OPINION 6

DYNAMIC CONTOURS OF | ISRAELI ARMY TELLS PALESTINIANS

MONEY 10

BSNL TO LAUNCH 4G SERVICES

ACROSS INDIA IN AUGUST

CONSTITUENCY | CANDIDATES

Amit Shah

Sonal Patel

Mohammedanish Desai

BSP

BJP.

Congress

Congress

Congress

Congress

BJP

Congress

Congress

Congress

BSP

NCP (Pawar)

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Poll battle enters crucial Phase III

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

rith stakes being high for the BJP which had overwhelming majority these seats, including all in

Gujarat, Karnataka, Bihar and

Madhya Pradesh, in the 2019

general elections, political bigwigs Union Ministers Amit Jyotiraditya Scindia, Mandaviya, Mansukh Parshottam Rupala Congress stalwart Digvijay Singh, to NCP's (Sharad Pawar faction) Supriya Sule and Samajwadi Party's Dimple Yadav are amongst several others from ruling and Opposition side who are in the fray for the voting to be held in 93 constituencies spread over 12 States and Union Territories on Tuesday in the third phase of

Lok Sabha polls. 1,300 candidates, Over including around 120 women, are in the fray for the 93 parliamentary seats in 12 States and Union Territories. Modi and Shah will cast their votes at booths in Ahmedabad city that fall under Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat.

After the third phase of polling, more than half of India will be covered. A total 283 will be covered after the third phase of polling

According to EC, over 17.24 crore voters will cast their vote in the third phase for 93 parliamentary seats. A total of 1,041 inter-State and 275 International Border check posts are keeping strict vigil on any illicit flow of liquor, drugs,



cash and freebies. Strict surveillance has been kept at sea and air routes. With the BJP bagging Surat

unopposed, 25 seats in Prime Minister Modi's home State of Gujarat will go to polls on May besides 11 seats in Maharashtra, 10 seats in Uttar Pradesh, the remaining 14 of the 28 in Karnataka, seven in Chhattisgarh, five in Bihar, four each in Assam and West Bengal, and all two in Goa.

The Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (2 seats) and nine seats in Madhya Pradesh, including Betul where elections were deferred, will also go to polls on Tuesday and over 11 crore people will be eligible to vote. Campaigning for the third witnessed the

Constitution and reservation issue dominating the poll discourse. The stakes are significant for the BIP and its allies, which had, in

2019, won 75 of the

93 seats going to polls on Tuesday, while the INDIA Bloc parties had won only 11. Four seats had gone to the undivided Shiv Sena, two were won by independents, and one by the AIUDF.

With the first two phases registering a dip in voter turnout as compared to 2019, the question is whether the third phase will buck the trend amid hot weather and heat waves in these States.

After the third phase, voting will be completed in 283 out of

Guna Jvotiraditva Scindia Rao Yadvendra Singh Dhaniram Chaudhary Raigarh Rodmal Naga Digviiay Singh Dr. Rajendra Suryavanshi Nirmal Kumar Saha Adhir Ranian Chowdhur 243 seats in the Lok Sabha. The next four phases will be on May 13, May 20, May 25 Vidisha Shivraj Singh Chouhan and June 1. Counting of Pratap Bhanu Sharma votes is on June 4. Jammu and Kashmir's Kishan Lal Ladiva Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Seema Sharma Sabha seats were also to vote in the third phase of Pralhad Joshi polling. However, due to Vinod Asooti several connectivity issues, the Election Commission of India South Goal Pallavi Dempo rescheduled it to May 25. During the campaign, the BJP Capt. Viriato Fernandes had to face the ire of the Kshatriya community over a Mainpuri Jaiveer Singh Thakur remark made by Rupala in Dimple Yadav Shiv Prasad Yadav

He had claimed several rulers from the community had "roti and beti" (marriage and trade) relations with the British and other foreign invaders.

VIRENDRA NATH BHATT

The stage is set for the third

phase of elections in 10

Lok Sabha constituencies which will go to polls on

Tuesday, with all eyes on the

first family of Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yaday

who are in the electoral frav.

Yadav's wife Dimple is aiming

to retain the Mainpuri Lok

Sabha seat which she won in

the bypolls following the

demise of her father-in-law

Mulayam, Akshaya Yadav,

son of Ram Gopal Yadav, the

national principal general secretary of SP, will try to

reclaim the Firozabad seat,

which he had won in 2014.

Raikot.

LG recommends NIA probe against Kejriwal SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI Congress

Troubles seem to be mounting for the jailed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal as Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena recommended National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe against the AAP chief for allegedly receiving political funding from the banned terrorist organisation 'Sikhs for Justice' to the Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday. The LG claimed that Kejriwal "has received a staggering amount of \$16 million in funding from Khalistani groups between 2014 and 2022."

The move comes a day ahead of the Supreme Court considering granting Kejrwal interim bail in view of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. The AAP chief, who is in Tihar jail, was arrested on March 21 by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with an excise policy linked money laundering case. In a letter to the Union Home

secretary, the Lieutenant Governor's secretariat said Saxena had received a complaint that the Kejriwal-led AAP allegedly received USD 16 million funding from extremist Khalistani groups for facilitating the release of Devendra Pal Bhullar. "Keeping in view, the sensitivity

and seriousness of the allegations levelled in the complaint, the LG has desired that the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, may consider referring the matter to the NIA for conducting comprehensive investigation into the matter," the letter to the Home



Ministry read.

Bhullar, who is in Amritsar Central Jail, was convicted in connection with the killing of nine people in a bomb blast in 1993 in Delhi. He was sentenced to death by a designated TADA court on August 25, 2001 and is undergoing life imprisonment after the Supreme Court commuted his death sentence.

Reacting to the development, senior AAP leader and Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj called it "yet another conspiracy against Kejriwal at the behest of

"They are losing all seven seats in Delhi and are rattled by the fear of defeat in Lok Sabha polls," he claimed, adding that the LG is the agent of BJP and the party had done something similar before also in Punjab elections.

The complaint was filed by World Hindu Federation's National General Secretary Ashoo Mongia.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with NDA candidates and leaders at a public meeting ahead of Lok Sabha polls in Berhampur,

BJP's all-weather ally in **Odisha faces Modi heat**

NEW DELHI/BERHAMPUR

ess than two months before Less than two months.

The announcement of Lok Sabha polls, when the BJP and BJD were discussing an alliance in Odisha and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik received praise from Prime Minister Narendra Modi at public rallies, the latter asserted on Monday that the expiry date of the BJD Government in Odisha is June 4, the day when Lok Sabha and Assembly election results will

be announced.

Addressing his first election rally in the State, Modi said, "Odisha mein BJD ast hain, Congress past hai aur log BJP per ashwasth hai. Sirf BJP ummido ka naya suraj ban kar ubhri hain (in Odisha, the BJD is setting sun, the Congress is battered and people are sure of BJP. And the BJP has emerged as the only ray of hope for the people)." BJD leaders expressed dismay and complete shock over the

PM's 'sharp attack' on the

party, as well as Patnaik, who left no stone unturned to the NDA Parliament. In February this year, he sent Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to the Rajya Sabha under the BJD

Patnaik also regarded the BJP with a tacit strategy, as it never aligned with the Congress-led Opposition alliance or any Third Front, which was proposed a year ago by several non-BJP parties to challenge Modi in the Lok Sabha polls.

Both parties were working to forge an alliance after breaking ties 15 years ago, though they cooperated in

tandem on legislative matters. In an apparent dig at Naveen Patnaik, the Prime Minister said, "Odisha needs a CM who understands Odia language and culture." 'The BJP will form a double-

engine Government here after the ongoing elections. The expiry date of the BJD

Government is June 4, 2024," Modi said at the Berhampur

When the talks were ongoing until they proved futile at the end of March, both Modi and Patnaik acknowledged each other's contributions, despite not being partners in Governments.

The pact was formed in 1998, orchestrated by senior leaders Bijay Mohapatra and the BJP's stalwart strategist late Pramod Mahajan. In

1998 Patnaik was Minister of Steel and Mines in the Vajpayee Cabinet. Patnaik 'Naveen always regarded the

BJP as a party of late PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The alliance was successful and even when in between there were no trucks, the BJD was tacitly with BJP in every sphere and never aligned with the Opposition side," said a BJD leader also quoting Patnaik's reaction post Modi's speech.



Badruddin Ajmal

Rakibul Hussain

Besides, Aditya Yadav, the son of SP national general secretary Shivpal Singh Yadav, is making his electoral debut from the Budaun Lok Sabha seat which was represented by his cousin Dharmendra Yadav in 2014. The 10 constituencies in UP that will vote in the third phase on Tuesday are



Sambhal, Hathras (SC), Agra Fatehpur Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Budaun, Aonla Bareilly. In the earlier two phases of elections, polling was held in 16 out of the total 80 Lok Sabha constituencies



Sikri,

members, polling will be held to seal the fate of Union Minister SP Singh Baghel, UP Tourism Minister Iaiveer Singh, Minister of State for

Besides the Yadav family

Revenue Anoop Pradhan Balmiki. Baghel, Jaiveer Singh, Balmiki

contesting from Agra (SC), Mainpuri, and Hathras (SC) Lok Sabha constituencies respectively. Rajveer Singh, son of former Chief Minister of UP and Bharativa Janata Party

stalwart Kalyan Singh, is looking to score a hat-trick from the Etah parliamentary constituency, which was also enresentec in Kalyan Singh as a candidate of the Jan Kranti Party. In Bareilly, the main contest has narrowed down to the BJP's Chhatrapal Singh Gangwar and Praveen Singh Aron of the SP after the nomination paper of Bahujan Samaj Party candidate Master Chhotey Lal Gangwar was rejected.

Capital sees 67 per cent surge in wrong side driving prosecutions

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

A staggering surge of almost 67 per cent in the number of prosecutions for 'wrong side driving' was witnessed in the national Capital in 2024, during the period from January 1 to April 30, compared to the same period in the previous year. While in the earlier year, a total of 18,047 violators of traffic rules were caught by the traffic police in the city, the number saw a considerable jump, taking the total to 30,062 in 2024.

A Delhi Traffic Police official said in response to the alarming increase in incidents of driving against the flow of traffic in the Capital city, the Delhi Traffic Police has launched a robust crackdown campaign to ensure road safety and discipline.

"Over the past few months, there has been a noticeable surge in the number of vehicles violating traffic norms by

driving against the designated flow of traffic. This reckless behaviour not only endangers the lives of the offenders but also poses a significant threat to other road users, leading to a rise in accidents and traffic congestion," said the official.

The police have intensified its measures in order to curb this dangerous practice. Special teams have been deployed

across key intersections and thoroughfares to monitor traffic flow and identify violators. Strict legal action, including fines penalties, is being taken against individuals found driving against the established traffic

direction," said the authorities. Further, top 10 traffic circles have been identified by the police with

Najafgarh area topping the list with 1,3289 violators. Sarita Vihar stands at the second number with 1,333 violators, followed by 1,133 in BhajanPura, 1,093 in Punjabi Bagh, 1,062 in Kalyan Puri, 1,056 in Kotwali, 1,041 in Dwarka, 998 in Sangam Vihar, 968 in Rajouri Garden and 966 in Kamla Market.

"The Delhi Traffic Police has also conducted

comprehensive analysis of the top ten traffic circles with the highest number of challans issued in 2024. This study makes it possible to target enforcement operations to improve road safety adherence to traffic

regulations by identifying the areas with the highest prevalence of these types of offences," a senior police statement by the traffic police said.

In a bid to raise awareness and make

citizens understand the importance of adhering to traffic rules and regulations, the traffic police is collaborating with various stakeholders, including authorities and educational "Public outreach institutions. programmes, awareness campaigns, and educational initiatives are being conducted to instil a sense of responsibility and civic duty among all

road users," the police said. Further, they urged citizens to prioritise safety and compliance with traffic laws while commuting on the city's roads. "It is imperative for every individual to respect traffic regulations, follow designated traffic flow directions, and contribute towards creating a safer and more orderly environment for all," the

Marine heatwave scorches pristine coral reefs of Lakshadweep

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The vibrant corals of the The VIDIAIN COLLEGE PROPERTY AND PROPERTY AN sea nestled in India's smallest union territory off the coast of Kerala are losing their sheen as it is experiencing prolonged marine heatwaves since late October 2023.

These marine heat waves characterised by extended periods of abnormally high ocean temperatures, have pushed the Degree Heating Week (DHW) indicator above

Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) as they observed alarming levels of coral bleaching, indicating significant stress on marine ecosystems in the region. Coral bleaching occurs when water becomes excessively warm,

within their tissues. Experts

say bleached corals are not

4 °C-weeks, posing a severe threat to coral health, said scientists at the ICAR-Central temperature

causing corals to expel the microscopic algae residing



dead but are at risk of starvation and disease. "Such heat stress levels signify

a severe threat to coral health. leading to extensive bleaching where corals lose the symbiotic

compromising their survival by depriving them of essential

continues to rise, reaching beyond 12 °C weeks, it could

precipitate an unprecedented biodiversity crisis due to multispecies mortality," KR Sreenath, senior scientist at CMFRI, said on Monday. According to the National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this level of DHW poses a substantial risk of coral bleaching, threatening the region's diverse marine region's ecosystems. Corals are living organisms

barrier, protecting these islands against the swelling of the seas, and keeping salt water out of the limited freshwater sources in the region. Shelton Padua, another senior scientist, identified the

marine life to thrive, especially

fish. Coral reefs are a natural

primary causes of these marine heat waves as excessive heat atmospheric transfer coupled with shifts in ocean currents, leading to unusually high that make up the reefs and water temperatures. provide the ecosystem for

Rajani

First voter casts ballot via postal ballot at SDO office

n a momentous occasion marking the commencement of the electoral process, the first voter exertheir franchise through a postal ballot at the polling station established within the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) office premises. District Election Officer, Ananya Mittal, oversaw the proceedings, ensuring that the election process unfolded smoothly and adhered to the principles of fairness and transparency.

Accompanied by Deputy Development Commissioner Manish Kumar, Project Director of Integrated Tribal Development Agency (PD ITDA) Dipankar Chaudhary, and other officials, Ananya Mittal conducted a thorough inspection of the polling sta-



tion. She provided necessary instructions to election personnel to ensure the integrity of the electoral process and to address any potential challenges that may arise during the voting period.

As a gesture of appreciation for being the first voter in this crucial electoral exercise, the individual was presented with flowers, symbolizing the significance of their participation in shaping the democratic process.

presence The esteemed officials underscores the commitment of

the administration to uphold the democratic values and principles of free and fair elections. Their vigilance and proactive measures aim to facilitate a conducive environment for voters to exercise their right to vote without any hindrance or

electoral drive, which commenced with the casting of the first postal

ballot, is set to continue until May 10, providing ample time for eligible voters to participate in the democratic process and contribute to the selection of their representatives.

As the electoral machinery gears up for the forthcoming elections, the administration remains dedicated to ensuring that every voter's voice is heard and that the electoral process reflects the true spirit of democracy. Voting will continue from

9 am in the postal ballot polling center built at SDO office, Dhalbhum. Voters of districts of fourth phase Lok Sabha Parliamentary area are using their franchise.

DBMS student tops Jharkhand in ICSE with 99.6 Per Cent marks work and routine study.

PNS: JAMSHEDPUR

Students of Steel City have once again showcased their academic excellence in the class 10th ICSE examination conducted by the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE), New Delhi. Priyanshu Kundu, a student of DBMS English School, emerged as the city topper with an outstanding score of 99.6 per cent marks in the class 10th ICSE examination. Following closely behind is Diya Biswas from Loyola School, securing the second position with 99.4 per cent marks in ICSE.

Priyanshu Kundu harbors aspirations of becoming a doctor in the future. His parents, Madhusudan Kundu, a cloth merchant, and mother Sunita



housewife, are Kundu, a understandably proud of his remarkable achievement.

Diya Biswas, expressing her joy, stated, "I am happy with my performance. I was keeping my fingers crossed, and I am glad that my efforts have brought cheers for my family." Busy receiving calls from friends and media, she attributed her success to hard

Principal of D.B.M.S English School, proudly announced that the school has achieved a 100% result in both ICSE and ISC Board Examinations 2024. All 217 students in ICSE and 160 students in ISC Examination 2024 have passed. Moreover, a total of 79 students secured above 90% in ICSE, and 33 students excelled in the ISC examination, with 22 in the science stream and 11 in the commerce stream. She expressed her happiness and pride in the students' achieve-Father ments. Vinod Fernandes, Principal of Loyola School, congratulated the students for their remarkable performance and wished them all the best for their future

Medics boycott classes demanding water and electricity in medical college



Irate boy and girl medicos tell the principal of the medical college about the water and electricity crisis. PNS

PNS: DALTONGANJ

Boy and girl medicos of the Medinirai medical college at Pokhraha in Daltonganj today boycotted their classes.

Their boycott was in protest against the acute and severe crises of water and electricity in the campus.

The medical college is badly languishing for water and electricity. There is hardly any day when water and electricity do not cause hardships to the students.

There live in the campus around 100 faculties and their family members who are equally badly affected by the water and electricity crisis here. Boy and girl medicos said they are buying drinking water while for their

daily chores like wash room, bath and some minor washings the acute scarcity of water stares at them.

The mess incharge of the medical college here has opted for pattal plates for breakfast, lunch and dinner of the students in place of crockery just for water as dish washing requires a lot of water and the mess has not much of the water.

The principal of the medical college Dr Kamender Prasad has admitted that there is a severe crisis of water and electricity in the campus. He said the municipal corporation gives 2 water tankers only and that too once in a day which is very insufficient. The principal said he has written a letter to

the city commissioner Md Jawed Hussain today urging him to provide 5 water tankers in morning and 5 water tankers in evening to tide over the water crisis in the campus of the medical

> The city commissioner told this correspondent today that the municipal corporation would be planning to press in 5 water tankers in the morning and 5 water tankers in the evening in this

Boy and girl medicos said the college management is hardly any serious about this problem as had the management been any concerned about it before their act to boycott classes would not have occurred today.

also took feedback after talking to the leaders and urged them to step up campaigns in favour of party candidates . It can be said that his main objective was to pacify the dissidents. First of all Laxmikant Vajpayee met Dhanbad MLA Rai Sinha at his residence. After a long conversation with Mansion and talked to former MLA Kunti Singh and Ragini Singh for a long period . Thereafter, he moved to Nirsa and met Nirsa MLA Aparna Sengupta and had discussions with them. He also hinted that failure in securing Dhanbad seat may also affect their future too as assembly elections are not far

On other hand in Congress too, the needed activism for party candidates is not visible here .Alike BJP Congress too faces internal factionalism. However, till now no senior Congress leader from state or centre has yet reached Dhanbad to counter this

BJP starts damage control exercise. **Congress yet to** begin in Dhanbad

PANKAJ: DHANBAD

election whether the BJP or Congress faces the danger of factionalism since bogh declared candidates for in Dhanbad Lok Sabha

WhileBJP starts damage control exercise whereas Congress is yet to take any such step.

Efforts are on to normalize everything by either sides and hopefully for this Jharkhand BJP in-charge Laxmikant Vajpayee Dhanbad on Sunday and met selective leaders of different castes besides MLAs of assembly constituencies that play a big role in shaping the outcome of Dhanbad Lok Sabha seat.

Sources Laxmikant Vajpayee met the leaders and urged them to increase activism in favor of the controversial BJP candidate Dhullu

The state in-charge he reached Singh

Breakthrough knee surgery successfully conducted at BGH

Ayushman Bharat yojana benefits patients at Bokaro General Hospital

R SHARMA: BOKARO

okaro General Hospital achieved a significant milestone by performing a groundbreaking knee surgery using arthroscopy, marking a historic moment in the local medical community. This pioneering procedure, a first in Bokaro, has ignited new hopes in the realm of local healthcare.

The injury, sustained by a young individual due to a fall from a height, involved multiple ligament tears in the knee. Another patient suffered from torn ligaments due to twisting of the knee joint.

In the surgical process for both patients, doctors utilized arthroscopic techniques. This method enabled physicians to access the injured area through small incisions and reconstruct various ligaments, facilitating a precise and effective treatment.

The primary objective of these surgeries was to safe-



while also restoring the integrity of the knee's various ligaments. Given the intricate nature of the injuries, these operations posed a challenge to the medical team, as the injury site was highly constricted, affecting several ligaments and tendons.

The outcomes of these surgeries have been promising, with improvements observed in the patients' conditions. Consequently, residents of Bokaro will no longer need to

complex knee surgeries, as Bokaro General Hospital now offers excellent facilities for such procedures.

The successful execution of these surgeries was made possible through the tireless efforts of various doctors at BGH, including Dr. Devendra Kumar, Dr. Veerendra Kumar, Dr. Vishal Mishra, Dr. Vibhor Sharma, Dr. Surendra, Dr. Prabhat, Dr. Sumit Kumar, Dr. Pritpal, and other junior dic specialists from Bokaro District, Dr. Ranbir Singh, Dr. A.K. Singh, and Dr. Alok, contributed to the success of this event. Their discussions on the latest techniques and methodologies aim to benefit patients in the district even The event was coordinated under the guidance of the Chief Medical Officer of BGH,

Furthermore, the presence and insights of orthope-

Dr. Bibhuti Karunamay, and the head of the Orthopedics Department, Dr. M.M. Kumar. Dr. Ayaan Kumar, who hails from the state capital, showcased his expertise and demonstrated various new techniques during this live telecasted operation. BSL COC M.K Dhan high-

lighted that patients underwent surgeries under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, showcasing Bokaro General Hospital and Bokaro Steel Plant's dedication to elevating

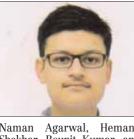
Jamshedpur students excel in ICSE and ISC Examinations



PNS: JAMSHEDPUR

In a testament to academic excellence, students of Loyola School in Jamshedpur have outshone in the ICSE and ISC examinations for the academic year 2024. The results, declared on Monday, showcase achievements remarkable across various streams, with students securing top ranks and impressive percentages. ICSE Results: 1st Rank: Diva Biswas secured the top position with an outstanding score of 99.4%. 2nd Rank: Nishtha Deo and Akshant Agarwal both attained an impressive score of 98.2%. 3rd Rank:





Naman Agarwal, Hemang Shekhar, Rounit Kumar, and Satvam Sinha shared the third position, each scoring 98%. ISC Results - Arts Stream: 1st Rank: Prevasta Bimal secured the first position with an exceptional score of 98%. 2nd Rank: Tooba Jannat achieved a remarkable score of 97.75%.







of 96.75%. ISC Results Commerce Stream: 1st Rank: Raghav Agarwal emerged as the topper with an outstanding score of 99%. 2nd Rank: Tushita secured an impressive score of 98%. 3rd Rank: Ishaan Vats achieved a notable score of 96.75%. ISC Results -Science Stream: 1st Bank: Shashwata Ganguly secured the top position with an impressive score of 97.5%. 2nd Madhav Varshney attained a commendable score of 95.5%. 3rd Rank: Satvam Kumar achieved a notable

Urbanization and industrialization heighten Asthma risk: Dr. Jagdish Lohia



PNS: JAMSHEDPUR

Exposure to triggering factors such as urbanization and industrialization significantly exacerbates asthma symptoms, warns Dr. Jagdish Lohia. Consultant Interventional Pulmonologist at Brahmananda Narayana Jamshedpur. Hospital, Speaking on the pressing issue of asthma exacerbation, Dr. Lohia underscored the detrimental impact of longterm exposure to smoke whether it emanates from outdoor sources like vehicle exhaust and industrial emissions or indoor sources like biomass fuel combustion.

Identifying key risk factors for asthma exacerbation, Dr. Lohia emphasized that individuals with blood relatives suffering from asthma, those with other allergic conditions such as atopic dermatitis or hay fever, smokers, and those exposed to occupational triggers like chemicals are particvulnerable. Furthermore, he highlighted the prevalence of indoor

allergens such as house dust

mites, cockroaches, dust particles, and pollen grains, as documented in an international study spanning five and encompassing 63,000 asthmatics.

Enumerating the symptoms and triggers of asthma, Dr. Lohia listed dry cough, shortness of breath, chest tightness, wheezing, and various airborne allergens, respiratory infections, cold air, air pollutants, certain medica-tions, and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) as common culprits.

He cautioned that asthma can be mistaken for other conditions such as sinusitis, respiratory viral infections, congestive heart failure, airway obstruction, and vocal cord dysfunction. In light of these challenges, Dr. Lohia stressed the importance of having an asthma action plan in place, aligning with this year's theme for Asthma Day, 'asthma Education Empowers.

Dr. Lohia outlined essential steps for managing asthma effectively, including identifying triggers with professional assistance, crafting a personalized asthma action plan, minimizing exposure to triggers, recognizing warning signs, adhering to medication regimens, and using inhalers correctly.

urbanization and industrialization continue to shape our environment. Dr. Lohia's insights serve as a timely reminder of the imperative to prioritize asthma education and proactive management strategies to mitigate the impact of this chronic respiratory condition on public

Anoushka Popli becomes commerce

BJP conducts door-to-door campaign, booth-level meetings in Bokaro



Every day, BJP workers in the Bokaro Assembly are actively engaging in door-to-door campaigns and organizing booth-level meetings in various areas. Under the chairmanship of Manoj Singh, Cooperative Society President of Bokaro Assembly Constituency, a booth-level workers meeting was held on Sunday evening at the Mandal office, attended by BJP's Dhanbad Lok Sabha candidate Dhullu Mahato, Bokaro MLA Biranchi Narayan, Co-coordinator of Lok Sabha, Rohit Lal Singh, and Bokaro Assembly in-charge Chandrashekhar Agrawal. The meeting commenced with the offering of flowers to portraits of great leaders, followed by a warm welcome and felicitation of all the guests by the Mandal President and officials. Dhullu Mahato expressed confidence in the leadership of the Modi government, stating that under his skilled leadership, the country is progressing steadily. He highlighted the Modi government's vision to develop India into a prosperous nation by 2047 and urged everyone to work towards realizing this dream by ensuring a Modi government with 400 seats in the center. He emphasized the benefits of various schemes of the Modi government reaching every village and city.

MLA Biranchi Narayan praised the acceptance of Modi by the people of Bokaro, attributing it to Modi's unprecedented achievements in the last 10 years. He highlighted Modi's bold decisions like abrogation of Article 370 and 35A in Kashmir, which integrated Kashmir into India and elevated the country's

economy to the third position globally.

Co-coordinator Rohit Lal Singh commended the people of Bokaro for their significant contribution to BJP's victory in the last election, mentioning the increase in votes from 1,84,000 to over 2 lakhs this time, ensuring BJP candidate Dhullu Mahato's journey to Delhi. The meeting was attended by several district officials and workers, including Deputy District President Dilip Srivastava, Kamlesh Rai, Ashok Kumar Pappu, Indra Kumar Jha, Vinay Anand, Vinod Sinha, Vipin Kumar, Prakash Chatterjee, Chandrashekhar Singh, Arun Varnawal, Sumant Singh, Avinash Jha, Jitendra Prasad, Raju Saw, Sanjay Prasad, Anita Singh, Rinku Singh, Tejpal Singh, Neeraj Pandey, Bhola Saw, Sanjay Rajak ,Manoj Rajak and others.

Training Session for IT Nodal Teachers on SAFAL at DPS Ranchi tion procedures and result

DPS Ranchi hosted a significant training session aimed at IT teachers from schools enrolled in the Structured Assessment for Analyzing Learning (SAFAL) 2024-25 programme. The session, organized by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), saw enthusiastic participation from 185 teachers from the state of Jharkhand eager to enhance their understanding of the assessment program.

The Resource Person leading the session was Amit Dutta, IT Master Trainer. The session was graced by the presence of Deepanshu Goyal, Assistant Secretary (Academics), CBSE, New Delhi and Dr. Ram Singh, CBSE City Coordinator cum the Principal of DPS Ranchi.

SAFAL, an assessment initiative aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of stu-



programme's primary objective is to identify areas of strength and weakness in students' learning journeys, facilitating targeted interventions to improve learning outcomes. Such initiatives resonate with CBSE's broader mission of fostering holistic education and ensuring the overall development of stu-

dents. SAFAL is a competen-

cy-based assessment for

Grades 3, 5 and 8 to assess

the progress of foundational

comes and competencies among students During the training ses-

sion, participants received detailed briefings on the technical aspects of the SAFAL platform. assessment Discussions also centered around potential challenges and troubleshooting methods to ensure the smooth conduct of the assessment process. Moreover, participants gained insights into the examination process, including registradeclaration protocols. In his address, the Chief

Guest Deepanshu Goyal emphasized the pivotal role of educators in shaping the educational landscape. He underscored the importance of initiatives like SAFAL in enabling teachers to better understand and address students' learning needs. He urged participants to leverage the knowledge gained from the training session to drive positive change in their classrooms.

Dr. Ram Singh highlighted the significance of collaborative efforts in fostering educational excellence. He commended the commitment of the participating teachers towards enhancing their pedagogical skills. Encouraging them to embrace innovation adaptability, expressed confidence in their ability to make a profound

impact on learning outcomes.

stream topper at St. Xavier School, Bokaro In a remarkable achievement, Anoushka Kaur Popli, a student of St. Xavier School in Bokaro, has emerged as the

topper in the commerce stream, securing an outstanding score of 94.75%. Her steltions her as the second overall topper in the school. Behind Anoushka's success lies a supperformance not only marks her as the cream of the portive family environment crop in her field but also posi-

deeply rooted in education. She is the daughter of B.S. Popli, the Executive Director (Personnel) at SAIL's corporate office, and Gurjeet Kaur Popli, a respected educator at one of Bokaro's premier schools. Their guidance and encouragement undoubtedly played a pivotal role in shaping Anoushka's

academic journey and foster-

lence. Anoushka's achievement not only reflects her dedication and hard work but also serves as an inspiration to her peers and aspiring students across Bokaro. As she sets her sights on future endeavors. her success story stands as a testament to the power of determination, support, and academic pursuit in realizing

ing her commitment to excel-

RANCHI I TUESDAY I MAY 7, 2024

ED recovers over Rs 30 cr from house help of Minister Alamgir Alam's PS

Raids were conducted in connection with money laundering scam in Rural \bar{D} evelopment Dept

ROSHAN KUMAR : RANCHI

Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday morning conducted raids at multiple locations in Ranchi and claimed to have recovered a huge amount of "unaccounted" cash during searches of premises allegedly linked to Jharkhand Rural Minister Development Alamgir Alam's Personal Secretary Sanjiv Lal.

The raids were conducted at Builder Munna Singh's Tejaswini in house Apartment, Pee Pee Compound, Main Road. Munna Singh is said to be close to Sanjeev Lal. House of Sanjeev Lal's servant Jahangir Alam in Syed located Residency Gadhikhana Chowk. House of Sanjeev Lal, PA of Alamgir



Officials of ED count recovered unaccounted cash during a search operation on the premises of a domestic help allegedly linked to the personal secretary of Minister Alamgir Alam. In Ranchi on Monday. Pix by Ratan Lal

Alam, located in Deendaval Nagar. House of Vikas Kumar, Engineer, Road

Construction Department, Sail City. Engineer Kuldeep Minj's house in Chirondi on

Bodeya Road. Kuldeep's posting is in Lohardaga. The ED also raided the hideouts of people close to suspended Chief Engineer Virendra

However, the muchtalked raid was at the household help of Sanjiv Lal, Secretary Personal Alamgir Alam. According to reports, the agency recovered more than Rs 30 crore cash from the Jahangir the household help of Sanjiv Lal, Personal Secretary to Alamgir Alam located at Gadikhana area of State Capital.

Video footage of the search showed wads of currency notes spread in a room that is alleged to be of the domestic help of Sanjiv Lal PS to Alamgir Alam.

Congress leader Alamgir Alam, 70, is Jharkhand's

Rural Development Minister and represents the Pakur seat in the state assembly.

The searches were carried out in connection with a laundering case against the former chief engineer of the rural develdepartment, opment Virendra K Ram, who was arrested by the probe agency last year.

Veerendra K Ram, accused of amassing property worth 100 Crore, was arrested by the ED in February 2023 in a money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in the implementation of some

The ED raids which started in the morning continued till evening, several cash counting machines from banks were brought for counting cash.

Apart from this, the ED has recovered Rs 3 crore from the flat of builder Munna Singh in Tejaswini Apartment located in PP Compound. Munna Singh is said to be close to minister Alamgir Alam's PA Sanjeev Lal. According to information received from sources, servant Jahangir Alam has told during ED's interrogation

the minister's PA Sanjeev Lal. In the matter of recovery of cash from PA Sanjeev Lal's hideout, Minister Alamgir Alam said that before this Sanjeev had been PA of two ministers each. Whatever you people are seeing on TV, we are also seeing the same, now what will be the conclusion of ED will be told later. Sanjeev is my departmental PS, he is a government employee and we hire PS

that this money belongs to

only after seeing him as experienced. Even before this, Sanjeev had been PA to not one but two ministers. It was on that basis that we brought him.

The ED raid which started

in the morning continued till evening. ED's Additional Joint Director Kapil Raj reached the residence of Minister Alamgir Alam's PA assistant Jahangir Alam on Monday evening. During the ED raid, when we talked to Jahangir's neighbors and people living nearby, they gave many information on the condition of anonymity. The place where ED has raided and recovered crores of rupees is not a residential area. On one side of the road there are two blocks of fourstorey buildings and on the other side there are mud houses made of asbestos.

second floor in a block of this building.

The name of the building is Sir Syed Residency. People say that Jahangir used to come by scooter most of the time. He would park his car and go straight to his flat and leave after some time. Many times, at night, big vehicles and well-dressed new faces would come to meet him, but neither Jahangir talked much to anyone nor the people who came to meet him. When the ED raid took place and crores of rupees in cash started coming out, no one could believe that a person who used to travel on a scooter had so much money with him. People living nearby say that the ED took the ill-gotten money, what would have happened if they had given some money to us.

JMM-Cong govt gifted deep rooted corruption to State, says BJP

INDIA bloc leaders are involved in corrupt practices



BJP State President Babulal Marandi along with others during a press conference in Ranchi on Monday. PNS

BJP State president and former Chief Minister Babulal Marandi targeting the Indi alliance said that in the Indi alliance rally, former chief minister Hemant Soren who is in jail in connection with money laundering scam was presented as if he had nothing to do with corruption. The leaders addressing the rally repeatedly said that Hemant Soren is being implicated because they are tribals. Marnadi said that however, the reality is that during his Hemant worked to completely tarnish the honor and dignity of the tribals. The identity of the tribals is that they are easy going and simple. He has no connection whatsoever with the irregularities, but in the last 4 years of being in power, Hemant Soren nas committed looted natural resources or mineral wealth, himself has been involved in loot and under his protection there are middlemen, brokers. They did not leave coal, iron, sand or even service land. Tribal land was also looted by making fake documents. He said that a moun-

tain of Rs 350 crore notes was

seized from the Rajya Sabha member of Congress. The world saw that too. The counting of notes found here did not end in one day, it continued for several days. Man and even machine got tired. If proper investigation is done, the involvement of the present or former Chief Minister in the money will also be seen. Today cash worth more than Rs 25 crore were also found at the hideouts of corrupt officers, brokers and middlemen in Jharkhand. Even today crores of rupees have been found in the house of Alamgir Alam's PS servant. Indi alliance leader Rahul Gandhi should tell whose

He said that if such a huge amount of money has been found in the house of a servant, then if the houses of his assistants, his secretaries or ministers, brokers and middlemen associated with the government are also raided, then I don't know how many crores of rupees will be found. This cannot even be imagined. The people of the Indi Coalition are completely disappointed. They want to win the elections on the strength of money. The Jharkhand government is completely

involved in corruption. Former Chief Minister taking mineral leases in his own name, taking land in an industrial area in the name of his wife, taking mining lease the name of brother in Pakur district, taking mining lease in the name of press advisor, taking mining lease in the name of family.

He said that the brokerengineer among them is also in jail. If the money received today or Rs 350 crore is investigated, its telegram will also reach the prince of Congress. The extortion business continued in the state for the last 4 years. The leaders here go around saying that Hemant implicated. Kalpana Soren says that the husband was framed. What could be a bigger proof than the fact that such a huge wad of currency notes amounting to Rs 350 crore was found at the residence of a Congress leader. Already Rs 20 crore is received from the offices of one IAS. Today money has been found from the house of the servant of the personal secretary of the Congress Party minister.

He said that the Chief Secretary had written a letter to the Rural Development Secretary and all those letters were found along with the bundle of notes. He said that Minister should file an FIR immediately on the basis of the letter. Ğet the entire matter investigated by CBI. Recommend it. It should not happen that he also spends his old age in jail.

Media in-charge Shivpujan Pathak, co-media in-charge Ashok Badaik, co-media incharge Yogendra Pratap were



Jailed former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren attends the last rites of his uncle under police custody at Nemara village under Ramgarh district on Monday. PNS



Jailed former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren seeks blessing from his father Sibu Soren During the last rites of his uncle under police custody at Nemara village under Ramgarh district on Monday. PNS

54 candidates in fray for 5th phase after withdrawal of nominations

11 candidates will try their luck in Gandey Assembly bye-election



Chief Electoral Officer K Ravi Kumar during a press conference in Ranchi on Monday. PNS

Election Jharkhand K. Ravi Kumar has said that after withdrawal of nominations for the fifth phase of elections, 54 candidates remain in the fray. On the last day of withdrawal of nominations, one candidate withdrew his nomination from Chatra Lok Sabha constituency. There are now a total of 22 candi-

dates in the fray here. Two

candidates from Koderma

victory and defeat will be decided between 15 candidates here. On the other hand, no candidate has withdrawn his nomination from Hazaribagh Lok Sabha constituency. There are a total of 17 candidates in the fray here. In Gandey assembly by-election also, no candidate withdrew his candidature on the last day of withdrawal of nominations. There are a total of 11 candidates in the fray from here. So far, 118 candidates have filed nominations for the sixth phase of elections. Out of them, 25 candidates from Giridih Lok Sabha constituency, 28 from Dhanbad, 33 from Ranchi and 32 from Jamshedpur Lok Sabha constituency have filed nominations. The Chief Electoral Officer was addressing a press conference at Nirvachan Sadan, Dhurva on Monday. He informed that since the notification of the election, goods and cash worth more than Rs 74 crore 38 lakh have been seized in Jharkhand. In response to a question, he said that there is no shortage of vehicles for election work. Vehicles are being easily available as per requirement. He said that the interest of the vehicle owners is also being taken care of in taking vehicles for election work. Arrangements have been made in such a way that the vehicle which has been marked for taking in one district will not be marked in another district. Digital arrangements have also been made to ensure that the vehicle owners get the fare of the vehicle on time. The Chief Electoral Officer appealed to all the voters to post Lok Sabha election

Lok Sabha constituency have withdrawn from the fray. Now the

related content with the hashtag #MainBhiElectionAmbassador on social media handles between 6 pm to 8 pm on May 7, 2024 under the SVEEP program in the Lok Sabha General Election 2024.



Jailed former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren meets with his mother Rupi Soren During the last rites of his uncle under police custody at Nemara village under Ramgarh district on Monday. PNS



Jailed former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren with his wife Kalpana Soren goes to attend the last rites of his uncle under police custody at Nemara village under Ramgarh district on Monday. PNS

Cong candidate Yashashwini Sahay

Congress candidate Yashaswini Sahay filed her nomination papers in front of Ranchi Deputy Commissioner (DC) cum District Election Officer Rahul Kumar Sinha on Monday. During this, Yashaswini Sahay along with her father and former Union Minister Subodh Kant Sahay and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha Rajya Sabha, MP Mahua Manji were present. After filing her nomination, Sahay addressed a public meeting at Morhabadi Ground in Ranchi. Before filing nomination, she touched the feet of Chief Minister, Champai Soren and took blessings at Ranchi Collectorate building. After this she went to file her nomination. Before the nomination procession, at around seven in the morning, Yashaswini offered prayers at the Kali temple located in Doranda. After this, after worshiping in the Durga temple of Dhurva Sector-3, a nomination procession took place. The procession reached Birsa Chowk, where Yashaswini garlanded the statue of Lord Birsa Munda. After this, he paid obeisance at Hanuman Temple and Shani Temple in Hinu Chowk. After this, the nomination procession reached Kadru via Doranda AG Mod, Swami Vivekananda Chowk. Baba Ambedkar Chowk, Risaldar



Congress candidate Yashaswini Sahay files her nomination papers for Ranchi Lok Sabha election in Ranchi on Monday. Pix by Ratan Lal Here Yashaswini Sahay visit-

ed Mahavir temple.

The procession reached Argora Chowk and the Congress candidate paid obeisance at the Hanuman temple. After this the procession reached Kishoreganj Chowk via Harmu Chowk, Swami Sahajanand Chowk, Kartik Oraon Chowk, Bharat Mata Chowk. Here the Congress candidate had darshan of Mata at Santoshi Mata temple. After this, the nomination procession reached the Collectorate building via Ratu Road intersection, Zakir Hussain Park. where Yashaswini Sahay filed her nomination papers in front of former Union Minister Subodh Kant Sahay and MP

Mahua Manjhi. A large number of people including leaders and work-Baba Mazar, Kadru Bridge.

ers of Congress, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) were present in the nomination procession. Lok Sabha elections in

Ranchi are to be held in the sixth phase i.e. on May 25. Apart from Ranchi, voting will also be held on Giridih, Dhanbad and Jamshedpur parliamentary seats on the same day. The nomination process for the sixth phase is going on from April 29, which will continue till tomorrow May 6. Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on May 7. Candidates will be able to withdraw their names till May 9. Let us tell you that the Ranchi Lok Sabha constituency consists of 6 assembly constituencies namely Ichagarh, Silli, Khijri, Ranchi, Hatia and

Kanke.

RPC delegation meets DGP, CEO on misbehaviour with journalist Electoral Officer K Ravi of the delegation, the DGP

PNS: RANCHI

Senior SP, Ranchi had misbehaved with Ranchi Press Club's executive member and Nakshatra TV's senior journalist Saurabh Shukla a few days ago. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Ranchi visit, Saurabh Shukla was doing news coverage and SSP misbehaved and snatched his mic ID.

Condemning the incident strongly, a delegation of Ranchi Press Club met Jharkhand DGP Ajay Kumar Singh and Jharkhand's Chief



Ranchi Press club President Surendra Soren handed over a memorandum to DGP Ajay Singh in Ranchi on Monday. PNS

Kumar and demanded action from them. In this regard, Club's President Surendra Lal Soren said that the misbehaviour done by SSP with a senior journalist on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day is unfortunate, which the Press Club strongly condemns and while demanding action from Jharkhand's DGP and Chief Election Commissioner, it also demands that the state police should behave decently with the journalists.

Considering the demands

the delegation to investigate the matter and take action. Those who submitted the memorandum mainly included the club's president Surendra Lal Soren, secretary Amarkant, vice-president Dharmendra Giri, treasurer Kuber Singh, executive members Saurabh Shukla, Chandan Bhattacharya, former secretary of the club and senior journalist Akhilesh Singh

and Aman Mishra.

and the Chief Election

Commissioner have assured

Opposition echoing voice of Pakistan: BJP

The BJP on Monday high-lighted a series of state-ments made by INDIA Bloc leaders that it said were against the nation's interest, as the ruling party accused the Opposition of echoing the voice of Pakistan and asked people to be wary of such "trai-

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi cited Maharashtra Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar's allegation that an RSS-affiliated police officer and not terrorist Ajmal Kasab killed the then anti-terrorism squad chief Hemant Karkare and former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi's claim that the attack on IAF personnel in Jammu and Kashmir was a poll stunt to slam the party.

He cited five other instances, including Pakistani leader Chaudhry Fawad Hussain's criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and praise of Rahul Gandhi, and Farooq Abdullah's reference to Pakistan having nuclear weapons, to allege that these INDIA Bloc leaders are echoing the neighbouring country's stand.

What the National Conference leader has said is very "astounding, revealing and shocking" as so far only a few Pakistani leaders considered reckless or radicalised religious leaders have made such comments, he claimed.

Replying to a question related to Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir, the former J-K chief minister



had said that Pakistan is not wearing bangles and has nuclear weapons. Such remarks are also an insult to women, the BJP leader said. Noting that Congress leader Shashi Tharoor has written a column in a Bangladeshi newspaper slamming Modi while analysing the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, Rajya Sabha MP Trivedi said while elections are being in India he is building public opinion in another country.

The Congress leader has also referred to the Valley as India-administered-Kashmir, he

One INDIA Bloc leader is giving "cover fire" to Pakistan on Mumbai terror attack, another is speaking about its nuclear weapon while somebody is describing the martyrdom of a solider as a poll stunt, he said. Modi had said the Congress manifesto carried Muslim League's imprints, he noted, adding that every work spoken by its leaders echoed Pakistan's stand. The Left parties want the country's nuclear stockpiles

All these development are not merely a coincidence but a deliberate and dangerous experiment, Trivedi said. "In whose hands these leaders are playing," he asked, telling people to be wary of "traitors" hiding within the country. Various kinds of powers outside are attempting to halt the rise of a proud and confident India, he

At the press conference, the BJP leader also took a swipe at Rahul Gandhi over the recovery of a huge amount of cash from the house of a domestic help allegedly linked to the secretary of Jharkhand minister and Congress leader Alamgir

He said Rahul Gandhi speaks about doing an economic survey and dividing the country's wealth and the Enforcement Directorate's raid has shown the way assets are being divided in Jharkhand when so much of money, between Rs 20 crore and 30 crore, is with the help of a minister's PA.

After looking at so much amount of money, nothing is left to explain, he added.

VCs, scholars slam Rahul for FIR against Nadda, varsity appointment claims

As many as 181 academicians, including Vice Chancellors (VC) and former VCs, have accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of spreading "falsehood" regarding the appointment process for university heads and sought lawful action against In an open letter, they said the

Congress leader has alleged that vice chancellors are appointed solely on the basis of affiliation with some organisation rather than merit as they slammed his claims. The process by which VCs are selected is characterised by stringent and transparent rigorous procedure grounded in the values of meritocracy, scholarly distinction and integrity, they claimed.

Jawaharlal University Vice Chancellor Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, Delhi University VC Yogesh Singh and AICTE Chairman T G Sitharam are among the academicians who have signed onto the letter.

The selection has been completely based on academic and administrative prowess and with a vision to take universities ahead, they said. Though they did not quote Rahul Gandhi's specific claims, the Congress leader has in the past alleged that affiliations with the Hindutva organisation RSS is often the guiding factor in appointments to academia.

Among the signatories to the letter are Vinay Pathak, VC, CSJM University, Kanpur, Bhagwati Prakash Sharma, Chancellor, Pacific University,



Udaipur, N C Gautam, former Mahatma Gandhi Gramodaya Vishvavidyalaya, Chitrakoot, Alok Chakkarval, VC, Guru Ghasidas Central University, Bilaspur and Vinay Kapoor, fomer VC, BR Ambedkar National Law University, Sonipat.

Universities in India have undergone a significant transition as evident in their ascent in global rankings, prominent accreditations, world class research and innovations, curriculum facelift narrowing the indus-try academia gap and higher placement prospects reaf-firming their commitment to academic quality and societal relevance, they asserted.

They said, "The array of academic disciplines and professional experiences represented amongst us stands as evidence of the unbiased and inclusive nature of the selection procedure.

It reflects their dedication to cultivating an atmosphere that values and promotes diversity, encourages independent thinking, and supports scholastic achievement,

"Rahul Gandhi has resorted to falsehood and has defamed the Office of the Vice Chancellors at large with the intent to derive political mileage out of it.

they said.

It is, therefore, earnestly prayed that appropriate action be taken against him forthwith in accordance with law," they said.

The academics said in their letter that as guardians of knowledge and administrators of academia, they maintain an unwavering commitment to maintaining the utmost levels of governance integrity, ethical behaviour, and institutional integrity. Urging everyone involved to exercise discernment in distinguishing fact from fiction, to abstain from spreading unfounded rumours, they called for dialogue that is well-informed, constructive, and supportive of their shared goal of creating a dynamic and inclusive educational

Malviya in Karnataka over social media post

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

An FIR has been registered against BJP president JP Nadda, the party's IT cell head Amit Malyiya and Karnataka unit chief BY Vijayendra in connection with a social media post allegedly intimidating members of SC and ST community not to vote for a particular candidate, police said on Monday.

On the other hand Congress alleged that professionals working for its social media department are being "harassed" and "intimidated" by police at the behest of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

The action on BJP leaders was taken following a complaint lodged by the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) with the Election Commission and police on Sunday alleging violation of model code of conduct, they said. They were booked under the sections of Representation of People Act and section 505 (2) (Statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or illwill between classes) of the Indian Penal Code, a senior police officer said.

In the complaint, the KPCC cited a video uploaded on the social media platform 'X' by the official account of Karnataka State BJP which, it alleged, is operated by Malviya, on instructions of Nadda, Vijayendra and Social Media incharge — Karnataka BJP, on May 4. "The said video posted on

social media featured animat-

Congress targets Modi Government



leader) Rahul Gandhi and (Chief Minister) Siddaramaiah. In the clip, the SC, ST and OBC community are portrayed as 'eggs" in a nest and it also suggested Rahul Gandhi planting a big egg labelled as Muslim community. It is projected as though funds are being fed to the chick depicting the Muslim community, which then kicks out SC, ST and OBC communities," it alleged.

Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate alleged that people of the Congress' social media team are being "harassed". The opposition party's assertion came days after the Delhi Police's Special Cell arrested a national coordinator of the Congress' social media team for allegedly uploading and circulating online a doctored video

'Professionals are being intimidated at the behest of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. These professionals are the people who chose the ideology of Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Bose and stood with the

The BJP is scaring those who chose truth and justice and rejected your false worship," Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said.

Rapid infrastructure development aiding destination weddings in India: Ministry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Union Tourism ▲ Ministry on Sunday said the rapid infrastructure development happening across the country, especially improvement in accessibility due to number of airports getting doubled in last few years besides improvement in digital and physical connectivity are aiding destination weddings across the

Speaking during the inauguration of First Wed in India expo at Rambagh Palace in Jaipur, Manisha Saxena (IAS) of Tourism, said along with cultural aspects of India the holistic development is a boon for destination wedding which also is a booster to the economy as well as employment.

An initiative of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the 'Wed in India' expo is being organised jointly with Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan and



Chambers of Commerce and destination for Wed-in-India. Industry (FICCI) alongside The Northeast is also fast also supported by Hotel and Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR), Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA) and Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators "With its unique blend of

natural beauty and cultural traditionswhich can actually invoke magic in weddings, Rajasthan along with Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Haryana,

of Indian Kerala, and Goa are favourite tination especially the tea gardens of Assam, Darjeeling, Siliguri, Mizoram, and Manipur," Saxena added.

Citing the experience of one of the G20 Tourism Group meetings held in Goa during India's G20 Presidency, Saxena said, "We catered to all the ministerial delegates in a 500-years old house which keeps its 200 years old cutlery. India has several such kinds of assets. We, in the Ministry of Tourism, are in process of documenting this repository of assets both tangible and intangible." Delivering her address in the

inaugural session, Gayatri Rathore, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan said, "Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan is delighted to hold first ever 'Wed in India' expo. Rajasthan has long been a preferred destination for celebrity weddings due to its luxurious and opulent settings. The state's magnificent palaces forts and havelis conhotels provide a regal backdrop for extravagant celebra-

Rajasthan's world-class hospitality, traditional cuisines and vibrant entertainment create unforgettable experiences for the couples and their guests. "Setting the tone of the expo, Chetan Vohra, Chair, FICCI Wedding Tourism Taskforce & Managing Director, Wedding

Line said, "Hospitality runs in the veins of every Indian and we were raised with one belief, to open our hearts and our homes to every guest as if they were God - something we call "Atithi Deva Bhavo" The Wed in India summit is a testament to our commitment in making this dream a reality." Dr. Jyotsna Suri, Past President, FICCI & CMD, Lalit Suri Hospitality Group said, "This expo is going to be a long way towards making it international. Besides Rajasthan, India has a lot of enticing wedding destinations which are equally beautiful and appealing."

from the tourism and hospitality industry and tour operators from over 50 countries are participating in the 'Wed India'

Representatives of Tourism Boards from various states, including Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, too are participating alongside stalwarts from India's tourism, travel, and hospitality sectors.

over Chinese transgressions PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Congress on Monday targeted the Modi Government on the issue of Chinese transgressions, and asked whether it has "surrendered" thousands of square kilometres in Depsang and Demchok to China or is it still trying to return to the status quo ante before May 5, 2020. On the fourth anniversary of the clashes between Indian and Chinese troops at Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh that culminated in the on June 15, 2020 in which 20 soldiers were killed, the Congress also asked the Prime Minister when he will take responsibility for the "abysmal failure" of his China

Has anyone been held accountable for India's biggest strategic and intelligence lapse in several decades," AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh asked in a post on X.

NTA dismisses reports of NEET-UG question paper leak



Posing questions to the Prime Minister, he asked, "Do you still believe your 19 June 2020 statement, made after 20 of Galwan, that 'Na koi hamari seema mein ghus aaya hai, na hi koi ghusa hua hai' (No one has entered India nor has anyone occupied any post)". "Has your government surrendered to Chinese control over thousands of square kilometres in Depsang and Demchok for the foreseeable future or are you still trying to return to the status quo ante before 5 May 2020," he

Taking on Modi, he charged that, "The PM's clean chit to China four days later when he said 'Na koi hamari seema mein ghus aaya hai, na hi koi ghusa hua hai' was a profound insult to our fallen soldiers and became the legitimisation of Chinese control over 2,000 square kilometres of land in eastern Ladakh.'

Despite 21 rounds of military talks over four years, the situation remains unfavourable. Leh's Superintendent of Police has clearly shown that our troops were unable to reach that they could access prior to May 5, 2020, Ramesh claimed. China's aggressive build up and intrusions are not restricted to Ladakh, he said, adding that along Arunachal Pradesh, the Chinese continue to build forces and infrastructure that pose a direct threat to India's Siliguri Corridor, which connects northeast India with the rest of the country.

Baghel, Gehlot appointed AICC senior observers for Raebareli, Amethi constituencies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI/RAEBARELI

Congress on Monday appointed former Chief Ministers Bhupesh Baghel and Ashok Gehlot as AICC senior observers for Rae Bareli and Amethi Parliamentary constituencies, respectively. Party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra reached Uttar Pradesh to spearhead the campaign in Rae Bareli and Amethi, and camp in these Parliamentary constituencies from Monday to ensure the party's victory in the two high-profile seats. She met party workers in

Raebareli to bolster Rahul Gandhi's campaign from the family bastion. Rahul is pitted against BJP leader Dinesh Pratap Singh from Rae Bareli. Rae Bareli and Amethi will go to vote in the fifth phase of election on May 20.

Priyanka Gandhi will be holding hundreds of 'nukkad sabhas', meetings and door-todoor campaign programmes, the sources said. "The centre will be Rae Bareli where she will be stationed at a guest house. From booth management to outreach, everything would be handled by her," the



Strong foundations that Feroze Gandhi laid in Rae Bareli were later nurtured and strengthened by his wife and former prime minister Indira Gandhi, who won the seat in 1967, 1971 and 1980, followed by friends and members of the Gandhi family. In Amethi, a non-Gandhi family member is in the fray after 25 years to take on incumbent BJP MP Smriti Irani. Irani had defeated Rahul Gandhi by more than 55,000 votes in 2019 in Amethi, while in Rae Bareli Sonia Gandhi defeated BJP's Dinesh Pratap Singh by more

than 1,67,000 votes. Sharma was the key person who had looked after the two prestigious constituencies and been a representative of the Gandhis in the two key seats.

Coast Guard detains Iranian fishing vessel with six Indians

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The Indian Coast Guard **▲** (ICG) detained an Iranian fishing vessel, with six Indian crew, west of Beypore off the coast of Kerala late Sunday, Defence Ministry said here on Monday adding the swift seaair coordinated operation involved the ships and aircraft

After intercepting the boat, an ICG team boarded the vessel and thoroughly investigated it to check the involvement of any anti-national activity. Initial investigation revealed that the owner of the boat was an Iranian sponsor who had contracted these Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu, and issued them Iranian Visas for fishing off the Iran coast. The crew alleged that the sponsor ill-treated and

deprived them of basic living conditions, besides confiscating their passports. The crew said that they had decided to escape from Iran to India using the same boat. The detained vessel was safely brought to Kochi on Monday for further investi-

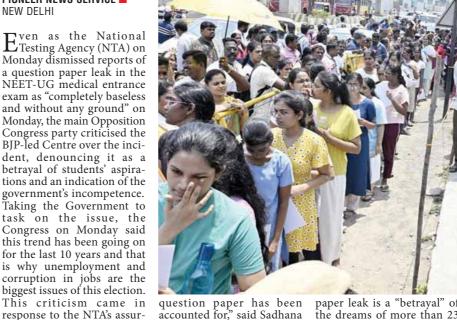
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Even as the National Testing Agency (NTA) on

NEET-UG medical entrance exam as "completely baseless and without any ground" on Monday, the main Opposition Congress party criticised the BJP-led Centre over the incident, denouncing it as a betrayal of students' aspirations and an indication of the government's incompetence. Taking the Government to

task on the issue, the Congress on Monday said this trend has been going on for the last 10 years and that is why unemployment and corruption in jobs are the biggest issues of this election. This criticism came in response to the NTA's assurance that every question paper had been properly managed and that images circulating on social media were unrelated to the actual exam

It has been ascertained from NTA's security protocols and Standard Operating Procedures that the social media posts pointing towards any paper leak are completely baseless and without any 'To put rumours to rest, it is

also stated that every single



Parashar, Senior Director, NTA. She added that no external person or agency can access the centres once the examination starts. "After the gates of the examination centres are closed, no one from outside is permitted access inside the halls, which are under CCTV surveil-

However, taking the NTA clarification with a pinch of salt, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said the news of the NEET exam

lance."

paper leak is a "betrayal" of the dreams of more than 23 lakh students and their fam-

In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, "Be it the students who dream of getting admission in college after passing 12th or the promising youth who are struggling for government jobs, the Modi government has become a curse for everyone."

The youth and their family, who have been paying the price of the BJP government's incompetence for the last 10 years with the destruction of their future, have now understood that there is a difference between speaking and running the government," he

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra too took the X platform to criticize the government. "Once again there are reports of a NEET paper leak. The future of 24 lakh youth of the country was again at stake. This trend, which has been going on with crores of promising youth for the last 10 years, is showing no sign of stopping. Will the Prime Minister of the country say anything about this?" she said.

Noting that a law against paper leaks was passed in Parliament, the Congress general secretary asked where that law is and why it is not applicable.

Congress general secretary, in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh, said news of NEET paper leak has come to light in Bihar. "Apart from this, there have also been complaints from Rajasthan about wrong sets of question papers of NEET exam being distributed at the examination centres," he said.

'In the last 7 years, more than 70 papers have been leaked. Due to this, the future of more than 2 crore candidates has been ruined. Despite there being laws regarding

paper leaks in many states, papers are being leaked," he

said. Citing some examples, Ramesh said 3.75 lakh candidates had participated in the teacher recruitment examination in Bihar on March 15 but within a few days, the exam had to be cancelled due to paper leak.

"60 lakh candidates took part in the UP Police examination on February 17 and 18 February. On February 24, the Yogi government had to cancel the examination due to paper leak," he said.

Ramesh pointed out that one of the five 'Yuva Nyay' guarantees is 'Paper Leak Se Mukti'.

"Our laws will ensure the highest standards of honesty and fairness at every stage of the examination process -from paper setting, printing, transportation, administration and inspection -- for paper-based and computerbased examinations," he said. The entrance exam was conducted on Sunday at 4,750 centres in 571 cities including

14 cities abroad. The NTA had on Sunday claimed that the distribution of wrong question papers at an exam centre in Rajasthan led to some candidates walking out with the papers. The agency had denied any leak of

Third phase of Assam polls to decide Polling in both LS seats in Goa today fate of 47 candidates in four seats

The political fate of 47 candidates in four Lok Sabha seats will be decided on Tuesday when the third and final phase of the elections in the State will be held.

Polling will begin at 7 am and conclude at 5 pm in the four constituencies — Kokrajhar (ST), Dhubri, Barpeta and Guwahati.

All eyes will be on the prestigious Guwahati seat where both BJP and Congress have put up woman nominees - Bijuli Kalita Medhi and Mira Borthakur Goswami – respectively.

The other prominent candidates are AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal who is seeking re-election for the fourth successive term from Dhubri, Congress MLA Rakibul Hussain, eight time Asom Gana Parishad legislator Phanibhushan Choudhury and CPI(M) MLA Manoranjan Talukdar. Barpeta has the highest of 14 candidates and Guwahati the lowest of eight in the fray while six women are contesting in the final phase.

The BJP has put up only one candidate in this phase for the Guwahati seat, while its alliance partners AGP are contesting in two — Dhubri and Barpeta — and the UPPL in Kokrajhar.

The Congress and the Voters Party International (VPI) are fighting in all four seats, while the BPF, the Trinamool Congress, Bharatiya Gana



Parishad, SUCI(C) Republican Party of India (Athawale) are contesting in each. The AIUDF, CPI(M), Gana Suraksha Party, Hindu Samaj Party, Asom Jana Morcha, National Road Map Party of India , Rashtriya Ulema Council. Ekam Sanatan Bharat Dal and Bahujan Maha Party are contesting in one seat each The contest in Barpeta is while 16 independents are also in the fray.

A total electorate of 82.11 lakh including 41.27 men, 40.84 women and 112 belonging to the third gender will be eligible to exercise their franchise in 9,516 polling stations.

and Polling will be held amid tight security with 60 companies of security forces deployed across the five constituencies. In Guwahati, held by the BIP, a direct contest is on the cards between BJP's Bijuli Kalita Medhi and Congress candidate Mira Borthakur Goswami, both debutants in

Lok Sabha polls. expected to be triangular among NDA partner Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) Phanibhushan candidate Choudhury, CPI(M)'s Manoranjan Talukdar and Deep Bayan of the Congress. In Dhubri, 13 candidates are

in the fray with AIUDF

seeking a fourth term, locked in a triangular contest with Congress MLA Rakibul Hussain and NDA partner AGP's Zaved Islam.

In Kokrajhar (ST), a triangular contest is also on the cards among UPPL's Jayanta Basumtary, Congress' Garjen Mushahary and Bodoland People's Front's (BPF) Kampa Borgoyary.

The sitting independent Kokrajhar MP Naba Kumar Sarania, representing the seat reserved for Scheduled Tribes since 2014, had filed his nomination papers which was rejected following the striking down of his Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

Assam Chief Electoral Officer Anurag Goel said that all arrangements have been completed for conducting the polls in a free, fair, safe and peaceful manner. In the first phase of polls held on April 19, 78.25 per cent of the electorate exercised their franchise to decide the fate of 35 candidates for the Kaziranga, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Sonitpur and Lakhimpur constituencies. In the second phase held on April 26, 81.17 per cent of the voters cast their votes to decide the fate of 61 candidates for Silchar(SC), Karimganj, Diphu (ST), Nagaon and

Darrang-Udalguri. In the outgoing Lok Sabha, BJP held nine seats, Congress three, AIUDF and an independent one each from **PTI** ■ PANAJI

More than 11 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in elections to both the Lok Sabha seats in Goa on Tuesday, where the Congress and BJP are locked in a straight fight.

The coastal state has two Lok Sabha constituencies -North Goa and South Goa.

"We are all ready with all the required facilities at polling stations. I appeal to all the voters to cast their ballots from 7 am to 6 pm," North Goa district collector Sneha Gitte said.

The polling booths are set up as per the Election Commission's guidelines.

Considering the hot weather conditions, voters will be provided refreshments and water at polling booths, she

North Goa will see the BJP's sitting MP Shripad Naik take on Congress's Ramakant Khalap, while in South Goa, the saffron party has fielded entrepreneur Pallavi Dempo against Navy-veteran-turned politician Viriato Fernandes of the Congress.

The South Goa Lok Sabha seat is currently held by Congress' Francisco Sardinha.

Sixteen candidates, eight each in North and South Goa Lok Sabha constituencies, are in the fray.

As per the data on the website of the office of Goa's Chief Electoral Officer, the state has 11,79,644 voters, including 5,80,710 in North Goa and 5,98,934 in South Goa, as on April 19. Of the total number of

voters, there are 5,71,617 men, 6,07,715 women and 12 members of the transgender community.

Besides, there are 300 service voters, including 133 in North Goa and 167 in South Goa, the data stated.

The run-up to the elections saw rallies by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for the BJP, and the Congress roped in its senior leaders Shashi Tharoor and Pawan Khera for campaigns in Goa. A total of 1,725 polling stations have been set up across the coastal state, including 863 in North Goa and 862 in South Goa, state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Ramesh Verma said in a media statement.

"Of these, 43 model polling booths have been identified in North Goa and 45 in South Goa. The move is aimed at streamlining the voting process and reducing the waiting time," he said. Medical camps will be held at eight model polling stations

voters, Verma said. "After casting their vote, senior citizens can avail health checks by doctors from the Directorate of Health Services," he said.

in urban areas where there is

a higher percentage of elderly

To empower women voters and promote gender equality, 40 dedicated polling stations, also known as 'pink booths', have been set up in both districts, the official said. "These polling stations will

be exclusively managed by women personnel, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for female voters to exercise their democratic right," he said. Verma said environment sustainability has been prioritised, and 40 'green' polling stations have been set

up.
"The eco-friendly booths are decorated using sustainable materials such as bamboo and coconut leaves sourced from local vendors, reflecting a commitment to reducing the ecological footprint of the electoral process," he

Divyang polling stations have also been set up — five in North Goa and three in South Goa, he added.

crore funds properly for

water supply.
Likewise, the allotment of

Adarsh Gram Yojana model

project was pending for three

years and was just released

ahead of elections, he alleged.

"Illegal transfer of tribal land

is rampant in Jharkhand, it is

a major issue and the state

government should have

Congress treated tribals as vote bank; BJP under Modi gave them respect: Arjun Munda

PTI KHUNTI (JHARKHAND)

Union minister Arjun Munda on Monday claimed that the Congress and INDIA bloc converted tribals into "mere vote bank". while the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi ensured that these people get due respect.

Attacking the Congress, the former three-time Jharkhand chief minister claimed that the party believed that tribals who lived in jungles were criminals by nature and the Vajpayee Bihari government first took interest in their welfare.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to ensure that they get due recognition and respect. This is why the Prime Minister chose Khunti to launch major schemes including a Rs 24,000 crore programme for PVTGs (Particularly

Vulnerable Tribal Groups) who took interest in their from Khunti," Munda said in welfare and later Modi an interview with PTI.

Munda, Union tribal and Lok Sabha contesting from Khunti elections reserved seat that is identified with tribal icon Birsa Munda. In 2019, Munda won the Khunti LS seat, facing the problems of trafficking, poverty, opium cultivation and Naxalism, Congress Kalicharan Munda.

"The Congress in its 60 years regime treated tribals as mere vote bank only. There were tribal seats," Munda claimed. no schemes no policies for them. When their rights and systems were adopted later, Congress ensured that tribal issues came under the Home Department. They believed that those who resided in jungles were criminal by nature," he claimed.

It was the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee

ensured justice to them, Munda said.

agriculture minister, is He claimed the tribal society understood the game plan of Congress that it wanted to keep them away from development to reap the benefits of their innocence and now they are aware of human their rights and understood who was working for them. "They will vote for BJP under

with a slender margin of a dynamic and visionary 1,445 votes, and is once again leader like Prime Minister locked in a direct fight with Modi. We are confident to candidate cross the 400 mark this time and in Jharkhand, we will win 'This is true that tribal all 14 Lok Sabha seats To a question he admitted that Khunti and Simdega are known for human trafficking, particularly of girls.

> I have undertaken an innovative step to boost confidence and provide employment to girls here. I had initiated moves like learning while earning - a



employment for tribal girls. "I am happy that an Now mobile parts of mobile phones like Apple are being made by Khunti girls," he

Massive horticulture initiatives are also being taken to bring youths engaged in drug trafficking and extremism programme to ensure mainstream, he said

The minister said that despite witnessing record production unprecedented experiment is of fruits and vegetables, becoming successful as Khunti is not able to reap the thousands of girls have been benefits as it lacks food links.

> Munda said, "I admit that the lacks eastern region infrastructure channelised agencies. The procurement of products from the region through minimum support price is also less. The governments in the past did not pay attention

to this. But we are now he said "We have sufficient they failed to utilise Rs 5,000 committed to ensuring a agriculture infrastructure in the belt for cash crops and horticulture so that these can be sent to the national market. Jharkhand will be accorded special attention." On lac and tussar silkworm cultivation, he said steps were being undertaken to promote these in national and international markets, while a large laboratory is being set up at Khunti under Honey Mission.

On the opposition's promise to introduce MSP on all agroproduce, he said it may be a populist measure in the short said that they deliberately term, but how much it will be heneficial in the long run is a matter of research.

They are promising this on the eve of this election whereas they were in power for 60 years. They would have done it long back," the BJP leader said.

On the BJP's promise of providing ration for 80 crore people for the next five years,

stock and there is no need for imports. Asked how confident he was of his win since the margin

last time was only 1,445 votes,

the minister said, "I accept the contest was close last time. But the people of Khunti are deciding the best for them." He listed the development measures that have taken place at Khunti, such as

teachers in existing ones. alliance in the state, Munda delayed release of funds and imn

Countering alliance's accusation that funds were not released under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna and hence the state had

checked it. Unfortunately, the former CM himself faces such charges of grabbing land," he said referring to an allegation against Hemant Soren.

On the INDIA bloc's accusation that the Centre has been using CBI and ED to harass opposition leaders, he said if they felt so, they could seek justice from the court of law. Munda attacked the state government for keeping control over sand, saying that

Congress dream to win elections on false promises will be shattered: Anurag Thakur

PTI ■ HAMIRPUR (HP)

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Monday said the Congress leaders are living in a fool's paradise and their dream "to win the elections on false promises" will be shattered once the poll results are announced on June

The BJP leader also took potshots at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, saying he has forgotten his own slogan "daro mat" and running from one seat to another while fearing defeat in the Lok Sabha elections

"First he ran from Amethi to Wayanad and now he is contesting from Rae Bareli and the Congress is sure to be wiped out from Rae Bareli also," he told PTI.

Thakur, who is contesting from the Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat, claimed that the people of the constituency were with him and his victory margin this time would be more than the previous margin of about four lakh

Thakur, a four time MP, expressed optimism that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) would win

more than 400 seats. Escalating his attack on the opposition, the BJP leader



said the Congress said the Congress gave thousands of acres of India's land to foreign powers during its 60 years of rule.

gave Katchatheevu Island to Sri Lanka, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi strengthened the army in the past 10 years, he said. Thakur alleged the hand of foreign powers is clearly visible in the Congress manifesto.

The limit was crossed when their evil eye fell on the ancestral property which belongs to your children and the Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge are yet to come out with a clarification on this issue, he said.

Thakur further said the Congress leaders spreading lies that the BJP would abolish reservation and the Constitution if it comes to

"But the people of the country know who imposed the emergency and who changed the Constitution of the country 62 times," he said.



One is a descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji underplaying that emotive connection, the other a close aide of NCP founder Sharad Pawar banking on the formidable leader. Both contestants vying to be MP from Satara say what matters is the common person and ground level issues such as obs and education.

The BJP has nominated Udayanraje Bhosale, the 13th descendant of the Maratha warrior king, to take on former MLA Shashikant Shinde of the NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar).

"I have never used Chhatrapati Shivaji's name in elections or in my life. I live in a democracy. If I am from that family, so be it. But I live as a common man," Bhosale told

According to Shinde, voters in Satara want a common person to represent them. He is banking on Sharad Pawar, who remains a formidable political player and is still capable of checkmating rivals.

The new generation needs an industrial hub, better education, an IT park and health infrastructure. We have thousands of sugarcane farmers but the ban on sugar exports by the Centre has made them angry," he told



The parliamentary constituency of Satara, which goes to the polls in the third phase on May 7, derives its name from the seven forts in the area. It covers the assembly segments of Karad North, Satara, Karada South, Patan, Koregaon, and Wai.

Satara has deep historical connections as the capital of the Maratha Empire under Shivaji. The region was also the site of many battles between the Marathas and foreign invaders.

The past is glorious, the present troubling. Lack of jobs and poor industrial and educational

infrastructure are key issues in the constituency, located in the state's sugar belt. Thousands of youth move to Pune or Mumbai for better education, say locals In 2019, Bhosale won the Satara seat for the third

consecutive time as a

candidate of the undivided NCP, but resigned within a few months and joined the BIP. In the ensuing bypoll, he lost as a BJP candidate to NCP's Shrinivas Patil.

A photo of a rain-soaked Sharad Pawar, then 79, delivering a speech in Satara was said to have ensured Patil's victory and changed the NCP's fortunes in the Maharashtra assembly polls that year.
A lot has changed since then,

with NCP seeing a vertical split. One section of the original party, headed by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, is now a constituent of the BJP-led Mahayuti, which also has a section of the original Shiv

Sharad Pawar, who now heads the NCP (SP), is a part of the opposition coalition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), which also comprises Shiv Sena (UBT) and Congress.
Traditionally, Satara was a

Congress stronghold, with Shiv Sena representing the seat for a few years. After Sharad Pawar broke ranks with the Congress and formed the NCP in 1999, it became his party's strong base.

Bhosale, currently a Rajya Sabha member, rejected the suggestion that the Sharad his past victories. "I had won on my own

Pawar factor might be behind

strength and not on anyone's name. You can ask anyone here. People ensured my victory because of the work have done?

He said he talks about the promises he has fulfilled when he meets people. "I have done work worth about Rs 10,000 crore in the last five years."

The BJP's campaign in Maharashtra has been led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who draws massive crowds, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. A few voters questioned the work done by NCP, expressing

hope that Bhosale would be able to solve their issues. Many were reluctant to express their views. Most, however, agreed that Satara has a huge tourism potential due to its historical links though it is yet to be tapped.

According to Shinde, a lot of people from Satara are in the armed forces.

"In some villages, every household has a member in the military. But no fresh recruitment is happening in the police or military. Our boys have no option but to enrol as Agniveers (who serve in armed forces for four years). So people are angry."

Shinde represented Koregan assembly constituency in Sangli district Pawar be the prime minister? in 2009 and 2014 as a member Will Mamata Banerjee become (the PM) or MK of the undivided NCP.

setting up Eklavya Model Schools and raising the number of students and Hitting out at the JMM-led

ementation of schemes to show the BJP in a

JMM-led it was a minor mineral and to launch Abua Awas Yojan Gram Sabha has rights over from their funds, he said the minor minerals in the ground reality is different as traditional system.

People have no sympathy for him, Munda claimed.

There will be jungle raj in country if INDIA Bloc comes to power: Shah

Stalin or Uddhav Thackeray?

will take another name

Please don't laugh. Can Rahul

baba become the PM?" Shah

He also alleged that leaders of

the RJD and the Congress did not attend the consecration

ceremony of the Ayodhya

Ram temple because of vote

RJD's Lalu Prasad and

Congress always opposed the construction of Ram temple

in Ayodhya, he claimed. Shah also said Congress has

always opposed reservation to

PTI ■ SAMASTIPUR (BIHAR)

There will be 'jungle raj' in the country if INDIA bloc partners - Congress and RJD -are voted to power, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Monday.

He also claimed that cash recovery in Jharkhand proves INDIA bloc leaders are corrupt

Addressing an election rally in favour of senior BJP leader and Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, in Bihar's Samastipur district, Shah said, "The latest recovery of Rs 30 crore and more from the house of a minister in Jharkhand proves INDIA bloc leaders are corrupt."

He also said, "If they come to power, there will be a complete 'jungle raj' in the country as well as in Bihar." Notably, the Enforcement

Directorate on Monday claimed to have recovered a huge amount of "unaccounted" cash during huge

searches at the premises of a domestic help allegedly linked to the secretary of Jharkhand minister Alamgir Alam. "Who will be the PM of the INDIA bloc? Will Sharad

Sarairanjan block comes under the Ujiarpur Lok Sabha constituency where Rai is seeking reelection.

said.

bank politics.

backward classes.

Rai, who is the NDA nominee, is pitted against RJD's Alok Mehta, who is the candidate Mahagathbandhan,

prototype of the INDIA bloc in Bihar.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Holding up the mirror

The roots of Khalistani extremism in Canada run deep; S Jaishankar just made it public

■ n a recent critique of the Trudeau administration, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar accused Canada of granting visas to individuals linked to organised crime, despite warnings from New Delhi, while also legitimising extremism, separatism, and advocates of violence under the guise of free speech. Regarding the escalation of pro-Khalistani activities in Canada and the recent arrest of three individuals in connection with the killing of India-designated terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, Jaishankar remarked that certain individuals have organized politically, influencing politicians to believe they hold sway over community support, thus carving out a space for themselves in the politics of democratic nations. This has been the Indian answer to Canadian charges of killing a Canadian Sikh on its soil. S Jaishankar has effectively retorted to the Canadian charges by saying that the Canada government gives visas to dubious people from India despite the Indian government's warnings. The roots of Khalistani separatism gained significant trac-



tion in the 1980s culminating in violence and the tragic events of Operation Blue Star and the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. The wounds inflicted during this period continue to fester, providing fertile ground for extremist ideologies to thrive, particularly among Sikh diaspora communities. Canada, with its sizable Sikh population, became a hub for Khalistani activists and sympathisers, offering refuge to those fleeing persecution in India while inadvertently providing a platform for the propagation of separatist ideologies.

The liberal immigration policies and multicultural ethos of Canada provided a conducive environment for the Khalistani movement to gain momentum, with sever-

al prominent figures finding sanctuary and support within its borders. However, the issue transcends mere ideological sympathies and delves into the realm of organised crime and terrorism. Over the years, there have been numerous instances of Khalistani elements in Canada being implicated in activities ranging from fundraising for militant outfits to carrying out targeted attacks against perceived enemies of the movement. India has repeatedly raised concerns about Canada's perceived leniency towards individuals with ties to Khalistani extremism. Minister for External Affairs, S Jaishankar's criticism reflects India's growing unease over the role of certain segments within the Canadian establishment in enabling and even legitimizing Khalistani activities. He has done the right thing in showing the mirror to the Canadian government which had accused India of a Sikh Canadian on its soil. Canada, on its part, has taken some steps to address these concerns but the fact is Canada's Govt has been largely sympathetic to such elements. Only a couple of days back Khalistani slogans were raised in the presence of Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau. Canada must strike a delicate balance between upholding its commitment to freedom of speech and association while preventing its territory from being used as a staging ground for violence and terrorism.



Polling officials travel via a boat to reach their respective polling booths, a day before the voting, in Kamrup

Dynamic contours of electoral politics



In a nation where election season seems perennial, the traditional distinction between campaign fervour and governance blurs into a continuous political landscape

he election season is here. The reaction to the statement could well be that election season is now almost there around the year. There are some elections in some parts of the country going on constantly. In short, almost every season has become an election season. It would be tempting to ask oneself if this is a good thing or a bad thing. It's normal to be judgmental in matters which appear to be significant. However, it would not matter which way the judgment goes because the judgment would not affect the actual run of the situation.

That may be another matter. However, the present election fever is unique in its type because it affects every part of the country and is not confined to a small region or another. The concern of the day is national rather than regional, as it often is. This makes the issues of national significance to figure out a choice in the fray. National issues could come up in many areas, such as defence, taxation, education and interstate movements. The special entry provisions that govern certain regions of the country, or indeed the kind of inter-regional transportation structure, including waterways, as it affects human movement, trade, or commerce. The list enumerated itself is loud and can be added to. However, it makes a basic point. The issues in this election are issues that cut across states, have pan-India bearings, or affect the identity of citizens in the country. All this adds to the exclusivity of the election. Conceptually, what has been set in the preceding few lines is

But operationally, there are many other shades and colours. A dominant theme affecting these elections seems to be religion, whereas worship is always a private thing. In India, methods of worship have often served as a method of aggregation of identity. This is a particularly unique gift of the way independence was achieved in this country. No country in the world in the post colonial era was ever partitioned based on religion, as India was, as a prerequisite for independence.

cause is not quite clear. If the basis of partition was religion, there was something strange about one country proclaiming its identity to be one religion and another country emphatically proposing that it would not have any religious identity. That, however, was the choice of August, 14 and 15, 1947, by the two countries that brought into existence freedom, or more technically, the withdrawal of colonial rule. The British were particular in pointing out that they were giving back power from where they had taken it when they started the rule of thenunified India. The rest has to say is history. But post August 15, 1947, saw an experience throughout the subcontinent that was unique and has been termed by some historians as the 'unification of India.' There

would have elected government, yet the princely India would have their choice of secession to India or Pakistan. The rest, as they say, is history. Barring Multan, North West Frontier territory, Jammu and Kashmir, Junagarh and Hyderabad, the merger issues were largely smooth and with out too much contention. Even the territories named above had a choice exercised sooner How this helped anyone or any than what seemed most like-

was a British India and a

The British India territories

princely India.



THE DISCONNECT **BETWEEN ELECTORAL** PROMISES, THE **ISSUES THAT WIN VOTES AND HOW** THE ELECTED PARTY **ACTUALLY GOVERNS** AND IMPLEMENTS THEIR AGENDA ONCE IN POWER LEADS TO MANY UNEXPECTED AND PERPLEXING **OUTCOMES** ly possible. The result was the emergence of a unified India and a unified Pakistan. Jammu and Kashmir remained the only state in which a deliberate contention was kept alive. Indeed, there was no contentious issue if the terms of the Freedom Act were followed, but in one way or another, the matter continues to evoke emotions, in a unique way, in several people. It is not just religion at play, there are several factors, including geopolitical ones. It is also possible not to recognize how the matter has been made increasingly complex by an unnecessary play of force, some of whom have no locus standee at all in the case.

One would have thought that elections held at a national level, so often, so regularly and so fairly across the length and breadth of the country, would have rendered the whole issue of controversy in Jammu and Kashmir needless. Alas, that is not the case.

Elections have a certain pattern in this country: give and take a few arguments here and there. However, choices have to be exercised and the numerical outcome of those choices determines how the country is governed. So the question arises as to what the net findings of the propositions thrown up as electoral issues are. In many states, local

issues seem to be inclined to determine the balloting that would take place for national representation. This appears to be the case, especially in Karnataka, Bihar, Manipur

and some other states.

The essence of the matter is that choices have to be exercised and the arguments of the choices need only to be communicable in terms of the strength that the community appears to endorse in the legislature. It is worth remembering that, at the end of the day, once the election results are announced, there is no accountability for the correlation between how choices made on issues during elections will be exercised when the party concerned, which wins the election, administers the issue. It may well be said that elections as a process still await better mellowing and maturing to make them an internally consistent one. At the moment, it is satisfying to note that by and large, the process of exercising choices, its panning out in the legislature and its administrative implementation are increasingly becoming worthwhile efforts and, a coherent method of administering, sensibly, a

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

rge country, such as India.

THE EDITOR

Climate startups: Innovative climate crisis warriors



SUBRAMANIAN

Startups, pivotal in the shift to a net-zero future, can revitalise economies and communities while providing innovative solutions

eux ex machina is a technique deployed by writers to solve a seemingly hopeless situation by external, magical and often unimaginable intervention. It is debatable if Deux ex machina exists in real life, nonetheless, Startups being creatures with innovation, disruption and problemsolving in their DNA can offer faster, creative and localised solutions, for the increasingly hopeless real-world crisis of Ćlimate Change.

Be it a startup supplying an animal feed supplement that can cut down bovine emissions significantly, another one using Biotech and robotics technologies for developing GMO seeds and seaweeds that act as powerful carbon sinks, a climate tech company developing agroforestry at a global scale or simpler everyday solutions that aim to greenify consumer finance or track individual efforts to reduce emissions, they can consolidate as a powerful force against climate change. Economic Forum estimates that startups create value, nearly on par with the GDP of a G7 economy and the



firms create almost half of the new jobs, suggesting their burgeoning economic power and potential to create impact

The race to net zero is propelled by energy and technology transition which on one hand is an opportunity for startups and a threat to local economies and livelihoods on the other. Take the case of coal being phased out; this might result in the currently bustling mining centres turning into silent junkyards. The modern world's triumphs in Silicon Valley or a Shanghai SEZ may guide the establishment of new climate innovation hubs. Brain port Eindhoven in the Netherlands is one such example showcas-

ing the transition from con-

ventional industries to futur-

istic setups. The questions on the proliferation of such a model 'Can' be addressed by a few suggestions of 'How': Blended Finance for Climate Innovation Hubs Practical experience suggests that 'Impact Capital' often expects social impact plus commercial returns. For startups social impact then becomes an additional responsibility and not an opportunity to improve margins or a business avenue to seriously pursue climate-positive opportunities over the long term. Blended finance can incentivise climate startups to agglomerate within the Startups should have oppor-

Climate Innovation Hubs. Monetising Sustainability tunities to monetise their efforts on reducing emissions, either in the form of reduced taxes and lower cost of capital or claim premiums for climate-positive brand value.

Reputation Capital — Unless climate-positive efforts are rewarded by markets in the form of valuations or additional capital or brand value, climate-positive behaviour will continue to be talk and no Research

Development (R&D) Support While large corporations have reserves that can be deployed for R & D, startups have only access to highly demanding capital that usually funds sales for growth and rarely for investments for innovations (unless the startup is incubated in a technical university).

While the existing carbon economy still grapples with the issues of just transition, the political economy of climate change signals shifts in geo-political equilibrium and technological leapfrogging in climate solutions is yet to emerge, startups as business organisations are only going to achieve greater proportions of power, prosperity and influence in the world. With focused support from policymakers, development finance institutions and international researchers, the global startup ecosystem can be geared up to take on threats of climate change head-on. Who knows we may have a Deux ex machina in the real world of climate change.

The writer is a Chevening Scholar and an International Development expert; views are personal

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Saffron cultivation: Replicate Poonch's success story," published on May 4, this is my response. The story of saffron cultivation in Poonch, Jammu and Kashmir, is not just about agriculture; it's a narrative of resilience and transformation. Ajaz Ahmad's journey exemplifies a shift from traditional farming to embracing the potential of saffron. His vision of Poonch becoming a saffron hub reflects the region's evolving agricultural landscape.

SAFFRON: A BLOSSOMING OPPORTUNITY

However, challenges loom large. Environmental shifts, like erratic rainfall and untimely snowfall, threaten saffron production in Kashmir. Such concerns emphasise the need for sustainable farming practices and governmental support, not just in terms of subsidies but also in ensuring security and mitigating wildlife threats. Yet, amidst these challenges, saffron's allure persists. Its medicinal properties and premium market value make it a lucrative venture for farmers. With initiatives like the National Saffron Mission, there's hope for revitalising saffron cultivation and uplifting Kashmir's socio-economic fabric. As saffron blooms in Poonch, it signifies not just a crop but a promise of prosperity for the region.

Virat Chatterjee | Pune

PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND HOPE Madam — Apropos the news article, "Narendra Modi introduces India to its Ashtalakshmis," published on May 4, this is my response. Reading about the political landscape and developmental challenges across India, especially in the neglected North East, evokes a mix of emotions. From the perpetual promises of politicians during election seasons to the persistent issues of floods, droughts and insurgencies, it's a reminder of the complex tapestry of our nation's journey. The failure to address fundamental issues like water scarcity and regional development highlights systemic shortcomings that

transcend party lines. However, amidst these challenges, there's orous preparation for CUET 2024, lever-

Call for transparency



propos the news article, "Covishield's Shield Ain Question," published on May 5, this is my response. The unfolding saga surrounding the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine underscores a pressing need for transparency and accountability in vaccine distribution and oversight. Alex Mitchell's harrowing experience, alongside numerous others, sheds light on the gravity of poten-

a glimmer of hope. The efforts made by the current government, particularly in the North East, show a commitment to inclusive growth and infrastructure development. Modi's North East Story sheds light on the transformative changes underway, offering a narrative of progress and resilience. It's heartening to see dynamic leaders and policymakers taking proactive steps to uplift these regions while preserving their unique cultural heritage. The book's portrayal of the North East's beauty and potential serves as an invitation for all Indians to engage with and support the holistic development of these often-overlooked states.

Ishika Verma | Jaipur

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Leveraging NCERT textbooks for CUET," published on May 4, this is my response. The Common University Entrance Test (CUET) stands as a significant milestone for students aspiring to secure undergraduate admissions in India. Amidst the rigtial side effects and the imperative of informed consent. As legal battles loom against pharmaceutical giants, questions mount regarding regulatory diligence and corporate responsibility. The admission of rare but severe side effects prompts reflection on the balance between vaccine benefits and risks.

The petition, led by advocate Vishal Tiwari, encapsulates the public's demand for rigorous scrutiny and redress mechanisms. Calls for expert medical panels and a vaccine damage payment system underscore a quest for justice and safeguarding public health. Amidst the cacophony of voices, from grieving parents to sceptical netizens, one message resonates: transparency breeds trust. As the global vaccination campaign continues, robust surveillance, thorough investigation and proactive communication remain indispensable in navigating the complexities of vaccine safety. Arnav Reddy | Hyderabad

aging NCERT textbooks emerges as a strategic move. These textbooks, integral to classrooms nationwide, offer more than just academic aid. They serve as a robust foundation, aligning seamlessly with CUET syllabi and offering structured content presentations. From basic principles to advanced concepts, NCERT textbooks provide a roadmap.

Their clarity, supplemented by visuals and practice exercises, enhances comprehension and problem-solving skills. Moreover, their standardised content ensures equitable access to quality education, levelling the playing field for CUET aspirants. To optimise CUET preparation, students should adopt a subject-wise study approach, leverage visual aids, prioritise practice and revision and supplement with additional resources. By harnessing the potential of NCERT textbooks, students can bolster their confidence and maximise success in the CUET 2024 Exam.

Sanya Khanna | Chandigarh

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FIRST COLUMN RETHINKING **ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Excessive consumerism contradicts our spiritual values ingrained in our heritage



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR **NIKUNJ JI**

he US economy is very often seen as the engine of the world economy, and that is why any sign of slowdown in the US raises serious concerns about harmful spillovers to the other economies. Any keen student of current economics would know well that the economic policies of America, especially during the last few years, have not worked well. In fact, the defeat of the most powerful leaders in the presidential elections that were held in the past few decades is attributed mainly to the failure of their economic policies which created many problems for the country. However, most people do not realise that the economic problems faced there, emanate not merely from wrong policies, adopted recent-

Their roots are hidden in some wrong economic, political and cultural concepts and the models built on them over a period of time. For example, the mounting unemployment and the huge foreign debts are not the phenomena that have sprung up overnight and the phenomenon of estimated 11.5% Americans, living in poverty, also has not arisen in the short period of only one or two years. The roots of their sad economic state go at least to as far a period as the end of the World War-II when they adopted a very lavish life-style and an utterly consumeristic attitude and built their economy on militarism, giant industries, transactional and multi-national business corporations, import of raw materials at cheaper rates from the undeveloped countries and export of their goods to such nations and economic capture of foreign markets through their multinational corporations. In short, they thrived on the basis of this economic system as long as other industrial nations did not come up strongly to stand up to them or the weaker nations did not stand up against



their economic exploitation or injustice. Nevertheless, their economic system was not, based on some morally sound and enduring economic principles. As mentioned earlier, it was based on commercialism, competition, consumerism and exploitation of weaker nations and on hot or cold war with an adversary nation, or on considering their nation as the strong military- man of the world, ready for hot or cold war. Now, when some other industrial nations have grown stronger, they cannot compete with them and have, therefore, to close down or to retrench workers as was done recently by many industrial giants. Also, now when there is no war— hot or cold—they are forced by economic reasons to sell their military hardware as they recently sold fighter jets to many Asian countries in order to keep the workers in employment. Their country has had either the ills of recession, or inflation, or heavy taxation, or it had to resort to deficit budgets, foreign debts, protectionist policies, etc. to keep the economy going. It would have, therefore, been appropriate if developing nations like India had learnt some lessons from the failures of the so-called developed models of economy and had, instead, kept in mind their own national ethos and ancient heritage which suggests that a right system of economy is one which is based on social justice, and on economising rather than borrowing and deficit-financing. We should also keep in mind our own national situation which necessitates national and regional self-sufficiency and affords opportunities of full employment to its citizens and promotes balance between rural and urban economy, equitable distribution of income and wealth and prevention of the growth of very wide disparities in income and wealth. We must remember that unbridled consumerism and commercialism and also large-scale borrowing are against the value-system which is embedded in our spiritual heritage and will, sooner or later, lead us to grave economic crisis. So,let us all learn to lead a life of simplicity and frugality and be honest and just to all.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

Reimagining Tagore's educational philosophy



Rabindranath Tagore, the polymathic Nobel Laureate from Bengal, is celebrated not only for his literary brilliance but also for his visionary ideas on education

Rabindranath Tagore (May 7, 1861 to August 7, 1941), the polymathic Nobel Laureate from Bengal, is renowned not only for his literary brilliance but also for his progressive ideas on education. His philosophy of education, rooted in the principles of creativity, freedom, and humanism, continues to resonate with contemporary educational discourse. In today's rapidly changing world, where tra-ditional educational paradigms are being challenged and redefined, Tagore's insights offer valuable perspectives for reimagining education in a manner that fosters holistic development and meaningful engagement with the world.
At the heart of Tagore's educational phi-

losophy is the belief in the innate creativity and potential of every individual. He envisioned education as a process of nur-turing this inherent creativity rather than imposing predetermined knowledge. In his seminal work, "Siksha: Herok Ek Jibon" (Education: A Continuum of Life), Tagore emphasized the importance of cultivating curiosity, imagination, and critical thinking skills in learners. He advocated for an education system that encourages students to explore, question, and construct their understanding of the world, rather than passively receiving

Further, central to Tagore's philosophy of education is the concept of "Shantiniketan," or the abode of peace and later Sriniketan - which he established as an experimental educational institution in rural Bengal. Shantiniketan epitomized Tagore's holistic educational philosophy, integrating intellectual, artistic, and spiritual facets of human life. Education transcended traditional confines, embracing nature, arts, and community involvement. Tagore emphasized fostering reverence for nature, aesthetic sensibility, and interconnectedness with all life. He advocated for intellectual development through imagination, free thought, and perpetual curiosity. This personalized approach prioritized holistic growth, including physical development through exercises, yoga, and sports, echoing Tagore's belief: "The highest education is that which does not merely give us that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.'

According to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, "A teacher can never truly teach, unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp, unless it continues to burn its own flame". In his essay 'Ashramer Shiksha' (Ashram's Teaching), Tagore extolled the virtues of patience in teaching, advocating that only those imbued with affection for their students deserve the mantle of a teacher. He rejected authoritarian teaching methods, viewing them as indicative of governance inadequacy. K M O'Connell (University of Toronto, Canada) had written that Rabindranath Tagore stands with the pioneering educators, like, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori, and Dewey Malcolm Knowles, who have striven to create non-authoritarian learning systems appropriate to the surround-

Furthermore, Tagore's educational philosophy emphasizes fostering a love for humanity and advancing universal brotherhood through recognizing the interconnectedness of all beings and promoting empathy across cultures. Central to his approach is establishing harmony



HIS NOTION OF FREEDOM IN **EDUCATION EMPHASISES** LINKING NATURE. SOCIETY, AND LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES. HE ADVOCATES FOR LEARNING IN **NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS** TO NOURISH **BODY AND SOUL. PRIORITISE** CREATIVITY, AND **ENGAGE**

CRITICALLY WITH TRADITIONAL VALUES AND **BELIEFS**

between individuals, nature, and the divine. Tagore advocates for freedom in education to unlock individuals' inherent potential and stresses the significance of moral and spiritual development alongside academic learning. His vision aims at cultivating wellrounded individuals capable of selfless service and social integration, ultimately contributing to a conscientious and harmonious

In today's context, characterized by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and environ-mental challenges, Tagore's emphasis on holistic education is more relevant than ever. The prevailing thought on standardized testing and rote memorization (read learning) often stifles creativity and critical thinking, leaving students ill-prepared for the complexities of the modern world. Tagore's philosophy, instead, calls for a shift towards a more studentcentered, inquiry-based approach to learning that empowers learn ers to navigate uncertainty, think critically, and adapt to change.

Tagore's educational philosophy, as elucidated in his essay "The Centre of Indian Culture," emphasizes the imperative for education to reflect and engage with the socio-cultural milieu in which it operates, asserting that genuine education must be attuned to its contextual realities to foster

healthy growth. This sentiment resonates in Sunil Banga's (Lancaster University Management School) analysis - in his paper "The global relevance of Tagore's cosmopolitan educational philosophy for social justice in a post-Westphalian world" published in Journal of Philosophy of Education (August 2023, Oxford) which underscores Tagore's cosmopolitan approach to education as a potent instrument for social justice and equity in today's

world. Banga highlights Tagore's commitment to societal transformation through education, evident in his advocacy for women's empowerment, condemnation of oppression, and advocacy for India's independence (read freedom). Despite emerging from the colonial era, Tagore's philosophy remains pertinent, particularly his emphasis on education as a catalyst for moral and social development, aiming towards societal harmony and integration to address contemporary global chal-

Moreover, Tagore's emphasis on the integration of arts, music, and literature into the curriculum offers a counterbalance to the narrow focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education prevalent in many educational systems today. Arts play a crucial role in fostering creativity, empathy, and emotional intelligence, which are essential for navigating the compiexities of numan relationships and societal challenges.

Sunil Banga underscores Tagore's educational paradigm as an early advocate of global interconnectedness. Tagore posited that education's primary objective was the attainment of self-realization, which he termed 'Atma Shakti,' wherein individuals harmonize with nature and society. Drawing from Hindu literature, Tagore envisions a 'universal man' embodying faith in universalism and humanity. He further advocates for personality development through arts and music, leading to a transcendent understanding of human nature. He contends that humans, upon achieving self-realization, unite with 'God' or 'Manav Brahma,' thereby becoming the 'complete man' and 'soul.'

Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy underscores the integral role of education in fostering connections between individuals and humanity while promoting holistic development. In essence, at the heart of Tagore's vision of cosmopolitan education

is the idea of freedom - freedom to engage critically with traditional values and beliefs; and freedom to imagine citizenship in a globalized world, that enables an exploration and negotiation of multiple allegiances in sympathy with others. His notion of freedom in education emphasizes linking nature, society, and learners' experiences. He advocates for learning in natural environments to nourish body and soul, prioritize creativity, and engage critically with traditional values and beliefs.

Rabindranath Tagore's philosophy of education provides a compelling framework for reimagining education in the 21st century. His emphasis on creativity, freedom, holistic development, and social engagement offers valuable insights for addressing the multifaceted challenges of today's

By embracing Tagore's vision, educators can create learning environments that empower students to become compassionate, critical thinkers capable of shaping a more just, sustainable, and humane society and boosting student's morale.

On the occasion of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's 163rd Birth Anniversary, we may well reflect on his philosophy advocating for an education that transcends mere impartation of knowledge, rather instills a profound harmony with all existence. Revisiting Tagore's principles may serve as a guiding light for Indian educational institutions in this globalised age.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are

Vision for India: A State-led roadmap for effective governance

Amid India's socio-economic shift, Karthik Muralidharan's new book shines as a guide for the nation's trajectory

rt was during the mid-1960s that I had a first-hand ■experience with Kochi, popularly known as the Queen of the Arabian Sea. Other than Kochi Port, the small aerodrome and the star hotel of yore years Sea Lord and Malabar, there was nothing attractive about the city. Scavengers carrying night soil collected from homes and hotels on their heads were the first sight that welcomed people during the daybreak. Some discernible changes are there in Kochi and other cities in the State. Scavengers are gone and their places have been taken over by cycle rickshaws with the hoarding "For cleaning septic tanks, please contact us." In the hinterland, farmers wearing loincloths plough their farmland with bullocks



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

despite India being one of the largest manufacturers of tractors of all kinds. The mention of the word farmer brings to mind the images of loin-clothclad men beating their bollocks to force them to plough

You go to Madurai in Tamil Nadu, which the DMK touts as a role model of Dravidian development. What welcomes you to the small towns and vilring roads being used as public comfort stations by the residents. Dravidian leaders do not like the idea of Swachh Bharat and insist that their followers use roads, rivers and beaches as public toilets. It is in these contexts that a

book for the economic and social development of India has hit the shelves. Karthik Muralidharan, renowned economist and Tata Chancellor's Professor of Economics at the University of California, San Diego, has authored a book "Accelerating India's Development - A State-led Roadmap for Effective Governance", a blueprint for

Comprehensive Development of India. Productivity, competitiveness, the number of jobs created and lages are thoroughfares and the skill of the labour force are

some of the most important ingredients of the economic growth of a country. It is for the Central and Governments to generate enabling conditions for speedy economic and social development, according to Muralidharan.

The author says that land, labour, capital, policies on taxation, bankruptcy, environmental regulation and promoting competition are the enabling services that ensure speedy economic and social development. Muralidharan, who has no

love lost for the Modi Government at the Centre, says the present Central Government is always ahead in resolving issues that retard economic progress. "India's public discourse on growth mainly focusses on Central Government actions to promote it, though many of the key issues above are in the domain of State Governments. It is critical to analyze and improve the effectiveness of State level actions for boosting productivity and job quality. State-led initiative and innovations followed by rapid replication of successful ones can play a key role in accelerating both growth and development in India," writes Muralidharan in the chapter "Jobs, Productivity and Economic Growth".

What makes the book interesting is Muralidharan's call for improving job quality rather than job quantity. It is not the number of jobs created but the quality of jobs that determines the welfare of the people, says Millions of Indians are reliant shortage of electricians,

Muralidharan. "A job is not just a source of income. It also provides identity, dignity and social engagement. With over 95 per cent of India's population relying primarily on labour income for sustenance, improving job quality will directly improve the welfare of hundreds of millions of Indians," says the economist. This is an open call to finish once-and-forever jobs like scavenging, ploughing the land with bullocks and other mean works. The earlier we introduce Artificial Intelligence and robots for such jobs, the better. Instead of using this technology to deceive the public with deep fake videos and political rivals, it would be better if we use this technology to uplift the status of jobs.

on casual wage labour for sustenance. An average income earner supports 2.7 dependents. "This is why improving living standards in India depends critically on improving worker productivity and creating more highquality jobs to generate higher, more reliable incomes," Muralidharan writes.

The skill development programme initiated by the present government should be invigorated and made compulsory for students and school dropouts.

The Agniveer scheme is an innovation that inspires the mind. One need not go to engineering colleges or medical colleges to emerge as a skilled professional in highquality jobs. There is a severe

plumbers and mechanics with expertise in household jobs. Even as the central and State governments can increase the number of medical colleges, no stone should be left unturned in increasing the number of ITIs and technical schools. Equal priority should be given to increasing the agricultural productivity in which India ags behind China Vietnam etc. The situation is favourable to India. Skill development, Agniveer and increase in agriculture productivity should be implemented with full vigour. There is hope for India to become the world leader by

> (The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

Israeli army tells Palestinians to evacuate parts of Rafah

The Israeli army ordered some 100,000 Palestinians on Monday to begin evacuating from the southern city of Rafah, signalling that a longpromised ground invasion there could be imminent and further complicating efforts to broker a cease-fire in Gaza.

The looming operation in the city — where more than 1 million Palestinians are sheltering and a high number of deaths is feared - has raised global alarm and Israeli's closest allies have warned against it. On Monday, the United Nations agency serving Palestinian refugees said it would not comply with the evacuation order.

Israel has described Rafah as the last significant Hamas stronghold after some seven months of war, and has repeatedly said the invasion is necessary to defeat the Islamic militant group, which unleashed the current conflict with an attack on Israel on October 7.

But Hamas and key mediator Qatar have warned that invading Rafah — along the border with Egypt - could derail efforts by international mediators to broker a ceasefire. Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an army spokesman, said some 100,000 people were being ordered to move to a nearby Israel-declared humanitarian zone called Muwasi — a makeshift camp of tents where along the coast hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have sought safety and live in squalid conditions

Shoshani said Israel was preparing a "limited scope operation" and would not say whether this was the beginning of a broader invasion of the city Israel never formally announced the launch of its current ground invasion in

Smoke could be seen rising from Rafah Monday afternoon, although the cause was unclear.

Tensions escalated Sunday when Hamas fired rockets at Israeli troops positioned on the border with Gaza near Israel's main crossing for delivering badly needed humanitarian aid, killing four soldiers. Israel shuttered the crossing — but Columbia University cancels commencement amid ongoing protests

New York (AP): Columbia officials said. "They are eager University is cancelling its to cross the stage to applause large university-wide commencement ceremony amid ongoing pro-Palestinian protests but will hold smaller school-based ceremonies this week and next, the university announced Monday.

"Based on feedback from our students, we have decided to focus attention on our Class Days and school-level graduation ceremonies, where students are honoured individually alongside their peers, and to forego the universitywide ceremony that is scheduled for May 15," officials at the Ivy League school in upper Manhattan said in a statement.

Noting that the past few weeks have been "incredibly difficult" for the community, the school said in its announcement that it made the decision after discussions with students. "Our students emphasised that these smaller-scale, school-based celebrations are most meaningful to them and their families."

Shoshani said it would not affect how much aid enters Gaza as others are working.

He would not say whether the upcoming operation was a response to that attack. Meanwhile, Israeli airstrikes on Rafah killed 22 people, including children and two infants, according to a

Shoshani said Israel published a map of the evacuation area, and that orders were being issued through airdropped leaflets, text messages and radio broadcasts. He said Israel has expanded humanitarian aid into Muwasi, including field hospitals, tents, food and

Israel's army said on the social media platform X that it would act with "extreme force" against militants, and urged the population to evacuate immediately for their safety.

people gathered to discuss their options after receiving the fly-

to cross the stage to applause

and family pride and hear

from their school's invited

that had been scheduled for

the south lawn of the main

campus, where encampments

were taken down last week,

will take place about 5 miles

north at Columbia's sports

cancelled in-person classes.

More than 100 pro-Palestinian

demonstrators who had

camped out on Columbia's

green were arrested last

month, and similar encamp-

ments sprouted up at univer-

sities around the country as

schools struggled with where

to draw the line between

allowing free expression while

maintaining safe and inclusive

campuses.The University of

Southern California earlier cancelled its main graduation ce remony while allowing

other commencement activi-

Jan Egeland, secretary-gen-

eral of the Norwegian Refugee

Council, condemned the

"forced, unlawful" evacuation

The area is already over-

About 1.4 million

order and the idea that people

stretched and devoid of vital

Palestinians — more than half

of Gaza's population — are

jammed into Rafah and its

surroundings. Most of them

fled their homes elsewhere in

the territory to escape Israel's

onslaught and now face anoth-

er wrenching move or the dan-

ger of staying under a new

tent camps, overflowing U.N.

shelters or crowded apart-

ments, and are dependent on

international aid for food, with

sanitation systems and medical

facilities infrastructure crip

They live in densely packed

assault.

should go to Muwasi.

services," Egeland said.

ties to continue

Columbia had already

complex, officials said.

Most of the ceremonies

guest speakers.

"So many people here are displaced and now they have to move again, but no one will stay here it's not safe," Nidal Alzaanin told The Associated

Palestinians in Rafah said

Press by phone.
A father of five, Alzaanin works for an international aid group and fled to Rafah from Beit Hanoun in the north at the start of the war. He said people concerned Palestinians have said they were fired at during previous evacuations. Israel denies shooting at civilians.

Alzaanin said he has packed his documents and bags but will wait 24 hours to see what others do before relocating. He said he has a friend in Khan Younis whom he hopes can pitch a tent for his

The U.N. agency that has helped millions of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank for decades, known as UNRWA warned Monday of devastating consequences of a Rafah offensive, including more civilian suffering and deaths. Juliette Touma, communications director for the agency, which has thousands of employees in the city, said it has not evacuated and has no plans to do so. Egypt's Rafah crossing, a

main transfer point for aid going into Gaza, lies in the evacuation zone. The crossing remained open on Monday after the Israeli order.

The war was sparked by an unprecedented Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel in which Hamas and other militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted

around 250 hostages.

The ensuing conflict has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials. The tally does not distinguish between civilians and combatants, but officials say at least two-thirds of the dead are children and women. It has left a swath of destruction in Gaza, and around 80% of the territory's population has fled to other parts of the besieged coastal

UK facing 'disaster' of hung Parliament, warns Sunak after local election debacle

PTI ■ LONDOON

 $P^{\text{rime Minister Rishi Sunak}}_{\text{warned on Monday that an}}$ analysis of the local election results shows the country is headed for a hung Parliament led by the Opposition Labour Party, which "would be a disaster for Britain".

The 43-year-old British Indian leader told 'The Times' in the wake of a debacle for the governing Conservative Party, who lost hundreds of local council seats and key mayoralties across England in results over the weekend, that he was bitterly disappointed but determined to fight back.

He sought to paint a less bleak picture for party rebels, demanding a change of political course to win back voters in time for a general election, expected later this year.

These results suggest we are heading for a hung parliament with Labour as the largest party," Sunak told the newspaper.



propped up in Downing Street by the SNP [Scottish National Party], Liberal Democrats and the Greens would be a disaster for Britain. The country doesn't need more political horsetrading, but action. We are the only party with a plan to deliver on the priorities of the people," he insisted.

He went on to acknowledge the frustration of the voters because of a tough few years due to a cost-of-living crisis and soaring household bills, which had made them less inclined to vote for Tory councillors and mayors in the polls last Thursday. "I know the last few years have been tough, and I understand

why people are frustrated. Losing good Conservative councillors and a mayor as fantastic as Andy Street who has done so much good for the West Midlands is of course bitterly disappointing. But I am determined to show people that we are delivering for them, and standing up for our values," he said. After the final votes were counted on Sunday, the Tories had lost control of 10 councils and more than 470 council seats. They also lost 10 Police and Crime Commissioners with most of the gains made by Labour and the Lib Dems who pushed the Tories to the third position.In an apparent message for the rebellious voices from the Conservative backbenches being led by former home secretary Suella Braverman who has demanded the Prime Minister move on from "managerialism" and show strong leadership, Sunak added: "There's work to do and more progress to be made and I am determined that we will come together as a party and show the British people we are delivering for them." Sunak's comments on a hung Parliament reflect analysis by leading psephologist Professor Michael Thrasher for

326 for a majority. The projection, which some other polling experts have dismissed, used the local election results to project a nationwide estimate of vote share at a general election.

'Sky News', which suggested Labour would win 294 seats at

a general election, short of the

It assumes everyone would vote the same way at a general election as in last week's local elections when smaller parties and Independent candidates tend to do better in local elections.

UN nuclear watchdog chief travels to Iran as its monitoring remains hampered

The head of the United Nations' atomic watchdog travelled Monday to Iran, where his agency faces increasing difficulty in monitoring the Islamic Republic's rapidly advancing nuclear program as tensions remain high in the wider Middle East over the Israel-Hamas war. Rafael Mariano Grossi already has warned Tehran has enough uranium enriched to near-weaponsgrade levels to make "several" nuclear bombs if it chose to do so. He has acknowledged the agency can't guarantee that none of Iran's centrifuges may have been peeled away for clandestine enrichment. Those challenges now find themselves entangled in attacks between Israel and Iran, with the city of Isfahan apparently coming under Israeli fire in recent weeks despite it being surrounded by sensitive nuclear sites. Grossi is likely to attend an Iranian nuclear conference there while

on his two-day trip to Iran.

"Problems will not disap-r," Grossi told an Înternational Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors' meeting in March. "They will only get worse. So, we need to address this in a serious way.

In Tehran, Grossi and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian shook hands in front of journal ists before going into a meeting. Authorities offered no immedi ate comment on their discus-

Grossi will travel to Isfahan on Tuesday before heading back to Vienna, where he plans to give an update to journalists. Tensions have grown between Iran and the IAEA since then-President Donald Trump in 2018 unilaterally withdraw America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers. Since then, Iran has abandoned all limits the deal put on its programme and enriches uranium to 60% purity — near weapons grade levels of 90%.

IAEA surveillance cameras have been disrupted, while Iran has barred some of the agency's most experienced inspectors.

Meanwhile, Iranian officials have increasingly threatened they could pursue atomic

weapons.

"For us, making the atomic bomb is easier than not building atomic bomb," said Mahmoud Reza Aghamiri, the chancellor of Tehran Shahid Beheshti University and a specialist in nuclear physics. Iranian media quoted Aghamiri acknowledging Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had previously said making an atomic bomb is forbidden.

"But if his fatwa and viewpoint is changed, we have ability to build atomic bomb, too," Aghamiri added.

Aghamiri's comments follow a drumroll of others by Iranian lawmakers, those in its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and a former head of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran suggesting Tehran could

Iranian diplomats for years have pointed to Khamenei's preachings as a binding fatwa, or religious edict, that Iran wouldn't build an atomic bomb. We do not need nuclear

bombs. We have no intention of using a nuclear bomb," Khamenei said in a November 2006 speech, according to a transcript from his office. "We do not claim to dominate the world, like the Americans, we do not want to dominate the world by force and need a nuclear bomb. Our nuclear bomb and explosive power is our faith." But such edicts aren't written in stone. Khamenei's predecessor, Grand Avatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, issued fatwas that revised his own earlier pronouncements after he took power following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. And anyone who would follow the 85-yearold Khamenei as the country's supreme leader could make his

own fatwas revising those pre-

viously issued.

EU's executive decides to end legal standoff with Poland

Brussels (AP): The European Union's executive decided on Monday to end its 6-year dispute with member state Poland, saying Prime Minister Donald Tusk has initiated the necessary changes to reverse what the bloc called the previous government's backsliding on democratic principles. The EU's decision to withdraw its case over rule of law complaints follows one in February to start releasing billions of euros that it had frozen in the dispute.

"Today, marks a new chapter for Poland," said EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, calling the breakthrough the result of the country's determined reform efforts. "The ongoing restoration of the rule of law in Poland is great for the Polish people and for our union as a whole.

Trump fined \$1,000 for gag order violation in hush money case

AP NEW YORK

The judge presiding over Donald Trump's hush money trial has fined him \$1,000 for violating his gag order and sternly warned the former president that additional violation could result in jail time. The fine marks the second sanction for Trump for inflammatory comments about witnesses since the start of the trial last month. He was fined \$9,000 last week for nine violations. Judge Juan M Merchan warned Monday that additional gag order violations could potentially result in jail time, though he said that was "the last thing I want to do".

Prosecutors in Trump's hush money trial are moving deeper into his orbit following an inside-the-room account about the former president's reaction to a politically damaging recording that surfaced in the final weeks of the 2016 campaign. Hope Hicks, a for-



mer White House official and for years a top aide, is by far the closest Trump associate to have taken the witness stand in the Manhattan trial.

Her testimony Friday was designed to give jurors an insider's view of a chaotic and pivotal stretch in the campaign, when a 2005 recording showing Trump talking about grabbing women without their permission was made public and when he and his allies sought to prevent the release of

other potentially embarrassing stories. That effort, prosecutors say, included hush money payments to a porn actor and Playboy model who both have said they had sexual encounters with Trump before he entered

"I had a good sense to believe this was going to be a massive story and that it was going to dominate the news cycle for the next several days," Hicks said of the "Access Hollywood" recording, first revealed in an October 2016 Washington Post story. "This was a damaging development."

The trial enters its third week of testimony Monday with prosecutors building toward their star witness, Michael Cohen, Trump's former lawyer and personal fixer who pleaded guilty to federal charges related to the hush money payments. Cohen is expected to undergo a bruising cross-examination from defense attorneys seeking to undermine his credibility with jurors. Trump faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in connection with payments made to stifle potentially embarrassing stories. Prosecutors say Trump's company, the Trump Organization, reimbursed Cohen for payments to porn actor Stormy Daniels and gave Cohen bonuses and extra payments. Prosecutors allege that those transactions were falsely logged in company records as legal expenses. Trump has pleaded not guilty and denied sexual encounters with any of the women, as well as any wrongdoing. So far, jurors have heard from witnesses including a tabloid magazine publisher and Trump friend who bought the rights to several sordid tales about Trump to prevent them from coming out and a Los

US, Philippine forces stage combat drills near strategic channel off southern Taiwan

AP ■ ITBAYAT

U^S Marines and their Filipino counterparts darted out of Black Hawk helicopters during combat drills Monday in the Philippines' northernmost island town along the strategic Bashi Channel off southern Taiwan — a flashpoint in the military rivalry between Washington

and Beijing.
The show of allied battle readiness in Itbayat in Batanes province is part of annual military exercises that started last month, dubbed Balikatan, Tagalog for "shoulder-to-shoulder," and involving more than 16,000 American and Philippine military personnel.

This year's exercises by the longtime treaty allies - the largest yet — are meant to deter possible aggression. They come against the backdrop of China's increasingly assertive actions in the disputed South China Sea, where Chinese and Philippine coast guards and accompanying ships have had several increasingly tense faceoffs since last vear.

More than 250 French and Australian forces are also participating, along with observers from several allied and security partner nations, led by Japan and European nations. The drills, which began April 22, end later this week.

In Monday's mock battle scenario, American and Filipino forces took positions at the airfield, ringed by lowlying hills, as three Army CH-47 Chinook helicopters landed to deliver combat supplies.

Rennaissance and counter reconnaissance drills were also planned in the far-flung region. The Associated Press was among a small group of journalists invited to attend the maneuvers. "We are absolutely battle-ready and that's what we train for day in and day out, Marine Maj. Robert Patterson said. "It's important to enhance inter-operability with our

Washington and Manila say the drills are not directed at any country and are crucial for improving the response to emergencies in the Philippines, one of the world's most disaster-prone countries. However, this year's drills

Filipino counterparts.

focus on territorial defense and are being staged mainly in two of the most sensitive fault lines in the regional rivalry between China and the United States: the disputed South China Sea and the Bashi Channel. The critical waterway between Taiwan and the

Philippines, an important trade conduit laden with international undersea cables, has been closely watched and guarded by Chinese and American forces China considers Taiwant a part of its territory, to be annexed by force if necessary. In a telephone call last

month, Chinese President Xi Jinping stressed to President Joe Biden that Beijing will not tolerate separatist activities by Taiwan's independence forces, as well as "exterior indulgence and support," an apparent reference to Washington's support for the island.

Biden raised concerns about China's actions in the South China Sea, including efforts to impede the Philippines, which Washington is treaty-obligated to defend, from resupplying its forces on the fiercely disputed Second Thomas Shoal.

Derek Grossman, a senior defense analyst at RAND Corporation, said the message of deterrence was important. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s decision to allow U.S. forces indefinitely access to

B'desh march through universities

Activists in

AP ■ DHAKA

Thousands of activists in Bangladesh backed by the ruling party's student wing marched through universities around the country Monday to demand an end to the Israel-Hamas war and the creation of an independent Palestinian

Activists of the Bangladesh Chhatra League marched through the campus of the prestigious Dhaka University chanting anti-Israel slogans, carrying Bangladeshi and Palestinian flags and spreading banners saying "Free Palestine, Stop Genocide." Many other students also joined the rally, organizers said. Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority nation of nearly 170 million people, maintains no diplomatic relations with Israel and has called for an independent Palestinian

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, of the ruling Awami League, has slammed Israel over what she has alleged is genocide committed by its government. The student group said it organised the demonstrations in solidarity with protests in the United States and because of growing rage against the Israeli military action in Gaza. It called for action "against atrocities, massacres and ongoing human rights violations". Student leaders cited Israel over what they described as brutal and indiscriminate attacks that killed women and children and damaged hospi-

Meanwhile the children of Gaza aren't getting enough food and water, said Tanbir Hasan Shaikat, an organiser. "We have never seen attacks on hospitals in any war, but we have seen that in Gaza," he

Other protesters said they joined the demonstrations to send a message to the world that they were against any

Sunita Williams set to fly into space for third time ing, even if technical issues or Dragon and Starliner flying regularly — is one for which the US **PTI** ■ WASHINGTON and third Starliner flight test overall, following a second Orbital Flight Test, the uncrewed ndian-origin astronaut Sunita space agency NASA has long Indian-origin assurance Williams is ready to fly into mission also known as OFT-2,

space for the third time on Tuesday as the pilot aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft in its the first crewed test flight. Boeing's Starliner will blast off for the International Space Station from Cape Canaveral in Florida.

Starliner will carry Williams, 58, and Butch Wilmore to the International Space Station, marking what could be a momentous and long-awaited victory for the beleaguered Boeing programme.

The scheduled lift-off is set for 22:34 local time on Monday (8:04 am IST on Tuesday)

"We are all here because we are all ready. Our friends and family have heard about it and we've talked about it and they are happy and proud that we are



the BBC quoted Williams as saying The mission has been delayed for several years because of setbacks in the spacecraft's development.

If it is successful, it will become the second private firm able to provide crew transport to and from the ISS, alongside Elon Musk's SpaceX.Such a scenario with both SpaceX's Crew

waited."Design and development is hard — particularly with a human space vehicle," said Mark Nappi, vice president and Starliner programme manager at Boeing, during a Thursday news briefing."There's a number of things that were surprises along the way that we had to overcome. ... It certainly made the team very, very strong. I'm very proud of how they've overcome every single issue that we've encountered and gotten us to this point," Nappi said.

This is history in the making, NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said of the upcoming Starliner mission during a March 22 news conference. 'We're now in the golden era of space exploration?

This is Boeing's second flight to the International Space Station

in May 2022. Boeing also completed pad abort demonstration in November 2019, according to NASA. As the final flight test for Starliner, NASA's Boeing crew flight test will validate the transportation system, including the launch pad, rocket, spacecraft, in-orbit operational capabilities, and return to Earth with astronauts aboard, it said. SpaceX and Boeing developed their respective vehicles under

NASA's Commercial Crew Programme, a partnership with private industry contractors. From the outset, the space agency aimed to have both companies operating at once. The Crew Dragon and Starliner spacecraft would each serve as a backup to the other, giving astronauts the option to keep flyother setbacks grounded one spacecraft. Williams received her commission as an Ensign in the United

Angeles lawyer who negotiat-

ed hush money deals on behalf

of both Daniels and Playboy

model Karen McDougal.

States Navy from the United States Naval Academy in May 1987. Williams was selected as an astronaut by NASA in 1998 and is a veteran of two space missions, Expeditions 14/15 and 32/33. She served as a flight engineer on Expedition 32 and then commander of Expedition During her first spaceflight, Expedition 14/15, Williams was launched with the crew of STS-116 on December 9, 2006, dock ing with the International Space Station on December 11, 2006. While onboard, she established a world record for females with four spacewalks totalling 29 hours and 17 minutes. Astronaut Peggy Whitson subsequently broke the record in 2008 with a total of five spacewalks.

WESTERN OFFICIALS' INVOLVEMENT IN UKRAINE

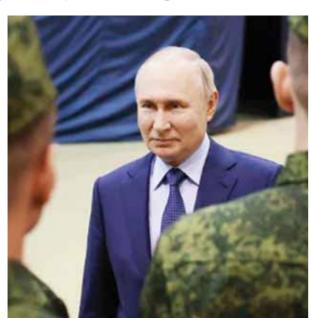
Russia announces nuclear drills

amid rising tensions following comments by senior Western officials about the possibility of deeper involvement in the war in Ukraine.

The announcement came on the eve of Russian President Vladimir Putin's inauguration to a fifth term in office and in a week when Moscow on Thursday will celebrate Victory Day, its most important secular holiday, marking its defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. The drills are a response to provocative statements and threats of certain Western officials regarding the Russian Federation," the Defence Ministry said in a statement. It was the first time Russia has publicly announced drills involving tactical nuclear weapons, although its strategic nuclear forces regularly hold exercises. Tactical nuclear weapons include air bombs, warheads for shortrange missiles and artillery munitions and are meant for use on a battlefield. They are less powerful than the strategic weapons — massive warheads that arm intercontinental ballistic missiles and are intended to obliterate entire cities.

The Russian announcement was a warning to Ukraine's Western allies about becoming more deeply engaged in the 2-year-old war, where the Kremlin's forces have gained an upper hand amid Ukraine's shortage of manpower and weapons. Some of Ukraine's Western partners have previously expressed concern that the conflict could spill beyond Ukraine into a war between NATO and Russia.

French President Emmanuel Macron repeated last week that he doesn't exclude sending troops to Ukraine, and UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron said Kyiv's forces will be able to use British longrange weapons to strike targets inside Russia. Some other NATO countries providing weapons to Kyiv have balked at



The Kremlin branded those comments as dangerous, heightening tension between Russia and NATO. The war already has placed significant strain on relations between Moscow and the

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that Macron's recent statement and other remarks by British and US officials had prompted the nuclear drills.

"It's a new round of escalation," Peskov said, referring to what the Kremlin regarded as provocative statements. "It's unprecedented and requires special attention and special measures?

Russia's Foreign Ministry summoned both the French and British ambassadors. Sweden's Foreign Minister Tobias Billström said the nuclear exercises "contribute to increasing

'In the current security situation, Russia's actions may be considered particularly irresponsible and reckless," Billström told

Swedish news agency TT. Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia's Security Council that's chaired by Putin, said in his typically hawkish fashion that the comments by Macron and Cameron risked pushing the nuclear-armed world toward a "global catastrophe." It wasn't the first time Europe's military support for Ukraine has prompted nuclear saber-rattling. In March 2023, after the UK's decision to provide Ukraine with armor-piercing shells containing depleted uranium, Putin said he intends to deploy tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Ukraine neighbor Belarus

The ministry said the exercise is intended to "increase the readiness of non-strategic nuclear forces to fulfill combat tasks" and will be held on Putin's orders. The maneuvers will involve missile units of the Southern Military District along with the air force and the navy, it said. The Russian announcement stirred little reaction in Ukraine, where the spokesman for the Military Intelligence agency, Andrii Yusov, said on national television: "Nuclear blackmail is a usual practice of Putin's regime; it does not constitute major

Western officials have blamed Russia for threatening a wider war through provocative acts. NATO countries said last week they are deeply concerned by a campaign of hybrid activities on the military alliance's soil, accusing Moscow of being behind them and saying they represent

Macron sets trade, Ukraine as top priority

hina's President Xi Jinping arrived at the French presidential palace on Monday for a two-day state visit that is expected to focus both on trade disputes and diplomatic efforts to convince Beijing to use its influence to move Russia toward ending the war in Ukraine.

In Paris, Xi first joined a meet-ing with French President Emmanuel Macron and Commission European President Ursula von der Leyen meant to address broader EU

Macron said in his introductory remarks the meeting would first address trade issues and how to ensure "fair competition", then the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

"We are at a turning point in our history" as the Europe-China relationship is faced with challenges, Macron said. The talks are aimed at sharing "both our shared positions and our concerns, to try to overcome them, because the future of our continent will very clearly also depend on our ability to develop balanced relations with China", he said.

Macron, a strong advocate of

ty, wants to raise French concerns about a Chinese antidumping investigation into cognac and other European brandy, and tensions over French cosmetics and other

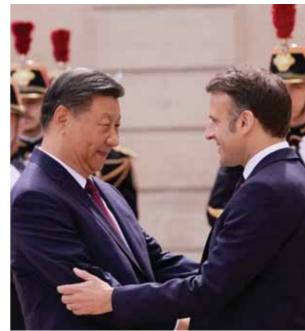
In a recent speech, he denounced trade practices of both China and the United States as shoring up protections and subsidies.

At the start of the meeting in Paris, Xi said "the world today has entered a new period of turbulence and change".

"As two important forces in the world, China and Europe should ... continuously make new contributions to world peace and development," he said. The EU launched an investigation last fall into Chinese subsidies and could impose tariffs on electric vehicles exported from China.

'The European Union and China want good relations," von der Leyen said. "We have a substantial EU-China economic relationship. ... But this relationship is also challenged, for example, through stateinduced overcapacity, unequal market access and overdepen-

Paris is the first stop on Xi's



European trip, seeking to rebuild relations at a time of global tensions. After France on Monday and Tuesday, he will head to Serbia and Hungary. France hopes the discussions will help convince China to use its leverage with Moscow to contribute to a resolution of the conflict" in Ukraine, according

to a French presidential official. Russian President Vladimir Putin recently announced plans to visit China this month.

Macron will press Xi over supplies from Chinese companies supporting the Russian war effort despite EU sanctions, he said. China claims neutrality in the Ukraine conflict. France official, who was not authorised to be identified according to presidential policy. Last year, Macron appealed to Xi to "bring Russia to its senses", but the call was not followed by any apparent action by Beijing.

French authorities are pursu ing two objectives that are ultimately contradictory," said Marc Julienne, director of the Center for Asian Studies at the Institute French International Relations. "On the one hand, to convince Xi that it's in his interest to help Europeans to put pressure on Vladimir Putin to end the war and, on the other hand, to dissuade the Chinese president from delivering arms to his Russian friend

help us, but at the same time we fear that he could help Putin," Julienne wrote. As France prepares to host the Summer Olympics, Macron said he would ask Xi to use his influence to make the Games "a diplomatic moment of peace". The discussions will also be closely watched from Washington, a month before President Joe Biden is expected to pay his own state

"In short, we think that Xi can

Germany recalls envoy in Russia for a week

Berlin (AP): Germany said on Monday it recalled its ambassador to Russia for a week of consultations in Berlin following an alleged hacker attack on Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party. Germany last week accused Russian military agents of hacking into the top echelons of Scholz's Social Democrats' party and other sensitive government and industrial targets. Berlin has joined NATO and fellow European countries in warning that Russia's cyberespionage would have consequences. The Foreign Office in Berlin said Monday that the government is taking the latest incident "seriously" and that Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock had decided to call back German Ambassador Alexander Lambsdorff. He would return to Moscow after

a week, it said. "The German government

takes this event very seriously as behavior against our liberal democracy and the institu-tions that support it," Foreign Office spokeswoman Kathrin Deschauer said.

Baerbock said last week that Russian military cyber operators were behind the hacking of emails of the Social Democrats, the leading party in the governing coalition. Officials said the hackers had exploited Microsoft Outlook.

The German Interior Ministry said in a statement last week that the hacking campaign began as early as March 2022, a month after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, with emails at the Social Democrat party headquarters accessed beginning that December. It said German companies, including in the defense and aerospace sectors, as well as targets related to the war in Ukraine were the focus of the hacking attacks.

Maldives urges Indians to 'be a part' of its tourism

With the number of Indian tourists visiting the Maldives dwindling amidst strained bilateral ties, the archipelago nation's tourism minister on Monday urged Indians to contribute to the country's economy which is dependent on tourism.

In an interview with PTI Videos here, Maldivian Tourism Minister Ibrahim Faisal emphasised on the historical relations between his country and India.

'We have a history. Our newly elected government also wants to work together (with India). We always promote peace and a friendly environment. Our people and the government will give a warm welcome to Indian arrivals. As the Tourism Minister, I want to tell Indians

tourism. Our economy depends on tourism," he said. A full-blown backlash was directed at the Maldives following derogatory remarks against India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on social media by three Maldivian officials after Modi posted photos and video of the pristine Lakshadweep Islands on India's west coast on January 6 on his X handle. Scores of Indians, including multiple celebrities, cancelled their reservations and dropped plans to visit Maldives. The tourism arrival statistics reflected how from being a top visitor country, India's position went down from topmost to sixth position after January.

According to a sun.mv report published on Monday, the India declined by 42 per cent in the first four months of this year compared to the first four months of last year.

At the start of this year, India was the top tourist market for the Maldives. Shortly into the year, India dropped to sixth place amongst the top tourist markets, the news portal reported. According to Tourism Ministry statistics, Maldives recorded a total of 43,991 tourist arrivals from India as of May 4. Between January and April of last year, Maldives recorded 73,785 tourist arrivals. This year, the number stands at 42,638. The report attributed the steep decline in Indian tourists to the strained relations between India and the Maldives after the new administration led by President Mohamed Muizzu assumed office in November

Pak SC suspends HC verdict denying **Sunni Ittehad Council reserved seats**

PTI ISLAMABAD

In a relief to jailed former premier Imran Khan's party, Pakistan's Supreme Court on Monday suspended a high court verdict denying the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) reserved seats for women and minorities in the national and provincial assemblies.

The Peshawar High Court (PHC) had rejected a petition of the SIC, which came to the fore after Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed independently elected lawmakers joined it, regarding its claim on reserved seats.

PTI was forced to take the cover of SIC because reserved seats are allott0ed to parties having members in the national and provincial assemblies Since the PTI was deprived of its bat symbol before the election due to failure to hold intra-party elections as per law, it was not allowed to contest the February 8 general election as a party.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in March ruled that the SIC was not entitled to claim quota for reserved seats as none of its members contested the election from the party platform and it also failed to provide a mandatory party list for reserved seats There are 70 reserved seats in

the 336-member National Assembly and 156 in the provincial assemblies which are allotted proportionally to the winning parties in the general elections. The reserved seats were allocat-

ed to all political parties according to their strength in the assemblies except the PTIbacked SIC. The ECP in March also decided to distribute the seats among other parliamentary parties but the PTI rejected the verdict as unconstitutional and petitioned against it in the PHC, which rejected the plea. The SIC then filed a petition before the apex court against the PHC judgment in

A three-member bench of the Supreme Court led by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and comprising Justices Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Athar Minallah took up an SIC appeal against the PHC order.

After hearing arguments, the court suspended the decision by the PHC. "We are accepting the case for hearing," Justice Shah said, adding that the PHC order upholding the ECP decision was suspended to the extent of the remaining reserved seats given to other

Later, the court adjourned the matter for hearing until June 3. The final verdict whenever it comes will be a moral victory for PTI but may not have any impact on the government. The total number of PTI lawmakers would slightly increase in the assemblies but still, the party would not be in a position to challenge the government. Earlier, the SIČ in its petition said that the PTI candidates joined the SIC after

their party lost its electoral symbol, adding that the ECP also raised no objections to the above independent returned candidates joining the SIC. It contended that the funda-

mental premise of the proportional representation system for allocating reserved seats for women and non-Muslims, as outlined in Article 51(6)(d)(e) and Article 106(3)(c) of the Constitution, 1973, does not hinge on whether a political party submits candidate lists for reserved seats before the general election or whether the party contested the election. Instead, the party asserted that the core constitutional basis for the right to reserved seats under the proportional representation system is determined by the "total number of general seats secured by each political party from the province concerned in the National Assembly" or the "total number of general seats secured by each political party in the provincial assembly.

PTI ■ LONDON

Pak CJ slams panel for probe into extremist group-led sit-in

Dakistan's Chief Justice Faez **I** Isa on Monday slammed a fact-finding commission set up to investigate the extremist group Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan's 2017 Faizabad sitin, saying that apparently, the committee's "mandate was to acquit" former ISI chief Faiz Hameed "by going out of the

Isa's remarks came as a three-

member bench of the Supreme Court took up a set of review petitions filed against its 2019 judgement in the Faizabad sit-in case involving the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). The Faizabad Dharna Commission was formed in November last year to investigate the TLP's 20-day sit-in, which paralysed life in both Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The extremist religious party was protesting alleged changes in the oath of lawmakers. A Supreme Court panel led by Justice Isa, years

chief justice, in a landmark judgment in 2019 had ruled against the sit-in and directed action against those responsible for it. However, no action was taken to implement the judgment and instead, several review petitions were filed against it, while the then government led by jailed prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party filed a corruption case against Isa. The case was rejected by the top court and the review petitions remained pending until Isa became the Chief

Justice last year and took them up for hearing. Interestingly, the majority of the petitioners withdrew their review pleas. However, the bench insisted on the implementation of the original verdict and the government set up a commission to suggest fixing the responsibility and hold officials accountable. A bench headed by Justice Isa

and comprising Justice Irfan

New vaccine may be effective against all coronaviruses

Akhtar Awan conducted the hearing on Monday after the report of the commission was submitted. The three-member commission was led by retired Inspector General Police Syed Akhtar Ali Shah with former Islamabad police chief Tahir Alam Khan and additional interior secretary Khushal Khan as its members. Chief Justice Isa was not

pleased with the report and said it was an effort to protect the former ISI chief, who had held talks with the protestors and also signed an agreement with them. "Why is this gentleman (Faiz) being acquitted in the report by going out of the way? Apparently, the commission's mandate was to acquit Faiz Hameed," the chief justice remarked during the hearing. He said it was very disappointing and a waste of the country's time because the commission failed to call anyone on behalf of the TLP who could have helped the commission.

Chad holds prez polls after years of military rule

Chad headed to the polls on Monday to cast their ballot in a long delayed presidential election that is set to end three years of military rule under interim oresident, Mahamat Deby Itno. Deby Itno seized power after his father who ran the country for more than three decades was killed fighting rebels in 2021 Last year, the government announced it was extending the 18-month transition for two more years, which provoked protests across the country.

There are 10 candidates on the ballot, including a woman. Analysts say Deby Itno is expected to emerge among the front runners. The main opposition figure Yaya Dillo, the current oresident's cousin, was killed in February in circumstances that remain unclear. "For years now we've had to cope with the high cost of living, without any solution," said Adoumadji Jean, a teacher at a state secondary school in Moyen-Chari province, in an interview with The Associated Press.

'Gulf Kingdom considers Pak high priority biz opportunity'

Islamabad (PTI): A senior Saudi official on Monday said that the oil-rich Gulf Kingdom's government and companies consider Pakistan a high priority economic, investment and business opportunity.

Saudi Deputy Investment Minister Ibrahim Almubarak made the remarks while addressing a two-day Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Investment Conference, which began here on Monday. A 50-member Saudi business delegation is in

Pakistan to attend the event. Almubarak said his country "believes in the economic potential of Pakistan" including its demography, location and natural resources, state-run Radio Pakistan reported. He said Pakistan is a major

strategic partner for Saudi

Arabia. Referring to the "fraternal ties" rooted deep in common faith, culture and shared values, the official said, "we want to see Pakistan as one of our leading international partners." The Saudi minister said that "the gathering provides an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the great opportunity available for investment in Pakistan. He expressed his confidence

that the public and private sectors of both the countries can take their partnership to the next level

Almubarak mentioned that Saudi Arabia is a home to about two million Pakistanis who have contributed significantly to the Gulf Kingdom's vision 2030. On his part, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb expressed the government's "commitment to fully facilitate the private sector to take the country towards export-led growth' The Pakistan government was

focused on bringing foreign direct investment to uplift various sectors, he said. Giving an overview of the country's economic situation, the finance minister claimed it was on a positive trajectory. He said that the cash-strapped country's current account deficit will be less than a billion dollars during the ongoing fiscal year.

He said the country's foreign exchange reserves have risen to \$9 billion, adding that the local currency was stable over the last ten months while the inflation was down to roughly seventeen

A team of scientists from the world's leading universities have developed a new allin-one vaccine that they hope can protect humans against a broad range of coronaviruses,

including ones that are yet to The research published in 'Nature Nanotechnology' on Monday is based on a new approach to vaccine development called "proactive vaccinology", where scientists build a vaccine before the diseasecausing pathogen even emerges, which has shown promising results in mice. The study by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the UK and Caltech in the US says the vaccine works by training the body's immune

naviruses, including SARS-CoV-2 which caused the COVID-19 outbreak, and several that are currently circulating in bats and have potential to jump to humans and cause a pandemic. "Our focus is to create a vaccine that will protect us against the next coronavirus pandemic, and have it ready before the pandemic has even started," said Rory Hills, a graduate researcher in the University of Cambridge's Department of Pharmacology and first author of the report. For example, the new vaccine does not include the SARS-CoV-1 coronavirus, which caused the 2003 SARS outbreak, yet it still induces an immune response to that

regions of eight different coro-

"We've created a vaccine that system to recognise specific provides protection against a

broad range of different coronaviruses - including ones we don't even know about yet, said Hills Key to its effectiveness is that the specific virus regions the vaccine targets also appear in many related coronaviruses. By training the immune system to attack these regions, it gives protection against other coronaviruses not represent-

identified vet. 'We don't have to wait for new coronaviruses to emerge. We know enough about coronaviruses, and different immune responses to them, that we can get going with building protective vaccines against unknown coronaviruses now," said Professor Mark Howarth in the University of Cambridge's Department of

ed in the vaccine, including

ones that haven't even been

Pharmacology, senior author of the report "Scientists did a great job in

quickly producing an extremely effective COVID vaccine during the last pandemic, but the world still had a massive crisis with a huge number of deaths. We need to

work out how we can do even better than that in the future, and a powerful component of that is starting to build the vaccines in advance," he said. The new 'Quartet Nanocage' vaccine is based on a structure called a nanoparticle – a ball of proteins held together by incredibly strong interactions. Chains of different viral antigens are attached to this nanoparticle using a novel "protein superglue". Multiple antigens are included in these chains, which trains the immune system to target specific regions shared across a broad range of coronaviruses The latest study demonstrated that the new vaccine raises a broad immune response, even in mice that were preimmunised with SARS-CoV-

2. The new vaccine is much simpler in design than other broadly protective vaccines currently in development, which the researchers believe should accelerate its route into clinical trials. The underlying technology

that the scientific collaboration has developed also has potential for use in vaccine development to protect against many other health challenges. It is said to improve on previous work, by the Oxford and Caltech groups, to develop a novel allin-one vaccine against coron-

avirus threats.

India's service activity growth in April among fastest in 14 years: PMI

 $I^{
m ndia's}$ services sector growth eased slightly in April but growth of new business and output remained sharp and among the fastest in 14 years favourable economic conditions and strong demand, a monthly survey said on Monday. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index fell from 61.2 in March to 60.8 in April, highlighting one of the strongest growth rates seen in just under 14 years.

Survey members attributed the latest upturn in output to favourable economic conditions, demand strength and rising intakes of new work.

In the Purchasing Managers'

Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction

"India's service activity rose at a slightly softer pace in April, backed by a further rise in new orders, with a notable strength in domestic demand," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist

In addition to buoyant domestic demand, firms noted new business gains from several parts of the world, which collectively underpinned the secondquickest upturn in international sales since the series started in September 2014.

On the job front, a few service providers in India showed an increased appetite for new hires



in April, amid rising inflows of new business. However, several companies indicated that payroll numbers were sufficient for current requirements, and the rate of job creation was marginal and softer than that seen at the end of the previous fiscal year.

"In response to increased new orders, firms expanded their staffing levels, though the pace of hiring growth decelerated," Bhandari said.

On the price front, wage pressures and higher food prices meanwhile led to another increase in cost burdens, which firms partially passed on to their customers.

'Input costs continued to rise sharply, albeit slower than in March, but resulted in squeezed

margins for service firms, as only part of the price rise was passed on to clients through output charges," Bhandari said.

Meanwhile, confidence among service providers towards the vear-ahead outlook for business activity improved to a 3-month

Marketing efforts and efficiency gains, alongside plans to price competitively and predictions that demand conditions will remain favourable, boosted optimism, the survey said. Meanwhile, the HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index

moderated to 61.5 in April, from 61.8 in March, the latest reading was one of the highest seen in close to 14 years and signalled a substantial rate of expansion

"In terms of overall activity,

aggregate output across both the manufacturing and service sectors rose significantly in April, albeit at a slightly slower pace, indicating sustained health in these sectors," Bhandari said. During April, manufacturers continued to note a stronger increase in new business intakes than service providers. Aggregate sales rose sharply, and at one of the fastest rates since mid-2010.

Composite PMI indices are weighted averages of comparable manufacturing and services PMI indices. Weights reflect the relative size of the manufacturing and service sectors according to

Sensex closes flat, Nifty slips on profit taking by investors



PTI MUMBAI

 $B_{\text{almost flat in a range}}^{\text{enchmark Sensex closed}}$ bound trade on Monday as investors booked profits in index heavyweights amid high valuation concerns. The 30 share BSE Sensex edged up 17.39 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 73,895.54. The barometer hit a high of 74,359.69 and a low of 73,786,29.

The broader NSE Nifty declined 33.15 points or 0.15 per cent to close at 22,442.70. From the Sensex basket, Mahindra Bank jumped 5 per cent after the company reported a 25 per quarter net profit at Rs 5,302 crore, limited by a drop in the core income due to narrow interest margins.

Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Tech Mahindra and IndusInd Bank were among the other major gainers. Titan tanked 7 per cent after its March quarter earnings failed to cheer investors. State Bank of India, NTPC, Power Grid, Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro were the other laggards.

The domestic indices traded in a range-bound manner, said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. "The broader indices also witnessed major selling

pressure due to valuation concerns and profit-booking," Global oil added.

benchmark Brent crude

climbed 0.80 per cent to USD

83.62 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded equities worth Rs 2,391.98 crore on Friday, according to exchange

In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory. Japan and South Korea's markets were

closed for the holidays. European markets were trading with gains. Wall Street ended with significant gains

Billionaire investor Warren that the Indian market has "unexplored" opportunities which holding conglomerate Berkshire company, Hathaway, would like to explore "in the future".

Buffett's remarks came at Berkshire's annual meeting on Friday when Rajeev Agarwal of DoorDarshi Advisors, a US-based hedge fund that invests in Indian equities, asked him about the possibility of Berkshire exploring in India, the world's

fifth-largest economy.
The BSE benchmark dropped 732.96 points or 0.98 per cent to settle at 73,878.15 on Friday. The NSE Nifty also declined 172.35 points or 0.76 per cent to 22,475.85

FADA, Frost & Sullivan team up for study to analyse domestic PV segment PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Automobile dealer's body FADA on Monday said it has joined hands with Frost & Sullivan for a study to analyse various aspects of customer journey, encompassing sales, after-sales and product quality across the domestic passenger vehicle industry.

The Customer Experience Index (CEI) study will target various segments hatchbacks, sedans, SUVs, EVs and luxury vehicles, detailed utilising questionnaire to capture from insights 8,000 participants across 26 cities. The study would include seven

metropolitan areas, 16 tier-2 cities and three tier-3 locations, ensuring a broad and inclusive data set that spans the diverse Indian landscape.

incorporating this customer experience index survey, we are broadening our analytical scope to encompass all facets of the Indian automobile ecosystem, thereby providing a comprehensive voice and strategic vision for all stakeholders," FADA Manish President Singhania said.

The insights garnered from this expansive survey will directly inform and refine OEM strategies, facilitating tailored customer experiences that foster brand loyalty and satisfaction, he added.

FADA Research & Academy Chairman Vinkesh Gulati said integrating detailed assessments of sales, after-sales experiences from various vehicle categories, the body aims to provide OEMs and dealers with the insights necessary to elevate their service standards and product offerings. The results of the study are expected in September this year.

"India is poised to witness exponential growth in the automotive industry driven by the rising middle-income and youth population, adoption of electric vehicles, increased investment in the Indian automotive industry and government policy impetus," Frost & Sullivan Global Managing Partner & Executive Board Member Aroop Zutshi

BSNL to launch 4G services across India in August

State-owned BSNL will start rolling out 4G services across the country August, using indigenous completely technology in line with the government's "Atmanirbhar" policy, according to official sources. BSNL officials claimed to have recorded peak speed of 40-45 megabit per second on the 4G network which has been rolled out in the premium spectrum band of 700 megahertz (Mhz) as well as in 2,100 Mhz band during the pilot phase.

The company has rolled out 4G services in Punjab using developed indigenously technology by IT company TCS and State-run telecom research organisation C-DoT-led consortium and onboarded around 8 lakh subscribers.

'The 4G core developed by C-DoT is performing very well in the BSNL network in Punjab. It was installed in July last year. It takes 12 month to prove the success of such complex technology but C-DoT core has stabilised within 10 months. will launch atmanirbhar 4G technology across the country in

August," a senior government official, who did not wish to

be named, told PTI. The core network collection network devices, and hardware, that provides software fundamental services in a telecommunication network. Telecom regulator Trai in a recent paper explained core as part of a network that offers the functionality of aggregation, call control, switching, authentication, charging, gateway functionality, etc.

TCS, Tejas Networks and government-owned ITI have bagged orders worth about Rs 19,000 crore from BSNL for deploying 4G network which is upgradable to 5G. In a recent earnings call,

Tejas Networks Executive Director and chief operating officer Arnob Roy said BSNL's mobile network is getting deployed across zones. He said that wherever the C-DOT core is not available on the BSNL network, the equipment is getting integrated to the existing core.

"When the C-DOT core gets deployed in those circles, in those zones, they will get parented to the C-DOT core as well. Tejas Networks Limited," Roy said.

Brand India more mature, fearless brand than it used to be

PTI SANTA CLARA

India has made its mark as the startup capital of the world and "Brand India" has emerged as a more mature and fearless brand than it used to be two decades ago, a top marketing leader has said. India has made its mark in the startup nation category. So many great startup companies have come out of it and they have gone on to become mature businesses, Ajay Mangalani, a seasoned marketing leader in the rapidly evolving technology and SaaS industries, told PTI in an interview.

"Brand India is passionate. Brand India is still hungry to make things, to build things, to create things. Brand India is also much more mature now...," said Mangalani, also the chief marketing officer of TiE Silicon Valley, on the sidelines of the TiECon, the largest gathering of tech entrepreneurs in the world. As many as 30 Indian startups participated in the

recently concluded TiECon, organized by TiE Silicon Valley. envision the Indian generation entrepreneurship will be much more focused around research and will be risk

takers... That level of grit and

passion that the Indian

community has, I have no

doubt that it is going to move well under the current in that direction of strong leadership as a startup nation," Mangalani said. An award-winning marketing leader, Mangalani for over

two decades has helped Fortune 500 giants and highgrowth pre-IPO AI and B2B SaaS companies break the scale barrier, crafting datadriven marketing strategies. Responding to a question, he said the world is taking note of India. "The world is taking note...

India has become a value driven country as we have always been in terms of standing with our core values of trust, support, honesty, insight, and all of that. The world really appreciates where we are today," Mangalani said. India has done tremendously leadership, especially in terms of development and digital transformation on the ground, which was crucial for the growth of both startups as well as traditional companies. Lauding Anita Manwani, the new president of TiE Silicon Valley, Mangalani said "She has a very clear vision about TiE, and she's a phenomenal operator and executor". TiE Silicon Valley, he said, is a

bridge to the knowledge, the insights, the experience, and the power that comes with it. ... I think that the next generation of TiE is going to be focused on bringing in new blood, the new talent, the next generation of entrepreneurs and providing them the connectivity and growing them from there," Mangalani said.

Rupee falls 5 paise to close at 83.50 against US dollar

PTI MUMBA

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled for the day 5 paise lower at 83.50 (provisional) against the US dollar, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices.

Forex traders said a weak trend in domestic equities also dented investor sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 83.43, then touched an intra-day high of 83.42 and a low of 83.50 against the greenback. The rupee finally settled at 83.50 (provisional) against dollar, registering a fall of 5 paise over its previous close.

On Friday, the rupee inched up 1 paisa to settle at 83.45 against the US dollar. Forex traders said US dollar demand



from importers and a recovery in crude oil prices weighed on the rupee. We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on the rise in risk appetite in global markets. However, any recovery in crude oil prices may

cap sharp upside. Any renewed geopolitical tensions in the Middle East may also weigh on rupee at higher levels," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP

USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.20 to Rs 83.70, Choudhary added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which

gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.06 per cent higher at 105.09. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.80 per cent to USD 83.62 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex advanced 17.39 points, or 0.02 per cent, to settle at 73,895.54 points. The Nifty fell 33.15 points, or 0.15 per cent, to close at 22,442.70 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Friday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,391.98 crore, according to

exchange data. Meanwhile, India's forex reserves dropped USD 2.412 billion to USD 637.922 billion as on April 26, in the third consecutive weekly decline in the reserves, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined USD 2.28 billion to USD 640.33 billion. On the macroeconomic front, the seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index fell from 61.2 in March to 60.8 in April, highlighting one of the strongest

growth rates seen in just under 14

Indian airlines to have 50 per cent market share in international passenger traffic by FY'28: CRISIL

PTI MUMBA

As much as half of the country's international air passenger traffic is expected to be catered by Indian airlines by financial year 2027-28, credit ratings agency CRISIL said on Monday

The share of Indian airlines in international passenger traffic, including originating or terminating as well as the traffic transitioning through the country, is seen surging 700 basis points to around 50 per cent by 2027-28, from 43 per cent in the previous fiscal, it said.

The improvement would be driven by Indian airlines deploying additional aircraft and adding new routes in the international segment, as well as their inherent advantage of superior domestic connectivity compared with foreign carriers, CRISIL Ratings said in its report.



The report noted that business profiles of Indian carriers will strengthen as a result of their rising share in international traffic, which is more profitable than the

domestic segment. international passenger traffic grew to around 70 million in fiscal 2024, from a low of 10 million in pandemic-hit disposable incomes, easing fiscal 2021, and has surpassed the pre-pandemic level, according to CRISIL. disposable incomes, easing visa requirements, growing number of airports and enhanced air travel

The share of Indian airlines. which was rising steadily earlier, picked up pace since the pandemic, it said. noticeable shift

spending patterns has emerged after the pandemic, as evident in the increasing inclination of Indians towards international leisure travel. "Increasing disposable incomes, easing visa requirements, growing

travel

enhanced

connectivity are boosting international travel," said Manish Gupta, Senior Manish Gupta, Senior Director and Deputy Chief Ratings Officer at CRISIL Ratings. The government's focus on making India a hub for tourism is also expected to provide a fillip to inbound

Thus, international passenger traffic is likely to clock a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10-11 per cent over the next four fiscals, against a mere 5 per cent CAGR in the four years prior to the pandemic, he added.

Indian airlines have added 55 new international routes over the past 15 months, taking their tally beyond 300, it said. These include direct flights originating from additional cities to popular long-haul destinations in the United States, Europe and Australia, effectively reducing flying time and eliminating eliminating layovers, CRISIL said.

P note investments surge to near six years high at ₹1.5 lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tnvestments through **L**participatory notes in the markets Indian capital markets reached Rs 1.5 lakh crore at the end of February, making it the highest-level in nearly six years, driven by a strong performance of the domestic economy

The latest data includes the value of P-note investments in Indian equity, debt, and hybrid securities.

Participatory notes (P-notes) are issued by registered foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to overseas investors who wish to be part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly. They, however, need themselves to go through a due diligence

According to the latest data from markets regulator Sebi, P-note value investments in Indian markets - equity, debt, and hybrid securities — stood at Rs 1,49,517 crore at the end of



1,43,011 crore at the end of January

The amount has reached the highest-level since June 2017, when investment through the route stood at Rs 1.65 lakh crore, data with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed.

The growth in P-notes generally aligns with the trend in FPI flows. When there is a global risk to the environment, investment through this route increases, and vice-versa.

Market experts said that influx in February can be porate positive growth trends during the attributed to robust corporate earnings economic observed December quarter. India's economic growth accelerated to 8.4 per cent in

the third quarter of 2023-24, mainly due performance manufacturing, mining & quarrying and construction sectors.

Of the total Rs 1.5 lakh crore invested through this route till February, Rs 1.27 lakh crore was invested in equities Rs 21,303 crore in debt, and Rs 541 crore in hybrid

In addition, assets under custody of the FPIs grew to Rs 68.55 lakh crore in Februaryend from Rs 66.96 lakh crore

securities.

in the preceding month. Meanwhile, FPIs invested a net sum of Rs 1,539 crore in the Indian equities and Rs 22,419 crore in the debt market in February.

Indonesian delegation appreciates The Cottage



Ministry of Defence, Republic of Indonesia led a delegation to "The Cottage" at Janpath and appreciated the diverse range of ethnic crafts of India under one roof. While going around the highly impressive wide variety of product categories, he expressed his keen interest in evolving models for growth of cottage industries of both the India & Indonesia.

Seen in the picture is Anil Rajak, Addl. General Manager, the Cottage explaining the importance and intricacy of Filigree Craft from Orissa to the delegates. *PNS*

RANCHI I TUESDAY I MAY 7, 2024

Rublev overcomes fever and praises doctors after winning Madrid Open for the 1st time



AP ■ MADRID

espite sleepless nights struggling with a fever, Andrey Rublev found a way to fight back and win the Madrid Open for the first time.

Rublev was feeling sick all week but rallied to beat Felix Auger-Aliassime in three sets on Sunday and clinch his second Masters 1000 title. Rublev won 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 after Auger-Aliassime double-faulted on the last point of the final at the clay-court

tournament in the Spanish

capital.

"I would say this is the most proud title of my career," Rublev said. "I was almost dead every day. I was not sleeping at night. The last three, four days I didn't sleep." Rublev gave "full credit to the doctors," who were "doing some tricky things" just to make sure he could play.

some tricky things" just to make sure he could play.
"I have no words," the eighthranked Rublev said. "If you knew what I had been through in the past nine days you would not imagine that I would be able to win a title." The 26-year-old Russian won his first Masters 1000 title at Monte Carlo last year. Auger-

Aliassime was playing in his first final at this level.
Rublev entered Madrid on a four-game losing streak after early exits at Indian Wells, Miami, Monte Carlo and

Barcelona. One of his victories in Madrid came in the quarterfinals against home-crowd favorite Carlos Alcaraz. He now has 16 career titles, and two this season after Hong Kong in January. He had arrived with a 5-1 record against Auger-Aliassime, including a win in their sole matchup on clay.

Auger-Aliassime's path to the final saw second-ranked

Sinner Iannik because of an injury ahead of the quarterfinals, and Jiri Lehecka retired against the Canadian in the first set of the semifinals. Other injuries hit the men's draw in Madrid starting with Novak Djokovic's withdrawal before tournament. Daniil Medvedev retired in the quarterfinals while Alcaraz was hampered by a sore right arm and Rafael Nadal bowed out of what was

home country.

Iga Swiatek won the women's title for the first time in her career on Saturday.

likely his last appearance in his

This may be published in Newspapers and TV form the day following the last date for withdrawal of candidature and upto two days before the date of poll

Format C-2

(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgment dated 25th September 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs Union of India & Anr.)

Name of Political Party : BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

*Name of Election : LOKSABHA- 2024
Name of State/UT : JHARKHAND

Name of State/UT : JHARKHAND								
1	2	3	8	4	5			
SI. No.	Name of Constituency	Name of Candidate			(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences			
			Name of Court, case no. & status of the case(s)	Sections of the Acts concerned & brief description of offence(s)	of Court & date(s) of	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Punishmen Imposed	
1	Kodarma	Annpurna Devi	Spl. Court	Sec. 130 (E) People of Representati on Act 1951				
2			Smt. Nutan Ekka Spl. JMFC, MP, MLA, Civil Court Ranchi Dhurwa (Ranchi) PS Case no. 107/23 Pending	Sec. 147,				
3			CJM Dhanbad Dhanbad PS case no. 454/21 Pending	Sec 269/270 /34 IPC				

*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.

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SI. No.	Name of Constituency	Name of Candidate	(A) Pending criminal cases		(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences			
			Name of Court, case no. & status of the case(s)	Sections of the Acts concerned & brief description of offence(s)	date(s) of	& `´punishment	Punishment Imposed	
1	HAZARIBAGH	MANISH JAISAWAL	Sri Sushil Kumar Pingua, (Now S.S. Minz) JM Hazaribagh Katkamdag PS Case no. 131/2021 Pending	323, 337				
2			Miss Arpita Narayan (MP/MLA) Court Sadar PS Case no. 380/21 Pending	3 Jharkhand				

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SI. No.	Name of Constituency	Name of Candidate	(A) Pending criminal cases		(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences			
			Name of Court, case no. & status of the case(s)	Sections of the Acts concerned & brief description of offence(s)	of Court & date(s) of	& punishment	Punishment Imposed	
1	CHATRA	KALI CHARAN SINGH	CJM Chatra Sadar PS Case no. 195/ 2022 Pending	Sec. 13 of JMMC Act 2017, 21, 21 of MMDR Act 1957, 37 and 38 of Air Prevention and Control of Pollution Act 1981	I .			

*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

elhi Capitals would require Rishabh Pant's killer instinct and Jake Fraser McGurk's unbelievable flair in their bid to stay alive in the IPL playoff race when they square off against a rampaging Rajasthan Royals in a mustwin game here on Tuesday.

The Capitals have been inconsistent so far, winning five and losing six of their last 11 games. While winning the remaining three games is a must for Pant's men, even that will only take them to 16 points which might not be enough to qualify for the last four stage of the tournament.

Apart from KKR (16 from 11 games) and RR (16 from 10 games), there are at least three teams, namely Chennai Super Kings (12 from 11), Sunrisers Hyderabad (12 from 10 games) and Lucknow Super Giants (12 from 11 games), who can go beyond the 16-point mark. Given the situation, DC's best

MUST WIN GAME FOR I

might not be enough for qualification, but Pant would look to only "control the controllables," a policy advocated by his mentor Mahendra Singh Dhoni.
On a flat Feroz Shah Kotla deck, the challenge will be twofold for the DC skipper.
At one end, he would want the Khaleel Ahmeds, Ishant Sharmas and Kuldeep Yadavs

he pioneer

Sharmas and Kuldeep Yadavs to restrict the Yashasvi Jaiswals, Sanju Samsons, and Riyan Parags to a manageable level but then with barely 60-metre boundary on one side, it will be a challenge to stop a team, whose jersey's colour (Pink) resembles their overall health. With 380 runs to his credit and three impactful half-centuries in his kitty, Pant would like to once again perform, especially when his team has been pushed to the wall. He will



have new Aussie sensation Fraser-McGurk, who has gone off the boil in the last couple of

These two batters can individually change the complexion of a game, but DC will be wary of the Royals' bowling attack, which will pose a very different challenge at the Kotla compared to Sawai Man Singh.

Facing spinners of Yuzvendra Chahal and Ravichandran Ashwin's calibre isn't easy, and in veteran Sandeep Sharma, RR has a bowler, who can take pace off the deliveries.

The Rajasthan bowling attack has been able to maintain a decent economy rate but for DC, only Axar Patel (ER of 7.24) and Kuldeep (ER 8.45) have shown the wherewithal to stop opposition batters on their tracks.

It is time that Khaleel (ER 9.47) and Mukesh Kumar (ER 11.05) also show more consistency. South African pacers Lizaad Williams (ER 12 in 2 games) and Anrich Nortje (ER 13.36) have simply not looked the

The last time the two teams met was in Jaipur in March and DC then had lost control during the second half of their bowling innings with Riyan playing a superb innings.
The Royals batters would be licking their lips after having a

look at the surface which can't

get flatter than what it is right Riyan, skipper Sanju Samson, the dashing Yashasvi, along with finishers Rovman Powell, Shimron Hetmyer and Dhruy Jurel give Royal a very scary

look and DC bowlers can only

pray that it doesn't turn out to

be 'Nightmare 2.0' for the

TEAMS:

Delhi Capitals: Rishabh Pant
(c), David Warner, Abishek
Porel, Ricky Bhui, Yash Dhull,
Shai Hope, Prithvi Shaw,
Tristan Stubbs, Kumar Kushagra, Swastik Chikara, Ishant Sharma, Jhye Richardson, Rasikh Dar Salam, Vicky Ostwal, Anrich Nortje, Mukesh Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav, Praveen Dubey, Khaleel Ahmed, Sumit Kumar, Axar Patel, Mitchell Marsh, Lalit Yadav, Jake Fraser-McGurk. Rajasthan Royals: Sanju Samson (c), Jos Buttler, Shimron Hetmyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel, Riyan Parag, Donovan Ferreira, Kunal Rathore, Ravichandran Donovan Ferreira, Kuldeep Sen, Saini, Keshav Ashwin, Navdeep Maharaj, Sandeep Sharma, Trent Boult, Yuzvendra Chahal, Avesh Khan, Rovman Powell, Shubham Dubey, Tom

We are focussed on following template set by Gambhir: Harshit Rana

Young pacer Harshit Rana feels Kolkata Knight Riders are reaping the rewards by following the winning template set by two-time IPL winner and current mentor Gautam Gambhir as they continued their sensational run to grab the top position in the IPL points table.

Gambhir had led KKR to the IPL crown twice with the team also qualifying for the playoffs five times during his stint from 2011 to 2017. He had also guided KKR to the finals of the now-defunct Champions

League T20 in 2014. However, in the last seven years, KKR could reach the playoffs only twice.

Gambhir's return to the KKR camp as a mentor this year

turned things around as the franchise Kolkata-based moved to the top of the table with 16 points following a dominating 98-run over Lucknow Super Giants — 8th win in 11 games — on Sunday night. "Not only this match, this entire season we have been focussing a lot on the style of cricket that Gautam Gambhir wants us to play. He has a lot of knowledge on how to turn games in our favour and it helps us a lot in the middle," Rana said during the press

conference. "Like today he gave the bowlers a free hand, to find the length to bowl depending on the wicket, and not to try too many things," he added.

Rana (3/24 in 3.1 overs) played a crucial role in the win by taking three wickets while



defending a target of 235. KKR read the wicket very well. The areas we had to bowl, we targeted the right places," Rana said.

IPL's biggest buy Mitchell Starc has proved expensive this season but Rana said the team management is not at all bothered about his economy

rate and has faith on the Australian speedstar.

"We have not cared even for a bit on how expensive Mitchell Starc has been in IPL 2024. He have full faith in him and he won us the last game and we have no doubts on him whatsoever.

"He has such a great influence on the younger players, he has such a huge wealth of knowledge," Rana said. Rana said his dream is to play

for India and is focussing on his performance.

"My aim is to play for India but whatever franchise I play for I try to give my best on the day of the match. I will be selected based on my performance and performance alone," Rana said. . We'd our plans but everything went Narine's way: Naveen: It was yet another sparkling fifty

by Sunil Narine (81 off 39) which helped KKR post a massive 235 for six and LSG fast bowler Naveen Ul Haq conceded that all their plans failed against the star West Indian allrounder.
"I think he played quite well. We had a plan of bowling bouncers and yorkers and mixing it up and not being

mixing it up and not being predictable against him. We did that but he played quite a brilliant innings to be honest," he said.

"It wasn't like he was slogging and everything was going top edge or anything like slicing the ball. He was properly middling it and that's the case like from the beginning of the

"He's been middling it. Everything going his way. So yeah, it was a great knock by

The Afghan seamer said LSG could have produced a better show with the bat but they can't dwell on defeat too much as they need to focus on the next

Versatility of Jadeja makes him class act, says Finch



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Australia skipper Aaron Finch has termed India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja a "class player" because of his versatility which brings in a lot of balance in all the teams that he represents.

Jadeja scored 40-odd runs and took three wickets in Chennai Super Kings' victory over Punjab Kings on Sunday.

"Ravindra Jadeja is such a versatile player, which makes him so effective. With the ball, he would

have loved more wickets," Finch told Star Sports. "He's been economical, going at under eight per over throughout the tournament. Leading with three wickets today (Sunday), he showed he is an absolute class player." Finch was impressed that Jadeja returned with fine figures of 3/20 in his full quota of four overs while defending a not-so-big total of 169.
"Three wickets for just 20 runs when the Punjab

Kohler-Cadmore,

Mushtag, Nandre Burger.

Kings were chasing a total of 170 odd runs is just superb. It just shows why he's one of the best players in the world," the Australian said. Finch also spoke highly about Kolkata Knight Riders' Sunil Narine. The 2021 World T20-winning Australian skipper feels that it is

extremely difficult to contain Narine for a long period of time. It's truly remarkable, isn't it? I mean, seeing

Sunil Narine stride out to open the batting.

Before this season, you're thinking, if we can just keep him quiet for a couple of balls, he'll try and do something and play a big shot. But this season, he's not only getting off to explosive starts but also batting smartly and seizing control of the innings," Finch said.

(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)

Format C-2

OTHER SPORTS



Indian women and men 4x400m relay teams qualify for Paris Olympics 26 to August 11.

PTI ■ NASSAU (BAHAMAS)

The Indian men's and women's 4x400m relay teams qualified for Paris Olympics after finishing second in their respective second-round heats at the World Athletics Relays here on Monday.

In the women's competition, the quartet of Rupal Chaudhary, M R Poovamma, Rusthiles Sci. Don't Pool 10 Hz. Jyothika Śri Dandi and Subha Venkatesan clocked 3 minutes and 29.35 seconds to finish second behind Jamaica (3:28.54) in heat number one to book a Paris Games ticket. Later, the men's squad of Muhammed Anas Yahiya, Muhammed Ajmal, Arokia Rajiv and Amoj Jacob finished with a collective timing of 3 minutes and 3.23 seconds to also finish second in their heat, behind USA (2:59.95).

The top two teams in each of the three heats in the second round were to qualify for the Olympics to be held from July

It was a sort of a surprise that the women's 4x400m team qualified for the Olympics as the focus was more on the more men's 4x400m team which has qualifi broken Asian record in backto-back global events — Tokyo Olympics and 2023 World Championships — as well as winning 2023 Asian Games

The Indian women's team had finished fifth in the first-round qualifying heat on Sunday with a time of 3 minutes and 29.74 seconds.

The men's team had failed to finish in the first-round qualifying heat after second leg runner Rajesh Ramesh pulled out midway due to cramps. Arokia Rajiv took the place of Ramesh in the team and he ran the third leg after Anas and

team was on third position when anchor-leg runner Jacob took the baton from Arokia but the Delhi boy ran a

fantastic race to overtake his Mexican opponent and finish second.

It was not about the timing but more about Olympics qualification for the Indian men's team which ran 3:00.25 at the Tokyo Olympics for the then Asian record before bettering it during the 2023 World Championships with yet another Asian record of 2:59.05. Monday's timing was well below the team's best.

India had even given a mighty scare to formidable USA during the heat race at the 2023 World Budapest Championships before settling for the second place.

Meanwhile, India pulled out of

the mixed 4x400m relay second round heat races on Monday as Ramesh was not available after suffering muscle Ajmal. cramps while running the The Indian men's 4x400m men's 4x400m first round heat

mixed 4x400m and men's

4x400m races on Sunday. India

on Sunday. Ramesh had run both the

had featured in mixed 4x400m relay in the Tokyo Olympics where the event made its debut.

The Indian women's 4x400m relay team will be returning to Olympics after missing out in Olympics after missing out in Tokyo Games. The Paris participation will be the eighth time for the Indian women's 4x400m team, the first being in 1984 Games. For the men's 4x400m, this will be the fourth time India will be taking part in the Olympics, the first being in the 2000

Sydney Games. With this, India now have at least 19 Paris-bound track and field athletes and the list includes defending javelin throw champion Neeraj Chopra among others.

The athletics events at the Games will begin on August 1. A total of 70 teams have qualified for relay events at the Paris Olympics following two days of thrilling action at the Relays World Athletics Bahamas.

Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgment dated 25th September 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs Union of India & Anr.)

Name of Political Party : BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

*Name of Election : GANDEY ASSEMBLY SEAT BYE-ELECTION- 2024

Name of State/UT : JHARKHAND

Name of otate/of : STARRIAND								
1	2	3	4			5		
SI. No.	Name of Constituency	Name of Candidate	(A) Pending criminal cases		(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences			
			Name of Court, case no. & status of the case(s)	Sections of the Acts concerned & brief description of offence(s)	of Court & date(s) of	& `´punishment	Punishment Imposed	
1	GANDEY	DILIP KUMAR VERMA	Smt. Saqiua Koshar J.M. 1st Class Giridih GRD(T) P.S. 161/2021 Pending	U/S 188, 269 of IPC and 51 of Disaster Management Act. allegation for participating in a Public Protest against State Government				

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