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# KEJRIWAL SPIRIT BACK IN DELHI

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Filled with energy and high political spirit ever since he walked out from Tihar Jail on Saturday, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal while addressing his enthused party workers launched a scathing attack at the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of crushing his and other Opposition parties. Kejriwal, who has launched his Lok Sabha campaign for the May 25 Delhi schedule, alleged that the BJP is on a mission to bring about dictatorship in the country. Besides the “one nation, one leader” jibe, the AAP convenor also accused the BJP of shielding corrupt leaders and asked them if they would live up to the rule of retirement at the age of 75 that was brought about by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Kejriwal further claimed that the Prime Minister wants Amit Shah to succeed is his acknowledgement that the party is set to retain power for a third straight term. At the same time Kejriwal also asserted the BJP will not return to power and said the INDIA Bloc will form the Government on June 4. “In the last 20 hours after release from jail, I talked to poll experts and people and got to know the BJP is not going to form the Government. The AAP will be part of the Government at the Centre. We will get full Statehood for



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

Delhi and it shall have a people's Governor, not a man from Gujarat,” he said, while adding that according to his assessment that the BJP is not getting more than 220-230 seats. Earlier in the morning, Kejriwal along with his wife Sunita and Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann offered prayers at the Hanuman temple in central Delhi's Connaught Place. Hours after the visit, the Chief Minister posted on X about his temple visit. Reciting a verse from Hanuman Chalisa, “Sab sukh lahe tumhari sarna, tum rakshak kahu ko darr na”, he said in the post in Hindi, “Reached the ancient Hanuman temple in Connaught Place and received the blessings of Hanuman ji. I prayed to

Mahadev in Shiva temple and worshiped Shanidev Maharaj. I prayed to God for happiness and prosperity of the country and to give strength to free the country from dictatorship. God bless everyone.” “The BJP sent four of our top leaders to jail - Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh and Satyendar Jain. This was an attempt by them to crush us. PM Modi wants to crush the AAP because he knows that we can bring about a bright future for the country. All Opposition leaders including West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and RJD leader Tejashvi Yadav, will be in jail if BJP wins Lok Sabha polls,” Kejriwal said

addressing media, a first after his release on bail in the multi crore liquor scam. Kejriwal claimed that PM Modi has not spared his own party's popular leader and will remove Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath from his post if the saffron party wins again. “Modi ji has a very dangerous plan - the plan of One Nation One Leader. He doesn't want anyone else to be popular. If they win the Lok Sabha polls, they will change the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in two months. They have tried to crush all the popular leaders in their party. Look at Vasundhara Raje and Shivraj Singh Chauhan. I am sure that Yogi Adityanath is the next,” he added. Party workers and supporters gathered in big numbers to welcome Kejriwal after he was granted an interim bail by the Supreme Court till June 1. A supporter was seen standing on the tree at the office with the picture of Bhagat Singh and a copy of the Constitution of India shouting the slogan “Jail k tale toot gaye, Kejriwal choot gaye”. Many others adorned party flags and t-shirts that has “I am also Kejriwal” written on them. This was Kejriwal's first such presser following his release from jail after 50 days. Further, he said that the reason why he did not resign from Chief Minister's post was because he didn't want to give in to the ‘dirty politics’ of BJP.

# Transforming tribal lives is real service to God : Padma Shri Jageshwar Yadav

SHRI RAM SHAW ■ RAIPUR

*Messiah ussi ko toh kahte hain hum/ Khushi baant le le jo auron ke ghum*... the soulful number aptly fits septuagenarian Jageshwar Yadav who has been transforming the lives of the tribal community in Chhattisgarh for more than four decades.

A resident of Bhitghra village in Jashpur, a district from which Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai hails, Jageshwar has been working for the economic and social upliftment of the Pahadi Korva and Birhor tribes.

He was conferred the country's fourth highest civilian honour, Padma Shri, by President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi on Thursday for his exemplary social work. Here are the excerpts of his interview with *The Pioneer*.

**What really prompted you to work for the upliftment of tribal lives?**

I was born in Bhitghra of Jashpur district. Since childhood, I had seen the plight of Birhor tribals. They were living a life of gypsies, moving from one place to another. They were living in dense forests deprived of basic human needs like education, health and employment. I decided to change their lives. For this, first I started living among them. I learned their language and culture. After this, I lit the flame of education and encouraged them to send their wards to schools.

**What exactly you did to educate them? It must be a daunting task? Isn't it?**

Challenges were galore. I have set up an ashram in Jashpur with the aim of eradicating illiteracy and elevating healthcare standards among the Birhor and Pahadi Korva tribes which reside mainly in the Sarguja region. The task was really Herculean because most of the people from Pahadi Korva and Birhor tribes were reluctant to interact

Not only this, they used to hide even after seeing shoe marks. In such a situation, going to school for studies was a very distant dream for them. But now times have changed. Due to constant efforts, now children of this tribe also go to school. So far, more than 3,500 families have been provided shelter alongside river and in jungle

areas, respecting their wishes because convincing and making them understand anything wasn't that easy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, educating and motivating them for vaccination was also very tough. Allaying their hesitancy and apprehensions in the remote regions of Sarguja division was very important. It immensely helped in reducing the infant mortality rate.

**What message would you like to impart to this troubled world?**

There's no greater service than serving humanity. I firmly believe that transforming tribal lives is real service to God. We have worked hard to eliminate illiteracy by organizing camps and to make health care available to them...made tireless efforts to connect them with the mainstream of development. I received Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Award in 2015 and now the Padma Shri. It's ok, but the good work must continue...*Ho yahi koshish banen insaaf ki aisi mashaal/ Rashtra insaniyat ka jo sadaa raushan kare...*



with outsiders until recently, and the community was even terrified by the marks of shoes in the jungles.

**What sort of difficulties you faced? How many families have been settled so far?**

All this was not easy for me due to financial difficulties. But my passion was helpful in bringing about a social change. Earlier, the people of Birhor tribe and their children were not similar to other people. They would run away as soon as they saw outsiders.

# Akhilesh in Kannauj to avenge wife's defeat

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ KANNAUJ

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

At the core of this unfolding drama lies a deeply personal quest for redemption. Akhilesh's decision to contest from Kannauj is not merely a strategic move but a poignant attempt to avenge his wife Dimple Yadav's defeat in the previous elections. The sting of that loss still resonates, propelling Akhilesh with a fervent resolve to reclaim Kannauj for the Samajwadi Party (SP), a stronghold nurtured by his father, Mulayam Singh Yadav. “The wounds of defeat run deep, but so does our determination,” declares Akhilesh, his voice echoing with unwavering resolve. “Kannauj embodies our legacy, and we will not allow it to slip away.” In the 1990s, Mulayam strategically expanded his influence in Kannauj, a constituency dominated by Yadavs and Muslims, transforming it into a bastion for the SP's first family. Over 16 elections held in Kannauj since 1967, Mulayam-affiliated candidates emerged victorious 10 times, while non-Yadav candidates



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

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



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

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

Mishra, a seasoned journalist in Kannauj. Indeed, the stakes could not be higher. Kannauj, steeped in political history, has long been synonymous with the SP's dominance. For decades, the Yadav family has wielded influence, transforming it into a formidable bastion of their political power. However, cracks surfaced in this fortress in 2019 when Pathak, a BJP candidate, dealt a significant blow by defeating Dimple, disrupting the family's winning streak.

The loss reverberated through the Yadav clan, marking a turning point in their political fortunes. Mulayam, the patriarch of the family, witnessed this setback bore his passing in 2022, leaving behind a legacy tainted by defeat.

# Rahul dares Modi to US style Presidential debate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Miss Universe India sees beauty in diversity

SAKSHI PRIYA ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

The decision to introduce state-level competitions in all states of India is also a significant step towards decentralizing the pageant and providing opportunities for women from diverse backgrounds to participate.

By eliminating age and height limits, introducing State-level competitions, and appointing Sate directors, the competition is setting a new standard for beauty pageants, one that celebrates the diversity and talent of women from all walks of life.



# Dust storm, gusty winds claim two lives in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

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

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has advised people to stay indoors, close windows and doors and avoid travel if possible, Take safe shelters, do not take shelter under trees and Do not lie on concrete floors and do not lean against concrete walls, the IMD said predicting strong wind/hail which may damage plantation, horticulture and standing crops. Hail may injure people and cattle at open places, it said.

Nine flights were also diverted at the Delhi airport late Friday evening due to bad weather, an official said. Rain and thunderstorms were witnessed in many areas of Rajasthan as well due to the impact of a western disturbance during the last 24 hours, the local weather office said on Saturday. Thunderstorm activities are likely to continue till May 14, due to which the maximum temperature may fall in most parts. In west Delhi's Vikasuri, a person on a two-wheeler died after a branch of a tree fell on him near Janakpuri flyover. Police said the branch was removed with the help of cranes and the victim, Jaiprakash, was rushed to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival. A car was also damaged in the incident but its occupants were unhurt, a police officer said. In the other incident, a labourer got trapped under a tree which fell on him near IB Block at KN Katju Marg around 11 PM. Hariom was taken to a nearby hospital but the doctors said he was already dead. The police officer said in this incident also a car was damaged but its occupants were safe.



# Cong has forgotten great revolutionaries of India: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav in support of BJP candidate Anita Nagar Singh Chauhan from Ratlam Lok Sabha seat, Jaora in support of BJP candidate Sudhir Gupta from Mandasaur Lok Sabha seat, Depalpur Assembly in support of BJP candidate Shankar Lalwani from Indore Lok Sabha seat. Addressing the public meetings organized in Betma and Indore, he said that Congress has forgotten the sacrifice of great revolutionaries like Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Azad Chandrashekhar, Subhash Chandra Bose who gave independence to the country, but always remembered one family. Congress is contesting elections in India and praises Pakistan, the people of the country and the state will not tolerate such traitors. We are follow-

ers of Sanatan Dharma, we are Sanatani, but there is a lot of tension in the Congress. One whose roots are from enemies outside the country can never deserve respect. Even after getting bail, Arvind Kejriwal is saying that he will free this country from the dictatorial government. He is on ventilator and should resign from the post of Chief Minister. When Pakistan misbehaved, Prime Minister Narendra Modi entered the house twice and taught it a lesson. During this, the Chief Minister also held road shows in Ratlam, Javra and Indore. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that during the BJP rule, many welfare schemes were made to improve the life of every class and every person. During the reign of former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Ladli Brahmin Yojana was created, we have also taken

the initiative to provide facilities like air ambulance to take the patients to big hospitals. In Madhya Pradesh too, we took many important decisions and along with removing loud-speakers from temples and mosques, allowed them to operate as per rules. Now the Congress people chant daily that they will stop this scheme, but the scheme will not be stopped, the Congress party will be locked. The wishes of Congressmen will never be fulfilled. Schemes do not stop in BJP government, rather new schemes are started. In Indore, since 1984 till today, the claw of the hand has not moved for 40 years and now it has been completely amputated. "Congress forgot everyone's sacrifice, but remembered one family" Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that many great revolutionaries

like Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Azad Chandrashekhar, Subhash Chandra Bose had sacrificed their lives in giving independence to this country, but after independence, when the reins of the country came into the hands of the Congress Party, they followed Gandhiji. Chose the family and from then till now Congress remembers only one family. They completely forgot the sacrifices of the great revolutionaries. Such is their ideology. We are people of BJP ideology. In the 1984 elections, when only two leaders of BJP had won and even then he did not leave the party, he stood firm. This is the ideology of our party and we all are in the Bharatiya Janata Party because of this ideology. Our party and party leaders are like 24 carat gold. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that

Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi are saying that if BJP comes to power, they will destroy democracy. They do not know that BJP is already in power and the work of saving this democracy has been done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He has protected the honor and dignity of the country, the democracy of the country, the democracy of the country and the people of the country and has brought respect to India in the world. When Pakistan killed Indian soldiers while they were sleeping, the whole world saw what happened after that. Twice he has entered Pakistan's house and taught him a lesson. Congress party and its leaders love terrorists, they address them as Osama, but one whose roots are from enemies outside the country can never deserve respect.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav distributes voter slips to the voters during door-to-door campaign in ward no. 35 of Ujjain South State Assembly constituency, ahead of the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh on Saturday. Pioneer photo

## Two persons killed in clash between 2 families

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Two people were killed by mowing down by a tractor in Nazirabad area of Bhopal. At 10 am on Saturday, the family members of the former Sarpanch and the present Sarpanch came face to face. They attacked each other with sharp edged weapons and sticks. In which Ranglal and Jasmal died. The incident was reported in Shukla village. There is an old dispute going on between two families living in the neighborhood regarding the possession of government land. Recently the tender for a silo built on government land had ended. After this the silo was disposed of Ranglal claimed to be in possession of this land. There was a dispute between both the parties regarding this. Harinarayan Gurjar, Raju Gurjar (35), Deep Singh

**In view of the tense situation in the village after the incident, police from 3 out of 7 police stations**

Gurjar (24), Kanchan Gurjar (60) and Balram Gurjar (30) were injured in the incident injured are undergoing treatment in Hamidia. In view of the tense situation in the village after the incident, police from 3 out of 7 police stations of Shamshabad and Bhopal Rural of Vidisha district have been deployed on the spot. In the evening, both of them were cremated at the cremation ground of the village itself. Nazirabad TI Harishankar Verma told that Mangilal

Gurjar is from the family of the current sarpanch in Shukla village. Ranglal and Jasmal alias Jaswant Gurjar were from the family of a former sarpanch. Both of them belong to the same family and look like uncle and nephew. A relative of Mangilal Gurjar crushed Ranglal and Jasmal Gurjar with a tractor. Both died on the spot. The condition of two of the injured is critical. He was taken to Civil Hospital, Berasia. From there he has been referred to Hamidia. In an old dispute, Ranglal and Jasmal Gurjar were crushed to death by a tractor. Ranglal and Jasmal used to do farming. According to the villagers, both Ranglal and Jasmal used to do farming. Jasmal's father had been a sarpanch. The family with whom the dispute took place lives in the neighbourhood.

## Six of a family die in road accident while returning from Salkanpur

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Six funeral processions took place together in Bhopal after members of the same family from Bhopal, who lost their lives in the accident at Bhairav Valley near Salkanpur, were cremated at Chhola crematorium. On Friday, five members of the family lost their lives. At the same time, the injured 6-month-old child also died on Saturday. Seven people including the driver have died in the accident. There was an heart wreched people when the funeral procession of a 6-month-old baby was taken out along with his grandparents in Chaukse Nagar in the afternoon. Monica Pandey, who was injured in the accident, reached the crematorium in an ambulance and had the last glimpse of her father.

**Five members of the family lost their lives. At the same time, the injured 6-month-old child also died on Saturday. Seven people including the driver have died in the accident**

In the house where till yesterday there was an atmosphere of happiness, there is mourning today. Everyone is sad. Even the colony residents and relatives are in shock. The deceased were identified as Sharda Prasad Pandey (72), Aparna Pandey (60), Rajendra Pandey (70), Usha Pandey, Vyom (6 months) and Puspapala Awasthi (85) and Lakshmi Narayan Chouksey. Neighbors of the Pandey family living in Chaukse Nagar told that Rajendra Prasad Pandey's daughter Monica is going to get married in July. In the beginning of the year,

Monica's family has fixed the relationship with a family in Lal Ghati area of Bhopal. Even before Pandey could see off his daughter from home in a palanquin, the death of 6 family members has created a mourning atmosphere in the entire family. Vyom's father Mohit Pandey is in a government job in Gwalior. He got married last year. His wife Shikha was a teacher in a private school in Bhopal. But, she left the job after pregnancy. Mohit used to commute from Gwalior and Shikha lived in Bhopal with her son.

On Friday, the car of the family returning from Devi Dham Salkanpur after getting 6-month-old baby tonsured and Tuladan (ritual) met with an accident. Six members of the family, including the grandparents and the driver, died in the accident at Bhairav Valley. The family of Rajendra Pandey (75), resident of Chaukse Nagar of DIG Bungalow area in Bhopal, is an ice cream businessman. On Friday, 10 members of the family had gone to Salkanpur in a Tavera car to get the tonsure of his 6-month-old grandson Vyom. At 6.20 pm on Friday evening, the car collided with the railing wall at Bhairav Valley and overturned. Mohit Pandey, father of the child sitting behind in the Tavera, said that the driver could not turn the car at the turn of the valley. The vehicle collided directly with the railing wall.

## Bhuri Bai, working at IGRMS passes away, condolence meet held

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bhuri Bai, working at Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav sangrahalaya Bhopal passed away on 4 May 2024 after a prolonged illness. Today, a tribute meeting was organized at the tribal Habitat Open air exhibition area which was his workplace. On this occasion, the officers and employees working in the museum paid tribute to him about the time and work spent with him. Bhuri Bai, born in Jher village of Jhabua, was working in the Manav Sangrahalaya since the 90s. The walls of the Bhil residence and gallery in the Manav Sangrahalaya are filled with Bhuri Bai's paintings. In her childhood, she used to go to markets or local fairs, which is an integral part of Bhil life. The festive colors of the fairs inspired him to paint. She depicted the laughter and fun of the Gad Bapsi festival. Bhuri Bai was very young when her mother taught her to make kothi (anna gar) and Bhil hut. She used to shape figures from a mixture of clay, cow dung and bran and paste them on the walls. It is known as wall painting or clay painting. Bhuri likes cows, so she always made a picture of a cow for her wall. Bhuri Bai liked singing songs and drawing pictures. The Bhil Awas in Manav Sangrahalaya has been created jointly by Bhuri Bai and other Bhil artists, who have preserved the memories of Bhuri Bai as a memorable abode.



District Judge Amitabh Mishra addresses National Lok Adalat in the district court in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

## 52-year-old man commits suicide after sending a video message

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 52 year old man committed suicide in a car near Anand Vihar School, Link Road No. 1, Bhopal. Police have also found a suicide note, in which there is mention of being troubled by debt. The man had sent a video message to his wife at 11 am on Friday. In this, he had said that partnership was given in a company in 2003 and payment was not given. There has been a request to make them debt free. Also asked to punish the accused. According to TT Nagar police, Radheshyam Sen (52), resident of Neelbad, consumed poison in the car near Anand Vihar School. Before suicide, he had sent a video message to his wife Neeta Sen. In this, he has said that he was given partnership in Sorbin Company after 2003 and payment was not made after that. The directors of a company. He stated that he had lodged a complaint with the police around four years ago, but no action was taken till date. In the video, Radheshyam

**In this, he has said that he was given partnership in Sorbin Company after 2003 and payment was not made after that**

Sen has said that after partnership in the company, payment was not made till 2021. In 2022, the company's operators silenced them by paying Rs 15 lakh that they would not take further action. Complaint about this had to be lodged at Ratibad police station. At the end of the video, Radheshyam Sen has requested that his children be freed from debt. Such industrialists should be punished. Police said that Radheshyam Sen's son had reported his father missing at around 11 am on May 10. Neeta Sen had informed the children about the message. When the father was not found, a missing person was registered.

## Dr Rashmi of AIIMS Bhopal presents her research at Bangkok

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Recently, Prof (Dr) Rashmi Chowdhary was invited as a guest speaker to deliver a lecture at the International Conference on Cancer Science and Therapy held during May 6-7 2024 at Bangkok, Thailand. Dr Rashmi Chowdhary shared her research work being conducted at the AIIMS Bhopal on cervical cancer, its early detection and mass-screening device especially for the rural areas females of India to safeguard them against the deadly disease. This research work is funded under the Grant-in-Aid (GIA), Department of Health Research (DHR) Govt of India. Her insightful contributions and thought-provoking presentation have captivated audiences and sparked meaningful conversations that transcended geographical boundaries. Her efforts were highly appreciated towards early cervical cancer detection by the developed device which is offering fresh perspectives on longstanding challenges.

## Legal literacy camp inaugurated at Siddheshwar temple fair in Shivpuri

PNS ■ SHIVPURI

In order to make the citizens coming to a monthly fair organized in the premises of Siddheshwar Temple at District Headquarters Shivpuri, aware about the schemes of National Legal Services Authority, New Delhi and State Legal Services Authority, Jabalpur, a legal literacy camp has been organized in the fair for a permanent period of one month. The Legal Literacy Camp was inaugurated in the fair on May 09, 2024 by Principal District Judge/Chairman, Rajendra Prasad Soni by cutting the ribbon and on this occasion Principal District Judge Soni said that whether the common man is suffering from drug addiction or serious Suffered from disease, suffering from poverty, deprived of government schemes, involved in prostitution, troubled due to old age, suffering from gender crimes, suffering from public violence, Suffering from a natural disaster or involved in a legal matter or worried about the possibility of becoming embroiled in a

**A legal literacy camp has been organized in the fair for a permanent period of one month**

legal matter. To solve all such problems, citizens can get legal solutions to their legal problems through the Legal Aid Office. On this occasion, Chief Justice Family Court Joginder Singh, Vivek Sharma, First District Judge, Yogendra Kumar Tyagi, District Judge/Secretary, D.K. Singh, Fourth District Judge, Vivek Patel Fifth District Judge, Amit Kumar Gupta, Seventh District Judge, Vidhan Maheshwari, Third District Judge, Judicial Magistrate Ravi Kumar Bourasi, Jitendra Mehar, Pooja Pathak Bourasi, Amit Pratap Singh, Rupam Tomar, Pratyaksha Kulesh, Mithali Vani, District Legal Aid Officer Dr. Virendra Kumar Chadhar, and fair in-charge from Shivpuri Municipality Sachin Chauhan, etc. were present.



While giving information, owner of Best Shots Indoor Sports Club Kohe-Fiza Bhopal Shahbaz Kausar said that the Club is organising a four-day Riyaz Kausar Memorial Cricket Tournament from may 16 to 19. On this occasion, Munnuwar Kausar will be the chief guest and he will honor the players by giving them awards. The final of this match will be held on May 19. ten to 15 teams from across the state will participated in this tournament. The winning team will get Rs 41000 cash and trophy, while runner up team will get Rs 21000 cash and trophy, along with Best Batsman, Best Bowler, Man of the Match and Player of the Year awards. Pioneer photo

## Nurses Week being celebrated at AIIMS Bhopal

PNS ■ INDORE

Nurses Week is being celebrated by the Nursing Services of AIIMS Bhopal in collaboration with the College of Nursing from May 6 to 13. In this connection, an awareness campaign was conducted today in Ashapuri village of

Raisen district. On this occasion, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh was also present. Nursing staff went door-to-door in the villages of Raisen district and told people about the benefits of vaccination. And along with checking the BP and sugar of the villagers, they also provided medical

guidance to them. The nursing staff found that children in about 40% of the homes were not vaccinated. Executive Director Professor (Dr) Ajai Singh said that it is very important to get vaccinated for the safe future of children and their better health. This will prevent many diseases occurring in children.







# BJP questions Rahul knowledge, standing to debate against Modi

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday made light of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's readiness for a debate with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it questioned his knowledge of issues and his standing, noting that he is neither the president of his party nor the leader of the Opposition. Making this assertion in a news conference here BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi also took a swipe at Rahul Gandhi over his claim that the Opposition INDIA bloc will win the Lok Sabha polls, saying someone who could not file his nomination from Amethi is speaking about forming government at the Centre. "Phenomenon thy name is Rahul Gandhi," he said mockingly. Trivedi asked that in what capacity Rahul is looking to debate with Modi as he is merely an MP of his party. In the Congress, one MP heads a yatra while its leaders in both the Houses of Parliament stand behind him. While Mallikarjun Kharge is its president, Rahul's posters are visible, he said, jeering at the opposition party.



Some prominent citizens, including a former Supreme Court judge, had recently written to Modi and Rahul, urging them to engage in a public debate on the Lok Sabha elections. The former Congress president said he was ready for such a debate and claimed that the prime minister would not agree to it. Targeting Rahul, Trivedi told reporters that he recently dragged the issue of upper castes and Dalit representation while speaking about IITs, which, the BJP leader said, were set up by Jawaharlal Nehru in collaboration with different foreign countries. Whether one can debate with him can be understood with the level of his knowledge on

different issues, he said, adding that many people have challenged Gandhi for a debate as well. Trivedi also had a go at Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal over jubilation in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) following his interim bail, saying he has joined a elite club of politicians who have returned from jail. Earlier, Anna Hazare was his guru and now it is Lalu Prasad Yadav, the RJD president who has been convicted in multiple corruption cases, and its impact is clearly visible, he said. One can see how the so-called new politics Kejriwal claimed to launch has become the same old politics in the company of the Congress, Trivedi said. At the press conference, the BJP

leader alleged that Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole had insulted President Droupadi Murmu, who comes from a tribal community, with his comments that the Ram mandir will be purified once the opposition comes to power. Patole had accused Modi of violating religious protocol in the temple's inauguration. Trivedi said his comments have come soon after Murmu has visited the temple. It is a deep insult of Murmu and has brought forth the malice the Congress has for the deprived community, he alleged. With Patole referring to the critical remarks of some Shankaracharyas about the inauguration ceremony, Trivedi said all religious leaders drawn from across the country had supported the demand for a Ram temple at a "Dharam Sansad" in 1989 and that one of the persons chosen for the "shilanyas" ceremony was a Dalit. The Congress opposed these developments, he added. It is organisations with similar ideological bent as the BJP which worked to promote and preserve the culture and traditions of the disadvantaged communities, Trivedi said.

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

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday said it is surprising that the Election Commission (EC) chose to respond to a letter he wrote to INDIA Bloc leaders but ignored several other complaints he raised directly to it. In a letter addressed to the CEC and other election commissioners, he said the poll panel is showing no urgency in dealing with "blatantly communal and casteist" statements being made by leaders of the ruling party and this is puzzling. In response to the letter written by Kharge to INDIA bloc leaders expressing concerns over EC's delay in releasing voter turnout figures for first two phases of polls, the Commission had on Friday called it an attempt to push a biased narrative under the guise of seeking clarifications. Kharge, in his response, said it was an open letter clearly addressed to the alliance partners and not to the Commission. "It is surprising that the Election Commission of India



wanted to respond to this letter while ignoring several other complaints given directly to it. I have certain misgivings about the language of the letter, but I will not press on that issue as I understand the pressures they are working under," Kharge said in his letter sent to the EC on Saturday. He said the EC letter on the one hand says the Commission respects citizens' right to ask questions and on the other hand, "threatens citizens in the form of an

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

the release of voter turnout data in the first two phases of the Lok Sabha elections and termed Kharge's allegations "unwarranted", "without facts" and "reflective of a biased and deliberate attempt to spread confusion". In his letter to INDIA bloc leaders, Kharge had said "apart from the delay, the voter turnout data released by the Commission does not mention crucial yet related figures, such as the votes polled in each parliamentary constituency and in the respective assembly constituencies". He also said if the voter turnout data was published within 24 hours of voting along with the crucial figures, then people would have known if the increase of "5 per cent" had been witnessed across constituencies or only in constituencies where the ruling regime had not performed well in the 2019 elections. Opposition leaders had also met the EC top brass on Friday and raised the issue of voter turnout figures and the complaints given by them on various incidents of model code violation by ruling party leaders.

# Congress has soft approach towards terrorism: Sitharaman

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday attacked the Congress, saying the approach of the party towards terrorism has been "soft". "You saw it during the ten years of UPA rule led by the Congress how terror attacks were tolerated... Proper response was not given," the senior BJP leader here said. "They believed in sending dossiers to Pakistan to the extent that you will recall that handlers of the Mumbai attack are still not punished," she said after an interaction with youths from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana here. "So, the attitude and approach of the Congress party towards terror has always been weak and soft," Sitharaman said. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the Congress of not taking swift action after the 26/11 terror attacks over fears that their "vote bank" will shift. He also said the people of Jammu and Kashmir have



struggled for decades because of the Congress' "weak mindset". "India will never forget the times when the country used to suffer frequent terrorist attacks and the Congress leaders would sit with the perpetrators of terrorism," he said. During her interaction with youths, Sitharaman answered various questions including on her journey to the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and how she could not complete her PhD as she took up a job overseas. She also talked about the

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

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

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
SHIMLA/NEW DELHI

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Saturday said the BJP will hit a four and six in Himachal Pradesh by winning all the four Lok Sabha seats and bypolls in six Assembly constituencies in the State. Thakur, the BJP candidate from Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat, said that people were happy with the performance of the BJP led government at the Centre and wanted to make Narendra Modi the prime minister for the third term.

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



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

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

last assembly polls has neither been deposited in the banks of the women nor it will be deposited and accused it of cheating the public. He asked the youth whether they got five lakh jobs as promised or not and whether the Congress government bought milk for Rs 100 per litre and cow dung for Rs 2 per kg or not. Thakur, the BJP candidate from Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat, said the love of his people is his earning of 20 years. Former chief ministers Prem Kumar Dhumal and Jai Ram Thakur shared the stage with Thakur along with state BJP chief Rajeev Bindal and state party in-charge Saudan Singh. Jai Ram Thakur, the Leader of Opposition, said that the results would be announced on June 4 but the people have already expected Modi as the prime minister and Anurag Thakur will win from Hamirpur with a margin of over five lakhs. Bindal exhorted the party workers to go to every household to ensure the BJP's victory. Earlier, Anurag Thakur took out a massive roadshow 'Vijay Sankalp Yatra' in Hamirpur district and said the enthusiasm of the people

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

# CDS stresses need for expediting jointness process



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

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

emphasized the need for expediting the progress of the initiatives as these were to pave the way to theaterisation and hence creation of a Multi Domain Response capable Indian Armed Forces. General Chauhan expressed confidence that such brainstorming would help the Armed Forces evolve into a theaterized force capable of Multi-Domain Operations and strengthen the resolve and capability to safeguard our territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Various COSC Sub-Committees gave an update on the progress of initiatives considered imperative for Jointness and Integration. There was active deliberation on the vital reforms critical towards the fruition of the goals envisioned to achieve the desired 'Joint & Integrated' end state towards transformation.

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

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

India for the first time will host a 'Bharat Parv' at the 77th Cannes Film Festival for eminent dignitaries and delegates from around the world to showcase the myriad creative opportunities in the country. At the prestigious film gala, a delegation consisting representatives from central and state governments as well as members of the industry will showcase India's creative economy in Marche du Films through a series of significant initiatives, the Information and Broadcasting ministry said on Friday. It will be for the first time that the country will host a "Bharat Parv" at the Cannes Film Festival to engage with film celebrities, filmmakers, directors, producers, buyers and sales agents from across the world and showcase the creative opportunities and a rich bank of creative talent. The official poster and trailer of the 55th India International Film Festival (IFFI), to be held in Goa on November 20 to 28, will also be unveiled at the Bharat Parv, the release stated. At the Bharat Parv, the delegation will also see the release of the "Save the Date" for the first edition of the World Audio-Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES), which will take place alongside the 55th IFFI. The Bharat Pavilion, which serves as a platform for the Indian film community to



engage in various activities, at the 77th Cannes Film Festival at 108 village International Riviera will be inaugurated on May 15 in the presence of eminent celebrities. The Pavilion will be organized by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) in collaboration with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) as industry partner. A 'Bharat Stall' will be put in the Marche du Cannes through the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The Bharat Pavilion has been designed by the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. It is christened on 'The Sutradhara' for depicting this year's theme of "Create in India". At the internationally recognised festival, several Indian movies and productions will be showcased. The highlight will be filmmaker Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light", which has been selected in the Competition section, where it will vie for the top

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

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

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Feeling sharp, pricking pain and numbness in your hands and feet may signal a nerve damage condition, according to a study. The condition known as neuropathy can lead to falls, infection and even amputation. The findings, published in the journal Neurology, showed that even after being very common, it often goes underdiagnosed. Conducted by researchers from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, US, the study aimed to elucidate the prevalence of neuropathy and its associated risk factors, particularly in individuals with diabetes, a known risk factor for the condition. The research involved 169 participants, half of whom had diabetes. Among this group, a staggering 73% were diagnosed with neuropathy. What's more alarming is that 75% of those diagnosed had not been previously identified with the condition, underscoring the likelihood of underdiagnosis in clinical settings. One of the key findings of the study was the significant association between neuropathy and metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome, characterized by excess abdominal fat and other risk factors such as hypertension, elevated triglycerides, diabetes, and low levels

of HDL (good) cholesterol, was found to increase the risk of neuropathy more than four-fold. This highlights the intricate interplay between metabolic health and nerve function, emphasizing the need for comprehensive management of metabolic risk factors to mitigate neuropathic complications. The implications of neuropathy are profound, extending beyond mere discomfort to potentially life-threatening consequences. Individuals with neuropathy face an elevated risk of falls, infections, and even limb amputation, underscoring the urgency of early detection and intervention. Melissa A. Elafros, one of the researchers involved in the study, emphasized the critical importance of identifying and treating neuropathy promptly to prevent these adverse outcomes and improve patients' quality of life. In summary, the study underscores the pervasive nature of neuropathy, its underdiagnosis in clinical practice, and its significant association with metabolic syndrome. By elucidating these connections, the research highlights the imperative for proactive screening, comprehensive management of metabolic risk factors, and early intervention to mitigate the debilitating effects of neuropathy and enhance patient outcomes.

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



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Media associations demanded on Saturday that the Election Commission (EC) hold press conferences after every voting phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. Media associations Press Club of India, Indian Women Press Corps, Press Association, Foreign Correspondents Club and Delhi Union of Journalists also asked the poll authority to release the entire election data, including the absolute number of votes cast in each phase and percentage of voting, by the next day of the polling date. "It should be noted that at press conferences, the journalists get their doubts and confusions, if any, cleared which helps them report and write error-free copy for their readers," the media associations said in a joint statement. They noted that till the 2019 general election, it was normal practice for the EC to hold press conferences after each phase of voting.



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

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

Flash floods from seasonal rains in Afghanistan have killed hundreds of people and injured a “substantial number,” a Taliban official said Saturday, without giving exact figures. The floods hit mostly the northern region of the country. The province of Baghlan bore the brunt of the deluges Friday with officials preliminary reporting at least 50 people dead and properties destroyed in multiple districts. In neighbouring Takhar province, state-owned media outlets reported the floods killing at least 20 people. Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief spokesman for the Taliban government posted on social media platform X on Saturday, saying that “hundreds ... have succumbed to these calamitous floods, while a substantial number have sustained injuries.” Mujahid underscored the provinces of Badakhshan, Baghlan, Ghor and Herat as the worst hit. He added that “the extensive devastation” has



resulted in “significant financial losses.” He also said the government had ordered all available resources mobilized to rescue people, transport the injured and recover the bodies of the deceased. The Taliban defence ministry said in a statement Saturday that the country’s air force has already begun evacuating people in Baghlan and has so far

rescued a large number of people stuck in flooded and transported a hundred injured people to military hospitals in the region. Officials previously said that in April, before Friday’s floods, at least 70 people died from heavy rains and flash flooding in the country. About 2,000 homes, three mosques, and four schools were also damaged.

# Israel orders new evacuations in Rafah

AP ■ RAFAH

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

that it planned. The order comes in the face of heavy international opposition and criticism. US President Joe Biden has already said he will not provide offensive weapons to Israel for Rafah, and on Friday the US said there was “reasonable” evidence that Israel had breached international law protecting civilians in the way it conducted its war against Hamas — the strongest statement that the Biden administration has yet made on the matter. The United Nations and other agencies have warned for weeks

that an Israeli assault on Rafah, which borders Egypt near the main aid entry points, would cripple humanitarian operations and cause a disastrous surge in civilian casualties. More than 1.4 million Palestinians — half of Gaza’s population — have been sheltering in Rafah, most after fleeing Israel’s offensives elsewhere. Considered the last refuge in the strip, the evacuations are forcing people to return north where areas are devastated by previous Israeli attacks. Aid agencies estimate that 110,000 had done so before

Saturday’s order that adds a further 40,000 to that number. People have been displaced multiple times and there are few places left in the embattled strip to move to. Those fleeing fighting earlier this week erected new tent camps in the city of Khan Younis — which was half destroyed in an earlier Israeli offensive — and the city of Deir al-Balah, straining infrastructure. Georgios Petropoulos, an official with the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Rafah, said humanitarian workers had no sup-

plies to help them set up in new locations. “We simply have no tents, we have no blankets, no bedding, none of the items that you would expect a population on the move to be able to get from the humanitarian system,” he said. Israeli troops have captured the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing with Egypt, forcing it to shut down. Rafah was the main point of entry for fuel. The World Food Program has warned that it will run out of food for distribution in southern Gaza by Saturday, Petropoulos said.

# Russian offensive in Kharkiv forces about 1700 civilians to evacuate

AP ■ KYIV

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

Ukraine rushed reinforcements to the Kharkiv region on Friday to hold off a Russian attempt to breach local defences, authorities said. Russian forces stepped up their bombardment of Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second-largest city, in late March. Friday’s attack signalled a tactical switch in the war by Moscow that Ukrainian officials had been expecting for weeks. Russian military bloggers said the assault could mark the start of a Russian attempt to carve out a “buffer

zone” that President Vladimir Putin vowed to create earlier this year to halt frequent Ukrainian attacks on Belgorod and other Russian border regions. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed on Friday evening that Russian forces were expanding their operations. He also called on the country’s Western allies to ensure that promised deliveries of military aid would swiftly reach the country’s frontlines. “It is critical that partners support our warriors

and Ukrainian resilience with timely deliveries. Truly timely ones,” he said in a video statement on X. “A package that truly helps is the actual delivery of weapons to Ukraine, rather than just the announcement of a package.” The Kremlin’s forces have repeatedly sought to exploit Ukraine’s shortages of ammunition and manpower as the flow of Western military aid to Kyiv has tapered off in recent months, with promised new support still yet to arrive. Ukraine previous-

ly said it was aware that Russia was assembling thousands of troops along the northeastern border, close to the Kharkiv and Sumy regions. Intelligence officials also said they had expected an attack there though Russia’s most recent ground offensive had been focused on parts of eastern Ukraine farther south. While Russia’s gains in the region have so far been limited, analysts at the US think tank Institute of the Study of War (ISW) described them Friday as “tactically significant.”


# Pak President Zardari gets immunity in two corruption cases

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD


Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday received immunity from prosecution as a head of state in two cases of alleged corruption. The Park Lane and Toshakhana cases were filed against him by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), the national anti-corruption watchdog. Islamabad-based Accountability Court Judge Nasir Javed Rana was hearing the cases. The Express Tribune reported

that Zardari, 68, had sought immunity in the two cases and the judge issued a written decision on the president’s petition and halted all proceedings against him. Zaradi, co-chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was elected in March as the 14th President of Pakistan for five years. The judge noted that the president sought immunity under Article 248 (2) of the Constitution, following which no case can be registered or action taken against the peti-

tioner. The prosecution did not object to the president’s plea, hence it was approved and case proceedings were halted until the end of Zardari’s tenure as president of Pakistan, according to the written order. The Park Lane case accused Zardari of influencing relevant authorities during his tenure as the president during his first term from 2008 to 2013 allegedly obtaining loans for his front companies and allegedly causing a loss of Rs 3.77 billion to the country.



**Office of the Superintending Engineer**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh**  
Email : [sepwdpth@rediffmail.com](mailto:sepwdpth@rediffmail.com)




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

**National Competitive E-Tender Notice**

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

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Earnest Money (in Lac)	Cost of Tender (in Rs.)	Validity of Tender (day)	Period of Completion (months)	Contractor's Category of Registration
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Upgradation work of Circuit House Building located in Champawat.	10.50	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	120	09	Category 'A' and above for Building works, in any state Govt./ Govt. of India /Govt. undertaking.




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**NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited invites expression of interest (EOI) from eligible vendors for “**Procurement of NDCAT Annual Overhauling Spares**” for 3x660 MW Thermal Power Plant at Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited, Bara, Dist. Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India  
Details of pre-qualification requirements, bid security, purchasing of tender document etc. may be downloaded using the URL- <https://www.ppgcl.co.in/tenders.php> Eligible vendors willing to participate may submit their expression of interest along with the tender fee for issue of bid document latest by **23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.**




**PPGCL**  
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Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited invites expression of interest (EOI) from eligible vendors for “**Supply, erection and commissioning of Self-Cleaning strainer (02 set) along with control panel**” for 3x660 MW Thermal Power Plant at Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited, Bara, Dist. Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India  
Details of pre-qualification requirements, bid security, purchasing of tender document etc. may be downloaded using the URL- <https://www.ppgcl.co.in/tenders.php> Eligible vendors willing to participate may submit their expression of interest along with the tender fee for issue of bid document latest by **23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.**



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Sale of immovable properties mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 (No.54 of 2002). Whereas, the Authorized Officers of **PUNJAB & SIND BANK** has taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 in the following loan account/s with our Branch with a right to sell the same on “**AS IS WHERE IS BASIS**” and “**AS IS WHAT IS BASIS**” for realization of Bank’s dues. The sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the website: <https://www.bankeauctions.com>.

**SCHEDULE OF SALE OF THE SECURED ASSETS**

S.No.	Name of the Borrower/ Bank Branch	Demand Notice Date & Outstanding amount mentioned therein	Description of property along with name of mortgagor (Owner of property)	Status of possession (Physical or Symbolic)	Reserve Price/EMD/Bid Incremental Amount	EMD Submission Account Details (deposit through RTGS/NEFT)	Property Inspection Date & Time	The Last Date of EMD & E-Auction Date	Name & Contact N. of Authorized Officer
1.	Ushma and sanjay kumar Sector 31 Gurugram	02.08.2023 Rs.6216148.68	All Part and parcel of the immovable property bearing House no 670/28, Measuring 100 Sq. yards, Part of Khasra No. 882 Gali No 13 New Jyoti Park, Gurugram	Physical	Rs.7350000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 11:00 -11.30 AM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
		Rs.7350000.00							
		Rs.73500.00							
2.	Ushma, sanjay kumar & RPM Aircon Sector 31 Gurugram	02.08.2023 Rs.5752457.00	All Part and parcel of the immovable property bearing House no 675/28, Measuring 100 Sq. yards, Gali No 13 Jyoti Park, Gurugram	Symbolic	Rs.7200000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 11:30 – 12:00 PM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
		Rs.7200000.00							
		Rs.720000.00							
3.	Sunita Sharma and Subhash Chander Sharma Sector 31 Gurugram	01.06.2023 Rs.1917561.36	All Part and parcel of the immovable property House No 263, Measuring 50 Sq. Yards Part of Khasra No. 8/7,26,15/19,17/4/2,123,1234,316,317 Situated at Gali No 6, Surat Nagar-II, Village- Dhawanpur, Tehsil- Kadipur, Near Bharat Communication, Gurgaon	Symbolic	Rs.2850000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 12:00-12.30 PM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
		Rs.2850000.00							
		Rs.285000.00							
4.	Padma Bista Sehgal & Bharat Deep Sehgal Gurudwara road Gurugram	04/02/2023 Rs.3143739.49	All part and parcel of built up second floor without roof rights out of built up property bearing no. 68,69 and 70, Land area measuring 100.00 sq.yds out of khasra no. 78/14, situated in the area of village Hastal and colony known as OM Vihar Extention Phase-3 Uttam Nagar, New Delhi	Symbolic	Rs.3400000.00/	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 12:30-01:00 PM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
		Rs.3400000.00/							
		Rs.340000.00/							
5.	Gulshan Kumar and Geeta Rani	03/03/2023 Rs.734952.00	All the part and parcel of the immovable property bearing House No. 273 A, khasra no.814-15 Krishna colony Gurgaon, Haryana-122001	Symbolic	Rs.4000000.00/	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 01:00 – 01:30 PM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
		Rs.4000000.00/							
		Rs.400000.00/							
6.	Jawahar Singh NO 5 NIT Faridabad	08.05.2023 Rs.641362.79	All the part and parcel of the mortgaged property bearing part of plot no 183, Measuring 51 Sq. Yards, Comprised in Rect No. 14/10/2, Mauza Gaunchi, tehsil-Ballabhgarh, distt-Faridabad	Symbolic	Rs.1900000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 10:00 – 10:30 AM	SH. ROHIT BASWALA (Chief Manager); Mobile-9910975407 Email id-ROHIT.BASWALA@PSB.CO.IN
		Rs.1900000.00							
		Rs.190000.00							
7.	Lalita Sehgal and M/s pragya Beauty Parlour Ajronda Faridabad	07.12.2018 Rs.4503677.00	Front side First Floor Without Roof/ Terrace Rights of Build up property bearing No A-20 Area measuring 75 Sq. Yards with one car parking space in common parking area at stilt. Out of khasra no 945, 946, 956 to 960, situated in the area of village Nawada Colony known as OM vihar, A- Block, Uttam Nagar on Najafgarh road, New Delhi-110059	Physical	RS.3000000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 10:00 -10:30 AM	Smt. Suman Sharma (Chief Manager) Mobile: 9899748099 Email Id:A0121@psb.co.in
		RS.3000000.00							
		RS.300000.00							
8.	Shamu & Beena/ Sector 31,/ Gurugram	22.06.2022/ Rs.15,76,965.17	All Part and parcel of the immovable property bearing House no 72, Measuring 58 Sq. yards comprising khasra no 88,278,179 Surat Nagar within MC area of Gurgaon	Symbolic	Rs.3100000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 10.00-10.30 AM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
		Rs.3100000.00							
		Rs.310000.00							
9.	Sh. Rajan Kumar/ Manesar	15.06.2023/ Rs.1549338.04	Residential House No. 1890/29, part of khasra no. 4669/4096/308, Gali No.17, Near Dhanuka Factory, Surat Nagar Phase-1, Gurgaon	Symbolic	Rs.3500000.00	Account no. 80235040070003 IFSC Code-PSIB0008023 SUNDRY CR- FUNDS/ASSETS	22.05.2024 10:00am to 4:00pm	28.05.2024/ 29.05.2024/ 10.30-11:00 AM	Sh. Atul Kumar (Chief Manager) Mobile No-8607925026 G1509@psb.co.in
		Rs.3500000.00							
		Rs.350000.00							

**Terms & Conditions:-**

- The e-auction is being held on “**AS IS WHERE IS BASIS**” and “**AS IS WHAT IS BASIS**”.
- Auction sale/bidding shall only be done through “Online Electronic Mode” through Bank’s approved service provider M/s C1 India Pvt. Ltd. (Tel. +91-124-4302020/21, 7291981124 / 1125 / 1126, M: +91-9813887931,Email-Delhi@c1india.com) at the web portal <https://www.bankeauctions.com>. . E-auction tender document containing online e-auction bid form, declaration, general terms & conditions of online auction sale are available at portal site. This notice is also to be treated as sale notice to Borrowers and Guarantors under Rule 8 (6) Security Interest (enforcement) Rule, 2002
- The e-auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the Bank. The property is being sold with all the existing & future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the Bank. The Authorized Officer/Secured Creditor shall not be possible in any way for any third party claims/right/dues. However, the intending bidder should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of properties put on auction and claims/rights/dues affecting the property.
- The successful bidder shall have to deposit 25% of the bid amount immediately including the earnest amount already deposited. The remaining 75% of the bid amount be deposit within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale.
- In case of default in depositing 25% of bid amount & balance 75% of the prescribed amount within the time limit as mentioned at point no. 4, the amount already deposited will be forfeited and secured asset will be resold.**
- As per Income Tax Rule, TDS @rate of 1%of Auction price is payable by the successful auction purchaser, wherever applicable.**

**The sale shall be subject to rules/conditions prescribed under the securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of security Interest Act, 2002.**

The other terms and conditions of the e-auction are published in the websites- 1. <https://www.bankeauctions.com>, 2. <https://punjabandsindbank.co.in>

**Date- 12.05.2024**

**Place- GURGAON**

**Authorized Officer**  
**Punjab & Sind Bank**



# Measures in place to meet peak power demand in May, June: Government

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has taken adequate measures to meet the estimated 235 GW peak power demand in May and 240 GW in June, according to an official statement. "With various measures, we have been able to successfully meet the peak evening power demand of 224 GW during April 2024," the Ministry of Power on Friday.

The power demand is projected to peak at 235 GW during the day-time and 225 GW during evening hours for May and 240 GW during day-time and 235 GW during evening hours for June 2024, it said in the statement. The power ministry has estimated around 260 GW of peak demand during this summer season. Elaborating on the measures, the ministry said section 11 directions have been issued



to gas-based power plants besides coal-based units to make full capacity available for electricity generation. The optimisation of hydropower generation has made available an additional 4 GW for meeting the demand during May and June. Further, the shifting of planned maintenance and minimisation of partial and forced outages of thermal power plants have made available another 5 GW for

the summer season, the ministry said. Besides, power generated from wind is expected to increase by 4 GW to 5 GW during May and June. "With these measures in place and the current generation trend...It is expected that the power demand would be adequately met both during the day and during night hours in the summer months of May and June 2024," the statement said.

## Union Bank of India Q4 net profit rises 18 per cent on lower provisions

PTI ■ MUMBAI

State-owned Union Bank of India on Saturday reported an 18.36 per cent growth in its consolidated net profit for the March quarter to Rs 3,328 crore, helped by lower provisions. For the fiscal 2023-24, the lender reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 13,797 crore against Rs 8,512 crore in the year-ago period. In the quarter under review, its standalone net profit increased to Rs 3,311 crore from Rs 2,782 crore a year ago.

The core net interest income grew 14.38 per cent to Rs 9,437 crore on an 11.7 per cent growth in advances and widening of net interest margin to 3.10 per cent from 2.97 per cent in the year-ago period.

Its managing director and chief executive A Manimekhalai told reporters that for FY25, it is aiming for a credit growth of 11-13 per cent and deposit growth to be between 9-11 per cent compared to 9.3 per cent in FY24.

It, however, expects a fall in NIMs to 2.8-3 per cent, she said, adding that the targets will be reviewed midway through the year.

The non-interest income declined by over 10 per cent to Rs 4,707 crore, primarily due to halving of recoveries from written off accounts.

For FY25, the bank is targeting the overall recoveries to come at Rs 16,000 crore against over Rs 18,000 crore in FY24.

The overall provisions declined to Rs 3,222 crore from Rs 4,041 crore in the year-ago period.

The fresh slippages increased to Rs 3,202 crore from the Rs 2,687 crore a year ago, but the final stock of gross NPAs was lower because of help coming in on recoveries, upgradation and write-offs.

The bank's gross NPA ratio declined to 4.76 per cent against 7.53 per cent in the year-ago period, and Manimekhalai said it will be



targeting to close FY25 with the number under 4 per cent. The RBI's newly introduced proposals on the project finance front will not have a big impact on the bank's financials, she said, adding that the position will be "manageable" even if the draft is implemented in the present form.

She said about 28 per cent of the corporate loan book is project finance loans at present, of which 68 per cent is to projects that have been completed. Also, the RBI is proposing for a phased implementation of the provisioning requirements, which will be of help.

The bank has an overall pipeline of over Rs 40,000 crore, which will ensure that the credit growth aims are met, she said, adding that there is demand from sectors like data centres, real estate, steel and renewables.

When asked about the tech side initiatives, Manimekhalai said it is revamping its mobile app at present, and exuded confidence about not being impacted by any challenges on the technology front.

The overall capital adequacy of the bank stood at 16.97 per cent, with the core buffer at 13.65 per cent. Manimekhalai said the bank will not need any new fund infusion unless there is a huge private capex improvement, which ups the demand.

The bank plans to open 250-300 branches in FY25, she said.

## Eicher Motors Q4 PAT rises 18 per cent to ₹1,070 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Eicher Motors on Saturday reported an 18 per cent increase in consolidated profit after tax to Rs 1,070 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2024, driven by higher sales.

The company posted a profit after tax of Rs 906 crore in the same period last year. Its total revenue rose 12 per cent to Rs 4,256 crore in the January-March quarter of FY24 compared to Rs 3,804 crore in the corresponding quarter of 2022-23, Eicher



Motors said in a statement. Royal Enfield, the two-wheeler division of the company, recorded sales of 2,27,925 motorcycles in the fourth quarter, up 6 per cent from 2,14,685 units in the year-ago period.

For fiscal 2024, the company reported a 37 per cent rise in PAT to Rs 4,001 crore against Rs 2,914 crore for FY23. The company's revenue from operations grew 14.5 per cent to Rs 16,536 crore from Rs 14,442 crore recorded in FY23. During the last fiscal, Royal Enfield's registered sales rose 9 per cent to 9,12,732 units from 8,34,895 units in 2022-23. The company said its board recommended a final dividend aggregating to Rs 1,396.41 crore at Rs 51 per share for the financial year ended March 31, 2024.

## Air India appoints SIA Engineering as partner to develop maintenance facilities

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Air India on Saturday announced it has appointed SIA Engineering Company Limited as its strategic partner for the development of its base maintenance facilities here. As part of the partnership, Air India will work closely with SIA Engineering Company Limited (SIAEC) on the planning, construction, development and operationalisation of its base maintenance facilities here, they said. In a statement, Air India said,

"Projected to be ready in 2026, the facilities will comprise both wide-body and narrow-body hangars, including associated repair shops, to support the growing Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) needs of the aircraft fleet in Air India Group."

"The collaboration with SIA Engineering Company will not only help Air India become more self-reliant for the maintenance of its own fleet but it also reiterates our commitment to strengthen India's aviation infrastructure by boosting the growth of the

country's MRO industry," Campbell Wilson, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Air India, said.

Air India had earlier announced setting up a state-of-the-art Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) facilities at Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru (operated by Bangalore International Airport Ltd) starting with aircraft maintenance through the development of wide-body and narrow-body aircraft hangars for all checks.

## Property brokerage firm InvestoXpert revenue up 56 per cent in FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Real estate brokerage firm InvestoXpert's revenue rose 56 per cent in the last fiscal to Rs 56 crore as it facilitated sales of properties valued more than Rs 2,000 crore on strong housing demand.

Its revenue stood at Rs 36 crore in 2022-23. In a statement, Noida-based InvestoXpert said the company facilitated sales amounting to Rs 2,050 crore during the last fiscal, up 95 per cent year-on-year.

The better performance in sales translated into robust revenue growth, it added.

Vishal Raheja, Founder & MD of InvestoXpert said, "This achievement underscores our commitment to excellence and innovation in the real estate sector. As we look ahead, we are confident in our ability to continue this upward trajectory, with ambitious targets set for the upcoming financial year".

He said the demand for luxury homes has risen significantly. Raheja said the second and fourth quarters collectively accounted for almost 70 per cent of the business, underscoring the seasonal variations in the real estate market.

## Khanij Bidesh India may acquire lithium asset in Australia this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) hopes to acquire a lithium block in Australia this year, a top official said on Saturday. KABIL, a joint venture of three PSUs to scout for mineral assets overseas, has been working in Australia for the last year, Mines secretary V L Kantha Rao said. "KABIL (Khanij Bidesh India Ltd) has the responsibility to look at other countries. We have to increase our efforts in

Australia. We will have to ensure that during this financial year, we target one more asset," Rao said at the inauguration of the registered office of KABIL here. KABIL is owned by three public sector undertakings -- National Aluminium Company Ltd (Nalco), Hindustan Copper Ltd (HCL) and Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Ltd (MECL). "I am hoping that it should be Australia because we have been working (there) for the last year," he explained.



But unlike Argentina, Australia would be a bit costly so the paid-up capital of KABIL will have to be increased. KABIL has a paid-up capital of Rs 100 crore at present.

"We are authorised to go up to Rs 500 crore and I think we have approval of up to Rs 200 crore," he explained. Rao further said that target has been set to begin mining in the lithium blocks in Argentina in another two to three years.

Lithium is the most

important mineral for the energy transition, a fundamental component of lithium-ion batteries, which power electric vehicles and battery energy storage systems.

The government had earlier said that India would pump in about Rs 200 crore to explore and develop five lithium mines in Argentina.

Argentina is part of the 'lithium triangle' along with Chile and Bolivia with more than half of the world's total lithium resources.

## PropEquity FY24 profit up 10 per cent to ₹12 crore in FY24

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

PE Analytics Ltd, which runs real estate data platform PropEquity, has reported 10 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 11.67 crore for the last fiscal year on better income. Its net profit stood at Rs 10.6 crore in the preceding year. According to a regulatory filing on Friday, total income grew 37 per cent to Rs 44.17 crore last fiscal from Rs 32.3 crore in 2022-23. Samir Jasuja, Founder and CEO of PropEquity, said, "We have done reasonably well in FY 2024, with 10.4 per cent

growth in our profits before tax (PBT) compared to the preceding financial year. Our overall revenues also continue to rise by 37 per cent to Rs 44.1 crore." He said the valuation business vertical has performed well as revenue grew by 106 per cent since the last financial year. "We are adding new verticals in the valuation business which are auto valuations and plant and machinery valuations in FY 24-25 which will help us grow our business manifold," he said. Jasuja said the company is setting up a new firm in the Middle East in partnership

with local partners to launch its services.

Along with this, he said the company would be launching two more verticals -- B2C project monitoring and developer asset management -- to boost revenue.

PropEquity is an online provider of analytics, data and deal flows covering the Indian real estate industry. The company tracks over 1,73,000 projects of 57,500 developers across 44 cities in India on a real time basis. Its search platform generates analysis for all verticals under residential, commercial and retail sectors.

## India's cotton exports may rise 27 per cent in 2023-24 season: CAI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Cotton Association of India (CAI) on Saturday estimated cotton exports to rise about 27 per cent to 28 lakh bales during 2023-24 crop year ending September. In 2022-23 crop season (October-September), cotton exports were at 22 lakh bales, CAI said. One bale is equal to 170 kilogram.

"The demand for Indian cotton went up as the prices ruled 8-10 per cent lower than the international prices during December 2023 till March 2024. Our cotton is mainly exported to countries like Bangladesh, China and

Vietnam," CAI President Atul Ganatra told PTI. Meanwhile, CAI pegged the cotton production for 2023-24 at 309.70 lakh bales, same as estimated in the previous month. The production is however expected to be lower than the previous season's 318.90 lakh bales.

The total cotton supply till end of April 2024 is estimated at 315.86 lakh bales, which consists of pressing at 281.96 lakh bales, import of 5 lakh bales and the opening stock of 28.90 lakh bales.

The estimated cotton consumption till April 2024 is 192.50 lakh bales while export is pegged at 21.50 lakh bales.

## Jaipur based entrepreneur features on Fortune's 40 Under 40 list

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Jaipur-based entrepreneur Yogesh Chaudhary, the director of Jaipur Rugs, has been included in the list of emerging leaders from India by Fortune, a statement said. Chaudhary has been included in the '40 Under 40' list, an annual list of influential young individuals under the age of 40 who changed the

course of business and economy in India. Isha Ambani, Director, Reliance Retail, Harshad Reddy, Director, Apollo Hospitals, and Akash Ambani, Chairman, Reliance Jio Infocomm, are the other young entrepreneurs who have featured on the list. Chaudhary joined the family business at 19 to assist his father, Nand Kishore

Chaudhary. He said that in 2016, Jaipur Rugs forayed into retail and now sells in more than 90 countries. "The company collaborates with designers such as Shantanu Garg and Gauri Khan. The artisanal rugs are a result of 40,000 artisans in 600 villages, out of which 80 per cent are females," he said in a release here.

## Zydus gets USFDA nod to market generic arthritis drug in US

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Zydus Lifesciences on Saturday said it has received approval from the US health regulator to market a generic medication for arthritis and other conditions in the American market. The company has received final approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) to market Dexamethasone



tablets (1mg), the drug maker said in a statement.

Dexamethasone is used to treat conditions like arthritis, blood/hormone disorders, allergic reactions, skin diseases, eye problems, breathing problems, bowel disorders, cancer and immune system disorders. As per IQVIA data, Dexamethasone tablets had an annual sales of USD 1.8 million in the US.

## D2C fashion brand Powerlook aims ₹300 crore GMV this fiscal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fashion brand Powerlook looks to hit a gross merchandise value (GMV) of Rs 300 crore this financial year, clocking a more than twofold growth over the last year, a top official of the company said on Saturday. The fashion brand which markets products mainly on

leading ecommerce platforms like Myntra and Flipkart recorded a GMV of Rs 130 crore in the last financial year. GMV refers to the total value of products or merchandise sold over a certain period through a customer-to-customer exchange site. The brand also has a stronghold in the offline



market with good operating revenue, Powerlook said in a statement. Powerlook co-founder Raghav Pawar said that the brand's focus is on customer satisfaction and delivering products on time.

"By prioritizing quality products and personalized shopping experiences, the brand continuously

endeavours to exceed customer expectations," he added.

The men's fashion brand has maintained 35-40 per cent growth quarter-on-quarter last year, Pawar said. It witnessed a 30 per cent quarterly increase in sales and revenue. Powerlook's focused marketing campaigns,

strategic collaborations with renowned influencers, and a dynamic pricing strategy and customer retention policy have propelled growth, Pawar said.

Thw brand has leveraged social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to engage with its audience and cultivate a robust online presence.

### BUSINESS BRIEF

#### BSES GETS WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AWARD

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) has been conferred the prestigious "Women Empowerment" award at the 17th Star of the Industry Awards for its impactful community outreach programs. The award was adjudicated by a distinguished jury. BRPL's CSR initiatives have positively impacted lakhs of beneficiaries, with over 50% being women. These programs focus on empowering women across various areas like healthcare, education, skill development and sanitation BSES conducts various CSR programs across its licensed areas (South, West, East & Central Delhi), including vocational training, self-defense training for women, scholarships to students, setting-up mini science centres, Water ATMs, manufacturing and distribution of sanitary napkins.



#### ANTI BRIBERY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATION



Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Maharatna CPSU under Ministry of Power, Govt. of India, has been awarded Anti-Bribery Management System (ABMS) IS/ISO 37001 certification by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in a program held on May 8, 2024 at POWERGRID Corporate Centre, Gurugram. The ABMS Certificate was handed over by Lalthan Pari, Director, Management System Certification (Central), BIS to Dharmendra Kumar Madan, Chief Vigilance Officer, POWERGRID in the august presence of Ajay Tewari, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power, Govt. of India, R K Tyagi, CMD, Abhay Choudhary, Director (Projects), G. Ravisankar, Director (Finance), Dr. Yatindra Dwivedi, Director (Personnel), Shri Ashish Tripathi, Chief Vigilance Officer, BIS, Anish Anand, Dy. CVO, POWERGRID and senior officers of POWERGRID and BIS.

#### YASHODA KAUSHAMBI HOLDS PROGRAMME TO ENHANCE INDIA, AFRICA COLLABORATION

Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital-Kaushambi, in association with FICCI, organised a momentous event at Taj Maan Singh, as it hosted a gathering of distinguished Heads of Missions and Diplomats from African nations. The focus of the event was the burgeoning sector of Medical Value Travel (MVT) and its potential to foster stronger ties between India and Africa in the healthcare domain. The event was graced by Dr. PN Arora, CMD and Dr. Upasana Arora, MD of Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital, who shed light on the significance of Medical Value Travel and its implications for international patients. The event also witnessed the special felicitation of guests by Mr. P.N. Arora, welcoming the participation of countries such as Mauritius, South Africa, Kenya, Algeria, Uganda, Madagascar, Ethiopia, and many other African nations.



# Mbappé confirms he will leave PSG ahead of move to Real Madrid

AP ■ PARIS

Kylian Mbappé confirmed what the soccer world was long expecting to hear, announcing that he is leaving Paris Saint-Germain ahead of a widely expected move to Real Madrid. Mbappé said on X on Friday that his final home game for PSG will be on Sunday against Toulouse.

"I never thought it would be this difficult to leave my country," he said in the video post.

"I think I needed this, a new challenge after seven years."

An emotional-looking Mbappé gulped and paused for breath as he addressed PSG's fans.

"It's a club I will keep in my mind for my entire life. I will tell everybody I had the chance to play here."

He added, "You will stay in my heart forever," then winked and raised a thumb.

According to sports daily L'Equipe, Mbappé went to meet and dine with PSG ultras known as CUP (Paris Ultras Collective) shortly after making his announcement. They were set to discuss tributes to him at Parc des Princes on Sunday night.

After that game, French champion PSG has league games to follow at Nice and Metz. He is once more the French league top scorer, with 26 goals.

The 25-year-old Mbappé now captains France and won the World Cup in 2018, becoming the second teenager, after Pelé, to score in a World Cup final. He top-scored at the 2022 World Cup, including a rare hat trick in the final.

Mbappé joined PSG in 2017 from Monaco in a deal worth 180 million euros (USD 194 million). He is expected to be bought by 14-time Champions League winner Real Madrid.

In 2021, PSG turned down a bid of 180 million euros from Madrid for Mbappé. He renewed his contract with PSG but didn't take up the option for an extra year. Earlier this year, he told PSG he's leaving at the end of the season.

On Friday, he confirmed it.

"I wanted to announce to you all that it's my last year (season) with Paris Saint-Germain. I will not extend (my contract) and the adventure will come to an end in a few weeks," he said.

"First of all, I want to thank my teammates, all the teammates I had, all the coaches: Unai Emery, Thomas Tuchel,



Mauricio Pochettino, Christophe Galtier and Luis Enrique."

He has 255 goals for PSG, many of them featuring his trademark move: Sprinting down the left wing, cutting inside a wrong-footed defender and curling the ball into the right corner with speed and precision.

While his prolific output helped to deliver six league titles in seven years, it also often masked glaring deficiencies that were exposed at the highest level in the Champions League.

On Tuesday night, he trudged off the field when PSG went out of the semifinals of the Champions League after losing to Borussia Dortmund 1-0 in each leg.

Mbappé's departure will end the superstar era at PSG.

He arrived at the club along with Neymar, who cost a world record 222 million euros (USD 239 million). PSG was also a stop for Zlatan Ibrahimovic (156 goals for the club), Edinson Cavani (200 goals for PSG) and Lionel Messi (won his seventh of eight Ballon d'Ors).

None could win the Champions League with PSG, which has spent more than 2

billion euros (USD 2.15 billion) in transfer fees and paid massive wages. The fact Mbappé played under so many coaches also underlined the hire-and-fire attitude of the club's cash-rich Qatari owner QSI, which took over the club in June 2011.

Mbappé starred for Monaco as an 18-year-old sensation when it reached the semifinals of the Champions League seven years ago. PSG beat Madrid to his signature then, but things seem to have come full circle, and he will leave as a free transfer.

By the time Madrid likely signs him, the Spanish powerhouse may have clinched a record-extending 15th Champions League title.

Madrid plays Dortmund in the final on June 1 at Wembley, one week after Mbappé's last ever game for PSG in the French Cup final against Lyon. It wasn't the way he hoped to bow out of French club soccer.

But joining a massive club like Madrid surely gives him a better shot at winning the Ballon d'Or he so craves.

PSG has to find a new leader.

After Mbappé wears the No. 7 jersey for the last time, PSG will face a huge rebuilding task without him.



## Neeraj Chopra vows to win next DL meeting after finishing close second in Doha

PTI ■ DOHA

Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra vowed to go one step ahead in the next Diamond League meeting after finishing a close second during the Doha leg here.

Chopra finished second at the Doha Diamond League as his big final effort of 88.36m fell short by just two centimeters of Jakub Vadlejch's winning effort on Friday night.

The 26-year-old Chopra trailed the veteran Czech — who won the title with his third throw of 88.38m — throughout the competition.

Chopra, taking part in his first competition of the season, made a last ditch effort but the Indian superstar failed to defend the title.

Two-time world champion Anderson Peters took the third sport with a throw measuring 86.62m.

"The most important competition for me this year is Paris Olympics, but Diamond League meetings are

important too. This was the opener for me this season, I finished second with a narrow two centimetre margin but next time I will try to draw far and try to win," Chopra said.

The next Diamond League meeting which has men's javelin as a discipline will be held in Paris on July 7.

Chopra also thanked the Indian diaspora in Qatar for supporting him.

"The support I am getting from the Indian people here in Qatar is always amazing, there aren't words enough for me to thank them for their support.

"Maybe in some years the Indian will throw really far! I feel really proud that I am an Indian."

At each DL meeting, athletes are awarded 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1 points for ranking first to eighth respectively.

The top six javelin throwers will compete in the Diamond League Finals in Brussels on September 13-14 and the winner will lift the DL champion's trophy.

## Strong technical training will help India get good results in Paris: archery coach Kim Hyung Tak

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After sealing a historic World Cup gold recently, the Indian archers, who are undergoing "strong technical training," can land a maiden Olympic gold medal in Paris, reckoned renowned coach and mentor Kim Hyung Tak.

Dhiraj Bommadevara is the lone Indian to seal the Paris 2024 quota place for India in archery so far.

"The Indian recurve team is undergoing very strong technical training. This will definitely help get good results in the Olympics," Kim said after conducting a coaches' seminar at the Sports Authority of India's National Centre of Excellence in Sonapat.

"By keeping this consistency in training and preparation, I think it is very much possible to get a medal in Paris," he added.

The Indian recurve archers are striving for a team quota in the final qualification tournament to be held in Antalya, Turkey from June 14 to 17.

The hopes are quite high after the Indian team of Bommadevara, Tarundeep Rai and Pravin Jadhav shocked reigning Olympic champions South Korea to clinch a World Cup gold after 14 years in Shanghai on April 28.

Kim, who also supervised a two-day national team preparatory camp at Sonapat, said the constant training has helped the side raise its standards.

"The average level of the team has got a notch higher because of the talented men's and women's recurve team here.



"The frequent coaching camps by SAI and Archery Association of India too are contributing to the cause," said Kim, who led the Korean women's recurve team to its first Olympic gold at the Los Angeles Games in 1984.

Giving an insight into the training programme at SAI, Kim said the synergy between different departments has given the archers a fresh momentum.

"Since I've come here, I've seen more high level and detailed training provided to the archers. The training programmes, which use a lot of technology, are also very well-crafted.

"The coaches are continuously mentoring the archers on managing training schedules to training times. The

psychology team is also working around the clock and good mentoring is being provided as a whole," he said.

Kim, who has the experience of working with over 500 archers from across 30 nations, said the senior Indian archers have been lending a helping hand to the budding stars.

"There are many young archers. The experienced heads like Deepika (Kumari) and Tarundeep are guiding them. This helps a lot in team building and this is very important in the build-up to the Paris Games," noted Kim, who had a special session with three-time Olympian Deepika, who is trying to punch her ticket to Paris riding on some strong performances after motherhood.

Djokovic says he's "fine" after

being hit on the head by a water bottle

Rome,(AP) Novak Djokovic said he was "fine" after accidentally getting knocked on the head by a water bottle after a win at the Italian Open.

A man was leaning over the railing to hand Djokovic a notebook for a signature and an aluminum-type water bottle fell out of his backpack and hit the top-ranked player on the top of his head on Friday.

"Thank you for the messages of concern. This was an accident and I am fine resting at the hotel with an ice pack," Djokovic posted on X.

"See you all on Sunday."

After getting hit, Djokovic placed both of his hands on his head and then curled up on the ground as a security guard shielded him. Then he was

helped down the tunnel into the locker room.

Djokovic had a bump on his head and he was checked by doctors, tournament organizers said. He did not hold his usual post-match news conference.

"While leaving center court after his match, Novak Djokovic was hit on the head by a water bottle while signing autographs. He received medical attention and has already left the Foro Italico to return to his hotel. His condition is not a cause for concern," organisers said in a statement.

Djokovic had a bit of blood on his head but did not require stitches, Italian Tennis Federation spokesman Alessandro Catapano said.

"He was upset, but he seems OK," Catapano said.

"We're also very upset about what happened and we are trying to figure out who it was and understand the dynamics."

"The police came and asked for information but the person who did it had already left," Catapano added.

"We're going through all of the video and camera angles to see if we can determine what exactly happened."

The incident occurred shortly after Djokovic's 6-3 6-1 win over French qualifier Corentin Moutet in his opening match.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion was returning after nearly a month off. Djokovic has a day off before his next scheduled match at the clay-court tournament on Sunday.

The 36-year-old Serb is preparing to defend his title at the French Open, which starts May 26.

## Minor stakeholder Thierry Henry on hand to see Como promoted to Serie A

AP ■ COMO (ITALY)

Thierry Henry was in the stadium to see his investment in Como pay off when the Italian second-tier club won promotion to Serie A.

Como, coached by Henry's former Arsenal teammate Cesc Fabregas, drew with Cosenza 1-1 on Friday to clinch second place in Serie B and end a 21-year absence from the top tier. Leader Parma already sealed promotion.

Henry, the France great who will coach its men's under-23 team at the Paris Olympics, bought a stake two years ago in Como, which plays in a picturesque lakeside stadium about 50 kilometers (30 miles) north of Milan.

Como could replace Frosinone in Serie A after the latter lost to Serie A champion Inter Milan 5-0.

With two weeks of the season remaining, six teams are still hoping to avoid joining Salernitana in the second tier. Frosinone is 16th on the 20-team table, two points above the relegation zone. It has two games left, while teams above and below it have three. The result ended Frosinone's six-game unbeaten run.

Davide Frattesi scored Inter's first-half opener and Marko Arnautovic made it 2-0 after an hour. Canadian midfielder Tajon Buchanan got the third with his first goal for the club.

Lautaro Martinez's left-foot shot was his 24th goal of the league.

## Two time defending champ Stricker takes second round lead at Regions Tradition over Ernie Els

AP ■ BIRMINGHAM (US)

Two-time defending champion Steve Stricker birdied the final two holes for a 7-under 65 and a one-shot lead over Ernie Els after the second round of the Regions Tradition, the first of five PGA Tour Champions majors.

Stricker, who has won three of the last four times at Greystone, had four birdies and a pair of bogeys over the first six holes before overtaking Els at the end on Friday.

A six-time winner last year, he's seeking his first this season and got his wish of being in the final group for what he predicted "should be a fun weekend." Stricker said he's not dwelling on the chance for a three-peat. "I enjoy it here. I feel good going around here," he said.

"I'm just trying to, you know, that old cliché of just taking one shot, one hole at a time kind of thing. So continue that with (Saturday)." A World Golf Hall of Famer, Els shot a 68 in the second round. He was part of a six-way tie for first upon Round 1's completion earlier in the day after play was halted because of bad weather on Thursday.

Els had four birdies and still hasn't had a bogey over the first 36 holes to stay up with Stricker.

"Steve Stricker is obviously the king around here at the moment," Els said. "He's won three or four times. He's got the tournament record so probably playing with him (Saturday) so I need to keep the pace up with Steve and try and make him work hard for this one. He's always got a lot of momentum on this course, but at least we're heading in a good direction."



Steve Flesch, who had one bogey, moved to 10 under with a birdie on 18 for a 69. He is a four-time winner on the 50-and-over circuit but hasn't finished better than 25th in seven events this year. "I tried to be patient with how the year has been going on, but the golf hasn't been as bad as maybe where I am on the Schwab Cup list indicates," said Flesch, who came in ranked 65th.

"So maybe this will be a nice kickstart for me to get my year going a little bit, but I'm just I'm just glad I've kind of played two decent rounds and heading into the weekend with a chance."

Charlie Wi and Padraig Harrington were 9 under. Wi shot a 69, making two bogeys on par 5s but closing on No. 18 with his fifth birdie of the round. The South Korean has two runner-up finishes but no victories in 33 PGA Tour Champions events.

Harrington had a more up and down day, overcoming four bogeys for a 70.

## Bhaker, Bhanwala stay on course for top finish at Olympic Selection Trials

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Olympian Manu Bhaker and Anish Bhanwala stayed on course for a top finish at the Olympic Selection Trials (OST) for rifle/ pistol, shooting solid scores in qualification rounds of their respective events here on Saturday.

Taking aim at the M.P.State Shooting Academy range, Anish topped the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol event with a score of 587, while Manu came third in the women's 25m pistol shooting 585 to maintain the top rank among the five shooters in each event.

The finals are scheduled for Sunday where there are crucial podium points to be won by the five qualified shooters.

In the women's pistol, Rhythm Sangwan, after having two ordinary outings by her standards in Delhi, bounced back with a top score of 586, while Simranpreet Kaur Brar continued an inspired run to pip Manu to second on inner 10s with a 585. Esha Singh



(579) was fourth while Abhidnya Ashok Patil (575) was fifth.

This means that whatever happens in the finals, Manu would go into the fourth trial with at least a four-point cushion over her nearest competitor.

The fight for the second spot is currently very tight between Esha, Rhythm and Simranpreet. Bhanwala too is assured of a two-point cushion over his nearest challenger in the men's RFP.

Vijayveer Sidhu and Bhavesh Shekhawat are in a close fight for second with the former edging it currently, with Adarsh and Ankur seemingly looking out of it.

## Anderson to retire after Lord's Test against West Indies

PTI ■ LONDON

Legendary pacer James Anderson on Saturday announced that the first Test against the West Indies this summer will be his final appearance for England, bringing down the curtains on an illustrious career spanning over 20 years.

Regarded as one of the greatest bowlers of all times, the 41-year-old is England's leading wicket-takers and is one of only three bowlers to take over 700 Test scalps.

"Hi everyone. Just a note to say that the first Test of the summer at Lord's will be my last Test," Anderson wrote on his Instagram.

"It's been an incredible 20 years representing my country, playing the game I've loved since I was a kid. I'm going to miss walking out for England so much."

"But I know the time is right to step aside and let others realise their dreams just like I got to, because there is no greater feeling," he added.

Anderson's announcement comes after England red-ball coach Brendon McCullum conveyed to the seamer that they are looking at the future, with an eye on the Ashes 2025-26 in Australia.

Anderson made his Test debut back in 2003 and has since claimed a remarkable 700 wickets in 187 Test matches. He currently ranks third on the all-time list of Test wicket-takers, trailing behind

spinners Muttiah Muralitharan of Sri Lanka and Australia's Shane Warne.

However, whether Anderson will continue playing for his county side Lancashire remains unclear. "I couldn't have done it without the love and support of Daniella, Lola, Ruby and my parents. A huge thank you to them. Also, thank you to the players and coaches who have made this the best job in the world."

**IndusInd Bank**

FRR Group, IndusInd Bank Limited, 3A Upper Wood Street, 1st Floor, Savitri Towers, , Kolkata - 700017

Corrigendum to Possession Notice (see rule 6 (1)) (For Immovable/movable property) dated 23.02.2024 published in "The Pioneer (Raipur Edition)" on 27.02.2024

Under Description of Immovable/movable Property, "c. All that Part and Parcel of Property in the name of Chandrakala Jain bearing Flat No- D-105 at the 1st Floor of Block D of Shri Krishna Apartment, admeasuring Built Up Area-784.93 Sq Ft. and Balcony area-90.93 Sq. Ft. Total Area- 875.86 Sq. Ft. (Together with the construction thereon) situated at part of Survey No.- 62514-7, 62515-8, 62519-10, Village -Mova, P.H. No. 109, R.I.C.- Raipur-1, Dr. Bhimsrao Ambedkar Ward No. 27, City, Talsil and District Raipur, Chhattisgarh and bounded by (as per sale deed) in North by Flat No. A-106, In South by - Open Spaces; in East by - Open Space and in West by- Corridor" shall be replaced by and read as "c. All that Part and Parcel of Property in the name of Chandrakala Jain, bearing Office No. 327, Carpet Area Admeasuring - 165 sq. ft. (Together with the construction thereon) situated at third floor of Arlhart Complex, Part of Municipal House No. 12/358 to 365, Kalkarpura Ward No. 14 (Old) Indira Gandhi Ward No. 20 (New), Station Road, Village Raipur Khas, P.H. No. 106-A, R.I.C. - Raipur-1, City, Talsil and District Raipur, Chhattisgarh and bounded by (as per sale deed) - In North By- Passage of building, In South by- Road, in East by- Office No. 326 and in West by- Office No. 328."

Except the above mentioned, all other details stated in the aforesaid Possession Notice shall remain unchanged.



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

**PTI ■ BENGALURU**

Pushed into a tight corner, Royal Challengers Bengaluru rose above their frailties to notch four wins on the trot to stay alive in the race to play-offs, but Delhi Capitals even sans their suspended skipper Rishabh Pant offer them a different challenge in the IPL match here on Sunday.

Pant was suspended for one match and handed a fine of Rs 30 lakh for maintaining slow over rate against Rajasthan Royals at Delhi on May 7.

It was DC's third offence of the season; hence the suspension came in vogue immediately leading to Pant missing the match against RCB.

While the absence of Pant will certainly give RCB an edge, they can't get themselves lulled into a comfort zone.

In the run-up to this match, RCB defeated Gujarat Titans twice, Punjab Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad once

each.

While the victory over SRH was valiant, RCB did not face much challenge from the floundering Titans and Kings. But the Capitals are a team unlike any other as they have oscillated between brilliant and ordinary in the span of a few days.

On April 27, the Pant-led side posted a hefty 257/4 in their 10-run win over Mumbai Indians and on April 29, they made a lowly 153/9 while capitulating against Kolkata Knight Riders.

The RCB, currently seventh with 10 points from 12 matches, will desperately hope not to run into that brilliant Capitals as a defeat can undo their good work in the last four matches.

But their confidence will be high, courtesy strong and consistent batting effort led by talisman Virat Kohli.

Kohli is the leading run-getter in this IPL with 634 runs but, more importantly, those runs

have come at a brisk rate of 153, giving RCB early momentum while setting or chasing targets.

Along with Kohli, additional runs from skipper Faf du Plessis, Rajat Patidar, Cameron Green and Dinesh Karthik have provided their bowlers, who have responded to the call splendidly, with a cushion.

The transformation of RCB bowlers in the last four matches have been nothing short of remarkable.

Mohammed Siraj has found his mojo after a 10-day break, and he has received excellent backing from fellow pacer Yash Dayal and left-arm spinner Swapnil Singh.

After the match against PBKS, the overall run-rate of Siraj (9.4) and Dayal (9) have gone under 10 for the first time this season, not a mean feat in a tournament where runs were scored at a breakneck pace.

Their skills will be tested first by Jack Fraser-McGurk, who has teed off to make 309 runs



from seven matches at an impressive strike-rate of 235.87.

McGurk took the opener's slot once David Warner - 167 runs from 7 matches at a strike rate

of 135 - had to sit out with an injury, and he has not made the absence of the veteran felt even once.

His opening partner Abhishek Porel too has made runs at 157

a fair clip but now without the skipper the DC middle-order will further lean on Stubbs for momentum.

But in the bowling department, DC will feel that they might have a slight edge.

Spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel have been thrifty while sharing 24 wickets among them as they have maintained economy rates of 8.2 and 7.3 respectively - gold dust while others have gone above 10.

Their combined eight overs will have a massive say in the match, as the wrist-spinner and his left-arm comrade will have to contain the free-flowing RCB batters in the middle phase.

If pacers Khaleel Ahmed (14 wickets, 9.68) and Mukesh Kumar (15 wickets, 10.94) can inflict some blows upfront, DC can hope to contain the home side.

Glenn Maxwell, Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar, Anuj Rawat, Dinesh Karthik (wk), Suyash Prabhudessai, Will Jacks, Mahipal Lomror, Karn Sharma, Manoj Bhandage, Mayank Dagar, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Akash Deep, Mohammed Siraj, Reece Topley, Himanshu Sharma, Rajan Kumar, Cameron Green, Alzarri Joseph, Yash Dayal, Tom Curran, Lockie Ferguson, Swapnil Singh, Saurav Chauhan.

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

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



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

**PTI ■ CHENNAI**

In need of a win to firm-up their position in the IPL playoff race, Chennai Super Kings have the heavy task of nullifying a deeply hurt and frustrated Rajasthan Royals here on Sunday.

Let's take a quick assessment of the two protagonists' situations. The Super Kings are currently fourth in the standings with 12 points from as many games but the defeat against Gujarat Titans on Friday has added dollops of pressure on them, and now they need victory in their remaining two matches.

The Royals, on the other hand, are second with 16 points but they are smarting from two successive defeats against Sunrisers Hyderabad, which was by just a run, and Delhi Capitals.

They are in no real danger of missing the playoff spot, but the Sanju Samson-led side will be eager to return to the winning ways at the earliest and enter the knockouts.

What had hurt CSK against GT was the malfunction of their top-order consisting Ajinkya Rahane, Rachin Ravindra and skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and they would be desperate to regain the momentum in Chepauk.

Ravindra might be given another go against Royals, but it could be a make-or-break situation for him.

Although it was pleasing to see Daryl Mitchell and Moeen Ali among runs, Shivam Dube, who has been CSK's bulwark this season, has gone silent ever since he was selected to the Indian team for the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Having scored a 13-ball 21 against GT, he has twin causes to fire — to justify his selection for the World Cup and carry his team closer to the playoffs.

As for the CSK's bowling, Tushar Deshpande once again fired against GT while Shardul Thakur surprised all with his economical outing.

However, the Chennai bowlers are expected to buckle up and do well in this fixture at home, their strong area.

The low amount of dew in this afternoon clash might help CSK spinners.

On the other hand, desperate to end the losing streak, Rajasthan could not have asked for a more suitable opponent than an unsteady CSK.

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has not been at his best this season, will be desperate to prove his mettle before travelling to the Americas for the T20 World Cup.

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

**PTI ■ AHMEDABAD**

Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill is Goptimistic about sneaking into the IPL play-offs, even though odds are heavily against them despite the 35-run win over Chennai Super Kings here.

Gill (104 off 55b) and B Sai Sudharsan (103 off 51b) notched up destructive centuries to propel GT to 231/3 and then restricted the defending champions to 196/8 to stay alive in the play-off race. The win lifted GT from the bottom of the table to the eighth spot. They have 10 points from 12 games, while CSK remained fourth with 12 points.

"The chances of us qualifying was 0.1 or 1 per cent. I think all of us, all 25-30 of us, believe that we can still make it into the play-offs.

"Because I have seen miracles happen with this team in the past couple of years and we all do believe in that," Gill said in the post-match press conference on Friday night.

Gill, however, felt that GT were some runs short despite piling up a huge total.

"When I got out, I was a bit frustrated. I thought as a batting unit, we left 10-25 runs out there. At one point we were 195/0 in 15 overs, so I thought that 250 was a pretty gettable score and I was thinking about that.

"It is as satisfactory as any hundred. We lost our last three games and it was important for us to win this one and that is what me and Sai were



discussing. We were trying to maximise every opportunity and every challenge that was thrown at us."

The young skipper also had words of appreciation for his opening partner Sudharsan.

"Last year he (Sudharsan) missed a hundred in the final, having come back and the way he played in the middle overs is exceptional.

"He is someone who works very hard on his game and for someone like him to be able to execute those shots was just magnificent," Gill said.

Talking about the talismanic Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who played a 11-ball 26-run cameo with three sixes, and his fan following, Gill said, "Wherever Mahi bhaji plays, it is their (CSK) home ground, so nothing different with that.

"But at least, when we were scoring, people were cheering for us and when we visited Chepauk, it was complete silence when we hit boundaries or took a wicket," he concluded.

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

**PTI ■ AHMEDABAD**

B Sai Sudharsan broke away from the mould of anchor with a brilliantly crafted hundred against Chennai Super Kings, and the "calm under pressure" demeanour of the Gujarat Titans' opener has left stalwarts Graeme Smith and Tom Moody impressed.

Till the match on Friday, Sudharsan struck runs at a moderate strike rate of 131.67 while coming at No. 3, but the promotion to the opener's slot seemed to have liberated him.

Against CSK, the Tamil Nadu left-hander made 103 off 51 balls (5x4s, 7x6s) and his strike-rate read 201.96.

Smith said Sudharsan should be given more opportunities.

"Sudharsan is so under the radar, he is the leading run-scorer for GT this season, the fastest Indian to a thousand IPL runs with a difference of six innings. He needs to start being spoken about a bit more," said Smith on JIO Cinema.



Former Australian all-rounder and a revered coach Tom Moody praised Sudharsan for maintaining his composure in the match against a tough opponent.

"The way this young player goes about his business is a joy to watch. He seems so calm under pressure. He seems to have the right answers at the right time.

"He knows when to go big to look for that boundary to take pressure out of an over and he seems to be able to keep pace with the game," Moody told Star Sports Cricket Live show.

Former South Africa skipper Smith lauded the partnership between Sudharsan and Shubman Gill that was worth 210 runs, joint highest for the opening wicket this season.

"The partnership was excellent, left-hand-right-hand combination, they ran between the wickets well; they picked their targets, and their matchups were just outstanding," he added.

Moody also underscored the importance of the alliance between Gill and Sudharsan.

"The partnership was nothing short of extraordinary. They complemented each other exceptionally well, evident in their visible enjoyment on the field, as Gill expressed during the post-match presentation.

"This camaraderie is crucial for any backing and partnership," added Moody.

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

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant will miss Sunday's crucial match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru after he was handed a one-match suspension for maintaining a slow over-rate for the third time this IPL season.

Pant was also fined Rs 30 lakh for the Code of Conduct breach that took place during DC's 20-run win against Rajasthan Royals on May 7 here.

DC were 10 minutes behind time at the start of the final over in that game.

"Mr Rishabh Pant, Captain, Delhi Capitals has been fined has been fined and suspended for one match for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct after his team maintained a slow over-rate against Rajasthan Royals at the Arun Jaitley



Stadium, Delhi on May 07, 2024," an IPL statement read. The Capitals had been found guilty of maintaining slow over rates against Chennai Super Kings (March 31) and Kolkata Knight Riders (April 3) earlier in the season.

"As it was his team's third offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences,

Rishabh Pant was fined INR 30 lakh and suspended for one match."

All other DC players were also penalised.

"The rest of the members of the Playing XI, including the Impact Player, were each individually fined either INR 12 lakh or 50 per cent of their respective match fees, whichever is lesser."

DC filed an appeal challenging this ruling of the match referee which was referred to the BCCI Ombudsman for review. The Ombudsman conducted a virtual hearing and stated that the decision of the match referee is final and binding.

"As per Article 8 of the IPL Code of Conduct, the Delhi Capitals filed an appeal challenging the ruling of the Match Referee. Following this, the appeal was referred to the BCCI Ombudsman for review.



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

**PTI ■ AHMEDABAD**

Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming said the defending champions were undone by the "high calibre" batting effort of Gujarat Titans' openers — skipper Shubman Gill and B Sai Sudharsan — during their 35-run defeat in an IPL match here.

Gill (104 off 55b) and Sudharsan (103 off 51b) notched up destructive centuries in an opening stand of 210 runs to propel GT to 231/3 and then restricted the defending champions to 196/8 to stay alive in the play-off race. The win lifted GT from the bottom of the table to the eighth spot. They have 10 points from 12 games, while CSK remained fourth with 12 points.

"It was a good onslaught and the batting was of the highest calibre. Right from the first over they disrupted our plans. It wasn't till the latter stages we got some control," Fleming said at the post-match press conference on Friday night.

"We didn't execute as well as we could but the other part was the sublime batting from two

very good players."

The former New Zealand captain praised Sudharsan for his effort.

"In the final last year, he (Sudharsan) played beautifully, he got 96. I have watched him closely, he has got good connections around the Chennai area. He is a wonderful player and today he proved that," Fleming said CSK were put under immense pressure by the onslaught of GT openers, resulting in errors in bowling and fielding.

"We were a little bit handicapped by the absence of some players. The players who were playing today did really well in the last game, so the confidence was high.

"Sometimes you do all the right things but good batting can put you under pressure. It was some high calibre hitting, just the pressure of that onslaught made us a bit sloppy," he said.

"Fielding has been really good, you can't look at just one game. We were put under pressure today. Both bowling and fielding can often be on the backfoot under pressure. Today, we probably fell a little bit behind mentally."

**PTI ■ CHENNAI**

With the sheer momentum they had in the first half of IPL 2024, Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Donovan Ferreira said on Saturday the team should have qualified for the playoffs by now but with three more games still remaining, the side had a great chance to make the top-two. The Royals, who were leading the IPL table till just a few days back, have slipped to second spot following two consecutive defeats and would be desperate to get back to winning ways when they take on defending champion Chennai Super Kings here on Sunday.

"We should have already qualified for the playoffs by now. But, the IPL is a long tournament, and obviously, the second half is important," said Ferreira during a pre-match press conference here on Saturday.

The Royals are currently on 16 points, the same as leaders Kolkata Knight Riders but the latter have a far superior net run rate. "We had set out nicely by winning most of the games in the first half, and this game (against CSK) is quite important. We have three games left, but we don't want to leave it too late and put pressure on ourselves," he added.

After they play CSK on Sunday, Royals have games against Punjab

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

Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders.

"If we win this game, it will give us an even better chance of finishing first or second. Anyone playing against Chennai knows they are a good team. The past few games have been close, and these small margins can go either way. But hopefully, we can get over the line tomorrow by playing the brand of cricket that we have been playing."

The Royals' middle order is a bit of a concern as it has not been tested much this season but Ferreira said the training intensity had ensured all the batters were in good shape.

"It's (middle order) not much of a concern. We are grateful that our top order has put us in good positions and got us over the line. But, we have got capable batters and a deep batting line-up to pull us through.

"We just need to keep backing ourselves. With three games to go, we don't want to test ourselves but keep the momentum going. It's about training with the match intensity with



the middle order so that when the moment arrives, your skills are sharpened, and you back yourself to pull the game through."

Sunday's fixture will be the first afternoon game at Chepauk this season, and the South African reckoned that spin would play a crucial role, especially with R. Ashwin returning at his home venue.

"Obviously, this is a turning track. So, Ashwin will play a big role with (Yuzvendra) Chahal tomorrow?" The city is in the grip of an intense heat wave, with temperatures in the range of 41 degrees C. Asked how would they handle the conditions, Ferreira said that as cricketers, they are used to it.

"Fortunately, most of our training

schedule has been in the afternoon, so we are kind of used to the heat. But, it's not possible to replicate the match intensity in training.

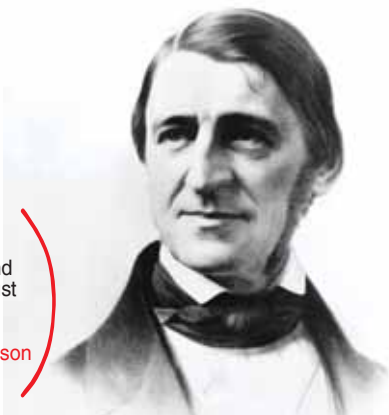
**"NOT GOOD FOR ANY TEAM TO LOSE THREE PRIMARY BOWLERS":** CSK will be without three of their primary bowlers — Mustafizur Rahman (returned home), Matheesha Pathirana (hamstring injury) and Deepak Chahar (injury). Ferreira said rather than focus on the issues facing the rivals, his team would play to its strengths.

"It's not good for any team to lose three primary bowlers. But in cricket, any guy can bowl well. It's for us to focus on what we have to do, analyse the bowlers and see who we can take down and how we can do it.

"This is a different wicket and condition, so we should not focus on what they have been doing but what we can do. It's about having good plans and structure to execute it well out there," he said.



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



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

NAVNEET MENDIRATTA

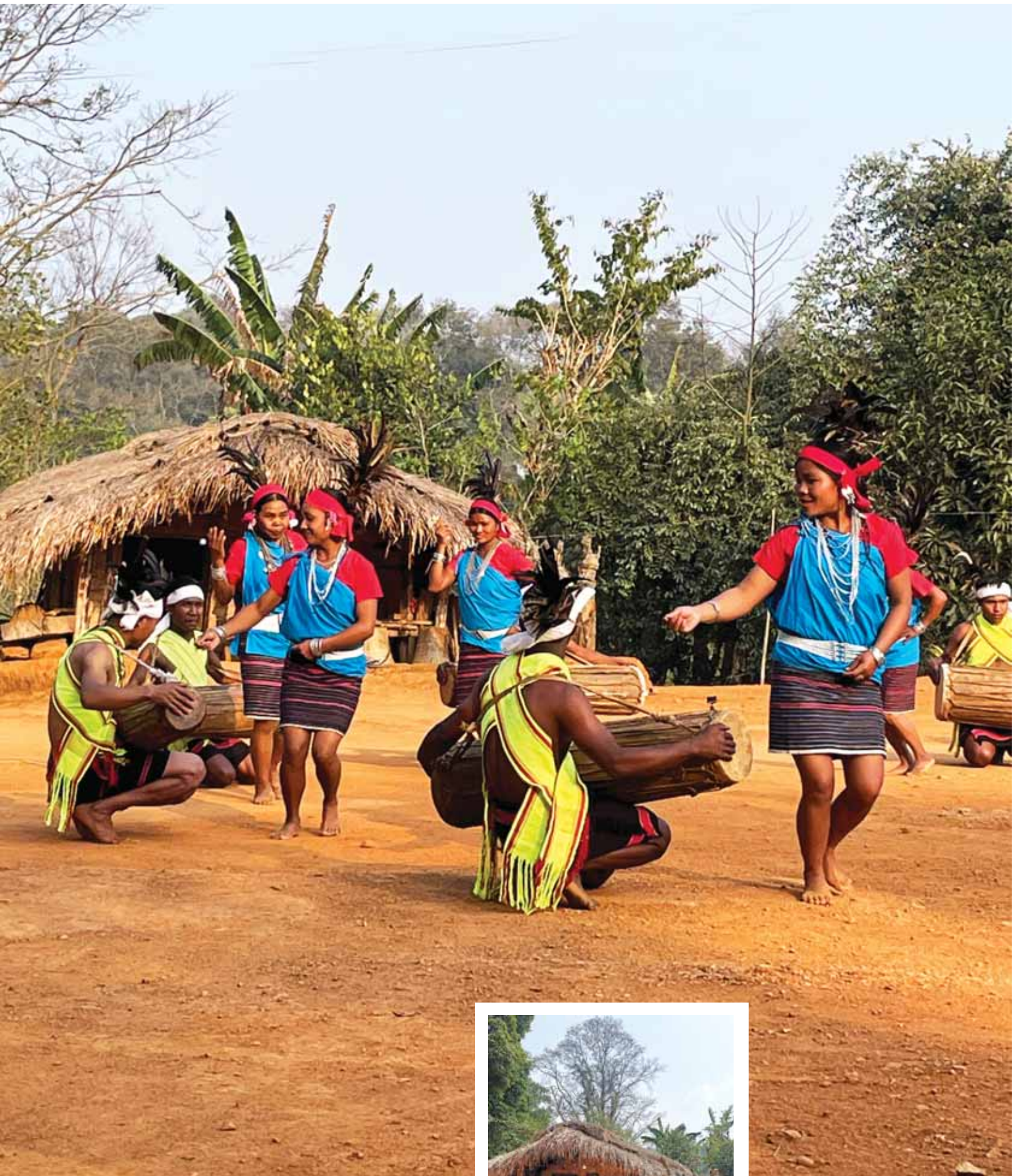
# VIBING TO THE DANCE OF A 100 DRUMS

It is clearly the road less travelled. The West Garo Hills of Meghalaya in Northeast India may not have attracted the fancy of the tourists as their Khasi hills counterparts (yet), but that could well be a blessing in disguise for a region that is holding on to the last bit of ancient Garo traditions — the Songsarek practices. Songsarek is a pre-Christian animist religion that is fast losing out to conversions to Christianity, that spread in the region in the second half of the nineteenth century and intensified throughout the twentieth century. Currently, of the 150 villages that exist in the region, only 13 to 15 are Songsarek villages. In these, only five or six houses continue to actively practise the rituals related to the ancient Garo society. A narrow hill road leads us to the Songsarek village of Gondenggre. Located in the Rongram subdivision of West Garo Hills district in Meghalaya, the village is located 18 kms from sub-district headquarter Rongram and some 36 kms from district headquarter of Tura. Our entourage comprises a group of nine Royal Enfield bikers and content crew who are here to document the living heritage of the communities in these regions as part of a unique partnership between Royal Enfield and UNESCO. The project titled, The Great Himalayan Exploration, involves engaging with Royal Enfield's motorcycling community and inspiring them to come forward to not just explore the landscape but to help preserve and promote the living heritage of the communities in these regions. Documentation is the first step in this direction. These practices range from performing arts (dance forms, songs, etc) to tangible crafts (handmade paper from tree bark, specific types of hats, etc), food practices (preservation techniques, culinary cultures), agricultural practices, local medicinal practices, body art and even indigenous spiritual and social systems.

## KEEPERS OF THE TRADITION

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

the traditionally fermented (but weak) alcoholic rice beverage that is poured right into our mouths from an *abet* or a hollowed dried bottle gourd. It is the locals' way of welcoming the guests and must be accepted by them as a mark of honour. *Chubitchi* flows freely in Garo villages. There is no age or stigma attached to its consumption. It is an important part of every Garo celebration — be it religious rituals, meetings, social gatherings, birth, marriage, during *Wangala* (harvest festival) or even a house warming ceremony. It is said that in pre-modern era, the Garos would serve the drink before taking off for a hunt or to fight enemies. The traditional ways of making *Chubitchi* are said to have been passed down orally among the Garos until the arrival of Baptist American Missionaries. In the present day, though the knowledge of brewing *Chubitchi* continues to be shared in the interiors of Garo Hills, it is no longer a preferred practice in urban areas. Songsareks of Gondenggre are friendly albeit private people. Curiously is writ large on their faces as language holds them back from communicating freely with the outsiders. Rakkan M Sangma, Joint Secretary of the 100 Drums Wangala Festival Committee and Secretary of Garo Heritage Village plays interpreter and takes us through the rituals and practices of the villagers. “*Song* in the local language means village or a native place and *Warek* means houses built in a line. By that definition, *Gondenggre* is a spread out village with houses that are built in a single line,” says Sangma. “About 5-7 kms from the village, there exists a strong sacred grove called *A Song Kosi*. It is a special place where outsiders are forbidden from entering. No one is allowed to speak in that forest let alone pluck a single leaf. No one, not even a member of our tribe, can cause any harm to the trees, flowers, or animals there,” he shared. Cleanliness is a buzzword in most parts of Meghalaya. Made from bamboo, Garo houses typically last for about four to five years. The kitchen is usually located outside the house. A complete set up comprising kitchen and dining space at the entrance of the village is meant



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

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

## DANCING TO A HUNDRED DRUMS

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



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

## THE GREAT HIMALAYAN EXPLORATION PROJECT

Royal Enfield's partnership project with UNESCO, The Great Himalayan Exploration, draws rider-researchers to document the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Himalayas. “The aim is to document and safeguard the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Himalayas and thereby, raise awareness about the living treasures that make up the beating heart of India,” says Bidisha Dey, Executive Director, Eicher Group Foundation — the CSR and Sustainability arm of Royal Enfield. According to her, over two editions and 16 curated rides, 119 rider-researchers have already documented 66 practices across the Eastern Himalayan states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, North Bengal, Sikkim and Tripura. “We are now set to extend our exploration to the Western Himalayas in 2024,” says Dey. “We conduct a detailed on-ground reece before rolling out the riders to ensure the assent of the locals and as respect for their privacy. We are especially careful to follow the community protocols on how to approach the community and then conduct capacity building programmes to educate the rider researchers before they set out on their journeys,” she shares. Among the practices recorded are: The black pottery of Tyr Shang village in the West Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya, *Muga* silk threads of Assam, *Mon Shugu*, the ancient art of making paper of Arunachal Pradesh, living roots bridges of Meghalaya, handmade mask art of Majuli island, Assam. “For us, the partnership is not just about the documentation. It's also about creating awareness about the intangible cultural heritage practices,” concludes Dey.



# ENCALM’S WARM EMBRACE OF ATITHI DAIVO BHAVA



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

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

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

In a short span of three years, Sharma today heads a 200 plus team which, according to him, is crucial in taking the organisation’s long term objectives forward through “strategic thinking and effective communication.” At a time when most airlines provide their Business Class passengers with state of the art lounges and customized relaxation plans without overheads, what does



VIKAS sharma, CEO, ENCALM HOSPITALITY PVT LTD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One of the standout features of the Encalm Prive Lounge is its expansive conference room, which doubles as a personal dining room, perfect for business travelers or senior bureaucrats and VIPs looking to conduct meetings or enjoy a meal in a private setting.

For those looking for entertainment, the lounge offers a small gaming zone and a dedicated kids area, ensuring that travellers of all ages have something to enjoy during their visit. The virtual gaming zone and Xbox games comes as a chargeable feature separate from the lounge charge though it can be availed by only the lounge users. A small fitness centre and kids play area comes complimentary along with the lounge facility.

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



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

While the lounge service came complimentary with my flight tickets, Encalm has another facility called Atithya Meet and Greet Service. So if you are a first time traveller or just worried about your parents or kids traveling alone, just avail this service from their portal that comes in various options — Silver,

Gold and Elite. This service provides you with a guest manager who will escort you from the entrance without having to wait in the queue, help you through check-in and immigration services. They try to help you go through business class immigration service but it depends upon the government official to allow it. And then they help you get the buggy till your boarding gate. If you have a business class ticket or are planning to use the lounge through credit cards, in my opinion, Silver tier option gives you the best value for money.

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

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



# Splendid Expedition Across Switzerland

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

BY **AKANKSHA DEAN**

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



## MOST POPULAR TRAIN JOURNEYS THAT ARE A PART OF THE GRAND ROUTE

Hop on the Glacier Express, a legendary trip winding through the breathtaking Swiss Alps from Zermatt to St. Moritz. Take a journey on the Bernina Express to discover the Bernina Pass, Bernina Range, and the UNESCO World Heritage Rhaetian Railway. Travel along the Golden Pass Line, linking Lucerne to Montreux through stunning scenery. Enjoy the

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

## MUST KNOW

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

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

Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer

BY **PAWAN SONI**

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

## LOCATION

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

## AMENITIES

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

## LET'S GOA...



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

## HOUSEKEEPING

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

## FOOD

One of the highlights was the option to have the staff

## FACT SHEET

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

Phone Number: 9350009000

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

paranths, cut fruits, poori-aloo, and poha apart from beverages like fresh juice, tea and coffee.

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

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



# SAVING THE GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

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



BKP SINHA



ARVIND K JHA

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

The Supreme Court of India in MK Ranjitsinh and Ors vs. Union of India has constituted a seven-member committee and tasked it with addressing the delicate balance between conservation initiatives for the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) and the installation of renewable energy projects in its habitat. This decision follows the Court’s acknowledgement of the challenges posed by its April 2021 directive mandating the burial of all power lines within the GIB habitat, a measure claimed to be expensive and impractical over extensive distances by Power companies and the Central Government. With the complex interplay between development and conservation at the forefront, the committee has to assess primarily the viability of reducing the area banned for overhead powerlines from 80,000 to 13,663 square kilometres. The GIB figures in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, in Appendix I of CITES and is classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Included in the National Wildlife Action Plan, it has been earmarked for a recovery program under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India. During the Mughal and British periods, the GIB was one of the top game birds. Historical accounts suggest that tribal Bhils used to set fire to the bushes surrounding their nests to trap females. The species has been facing numerous threats to its survival including occasional poaching, collisions with high-tension electric wires, fast-moving vehicles, and free-ranging dogs in villages. Additionally, habitat loss and alteration due to the diversion of grasslands and scrublands, extensive agricultural expansion, mechanized farming practices, and infrastructural developments such as irrigation systems, roads, and windmills pose significant challenges. Weighing approximately 15 kilograms each, their bulk poses a challenge when navigating around electricity lines or windmills, often resulting in fatalities or injuries. The dry semi-desert regions where the bustard once thrived, particularly in parts of Rajasthan, have also undergone significant transformation due to irrigation canals, converting the landscape into highly cultivated areas. Present-day threats include further expansion of linear infrastructure such as roads and electric power transmission lines leading to collision-related mortality. The proposed expansion of renewable energy infrastructure, including large-scale deployment of solar panels across desert and grassland areas, further jeopardizes the bird’s habitat. In its historical range, the great Indian bustard once existed across Western India, spanning 11 states, including parts of Pakistan, with strongholds in the Thar desert and the Deccan plateau. Known for its preference for flat, open landscapes with minimal disturbance, it thrives in grasslands. Their numbers, however, have dwindled dramatically, with only around 150 individuals estimated to survive as of 2018, down from around 250 in 2011. Most of the population, estimated at around 120, is concentrated in the arid grasslands of Thar, Rajasthan, particularly in the Desert National Park and the Pokhran Field Firing Range, with smaller populations reportedly scattered elsewhere in the country. In Maharashtra, two individuals had been reported in Nanaj, Solapur district, where the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is actively involved in conservation efforts. Concerningly, however, the absence of the great Indian bustard in Nanaj in Maharashtra as well as in the Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh for the past few years suggests a looming risk of local-level extinctions. Known for their slow reproductive rate, GIBs lay only a few eggs and invest nearly a year in caring for their chicks. Establishing a founder population requires a minimum of 20 breeding females and 5 to 10 breeding males. In the relatively better populated Thar region, specifically focused upon in the



Supreme Court case, the looming risks of the maze of infrastructural development, food insecurity, conflicts, and climate change-induced impacts exacerbate the challenges faced by them. As regards actions taken to safeguard the dwindling population of the GIB, the MoEFCC, Rajasthan Forest Department, and Wildlife Institute of India (WII), came together in 2018 to initiate conservation breeding programs and conduct scientific research for GIB’s conservation. Notably, the WII had already identified ten potential locations for GIB breeding centres in 2017, setting the stage for proactive conservation measures. Drawing on expertise beyond borders, the International Fund for Houbara Conservation (IFHC) from Abu Dhabi was enlisted as a technical partner due to its successful track record in breeding other bustard species. The collective efforts resulted in the establishment of two breeding centres in Rajasthan, housing a total of 29 GIBs, bolstering hopes for the species’ survival. Further support poured in from WWF-India, which helped in crafting guidelines for a comprehensive State Action Plan for Resident Bustard Recovery Programme and backed future expansion plans in Gujarat. In Karnataka’s Siruguppa taluka, the Ballari Forest division proposed a Detailed Project Report with an

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

undergrounding of <66 kv wires, and retrofitting of existing wires with bird diverters. WII’s findings also underscored the perilous predicament, with an estimated 16 GIB fatalities annually due to collisions with high-tension lines in the Thar region alone. Such alarming mortality rates, validated by tagging efforts by WII, are in sharp contrast to the indication of the number of recorded mortality cases as insignificant before the highest court. Using a lower number of collision deaths as a basis for allowing a network of overhead powerlines in GIB habitats will be akin to advocating the discontinuance of medicines in a pandemic situation where due to a reduced number of survivors, deaths per day may be lowered. An approach of balancing conservation and development by permitting power projects, in a critically endangered species’ habitat with just about 140 survivors, currently less polluting than non-renewable resources deserves perhaps a second look. The idea of development and its impact created and sold by the most selfish species on earth pitted against the right to life of a species at the brink of extinction needs to adopt a much wider and multi-sectoral perspective. India’s insulation data in many areas, not natural habitats of GIB, presents

similar ranges as in Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Annual Mean Daily Global Solar Radiation (AMDGSR) map indicates 6.8 to 5.6 kWh/ m2/ day in different parts of Rajasthan and Gujrat; 6.0 to 5.8 in Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Ladakh; and 5.8 to 5.6 in states like Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu. India’s solar power generation capacity having reached about 76 GW in FY24, is concentrated in Rajasthan and Gujarat with 17.8 GW and 10.1 GW. Large states like MP and UR are major disappointments. Authorities should consider the country-wide spread and benefits, site-specific costs on infrastructure, and the capacity utilization factor (CUF) figures reported to be 20 for Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh; 19 for Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and Madhya Pradesh; and 18 for Gujarat. Considering this scenario, any honest concern for balancing conservation and development must, instead of compromising GIB’s future, explore and exploit the potential spread out in the country for solar projects. That would be true climate justice! (The writers are Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra; views are personal)







**Lucky number** 21 | **Lucky colour** Yellow  
**Lucky day** Monday

**Lucky number** 12 | **Lucky colour** Black  
**Lucky day** Saturday

**Lucky number** 91 **Lucky colour** Off White  
**Lucky day** Wednesday

**Lucky number** 2 | **Lucky colour** Fuchsia  
**Lucky day** Sunday

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