejriwal will have to surrender before the Tihar jail authorities on June 2. Kejriwal is currently campaigning in

Punjab which will go to polls on June 1. In a related development, his aide Bibhav Kumar has also moved the Delhi High Court challenging his arrest in connection with the alleged assault on AAP MP Swati Maliwal at the CM's residence earlier this month. Kejriwal has sought extension of his interim bail by seven days to undergo a host of medical tests, including a PET-CT scan, in view of his "sudden and unexplained weight loss coupled with high ketone levels", which are indicative of kidney, serious cardiac ailments and even cancer. The Chief Minister, in his fresh plea filed on May 26, said he will surrender before jail authorities on June 9 instead of June 2, the scheduled date for his return to prison. The top court had on May 10 granted 21-day interim bail to the chief minister, who was arrested in a money laundering case linked to the excise policy 'scam', to enable him to campaign for the Lok Sabha polls. **Continued on Page 2**

Prajwal books return ticket, date with SIT

PNS ■ BENGALURU/NEW DELHI

Suspended JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna, who is facing sexual abuse charges, has booked a return flight ticket to Bengaluru from Munich on May 30, official sources said on Wednesday. According to sources in the Special Investigation Team (SIT), the 33-year-old grandson of JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda is expected to land in Bengaluru in the small hours of May 31. Revanna on Wednesday moved a Special Court seeking anticipatory bail in the rape case registered against him. His advocate filed an anticipatory bail application in the Special Court for cases involving MPs/MLAs. He reportedly left for Germany on April 27, a day after Hassan LS seat went to polls, and is still at large.

The SIT is maintaining vigil at the Kempegowda Airport to arrest him as soon as he lands. The MP, who is seeking re-election as the NDA candidate from Hassan Lok Sabha segment, fled to a foreign country as soon as the news broke out that the Karnataka State Commission for Women requested Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to order an investigation into the huge cache of explicit videos showing several women being sexually assaulted allegedly by him.



Police personnel and civilians near the escort vehicle, part of the convoy of Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh's son and BJP leader Karan Bhushan Singh, that allegedly hit a biker, in Gonda, on Wednesday. At least two people were killed in the accident, according to officials PTI

SUV in Brij Bhushan son's convoy mows down two, injures 2

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In an incident similar to that reported in Lakhimpur Kheri in which Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra Teni's son went crushing farmers, a vehicle of the convoy of the son of Bharatiya Janata Party MP from Kaiserganj in Gonda district, Brij Bhushan Saran Singh, crushed two youths, including a 17-year-old, to death and critically injured an old woman.

As Brij Bhushan, the former president of Women's Wrestling Federation, is facing charges of sexual assault of women wrestlers, the BJP gave its ticket for the Kaiserganj Lok Sabha seat in the ongoing elections to his son Karan Bhushan Singh.

According to eyewitnesses, the convoy of vehicles was of BJP candidate from Kaiserganj, Karan. A large number of policemen are deployed at the spot. Police have seized the SUV involved in the accident and have also arrested the driver of the escort vehicle. There is no confirmation yet whether Karan was travelling with the cavalcade at the time of the accident.

Reports said Karan was going to Huzurpur with his convoy of vehicles that included a Fortuner with 'police escort' written on it. When the convoy reached near Chhatrapurwa on Bahraich Huzurpur road, the Fortuner, in an attempt to overtake other

vehicles, crushed two youths - 17-year-old Rehan and 21-year-old Shahzad Khan - who were coming to Karnailganj market on a motorcycle from Nidura village to purchase medicines. The Fortuner later broke the electric pole and also crushed 60-year-old Sita Devi, who was sitting in front of her house, critically injuring her. She has been admitted to hospital. Soon after the accident, hundreds of local residents gathered at the spot and started raising slogans against the police administration, demanding action against the MP's son.

They also blocked the road and tried to burn the Fortuner, leading to heated arguments between the police and the people, who were adamant on not allowing cops to take the bodies of the youths for post-mortem. Seeing the situation becoming violent, police from many police stations, Additional Superintendent of Police, police circle officer, sub-district magistrate, tehsildar and many other officers reached the spot and somehow calmed down the agitated people. After much struggle and persuasion, the police sent the bodies for autopsy.

A complaint regarding the incident has been filed in the police station by Chanda Begum, a woman among the family members of one of the deceased youth.

Why can't Modi meditate in private, Oppn seethes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties, including Congress and Trinamool Congress, are to approach the Election Commission to first restrict and secondly prevent media publicity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meditation plans at Rock Memorial, a monument built in tribute to Swami Vivekananda, in Kanyakumari following the culmination of the Lok Sabha polls campaign on Thursday. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said the Trinamool Congress will complain to the Election Commission if Prime Minister meditation in Kanyakumari is televised, claiming that it would be a violation of the election Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

The Congress said the Election Commission should not grant permission for the PM's programme, as the model code of conduct was in force. "Such a move was an attempt at 'indirect campaigning' after the end of canvassing of votes," Tamil Nadu Congress chief K Selvaperunthagai alleged. The PM will meditate from



the evening of May 30 to the evening of June 1 at Dhyan Mandapam, the place where Vivekananda — a spiritual icon admired by Modi — is believed to have had a divine vision about 'Bharat Mata', BJP leaders said. The Prime Minister had gone on a similar meditation exercise in a Kedarnath cave after the 2019 poll campaign. "We will complain. He can meditate, but it cannot be aired on television," Mamata said, claiming that this will amount to "violation of the MCC." "Does anyone have to get cameras for doing meditation?" she asked, claiming that it was a way of

canvassing during the silence period between the end of campaign and the poll date.

All arrangements, including heavy security, are in place for Modi's 45-hour stay at the Rock Memorial. The district in the country's southernmost tip will see a strong posse of 2,000 police personnel and various security agencies maintaining a tight vigil during the PM's event. Tirunelveli range DIG Praveish Kumar accompanied by superintendent of police E Sundaravathanam had inspected the security arrangements at the rock memorial, boat jetty, helipad and the State guest house in Kanyakumari.

Even as the Prime Minister's core security team reached the venue, a trial of helicopter landing had also been conducted at the helipad. As per his tentative schedule, Modi is expected to arrive at Kanyakumari late afternoon on May 30 for the spiritual sojourn. He would later proceed to the memorial.



RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The epic campaign for the seven phase 2024 general elections spanning for about two months now amid intense heatwave will come to an end on Thursday evening for the last phase voting on Saturday to seal the fortunes of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Varanasi, Bollywood actress Kangana Ranaut, Union Minister Anurag Thakur, National Conference leader Omar Abdullah, actor turned politician Ravi Kishan and TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee.

The voting schedule period for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, spread over 44 days, which is the second longest after the first parliamentary elections of 1951-52, which lasted for more than four months but then that time it was through ballot papers and the counting of votes lasted for 4/5 days. Interesting slogans ranged from "God of the Gods" to "Lord Jagannath" and "Mujra", 'disco', 'Bhangra', 'Bharatnatyam' to Minimum Support Price (MSP) to farm loan waiver and Muslim appeasement dominated in



BJP supporters during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaign rally for Lok Sabha polls, in Mathurapur, West Bengal, on Wednesday PTI

this phase that sparked controversy. Besides the Congress's khatakhata, khatakhata has become the buzz phrase so much so that even Modi used it to attack the Opposition. Khatakhata khatakhata has also spawned its own family of buzz phrases. Congress leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi, started using khatakhata khatakhata, a Hindi onomatopoeia that signifies something being done fast in a repeated movement. Everyone immediately took a liking to the buzz phrase khatakhata khatakhata with an addition of 'Good Bye Tata' a day earlier by Congress' Rahul Gandhi.

The high decibel campaign also saw political engagements on remarks like India racism and redistribution of wealth by then Congress Overseas Incharge Sam Pitroda leading to his removal from the post and the zenith was a sex scandal involving JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna who is seeking reelection from his Parliamentary constituency Hassan. The seventh phase of polling will be held across 57 parliamentary constituencies, covering eight States and Union Territories on June 1. The stakes are high for the BJP in this phase as it has won 30 seats of the total 57 in 2019. **Continued on Page 2**

Sop 'Khatakhata' draws women to Bengaluru GPO

PTI ■ BENGALURU/NEW DELHI

An otherwise silent General Post Office (GPO) in Bengaluru is witnessing an unprecedented rush of women hurrying to open India Post Payment Bank accounts, anticipating a monthly deposit of Rs 8,500 into their accounts if the INDIA Bloc comes to power at the Centre. The elections are still in the process but women, largely from the minority communities sporting burqas, stood in long queues to open the account. Some of them believed that opening the IPPB account would ensure that they get Rs 8,500 per month. A woman said she stood in queue early in the morning itself.

Another said everyone in her neighbourhood was saying that money would start coming from the day the account is opened, so she too came to open an account.



Most of the women PTI spoke to were from Shivajinagar, Chamarajpet and surrounding places in the city. Talking to

reporters, Chief Post Master of GPO Bengaluru H M Manjesh said people have been coming to the office to open IPPB accounts in the

belief that the Department of Post would credit Rs 2,000 or Rs 8,500 into their accounts.

"Actually it is a rumour. Somebody has spread this rumour. The department will not pay any amount to them. However, this account can be used for any type of online transaction or even Direct Benefit (Transfer) scheme," Manjesh clarified.

He said the department has already informed the customers about this. "We have displayed some posters also. In spite of that, customers are requesting that we open IPPB accounts for them." There was such a rush that more counters were opened outside the GPO building, under the open sky, he added.

"Earlier we used to open 50 to 60 accounts in a counter. Now we have made separate arrangements. We have brought our postmen for this

purpose and regularly we are opening around 500 to 600 accounts, sometimes even 1,000 accounts in a day," Manjesh said. According to sources in the department, this rush has been witnessed for the past three days. It is learnt that some Congress MLAs spread the rumours, believing that the women made a beeline for the GPO. The MLAs said the women will start getting money after June 4 "when the INDIA Bloc will come to power". The Congress has made a promise to launch the Mahalakshmi scheme under which Rs 8,500 will be directly credited into the account of women heads of families belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) category. It is similar to the Gruha Laxshmi guarantee scheme started by the Karnataka government in which Rs 2,000 is paid to women heads of BPL families.

Executive knocked dead by train

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An assistant manager of a hotel died after he was hit by a train on the railway tracks in Gomti Nagar extension police station area as he was crossing the tracks while wearing an earphone on Wednesday. As per reports, Mohammed Imtiaz (35) of Kolkata worked at a private hotel in the city and stayed at a rented accommodation in Bharwara locality in the area. The incident took place when Imtiaz was crossing the tracks around 2 am on May 27 in the area while wearing his earphones and talking to someone. He was unaware of an approaching train and was hit by it. The driver of the train reported the incident to Malhaur station master and the message later reached the police. The police contacted the

deceased's family with the help of a document recovered from the body. Javed initially confirmed the identity of the deceased on the basis of documents recovered and appeared at the mortuary where he and other family members identified the deceased. The police said they were investigating what work led Imtiaz to go outside his rented accommodation in the night and the identity of the person he was talking to on the fateful day. **THEFT** Thieves made off with ornaments and valuable items from a house located close to a petrol filling station in Takrohi in Indira Nagar. The incident took when the house owner, Suresh Pandey, had gone to his native house in Basti for some work and the house was lying closed.

Prayagraj tops at 48.8°C

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Following slight rise in temperature over eastern, central and western parts of UP, heat wave to severe heat wave conditions prevailed at many places in the state, accompanied by isolated warm night conditions shattering many records. Prayagraj, Kanpur Nagar, Fursatganj and Sultanpur in east UP recorded all-time high temperatures on Wednesday. Fursatganj recorded its all-time high temperature whereas Prayagraj equalled the previous all-time high temperature of 48.8 degree Celsius. Fursatganj recorded 47.2 degree Celsius and Kanpur Nagar recorded a maximum temperature of 48.4 degree Celsius. Lucknow recorded a maximum temperature of 43.7 degree Celsius which was 3.6 degrees above normal and a minimum temperature of 29.4 which was 3.9 degrees above normal.



The 1090 crossing in Lucknow wears a deserted look in the scorching heat on Wednesday afternoon

Pioneer

SGPGI performs hi-tech surgery

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A latest gadget called "harmonic scalpel" has been used for the first time in SGPGIMS for treating vascular malformations. Head of the Plastic Surgery Department, Dr Rajeev Aggarwal said here on Wednesday that vascular malformations are tumours of blood vessels and, therefore, bleed when operated by conventional methods. "For this a harmonic scalpel has been used which is a game changer," he said. Talking about a case study, he said that Ayush Yadav, a one-year-old male child, was born with a big vascular tumour over the upper lip. "He was initially treated by a sclerosant agent to shrink the lesion but there was not much response. He was operated on

May 29 this year using the latest technology of harmonic scalpel where the entire tumour could be removed in one sitting." He further said that the child was recovering well after surgery. "His tumour has been cured by the use of a harmonic scalpel. With this surgery, SGPGI becomes one of the very few centres in the world to have this advanced facility of treating vascular malformations by the harmonic scalpel. The cost of surgery with this device is also moderate and ranges between Rs 20,000 and 30,000. This surgery is thus very much affordable for the common man," he added. Giving details about the harmonic scalpel, he said that it is

a surgical instrument used to simultaneously cut and cauterise tissue. "It is the latest device to have been introduced in the last decade or so. Ultrasonic energy is used in Harmonic scalpel where ultrasonic energy is converted to mechanical energy at the active blade. Its main advantages include precise dissection. He said that Harmonic also has some credible reports, suggesting that it has better results in terms of less post-operative pain complaints by patients. The device divides tissue by using high-frequency (55,000 Hz) ultrasonic energy transmitted between the instrument blades.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The UP Tourism Department is working to highlight the Jain tourism circuit in the state. DG Tourism, Mukesh Meshram, said here on Wednesday that they were making efforts in this direction. "Out of 24 Tirthankaras in Jain religion, 18 were born in Uttar Pradesh. Right now, however, as far as Jain tourism is concerned, people are looking towards Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. "In Uttar Pradesh, these destinations are very important

and so we have set up a Jain Research Institute under the Culture Department and we are compiling a list of Jain organisations, their social organisations and their different institutes and in collaboration with them the idea of taking the Jain circuit forward is being carried out," he said. He said that Jain tourists are aware of these tourist destinations in the state which they also visit. "In Uttar Pradesh, the number of Jains are less in number and we need to attract Jains from other states to Uttar Pradesh. Once they start coming to the state of Uttar Pradesh, their numbers will gradually increase," he added.

Talking about the sites for Jain tourists in the state, a tourism department official said, "Varanasi has the distinction of being the birthplace of the 23rd Jain Tirthankara Parshvanath. The influence of Jainism can also be seen on a large scale in the Bundelkhand region of the state. Devgarh here is an important Jain pilgrimage site," he added. He further stated that according to Jain beliefs, Ayodhya is the original pilgrimage site for Jains. "There is a 31-feet statue of Lord Rishabhdev in Raiganj, Ayodhya. It is known as Badi Murti. Ayodhya has Shri Digambar Jain Temple, Ayodhya Jain Temple and

Ayodhya Shwetambar Jain Temple," he added. He said Hastinapur has many centres of Jainism such as Jambudweep Jain Temple, Shwetambar Jain Temple, Ancient Digambar Jain Temple, Ashtapad Jain Temple and Shri Kailash Parvat Jain Temple etc. Further, he pointed out that Shri Digambar Jain Bada Mandir located at Baraut in Baghpat has in itself a history of 650 years. "The special thing is that the biggest festival of North India takes place here in which people of the Jain community come from all over the country to participate". Among other temples of Jains

in the state, there is a huge temple of Lord Pushpadant Nadha, the ninth Tirthankar of Jainism, in Khukhundu in Deoria district of UP. "His statue is also installed here. Devotees and tourists come from all over the world to see it. This is a special centre of attraction for those who believe in Jainism. It is believed that Lord Pushpadant Nath had performed penance for years in the dense forests here. He was the ninth Tirthankara of Jainism. Apart from this, the old temple of Shobhnath located in Shravasti district is dedicated to Jain Tirthankar Sambhavnath," he added.

Varanasi to host USD 9m Toyota Mobility Foundation Sustainable Cities Challenge

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's iconic city Varanasi, a spiritual hub on the banks of the River Ganges and Parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with Detroit, the historic 'Motor City' in the US, and Venice, Italy's iconic canal city, has been selected to host the much-sought after USD 9 million Toyota Mobility Foundation Sustainable Cities Challenge. Announced early last year, this initiative aims to accelerate sustainable mobility, fostering healthier and safer urban environments in the cities selected for the task. Each city will have USD 3 million to develop innovative, data-driven solutions to enhance accessibility and safety. Varanasi's Challenge focuses on generating innovative, data-driven

solutions incorporating elements of technology and design that will help make crowded areas of Varanasi's old city (Kashi) safer and more accessible for religious tourists and local residents alike including vulnerable members of the population. Known for its ghats and temples such as the Kashi Vishwanath Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, for education and learning and art and culture Varanasi draws millions of visitors each year. Akshat Verma, Municipal Commissioner/Chief Executive Officer, Varanasi Municipal Corporation/Varanasi Smart City said, "This initiative offers us a valuable chance to explore technical and design-related avenues for enhancing mobility within our city, benefiting both our residents and the growing influx of tourists. "By collaborating with innova-



tive minds, we aim to bolster Varanasi's reputation as a premier global tourist destination." He said the Varanasi City Challenge will be kicked off by June-end 2024. Meanwhile, in Detroit, the chal-

lenge is focused on Eastern Market food production and distribution centre, reducing fossil fuel use and cutting costs of freight operations "by increasing efficiencies and unlocking opportunities for clean freight

technologies". Meanwhile, Venice's issues are around the majority of the population, which lives and works in mainland suburbs such as Mestre and Maghera, and the city is looking for "innovative solutions that

shift behaviour, encouraging an increased use and adoption of existing sustainable transport modes". The Toyota Mobility Foundation, in collaboration with the World Resources Institute and Challenge Works, will work with local organizations to identify urban mobility barriers and create actionable solutions. Global innovators will be invited to access funding and demonstrate their concepts to improve transportation in these cities. Ryan Klem, director of programs at the Toyota Mobility Foundation, said: "Our hope is that the Sustainable Cities Challenge will provide the great cities of Detroit, Varanasi and Venice with new ideas that can potentially be scaled and replicated around the world, amplifying the impact to transform people's lives". Ben Welle, director of integrat-

ed transport and innovation at WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, said: "Detroit, Varanasi and Venice all have distinct mobility barriers, but they also share the same circumstances and concerns with many other cities around the world." The cities were chosen from a list of 10 cities shortlisted in November 2023, which was whittled down from more than 150 entrants. These were Bengaluru, India, Detroit, US, Fortaleza, Brazil, Medellin, Colombia, Mexico City, Mexico, New Orleans, US, Seberang Perai, Malaysia, Varanasi, India, Venice, Italy and York, UK. Over 150 cities from 46 countries entered the Challenge after the call to cities was first launched in June 2023 and over the last months, the list was narrowed to 10 and now finally 3 cities i.e. Varanasi, Detroit and Venice.



NOTICE

I hereby declare that in my official documents my mother's name DEVAKI DEVI, her date of birth 08.09.1943 and my father's name BHAGAWAN BAX SINGH, his date of birth 01.08.1940 is wrongly registered. My mother's correct name is JANKI DEVI, her correct date of birth 01.01.1949 and father's correct name is BHAGAWAN BAKS SINGH, his correct date of birth is 01.01.1944. Hence, in my all documents the correct name and date of birth of my mother and father will be written and known. Upendra Singh S/O Bhagawan Baks Singh R/O Village and post Navva Mahmoodpur, Tehsil and District-Sitapur

NOTICE

My Father's name is wrongly spelled as DAYASHANKAR in my intermediate (CBSE) marksheet and certificate, whereas the correct spelling in aadhar card is DAYA SHANKER. Therefore correct the spelling of my father's name in my 12th marksheet and certificate. Karishma D/o Mr. Daya Shanker, H. No.- 21, Annpurna Enclave, Kanpur Nagar- 208002

Information

It is informed that my date of birth has been erroneously recorded as 11/10/1992 in my husband's service book which is wrong and incorrect. The date of birth recorded in the correct and other documents is 16/12/1990 which should be considered right and correct. Sunita W/O Vikram Singh Resident - kaziipur Post - Kisundaspur Tehsil - Dalmou District - Raebareli.

NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
Mohd Anas (BORROWER) Have agreed to create a mortgage on respect of
1- Original sale deed dated 22.04.2014 registered on vide Book No 1 Volume No. 14924, Page No. 347 to 372 at Serial No. 8233.
2- Original sale deed dated 06.10.2006 registered on vide Book No 1 Volume No. 7353, Page No. 29 to 52 at Serial No. 10525.
3- Original free hold deed dated 25.08.2006 registered on vide Book No 1 Volume No. 7272, Page No. 309 to 324 at Serial No. 9118
4. Original Allotment and Possession Letter in favour of Jay Hind Singh. If any person having any claim against the said property and documents can contact me within 07 Days
SHIVAKANT DIXIT ADVOCATE
OFFICE CHAMBER NO. 112, 1st floor
KAN CHAMBER, 14/113, CIVIL LINES,
KANPUR NAGAR Mob: 09336632546, 09415403399

SC cold to Kejriwal bail extension plea

From page 1

Taking a dig at Kejriwal, Union Minister Anurag Thakur, criticised him, stating that Kejriwal is capable of participating in a roadshow despite Delhi's scorching 47 degrees temperature, yet he seeks bail citing health concerns. "He is exposed once again. It is visible to everyone that he can do a roadshow in 47 degrees temperature but asks for bail on the pretext of ill health," Thakur said. Another BJP leader MS Sirsa said, "All day he (Kejriwal) campaigned, but when it comes to going to jail, he becomes unwell...". On Wednesday, the Supreme Court registrar, while refusing the plea, said the Delhi Chief Minister was given permission to move the trial court for regular bail, and hence this petition is "not maintainable". Additionally, it was pointed out that since the judgment on the challenge to the arrest is already reserved, the present extension application has no correlation to the main

petition.

On Tuesday, a vacation bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and K V Viswanathan said it would refer his request to list the application for urgent hearing to Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud for appropriate orders. On Tuesday, when Kejriwal's request for urgent hearing of his application was mentioned by senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, the bench of Justices Maheshwari and Viswanathan sought to know why Kejriwal had not raised the request before Justice Dipankar Datta, one of the judges on the bench that granted him interim bail, while he was holding court until May 24. Singhvi pointed out that the matter in which the court had reserved its order on May 17 was Kejriwal's petition challenging his arrest and had nothing to do with medical grounds. He urged the bench to list it for hearing on Wednesday "or whatever is Your Lordships' convenience".

Baked Delhi waits to exhale

From Page 1

The IMD later said there could be an error in sensor data and the data of Mungeshwar site is being examined. The Delhi Government's LNJP Hospital has been seeing a spike in the number of patients affected due to heatwave conditions. "We have seen a high number of patients affected by the heat this week. Yesterday alone, we received nearly 10 patients who were affected by heat stroke," said Dr Ritu

Saxena from Lok Nayak Hospital. Symptoms like fever, headache, vomiting and unconsciousness are common among such patients, she said. Saxena advised that people should avoid stepping out, especially during peak hours, and keep themselves hydrated. Amit Kumar, a resident of Najafgarh, said his family is struggling due to the heat and said they are trying to avoid stepping out as much as possible. "My brother got sick due to

the heat, and now we are taking extra precautions. We're taking traditional remedies like aam panna (unripe mango juice) and using wet towels to stay cool and prevent fainting. The heat is so severe that we are giving the kids multiple baths during the day to stay cool," Kumar said. Jay Pandit, a resident of Mungeshpur who commutes 30 kilometres for work in Central Delhi, described the challenges of daily travel. "The hot wind feels like

burning the skin, and it's affecting my health. How long can you sit inside? A day or two, maybe three, you can't just stay inside. To live, to survive, you have to step out, but managing this heat is tough. I feel headaches and fever most days while coming back home," Pandit said. Residents of Delhi are adopting various measures to combat the sweltering conditions, such as taking traditional remedies like aam panna and using wet towels to stay cool. Some are taking

baths twice a day and trying to avoid stepping out. On the outskirts of the city in Mungeshpur and Narela, the mercury touched as high as 49.9 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, nine notches above normal. Amit Singh, a contractor, said, "We can't work from 11 am to 5 pm because of the heatwave. Many labourers have left for their native places, and our business has been affected. We need to work in open areas, which is just not possible these days as the

weather is unbearable." To protect themselves, people are taking ORS and keeping themselves hydrated as much as they can. Rakesh Kumar, a resident of Rajiv Vihar in Najafgarh, said the high temperatures and the hot, dry wind are making people in the area fall sick. "I commute to Central Delhi on my bike every day. Despite taking all the precautions, I have developed a high fever and body ache due to heat stroke," he added. With the heatwave in the National

Capital, it is the first time in the history that its power demand has crossed the 8,300-MW mark. Power distribution companies had estimated the demand to peak at 8,200 MW this summer. Further, the Delhi Government on Wednesday announced that a Rs 2,000 fine would be imposed on anyone found to be wasting water - washing cars with a hose, letting their water tanks overflow or using private connections for commercial activity.

Seismic shift in Mirzapur’s political landscape

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ MIRZAPUR

In eastern Uttar Pradesh’s town of Mirzapur, where the revered Maa Vindhyavasini shrine stands as a testament to faith, the political landscape has undergone a seismic shift. The Bharatiya Janata Party’s decision to deny ticket to its sitting MP from Bhadohi, Ramesh Bind, has ignited a fierce electoral contest. In a surprising turn of events, Bind defected to the Samajwadi Party just days before the nomination deadline, posing a formidable challenge to Union Minister Anupriya Patel, leader of the BJP ally Apna Dal (Sonela). “This was a golden opportunity that the SP seized,” remarked Nomita P Kumar from the Giri Institute of Development Studies in Lucknow. “By strategically fielding Ramesh Bind, the SP aims to disrupt the Kurmi-dominated OBC caste dynamics that have favored the BJP and its allies since 2014,” Kumar added.

The impoverished town of Mirzapur now finds itself at the heart of a complex interplay of caste politics. Anupriya Patel, seeking a third consecutive term, faces a constituency where voting patterns are deeply entrenched in caste affiliations. “Caste dynamics have historically played a decisive role in this Sonbhadra region,” noted Kumar, adding that while issues like inflation and unemployment are discussed, ultimately, caste remains the driving force. Local journalist Manoj Singh emphasised the pivotal role of caste in shaping the election landscape. “This contest is a direct battle between Apna Dal (S) and the SP. As in past elections, caste equations will be the determining factor,” he said, adding that with the combined votes of Kols, Patels (Kurmis), Binds, and Brahmins totaling over seven lakh, every vote becomes crucial. Singh predicts that while Patel’s supporters will predominantly back

Anupriya Patel, the Bind community will rally behind Ramesh Bind. A significant portion of the Brahmin community is expected to support Anupriya Patel, with around 30 per cent backing Bahujan Samaj Party candidate Manish Tripathi, who also hails from the Brahmin community. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Anupriya Patel secured victory with a margin of 5,91,564 votes, defeating Ram Charitra Nishad of the SP. According to the 2011 census, Scheduled Caste voters in the Mirzapur parliamentary seat number approximately 4,80,867, constituting about 26.1 per cent of the electorate. Scheduled Tribe voters are around 14,739, making up approximately 0.8 per cent of the electorate. Despite Bind’s entry into the fray, BJP leader Dilip Kol remains unfazed. “It is true that the Binds will vote for Ramesh Bind, the SP candidate, but in 2014, Anupriya defeated Samudra Bind of the BSP. At that time, she

received 43.32 per cent of the votes. So, the BJP turnout is no threat to us,” he says. Santosh Kumar, vice-president of Akhil Bharatiya Vaishya Mahasabha, highlighted the unwavering support of the Vaishya community for the BJP and Apna Dal (S). “Vaishyas are staunch supporters of the BJP, and Apna Dal (S) is a trusted ally. Therefore, they are supporting Anupriya Patel,” he said. However, some residents, like Rajendra Kumar of Rajgarh, believe the SP’s campaign is gaining momentum. Conversely, Rakesh Kumar Patel counters, “Both caste arithmetic and equations currently favour Anupriya. Though she faces a tough contest, she enjoys strong local support.” Anupriya Patel’s supporters cite her developmental projects in Mirzapur, including the establishment of a state university, a medical college, and the upgradation of the Mirzapur railway station. Political analyst Amaresh

Chandra noted that Brahmins are pleased with the construction of the Vindhyachal Corridor, which has beautified and expanded the Maa Vindhyavasini temple premises. Mirzapur, also renowned for its brass utensils, is part of the Uttar Pradesh government’s One District, One Product scheme. Rajendra Agarwal, general secretary of the Mirzapur Metal Traders Association, underscored the significance of this industry, which employs over 35,000 artisans and involves around 500 manufacturers. “The entire industry is worth roughly Rs 900 crore and provides substantial employment. Politicians should take this industry seriously,” he said. As Mirzapur prepares to cast its votes in the final round of the seven-phase Lok Sabha election on June 1, the outcome will determine whether the BJP and its allies can maintain their stronghold or if the SP’s strategy to disrupt caste dynamics will succeed.

Lucknow LS result likely to come earlier than Mohanlalganj

800 counting personnel trained

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the number of counting rounds being lesser for the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency, its result is likely to come faster as compared to the Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha constituency on June 4 when counting will be taken up. Giving this information, a senior official from the district election office said that counting would start at 8 am at Ramabai grounds on June 4 and results would come between 3 pm and 4 pm. He said that the training was imparted to 800 counting personnel on Wednesday at Jai Narain Degree College, including counting supervisors, counting assistants, micro observers and additional returning officers for both Lucknow and Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha constituencies. He informed that for the Mohanlalganj Lok Sabha constituency, 42 rounds of counting will be held for Sarojini Nagar assembly segment, 35 rounds for Bakshi Ka Talab segment and 29 rounds each for Malihabad and Mohanlalganj assembly segments. In Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency, the maximum counting rounds of 30 will be held for Lucknow West and Lucknow East assembly segments, 24

rounds for Lucknow Cantonment segment, 24 rounds for Lucknow Central assembly segment and 29 rounds for Lucknow North assembly segment. There will be 14 tables in each room of the Ramabai grounds where the counting will be held and counting for 14 booths will take place at one time. For Sarojininagar, the Election Commission of India will set up 18 tables “Arrangements are also being made for the counting of the postal ballots and the electrically transmitted postal ballot in a separate room,” the official added. Security will be in place, he informed, “The outer two rings will have the state police and the inner ring immediately outside the counting rooms will be guarded by the CRPF. Water and food arrangements for the personnel on duty are also being looked into. Passes will also be issued for the candidates and the party agents who will be present for the voting,” he said. He said that work had started on how the counting tables would be set up in the rooms at Ramabai grounds. “Arrangements for air-conditions are also being made looking into the heat wave conditions prevailing in the city,” he added.

BJP Yuva Morcha leader creates ruckus in Mathura, manhandles S-I

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Along with his goons, openly beat up a sub-inspector on the road in Mathura and also tried to run his car over the cop. The incident took place on Tuesday night and the BJP leader involved in it was said to be Sumit Saraswat, who assaulted the policeman. During the fight, the sub-inspector’s uniform was torn and the gold chain he was wearing around his neck also broke. The BJP leader also tried to run his car over the sub-inspector, who had a narrow escape. As a large crowd gathered at the spot, more force had to be called from the police station. The police arrested four people from the spot in this assault case. Raids were also being conducted in search of others, including Saraswat. On receiving information about stone-pelting and firing, SP (City) and CO (Refinery) along with the in-charge of Balajipuram outpost also reached the spot. It is said that the accused BJP leader has created a terror among the people in the area. A few days ago, Sumit Saraswat had beaten up the councilor and other people. The whole matter is of Balajipuram Tomar intersection of Thana Highway area in Mathura.

BJP committed to welfare of people: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On Wednesday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held four rallies and a roadshow as part of the final phase of the election campaign. His first rally took place in Hata, Kushinagar. Additionally, he campaigned for the candidates of Salempur, Bansgaon, and Gorakhpur Lok Sabha constituencies, urging voters to press the ‘lotus’ button on the EVMs once again. During his speeches, the chief minister highlighted the development projects implemented by the Bharatiya Janata Party governments at both the Centre and in UP, emphasising their commitment to the welfare of the people. He also criticised the INDI Alliance, particularly the Samajwadi Party, Congress and the Bahujan Samaj Party. Yogi Adityanath assured the people that their patience during rallies despite the sweltering heat would be repaid through comprehensive development initiatives. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held a public meeting in Hata to support Vijay Dubey, the BJP Lok Sabha candidate from Kushinagar. He criticised the SP, the BSP, and the Congress for hindering the construction of Ram Mandir, asserting that once Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power, all obstacles were removed, leading to the temple’s construction in Ayodhya. He encouraged those who voted for the BJP to proudly proclaim their role in building the Ram



mandir. Highlighting the public’s support as the strength behind Modi and himself, Yogi Adityanath emphasised, “Electing MPs and MLAs from the BJP facilitate development.” Impressed by the large turnout, he remarked, “The event exemplifies the democratic spirit.” He recounted how, during the SP government, attempts to organise the Dola Mela in Padrauna were thwarted. The CM praised Kushinagar’s achievements, noting its university, airport and medical college, which few districts could boast. He highlighted Kushinagar’s emergence as a new hub for international tourism and celebrated its unique identity, attributed to the sweetness of its sugarcane.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held his second public meeting in Bhatpur Rani, Deoria, where he urged the re-election of Ravindra Kushwaha, the BJP candidate from the Salempur Lok Sabha seat. He highlighted, “The eradication of both the mafia from the state and encephalitis from Purvanchal as significant achievements.” He criticised the SP and the Congress, accusing them of undermining India’s faith, and described the SP as pro-mafia, alleging it embraces criminals. Yogi Adityanath also condemned Congress for its proposal to implement an inheritance tax similar to the one in the United States, comparing it to Aurangzeb’s Jizya tax.

He praised Prime Minister Modi for his decade-long dedication and efforts to uplift the poor. Reflecting on past events, Yogi recalled how he intervened during the SP regime to protect Hindus in Bhatpur, where their homes were burned and they were imprisoned. He emphasised that there have been no riots under BJP rule in Uttar Pradesh in the last seven years. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in his public meeting in Sahjanwa, Gorakhpur, passionately advocated for BJP MP and party candidate Ravi Kishan. He drew a stark contrast between the alleged divisive agendas of Congress, the SP, and the INDI Alliance, and the BJP’s unwavering focus on development, wel-

fare of the poor, and making the country self-reliant under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. He went on to assert that the manifestos of the SP and the Congress were nothing but plans to deceive and betray the nation. Yogi Adityanath affirmed that the BJP would govern the country based on the Constitution drafted by Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, rejecting any governance based on Sharia law. The chief minister highlighted recent developments in Gorakhpur and Sahjanwa, including the construction of four-lane roads, over bridges, new factories, a stadium, and the Atal Residential School for free education of poor and working-class children in Sahjanwa. In Gorakhpur, he noted the establishment of AIIMS and a fertilizer factory as significant achievements. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held his fourth public meeting in Kauriram, campaigning for Bansgaon MP and BJP candidate Kamlesh Paswan. He highlighted India’s extensive changes in the past decade, contrasting the current focus on development with previous administrations prioritising their own families. He emphasised his government’s dedication to the people’s welfare and announced plans to develop a new industrial area in Dhuriyapur, similar to GIDA (Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority), which would attract global job seekers.

144 candidates in fray for last phase polls

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Polling for the seventh and last phase of Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh will be held on June 1 along with polling for by-election to Duddhi assembly seat in Sonbhadra district. There are 144 candidates in the poll fray in the 13 Lok Sabha constituencies going to polls in this phase, including 134 male and 10 female candidates. Chief Election Officer of Uttar Pradesh, Navdeep Rinwa, said all election-related activities and campaigns would be prohibited in the 13 Lok Sabha constituencies of the seventh phase and in the Duddhi

assembly by-election from 6 pm on Thursday, May 30. The 13 Lok Sabha constituencies going to polls in the final phase include Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Deoria, Bansgaon (SC), Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Mirzapur and Robertsganj (SC), which are spread over 11 districts. The Duddhi assembly seat where the by-election is being held falls under Sonbhadra district. Rinwa said that in view of the heat, necessary arrangements had been made at the polling stations, which include cold drinking water, toilets, and wheelchairs for people with disabilities and older people.

Ganganyaan astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla interacts with students

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla selected for Ganganyaan mission met students and faculty of his alma mater to share his journey from his classroom to the cosmos. Group Captain Shukla reminisced about his school days and the pivotal role this prominent institution played in shaping his educational and career aspirations. As a fighter pilot in the Indian Air Force to his current role as an ISRO astronaut, Shubhanshu’s thought-provoking journey attracted a universe of questions from the young explorers. His insightful responses about the extra-terrestrial habitat, the unifying experience of viewing Earth without borders from space, the interdisciplinary approach to education



that integrates various fields of knowledge and the indispensable role of physical fitness, discipline and consistency left the audience immersed and reflect-

ive. In 2019, Shubhanshu was among the final four candidates selected for ISRO’s prestigious Ganganyaan programme. He trained at the Gagarin

Cosmonaut Training Center in Russia and received the astronaut’s wings from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 27, 2024.

LMC to hold GIS Samadhan Diwas every Friday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In order to resolve the objections presented against tax assessment of buildings by GIS Survey within the limits of Lucknow Municipal Corporation, GIS Samadhan Diwas will be held every week. “GIS Samadhan Diwas will be organised every Friday from 9 am to 12:30 pm at Triloknath Auditorium, Lalbagh, located at the municipal corporation headquarters. Senior officers and zonal officers concerned and representatives of GIS survey company will be present in the GIS Samadhan Diwas” said an LMC official. He said that building owners of Lucknow city were informed that if there was any objection against the revised house tax assessment in GIS, then it could be resolved by appearing on time on the said day and registering their objections.

Orchard visits to mark Mango Festival

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The organiser of the 12th Mango Festival, Jyotsana Habibullah, said here on Wednesday that this year’s highlights included the signature farm visits at Madhav Udyan, Village Mall on Sunday, June 9, and at Vintage Village, Sitapur on Sunday, June 23. “These visits offer a unique opportunity for attendees to commune with nature in the beautiful orchards, promoting biodiversity and providing an escape reminiscent of summer holidays we read about in books. Attendees can buy mangoes directly from farmers, ensuring they enjoy the freshest produce while supporting local agriculture,” she

said. She said that for the farmers, the festival represents a significant economic boost. “The festival was born from a passion to celebrate the magnificence of mangoes and to support our local farmers,” says Habibullah, adding, “It’s about creating a sustainable model that benefits everyone involved, from the growers to the consumers.” “Selling directly to consumers at the festival has been a game-changer for us,” said Prem Singh, a Malihabad farmer. “We can offer our mangoes at better prices and connect with the people who enjoy our fruit. It’s incredibly rewarding,” he added. The Bhatnagars, a visiting family, shared their experience of last year: “It was our

first time at the Mango Festival, and our children were thrilled! From picking mangoes to tasting the delicious varieties, it was a day we’ll never forget. The kids learned so much about where their food comes from, and it felt like stepping into a storybook.” “In addition to the farm visits, the festival features a rich array of cultural activities including craft exhibitions, music performances, food tastings, storytelling – Lucknow’s famed Dastangoi, poetry, shayari, and environmental initiatives. The Guthli Club, a green initiative that propagates mango saplings from seeds, continues to thrive, planting these saplings in local villages each year,”

said Jyotsana Habibullah. “The festival also serves as a launchpad for innovative mango-based products. Over the past 12 years, around 45 new products have been introduced, including mango-based skincare, foods, raw mango dishwash powder, recycled products, and mango-inspired art. This year promises even more exciting launches, showcasing the versatility and potential of this beloved fruit. Moreover, the festival has introduced an app for farmers, facilitating direct sales to consumers. This initiative not only benefits the farmers by eliminating the need for prolonged preservation but also ensures consumers get the freshest mangoes,” she added.

LU, Copenhagen Univs sign MoU

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow University and the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, represented by its Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to foster cooperation in education, research, and skill development. Prof Alok Kumar Rai, Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow University and Prof Birgit Nørrung, the head of department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and former chair of the European Food Safety Authority Panel on Biological Hazards, signed the MoU in a virtual ceremony.



बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा
Bank of Baroda

Regional Office, Kanpur Dehat Region: 118/330,
2nd Floor, Gunti Mo. 5, Kaushalpur, Kanpur - 12

DEMAND NOTICE Branch : Auraiya, Distt. Auraiya

Here by this is to inform that under named borrower has not repaid principal and interest thereon of the loan. Therefore the loan become NPA on below Dated . A notice under section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 was issued at last known address, which was returned undelivered. Therefore we again inform to under named borrower/ Guarantor by this public notice to repay the loan amount due including interest and other expenses as mentioned in this notice within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice otherwise bank will take action u/section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act 2002.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets, that after publication of public auction/inviting quotation/tender/ private treaty your right to redeem the secured assets will not be available.

Name and Address of Borrower / Guarantor and Security agreement with brief description of securities/N.P.A. Date & Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice

Borrower : M/s Om Shri Krishna Trolley Udyog, Address : Dibiyapur Road, Kakhawatoo, Auraiya, **Proprietor :** Shri Arun Kumar S/o Shri Siyaram Mishra, R/o: 305, Rahatpur, Auraiya. **Guarantor :** Smt. Kalpana W/o Shri Arun Kumar, R/o: 305, Rahatpur, Auraiya.

Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 18,63,749.08 + Intt. + Others Charges

Property (1) : Land & Building Situated at Land No. 113, Mauja Kakhawatoo, Pargana & Distt. Auraiya in the name of Shri Arun Kumar S/o Shri Siyaram Mishra, **Area :** 90 Sq. Mtr. **Bounded-North :** Chak Road 20 Ft., **South :** Land No. 111 Sujet Kumar, **East :** Plot of Ram Narayan, **West :** Plot of Abhishek.

Property (2) : Land & Building Situated at Land No. 2241 Mi, Mauja Kakhawatoo, Pargana & Distt. Auraiya in the name of Shri Arun Kumar S/o Shri Siyaram Mishra, **Area :** 306 Sq. Mtr. **Bounded-North :** Land No. 2240, **South :** Plot of Kamla Devi, **East :** Rasta 21 Ft., **West :** Boundary of Hanuman Mandir Sehud.

Property (3) : Land & Building Situated at Land No. 61, Mauja Kakhawatoo, Pargana & Distt. Auraiya in the name of Shri Arun Kumar S/o Shri Siyaram Mishra, **Area :** 92.936 Sq. Mtr. **Bounded-North :** Land of Seller, **South :** Sadak Link Marg (Bharatpur), **East :** Land of Seller, **West :** Land of Seller. **N.P.A. Date : 28-08-2023 • Demand Notice Date : 16-05-2024**

Date : 30-05-2024 **Place : Auraiya** **Authorised Officer**



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DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002
You, the under mentioned Borrower / Mortgagor is hereby informed that the company has initiated proceedings against you under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and that the Notice under 13 (2) of the Act sent to you by Registered Post Ack. Due for Borrower/s has been returned undelivered. Hence, you are hereby called upon to take notice and pay the outstanding loan amount mentioned against the said account with interest accruing there from within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the company will proceed against you by exercising its right under Sub-Sec (4) of Section 13 of the Act by enforcing the below mentioned security to realize its dues with interests and costs. It is needless to mention that this notice is addressed to you without prejudice to any other remedy available to the company.

Name and Address of the Borrower/s	Loan Amount	Date of Demand Notice & Amount Outstanding	Description of the property/ Secured Asset
Loan Account - X0HERRH00001979967 1. Rahul Shukla (Applicant) 2.(A) Aditya Singh (Co Applicant) Both Add- Peepal - 69, CG Housing Board Colony, Boriyakala, Opp. Sadani Darbaar, Chhattisgarh - 492001. 2.(B) Aditya Singh (Co Applicant), Bhikharipur, District Varamashi, U. P. - 221004, 3.(A) Mamta Shukla (Co Applicant), Peepal- 69, CG Housing Board Colony, Boriyakala, Opp. Sadani Darbaar, Chhattisgarh 492001, 3.(B) Mamta Shukla (Co Applicant), 18 Mig. A D A Colony, Neem Sarai, Gyaasuddinpur, Uparhar, Dhoomanganj, Allahabad, District- Allahabad, U. P 211011, 4. M/S Mooneyes Marketers & Consultant (Co Applicant), First Floor, Radha Mohan Tower, Bhaishtaan, Raipur, Chhattisgarh 492001, 5.(A) Parashuram Shukla (Co Applicant), Peepal - 69, CG Housing Board, Colony, Boriyakala, Opp. Sadani Darbaar, Chhattisgarh 492001, 5.(B) Parashuram Shukla (Co Applicant), P.I.L. 03, Ward 15, Champaa, District, Janjigir Champa, Chhattisgarh 495671.	₹ 52,50,000.00	23.05.2024 ₹ 39,30,607.00 as on 23.05.2024 with further interest thereon NPA Date: 05.05.2024	All The Part And Parcel Of The Property Bearing House No. Peepal I/69, Part Of Survey No. 1495/1, 1495, 1496/1498, Area Admeasuring -198 Sq. Mt. (2130.48 Sq. Ft.), Situated At Housing Board Colony Boriyakala, P.H.N.-117, Raipur, Tehsil And District Raipur, Chhattisgarh. Bounded As:- North- Road, South- Peepal House No. 56, East- Peepal House No. 68, West- Peepal House No. 70.

Date: 30.05.2024 **Place: Raipur (C.G.)** **Authorised Officer/ Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited**

Misinformation about Constitution change a crime: Kalraj Mishra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Governor of Rajasthan Kalraj Mishra said due to their vested political interests in the Lok Sabha elections, some people are spreading the propaganda regarding changes in the Indian Constitution and this act comes under the category of a heinous crime. He expressed these views while speaking at a seminar on 'our constitutional responsibility on the festival of democracy', organised by the Akhil Bhartiya Manishi Parishad at a hotel in Lanka area here on Wednesday.

Describing the features of the Constitution, he said that after the approval of both the houses, the Constitution can be amended but it cannot be changed.

"The Indian Constitution has been prepared with great effort in two years, 11 months and 18 days by 284 members of the Constituent Assembly after studying the major constitutions of the whole world, various Indian political systems, governance systems and the governmental systems up to the Vedic period", he said, adding that it includes all the elements necessary for democracy. According to



Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra addressing a seminar in Varanasi on Wednesday.

him, the original Indian Constitution is handwritten by Prem Narayan Raizada. "The Constitution makers have tried to express the spirit of the Constitution through pictures at various places. The picture of Lord Ram on the page of Fundamental Rights gives the message that the Fundamental Rights should be dignified. The picture of Lord Krishna and Arjun on the page of Directive Principles reminds us of the teachings of Lord Krishna and similarly the federal system is inspired by the pictures

of Mahatma Buddha and Mahatma Mahavir. It also gives the message of truth and non-violence", he said, adding that such a beautiful constitutional system is being maligned by some people for their vested political interests.

He expressed his concern over an attempt being made to spread the confusion in the society that the Constitution will be changed. "That is why spreading the talk of changes in the Indian Constitution, which is the holy book of democracy, comes under the category of a heinous crime",

he added

The seminar was chaired by Padma Shri Pt Rajeshwar Acharya. The vote of thanks was proposed by Prof Manju Dwivedi of Banaras Hindu University.

General secretary of the parishad Diwakar Dwivedi, treasurer Ajay Mishra, Prof Padmanabh Dwivedi, Prof Sujit Kumar Dwivedi, Dr Aadya Prasad Pandey, former MLC Dr Veena Pandey and many others were present. The seminar was conducted by the president of parishad Dr Vidyasagar Pandey.

Crimes against women have increased tremendously: Cong leader

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhana Mishra Mona criticised the Central government for increasing crimes against women and termed Matrishakti slogan of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as hollow.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, she said the Modi government came to power, the crime rate against women has increased to 64.4 per cent, which was 54 per cent in 2014. "Crimes against women have increased tremendously. In 2014 there were 3,37,922 crimes against women every year, which has increased to 4,45,256 today. That is 1,219 women are becoming victims of criminals every day in the country", she said, adding that today the cries of women can be heard from every corner of the country under the BJP rule. "From Hathras to Hassan, from Manipur to Unnao, from Pauri Garhwal to Sonbhadra, from Kaiserganj to Varanasi, the patronage of the BJP government is with the rapists", she alleged. The Congress leader said the women are being harassed in every way under the BJP government, from rape, inflation, unemployment of their capable children, malnutrition, discrimination at workplaces etc. "Today women of the entire country are raising their voice in one voice to remove the Modi government and empower women", she said, flaying the BJP government for gang-rape in Varanasi. "The accused were identified in seven days but the BJP government not only tried to save them but also sent them to other states for election campaigning. Despite the pressure of the opposition and the media, the accused were arrested after 60 days", she said. She said one more such heinous incident has happened in Sagar district of Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled state Madhya Pradesh (MP). "When a Dalit daughter complained about molestation, first her brother was murdered, then her uncle was killed and then the daughter died under suspicious circumstances", she said.

BJP makes last-ditch attempt to woo voters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

With just a few hours left for the election campaign to end, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is making last ditch-attempt to woo the voters to ensure third consecutive win of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the Varanasi Lok Sabha. Several party poll campaigners thronged the city here on Wednesday and in the evening, Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnis participated in the



BJP leader Rani Ratna Kumari campaigning on Wednesday for ensuring the win of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Varanasi

'Kashi Maharashtra Samagam' programme organised at Jangamwadi Math. Hundreds of Marathi families are living in this holy city for more than a century and their role in promotion of Hindi journalism was remarkable. Union Minister Smriti Irani addressed a public meeting at Kadambini Lawn at Shivpur in the evening while UP Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya also addressed the same election meeting. Besides, a group of BJP Mahila Morcha workers gathered at Assi Ghat wearing lotus sarees and then took out a 'padyatra' to create voter awareness through contact and dialogue with the local people in favour of party's candidate and the PM. Meanwhile, addressing the influential people of Patel community, doctors, businessmen and other eminent people in the conference at Rajwanti Lawn, Mehndiganj, regional BJP president Dilip Patel said there is a wave of BJP in the whole country. He said the development of the poor, economic strength of farmers, employment to the youth and empowerment of women is the resolution of the PM. "As soon as the figure of 400 is crossed on June 4, 80 crore people of the country will

get free ration for five years and three crore poor people will get houses", Patel said, adding that with Modi becoming the PM for the third time, the country will move rapidly towards becoming the third economic superpower of the world.

He said when the son of a poor man became the PM, he dedicated all the schemes of the government to the poor. He alleged it is the tradition of Congress to usurp 85 per cent of the rights of the poor in brokerage and commission. "Modi has worked to deliver the rights of the poor to the poor by stopping corruption, brokerage and commission. The constituent parties of the INDI Alliance, including SP, Congress etc have become nervous and are spreading lies and confusion", he said. Praveen Singh Gautam, Arvind Singh Patel, Surendra Patel and others were also present.

Besides, in support of Modi in Rohania assembly of Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency, BJP leader Rani Ratna Kumari from Rajasthan's Jaipur Shahpura royal family visited 15 villages during the day and met people. Addressing the people present in Sagarpur village, she said we are contesting

the elections on Modi's guarantee. She said under the leadership of Modi, 25 crore poor families of the country have risen above poverty and there has been vast change in the standard of living of people. BJP leaders Pramod Singh, Mahendra Singh Chandel, Akhilesh Singh, Ganesh Singh, Chandan Singh and others were present. Earlier, UP Minister Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' held a meeting with the members of Lok Sabha Election Management Committee and Core Committee at Rohania Assembly Office and discussed the election strategy. During the discussion, he said the most important role in the election is of the booth committee and panna pramukh. "We have to ensure that the booth committee office-bearers increase their activity at their booths. Everyone has to fulfill the responsibility of ensuring victory at their booth. Panna pramukh must discuss with the voters coming in his area through some medium or the other every day. Panna pramukh should discharge his full responsibility of taking all the 60 voters registered in his designated page to the booth 100 per cent", he said.

Rahul extends support to agitating BHU cardiologist

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi had a long conversation over the phone with former head of Cardiology department in the Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) Prof Om Shankar who is on a continuous hunger strike against the institute.

Prof Shankar has been agitating for over two weeks in protest against the 'less' number of beds allotted to the heart patients in the Sir Sunderlal Hospital (SSH) which is against the guidelines of National Health Commission (NHC) even though this leading hospital serves a huge population of the region.

After addressing the

Parivartan Sankalp rally near Mohansarai crossing along with Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav in favour of Congress candidate from Varanasi Lok Sabha seat Ajay Rai and SP candidate from Chandauli constituency Virendra Singh on Tuesday, Rahul Gandhi during a phone conversation expressed support of his party and INDIA Bloc to the struggle of BHU cardiologist with the assurance of raising his issues at the national level. When Ajay Rai brought this matter to the notice of Rahul Gandhi, the latter talked to Prof Om Shankar on phone for about 10 minutes to understand the issues in detail. Rahul also asked the cardiologist to send a note in this regard to him by email.

According to Rahul, if he had

been aware of the matter earlier, he would have discussed it in his public meeting in Varanasi. However, Rahul promised that he would definitely keep raising the issues in future. He also told the cardiologist that after the formation of the INDIA Bloc's government, action will definitely be taken on this issue on priority.

During the telephonic talk, Prof Om Shankar told Rahul about the pressure of increased number of heart patients in the post-Covid period and the 'reluctance' of the administration of the IMS and BHU in allocating beds to patients as per their demands.

The agitating cardiologist also apprised Rahul of the alleged apathetic attitude of the IMS and corruption under the patronage of BHU vice-chancellor.

Along with this, Rahul also discussed with the agitating cardiologist the issue of public's right to health and medicine and public welfare policies and programmes for its meaningful implementation etc. Prior to that, former Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Bhupesh Baghel met the agitating professor and expressed his sympathy towards the stir.

In the matter, the Banaras Hindu University administration has already constituted a committee for review of bed allocation in its hospital system as per the guidelines of NHC apart from removing Prof Om Shankar from the responsibility of headship of Cardiology department, by giving the charge of the same to another faculty member.

Voters rejected BJP in every phase: Tiwari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Deputy Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Pramod Tiwari said the voters have rejected the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in every phase and strongly criticised the BJP for the electoral bonds terming it as the biggest 'funding scam' of all time in Independent India. Talking to the reporters at party's election office here on Wednesday, Tiwari alleged that the BJP government had collected payments or donations from the companies showing the fear of ED, CBI and IT in this scam, citing the names of many firms that gave huge donations to the BJP.

"The companies that got projects from the Central government returned their favour by donating to the BJP", he said, adding that if the BJP fails to issue a 'white paper' on this, then it will be clear as a mirror that it does not have the guts to tell the truth about how much money came from where and when. He further said that if the BJP does



Rajya Sabha MP Pramod Tiwari addressing a press conference in Varanasi on Wednesday.

not reveal its source, then the Supreme Court should look into the matter. Tiwari asked the prime minister to take moral responsibility for this and apologise to the entire nation. The Rajya Sabha MP said that the Modi government has proved unsuccessful on every front. "Whether it is the security of the country's borders, increasing unemployment among the youth, problems of farmers regarding

Minimum Support Price (MSP), rising inflation or corruption, the people of the country have been cheated and betrayed at every level", he said, adding that a government, which came to power by showing the dream of 'good days', has brought the people of the country into 'bad days'.

"Today the people of the country are facing the terrible blow of inflation, the prices of everything

right from petroleum to food grains, oil and cooking gas have increased tremendously and the essential commodities have gone out of the reach of the people, but the Modi government has nothing to do with the pain, trouble or problems of the people", he said.

Tiwari said that in a way, the Bahujan Samajwadi Party (BSP) has completely lost its political base in the country and now it is working only as a 'vote-cutter party'. "If the list of BSP candidates is seen, it becomes clear that it is to help the BJP candidates and there is no intention to make its own candidates win", Tiwari said, appealing to the people of Varanasi to make INDIA bloc candidate Ajay Rai victorious with a huge majority and give a befitting reply to the BJP.

AICC spokesperson Abhay Dubey, state media chief Dr CP Rai, national media coordinator Garima Dasgupta, UPCC spokesperson Anshu Awasthi and others were also present during the press conference.

Woman found hanging

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A newly-wed woman was found hanging under mysterious circumstances in Karankheda village under Maharajpur police station area on Tuesday evening. On getting information her parents rushed to the spot and alleged her killing by her in-laws. The police sent the body for autopsy and carried out probe. Srikanthi (24), sister of Ajay Nishad of Achalganj, Unnao, was married to Subhash Nishad of Karankheda, Maharajpur, 11 months ago. Ajay said on Tuesday morning brother-in-law Subhash informed him to reach Achalganj by the evening. When Subhash did not reach there till late evening, he again called him and failed to get any response. After some time Subhash's sister Anjali informed about Srikanthi committing suicide by hanging herself. When Ajay rushed to the spot with family members, he found Srikanthi hanging in her room. He alleged that all members of her in-laws' family had absconded. Inspector Surendra said on the basis of evidence, complaint and autopsy report, further action will be initiated. A probe is on in the matter, he said.

Meanwhile goons battered an auto rickshaw operator to death on Lucknow-Kanpur national highway in Unnao on Tuesday night. The injured operator was taken to the district hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Man found dead

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

An unidentified man died mysteriously in Maharajpur police station area. He was found dead along a nullah near a mosque ahead of a guest house in Sarsaul town on Wednesday morning. Sarsaul outpost incharge Pawan Mishra along with force rushed to the spot and sent the body for an autopsy. The residents said the man was living near the nullah for the past three-four years, always wore several clothes and tied a turban. Aged around 48, he would always carry some clothes with him. He had slept near the nullah on Tuesday night and when villagers passed from there on Wednesday morning, he was found dead. On getting information about it the police started investigation.

Maharajpur inspector Surendra Singh said the deceased was mentally deranged. The body had been sent for an autopsy.

A probe will be set up after investigations, he said.

ARNA EXCELS: Budding shooter Arna Gupta of the city won silver medal representing the youth category in the India Open Shooting Competition Rifle/Pistol held in Indore from May 21 to 27. A trainee of The Sportz Hub, Arna secured 390 out of 400 points. Coach Rohit Yadav and the Board of Directors of The Sportz Hub congratulated Arna for her achievements.

AWARDED: Over 50 players were awarded prizes and certificates after participating in the 15-day Tarang Summer Camp at the Jai Narayan Vidya Mandir, Vikas Nagar, which concluded on Wednesday. Former international player and president of UP Table Tennis Association Sanjiv Pathak Bobby was the chief guest. The camp convenor was Ashutosh Satyam Jha. Physical Education Head Ashutosh Satyam Jha proposed vote of thanks.

UK team calls on BHU V-C

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A delegation, led by Head (Political & Bilateral Affairs), British High Commission New Delhi, Natalia Leigh called on Vice-Chancellor (V-C) of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain on Wednesday. The delegation comprised Beck Buckingham (OBE Minister Counsellor - Political) and Rajendra Tripathi (Head, Education Program and Partnerships, British Council India). During a meeting Prof Jain said BHU is endeavouring to collaborate with global institutions. Registrar Prof Arun Kumar Singh, coordinator of International Students Prof SVS Raju, associate coordinator Prof Rajesh Singh and coordinator, Global Initiatives of Academic Networks Prof Madhu Tapadia were also present during the interaction.

SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CO. LTD.
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Ph : 0124- 4212530/31/32 E-Mail: customercare@shubham.co website : www.shubham.co

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES)
Sale Notice for sale of immovable properties as per proviso to Rule 8(6) and Appendix-IV-A (Under Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002)
Whereas the undersigned being one of the Authorized Officer of the Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited (hereinafter called the Company) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (The Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (The Rules) issued demand notices calling upon the borrowers, whose names have been indicated in column (C) below on dates specified in column (D) written against each of them, calling upon them to repay the outstanding amount indicated in column (E) below within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken voluntary surrendered/possession of the property mortgaged with the company, described in column (F) herein below, to recover the said outstanding amount, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 13(4) of the Act read with Rule 9 of the Rules on the date mentioned in column (H).
The Borrower in particular and the public in general be hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties mentioned in column (F) below and any dealings with these properties will be subject to the charge of the Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited for an amount mentioned in column (G).
Now, the borrower and the public in general is hereby also informed that the said properties would be sold by public auction on date, time and venue as specified in column (K) against each of the property by inviting bids in the sealed envelopes as per the procedure and terms and conditions stated below:

Sr. No.	Application Number	Name & Address Of the Borrowers	Date of Notice/ Us 13(2) D	Demand Notice Amount	Property Possessed	Total Due as on 27-05-2024 G	Date & Type of Possession H	Current RP I	EMD (Rs.) (10% of RP) J	Date, Time & Venue of auction K
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1.	OLKW1707 000005007 097	Sonu Kumar, Nizam Chaurasia, Shiv Kumar Gungunam Hariharu, Amethi Jagdishpur, Uttar Pradesh - 227809	19-10-2023	Rs. 12,36,451/-	House No. A-4, Build on Plot, Part/ Minjulia of Khasra/ Gata No.19, Situated at Gram/ Mohalla-Baghama, Pargana, Tehsil & District- Lucknow Uttar Pradesh- 226001	Rs. 13,54,777/-	(Physical) 03-01-2024	Rs. 17,70,400/-	Rs. 1,77,040/-	01-07-2024, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow, U.P. - 226001

Note: To the knowledge of the company, there is no encumbrance on the above properties. Terms and conditions of auction sale notice
TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC AUCTION- PROCEDURE AND TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC AUCTION BY INVITING BIDS:
1. The Properties at Serial No. 1, can be inspected on 22-06-2024, respectively from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
2. Sale is subject to the conditions prescribed in SARFAESI Act/Rules 2002 and the terms and conditions mentioned hereunder as also subject to conditions in the offer/bid documents to be submitted by the intending/participating bidders.
3. The bids shall be submitted in a sealed envelope to the office of undersigned along with a Demand Draft/Pay Order towards the Earnest Money Deposit favouring Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited, payable locally. The Earnest money deposit shall not carry any interest. Along with Bid form the proposed bidder shall also attach his/her identity proof/ KYC norms and proof of residence such as copy of the passport, Aadhar Card, election commission card, ration card, driving license etc, and a copy of the PAN card issued by the Income tax department.
4. Last date to submit the bid along with Earnest Money Deposit on or before 29-06-2024 for Properties at Serial No. 1, respectively between 10.00 A.M. To 4.00 PM
5. In no eventually the property would be sold below the reserve price indicated against each of the property.
6. On the date of sale all the, bids so received would be opened and the bid of the highest bidder, provided it is above the reserve price, may be accepted by the company. However the bidders personally present at the auction site shall have the right to further enhance their bid price, subject to a minimum of Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees Five Thousand Only) and in the event of higher bid price being offered the company shall have the right to accept the same. Thereafter, the Purchaser will be required to pay deposit of 25% (Twenty-Five percent) of the sale price, after adjusting the earnest money deposit, immediately at the fall of hammer with the undersigned upon receipt of said amount the company will confirm the acceptance of the bid. The request for extension of time may be allowed by the Authorised officer at his sole discretion subject to such terms and conditions as may be deemed at and proper by him. In the event the highest bidder fails to tender 25% of the bid amount immediately at the fall of hammer then the earnest money deposited by the highest bidder will be forfeited and the property would be offered to its second highest bidder. The balance amount of the purchase price shall be paid by the Purchaser to the undersigned on or before the fifteenth day of confirmation of the sale of the said property or such extended period as may be agreed upon in writing by the parties. In default of payment & within the time as mentioned above, the company shall be at liberty to forfeit the Earnest Money Deposit and/or any other deposit made by the purchaser and proceed with re-auction of the Property. That defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which may be subsequently sold.
7. All the payments shall be made by the purchaser by means of the Demand Draft/Pay Order favouring Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited.
8. On receipt of the sale in full, the company shall be issuing a Sale Certificate in favour of the Purchaser and would hand-over the possession of the property to the Purchaser.
9. The said Immovable Property described in the Schedule shall remain and be at the sole risk of the Purchaser in all respects including loss or damage by fire or theft or other accidents, and other risk from the date of the Confirmation of the sale by the undersigned authorised officer. The Purchaser shall not be entitled to annul the sale on any ground whatsoever.
10. The Demand Draft/Pay Order deposited towards the earnest money shall be returned to the unsuccessful bidders.
11. For all the purposes sale of these Properties is strictly on 'AS IS WHERE IS BASIS' and 'AS IS WHAT IS BASIS AND WITHOUT ANY RECOURSE BASIS'. The company is not aware of any encumbrances of any nature whatsoever on the aforesaid properties.
12. All expenses relating to Stamp Duty, Registration Charges, Transfer Charges and any other charges in respect of the above referred property shall be borne by the Purchaser.
13. The Authorised officer is not bound to accept the highest offer or any of all offers/bid(s) and the company reserves its right to reject any or all bid(s) without assignment any reasons thereof.
14. No person other than the bidders themselves or their duly authorised representative shall be allowed to participate in the sale proceedings.
15. In case all the dues together with all cost charges and expenses incurred by the company are tendered or settled by the above name borrower at any time before the date fixed for sale for the property, under Sect 13(B) of the Act, then the property will not be sold and all the bids received from the prospective bidders shall be returned to them without any liability/claim against the company.
16. This notice is also a notice to above said Borrowers under Rule 8(6) and Appendix IVA of the security interest Enforcement Rules 2002 to the Customer at their respective address as mentioned in Column # 'C' & 'F'.
17. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the Secured Creditor's website i.e. www.shubham.co.
18. For further information, clarity or any assistance, same can be approached to Prabhat Singh (Authorised Officer) at Mobile No.- 6394267268
PLACE : Gurgaon
DATE : 29/05/2024
Authorized Officer
Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited

Female candidates in LS polls rise from 7 per cent in 2009 to 9.6 per cent in 2024

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

From 7 per cent in 2009 to 9.6 per cent in 2024, the number of female candidates contesting the Lok Sabha elections saw a steady rise in 15 years, according to an analysis by the poll rights body Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR). This year, 797 women are in the fray, constituting 9.6 per cent of the total 8,337 candidates. This marks an increase from previous general assembly elections which recorded female representation of 9 per cent in 2019, 8 per cent in 2014, and 7 per cent in 2009, the analysis by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) showed. In the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, there were 556 female candidates, making up 7 per cent of the total 7,810 candidates. This number increased to 640 (8 per cent of 8,205) in 2014 and further to 716 (9 per cent of 7,928) in 2019. This year, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leads among the major parties with 69 female Lok Sabha nominees out of 440, making up 16 per cent of its total candidates. The Congress follows with 41 women out of 327 candidates, constituting 13 per cent. Significantly, smaller parties and regional players exhibit higher proportions of female



candidates. For instance, the Naam Tamilar Katchi has an equal gender representation with 20 out of 40 candidates being women, translating to 50 per cent. The Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) and the Nationalist Congress Party each have 40 per cent female candidates, with two out of five being women. Among prominent parties, the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and the All India Forward Bloc have the lowest levels of female representation at 3 per cent. Some parties with notable female representation in this year's parliamentary polls include the Jharkhand Mukti

Morcha (JMM) and the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), each with 33 per cent, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) with 29 per cent. The Samajwadi Party (SP) has 20 per cent female representation, and the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) 25 per cent. Thirteen per cent of the Lok Sabha candidates of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) are women and the figure stands at 8 per cent for the Bahujan Samaj Party. Parties such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the Communist Party of India (CPI) has female representation at 14 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively.

The Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)) and Shiv Sena each have 13 per cent female candidates, while the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha has 33 per cent women nominees. Both candidates of the Apna Dal (Sonelal) are women, TDP and BRS each have 6 per cent female candidates, Shiromani Akali Dal and Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar each have 8 per cent female contestants, while Shiv Sena (UBT) has 10 per cent. Independents, comprising a significant portion of the candidate pool, have 276 women out of 3,903 Lok Sabha nominees, representing a modest 7 per cent. Other parties collectively account for 252 women

out of 2,490 candidates, which is about 10 per cent. This is the first election since the passage of the women's reservation bill to reserve one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women, reviving a bill pending for 27 years for want of consensus among parties. The bill is yet to come into effect. The current figure of 797 female candidates in 2024 represents a 9.6 per cent share of the total candidate pool of 8,337. Only two candidates from the third gender category are contesting the polls this year, both as independents. During the first phase of the elections held on April 19, out of 1,618 contesting candidates, only 135 were women. This pattern continued in the subsequent phases, with women candidates remaining a small fraction of the total. The second phase held on April 26 saw 1,192 candidates of which 100 were women. The phase 3 polling on May 7 had 1,352 candidates, including 123 women. In phase 4 on May 13, of the 1,710 contestants, 170 were women. Phase 5 on May 20 had the fewest candidates at 695, with 82 women, while the sixth phase 6 had 92 women out of 866 candidates. In the last phase scheduled for June 1, there will be 904 candidates, with only 95 women.

ADR: 104 per cent rise in number of parties fighting LS polls from 2009 to 2024



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

There has been an increase of 104 per cent in the number of political parties contesting Lok Sabha elections from 2009 to 2024, according to an analysis by poll rights body Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). According to the analysis, 751 political parties are participating in 2024 as compared to 677 who participated in 2019, 464 in 2014, and 368 in 2009. This surge represents a staggering 104 per cent increase from 2009 to 2024. The ADR and National Election Watch have conducted a comprehensive analysis of the self-sworn affidavits of 8,337 candidates vying for seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha 2024 elections. Out of the total 8,360 contesting candidates, the breakdown reveals a diverse landscape of political representation: 1,333 from national parties, 532 from state parties, 2,580 from registered unrecognised parties and 3,915 independent candidates.

The analysis also sheds light on the prevalence of criminal cases among candidates. Among national parties, 443 out of 1,333 candidates have declared criminal cases, with 295 facing serious criminal charges. State parties exhibit a higher proportion, with 249 out of 532 candidates facing criminal cases and 169 facing serious charges. Registered unrecognised parties show comparatively lower figures with 401 out of 2,580 candidates having criminal cases and 316 facing serious charges. Independent candidates fall in between with 550 out of 3,915 candidates facing criminal cases and 411 facing serious charges. Additionally, the analysis reveals financial assets of the candidates with 2,572 out of all 8,337 candidates being crorepatitis or millionaires. Among national parties, 906 out of 1,333 candidates are crorepatitis, followed by 421 out of 532 in state parties, 572 out of 2,580 in registered unrecognised parties, and 673 out of 3,915 among independent candidates.

Average increase of 43 per cent in assets of 324 MPs recontesting LS polls in last five years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

There has been an average increase of 43 per cent over the last five years in the assets of 324 MPs who have entered the poll fray again in this Lok Sabha election, according to an analysis by a poll rights body. The average assets of these MPs in 2019 was around Rs 21.55 crore while in the current electoral cycle, the average asset value has increased 'significantly' to Rs 30.88 crore, marking an increase of Rs 9.33 crore over the past five years, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said in a report. It analysed the financial growth among Members of Parliament (MPs) recontesting in the 2024 general elections. The counting of votes for the seven-phase polls will be taken up on June 4.

The percentage growth in assets for these 324 MPs between the 2019 and 2024 polls averages at 43 per cent, the ADR said. The report said a comparative analysis of party-wise average assets between 2019 and 2024 further elucidates this trend. It said among the major parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party saw a 39.18 per cent increase in the average assets of its re-contesting 183 MPs (Rs 18.40 crore to Rs 25.61 crore). It was 48.76 per cent for 36 Congress MPs (Rs 44.13 crore to Rs 65.64 crore). For re-contesting 10 MPs of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam it was 19.96 per cent (Rs 30.93 crore to Rs 37.10 crore), 48.13 per cent for eight Shiv Sena MPs (Rs 19.77 crore to Rs 29.28 crore), 20.53 per cent for five Samajwadi Party MPs (Rs 20.56 crore to Rs 24.78 crore) and 84.13 per cent for eight Yuvajana Sramika Rythu

Congress Party MPs (Rs 28.66 crore to Rs 52.78 crore). The report said the average increase in assets of 16 re-contesting MPs of the Trinamool Congress was 53.84 per cent (Rs 15.69 crore to Rs 24.15 crore), 35.54 per cent for 11 Janata Dal (United) MPs (Rs 4.55 crore to Rs 6.17 crore), 14.34 per cent for one Nationalist Congress Party MP (Rs 12 crore to Rs 14 crore), 52.94 per cent for three Bharat Rashtra Samithi MPs (Rs 38 crore to Rs 59 crore), 21.05 per cent for three NCP (Sharad Chandra Pawar) MPs (Rs 48 crore to Rs 58 crore), 52.94 per cent for three Bharat Rashtra Samithi MPs (Rs 38 crore to Rs 59 crore) and 317 per cent for one Janata Dal (Secular) MP (Rs 9 crore to Rs 40 crore). The increase for recontesting MPs of the Bahujan Samaj Party was 25.37 per cent (Rs 8.46 crore to Rs 10.61 crore), 68.4 per cent for the Shiv Sena

(Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) (Rs 7.01 crore to Rs 11.80 crore), 184.02 per cent for the Biju Janata Dal (Rs 2.41 crore to Rs 6.85 crore), 143.2 percent for the Telugu Desam Party (Rs 18.90 crore to Rs 45.97 crore), 104.9 per cent for the Indian Union Muslim League (Rs 13.07 crore to Rs 26.78 crore) and 3000.51 per cent for the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (Rs 4.78 lakh to Rs 1.48 crore), the report said. It said the increase was 35.12 per cent for recontesting MPs of the All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (Rs 10.43 crore to Rs 14.09 crore), 97.61 per cent for the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (Rs 85.40 lakh to Rs 1.68 crore). It was 117.36 per cent for the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, the report said and added that the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) saw a slight decrease of three per cent in assets of recontesting MPs.

Unpredictable import, export policies caused losses to farmers: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday claimed that farmers have suffered huge losses due to "unpredictable" import-export policies of the Modi Government and asserted that under an INDIA Bloc Government such policies would be decided only after consultations with farmers and their organisations. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the Congress has given five guarantees to the farmers -- legal guarantee for Minimum Support Prices (MSP), loan waiver, transforming PM Fasal Bima Yojana, new import-export policy and making farmers GST-free. "On import-export policy, I want to say that we need to put restrictions on imports and encourage exports. We ban exports repeatedly like the ban on export of rice is not in favour



of the farmers in Punjab and it is benefiting the farmers of Pakistan," Ramesh said in a video statement on X. The Congress has given a guarantee that the import-export policy will be decided upon only after consultations with farmers and their organisations, the Congress general secretary said, adding imports and exports should be beneficial for farmers not traders. In his post on X along with the video statement, Ramesh said farmers have suffered huge losses due to the "unpredictable"

import-export policies of the Modi government. "The Congress has guaranteed that we will make a concrete law on import and export of agricultural products which will support farmers and farmer organisations and increase their income," he said. The Congress' Lok Sabha polls manifesto has stated that it will formulate and implement a sound import-export policy for agricultural commodities, which will give paramount importance to protecting the interests and concerns of farmers.

Expedition to Mount Kang Yatse-II peak flagged off

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) boys and girls mountaineering expedition to Mount Kang Yatse-II peak was flagged off here by Director General NCC Lt General Gurbirpal Singh. The peak is located in the Ladakh region at an altitude of 6,250m/20,505ft, and this is the 87th NCC Cadets mountaineering expedition since 1970. The team comprises five Officers, 17 Permanent Instructors and 24 Cadets (12 Boys & 12 Girls) from various NCC directorates. The team will attempt to scale Mt Kang Yatse-II by the end of June. The DG NCC wished success to the team and highlighted the pivotal role of the NCC in youth development and the opportunities provided to the cadets to engage in diverse adventure activities.

Matter of honour: Indian peacekeeper Major Radhika to get UN award

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/UNITED NATIONS

Major Radhika Sen, an Indian peacekeeper who will be honoured by United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres with a prestigious gender advocate award in UN, has said it is a matter of honour and privilege to represent India at the multilateral forum. Major Sen, who served with the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), will receive the prestigious '2023 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award' from Guterres on May

30 on the occasion of International Day of UN Peacekeepers. She is the second Indian peacekeeper to receive the prestigious award after Major Suman Gawani, who had served with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and was honoured in 2019. Meanwhile, the Indian Army commemorated the 76th International Day of United Nations (UN) Peacekeepers on Wednesday by paying homage to the fallen comrades by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial, New Delhi. Lieutenant General Rakesh Kapoor, Deputy Chief of the Army Staff (Information Systems and Coordination), officials of United Nations

Organisation, Staff from Ministry of Defence and Ministry of External Affairs laid wreaths. This is the day when in 1948 the first UN Peacekeeping Mission, "UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTOSO)" began operations in Palestine. Each year on this day, the UN and countries across the globe pay rich tributes to the professionalism, dedication and courage of men and women who have served/are serving in UN Peacekeeping Missions. This day also honours the memory of sacrifices of those who have laid down their lives for the cause of peace. India has a rich legacy of contribution to UN Peacekeepers



operations and is one of the largest contributors of troops. India has contributed services of approximately 2,87,000 troops to peacekeeping missions. Indian Army personnel have operated under difficult, challenging terrain and operational conditions and have displayed exemplary courage and valour,

to the extent of making the supreme sacrifice to uphold the UN mandates. It is noteworthy that 160 Indian Army soldiers have made the supreme sacrifice to ensure peace across the globe. Presently, Indian Armed Forces are deployed across nine countries in peacekeeping missions, namely UNDOF, UNIFIL,

UNTSO, UNFICYP, MONUSCO, UNMISS, UNIFSA, MINUSCA and MINURSO. India has been at the forefront of capacity development for the UN, host nations and partner nations. India has always strived to support UN initiatives by providing agile and flexible units, peacekeeper training, logistic support, enhancing gender parity and contributing to technological enhancements. India has provided active support for host nation capacity development by providing training, infrastructure development and Civil Military Coordination (CIMIC) activities. In addition, Veterinary Detachments of the Indian Army have displayed note-

worthy performance in various UN Missions. Efforts made to bring a significant improvement in the health of livestock in Abyei by Lieutenant Colonel Gurpreet Singh Bali, Commander of the Veterinary Detachment in Sudan were appreciated by the UN Headquarters. The Indian Army has established a Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi to impart niche training in peacekeeping operations. This Centre trains more than 12,000 troops every year. CUNPK undertakes a multitude of activities from contingent training to national and international courses for potential peacekeepers and trainers. It also hosts foreign delegations

as part of sharing best practices. The Centre regularly dispatches Mobile Training Teams to Friendly Foreign Countries as part of capacity building in the field of UN peacekeeping training. The Institute has evolved in the last two decades as a Centre of Excellence and repository of experience and best practices. In order to ensure operational efficiency and sustainability of Indian contingents in UN missions, the Indian Army has deployed state-of-the-art equipment and vehicles. These vehicles and equipment are manufactured in India and have successfully withstood the vagaries of difficult terrain, weather and operational conditions in the mission areas.

Aiyar remarks on IFS creates row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader and former diplomat Mani Shankar Aiyar sparked yet another row over his calling the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) of yore an "upper caste" service comprising "Macaulay ki aulaad", which he claimed is becoming more democratic now with the flavour of the country getting into it. BJP claimed that Aiyar's description of the Chinese attack on India in 1962 as an "alleged" invasion shows the "anti-India" mindset of the Congress and is an signal to

"enemy" countries to interfere in the electoral process here as the opposition is facing a "rout". Aiyar, though, immediately issued an apology to defuse the crisis, while the Congress also distanced itself from the veteran leader. Speaking at the launch of a book "Nehru's First Recruit", Aiyar, who literally describes himself as the "last IFS recruit" of the first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, said the country has overcome the "bad features" of its first generation recruits. At the event, Aiyar also referred to the 1962 Indo-China war as an alleged "Chinese invasion" but soon "unreservedly apolo-

gised" on the usage of the word 'alleged'. In a brief statement late Tuesday, Aiyar said, "I unreservedly apologise for having mistakenly used the word 'alleged' before 'Chinese invasion' at the Foreign Correspondents Club this evening." His phraseology, which has now triggered into a fresh controversy, saw the Congress dist associating itself with the Aiyar's statement. "Allowances must be made for his age. The INC distances itself from his original phraseology. The Chinese invasion of India that began on October 20, 1962, was for REAL. So too were the Chinese incursions in

Ladakh in early May 2020 in which 20 of our soldiers were martyred and the status quo disturbed," Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said in a statement. BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia alleged that Aiyar could not have made such a statement without the concurrence of Rahul Gandhi and also took a swipe at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for his "silence" over the issue. Aiyar had made the remarks at a book launch event on Tuesday, kicking up a row and embarrassing his party and handing over an issue to the BJP for yet another time with his controversial comments.

RudraM-II air to surface missile test fired successfully

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a boost to indigenisation in defence manufacturing, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Wednesday successfully flight-tested the RudraM-II air-to-surface missile from Su-30 MK-I platform of IAF off the coast of Odisha at around 1130 hours, defence ministry said here. Giving details, officials said the flight-test met all the trial

objectives, validating the propulsion system and control and guidance algorithm. The performance of the missile has been validated from the flight data captured by range tracking instruments like electro-optical systems, radar and telemetry stations deployed by Integrated Test Range, Chandipur at various locations, including the on-board ship. RudraM-II is an indigenously-developed solid-propelled air-launched missile system meant



for Air-to-Surface role to neutralise many types of enemy assets. A number of state-of-the-art indigenous technologies developed by various DRDO laboratories have been incor-

porated in the missile system. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO, IAF and industry on the successful test-flight of RudraM-II. The successful test has consolidated the role of the RudraM-II system as a force multiplier to the Armed Forces, he said. Chief of DRDO Samir V Kamat complimented the DRDO team for their untiring efforts and contribution culminating into the successful flight test.

Heed caution

All may seem lost in the Israel-Palestine war, but there is still time to save humanity in Gaza

The city of Rafah, which translates into wellbeing or prosperity in Urdu, experienced the trauma of seeing at least 45 people — including children — killed at a refugee camp in its midst following an Israeli airstrike in Gaza. Understandably, the act caused international indignation and further isolated Israel over the war with Palestine, coming only days after the International Court of Justice ordered the Jew nation to cease its operation in Rafah. Although the top UN court ordered Israeli forces last week to stop their operations, they persisted in their assault on the border town, which was long thought to be the last remaining shelter in the territory. Meanwhile, as international solidarity poured in for the Palestinians impacted by the Israeli strikes, the slogan “All Eyes On Rafah” has become popular on social media. The expression alludes to the continuous slaughter occurring in Gaza city, and several famous people have posted condolences along with the hashtag #AllEyesOnRafah. The cry for awareness of the ongoing battle has



gained traction with the use of this slogan. Prior to Israel intensifying its military operation on the Gaza side of the border earlier this month and seizing control of the crossing, Rafah served as a primary port of entry for humanitarian aid. Over one million Palestinians have fled the fighting in Rafah; the majority of them were already displaced due to the conflict between Israel and the Hamas. Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden does not seem to be changing his stance on Israel, according to the White House, because the incident “did not cross a red line” that would require adjustments in US support.

This is despite the fact that Israeli tanks have been seen rolling down central Rafah for the first time since the war began on October 7 last year. In another setback to Israel globally and perhaps as part of a larger signal for it to stop bloodying the Gaza Strip with the murder of innocent people — nobody actually minds if only the Hamas terrorists are annihilated — Spain, Norway and Ireland have acknowledged Palestine's independence. The three countries did not recognise the existence of a State; they just acknowledged its potential. As a result of the change, the Palestinian Authority and the three nations will have closer diplomatic ties. Everyone has declared that they will acknowledge Palestine based on its pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem serving as its Capital. Already, 143 of the 193 members of the UN General Assembly have recognised Palestine. The latest acknowledgments are the most compelling proof to date that the concept might be gaining support in the economically and diplomatically powerful western European States. The West Bank, which Israel has occupied, and the Gaza Strip, which is under siege and where Israel is conducting a war that has claimed more than 36,000 lives, make up what is left of ancient Palestine. However, it must be recorded to his credit that Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the Rafah incident was a “tragic mishap”.

PICTALK



Lovebirds at their enclosure on a hot summer day, in New Delhi

PTI

Electric vehicles lead eco-friendly commute

Electric two-wheelers, with their zero tailpipe emissions, are providing an efficient and sustainable transport option for urban mobility

In the 1980s, the introduction of Maruti 800 changed the landscape of the automobile industry in India for decades to come. Cut to 2024 and we are heading towards a similar revolution in the years to come - but with a little twist. Countries worldwide are addressing climate change by striving to reduce their carbon footprints. The adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), particularly electric two-wheelers (E2Ws), has emerged as a significant step in this effort. Understanding the environmental impact of E2Ws compared to conventional counterparts is crucial. There is compelling evidence supporting their widespread adoption as part of the transition towards sustainable transportation systems. Traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) motorcycles and scooters contribute to air and noise pollution. E2Ws have zero tailpipe emissions and thus, help in mitigating pollution levels significantly. In urban settings, they help in alleviating



ating noise levels as well. Another advantage is that their powertrain is more efficient when compared to ICE vehicles. Since the conversion of electrical energy into mechanical energy is more effective, E2Ws have minimal energy wastage and a diminished carbon footprint. E2Ws also operate quietly and without vibrations or petrol fumes. There is ongoing innovation to close the performance gap between electric and their conventional fuel-powered counterparts. While ICE engines require warm-up for optimal perfor-

mance in cold weather, E2Ws operate at full capacity instantly. This makes the ride hassle free in any condition. Their advanced features like Android-based instrument clusters and mobile app connectivity further enhance the overall experience. In contrast with conventional ICE vehicles, there is a notable difference in the energy efficiency of E2Ws. The electric motors are great at converting a larger portion of electrical energy from the grid into power at the wheels. This makes them highly effective in utilising

energy. The heightened efficiency indicates that they require less energy to travel the same distance, thereby reducing their environmental footprint even more. The production and upkeep of electric two-wheelers requires fewer resources and less energy. Their minimal maintenance requirements lead to decreased energy usage and a smaller environmental footprint. E2Ws are a promising solution for reducing carbon footprints and advancing towards a more sustainable transportation paradigm. There is a need to address certain challenges such as those around infrastructure and accelerating the transition to renewable energy sources. This will help realise the full potential of E2Ws in mitigating environmental impact. With concerted action from policymakers, industry stakeholders and consumers, E2Ws are set to play a significant role in shaping a greener, more sustainable future for transportation. (The writer is Founder & CEO, Motovolt Mobility; views are personal)



TUSHAR CHAUDHARY

Spiritual institutions under attack in Bengal

The assaults on the Ramakrishna Mission raise serious concerns about the State's political climate and its impact on religious harmony



PRAFULL GORADIA

West Bengal is again in the news and again for the wrong reasons. The premises of the venerable Ramakrishna Mission at Jalpaiguri have been vandalised by the goons of the State's ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC). That hasn't been the only incident of attacking a religious or spiritual centre. The ISKCON temple premises in the State have also been the target of the TMC brigade, as the State's chief minister Mamata Banerjee suspects the organisation's monks of being BJP sympathisers. So too have the premises of the Bharat Sevashram Sangh (BSS) at Beldanga in the district of Murshidabad suffered the ire of the ruling party's roughnecks. One of the BSS monks Kartik Maharaj has drawn Mamata Banerjee's ire as he is thought to be working towards influencing voters in favour of the BJP. Banerjee also believes that the ISKCON is playing a similar role.

The Ramakrishna Mission or RKM, as it is also known, headquartered in Kolkata's Belur Math was founded in 1897, by the great spiritual Ramakrishna Paramahansa's most renowned disciple, Swami Vivekananda. The latter was truly a global icon of modern Hinduism and planted the flag of Sanatana Dharma in the West, beginning with his spiritual conquest in Chicago in 1893 at a conference of the World Parliament of Religions. Though the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) was founded in New York, its founder Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada or Srila Prabhupada was born in Calcutta and ventured to the US only in his old age, at 69, to spread the message of Krishna to America and the rest of the world. To vandalise such highly regarded institutions such as the venerable Ramakrishna Ashram and the internationally respected ISKCON, which has over 160 temples across the globe and that too by some citizens of a country that is predominantly Hindu, is unthinkable and unpardonable. It is possible that the perpetrators of these attacks are not



Hindus but people belonging to another religion. Nevertheless, the message that comes out from these recent episodes of temple vandalism is of the Hindus as a people being religious-suicidal. This is all the more unfortunate for two reasons. The Ramakrishna Mission is world famous since it was Swami Vivekananda who single-handedly informed the world of the wonder that Hinduism is. It is ISKCON that enables so many countries, with its magnificent temples, to worship in the Hindu way of “Hare Rama, Hare Krishna”. Secondly, it has been only a few years since the image of Hindu India began to shine, after centuries of suppression. We now have the sordid spectacle of temple and ashram premises being attacked by goons with guns, in West Bengal of all places. It was just over a century ago that Congress leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale had said, “What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow”. It signified the province of Bengal was a leader. Is this what leaders do and that too for winning some seats in four or five constituencies? Just look back at the Renaissance, which in many ways, was comprehensively

“ONE COULD GO ON AND ON ABOUT BENGAL'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COUNTRY. MODERN INDIA'S GREATEST POET WAS RABINDRANATH TAGORE, AGAIN A GIFT OF BENGAL. HIS LYRICS ARE TODAY'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

led by Bengal. But before that, let us not forget Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who is considered by many to have been an avatar of Krishna. Chaitanya saved at least a part of Bengal for Bharat; but for him, the whole of the province would have been swallowed by Pakistan and then ruined. He stood between the conversion of the poorer Bengalis to Islam and saving them so that today they can worship Krishna. Ramakrishna Paramahansa was also a divine gift of Bengal, who himself had a glimpse of the divine. One could go on and on about Bengal's contributions to the country. Modern India's greatest poet was Rabindranath Tagore, again, a gift of Bengal. His lyrics are today are national anthem. One cannot ever forget Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and his stirring song Vande Mataram, which became the freedom anthem of India's national movement and inspired countless revolutionaries to armed action for combating the colonial raj, as well as to embrace the gallows in their supremely inspired quest. Bengal is a virtual encyclopaedia of the 19th and 20th-century, greats of India. It would need an entire volume to describe how and when the

saga began to sour. From the climbing of lofty heights of art, culture, literature and industry, Bengal began to slip towards an existence that wouldn't be envied in the least. The late Nirad Chaudhari, one of the finest writers the English language world has seen, gave vent to this angst by saying that the people of his are the “finest virtuosi of factiousness”, not a flattering comment, though this writer, having being raised in Bengal and able to speak fluent Bengali, is wont to take a much more positive view. The sense of being Bengali is of course very pronounced, but the unity a common language can foster cannot stand before the pull of religion, as has been the historical experience throughout most significant parts of the world. That the State that led India's renaissance in the 19th century has fallen into this travesty is a sad tale, but Bengal has been known to come back strongly towards nationalism every time it is felt that the province might have gone astray. Perhaps therein lies the silver lining. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TAIWAN STAYS STRONG AMID TENSIONS

Madam — Apropos the news story “Taiwan tracks dozens of Chinese warplanes and navy vessels off its coast on the 2nd day of drills,” published on May 24, this is my response. It's concerning to witness the escalation of tensions between Taiwan and China. Taiwan's tracking of Chinese military activity showcases their vigilance in the face of increasing pressure from Beijing. Despite the provocative displays from China's People's Liberation Army, Taiwan remains steadfast, with President Lai Ching-te affirming the nation's commitment to freedom and democracy. The ongoing dispute in Taiwan's parliament underscores the internal challenges they face, yet life continues in Taipei uninterrupted. China's aggressive stance, citing the one-China principle, only adds to the volatility of the situation. The international community must closely monitor these developments to ensure stability in the region and uphold Taiwan's sovereignty. Avani Singhania | Kolkata

TACKLING E-WASTE THROUGH ACTION

Madam — Apropos the news story “Mitigating the e-waste crisis,” published on May 28, this is my response. As technology advances, our reliance on electronic devices deepens, yet the consequences of our digital age loom large. E-waste, a byproduct of our tech obsession, poses a multifaceted threat to both environment and health. The toxic cocktail of substances found in discarded electronics, if not handled properly, can seep into soil, water and air, wreaking havoc on ecosystems and human well-being alike. The staggering statistics from the Global E-Waste Monitor 2020 paint a grim picture of our unsustainable habits. However, solutions are within reach. Governments must enforce stringent regulations on e-waste management, while manufacturers bear responsibility for the entire lifecycle of their products.

Hospital fire prompts safety overhaul



Apropos the news story “Once burned, Govt orders fire audit of all hospitals,” published on May 28, this is my response. Reading about the tragic fire at the neonatal hospital in Delhi, which resulted in the deaths of seven newborns and injuries to five others, is heartbreaking. This incident starkly highlights severe lapses in hospital management and safety protocols. The hospital was operating on an expired license and lacked fire department clearance, which is both shocking and unacceptable.

Investing in innovative recycling technologies and promoting eco-friendly design can mitigate the e-waste crisis. Ultimately, individual action is paramount. From conscientious disposal practices to advocating for systemic change, each of us holds the key to a cleaner, greener future. Let's embrace the challenge of recycling our e-waste and pave the way for a more sustainable tomorrow. Aryan Malhotra | Chandigarh

SCIENCE ARCHIVES DRIVE PROGRESS

Madam — Apropos the news story “Science Archives Preserve Our Scientific Legacy,” published on May 28, this is my response. As an ever-evolving discipline, science continually shapes our understanding of the world and our place within it. Reading the newspaper daily, I'm constantly reminded of how each discovery and innovation contributes to our present and builds the foundation for future generations. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, highlighted the power of scientific advancements in real-

The prompt action by the Delhi Government to mandate a fire audit for all hospitals by June 8 is a necessary step to prevent such tragedies in the future. However, it's deeply concerning that previous directives for fire preparedness and audits were not enforced rigorously. The revelation that the hospital was refilling oxygen without proper authorisation further underscores the negligence. It's encouraging to see the authorities committing to stringent new safety regulations and inspections, but these measures should have been in place long before this tragedy occurred. The bravery of the nurses and locals who risked their lives to save the babies deserves commendation, but such heroism should not be necessary in a properly regulated and safe environment. This tragic event serves as a grim reminder of the critical importance of strict compliance with safety standards in healthcare facilities.

Anaya Patel | Pune

time, transforming our lives and becoming a part of history. Scientific knowledge is inherently cumulative, with each generation of scientists building upon the work of their predecessors. This continuity drives not only intellectual progress but also economic and societal growth. The significance of preserving scientific archives cannot be overstated, as they store invaluable materials—research notes, experimental data and historical correspondence—that offer insights into the development of scientific thought. In India, initiatives like the Archives at NCBS play a crucial role in preserving our scientific heritage. However, with the risk of losing digital data, systematic conservation efforts are vital. Governments should mandate the periodic submission of research documents to ensure the longevity and impact of scientific work, safeguarding it from becoming lost to time.

Devika Menon | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

MICROMANAGEMENT AND UNDERMANAGEMENT

It is crucial to balance these extremes by ensuring employee empowerment



SAKSHI SETHI

In the realm of leadership and management, micromanagement and under management represent two extreme ends of a spectrum posing significant challenges to organisational success. While micromanagement leads to decreased autonomy, innovation and job satisfaction, under management results in a lack of direction, motivation and accountability. By understanding the impacts of these management styles and implementing strategies that balance oversight with empowerment, organisations can foster a productive, innovative and satisfying work environment. Micromanagement involves excessive control and oversight while under management is characterised by a lack of adequate supervision and support.

In the spectrum of management styles, micromanagement and under management represent two extremes, each with distinct characteristics and consequences for the workplace. In an organisation, if one is micromanaging the team and not giving its employees the freedom to work, will eventually drive away great talent while settling for mediocrity resulting in fostering anxiety and ultimately leading to negative impacts on overall organisational productivity and job satisfaction. Along with this, decreased employee morale, reduced creativity and innovation, lower productivity, increased stress and burnout, high turnover, poor performance and accountability are some of the impacts of both micromanagement and undermanagement that can be detrimental even though they manifest differently. Various research studies have shown that micromanagement stifles creativity and innovation.



It is negatively correlated with job satisfaction and positively correlated with stress and burnout. Employees under micromanagement reported lower engagement and higher intentions to leave their jobs. While on the other hand, the effects of under management found that employees lacking adequate supervision and feedback exhibited lower job satisfaction and performance.

It becomes of utmost importance to strike a balance between the two by adopting management practices that provide appropriate oversight while empowering employees. Balancing between micromanagement and under management involves adopting a management style that provides appropriate oversight while empowering employees. By fostering a culture of trust and empowerment; setting clear goals and expectations; and promoting a results-oriented culture can help the organisation create a positive and productive workplace where both managers and employees thrive. There is no denying the fact that balancing micromanagement and undermanagement is crucial for creating a productive, positive and effective workplace. By finding the middle ground, managers can provide the necessary support and oversight while empowering employees to take initiative and innovate.

Remember, be it micromanagement or undermanagement, both can have far-reaching negative effects on both the employees as well as the organisation. By understanding the causes and impacts and then implementing strategies to promote trust, autonomy and effective communication, organisations can create a more positive and productive work environment. Moving away from micromanagement not only enhances employee satisfaction and performance but also contributes to the long-term success and health of the organisation. Micromanagement and undermanagement, as opposite ends of the management spectrum, both present significant challenges to organisational effectiveness and employee well-being. While micromanagement stifles autonomy and innovation through excessive control, under management leaves employees directionless and unsupported. Both styles can lead to significant issues within an organisation, highlighting the need for a balanced approach to effective leadership.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Relevant skill sets can combat unemployment



DINESH SOOD

The rapid digital shift necessitates comprehensive strategies to address skill gaps and ensure inclusive growth. Public-private partnerships are essential



The service sector has undeniably been the primary driver of India's growth since 2000. The exceptional performance of certain modern services has unequivocally contributed to the creation of more productive and decent employment. The reliance on services for economic growth unequivocally demands a fully developed job market, enabling a free flow of the workforce. The absence of such mechanisms will undoubtedly lead to rigidity in the services sector, curtailing growth against the backdrop of the increasingly important position of the services sector. The key focus areas include the pivotal role of technology in shaping the services sector and stimulating job growth in other sectors through multiplier effects.

The momentous transformation of the Indian economy is irrefutably being spearheaded by the service sector, which unequivocally contributes more than 50 per cent of the GDP. The sector's expansion is not happening in isolation but is deeply intertwined with global technological advancements. Technological progress has undeniably been a catalyst for efficiency, customer satisfaction, market expansion and data-driven decision-making within firms. It has also undeniably given rise to new service categories, such as e-commerce and other tech-based services like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), revolutionising the sector.

The relationship between the service sector's growth and technological innovation is undeniably mutually beneficial. As the service sector expands, it undeniably fuels further innovation in technology-based solutions. New ventures and their technological needs undeniably push for continuous technological advancements to gain the competitiveness needed to maintain their foothold in the dynamic industry. This competition and need for differentiation undeniably lead to increased investments in research and development (R&D) and open innovations, benefiting both the firms involved and the public.

The introduction of 5G and the ongoing development of 6G technologies have significantly enhanced connectivity, service



THE SERVICE SECTOR UNEQUIVOCALLY OFFERS BOTH ABUNDANT OPPORTUNITIES AND FORMIDABLE CHALLENGES. ADDRESSING CHALLENGES DEMANDS A RESOLUTE, COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH WITH ASTUTE POLICIES AND UNWAVERING IMPLEMENTATION

delivery speed and overall efficiency in India. Efforts to improve digital literacy have further accelerated technology adoption, with 70 per cent of businesses identifying as "Digital Businesses" and the country exhibiting the highest fintech adoption rate at 87 per cent. The application of AI in business operations has markedly improved operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and decision-making, positioning India as a global leader in AI adoption. However, the rapid digital transformation necessitates a balance between creating employment and providing the relevant skill sets for technology-demanding jobs for a new generation is a national need.

The service sector unequivocally offers both abundant opportunities and formidable challenges. Addressing challenges demands a resolute, comprehensive approach with astute policies and unwavering implementation. Public-private partnerships and policies aimed at bridging the skill gaps must be executed with unwavering effectiveness. Educational institutions must directly align with the market's skill demands.

Technological advancement, while propelling economic growth, undeniably necessitates relentless skill development. To fully exploit technological progress, educational institutions must steadfastly ensure their curriculum is consistently updated and in sync with the latest innovations.

Skill Gap: In India, the skill gap in the labour force is a significant challenge, with only 51 per cent of the youth deemed employable due to a lack of necessary skills. This issue is exacerbated by the country's diverse socio-economic conditions, particularly affecting those in rural areas and from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who lack

access to quality education and training. This situation perpetuates cycles of poverty and aggravates wage inequality. Moreover, inadequate emphasis on developing non-technical skills such as communication, critical thinking and leadership, which are increasingly in demand, further compounds the problem. The absence of these skills from the curriculum of most educational institutes compels employers to choose candidates only from a handful of premier institutes. Additionally, there is a significant mismatch between the skills taught and those required by employers, leading to unemployment even among the formally educated.

Efforts to bridge this gap must include public-private partnerships (PPPs), such as the initiative to upgrade Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to train 150 million people by 2024. These initiatives are crucial steps toward aligning educational outcomes with market needs, emphasising the vital importance of both technical and non-technical skills development to enhance employability.

Gender Inequality: Female employability in India has consistently exceeded male employability from 2020 to 2023, but there was a drop in 2024. Furthermore, it has been higher for seven out of eleven years of the Wheelbuz India Skills Reports. However, there has been a persistent gap between female and male labour force participation, indicating a clear bias against employing women over men. This bias is diminishing as female labour force participation has risen over the years, but substantial improvement is still necessary.

The Indian Government has implemented various initiatives to foster gender-inclusive employment, aim-

ing to bridge the gender gap in the workplace, making employing female labourers more lucrative while also ensuring it does not come at the cost of pay disparity. One significant legislation is the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976, designed to eliminate the wage gap between genders by ensuring equal pay for equal work. However, the act faces challenges, such as the narrow interpretation of the same work or work of a similar nature and the onus on employees to prove discrimination, which is difficult due to workplace power dynamics and legal complexities.

Additionally, the Government has launched schemes like Mission Shakti and the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), focusing on women's skill development and employability. These initiatives include exclusive training institutes for women, industry-oriented courses and partnerships with private sector bodies and NGOs. To encourage female participation in skill development, 30 per cent of seats in ITIs and ITCs are reserved for women.

These measures represent a comprehensive and assertive approach to promoting gender equality in employment, highlighting the crucial importance of legislative support, skill development and financial empowerment in achieving a more inclusive workforce. These unwavering steps will guarantee the complete realisation of the Indian economy's potential and the equitable distribution of the benefits of skills development.

(The writer is Co-Founder and MD, of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Network Member, of India International Skill Centres, an initiative of GoI. Views expressed are personal)

The dawn of AI: Balancing innovation and prudence

As AI advances, it is essential to strike a balance between harnessing its advantages and addressing its challenges to ensure a sustainable future

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the ex-novo computer technology that essentially deals with developing machines capable of imitating human behaviour. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines AI as the "ability of a computer or robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings such as perception, critical thinking and decision-making". As far as the human mind is concerned, first, it processes the information, analyses the processed information from various angles and finally arrives at a logical conclusion. On the contrary, AI is a software programme that solely relies on pre-fed computer data to answer a query. In the entire process, the computer system behaves like



M J WARSI

a human mind. AI is the order of the day and admittedly, holds the potential to bring about revolutionary changes in communications, defence, healthcare and agriculture. In fact, till recently, the task that was considered impossible even for a machine to perform now AI has turned into a reality. AI has considerably brought computers very close to imitating the human mind, thus, diminishing the gap

between man and machine. Today AI has found its application in a variety of fields such as education, finance, defence, agriculture and healthcare. Leading medical research institutions use AI for experiment, diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of deadly diseases. AI facilitates high-quality tissue sample analysis that paves the way for precise prognosis. In this day and age pharmaceutical companies are using AI for drug discovery and chemical analysis. With the help of AI doctors and healthcare professionals can precisely diagnose serious medical conditions such as cancer and stroke. In the education sector too, AI plays an important role. AI has proved to be an extremely handy tool to develop study material, student

evaluation, grading and monitoring. Thus, teachers save their precious time which they can utilise in productive academic pursuits as well as engage in meaningful discussions with students. AI-powered virtual educator robots substantially improve teaching and learning outcomes.

Now let us see some of the imminent dangers of AI. The picture is not as rosy as it appears for the AI. Widespread indignant use of AI in almost every sphere of human activity is bound to raise some serious concerns concerning privacy, data security and transparency. Psychological well-being and social issues warrant our immediate attention. Companies are gradually replacing humans with AI-powered robots to perform

specific tasks at the workplace. This causes anxiety among employees and adversely affects their mental and emotional well-being. The technical dexterity of computers is also a major challenge for humans in the workplace. Of late AI AI-driven Deepfake videos and online Bots have spread at an alarming pace. Deepfake videos and online Bots are capable of orchestrating a fabricated consensus and manipulating public opinion. Fake news spreads like wildfire disturbing peace and leading to social unrest. Another disadvantage of AI is that it makes it extremely tough to distinguish between the original and the fake. AI-induced human rights violations should be stopped at the earliest. AI-powered changing

technology landscape has jeopardised data security, privacy, dignity, employment, equality, political rights and secrecy. Experts and sociologists have expressed reservations regarding the detrimental impacts of over-reliance on AI and human robots in important sectors like healthcare, law, marketing, accounting, education, management, technology and workplaces. AI's technological diligence, incredible analysis power and the ability to perform repetitive tasks may lead to huge layoffs. Consequently, this gives rise to a disproportionately high unemployment rate. Employees and the labourers may be subjected to discrimination and disparities and their professional and social security may be at stake. To

check the AI misuse a well-defined and comprehensive technological-labour policy is the need of the hour. Some of the measures that help workers survive in the AI-driven landscape are regular upgradation of employee skills through appropriate training, honing up of technical skills and developing Soft skills. Lo and behold! Let's not lose sight of the fact that AI is completely devoid of human temperament, comprehension and creativity. The human mind is blessed with infinite creative power and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). These supreme attributes propel human beings to an elevated plane and place them on a higher pedestal than machines. On the contrary, AI is data-driven and follows a defined tra-

jectory, thus, fails to capture human emotions, perception and the ability to perform tasks by adapting to a given environment. Since AI is in its nascent stage, therefore, it is too soon to assume that AI can take over humans shortly as humans continue to be the *fons et origo* of originality and innovation.

Another threat that scares us is that if ever in the future technologically advanced machines take Man as their enemy then the entire human race may face existential crises. Pre-empting these dangers the US and the European countries have taken a locus standi to oppose AI and have taken stringent legal measures to curb AI's capricious use.

(The writer is a professor; views are personal)

US says no policy changes after civilian deaths in Israeli strike

AP ■ WASHINGTON/
UNITED NATIONS

The White House on Tuesday condemned the loss of life of dozens of civilians as a result of an Israeli airstrike in Rafah, but said it is not planning any policy changes as a result of the Israeli actions. National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters that Israel had not violated Biden's "red line" for withholding future offensive arms transfers because it has not, and it appears to the US that it will not, launch a full-scale ground invasion into the city. "Everything that we can see tells us that they are not moving into a major ground operation in population centres in the centre of Rafah," Kirby said.

Kirby called the loss of life "heartbreaking" and "horrific", and said the US was monitoring the results of an Israeli investigation into the strike, which suggested the civilian deaths were the result of a secondary explosion after a successful strike on

two Hamas operatives. "We understand that this strike did kill two senior Hamas heads who are directly responsible for attacks," Kirby said. "We've also said many times Israel must take every precaution possible to do more to protect innocent life." Asked whether the strike would result in any US policy changes, Kirby said, "I have no policy changes to speak to."

Algeria proposes Security Council resolution
Algeria is circulating a proposed UN Security Council resolution that would demand an immediate cease-fire in Gaza and order Israel to halt its military offensive in the southern city of Rafah immediately. The draft resolution, obtained on Wednesday evening by The Associated Press, also demands that the cease-fire be respected by all parties. It also calls for the immediate release of all hostages taken during Hamas' attack in southern Israel on October 7. Some diplomats said they hoped for a quick vote, even as early as

Wednesday. "It is our hope that it can be done as quickly as possible because life is in the balance," Chinese Ambassador Fu Cong told reporters. US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said: "We're waiting to see it and then we'll react to it." The United States has vetoed multiple resolutions demanding a cease-fire in Gaza. The draft demands compliance with previous Security Council resolutions that call for the opening of all border crossings and humanitarian access to Gaza's 2.3 million people who desperately need food and other aid. The proposed resolution says that "the catastrophic situation in the Gaza Strip constitutes a threat to regional and international peace and security". It expresses grave concern at "famine spreading throughout the Gaza Strip" and the suffering of Palestinians who took refuge in Rafah. The resolution would demand

that Israel "immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in Rafah". The draft condemns what it calls "the indiscriminate targeting of civilians, including women and children, and civilian infrastructure" and reiterates the council's demand for all parties to comply with international law requiring the protection of civilians. Algeria's UN ambassador, Amar Bendjama, who is also the Arab representative on the Security Council, told reporters after emergency closed council consultations Tuesday that he would be sending the draft resolution to the 15-member council later in the evening. Algeria called the emergency council meeting as Israel pushed ahead with its military operation in Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge. It followed Sunday night's Israeli airstrikes that triggered a fire engulfing tents in a camp for displaced Palestinians west of Rafah, killing 45 people and injured over 100 others.



Israeli soldiers drive a tank near the Israeli-Gaza border, in southern Israel, Wednesday.

AP/PTI

Pakistan arrests 140 for alleged attacks on Christians

Lahore (PTI): Pakistan's Punjab police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested a total of 140 suspects involved in attacking members of the Christian minority, their properties and police personnel on the issue of alleged desecration of the Quran. A charged mob led by radical Islamist Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) activists last week attacked the Christian community in Mujahid Colony in the Sargodha district of Punjab, some 200 km from Lahore, that left two Christians and 10 policemen injured. The mob burned and ransacked the homes and properties of the Christians. According to Punjab police spokesperson Mubashir Hussain, some 140 suspects involved in the Sargodha incident have been taken into custody so far. "They are arrested in light of video and CCTV footage. It has been ensured that no innocent is rounded up," he said and added many of them have been sent to jail on judicial remand. Police booked over 450 people under terrorism and other charges. According to the FIR, a mob surrounded the residence and shoe factory of Nazir Masih alias Lazar Masih (an elderly Christian), accusing him of desecration of the Quran. The enraged mob set fire to the shoe factory, some shops and a couple of houses. "The mob also brutally torched Masih but the timely arrival of a heavy contingent of police saved the lives of Masih and 10 other members of the Christian community," the FIR said. It says some pages of the holy Quran were reported to have been found outside the shoe factory of Masih. This instigated the locals. Although the family of Masih denied desecration of the Quran the mob wanted to lynch him. "The enraged mob pelted stones at police personnel when they resorted to baton charge to disperse it. At least 10 policemen including officers have been injured," the FIR said.

SA President Ramaphosa confident of returning to power

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Millions of South Africans are voting on Wednesday to elect a new National Assembly as well as the provincial legislatures, amid predictions that the President Cyril Ramaphosa-led African National Congress could lose its majority for the first time since Nelson Mandela was elected 30 years ago. The polling stations opened at 7 am (local time) and will close at 9 pm. Final results are expected by Sunday. President Ramaphosa, 71, remained confident that his party would return to power in the election, which is the most hotly contested since Mandela was elected as the country's first democratic president in 1994. "The people of South Africa will give the ANC, as they vote today, a firm majority. So, in my mind, in my head and in my thought processes, there isn't even a doubt about that," Ramaphosa said in a brief



Former president of the A.N.C. and South Africa, Jacob Zuma, casts his vote in Nkandla, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, Wednesday during the general elections. South Africans are voting in an election seen as their country's most important in 30 years, and one that could put them in unknown territory in the short history of their democracy, the three-decade dominance of the African National Congress party being the target of a new generation of discontent in a country of 62 million people.

AP/PTI

interaction with the media after he cast his vote in the huge township of Soweto, created during the apartheid era to forcibly resettle the majority Black community of the region. The predictions of the ANC losing its majority came amid widespread public dissatis-

faction with the corruption at all levels of government which has led to poor service delivery, including rolling electricity blackouts for several years and a breakdown of rail and road transport infrastructure, especially at municipal level. Ramaphosa said the ANC

under his leadership ran a formidable campaign and the party workers went through the length and the breadth of the country to reach out to people and to also make those who may have been doubtful about voting to be encouraged to vote. "We were rather pleased that

we saw more and more young people registering to vote and we kept on urging the people of our country that we want to run a clean campaign, which we did, and we are determined to ensure that democracy is the winner in this whole election. So, in the end, it is the democratic process in our country that is going to emerge victorious and the ANC will reap the dividend from that by emerging as the winning party," Ramaphosa said. More than half of the 26 million registered voters are below the age of 35, most born after 1994, although there was still some level of concern among analysts about them coming out to polling booths today. Analysts have widely predicted that the ANC, which has been the ruling party since 1994, is likely to lose its majority and may have to enter into a coalition government after the polls. There are 52 political parties, and for the first time, scores

of independent candidates contesting the national and provincial elections. On Wednesday, Ramaphosa reiterated his concern about incidents where people had attempted to intimidate election officials or interfered with delivery to stations of ballot papers over the past few days. "We are concerned about the incidents that have been reported, where the IEC has raised its concerns. But also, one incident where the police also had to intervene by arresting those who were interfering in the work of the IEC (which is) sacrosanct." "It should never be interfered with because when you interfere with the work of the IEC you are really interfering with our democracy. You are trying to subvert the will of the people of South Africa (which should) never be obstructed (or) interfered with in any way whatsoever," Ramaphosa said. "So, we are concerned and we once again call on all South

Africans, particularly on this day and the next few days coming, when the results will be counted before they are announced, that all of us must abide by the prescripts of our electoral law and our Constitution as well," he said. Ramaphosa said he had full confidence in South Africa's security officers throughout the country to ensure that those who "seek to embark on ways that will disrupt our election will be dealt with severely." Former President Jacob Zuma is barred from running for parliament because of a contempt of court conviction, but his name is on the ballot paper. International observers from the African Union have also expressed their confidence in the election process rolled out by the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa. There are over 190 international observers at the various polling stations across the country.

Jury to begin deliberations in Hush money case after hearing from judge

AP ■ NEW YORK

Jurors in Donald Trump's hush money trial are expected to begin deliberations Wednesday after receiving instructions from the judge on the law and the factors they may consider as they strive to reach a verdict in the first criminal case against a former American president. The deliberations follow a marathon day of closing arguments in which a Manhattan prosecutor accused Trump of trying to "hoodwink" voters in the 2016 presidential election by participating in a hush money scheme meant to stifle embarrassing stories he feared would torpedo his campaign. "This case, at its core, is about a conspiracy and a cover-up," prosecutor Joshua Steinglass told jurors during summations that stretched from early afternoon into the evening. Trump's lawyer, by contrast, branded the star prosecution witness as the "greatest liar of all time" as he proclaimed his client innocent of all charges and pressed the panel for an across-the-board acquittal. The lawyers' dueling accounts, wildly divergent in their assessments of witness credibility, Trump's culpability and the strength of evidence, offered both sides one final chance to score points with the jury as it prepares to embark upon the momentous and historically unprecedented task of deciding whether to convict the presumptive Republican presidential nominee ahead of the November election. Trump faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records, charges punishable by up to four years in prison. He has pleaded not guilty and denied wrongdoing. It's unclear whether prosecutors would seek imprisonment in the event of a conviction, or if the judge would impose that punish-

ment. Jurors will have the option of convicting Trump of all counts, acquitting him of all counts, or delivering a mixed verdict in which he is found guilty of some charges and not others. If they deadlock after several days of deliberations and are unable to reach a unanimous verdict, Judge Juan M Merchan may declare a mistrial. The trial featured allegations that Trump and his allies conspired to stifle potentially embarrassing stories during the 2016 presidential campaign through hush money payments, including to a porn actor who alleged that she and Trump had sex a decade earlier. His lawyer Todd Blanche told jurors that neither the actor, Stormy Daniels, nor the Trump attorney who paid her, Michael Cohen, can be trusted. "President Trump is innocent. He did not commit any crimes, and the district attorney has not met their burden of proof, period," Blanche said. Steinglass sought to defray potential juror concerns about witness credibility. Trump, for instance, has said he and Daniels never had sex and has repeatedly attacked Cohen as a liar. The prosecutor acknowledged that Daniels' account about the alleged 2006 encounter in a Lake Tahoe hotel suite, which Trump has denied, was at times "cringeworthy" but he said the details she offered — including about decor and what she said she saw when she snooped in Trump's toiletry kit — were full of touchstones "that kind of ring true." And, he said, the story matters because it "reinforces (Trump's) incentive to buy her silence." "Her story is messy. It makes people uncomfortable to hear. It probably makes some of you uncomfortable to hear. But that's kind of the point," Steinglass said.

N Korea flies trash balloons over South as Kim doubles down on satellite ambitions

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea flew hundreds of trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea in one of its most bizarre provocations against its rival in years, prompting the South's military to mobilise chemical and explosive response teams to recover objects and debris in different parts of the country. The ballooning campaign came as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un urged his military scientists to overcome a failed satellite launch and continue developing space-based reconnaissance capabilities, which he described as crucial for countering U.S. and South Korean military activities, state media said Wednesday. In his first public comments about the launch failure, Kim also warned of unspecified "stern" action against South Korea over an exercise involv-

ing 20 fighter jets near the inter-Korean border hours before North Korea's failed launch on Monday. In a speech Tuesday, Kim called the South Korean response "hysterical insanity" and "a very dangerous provocation that cannot be ignored," the North's official Korean Central News Agency said Wednesday. In another sign of tensions between the war-divided rivals, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea also has been flying large numbers of balloons carrying trash toward the South since Tuesday night, in an apparent retaliation against South Korean activists for flying anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets across the border. The South's military said about 260 North Korean balloons were found dropped in various parts of the country as of

Wednesday afternoon and were being recovered by military rapid response and explosive clearance teams. It advised civilians not to touch the objects flown from North Korea and to report to military or police after discovering them. Photos released by the military showed trash scattered across highways and roads in different parts of the country. In the capital, Seoul, military officials found what appeared to be a timer that was likely designed to pop the bags of trash midair. In the central South Chungcheong province, two huge balloons carrying an unpopped plastic bag filled with dirt-like substances were seen at a road. There were no immediate reports of damage caused by the balloons. Similar North Korean balloon activities damaged cars and other property

in 2016. In a statement issued over the weekend, North Korean Vice Defense Minister Kim Kang Il said the North was planning to scatter "mounds of wastepaper and filth" over border areas and other parts of South Korea, in what he described as "tit-for-tat" action against the leafletting by South Korean activists. Kim Jong Un's comments about the satellite were from a speech at the North's Academy of Defense Sciences, which he visited a day after a rocket carrying what would have been his country's second military reconnaissance satellite exploded shortly after liftoff. North Korea's aerospace technology administration said the explosion was possibly related to the reliability of a newly developed rocket engine that is fueled by petroleum and uses liquid oxygen as an oxidizer.

Row over electoral prospects of Britain's first black woman MP

London (PTI): A row broke out within the UK Opposition Labour Party ranks on Wednesday as conflicting versions emerged regarding the electoral prospects of the country's first black woman member of Parliament after an internal disciplinary procedure. Diane Abbott, first elected to Parliament in 1987 as MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington in east London, claimed she had been barred from seeking re-election from the seat as a Labour candidate. It came after her suspension was lifted this week following an investigation over her controversial remarks about the levels of racism faced by different communities. "Naturally, I am delighted to have the Labour whip restored and to be

a member of the PLP (Parliamentary Labour Party)," Abbott, 70, said in a post on X. "Thank you to all those who supported me along the way. I will be campaigning for a Labour victory. But I am very dismayed that numerous reports suggest I have been barred as a candidate," she said. Amid anger from her supporters within the party, reporters asked Labour Leader Keir Starmer if the 70-year-old veteran MP had been barred as a party candidate in the July 4 general election. "No, that's not true. No decision has been taken to bar Diane Abbott. The process that we were going through ended with the restoration of the whip the other day," Starmer told reporters on the campaign trail.

‘Gravitational forces hit Singapore Airlines flight’

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

A rapid change in gravitational forces over 4.6 seconds resulted in an altitude drop of 178 ft to the Singapore Airlines flight last week, which likely caused injuries to crew and passengers, according to the findings of a preliminary investigation into the severe turbulence incident released on Wednesday. On May 21, Flight SQ321, which was heading to Singapore from London, experienced sudden severe turbulence over the Irrawaddy Basin in Myanmar during the breakfast service. One British passenger died while dozens were injured. Passengers described the incident as frightening. The initial report issued by investigators from the Transport Safety Investigation

Bureau (TSIB) is based on a preliminary analysis using the data stored in the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder on board the aircraft, The Straits Times newspaper reported. Investigators found that the aircraft, a Boeing 777-300ER, was flying at its cruise altitude of 37,000 ft south of Myanmar and near an area of developing storms in the afternoon when turbulence started to cause fluctuations between +0.44g and +1.57g for 19 seconds. G-forces measure the rapid acceleration or deceleration by comparing it to the normal pull of gravity on Earth, which is considered +1g. Hence, at +1.57g a person would feel like they were 1.57 times their body weight. On board SQ321, the passengers would also start to experience

the plane beginning to vibrate slightly. The aircraft started to climb, reaching 37,362 ft in altitude. It was at this point that the plane's autopilot tried to bring the plane down to its set cruise altitude, with the pilots turning on the seat belt sign. Eight seconds later, the plane experienced a rapid change in G-forces from +1.35g to -1.5g within 0.6 seconds. Negative G-forces move opposite the direction of gravity, causing people to experience a sensation of "lightness" or "floating." In SQ321's case, it caused the passengers and crew who did not manage to fasten their seat belts to become airborne, and the G-forces went from -1.5g back again to +1.5g in four seconds. This caused the aircraft to drop from 37,362 ft to 37,184 ft and all

airborne passengers to fall back down. "The rapid changes in G over the 4.6-second duration resulted in an altitude drop of 178 feet ... this sequence of events likely caused the injuries to the crew and passengers," the report said. During this time the pilots tried to retain control of the aircraft in a bid to stabilise it, disengaging the autopilot in the process, before re-engaging it and starting a descent to divert into Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, landing at 4.45 pm. The TSIB is the air, marine and rail accidents and incidents investigation authority in Singapore and is part of the Ministry of Transport. The investigation team was composed of TSIB investigators and representatives from the US' National Transportation

Safety Board, Federal Aviation Administration and aircraft manufacturer Boeing. In a statement on Wednesday, SIA acknowledged the preliminary findings from TSIB and said it is fully cooperating with the authorities in the ongoing investigations. The airline said it is committed to supporting the passengers and crew members on board SQ321, including covering their medical and hospital expenses, as well as any additional help they may need. There were three Indian nationals on the flight. "We deeply appreciate the invaluable assistance provided by the governments of Singapore and Thailand, as well as our many partners and the medical teams in both countries and around the world," SIA said.

Storms leave widespread outages across Texas

Houston (AP): Strong storms with damaging winds and baseball-sized hail pummeled Texas on Tuesday, leaving one person dead and about 1 million businesses and homes without power as much of the US recovered from severe weather, including tornadoes, that killed at least 24 people during the Memorial Day holiday weekend. Widespread outages were reported across a wide swath of storm-weary Texas, where an oppressive, early-season heat wave added to the misery. Voters in the state's runoff elections found dozens of polling places without power.

Stock markets fall for fourth day on profit taking

Sensex down 667 points

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty declined nearly 1 per cent on Wednesday, falling for the fourth day running amid profit-taking by cautious investors ahead of the results of the Lok Sabha polls.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 667.55 points or 0.89 per cent to settle at 74,502.90. It went below the 75,000 mark to hit the day's low of 74,454.55, plunging 715.9 points or 0.95 per cent. The BSE benchmark hit its all-time peak of 76,009.68 on May 27.

The NSE Nifty dropped 183.45 points or 0.80 per cent to 22,704.70. The 50-share barometer hit its lifetime high of 23,110.80 on Monday.

From the Sensex pack, Tech Mahindra, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC Bank, UltraTech Cement, Axis Bank, Reliance Industries and Infosys were the biggest laggards.

Power Grid, Sun Pharma, Nestle, ITC and Bharti Airtel were the gainers.

"Weak global cues prompted investors to take profits ahead of the US core PCE data, a key gauge of inflation that is anticipated to rise," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled lower while Shanghai ended with gains. European markets were trading lower. US markets ended on a mixed note on Tuesday. The last phase of polling is scheduled for June 1. The results of the ongoing general elections will be declared on June 4.



Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.88 per cent to USD 84.94 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 65.57 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

After gyrating between gains and losses during the day on Tuesday, the BSE benchmark finally ended 220.05 points or 0.29 per cent lower at 75,170.45. The NSE Nifty dropped 44.30 points or 0.19 per cent to settle at 22,888.15.

Giving thumbs up to the economic management of the Modi government, S&P Global Ratings after a gap of 14 years upgraded India's sovereign rating outlook to positive from stable on robust growth, improved quality of public spending in last 5 years and expectation of broad continuity in reforms and fiscal policies.

S&P, however, retained India's sovereign rating at the lowest investment grade of 'BBB-'.

Adopt regulation plus approach; comply with regulation in letter and spirit: RBI DG to ARCs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Swaminathan J has expressed concern over the increasing regulatory violations and warned Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) to ensure compliance without needing the regulator to point out the issues to them.

Addressing a conference attended by top management of ARCs in the country on May 17, he said, "I would urge you all to adopt a regulation plus approach where you not only comply with the letter of the regulation but also its spirit."

Very often, he said, "We get representations to our observations stating this is industry practice or clarifications are pending from the RBI. Sometimes there are incorrect or intelligent interpretations of the circulars."

These are not acceptable excuses for failing to do the right thing, he said, adding that the boards of ARCs should ensure that they do the right thing without needing the regulator to point it out to them.

He emphasised that ARCs'



potential for resolving stressed assets within the system can only be realised with sound governance and adherence to ethical practices by responsible ownership and professional management.

Some ARCs, while enjoying the full benefits of the special position granted to them under the law and the regulations, have been found to be using innovative ways to structure transactions in a manner to circumvent

regulations, he said.

During the course of onsite examinations, he said, "We have come across instances where ARCs have been used or allowed themselves to be used, if I may say so, as a conduit to evergreen distressed assets."

In many cases, there is a lack of transparency and consistency in the issuance and periodical valuation of Security Receipts (SRs), he said.

It is also observed that a few entities find new ways of achieving their designs once a particular practice has been called out as a violation or deviation, he said.

Swaminathan emphasised that setting the right tone from the top is crucial in fostering a culture of integrity and ethical conduct.

Deputy Governor also said boards should accord due importance to assurance functions, namely, risk

management, compliance and internal audit. These functions play a critical role in identifying and mitigating risks, ensuring compliance with laws and regulations as well as safeguarding the organisation's reputation.

Another area that is receiving closer scrutiny and attention of supervisors is the process followed for the disposal of assets. At times, the proposals are not even placed before the independent advisory committee, contrary to regulatory instructions, he said.

Assets are sold to group entities without following the arms-length principle and without subjecting them to scrutiny under related party transactions, he said.

Another surprising behaviour is the 'Swiss challenge', which often goes unchallenged! This has become a routine affair giving rise to a suspicion that there may be some implicit understanding among the various participants, he said.

It will not be out of place to mention that such happenings are necessitating the supervisors to lift the veil and examine the transactions more closely, he added.

S&P upgrades India's rating outlook to positive on growth, improved Government spending

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

S&P Global Ratings on Wednesday upgraded India's sovereign rating outlook to positive from stable while retaining the rating at 'BBB-' on robust growth and improved quality of government expenditure.

S&P said it could upgrade India's sovereign rating in the next 2 years if the country adopts a cautious fiscal and monetary policy that diminishes the government's elevated debt and interest

burden while bolstering economic resilience.

"The positive outlook reflects our view that continued policy stability, deepening economic reforms, and high infrastructure investment will sustain long-term growth prospects," S&P said.

S&P revised outlook on India to positive from stable. At the same time, it affirmed BBB-long-term and 'A-3' short-term unsolicited foreign and local currency sovereign credit ratings, it said.

BBB is the lowest investment



grade rating. The agency had last upgraded the rating

outlook to stable from negative in 2010. The US-

based agency said it may raise the ratings if India's fiscal deficit narrows meaningfully such that the general government debt falls below 7 per cent of GDP on a structural basis.

"The protracted rise in public investment in infrastructure will lift economic growth dynamism that, combined with fiscal adjustments, could alleviate India's weak public finances.

We may also raise the ratings if we observe a sustained and substantial improvement in

the central bank's monetary policy effectiveness and credibility, such that inflation is managed at a durably lower rate over time," S&P said.

All three major global rating agencies — S&P, Fitch and Moody's — have accorded the lowest investment grade rating to India. However, Fitch and Moody's still have stable outlook on their ratings. The ratings are looked at by investors as a barometer of the country's creditworthiness and has impact on borrowing costs.



Inox Wind Energy raises ₹900 crore through stake sale to trim debt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Inox Wind Energy has raised Rs 900 crore through equity share sale of Inox Wind Ltd, a subsidiary of the INOXGFL Group.

It is a significant step towards completely deleveraging external debt in Inox Wind Ltd, according to a regulatory filing.

Inox Wind is India's leading wind energy solutions provider, while Inox Wind Energy Ltd (IWEL) is one of the promoters of Inox Wind Ltd.

The funds raised will be used to pare down debt of Inox Wind and augment the working capital needs of the company thereby, strengthening its balance sheet further.

"The transaction was executed via block deals on the stock exchanges and witnessed participation by several marquee institutional investors," IWEL said in the filing on Tuesday evening.

As of March 31, 2024, Inox Wind's net external interest debt stood at Rs 655 crore.

On Tuesday, Inox Wind Energy divested a 4.6 per cent stake in its subsidiary company Inox Wind Ltd for Rs 904 crore through open market transactions.

INOXGFL Group is operating across two key verticals -- chemicals and renewable energy. It has four listed entities namely Gujarat Flourochemicals Ltd, Inox Wind Ltd, Inox Green Energy Services and Inox Wind Energy Ltd.

Earlier in May, Inox Wind Ltd reported a consolidated profit of Rs 36.72 crore for the March quarter, mainly due to increased income.

It had posted a net loss of Rs 119.04 crore in the January-March period of the preceding fiscal.

During the fourth quarter of FY24, the company's total income surged to Rs 563.07 crore from Rs 193.83 crore a year ago.

Design, analytics, programming top skills for entry level roles: LinkedIn

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

For fresh graduates looking to enter the job market, skills like design, analytics and programming can open up a wealth of career opportunities, according to the leading professional network LinkedIn.

Software Engineer, System Engineer and Programming Analyst are the top jobs for bachelor's degree holders, as per LinkedIn data.

Utilities is the fastest-growing industry for young professionals with a bachelor's degree, as per LinkedIn's Career Starter 2024 report.

Other top industries hiring fresh graduates include Oil, Gas and Mining, Real Estate, Equipment Rental Services, and Consumer Services.

Regardless of educational background, various job functions are experiencing rapid growth. Ample opportunities are available for bachelor's degree holders in fields like Community and Social Services, Legal, Marketing and Media and Communication, it said.

"Entering a tight job market can be tough, especially at the start of a career journey. Staying updated on industry trends and in-demand jobs, and exploring roles that might not seem obvious at first, can widen options," says Nirajita Banerjee, LinkedIn Career Expert



& India Senior Managing Editor.

Moreover, many skills are transferable across industries, and the rise of AI is creating more tech-related roles across various fields, leading companies to seek professionals with diverse educational backgrounds, Banerjee added.

"To expand their horizons, job seekers must keep strengthening their skills and networking with professionals," Banerjee noted.

According to LinkedIn, the trend towards more flexible working arrangements is growing significantly. Solely on-site roles are declining by 15 per cent and hybrid positions are surging by 52 per cent for entry-level roles year-over-year.

To compile this report, data scientists on LinkedIn's Economic Graph team analysed millions of member profiles and job postings.

Power Mech Projects bags order worth ₹563 crore to construct nuclear power plant from BHEL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Power Mech Projects on Wednesday said it has bagged an order worth Rs 563 crore from state-owned BHEL to construct a nuclear power plant.

The Power Mech Projects Ltd (PMPL) has secured its first construction project in the critical nuclear power sector, the company said in a regulatory filing.

According to the filing, the company has been awarded a significant order valued at Rs 563.23 crore from BHEL-Power Sector Southern Region for Civil, Structural, and Architectural works of turbine island package of 2x700 MWe, PHWR (pressurized heavy-water reactor), Kaiga Atomic Power Project (units 5 and 6) in Uttar Kannada district, Karnataka.

The scope of work includes a number of segments covering civil, electrical, and structural works, including TG (turbine generator) building, foundation for all equipment,



chemical lab, storage tanks, peripheral drains, and sewage network.

The duration of the contract is 32 months, plus 12 months of guarantee period.

This order represents Power Mech's expansion of its existing industrial civil works capability into the nuclear power projects sector.

"In securing this project, another door opens for PMPL to further its establishment in the nuclear power sector and contribute to the nation's growing sustainable energy needs," Sajja Kishore Babu, PMPL Chairman and

Managing Director, said in a statement.

While nuclear power currently contributes a modest 3 per cent to the national grid, the government's bold vision is to triple the capacity to 22,480 MW by 2031, making it nearly 9 per cent of electricity generation by 2047, Babu noted. It would translate into a 10-fold increase in nuclear power's contribution, he added.

Power Mech Projects Ltd (PMPL) is among the leading companies in project & infrastructure-construction.

BUSINESS BRIEF

PFC RECEIVES CSR CHAMPION AWARD

Gurugram: Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) has been honoured with the prestigious CSR award in the NF (Non-Fossil Fuel) business category at the Outlook Planet Sustainability Summit & Awards 2024 held in Goa. Parminder Chopra, Chairman & Managing Director, PFC, received the Award from V Srinivas, secretary, DARPG, Government of India in presence of dignitaries from DPE, IIT Goa and Outlook.

NMDC'S STEELY PERFORMANCE IN FY24

Hyderabad: India's largest iron ore mining company, NMDC declared its FY24 results on Monday. Delivering unprecedented volumes, the company produced 45.02 million tonnes and sold 44.48 million tonnes of iron ore in FY24. Realising a 10% growth in production and 16% growth in sales compared to FY23 volumes, NMDC is now the first mining company in India to cross the 45 Mnt milestone in iron ore production.

REC WINS SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION AWARD

Gurugram: REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, has been honoured with the 'Sustainability Champion - Editor's Choice Award' at the 'Outlook Planet Sustainability Summit & Awards 2024'. The Award ceremony was organised by Outlook Group, in collaboration with IIT Goa. Saraswathi, Senior General Manager, REC's Mumbai Office, received the award at an event held in Goa. This award recognises REC's commitment to sustainability initiatives and its efforts in driving progress towards a greener future.

Rupee falls 21 paise to close at 83.39 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

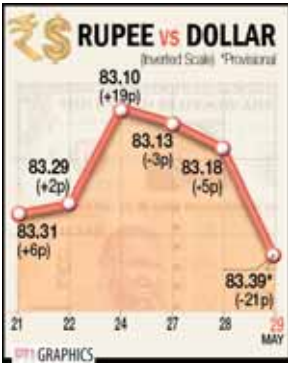
The rupee settled 21 paise lower at 83.39 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking a negative trend in domestic equities and elevated crude oil prices.

Forex traders said dollar demand from importers and oil marketing companies (OMCs) also weighed on the rupee.

However, foreign inflows in the bond markets ahead of inclusion on India's government bonds in global bond index cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.22 and finally settled for the day at 83.39 (provisional), down 21 paise from its previous close.

On Tuesday, the rupee pared initial gains to settle 5 paise lower at 83.18 against the US dollar.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on month-end dollar demand from OMCs and importers to



meet their obligations. Risk aversion in global markets and a strong US dollar may further pressurize the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. However, fresh foreign inflows in FPIs and bond markets may support the rupee at lower levels.

Traders may take cues from Richmond manufacturing index and speeches from US Fed officials. Investors may remain cautious ahead of core PCE price index data later this week, Choudhary added.

Brewers Association of India launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's largest beer-makers, United Breweries (a Heineken company), AB-InBev, and Carlsberg today jointly announced the launch of Brewers Association of India ("BAI"), a new industry body focused on growing the beer category in India, and drive innovation, moderation, and sustainability in the Indian beer market.

BAI is being established in partnership with the World Brewing Alliance (WBA), the global industry body consisting of brewers and brewing trade associations from Australia, Canada, the UK, the USA, Europe, Japan, Korea, Latin America, Brazil, New Zealand, Nigeria and now India. The goal of WBA is to exchange knowledge and best practices among brewers and other stakeholders. It is the global, unified voice of the industry to various audiences and stakeholders.

Cost of living does not influence salaries; Pune among safest cities for talent: KPMG survey

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Cost of living in a particular city does not influence the compensation packages for talent, a survey of recruitment leaders undertaken by a consultancy firm revealed.

Around 95 per cent of human resources leaders and talent acquisition heads from 40 companies across 10 sectors said "cost-of-living differences across Indian cities do not affect compensation decisions", as per the survey by KPMG in February and March.

Earlier, there used to be a city compensatory allowance to compensate for a higher cost of living in metros or tier-I cities, but HR heads say very few employers are offering it now, it said, adding the compensation range is more or less the same for the same roles across the country.

Employees consider residential rent, property indices, local purchasing



power, and overall cost of essentials like goods, utilities, and transportation when evaluating the cost of living, it said.

The survey found Pune among the cities to be excelling on the safety aspect. "Chennai, Navi Mumbai and Pune excel in safety, attracting those seeking secure environments," the survey said.

Apart from safety, key factors which influence the quality of living include connectivity, commute time, healthcare, and air quality, the survey

said.

Navi Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Chennai lead the cities with competitive commercial leasing prices, it said. The survey report also said that companies tapping into talent pool in satellite cities like Gurugram, Navi Mumbai and Noida are highly satisfied, and added that the attrition rates are low in such cities.

It said tactical and transformational work takes place in tier-I and satellite cities, while the tier-II cities have to contend with transactional roles.

Praggnanandhaa loses to World Champion Liren

PTI ■ STAVANGER (NORWAY)

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa lost to World Champion Ding Liren in the Armageddon tie-breaker after the two played out a draw under normal time control in the second round of the Norway Chess tournament here. The second round of the prestigious event saw all three classical games ending up in a draw once again. Magnus Carlsen, Alireza Firouzja and Liren won with white in the subsequent Armageddon games to grab 1.5 points each. India's prodigy Praggnanandhaa, who went with a 2-0 head-to-head lead against Liren, played out his first classical draw in the main event. But the Chinese GM then emerged victorious in the Armageddon tie-breaker. In the highly anticipated pairing of the day, Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura played out a closely contested classical game that ended in a draw. Carlsen, demonstrating his exceptional skill under pressure, managed to secure a crucial victory, adding to his impressive Armageddon record and taking the lead of 3 points in tournament standings. Meanwhile, Firouzja and Fabiano Caruana also drew their classical



game after a complex struggle. Firouzja's abilities in speed chess shone through in the Armageddon game as he bagged crucial 1.5 points. In the women's section R Vaishali defeated fellow Indian Koneru Humpy to register her first classical win in the tournament.

Despite Humpy's slight advantage in the opening, a critical blunder under time pressure allowed Vaishali to claim victory, and claimed her first ever win against India's number one female player. With the win, Vaishali became India's number two female player on the live

rating list. The other two classical matches between Lei Tingjie and Pia Cramling along with Ju Wenjun and Anna Muzychuk ended up in hard-fought draws. The Chinese duo of Wenjun and Tingjie emerged victorious in their respective Armageddon games.



Vaishali beats Humpy to move into sole lead at Norway chess

PTI ■ STAVANGER (NORWAY)

India's R Vaishali came up with a stupendous effort to beat compatriot Koneru Humpy and jump into sole lead in the women's section of the Norway chess tournament here. With each victory under classical time control worth three points, Vaishali got an early advantage moving to four points after the second round and her first-round loss against Wenjun Ju of China under faster time control does not matter so much right now. India's third and latest Grandmaster among women, Vaishali with four points is at the helm followed by the Chinese duo of Tingjie Lei and Ju, Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine and Pia Cramling of Sweden share the fourth spot in the six-players double round robin event, while Humpy currently is languishing at the bottom on 1.5 points. In the men's section, World number one Magnus Carlsen emerged as the sole leader on another day that had only Armageddon to decide the winners. The Norway Chess features a distinctive format where drawn classical games lead to Armageddon tiebreakers to ensure a winner after every round. While 10 minutes are provided to white, black gets 7 minutes to determine the winner of the contest. Black pieces win if the game ends in a draw. Carlsen proved superior than Hikaru Nakamura of United States in the Armageddon. It is no secret anymore that the world's best player and five times world champion does not enjoy Classical chess as much as before. Carlsen drew in the Classical for the second day in the running and then romped home in the faster time control over Nakamura. The lone Indian aspirant Praggnanandhaa had a tough day in office as he lost to reigning World champion Ding Liren of China in the tiebreaker. After drawing the first game confidently, Pragg somehow could not resist the perseverance of Liren who was like a man on a mission.

Later this year, Ding Liren is set to play a match against D Gukesh of India for the world championship crown. Carlsen took his tally to three points in all and came across as the sole leader after the second round thanks to all results going his way. India's Praggnanandhaa lost to Liren in the faster game, which left him with 2.5 points out of the opening round. Having Carlsen in front on three points, Praggnanandhaa is close behind on 2.5 along side Firouzja Alireza of France, Nakamura, and Liren. Fabiano Caruana is currently at the bottom on two points. Firouzja and Caruana also drew their classical game after a complex struggle but the former's abilities in speed chess shone through in the Armageddon game as he bagged crucial 1.5 points. The highlight of the day was Vaishali's fine victory over Humpy in an actual game. Humpy is known to be the queen of Indian chess for over a decade now and she was also ranked number two in the women's candidate that finished recently. Playing the white side of an Italian opening, Vaishali did not get much with her first move advantage and cashed in when the strongest ever Indian woman player made an error to find her queen entrapped. Vaishali also became the first player to score a victory in either section. The other two classical matches between Lei Tingjie and Pia Cramling along with Ju Wenjun and Anna Muzychuk ended up in hard-fought draws. The Chinese duo of Wenjun and Tingjie emerged victorious in their respective Armageddon games. Results men: Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 3) beat Hikaru Nakamura (Usa, 2.5) 1.5-1 ;Ding Liren (Chn, 2.5) beat R Praggnanandhaa (2) 1.5-1; Firouzja Alireza (Fra, 2.5) beat Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 2) 1.5-1. Women: R Vaishali (Ind, 4) beat K Humpy (Ind, 1.5); Tingjie Lei (Chn, 3) beat Pia Cramling (Swe, 2); Wenjun JU (Chn, 3) beat Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 2).

Arundhati advances to pre-quarters, Narender bows out of Olympic qualifiers

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Reigning national champion Arundhati Choudhary registered a convincing victory to move to the 66kg pre-quarterfinals while Asian Games bronze medalist Narender Berwal (+92kg) bowed out of the second Boxing World Olympic Qualifiers here on Wednesday. While Choudhary won by a 5-0 unanimous decision against Stephanie Pieneiro of Puerto Rico, Berwal went down 2-3 to

Ecuador's Gerlon Gilmar Congo Chala. Choudhary began her campaign with a clinical round 1 against her opponent. She was slightly conservative in Round 2, consolidating her position before again dominating the next round to get a unanimous verdict in her favour. Later, Berwal put up a strong fight but it was not enough to advance to the next round. The 2022 Asian Games bronze winner started slow in round 1 and was then forced to catch

up. He did well to impress three of the five judges with his punches in the second and third round of the round of 32 bout. However, his efforts were not enough to overturn the overall deficit. In the evening session, Ankushita Boro, will face Rimma Volossenko of Kazakhstan in 60kg pre-quarters while Nishant Dev (71kg) will be up against Thailand's Peerapat Yeasungnoen to earn a spot in the quarterfinals.

Djokovic begins his bid for a 25th Grand Slam title with a first-round French Open win

AP ■ PARIS

Ignore the straight-set score: Novak Djokovic was not quite at his impervious best in the first round of the French Open, and his 6-4, 7-6 (3), 6-4 win over Pierre-Hugues Herbert was not enough to alter the defending champion's "low expectations" at this tournament. "I don't want to get too excited," Djokovic said. "I thought it was a good performance for me. Solid. Of course, I could have done better, I think, on return games, but also credit to him for serving very well, for changing things up." It's been a rougher-than-usual season so far for Djokovic, and while there were some signs of breaking out of his 2024 funk during the course of the contest at Court Philippe Chatrier, he still has room for improvement as he attempts to become the first player in tennis history to claim 25 Grand Slam singles trophies. There's no doubt he cares about such things. "Grand Slams are the ones that are basically getting me up from the bed every day. Knowing that I have to hit the practice courts, I always think about what I can do in Grand Slams," he said. "So here I am. Hopefully I can have another deep run." That's what Herbert expected to see. "I knew, from the beginning," Herbert said, "that I'm going to have in front of me the Novak of the Grand Slams." ... It's just the intensity of concentration." Djokovic is a three-time title winner at Roland Garros who needs to return to the final to retain his No. 1 ranking. But he arrived in Paris without having done that at any tournament this year. He is 0-3 in semifinals - including a loss last week at the lower-tier Geneva Open on red clay -



and this victory across 2 1/2 hours only served to make his overall record 15-6. So when he spoke at a news conference on Sunday, Djokovic described his mindset heading into the French Open this way: "Low expectations and high hopes." Then he pointed out, "Anything but a title, for me, is not satisfactory," which is understandable given his remarkable resume. "In the moments when it mattered, I think I delivered. Played a great tiebreak. Stayed focused," Djokovic said about Tuesday's performance. "I'm glad that I started the way I started, the way I felt on the court. Comparing to the previous weeks of tournaments I played, I felt good. Better. So I'm moving in a positive direction. Yeah, it's just the beginning." He seemed a bit edgy at moments against Herbert, a 33-year-old Frenchman who owns a career Grand Slam in doubles but never has been past the third round at any

major in singles and is currently ranked 142nd. The home crowd tried to push Herbert, repeatedly calling out his name, even imploring him in English at one point by chanting, "Let's go, Pierre-Hugues! Let's go!" They jeered Djokovic late in the third set when he went to the sideline to towel off after he slipped, stumbled and tumbled onto the clay chasing a ball. A day after sitting in the Chatrier stands to watch rival Rafael Nadal's first-round loss against Alexander Zverev, Djokovic was competing in the chill of a 60-degree evening (15 Celsius), and he did not always look happy. He rolled his head back after one miss while making four groundstroke mistakes to get broken early in the second set. He repeatedly gestured to ballkids to give him tennis balls so he could prepare to serve. Although Herbert's game did not demand a maximum expenditure of energy from

Olympic boxing medalists in Paris promised cash prizes by rogue governing body

AP ■ GENEVA

The boxing governing body declared rogue by the International Olympic Committee said Wednesday it will pay \$50,000 in prize money to each gold medalist at the Paris Games. The cash promise is doubly confrontational for the IOC, which has severed ties with the International Boxing Association and does not approve of governing bodies paying prize money to Olympic medalists. The IBA said it has a \$3.1 million prize money fund for each male and female boxer who reaches the quarterfinals in 13 total weight classes, plus their coaches and national teams. The coach and national team of each Olympic boxing champion will both get \$25,000, and the scale of payments goes down to \$10,000 in total for each quarterfinalist.

The source of the money is unclear but the IBA led by its Russian president Umar Kremlev has been supported by the country's state energy firm Gazprom. The IBA promised \$200,000 for gold medalists at its 2023 world championships and committed to future increases. "As IBA president, I will always fight for our athletes' well-being, and this step is consistent in terms of the existing commitments we have already taken," Kremlev said in a statement. The Olympic body did not support a pledge in April by World Athletics to pay \$50,000 prize money to each of the 48 gold medalists in track and field in Paris. It has promised also to pay silver and bronze medalists in 2028 at the Los Angeles Olympics. The IOC has de-recognized the IBA, which will not be involved in



organizing bouts in Paris for the second straight Summer Games. The IOC cited its concerns about the boxing body's governance, reliance on funding from Gazprom, and the integrity of judges and bouts at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics. Those games were organized when the boxing body was led by a longtime IOC member, C. K. Wu. Paris medalists are set to be rewarded at "a special awards ceremony," IBA said, after "successful passing of respective anti-doping procedures." The IOC was contacted for comment. Prize money to Olympic medalists has traditionally been paid by state governments and national teams though not directly from money sourced to the IOC, which prefers governing bodies invest in developing their sport below the elite level. World Athletics said its \$2.4

million prize fund for champions in Paris would come from its share of the IOC's revenues. Track's \$39.5 million payment for the Tokyo Olympics held in 2021 was the largest amount of a \$540 million fund allocated by the IOC. Boxing's share of Olympic revenues from Tokyo was due to be more than \$17 million but was held back by the IOC, which had to oversee running the qualifying and finals tournament bouts. The IBA also will not get money from the IOC's Paris revenues and a rival organization of national federations, called World Boxing, is being established to become the recognized governing body of Olympic boxing. "We are setting a clear example for many," the IBA's chief executive Chris Roberts said, "on how international federations should be treating their champions."

India bids to host Gukesh-Liren World Chess Championship match

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has submitted its bid to host the much-anticipated World Chess Championship clash between teen sensation D Gukesh and defending champion Ding Liren of China in November-December this year. The 17-year-old Gukesh became the youngest ever challenger for the world title by winning the Candidates Tournament last month. He will face Liren between November 20 to December 15 in Chennai if the country gets the hosting rights. The bid has been submitted by the Tamil Nadu government. "We have received the bid from India," Chess' global governing body FIDE CEO Emil Sutovsky told PTI. As of now, FIDE hasn't received any other bids but the deadline to enter the race is May 31. It is learnt that Singapore is expected to compete with India but has not yet officially submitted the bid documents. "As of now no other country has bid for it but the deadline is till end of this week. Post that we will have a FIDE Council meeting next week. And after that due procedure will be followed and we will decide about the hosting rights," Sutovsky added. If AICF wins the bid, it will have to shell out close to Rs 71 crore. The basic criteria outlined by FIDE for a prospective bidder for the 2024 edition is a budget of Rs 8.5 million (Rs 71 crore approx) and a facilitation fee of USD 1.1 million (Rs 9 crore) for the global body. The duration of the tournament is 25 days and approval of regulations will be completed by July 1. The total prize money awarded by FIDE would be



around USD 2.5 million (Rs 20 crore plus) after the fund was increased from the USD two million (Rs 17 crore) in 2023. Gukesh's historic achievement at the Candidates has spurred a renewed wave of interest in chess. The Chennai-based teen, who has been mentored by five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand, bettered Russian legend Garry Kasparov's 40-year-old record to become the youngest Candidates champion. The Russian great was 20 when he qualified in 1984 to clash with compatriot Anatoly Karpov. India has hosted the prestigious showpiece in 2000 and 2013. In the 2000 edition, Viswanathan Anand claimed the first of his five world titles by winning the event played in a tournament format with 100 players. Anand defeated Alexei Shirov in the final. In 2013, Anand lost to Norwegian challenger Magnus Carlsen.

FINAL CHANCE FOR KOHLI, ROHIT TO GIVE INDIA ICC TROPHY AFTER 13 YEARS

PTI ■ BENGALURU

It's tough to find two cricketers who are so different from each other yet so closely intertwined by the same thread of fate as Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma. Rohit's initiation into top-flight cricket came at the idyllic Belfast in 2007 and Kohli's a year later at the more conventional Dambulla. Another intriguing chapter of this journey together will potentially come to an end next month in the stunning Caribbean Isles. The next T20 World Cup is in 2026, to be jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka, but Rohit would be touching 40 then and Kohli would be 38. The 50-over version is a further one year away. It's hard to see them playing in any of those, considering the increasingly strike-rate oriented nature of the game. So, both Rohit and Kohli will want to leave the stage with the winner's medal around their neck next month. Should they achieve that, it would be their second each after the 2007 T20 World Cup (Rohit) and the 2011 50-over showpiece (Kohli). And it will be a perfect send off for two players who have had an immeasurable impact on India's white-ball fortunes in the last 17 years.

However, the Kohli-Rohit story is not one of bromance. It's based more on mutual respect and the awareness that they should not step into each other's space. Kohli has talked about the admiration he has had for Rohit since the very beginning of their careers. "I was filled with curiosity about a player. People kept on saying - 'This is one player who is rising rapidly'. I used to wonder that even though I am a young player, no one talks about me, then who is this player. "But when he (Rohit) stepped out to bat, I was all quiet. It was amazing to watch him play. In fact, I haven't seen a player time the ball better than him," Kohli had said in 'Breakfast With Champions'. Contrasting in nature, their batting has been high art for the masses to which they added a dash of modernity later. Of the two, Kohli is the more all-format batter, who has adapted more fluently with the changing face of the game. He has scored in every corner of the cricketing world in a show of consistency that was rarely witnessed after the halcyon days of Sachin Tendulkar. While Rohit built his own edifices in white-ball formats, the Mumbai-man remained a



reluctant visitor in Test cricket's elite corridors for the better part of his career. A move up to the opener's role helped Rohit unshackle himself a bit in Tests in the later part of his career. But for now, Kohli and Rohit will have to lean on their vast experience in T20 cricket to fuel India's run in the World Cup. Rohit will certainly open and if his approach in last year's World Cup and in the just-concluded IPL can be taken as a sign, the skipper will continue his selfless, aggressive approach. Herein, Rohit has an inherent advantage. His natural big-hitting abilities will help him pursue his batsmanship without many improvisations. That one-legged pull of his is a cosy meeting point between elegance and malevolence. But Kohli's game is slightly different. He can pull off those occasional big hits - a swat-flick six or a flat-bat smash over bowler's head. A quick rewind to his pick-up shot off Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf during the 2022 T20 World Cup will vouch for that. Still, there is a sore point. Kohli has often struggled to score off spin, especially against the left-arm variety. His career strike-rate against slow bowlers hovers around mid-120s in T20s.

Several times, it has impeded his progress in the middle innings but during this year's IPL, he seemed to have found a solution. He brought out the slog-sweep against spinners, and it had a healthy influence on his strike-rate as Kohli made 260 runs from 188 balls and struck 15 sixes against them. His strike-rate against spin touched 139, a marked improvement from his overall IPL strike-rate of 124. "It was me mentally putting myself in that situation. I did not practice that at all," he explained. "I know I can hit it because I have played that shot a lot in the past. So, I just felt like I needed to take a bit more risk," Kohli said of his new approach against spin. This might come in handy for him in the T20 World Cup where the pitches are expected to become progressively slow, increasingly bringing spinners into the game. Beyond the realm of cricket, the two veterans' final charge at an ICC trophy — personally and for the team — would be a captivating sight. For the fans, this World Cup would be about drinking it in as much as they can because once this duo leaves the stage, there will be an immense emptiness.

Only Bumrah is executing yorkers consistently: Lee

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Legendary Australia speedster Brett Lee feels apart from Jasprit Bumrah, pacers are failing to nail yorkers effectively in the death overs and he wants them to master the pivotal delivery. Bumrah is one of the most complete bowlers in world cricket at the moment. He can bowl wicket-taking deliveries without leaking runs but the most lethal weapon in his armoury is his toe-crushing yorker, which he, more often than not, executes perfectly in the death overs. "On a general rule, other than Bumrah, we haven't seen enough fast bowlers nailing their yorkers recently. "I want to see fast bowlers bowl more yorkers. I still don't reckon they execute enough yorkers at the death," Lee said at the launch of the Legends Intercontinental T20 league recently. With the recently concluded IPL featuring scores in excess of 200 regularly, Lee believes the fast bowlers would be more economical had they nailed yorkers. "If you look back at 17 years of Indian Premier League, on average a yorker goes for a strike rate of less than 100. Which tells me that one run or less per bowler that's executed. "Now, when you bowl a yorker and you've got guys who can go down and scoop you over the head, well that puts pressure on you as a bowler. "You've got to set in the right field and put two men back, third man fine and back and then bowl," Lee added. As T20 cricket progresses, the game is tilting more and more towards the batters. With the 'Impact Player Rule' and flat decks, bowlers struggled in the IPL. Lee, like several other former players, called for a balance between bat and ball. "I'm all for batters smoking the ball all over, but there has got to be something for the bowlers too. I'm not asking for a green top, where teams bowled out for 110, because that's not good for cricket either. "You want a good total, I think. Anywhere around that 185 mark to 230 is a good score. We've seen scores now of 265, 270, 277. "It's really hard because most bowlers now are going for 45 to 50 off their four overs," he said. **WARNER HAS EARNED THE RIGHT TO GO ON HIS OWN TERMS:** Australia's charismatic young batter Jake Fraser-McGurk set the stage ablaze in his debut IPL season with many calling for his inclusion in Australia's T20 World Cup squad.



However, the selectors decided to go with veteran opener David Warner, who is set to retire after the tournament, Travis Head and Mitchell Marsh in the top-order. McGurk, who is a top order batter and Warner's Delhi Capitals teammate, though has been named as a travelling reserve. "David Warner has earned that right to go out on his own terms. And if things don't happen for whatever reason, then he's (McGurk) definitely there to take part," Lee said. Although Warner did not have a particularly great IPL as he missed several matches due to an injury, the Southpaw has scored 834 runs in T20 cricket since 2021 at a strike rate of around 150. He was woefully out of form ahead of the 2021 T20 World Cup but ended up being the player of the tournament, playing a vital role in Australia's maiden World Cup win in the shortest format. On the other hand, 22-year-old McGurk, who was called in as a replacement for Lungi Ngidi at Delhi Capitals, gave an excellent display of explosive batsmanship, smashing four half-centuries in nine games at an astronomical strike rate exceeding 234. "I think if you go over there as a reserve batsman, you definitely have a chance to get an opportunity. "That happened this year with the Delhi Capitals, he wasn't even picked in the squad. "Ricky Ponting rang him up late night and said come in and had a few injuries. So right time, right place. "But the advice to him, and he articulated it beautifully to say that he's only 22 years of age (aram se aram se) - He's got time. There's no point rushing it," Lee said.

ABD laments racial quota chatter around SA T20 World Cup squad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As de Villiers is not surprised that just days before South Africa renews its quest for an elusive World Cup, the talk back home is all about racial quota in the team. It's a rinse-and-repeat sort of situation and de Villiers, who retired in 2018, is glad that he is a mere spectator to the situation now. "...It's a shame going into a tournament to have the focus on that. I mean it's nothing new, it's just a shame," lamented one of the greats of South African cricket. "Luckily this time around, I've had nothing to do with anything over there. I'm just a spectator," the 40-year-old said in an interaction with PTI facilitated by 'Jio Cinema'. The cause of outrage is the presence of just one black player in the squad for the T20 showpiece that will take place

in the Americas from June 1. Considered the perennial bridesmaids, who tend to choke in crunch situations, South Africa somehow are always in the pre-tournament favourites bracket without actually living up to the tag. And having a deeply divisive topic take centre-stage just days before they begin their campaign is a far-from-ideal build-up for a country that has a troubled past when it comes to race relations. The Proteas will start off against the Netherlands in New York on June 8. Over the course of a season, six players of colour are required to be in the South Africa playing eleven including two from the black African community as per the policy introduced in 2016. With Kagiso Rabada being the only black African in the T20 World Cup squad, the national team is set to miss its target.



Another black-African, Lungi Ngidi, is part of the travelling reserves. The other players of colour include Reeza Hendricks, Bjorn Fortuin, Keshav Maharaj, Tabraiz Shamsi and Ott Niel Baartman. "There are controversial moments back home as per usual with the South African squad just before a World Cup," de Villiers said. "I think it's a good team. It's a shame about Lungi... (he) lost a

bit of form, had a couple of injuries. Otherwise, he most probably would have been in the squad and there wouldn't have been any controversial stuff back home," he added. At the moment, Cricket South Africa doesn't have a committee of selectors and the team is picked by head coaches Shukri Conrad (Tests) and Rob Walter (white-ball cricket). "Sometimes these things happen and it puts you under a

bit of pressure as a selection panel and as a coach and a captain," de Villiers said. "From what I remember is with the quota system, it's an average team, an average number over the season and they don't really look at every series, but as journalists sometimes enjoy steaming up things a bit," he tried to put things in context. Following the selection of the squad earlier this month, former Sports Minister Fikile Mbalula and former CSA and ICC president Ray Mali questioned the composition of the side. "Only one African player selected in the Proteas Team for the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024 Team. Definitely a reversal (reversal) of the gains of transformation and doesn't reflect fair representation of all South Africans in the national cricket tea," Mbalula wrote on X.

PTI ■ PORT OF SPAIN

Short of players, a nine-man Australia Sneeded as many as four support staff members on the field, including chief selector and head coach, in their T20 World Cup warm-up against Namibia but that did not change the expected outcome of the game. Australia won the game by seven wickets with impressive performances from David Warner (54 not out off 21 balls), fit again Josh Hazlewood (2/5) and leg-spinner Adam Zampa (3/25). They chased down Namibia's 119 with 10 overs to spare. With the likes of Pat Cummins, Travis Head, Mitchell Starc, Cameron Green, Marcus Stoinis and Glenn Maxwell given extra time at home following the two-month long IPL, chief selector and former captain George Bailey and head coach Andrew McDonald were among

Selector, head coach take field for nine men Australia in T20 World Cup warm up

the support staff who were forced to take the field. 46-year-old fielding coach Andre Borovec also took the field alongside Bailey when skipper Mitchell Marsh opted to bowl against Namibia. When Marsh and Hazlewood went back to the dressing room, McDonald and 49-year-old batting coach Brad Hodge had to step on the field. Hazlewood, playing hist first game in three months, looked in good rhythm. "Obviously, we didn't have a full quota of players but the guys who played, probably a few of us needed to coming off a big layoff," Hazlewood told



cricket.Com.Au after the game on Tuesday. "I know a number of the bowlers were coming off a long break which is pretty unusual in our system, but it's good to get out there, playing is always different to training. "The wicket looked a little bit tough early, a little bit slow, which is probably what we're going to encounter here in the West Indies. "So a nice hit out, got the result and we move onto the West Indies in a few days." Australia Test and ODI skipper Cummins, Head and Starc were part of the IPL final played in Chennai on Sunday.

India getting used to cooler temperatures, playing white ball games in morning

PTI ■ NEW YORK

After two months of intense competitive cricket under night lights, the Indian cricket team, sans Virat Kohli, began its preparations for the T20 World Cup with a morning training session here, keeping in mind the 10.30am starts for all its preliminary games. Kohli took a break for personal work after RCB's IPL ouster and in all likelihood, he will join the squad by Friday. But it is not clear if he would be able to take part in the only warm-up game against Bangladesh on Saturday after a long flight. Having played 90 per cent of the matches under lights in the scorching Indian summer, the idea would be to adjust to

pleasant mornings where temperatures will hover between 25 to 27 degree celsius with very less humidity. A white kookaburra in slightly windy mornings could be a challenge and to be prepared for that, the severely jet-lagged bodies need to get used to morning conditions. And this is why the support staff, before initiating the skills training (net sessions) on the practice pitches at a ground on the outskirts of the city, have decided to help the players acclimatise with the conditions. With 14 players checking in, there was light jogging, routine shuttle runs, and a bit of foot volley to get into the groove. "They have been away two and half months from us and



getting to know where they stand and what needs to be done before the World Cup is the goal. The (first) goal is to spend 45 minutes in the heat to get going." Strength and Conditioning coach Soham Desai told bcci.Tv. "We came in the day before yesterday and we just eased into our routines here, the players are just getting used to the time zone. Today we are having our first ground session," he added. As far as the players are concerned, there is an element of curiosity about playing cricket in New York. The Indian teams, over the years, have played primarily in Florida at the Fort Lauderdale ground during their tours of the West Indies.

"First time we are going to play cricket in New York, it's going to be fun," all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja said. "We have not yet played cricket, came here for a team activity today. Hopefully, it will be good. The weather is really good, so we are looking forward to it." Skipper Rohit Sharma's deputy Hardik Pandya seemed excited with the "bright sunshine" and "good vibes" while Suryakumar Yadav wanted to know more about the the diaspora's cricket interests. "I heard cricket is growing here in the US. So we are really excited and the first day here was amazing, so very excited for the few days coming up," Surya stated. India, the 2007 T20 World Cup

champions, will start their campaign here on June 5 against Ireland, followed by the big game against arch-rivals Pakistan on June 9. They take on hosts USA on June 12 before the cricket caravan moves to familiar Lauderdale in Florida for the game against Canada on June 15. India are supposed to be clubbed A1 irrespective of where they finish in the group and will then proceed to the Caribbean islands for the Super 8 phase of the tournament where they would meet Australia, New Zealand and Sri Lanka. None of the Indian main squad players featured in the IPL finals held on May 26 in Chennai.

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