

THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



British PM Rishi Sunak

UNITED KINGDOM
Sunak proposes tougher rules to fight 'sick note culture'

London: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said on Friday the government would look to tighten rules for long-term sick leave in a bid to reverse a rise in the number of Britons who have permanently dropped out of the workforce. Labour force participation among working-age Britons is its lowest since 2015, mainly due to a rise in long-term illness and a greater number of students. With his eyes firmly on a national election later this year, which polls show he is expected to lose, Sunak sought to appeal to core Conservative voters by warning the current welfare bill was unsustainable, and arguing that a 'sicknote culture' around mental health needed to be reined in. **REUTERS**

EUROPEAN UNION
Finland urges EU to help curb migrant influx

Helsinki: The European Union will help Finland guard its eastern border from neighbouring Russia's attempt to "instrumentalise migrants" to destabilise it, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Friday. Finland last year shut all passenger crossing points on its long border with Russia amid an influx of asylum-seekers from countries including Syria and Somalia, and accused Moscow of weaponising migration, an assertion the Kremlin denies. The border closure has put an end to the flow of migrants but Finland is building a fence on parts of the border and has stepped up patrol. **REUTERS**

BRAZIL
Lula recognizes two more indigenous lands

Brasilia: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva officially recognized two more indigenous territories on Thursday, but said he decided not to sign on four others because they still need to be cleared by people currently occupying them. The recognition grants the territories legal protection as reservations to be defended against invasions by illegal loggers, gold miners and cattle ranchers. Lula, who pledged to legalize as many reservations as possible, signed in Brasilia the recognition of the Aldeia Velha and Cacique Fontoura lands, which are located in Bahia and Mato Grosso, respectively. **REUTERS**

SOUTH KOREA
After poll failure, govt to rethink medical reforms

Seoul: South Korea's government announced a compromise in its medical reform plans on Friday in a bid to end a two-month walk-out by doctors, and also said President Yoon Suk Yeol would meet the opposition leader for the first time after two years in office. The conciliatory moves followed a crushing election defeat for Yoon's ruling party last week. The government was locked in a stalemate with doctors. **REUTERS**

NUCLEAR FACILITIES IN ISFAHAN NOT HIT, SAY IRANIAN MEDIA

Israel strikes Iran cities in first response to missile barrage

THE NEW YORK TIMES
APRIL 19

THE ISRAELI military struck Iran early on Friday, according to two Israeli and three Iranian officials, in what appeared to be Israel's first military response to Iran's attack last weekend but one whose scope, at least initially, appeared to be limited.

The Iranian officials said that a strike had hit a military air base near the city of Isfahan, in central Iran. Initial reaction in both Israel and Iran was muted, with news media in both countries appearing to play down the attack, in what analysts said was a sign that the rivals were seeking to de-escalate tensions.

The Israeli military declined to comment. A senior US official said that Israel had notified the United States through multiple channels shortly before the attack. All the officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

In the hours after Israel's strike, there have been no public calls for retribution by Iranian officials. Iranian news agencies reported that nuclear facilities in Isfahan had not been hit.

Israeli leaders came close to ordering widespread strikes in Iran on the night Iran struck, officials said, but after Prime Minister

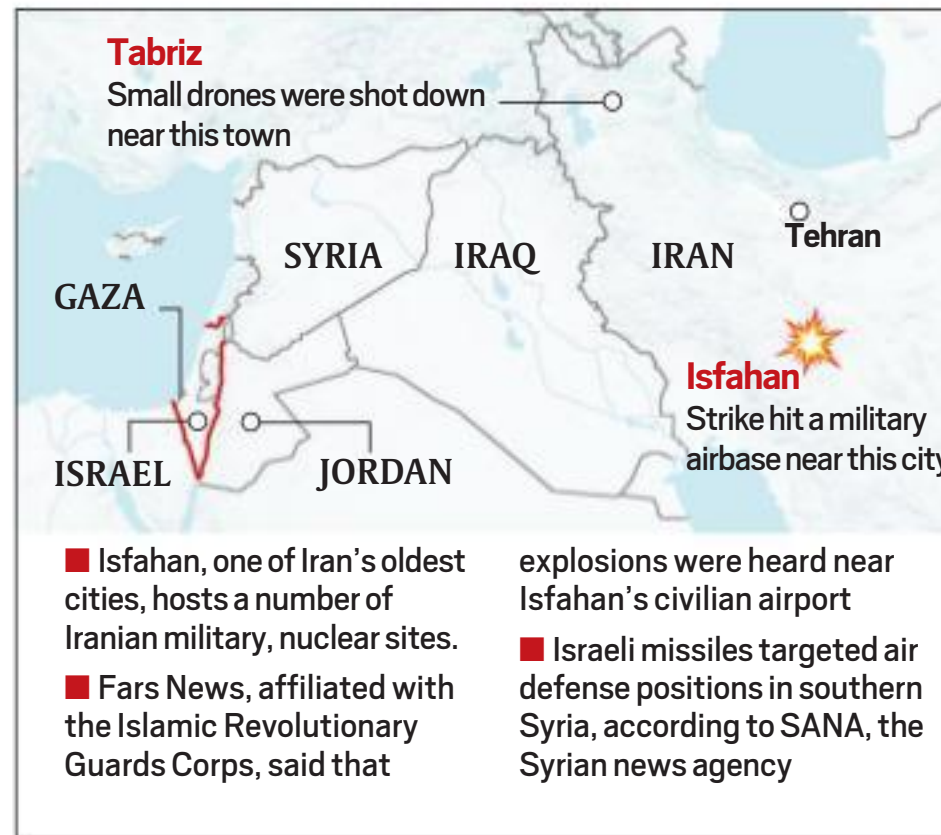
PALESTINIAN BID TO GET FULL U.N. MEMBERSHIP GETS VETOED BY U.S.

United Nations: The United States blocked the UN Security Council on Thursday from moving forward on a Palestinian bid to be recognized as a full member state at the United Nations, quashing an effort by Palestinian allies to get the world body to back the effort. The vote was 12 in favor of the resolution and one — the US — opposed, with abstentions from Britain and Switzerland. Palestinian envoy to the UN, Riyad Mansour, described the bid as an effort "to take our rightful place among nations." **NYT**

Benjamin Netanyahu spoke with President Biden, and because the damage was limited, the war cabinet postponed a decision.

Iranian officials said that the attack on Friday was carried out by small drones, possibly launched from inside Iran.

They said that a separate group of small drones was shot down in the Tabriz region, roughly 500 miles north of Isfahan.



■ Isfahan, one of Iran's oldest cities, hosts a number of Iranian military, nuclear sites.
■ Fars News, affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, said that

explosions were heard near Isfahan's civilian airport
■ Israeli missiles targeted air defense positions in southern Syria, according to SANA, the Syrian news agency



A protester being detained during a pro-Palestine demonstration on the Columbia University campus in New York City, on Friday. **Reuters**

108 arrested after pro-Palestine protest in Columbia University

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK CITY, APRIL 19

NEW YORK police removed a pro-Palestinian protest encampment at Columbia University on Thursday and arrested more than 100 demonstrators, including the daughter of a prominent Minnesota congresswoman.

Several students involved in the protest said they also were suspended from Columbia and Barnard College, including Isra Hirs, who is the daughter of Democratic US Rep. Ilhan Omar. Omar had questioned Columbia's president, Nemat Shafik, at a hearing Wednesday in Congress about the school's targeting of pro-Palestinian protesters.

Police said 108 people, including Hirs, were charged with trespassing at the private Ivy League institution. Two people were also charged with obstructing government administration.



Columbia University president Nemat Shafik

Out of an abundance of concern for the safety of Columbia's campus, I authorised the police to begin clearing the encampment

— NEMAT MINOUCHE SHAFIK ON POLICE ACTION IN CAMPUS

New York Mayor Eric Adams said the city was asked in writing by university officials to remove the encampment. "Students have a right to free speech, but do not have a right to violate university policies and disrupt learning on campus," Adams said.



Rescuers save a man from rubble after a Russian strike in Dnipro on Friday. **Reuters**

In a first, Ukraine downs Russian strategic bomber after strike kills 8

Dnipro suffers heavy damage after missiles rain on city, say officials

REUTERS
KYIV, DNIPRO, APRIL 19

UKRAINE SHOT down a Russian strategic bomber 300 km (185 miles) from its border on Friday after the warplane took part in an airstrike that killed at least eight people, including two children, in the central Dnipropetrovsk region, Kyiv said.

Missiles rained down on the city of Dnipro and the surrounding region in the early hours, damaging residential buildings, the main train station and wounding at least 28 civilians, regional officials said.

Russia has stepped up its long-range aerial assaults on Ukraine's energy system and other targets in recent weeks, ratcheting up the pressure on Kyiv far behind the front lines where Russian forces have been slowly advancing in the east.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for urgent supplies of air defences from Kyiv's allies as Ukraine's stocks dwindle due to a slowdown in vital Western military aid. "Russia must be held accountable for its terror, and every missile, every Shahed (drone) must be shot down," he said.

NATO ALLIES PLEDGE KYIV AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS

Brussels: NATO allies on Friday agreed to provide Kyiv with additional air defence systems, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said after a special meeting of allied defence ministers with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Many countries have pledged to provide financial support to purchase them for Ukraine, said Stoltenberg. **REUTERS**

In a first for Ukraine during the invasion, Kyiv's air force commander and military spy agency said they had shot down a Russian Tu-22M3 strategic bomber that had fired missiles at Ukraine during the overnight attack.

The warplane, they said, had been flying in Russian airspace 300 km from the Ukrainian border. An intelligence source told Reuters that Kyiv had used a modified S-200 air defence missile for the attack, but did not say where it had been fired from. The S-200 is a Soviet-era long-range surface-to-air missile system.

Trump uses trial on hush money case to squeeze small donors, court big spenders

REUTERS
NEW YORK CITY, APRIL 19

REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL candidate Donald Trump is using his hush money trial to squeeze his loyal army of small donors and personally lobby major backers as he scrambles to reduce a major funds disadvantage with President Joe Biden.

His campaign has been firing off daily, dramatically worded fundraising appeals to small donors since the trial in New York began with jury selection on Monday.

"I could be locked up for life," one email read this week. "I should be campaigning across America and fighting for our country."



Former US President Donald Trump

"He's been fairly unscrupulous in his appeals," said Zachary Albert, a politics professor at Brandeis University. "The norm is to treat these small donors as cash cows that you squeeze as much as you can, as often as you can."

"The donors I've needed him to talk to he's been exceedingly effective in terms of getting large checks and support from them," said one Trump fundraiser, who asked to remain anonymous to share private conversations.

NEARLY TWO-DOZEN WOMEN FIGHT FOR THEIR VILLAGE TO BE RELOCATED AWAY FROM A COPPER MINE

Meet the women guarding a Serbian village under threat from a mine

MARKO DJURICA & IVANA SEKULARAC
KABUL, APRIL 18

THE WOMEN are nurses, school teachers, students and housewives. They span three generations. And they are up for a fight.

Nearly two-dozen women are at the centre of a battle to have their village in eastern Serbia relocated away from a copper mine that they say has polluted their land and water and ruined the surrounding countryside.

Since January, when the men of the village go to work, the

women have taken turns guarding a barricade on a bridge in Krivelj to stop trucks from entering the mine, which is operated by China's Zijin Mining.

Zijin's subsidiary, Serbia Zijin Copper, acknowledged the problems and has agreed to relocate the community.

This week, Zijin agreed to stop driving large trucks through the village.

Residents temporarily lifted the blockade to allow the company to complete some work.

Some villagers have already been relocated by the company, but the majority of the remaining population in Krivelj are



Vlachs - Orthodox Christians who have preserved their own language and customs through



Officers survey the site of the blast on Friday. **Reuters**

5 Japanese escape, 1 Pak guard killed in Karachi suicide blast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KARACHI, APRIL 19

FIVE JAPANESE nationals working for Suzuki Motors had a lucky escape but their private security guard was targeted by a suicide bomber and a gunman here in Pakistan's port city on Friday, in the latest terrorist attack on foreign nationals in the country.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) East Azfar Mahesar said the two terrorists, who were already waiting for the van on the road near Murtaza Chorangi in Landhi, attempted to hit the vehicle carrying the Japanese nationals.

"All five Japanese remained safe," he said of the attack which took place at an upscale community in Karachi early morning.

The suicide bomber was killed in the attack while an accomplice was gunned down by

police. A private security guard accompanying the Japanese national died after succumbing to his injuries while another injured was shifted to the ventilator, Geo News quoted the hospital administration as saying.

Jinnah Hospital officials said three people were brought to the facility in critical condition.

One of the injured, a 45-year-old security guard, succumbed to his injuries while another injured was shifted to the ventilator, Geo News quoted the hospital administration as saying.

The administration said one more injured person is receiving treatment at the hospital.

CONCERNS OF RETALIATORY VIOLENCE RISE

Stabbing at Sydney church: Cops charge teen with terrorism

REUTERS
SYDNEY, APRIL 19

POLICE CHARGED a 16-year-old boy with a terrorism offence on Thursday for the alleged stabbing of Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel at a church on Monday. Footage from the scene showed the boy restrained by the congregation and shouting at Emmanuel for insulting Islam.

Police said they will allege he stabbed the bishop, who is in stable condition in hospital, as many as six times. The offence carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. The boy was refused bail.

A mob of thousands descended on the church after the attack, where they clashed with police and demanded the boy be

brought out to face justice.

Hours afterwards the Lakemba mosque, one of Australia's largest, received fire bomb threats. "Our real fear is one of targeting women who are identifiable through their head scarves walking through the streets or shopping centres," said Kheir, secretary of the Lebanese Muslim Association, which oversees three mosques including Lakemba.

Coming only days after a mass stabbing in Bondi, the attack on Emmanuel and the possibility of reprisals have put the normally peaceful Sydney on edge.

Gun and knife crime is rare in the city, one of the world's safest.

Bishop Emmanuel on Thursday pleaded for peace and said he had forgiven his attacker in an audio message recorded in hospital.

All parties involved. A local official said they hoped the move would be done by the end of 2025.

"We are defending our village and houses where we were born. I feel so sorry about our beautiful village, I am not sure I will survive the move," said Stana Jorgovanovic, a 79-year-old housewife as she stood at the barricade.

Some feared the trucks that shipped materials and waste to and from the mine may run over their children.

Others do not grow vegetables anymore because authorities said the soil was contaminated.

All are determined to make their voices heard.

Zijin said it has invested over \$100 million in environmental protection measures to minimize the impact on Krivelj.

"These concerted efforts have directly contributed to improving the environment of the Krivelj village," the company said in a statement to Reuters.

"I want a new village of Krivelj. I need a piece of land, a church and a cemetery," said Milosava Fufanovic, an elementary school teacher, as she sat on a sofa in her house. "If all the people leave the barricade I will be the last standing." **REUTERS**

BUSINESS AS USUAL
By UNNY



MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SEATS
in first of seven phases

REPOLLS LIKELY IN VIOLENCE-HIT
polling stations of Manipur

GREAT RESPONSE, SAYS PM,
thanks those who voted

62% turnout in 102 constituencies as Phase One of Decision 2024 ends



A woman, carrying her daughter, casts vote at a polling station in the border village of Zokhawthar in Mizoram's Champai district, Friday. Reuters **PAGES 6, 7**

Polling in the first phase augurs well for next phases: CEC Rajiv Kumar

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

FROM JAMMU and Kashmir to Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra to Manipur, the first phase of polling in the Lok Sabha elections saw a voter turnout of around 62% until 9 pm in 102 constituencies across 21 states and Union Territories, the phase with the largest number of seats in the seven-phase 2024 polls.

According to Election Commission of India data, turnout in the 102 Lok Sabha

VOTING TURNOUT 2024		
Tamil Nadu	Uttarakhand	Overall (102 seats)
65.19%	54.06%	62.37%
2019: 72.38%	2019: 61.64%	2019: 69.89%

OTHER STATES/UTS IN PHASE 1: Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, J&K, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal
Note: Provisional figures until 9 pm Source: Election Commission

Phase 2 voting on **APRIL 26** No. of seats: **88**

constituencies of Phase I and the 92 Assembly constituencies of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, where state legislature polls were held simultaneously, stood at 62.37% as of 9 pm.

Polling was to end at 6 pm, but those who were in line to

vote were being allowed to cast their votes beyond 6 pm, EC officials said. While the average turnout in these 102 Lok Sabha seats stood at 70% in 2019, the tentative turnout this time pointed to a decrease. However, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Clashes in Manipur and West Bengal, CRPF man killed in Chhattisgarh

SUKRITA BARUAH, JAYPRAKASH NAIDU & SANTANU CHOWDHURY
GUWAHATI, RAIPUR, COOCH BEHAR, APRIL 19

GUNFIRE AND clashes at polling booths, the death of a CRPF jawan, and allegations of EVMs being damaged marred the electoral process in Manipur, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, even as Election Commission officials said the overall process was smooth.

The poll body had unique challenges in two of the states — while Manipur has been in the grip of ethnic violence since May last year, Chhattisgarh's Bastar district cast its vote under the shadow of Naxalism. West Bengal had, in the aftermath of the 2021 Assembly polls, seen violence that claimed the lives of workers across the political spectrum.

According to officials in Manipur, there were multiple incidents of gunfire close to polling stations in the **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



'Fadnavis said he will groom my son Aditya as CM, and he would move to Delhi... made me look like a liar'

VANDITA MISHRA & SHUBHANGI KHAPRE
MUMBAI, APRIL 19

MAHARASHTRA IS a critical piece of the election puzzle this time — since the last Lok Sabha election of 2019, the traditional "communal vs secular" battlelines have been rearranged beyond recognition, after Shiv Sena and NCP splintered, and both government and Opposition were reconstituted. On the Opposition side, an unlikely alliance has taken shape — between Congress, Shiv Sena

impact? Has the alliance been too late in getting off the ground?

Congress cadre *bikhra hua tha* (was fragmented), it has been energised. Till 2023, people were afraid to speak, not any more. Now they feel democracy is in danger. If Rahul or I come out, people think someone is there (against the BJP), they also find courage to speak against *jhoote vaade* (false promises).

I was watching a Youtube video yesterday, in which a farmer was asked if he had got Rs 6,000 (of PM-Kisan).

I pay Rs 1 lakh for fertiliser in a year, and 18 per cent, Rs 18,000 as GST. So I have got Rs 6,000 from the government, but the government owes me Rs 12,000. Earlier, *dar ka mahaul tha* (there was an atmosphere of fear). Now people think *inko hara sakte hain* (BJP can be defeated).

Everything has its time. If two years ago we had said dictatorship, people would not have believed it. Today, *saamne aa gaya hai*, it has come to the fore.

But isn't the realignment of political forces in Maharashtra causing confusion for the people?

Where did it start, the people can see. We were with the BJP on "Hindutva" and "*desh* (nationalism)". Why did BJP do this to us (split the alliance and the Sena)? My father had said, you take the **CONTINUED ON PAGE 5**



UDDHAV THACKERAY
LEADER, SHIV SENA-UBT

DD News under Opp fire over new saffron logo



The new DD News logo was unveiled on Tuesday

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

TWO DAYS after DD News, the flagship channel of state-run Doordarshan, unveiled its new official logo — changing its colour from ruby red to saffron — the national broadcaster has come under fire from Opposition parties for alleged "saffronisation".

While the broadcaster played down the issue as a mere change of visual aesthetic, leaders of Opposition parties questioned the need for effecting the change right ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

On Tuesday evening, DD News posted on its official X handle a video of its new logo along with a message: "While our values remain the same, we are now available in a new avatar. Get ready for a news journey like never before. Experience the all-new DD News!"

"We have the courage to put: Accuracy over speed, Facts over claims, Truth over sensationalism... Because if it is on DD News, it is the truth! DD News - Bharosa Sach Ka," it added.

Soon after, TMC Rajya Sabha MP Jawhar Sircar, who was the CEO of Prasar Bharati between 2012 and 2014, said, "National **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Day after Rahul's arrest jibe, Pinarayi hits back: Your grandmother jailed us for year-and-a-half

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 19



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan

KERALA CHIEF Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Friday reminded Rahul Gandhi, who had questioned why the BJP government at the Centre was not acting against the CPI(M) leader like it had done with other Opposition CMs, that it was Rahul's "grandmother who had jailed us for one-and-a-half years".

Addressing an election event in Kozhikode, Vijayan said, "Rahul is worried why the Kerala Chief Minister is not being questioned and why he is not being taken into custody... It was your grand-

mother (Indira Gandhi) who had jailed us for one-and-a-half years (during the Emergency) when she suppressed the entire country."

On Thursday, at a rally in Kannur, Rahul had said, "Two chief ministers are in jail. How come this is not happening to the Chief Minister of Kerala? I am attacking the BJP 24x7, and the Chief Minister of Kerala is attacking me 24x7. This is a bit puzzling." The **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

BIG PICTURE



The Kotla Factory
Athletes by day and gig workers by night, their dreams begin in the lanes of Kotla Mubarakpur **PAGE 14**

EXPRESS NETWORK

IN 10 YRS, GOVT PLANS TO BOOST NCC STRENGTH TO 27 LAKH CADETS
MINOR'S ABORTION PLEA: SC ORDERS MEDICAL EXAM
PAGE 9

Amid South China Sea tension, India delivers BrahMos to Philippines

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

INDIA DELIVERED the BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines Friday as part of a \$375-million deal signed in 2022.

The delivery of the missiles was also announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at an election rally in Damoh in Madhya Pradesh where he congratulated people of the country for this.

An IAF C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft and a chartered aircraft delivered the missile system to the Philippines Marine Corps. Sources said three batteries of the weapon system would be deployed by the Philippines in their coastal areas **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

4 LOK SABHA CONSTITUENCIES VOTED IN PHASE-I

Bihar buzz: Modi leading light, Tejashwi sunrise, Nitish sunset

VIKAS PATHAK
MUZAFFARPUR, APRIL 19

IN BIHAR, which voted Friday in four Lok Sabha constituencies and where elections for the state's 40 seats will be held in all seven phases, there appears to be no overwhelming wave in favour of one party, no single emotive issue that has captured the imagination of voters.

It's a state key to the number game that will help decide who returns to the Centre. Across large swathes, as one travels from the districts in the south to those in the north close to Nepal, what is clear though is the voter's nuanced response.

Some say the ruling NDA should win with local variations



₹ 400

CM Nitish Kumar at a poll rally in support of NDA candidate Girdhari Yadav in Banka on Friday. PTI

and some tough fights; others predict an upset, still others are keeping their cards close to the chest.

Conversations on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his policies are intense and divided but his supporters underline the TINA (there-is-no-alternative) factor this election and that the BJP under Modi should do better than those dissing the BJP.

Yet they concede that the tally may dip below the 2019 near-sweep of 39 out of 40 seats.

There is one consensus that seems to cut across quite a few fault lines, even among detractors of the RJD: Tejashwi Yadav is a politician who has worked hard to ensure that the legacy of his father Lalu Prasad doesn't fade away. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

To regain a lost citadel, CPM relies on popularity of 'teacher amma'

SHAJU PHILIP
VADAKARA, APRIL 19

FROM POSTERS to social media posts, "teacher amma" is the central focus of the CPI(M)'s campaign in north Kerala's Vadakara Lok Sabha constituency. The party's candidate K K Shailaja "teacher", the former state health minister, is popularly referred to as the "pride of Kerala" by her supporters and Left workers.

Even in Thalassery, the hometown of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and late CPI(M) state secretary Kodyeri Balakrishnan that comes under

the constituency, the image of Shailaja who steered Kerala through the Covid-19 pandemic dominates the campaign.

In a video, Shailaja, a former high-school teacher, stands in a classroom and talks of the CPI(M)'s stand on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), explaining that the law "discriminates based on religion". There is even a "dine with Shailaja" outreach programme through which voters have a meal with her.

The CPI(M) is depending upon Shailaja's popularity to wrest back Vadakara that was once its citadel but has been won by the Congress three straight

times since 2009, when Congress veteran Mullapally Ramachandran defeated the CPI(M)'s P Sathheedevi by 56,000 votes. He retained the seat in 2014, but his margin came down to 3,000 votes. In 2019, the Congress's K Muralaiah defeated the CPI(M)'s P Jayarajan by 86,000 votes.

Shailaja, currently an MLA from Mattannur in Kannur, will take on Palakkad MLA Shafi Parambil of the Congress. The BJP has fielded BJP youth wing BJYM's state president Praful Krishnan. The Muslim vote, estimated to be about 31%, may prove to be decisive in Vadakara.



CPI(M) candidate K K Shailaja campaigns in Kuttiady in Vadakara constituency. Express

The constituency, which votes along with the rest of the 19 Lok Sabha seats on April 26 in the second phase, has a history of political violence and the CPI(M)'s alleged role in it has dented its prospects in the constituency in previous elections.

In May 2012, rebel CPI(M) worker T P Chandrasekharan who started a breakaway party called the Revolutionary Marxist Party of India (RMP) was hacked to death by members of the Left party. His wife, K K Rama, later took over the reins of the party and has been mounting a challenge to the CPI(M). She went on to become an MLA from the

Vadakara Assembly constituency. This February, the Kerala High Court quashed the 2012 acquittal of two CPI(M) leaders who were the accused in the murder case based on an appeal filed by Rama.

Violence again became a talking point in the constituency on April 5 when a CPI(M) worker lost his life while allegedly making a crude bomb in the constituency's Panur area. A dozen party workers have been arrested by police, who said the bombs were allegedly being prepared to be used against political rivals. The Congress has seized on the issue to target the **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

• Day after, Pinarayi hits back at Rahul

Congress has alleged that Vijayan was not criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi because of investigations by central agencies into an illegal payment scam at his daughter Veena's IT firm, and a fund scam at a co-operative bank in Thrissur.

Vijayan on Friday said he has never been afraid of any investigation or agency. "Rahul is being criticised over his stand on CAA. Why were you keeping away from the anti-CAA protest? Congress leaders were not among those arrested in Delhi in connection with the protest," Vijayan said. He also said Rahul "had been called a name in the past" and that he "should not create a situation that shows that

you have not changed". Senior Congress leader and party Working Committee member Ramesh Chennithala said Vijayan should retract the comments against Rahul and tender an apology. Vijayan "is ready to stoop to any level to curry favour with Narendra Modi," Chennithala alleged.

Since the start of the election campaign in Kerala, where the Congress and CPI(M) are rivals although they are part of the Opposition's INDIA bloc at the national level, Vijayan has repeatedly criticised Rahul for being silent on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act — something that the CPI(M) has made a major poll issue.

CLARIFICATION

18.04.24, PAGE 10

RESPONDING TO A Delhi Confidential report "Photo Copy", the PRO of CRPF has denied that the DG's office issued a directive for uniformity in office arrangements across offices and institutions, specifying the layout of chairs, tables, and the display of items such as photographs and pen stands etc.

The Indian Express replies: The communication was not issued from the DG's office. The error is regretted. However, such a communication was sent to different units from a wing of the CPRF.

FROM PAGE ONE FULL REPORTSON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM
62% turnout in 102 constituencies

the final figures were expected to go up. According to EC, the final figures would be known on Saturday.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said the first phase of polling had gone off satisfactorily. "Thanks to the voters and the polling personnel for their hard work over two years, the polling in the first phase augurs well for the next phases," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X: "First phase, great response! Thank you to all those who have voted today. Getting excellent feedback from today's voting. It's clear that people across India are voting for NDA in record number."

In Tamil Nadu's 39 seats, the turnout until 9 pm was 65.19% — the 2019 turnout in the state was 72.44%. Uttarakhand's five seats

saw a turnout of 54.06% as of 9 pm, compared to 61.88% in 2019. As of 9 pm, Tripura, where votes were cast for one seat, had the highest turnout for any state (80.17%), followed by West Bengal (77.57%) which had three seats in the fray. Bihar, which had four seats in the first phase, had the lowest turnout (48.50%) — in 2019, the four seats of Aurangabad, Gaya, Nawada and Jamui had an average turnout of 54%.

The first phase saw voters turning out for all 39 seats in Tamil Nadu, 12 seats in Rajasthan, 8 seats in UP, 6 seats in M, 5 seats each in Assam, Maharashtra and Uttarakhand, 4 seats of Bihar, 3 seats of West Bengal, 2 seats each in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and 1 seat each in Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Andaman and

Nicobar Islands, J&K, Lakshadweep and Puducherry. While there were reports of violence in some parts of Manipur, EC officials said considering the situation of ethnic conflict in the state since 2023, polling had been relatively smooth. The officials, however, said repoll was likely in the polling stations where there was violence and entry of outsiders into booths. In Nagaland, the turnout was 56.91% as of 9pm, but the EC's Voter Turnout app showed that the turnout in 19 of the 60 Assembly segments had been left blank and in one of them, Tamlu, it was "0.00%", reflecting the call for boycott in some districts over demand for separate administration.

In a statement at the close of polling, the EC said: "Polling for the first phase of the General

Elections 2024 recorded high voter turnout despite the heat wave. Polling remains largely peaceful with voters from various walks participating enthusiastically in a dazzling display of civic responsibility and pride."

In a departure from the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the EC did not release details of the numbers of EVMs and VVPATs used and the percentage replaced during polling. An EC spokesperson declined to comment when asked. According to an EC official, the replacement rate was below 1%.

Polling was held for the first time in 56 villages of Bastar and the Shompen tribe of Great Nicobar too voted for the first time, the EC said. The results will be announced on June 4. The Arunachal and Sikkim Assembly results will be out on June 2.

• Talk on Bihar street: Modi star, Tejashwi sunrise, Nitish sunset

"I am with Modi ji here, and he will be PM again. But do not forget that Tejashwi has worked hard to keep his party alive while Lalu Prasad was either in jail or ailing. He is leading from the front. *Ek din Chief Minister ban ke rahagaye jaan lijiye* (take my word, he will become CM one day)," says Ravi Ranjan of Muzaffarpur city.

In Samastipur, a supporter of BJP ally IJP has a similar take. "Tejashwi woh neta-putra hai jo raj yog ke liye bana hai. *Ghoomta raha rajya bhar mein jab Lalu Yadav jail mein thai ya bimari thai. Toh aage to jaayega hi ek din* (Tejashwi worked hard when his father was either in jail or ailing. He will go far)."

Yadavs in the state are backing Tejashwi, seeing him as the successor of Lalu Prasad. But there are others who, while acknowledging Tejashwi's growing heft, concede that the NDA is better placed, and that Modi is all set to return to power for a third term.

The one man whose graph seems to be falling, and who people think is fading away, is Nitish Kumar, the "survivor" who has remained in power for almost two decades despite being from a caste group, the Kurmi, that is barely 3 per cent of the state population.

In the political sky this time,

there is unanimity — across NDA and INDIA — that this is Nitish Kumar's sunset. While Yadavs are unforgiving after his latest shift to the NDA, even NDA supporters mock him. "Nitish has brains. He is No. 3 each time, yet he becomes CM," says an NDA supporter in Muzaffarpur to the merriment of all around him.

"Sushasan Babu Sushasan mein hi mil gaye. *Woh paltu Baba hain* (Sushasan Babu bites the dust on governance... he's the master of flip-flops)," says Santosh Yadav, who sells tea at a busy junction near the Darbhanga airport.

Across the state from him, Kushwaha villagers in Kutumba block of Aurangabad — next door to Jharkhand — are more unforgiving. "He is a blot on Bihar. He has no ideology," says an old man, his frown deepening his wrinkles. The subtext: they support RJD's Abhay Kushwaha here.

And yet, in Bihar, politics is never about black and white. As this correspondent waits in a Samastipur hotel for a meeting with a state Minister on his campaign trail, political workers from various NDA parties are engaged in a conversation in the large room over cups of tea.

"Nitish babu is down but his

political impact will take time to disappear," says Ajit Kumar, a local political worker. "His crossing over time and again has dented his image and the early Sushasan Babu image doesn't hold any more. But he still has Kurmis with him to quite an extent and invisible women voters who remember how he brought prohibition and gave bicycles to girls to go to school," says Ajit Kumar, a local political worker.

"Why did Modi ji ensure that Nitish ji comes on board? His vote percentage is going down in each election but he still gets that roughly 14-per cent vote, which is the difference between victory and defeat among the two alliances. Take that away from any one side, and the game is over so far as a victory is concerned."

He's quick to underline that Nitish's absence has ensured that even his presence cannot offer an alliance a clear sweep; there will be contests.

Another man sitting next to him adds, "Yes, till the JD(U) finally fades away and the BJP and RJD become the two poles of Bihar politics."

In the case of Modi, who is mentioned more than any other leader in casual conversations,

some upper-caste voters come across as supporters without conditions and some from deprived castes as labharthi (beneficiary) supporters.

"*Hum to usi ko vote denge jo humko 5-kg chaawal mufte de raha hai. Aur kisse denge?* (I will vote for the man who is giving me five kgs of rice free of cost. Who else will I vote for?)" says Ram Swarup Sahani, a Nishad from the Bhikanpur village near Muzaffarpur and at the junction of Muzaffarpur and Vaishali seats.

Sahani sells fish on the roadside just outside his village, the road in front of which connects Muzaffarpur and Sitamarhi. Asked about Mukesh Sahani of the Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP), seen as the party of the Nishads or Mallahs that is with the INDIA bloc at present, Sahani shoots back, "*To Bhaajpa ka candidate ya haan Nishad nahin hai kya* (Is the BJP candidate here not a Nishad?)"

The BJP has fielded Raj Bhushan Chaudhary, a Nishad, from Muzaffarpur, replacing sitting MP Ajay Nishad, who has joined the Congress in a huff. Interestingly, the BJP's present candidate lost to Ajay Nishad the last time, contesting on a VIP ticket.

• DD News under Opp fire over logo

broadcaster Doordarshan colours its historic flagship logo in saffron! As its ex-CEO, I have been watching its saffronisation with alarm and feel — it's not Prasar Bharati any more, it's Prachar (publicity) Bharati!"

Talking to *The Indian Express*, Sircar said, "It's not just the logo, everything about the public broadcaster is saffron now. While the programmes and events of the ruling party get maximum airtime, Opposition parties hardly get any space now."

Sircar called it "visual entrapment" being affected by the regime. He also gave the example of the Rajya Sabha hall in the new Parliament going saffron, from maroon in the old building.

Responding to the criticism, Prasar Bharati CEO Gaurav Dwivedi told *The Indian Express* that the new logo has "a catchy orange colour".

"A few months ago, ahead of G20 (summit), we had carried out

a revamp of DD India and settled upon a set of graphics as visual language for that channel," he said, adding that it was around that time that they started working on the revamp of DD News as well — visually and technically.

DD National's current logo is blue and saffron.

"Using a bright, appealing colour is purely about the channel's branding and visual aesthetic and it is unfortunate for anyone to be reading anything else into that," he said. "It's not only a new logo, the entire look and feel has been upgraded — we have a new set, new lighting, seating arrangement and equipment."

In fact, officials said that when Doordarshan was launched in 1959, it had a saffron logo. Subsequently, other colours such as blue, yellow and red were brought in for the logo, even as its design — two petals with a globe in the centre — has remained the same.

• Popularity of 'teacher amma'

her morphed pictures were being circulated online. The police registered cases against Congress workers who in turn filed complaints against CPI(M) leaders.

Shailaja says that her fight in Vadakara is about "standing for a secular and democratic India". The former state minister says, "When several controversial Bills were introduced in Parliament, the Congress was silent. We must all remember that," says the former

minister. Shafi, meanwhile, has alleged corruption during Shailaja's ministerial tenure.

"Those who think about the common man's life will vote for me. The state government recently told the High Court that welfare pension is not mandatory and was at the discretion of the government. People should think whether such a government should be supported," he says.

• India delivers BrahMos

amid tensions with China in the South China Sea.

Defence sources said that deliveries of some of the missile storage facility items had begun last month, but the actual deliveries of the missiles began Friday.

The deal for a shore-based variant of an anti-ship cruise missile marked India's first major export order. The missile has a range of around 290 km.

BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture between Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya. The supersonic cruise missile has been operationalised in all three wings of the Indian armed forces.

BrahMos NG is a next-generation smaller, lighter version of the

weapon system which can be deployed on a range of military platforms. The trials for it were scheduled to be held in the first half of 2024.

Work has been underway to upgrade the range of the existing BrahMos missiles from 290 km to 500 km for land attacks and 400 km for ship attacks. Electronic counter-counter measures are also part of the other upgrades being carried out.

Last month, the Ministry of Defence signed contracts with BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited to procure BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and procurement of ship-borne BrahMos systems at a cost of Rs 19,518.65 crore and Rs 988.07 crore respectively.

• Clashes in Manipur, Bengal

valley areas. Around 2 pm, a person identified as Khoisnam Sayamaima (65) received a bullet injury at a polling station in Khurai, Imphal East. Later, the polling station was vandalised and documents set ablaze, officials said. According to the booth level officer, two armed miscreants came into the polling station, enquiring about Congress and BJP polling agents, and tried to forcefully take the Congress agent away before being stopped by voters and volunteers.

"There have been a few more instances in which EVMs have reportedly been damaged. Along with this, there are also a few cases of people saying they were coerced and intimidated. Once all the reports are received, they will be analysed and there will be decisions taken on whether re-polling needs to be done anywhere," said an election official.

According to poll officials, eight EVMs were damaged in Imphal East and West districts. There was also an incident of gunfire at Thamanpokpi in Bishnupur district in the morning. Both these areas are located in the Inner Manipur constituency, which covers most of the state's Meitei majority valley, and where there are six candidates in the fray.

Throughout the day, there were reports of the presence of armed people — suspected to be members of radical armed Meitei group Arambai Tenggol — at polling stations in the valley.

The Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee has submitted a complaint to the Chief Election Officer (CEO) of booth capture by armed miscreants in polling stations in Heinang, Thongju, Kanthoujam, Oinam, Khurai, Sekmai, Sugnu, and Keirao Assembly segments — all of which are located in the valley. Except for Sugnu, which comes under the Outer Manipur Lok Sabha constituency, the others come under the Inner Manipur seat.

Manipur CEO Pradeep Kumar Jha confirmed that an EVM was damaged in Thongju in Imphal East. There was vandalism in at least one more polling station, in Uripok in Imphal West, officials said. The CEO said they received complaints from some polling stations in Imphal West of people intimidating voters and agents, and attempting to capture booths. EC officials said polling in Manipur had been relatively smooth.

IED blast kills jawan

In Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, a 32-year-old CRPF jawan was killed in an IED blast near a polling booth. In a separate IED blast, also in Bijapur, another CRPF man was injured. Both incidents took place under the Maoist-affected Bastar constituency which went to the polls on Friday.

The victim, Devendra Kumar (32), a constable with the CRPF's Battalion 196, was among those out on an area domination exercise around 500 metres from the polling booth in the Galgam area — around 55 km from Bijapur district headquarters — when the blast took place. He was airlifted to Jagdalpur city in Bastar district and admitted to Jagdalpur Medical College Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.

In the other incident, which took place in the Chihaka area of Bijapur, a CRPF assistant commandant suffered injuries to his hands and legs when an IED went off.

Blame game in Bengal

In West Bengal's Cooch Behar constituency, Union Minister Nisith Pramanik accused state minister Udayan Guha of orchestrating violence.

In Sitalkuchi area, which had witnessed the death of four persons in firing by CISF personnel during the 2021 Assembly polls, the TMC alleged that BJP workers thrashed its polling agents and voters were stopped from entering a few booths. The BJP, on the other hand, alleged that TMC workers pelted stones at them.

In Mathabhanga, a minor clash broke out between TMC and BJP workers following allegations of voter intimidation.

In Chandmani, BJP workers alleged that voters were not allowed to enter booths and that TMC members had taken control of polling stations to rig the election. The TMC denied the charges. TMC block president from Bethaguri, Anant Barman, was hospitalised after allegedly being beaten up by BJP members. State minister and veteran TMC leader Udayan Guha met the party leaders and held the BJP responsible for the attack.

Pramanik, meanwhile, said: "Wherever Udayan Guha is going, he is provoking people to indulge in violence. This shows they have become desperate to win the election, but people have made up their mind to once again elect us from Cooch Behar," he said.

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi
Old St. Stephen's College Building, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006

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Can a diabetic person eat mango, aloo-puri? In moderation, say experts

ANKITA UPADHYAY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

SHOULD YOU really be having mangoes if you have type-2 diabetes? And is aloo puri, a Navratri staple, a strict no-no for those wanting to keep their sugar levels in check?

With the ED alleging Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was deliberately eating the food items in jail to raise his blood sugar levels, thereby creating grounds for bail, and the Aam Aadmi Party hitting back, the popular food items have found themselves in the spotlight for unlikely reasons.

The *Indian Express* talks to two experts — Dr (Prof.) Sunder Kumar, Advisor, Endocrinology and Metabolism, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital; and Dr Priyanka Rohatgi, Consultant Clinical Dietician and Advisor with private nutrition corporations — on how safe, or harmful, the food items are for diabetics.

According to Dr Kumar, if one consumes anything in small quantities, it would not make a difference to their body even if they are suffering from diabetes. Dr Kumar said it is the amount

of calories a food item generates that is more important, adding small, frequent six meals a day, including sweets and fruits, are fine.

Commenting on Kejriwal's diet plan, Dr Rohatgi said his meals are planned well but need some portion regulation in terms of carbohydrates, adding he needed to increase fibre and protein content. Commenting specifically on mango, she said, "Mango has a Glycemic Index of 51. While it has fructose content, it also has adequate fibre. So, diabetics can have it daily, but in moderation."

According to Dr Kumar, a diabetic person can consume the same amount of mangoes as a normal individual. "Normally, fruits are very good for diabetes also. Their Glycemic Index is also not very high," he added.

"A Glycemic Index of 55 or below is considered low," said Dr Rohatgi while cautioning, "If one has a heavy meal and tops it up with mango or mango juice, then it can be harmful."

And what about aloo puri? Dr Kumar said it can be consumed once a week in limited quantities. "It is safe for a diabetic person," he added.

ROW OVER KEJRIWAL'S DIET

CM seeks insulin, jail officials say his sugar levels normal

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

FOLLOWING ALLEGATIONS that he was eating mangoes in jail to increase his insulin level in order to secure bail, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Friday informed the Rouse Avenue Court that the fruit was sent from his home only thrice after his arrest on March 21. Besides, Kejriwal said, he had sugar-free sweets six times.

As the court heard his application to allow him to have insulin in jail owing to his diabetic condition, Kejriwal, through his counsel, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, argued that "just because he's an undertrial prisoner, doesn't mean he doesn't have rights." Kejriwal has also requested online consultation with a private doctor every day for 15 minutes in the presence of his wife Sunita.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had on Thursday alleged that the CM, presently lodged in Tihar



Arvind Kejriwal was arrested on March 21.

Jail after being arrested in the Delhi excise policy case by the agency, was deliberately eating mangoes and other food to raise his blood sugar level.

"How petty and political the ED can get. The CM will hover on the edge of death, just to get out on a medical bail...?" argued Singhvi. "Is the CM a gangster? Can't he be allowed one VC (video call) for 15 minutes with a doctor daily?" quipped Singhvi.

Senior Advocate Ramesh Gupta, who also appeared for

Kejriwal, said, "... agar aam aadmi aam nahi khayega, toh kya mushroom khayega (What would a common man eat, if not mangoes? Mushrooms?)"

Representing the ED, Special Counsel Zoheb Hossain, however, claimed that there were deviations between the home-cooked food that Kejriwal was eating and the diet prescribed by his doctor. "The prescribed diet has no reference to any fruits, sweets. It appears to be a very restricted and regulated diet," said Hossain.

On the other hand, the counsel for the jail authorities submitted that the CM's sugar levels would drop drastically if he took insulin. He added that Kejriwal's sugar levels were normal on most days. "Home-cooked food has to follow the prescribed diet... Otherwise, I will have to submit that home-cooked food is not allowed as per prison rules," he added.

Comparing the home-cooked food and the prescribed diet, Special Judge Kavari Baweja observed that there were slight devi-

ations. She then requested Singhvi to file a chart showing the deviations. "There are only three minor deviations..." said Singhvi.

The ED asked the court if they could ask an AIIMS doctor to check if the CM needed insulin. Following this, the court asked Singhvi whether a medical board should be constituted.

"I'm merely asking for a meeting with my doctor for 15 minutes a day," submitted Kejriwal through Singhvi. On the other hand, Gupta submitted in court that many fruits sent from the CM's house were sent back.

After the arguments concluded, the court reserved orders for Monday asking the ED and jail authorities to file a reply to Kejriwal's application requesting insulin intake and consultation with his doctors through VC for 15 minutes daily. Kejriwal's diet included eggs, poha, namkeen, banana, upma, uttapam, roti, puri sabji, salad, rajma, rice, tea, mango, papaya and sweets, as per the submissions of the ED.

Conspiracy against CM, says Atishi; publicity stunt, alleges BJP

HIMANSHU HARSH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

LIKENING HIM to an Indian freedom fighter denied food and medicines behind bars, Delhi Minister and senior AAP leader Atishi on Friday accused the BJP-led Centre of "torturing" Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by not providing him insulin and other medicines in Tihar Jail. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) termed the allegations a publicity

stunt.

Atishi alleged the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Tihar administration were working in tandem with the BJP as per a conspiracy to keep Kejriwal from medical care even as she countered the central agency's allegations that the AAP convener was eating mangoes to raise his sugar levels in order to secure bail.

"For the first time in independent India's history, a person in judicial custody is being stopped from taking medicine... He is not



AAP leader and Delhi minister Atishi

a gangster or a terrorist, but a thrice elected Chief Minister," Atishi said.

"He used to take 54 units of insulin as instructed by his doctor... The BJP-led central government and PM Modi are plotting something against the Delhi CM by not

allowing him his medicines... his insulin," she added.

Atishi alleged the Tihar administration deliberately shared Kejriwal's diet and medical details with the ED, which the latter used against his bail appeal. "Under which legal provision did the Tihar administration share the information with the ED?... If it has to share anything, it must share with the court only," she asked.

"Did AAP mix cash in his rotis? Was ED investigating whether instead of sweetener in Kejriwal's

tea, someone had added Rs 45 crore?" she asked as she accused the agency of being a "subsidiary organisation of the BJP".

"All this indicates that there's a big conspiracy to stop Kejriwal's insulin... this is being done... in the manner the British government treated jailed freedom fighters by stopping their medications, their food," the minister said.

On allegations that the CM ate eggs during Navratri, she said his diet plan was changed in view of the festival, adding eggs were re-

placed with upma and poha.

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva accused the AAP of seeking to garner sympathy through "publicity stunt". He said, "The AAP is running a campaign to gather public sympathy for Kejriwal... by comparing him to freedom fighters, the AAP has hurt the feelings of countrymen."

(The writer is an intern with *The Indian Express*)

Mercury at 39.4° C, brace for hotter days ahead: IMD

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

ON FRIDAY, Delhi saw one of its hottest days this summer, with the maximum temperature hitting 39.4 degrees Celsius. The temperature is set to rise further over the week ahead, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast.

The maximum temperature of 39.4 degrees, recorded at the Safdarjung weather station, the city's base observatory, was three degrees above the normal for this time of the year. On April 13 too,

Delhi recorded a similar maximum temperature. The minimum temperature of 24.3 degrees Celsius, recorded early on Friday, was also three degrees above the normal. Parts of the city recorded traces of rainfall, cloudy skies, and strong winds of 25 to 35 kmph.

The maximum temperature is set to hit 40 degrees Celsius by April 23, going by the IMD forecast. It is likely to rise further to 41 degrees on April 24 and 25.

On Saturday, strong winds of 25 to 35 kmph are expected, along with a maximum temperature of 39 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 21 degrees Celsius.

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For more details visit www.signatureglobal.in where the list of successful applicants with names and flat nos. is available.

ENROLMENT FOR APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING IN DESIGNATED TRADES (IT-26), AT DOCKYARD APPRENTICE SCHOOL, NAVAL DOCKYARD MUMBAI-23

1. Naval Dockyard, Mumbai invites online applications on <https://registration.india.in/> from ITI qualified/ fresher candidates (Male / Female) in various designated trades for enrolment into Apprenticeship training at Dockyard Apprentice School under Apprentices Act-1961 read in conjunction with Apprenticeship Rules 1992. A total of 301 vacancies as per distribution shown below are to be filled up:-

Sl. No.	Apprenticeship Training Trade	Eligible ITI Trade	Vacancies	Distribution of Vacancies					
				SC	ST	OBC	UR	PWD	ARMED
ONE YEAR									
1	ELECTRICIAN	ELECTRICIAN	40	4	4	8	24		
2	ELECTROPLATER	ELECTROPLATER	1	0	0	0	1		
3	FITTER	FITTER	50	5	5	10	30		
4	FOUNDRY MAN	FOUNDRY MAN	1	0	0	0	1		
5	MECHANIC (DIESEL)	MECHANIC (DIESEL)	35	4	3	7	21		
6	INSTRUMENT MECHANIC	INSTRUMENT MECHANIC	7	1	1	1	4		
7	MACHINIST	MACHINIST	13	1	1	3	8		
8	MMTM	MECHANIC MACHINE TOOL MAINTENANCE	13	1	1	3	8		
9	PAINTER(G)	PAINTER(G)	9	1	1	2	5		
10	PATTERN MAKER	PATTERN MAKER/ CARPENTER	2	0	0	0	2		
11	PIPE FITTER	PLUMBER	13	1	1	3	8		
12	ELECTRONICS MECHANIC	ELECTRONICS MECHANIC	26	3	2	5	16		
13	MECHANIC REF. & AC	MECHANIC REF. & AC	7	1	1	1	4		
14	SHEET METAL WORKER	SHEET METAL WORKER	3	0	0	0	3		
15	SHIPWRIGHT (WOOD)	CARPENTER	18	2	2	3	11		
16	TAILOR(G)	SEWING TECHNOLOGY/ DRESS MAKING	3	0	0	0	3		
17	WELDER(G&E)	WELDER	20	2	2	4	12		
18	MASON(BC)	MASON(BC)	8	1	1	2	4		
19	T&CTSM	T&CTSM/IT&ESM	3	0	0	0	3		
20	SHIPWRIGHT (STEEL)	FITTER	16	2	1	3	10		
TWO YEAR									
21	RIGGER	FRESHER 8TH STD. PASS	12	1	1	2	8		
22	FORGER & HEAT TREATER	FRESHER 10TH STD. PASS	1	0	0	0	1		
TOTAL			301	30	27	57	187		

3% Horizontal Reservation subjected to availability of candidates in various trades
3% Horizontal Reservation subjected to availability of candidates in various trades

2. Eligibility Conditions

(a) Qualifications. The Essential education qualification in accordance with Schedule I of Apprentice Act-1961.

Ser	Trades	Qualification	Percentage
(i)	ITI Trades	ITI (NCVT/SCVT)	Pass
	Non ITI Trades		
(ii)	(aa) Rigger	Sid VIII	Pass
	(ab) Forger Heat Treater	SSC/Matric / Std X	Pass

Qualification for candidates who are to be enrolled for Rigger and Forger Heat Treater as 'Fresher' shall be Std 8th and 10th pass respectively.

(b) Age. There shall be no upper age restriction for apprenticeship training as per Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) office memorandum No. F.No. MSDE-14(03)/2021 AP-(PMU) dated 20 Dec 21. Minimum age is 14 years and for hazardous occupations it is 18 years according to The Apprentice Act 1961. Accordingly, candidates born before June 2010 are eligible for non-hazardous trades and candidates born before June 2006 are eligible for hazardous trades. Candidates are to be aware that there is an age limit set in the recruitment rules for the post of Tradesman Skilled in Naval Dockyard, Mumbai.

(c) Minimum Physical Standards. Height 150 cm, Weight not less than 45 Kg, Chest expansion not less than 5 cm, Eye sight 6/6 to 6/9 (6/9 corrected with glasses), external & internal organs to be normal. Physical fitness standards are as per MoD letter FM/0442/NHQ/1278 D(N-II) dated 14 Nov 1996.

(d) Previous Training. Candidates who have already undergone or are currently undergoing Apprenticeship under Apprentice Act 1961 in any Govt/ Public Sector/ Private Industrial organisation are not eligible to apply for the current enrolment.

3. Scheme of Written Examination. Written exam will be OMR based and will comprise of Multiple Choice Questions [General Science 35, Mathematics (Numerical Aptitude) 35, General Awareness (common for all trades) 30]. There will be no negative marking for wrong answers. Duration of the written exam will be 02 hours.

4. Centre of Examination. The Centre of examination will be Mumbai only and the exam will be held in **May / June 24**. The exact date, time and venue of written examination would be intimated to candidates through online call letters on their registered email IDs only. Candidates are advised to check their email regularly.

5. Commencement of Training, July/August 2024.

6. Travel/ Expenses. No travel expenses are admissible for candidates called for Written/ Document Verification.

7. Boarding/ Lodging. Candidates called for Written/ Document Verification are to arrange their own boarding and lodging. No accommodation will be provided to candidate by the Naval Dockyard during the entire selection Process.

8. Candidates are advised to login <https://registration.india.in/> for submission of online application or go through employment news for detailed advertisement. ASD Mbi reserves the right to make change vacancies (increase or decrease) or cancel or postpone the recruitment without assigning any reason.

FOR ANY CLARIFICATION/ ASSISTANCE, CANDIDATE MAY E-MAIL/CONTACT AT

E-mail: helpdesknavaldocknumbai@gmail.com Helpdesk Number - 033-24140047
CBC-10702/11/0003/2425

ENERGY FOR EVER
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THE LARGEST PURE-PLAY GREEN FINANCING INSTITUTION IN THE COUNTRY

EXTRACT OF AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31.03.2024 (₹ in Crores)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended March 31, 2024	Quarter ended December 31, 2023	Quarter ended March 31, 2023	Year ended March 31, 2024	Year ended March 31, 2023
		(Audited)	(Audited)	(Audited)	(Audited)	(Audited)
1.	Total Income from Operations	1,391.64	1,253.20	1,036.32	4,965.29	3,483.04
2.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	479.67	386.14	288.38	1,685.24	1,139.25
3.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	479.67	386.14	288.38	1,685.24	1,139.25
4.	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	337.38	335.54	253.62	1,252.23	864.63
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	251.99	424.69	290.23	1,095.43	825.89
6.	Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face Value of ₹ 10/- each)	2,687.76	2,687.76	2,284.60	2,687.76	2,284.60
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	5,871.66	5,446.80	3,650.57	5,871.66	3,650.57
8.	Securities Premium Account (net)	863.63	863.63	-	863.63	-
9.	Net worth	8,559.43	8,134.56	5,935.17	8,559.43	5,935.17
10.	Paid up Debt Capital/Outstanding Debt	49,686.86	41,700.70	40,165.28	49,686.86	40,165.28
11.	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Debt Equity Ratio	5.80	5.13	6.77	5.80	6.77
13.	Earnings Per Share (of ₹ 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) -					
	A. Basic:	1.25	1.38	1.11	5.16	3.78
	B. Diluted:	1.25	1.38	1.11	5.16	3.78
14.	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Debenture Redemption Reserve	397.75	432.69	397.97	397.75	397.97
16.	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
17.	Interest Service Coverage Ratio	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

- Notes:**
- The above results have been recommended by the Audit Committee of Directors and approved by Board of Director in their respective meetings held on 19.04.2024 and have been audited by the Statutory Auditors of the Company.
 - The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly and annual financial results filed with Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33&52 of the SEBI LODR Regulations. The full format of the said financial results are available on the website of the Company www.ireda.in and on the websites of Stock Exchanges www.bseindia.com & www.nseindia.com.
 - For the other line items referred in regulation 52(4) of the SEBI LODR Regulations, pertinent disclosures have been made to Stock Exchanges and can be accessed at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com respectively.

For and on Behalf of the Board of Directors

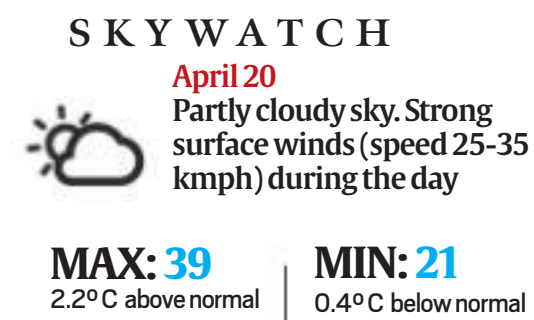
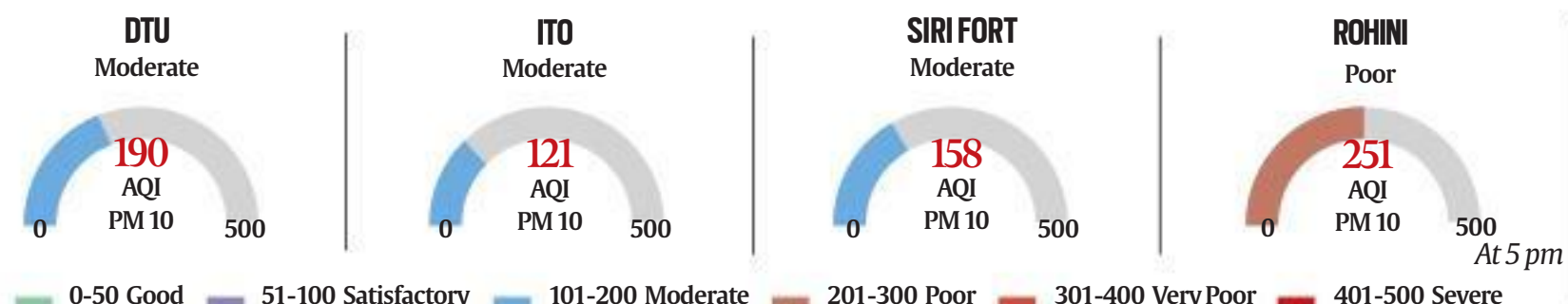
Sd/-
Pradip Kumar Das
Chairman & Managing Director
DIN No. 07448576

Date: 19.04.2024
Place: New Delhi

INDIAN RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY LIMITED (A Government of India Enterprise)

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BRIEFLY

DU to kick off admissions next week

New Delhi: Kicking off admissions for 2024-25, Delhi University (DU) is set to tentatively open registrations for undergraduate courses by mid-May while that for post-graduate courses will start on April 25, said Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh Friday. Along with postgraduate courses, registration for B.Tech and two five-year integrated programmes, including BA LLB, will also begin in April. The registration window will be open for a month, post which the second phase of admission will begin. Dean Admissions, Professor Haneeet Gandhi, said admissions this year will be done on a total of 13,500 seats for postgraduate courses, 120 seats each for the three B.Tech courses, and 60 seats each for BA LLB and BBA LLB courses. V-C Singh also lauded the improvement in QS rankings while adding the varsity also aims to be in the top 10 in the NIRF. **ENS**

MHA suspends Delhi Assembly secretary for 'irregularities'

New Delhi: Delhi Assembly secretary Raj Kumar, a DANICS officer, has been suspended by the home ministry in a case of alleged irregularities related to the Rani Jhansi flyover during his tenure in the city government, officials said on Friday. Kumar told PTI, "I have received the MHA order regarding my suspension. It's an old case and I was not given any chance to explain myself so I have nothing else to say now." According to the Ministry of Home Affairs order, issued on April 16, a "disciplinary proceeding" against Kumar is being contemplated. **PTI**

Crime can't be 'wiped off' by paying compensation to victim: HC

New Delhi: Refusing to quash an FIR in an attempt to murder case on the basis of a settlement between the parties, the Delhi High Court recently observed that a crime cannot be termed as being "wiped off" merely because compensation was paid to the victim. The HC dismissed the plea by the two accused who had sought quashing of a 2019 FIR under IPC sections 307 and 34 and proceedings emanating from it. **ENS**

MAYORAL POLLS NEXT WEEK

AAP vs AAP: 'Under pressure' claims Dy Mayor 'backup'; party points to BJP

SAMAN HUSAIN
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

POLLS TO elect the MCD Mayor and Deputy Mayor are barely a week away, but the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has found itself in a bind. In a post online on Friday, one of its 'backup' nominees for the Deputy Mayor's post hinted that he is allegedly under pressure to withdraw his nomination. AAP, in response, alleged it is the Bharatiya Janata Party's tactics to dismantle the party. The BJP retorted that the AAP's workers are simply standing up against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's corruption". The mayoral polls, slated for April 26, are a major political test for the AAP, and its ally Congress, after the arrest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

On Thursday, right after its chosen candidates filed nominations for the polls, two more AAP councillors arrived and threw their hats into the ring for the post of Deputy Mayor. This prompted murmurs of "fissures" in the party in the Opposition camp, but sources in the AAP had been quick to state that the two "latecomers" — Vijay Kumar and Narendra Kumar — were "backups".

Vijay, the Triokpuri councillor, even posted a photo on 'X'

AAP



MAYOR
Mahesh Kumar Khichi
 WARD: DEV NAGAR



DEPUTY MAYOR
Ravinder Bhardwaj
 WARD: AMAN VIHAR

BJP



MAYOR
Kishan Lal
 WARD: SHAKURPUR



DEPUTY MAYOR
Neeta Bisht
 WARD: SADATPUR

WHO ARE THE AAP'S TWO 'BACKUPS' FOR THE DEPUTY MAYOR POST?

■ Vijay Kumar, Trilokpuri ■ Narendra Kumar, Manglapuri

(formerly Twitter) in which he is seen sitting with AAP minister Atishi and wrote, "I am a soldier of Arvind Kejriwal. I was with Aam Aadmi Party. I am with Aam Aadmi Party and I will remain with Aam Aadmi Party. I am not contesting the mayoral

election." However, his post was subsequently deleted. On Friday, in a U-turn, Vijay posted a fresh post on X, in which he tagged Atishi, AAP MP Sanjay Singh, MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak, ex-MLA Nitin Tyagi and the party's official han-

dle, and wrote: "This is my personal decision. I request you not to involve my family in politics. Serving the public/doing politics is my job, the doors of my house are always open for you, you can come anytime, but I request you again not to put any kind of pressure on my family."

In yet another video message in the evening, he said: "I will contest the election for Deputy Mayor and will win. Please do not put any pressure on me and my family."

When contacted for comment, he did not respond.

In a veiled reference to Vijay, the AAP said: "A true soldier of Arvind Kejriwal always believes in party discipline unwaveringly and will refuse to become a puppet of the BJP, regardless of any temptations offered."

It added, "We are fighting a demonic power called BJP, they will try all deceitful tricks and tactics imaginable to unsettle us."

Reacting to the claims, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor alleged, "Many volunteers joined Arvind Kejriwal trusting his melodramas of ideal honest talks. With his corruption sagas coming out, many volunteers are pondering and may quit AAP. This is not defection for any temptation, but... a sincere voice of the

soul (that is) making volunteers stand up against Kejriwal's corruption."

Sources also claimed that many councillors are unhappy that Prem Chauhan, AAP's former Leader of Opposition, was not fielded for the mayor's seat. "All councillors have looked up to him as the next Mayor; the party leadership, instead, decided to field a candidate who hardly has any experience at the MCD..." an MCD councillor said on condition of anonymity. For the polls, the AAP has officially fielded Mahesh Kumar Khichi, the Dev Nagar councillor, for the Mayor's position and Aman Vihar councillor Ravinder Bhardwaj for the Deputy Mayor's post. While Khichi is a first-time councillor who has been associated with the AAP since the Anna Hazare anti-corruption movement, Ravinder is a two-time councillor.

In the BJP camp are Kishan Lal from Shakurpur for the post of Mayor and Neeta Bisht from Sadatpur for Deputy Mayor; both two-time councillors.

Meanwhile, the MCD Friday sought the Election Commission's permission to conduct mayoral polls on April 26 and also urged L-G V K Saxena to appoint a presiding officer, a civic body official said.

DELHI, HARYANA, UP POLICE HOLD MEETING

Ahead of polls, eye on 'money, muscle power and misinformation'



Sources said local personnel and paramilitary forces will carry out area-domination exercises in sensitive areas. *Archive*

UPASIKA SINGHAL
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

TO BOLSTER security measures for the Lok Sabha elections, top law-enforcement officials from Delhi, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh will be targeting the 4 Ms — money, muscle power, Model Code of Conduct (MCC) violations and misinformation. The three police forces met at an inter-state coordination meeting Thursday (April 18) to discuss seamless co-operation and intelligence exchange among other things.

In Delhi, police sources said, local personnel and paramilitary forces will carry out area-domination exercises in sensitive areas that are highly populated and have mixed communities to maintain peace and communal harmony.

Police will also crack down on any misinformation that can cause communal flare-ups. To this end, the Delhi Police has sensitised resident and market welfare associations, as well as community leaders, to flag any messages that they deem can be used to whip up communal sentiments. "There will be close coordination starting from the beat level, to the SHOs, DCPs and Range-level officers to nip any miscommunication — be it on so-

cial media platforms or messaging platforms — in the bud... We have requested the public to share any provocative messages with their local beat officers and SHOs," said a senior police officer.

At the joint meeting, meanwhile, strategies for enhancing surveillance along inter-state borders, executing joint patrols and checkpoints, cracking down on illegal bootlegging activities, and establishing efficient intelligence-sharing channels were discussed.

Police said CCTV cameras on borders will be monitored, along with intensified *naka*-checks, to ensure the transfer of money, liquor and freebies is curbed both before the election and on polling day.

Additionally, lists of criminals and habitual offenders will be shared between the forces to maintain peace during polling.

To keep MCC violations in check, DCP (East) Apoorva Gupta said, "Several vigilance teams have been created to carry out surprise raids based on intelligence inputs to crack down on individuals or groups involved in illegal activities such as bribery or distributing illicit material."

According to DCP (Northeast) Joy Tirkey, flying squads have been formed to take quick action upon receiving intel regarding the movement of illicit items.

Congress to release 3 manifestos for 3 seats; one with AAP to follow

JATIN ANAND
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

AFTER GATHERING suggestions from citizens over the last two months, the Congress will begin releasing constituency-wise manifestos for each of the three Lok Sabha seats it is contesting in Delhi over the coming week.

To be followed by a larger manifesto for Delhi and another one with its INDIA bloc ally, the AAP, party sources said each of these would be bound by the common strands of women empowerment and addressing unemployment — which are at the core of the party's national manifesto.

"The manifesto for each seat will combine the Congress's vision to remedy issues across the country with local concerns which have been identified through dialogue with the public, RWAs and similar focus groups; prominent leaders will go door to door to personally deliver these to citizens. The party will release them over consecutive days next week," a senior Delhi Congress leader said.

"The constituency-wise manifestos will talk about issues from GST to congestion and parking in Chandni Chowk Lok Sabha; condition of schools and roads in addition to the larger issue of communalism in Northeast Delhi; as well as the state of villages and infrastructure at unauthorised colonies in Northwest Delhi. Apart from this, it will highlight other guarantees such as provid-



DPPC chief Arvinder Lovely held a meeting to review the party's poll campaign

ing a yearly income of Rs 1 lakh to women to addressing the issue of unemployment among youth in addition to other 'Nyaya Guarantees' promised by Rahul Gandhi ji," another leader said.

The Congress, which is contesting three of the seven Parliamentary seats in the Capital while the AAP has fielded candidates on the remaining four, will also bring out a separate, pan-Delhi manifesto with its ally, Congress leaders said.

"After we release our manifestos, both parties will sit together to formulate a joint INDIA manifesto based on a common minimum programme agreed to by both parties. This will also pave the way for joint campaigning which is likely to kick off starting May," a Congress source said.

Delhi Congress chief Arvinder Singh Lovely, along with AICC General Secretary and in-charge for Delhi and Haryana, Deepak Babaria, earlier on Friday, met over preparations for the party's election campaign. He said the Congress would implement the five Nyaya Guarantees promised by Gandhi during his Bharat Jodo and Bharat Jodo Nyaya Yatras.



A nukkad natak performance at the Delhi BJP office, Friday. *Amit Mehra*

Street plays, flash mobs: How BJP plans to woo public, 'expose' AAP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

FROM NUKKAD *nataks* to flash mobs, the Delhi BJP will use various media to take Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "message of development" to the public on the one hand, even as it seeks to expose the "corruption and misrule of the Arvind Kejriwal government" through them on the other.

According to Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva, 8,000 street performances will be presented by 163 teams of artistes across the city starting next

month.

"Along with *nukkad nataks*, we will be using puppet shows, magic shows, poetry recitals, music bands, and flash mobs to take the beneficial schemes and achievements of the Modi government to the public... they will also expose the corruption and misrule of the Kejriwal government," Sachdeva said.

"Street plays influence every section of society... Since Delhi is a cosmopolitan city, we are also including some shows in English and regional languages. This cultural campaign will commence on May 1 in the presence of senior party lead-

ers," he added.

Anuj Sharma, Chief Member of the Street Play Committee, said 163 teams trained by the National School of Drama, including many artistes associated with Ramilias, will present over 8,000 shows of these street plays in Delhi between May 1 and May 23 in major markets, unauthorised colonies, slums and villages among other locations.

According to Sachdeva, on Sunday, the party would organise a grand event around devotional singer Hansraj Raghuvanshi who, through his performance, would convey "the message of a developed India".

FIRST PHASE OF POLLS HELD IN VIOLENCE-HIT NORTHEAST STATE

'Our vote doesn't matter': Resentment among Manipur residents in city

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

"WHAT WILL we gain from voting when nothing has been done for us?" The sentiment was voiced by several Manipur residents in Delhi, who fled the ethnic violence last year, as the first phase of the Lok Sabha election was held in the Northeast state Friday.

In the background, among those of the Kuki-Zo community, there is talk of the Centre and State having done little about the conflict nearly a year since, discussions of a poll boycott among sections of the Kuki community back home, and persistent uncertainty over whether those in the national capital will be able to return home.

A former resident of Imphal, in his late 30s, who now lives in

Delhi and didn't want to be named, said, "We are originally from the hill area, but settled in Imphal. We fled on May 4. As an Indian citizen, not being able to vote — and not by choice — is very sad. This time, even if we wanted to vote, it's just not possible... because of both the travel expenses involved and the law and order situation."

"People are divided on whether to abstain from voting or vote for a particular candidate to ensure a change in party... We just don't know anything anymore. It's been close to a year, and people are frustrated, of course. I don't have any hope of being able to return home... the divide has been allowed to remain for so long that it has become some sort of new normal. In discussions among friends, there is a complete loss of faith in the system.

Some are saying 'what does it matter? No matter who comes to power, for us it will be the same.' But I personally hope this election will bring change," he said.

He was working in Imphal, but has been out of a job for a while, and is looking for one in Delhi.

Among the residents are also a few first-time voters, like a 20-year-old Manipur University student. He moved to Delhi last May with his family, a few days after violence broke out on May 3.

Saying that he would have voted for the first time had he been back home in Imphal, the student said: "The government hasn't done anything... and we can't vote. We have been hearing mixed things about the election, there are young people there who are talking about boycotting it, since the Central government doesn't recognise our plight.



People wait to cast their votes for the Lok Sabha elections, in Manipur, Friday. *PTI*

Right now, for people who are here, it will be difficult to return home," said the first-year BA stu-

dent from the Kuki community. He landed a corporate gig after moving to Delhi but hopes to

complete his education. "... It has been quite hard to adjust to a new environment, but what can we say... it's about survival. Seven of us moved to Delhi since my aunt lives here... we didn't have anywhere else to go after we spent four days in a relief camp," he said.

Tara Manchin Hangzo, 58, a former member of the State Commission for Scheduled Tribes, who is from Imphal, also moved to Delhi last May. "It has been nearly a year since we were chased out of our house... We live here in rented accommodation... My 87-year-old mother and sister are with me..."

On her thoughts about the election, she said, "What will we gain from voting when nothing has been done for us? People were killed, and no justice has been served. Many people are unable to vote and our vote does-

n't seem to matter. We need assurance that there will be peace, and we will get our homes and livelihoods back. The Centre and the State have not responded to the crisis. We seem to be minor, minuscule people among billions in the country."

A 28-year-old PhD student at Delhi University, from the Kangpokpi district, said: "I was registered as a voter back in Manipur. We've been talking about the elections, how the current ruling party has not done anything about the conflict..."

"The last time I was able to go home was in February last year before all this began. I was reluctant to ask my family for financial support, so I ended up working for a few months while studying," he added.

A 57-year-old from Imphal,

who moved to Delhi in May last year and did not want to be named, pondered the futility of voting. "Even if I were there, I don't know who I would have voted for. Everybody is confused..."

She came to the Capital with about 20 relatives and stayed with a cousin in the city for two months, before moving to rented accommodation. "Delhi is for youngsters... it's difficult to find jobs at our age. But friends and well-wishers chip in. I try to continue with little things... I cook, bake, make soaps, and keep myself busy," said the woman.

She added, "Even if the government makes a policy for us to return, will we be able to live there with all those memories? We can't look back, can't go back, it's all a big question mark."

FROM PAGE ONE FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

'Fadnavis said he will groom my son Aditya'

country, we will look after the state. Achcha chakra tha (it was going well). My father died in 2012, Modi came to my home. In 2014, when Modi was sworn in as PM, it looked like a dream come true. Baad mein unki chaal alag ho gayi (they started behaving differently) after Amit Shah became party president. Before the 2014 assembly election, Shah asked us, have you done a survey. I said, ham ladne wale log hain (we plunge into the fight), we don't do surveys. Shivaji did not do a survey. If the survey says you are losing, will you give up the fight?

Earlier senior BJP leader like Pramod Mahajan, Gopinath Munde and Nitin Gadkari would come to negotiate with the Sena, there would be kheenchta taani (to and fro). Now, they started with arrogance and figures, and sent Om Mather (BJP leader from Rajasthan) to talk to us. The BJP calculated that with Balasaheb gone, this was the time to strike. Their guarantee is to use and throw. That's what they finally did to me in 2019.

I had promised my father that there would be a Shiv Sena chief minister and it was agreed with Amit Shah that the Sena and BJP would have a CM for 2.5 years each. Devendra (Fadnavis) had said that he would groom my son Aditya as CM, and he would himself move to Delhi. They made me look like a liar to my own people.

Show me one (BJP) ally who is happy. In NDA today, there are only toote phoote log (broken and battered parties). That's also what they do to their own leaders.

When you face the people, how will you explain your own change of position?

There can be some confusion. But people are also angry with those gaddars (betrayers) who

are going to the other camp (Shinde Sena). Because they (BJP) are using ED, putting pressure. There is a saying among the people here: "Pannas kholke, ek dum ok (pay Rs 50 crore, buy a leader, it's alright)".

Say that the BJP is now a vacuum cleaner, it sucks in the corrupt and gives them a clean chit — Praful Patel, Ashok Chavan, Ajit Pawar. It's no party with a difference — its tactics are party todo (break parties), ghar todo (destroy families), unleash raids... Its guarantee is khokhli (hollow). After demonetisation, Modi said give me 100 days. In April, 2024, it has been over 2700 days, what happened? They said they will double farmers' incomes, but only farmers' expenditure has doubled.

The Shiv Sena was founded on "Marathi asmita". How do you define it today?

In the last 10 years, where has the big industry gone? For us the villain is those who want to impoverish Maharashtra. Industry that was supposed to go to Maharashtra, went to Gujarat, it is another matter that they couldn't stay there, investment did not happen at all. The country lost out. Out of three semiconductor companies, two will be set up in Gujarat. The Modi government's flagship schemes across the country, free rations, cooking gas, Jan Dhan, Ayushman have touched a huge section of people...

That's having a negative effect now, it will boomerang. You are giving people free grain, why don't you give them jobs? When I go to rural areas, I say that this

government did not let farmers come to Delhi with their demands, branded them as anti-national and even terrorists. Farmers did not come from China, they are only asking for implementation of the Swaminathan panel recommendations.

BJP says there are four castes — young, farmers, women and poor. Where are the jobs for the young? You turn a deaf ear to the kisan. Amit Shah as home minister appeared not to know about the crime against women in Manipur on his government's watch. And you keep the poor in poverty.

You are now an opponent of the BJP but your party shares its core ideology of Hindutva.

Our Hindutva is different from their Hindutva. Our Hindutva is ghar ka chulha jalane wala (to keep the home fires burning). BJP's Hindutva is ghar jalane wala (one that burns down the house).

We are not against Muslims, only against desh drohi (those who betray the nation).

Surely, that's a shift in the Sena stood for. The Sena was known for its role in the 1992-93 communal violence in Mumbai. And for digging up pitches when India played cricket with Pakistan.

There is no shift. People misunderstood Balasaheb, now after a generation the misunderstanding is clearing. In 1992-93, the violence started in Behrampada. Today the Shiv Sena has a Muslim corporator from Behrampada.

When the pandemic struck, as chief minister, I did not discriminate. We gave the Dharavi model, also worked in Malegaon. I have left BJP, I have not left Hindutva. But isn't the Hindu unemployed? They also need education, loans for farming, jobs

outside agriculture for the next generation, money to get married.

How do you respond to the BJP when it says it has built the Ram temple at Ayodhya?

They must talk of rozi-roti (bread and butter issues) first. They must tell us what they are fighting the election on — issues of farmers-women-poor-youth or Hindutva? The BJP did not make Ram mandir, it was a decision of the court.

We (Sena) took responsibility for the demolition of the (Babri) masjid, as CM I have spoken in the assembly on Hindutva. People know it.

But for me today, the biggest issue is that I want a Bharat sarkar, not Modi sarkar. Ek hi party rahegi toh (if only one party remains), this is most dangerous for the country. In my father's time, we thought there should be a strong government. But Atal ji ran a coalition government successfully, Narasimha Rao's government brought economic reform. Now, samay ke anusar (times have changed), the country needs a government that takes along many parties.

If such a coalition government is formed, and if your Sena is part of it, will India play cricket with Pakistan?

I will certainly not eat cake with Nawaz Sharif (as Modi did). The BJP only talks of Pakistan, but why doesn't it answer on China? Today, China is coming into your territory, changing names of your places. It is not playing cricket.

Do you foresee a possibility of going back to the BJP?

Why would I do so? I have been betrayed more than once. To me, the BJP's real face has been bared.

TISS suspends Dalit PhD student for 2 yrs for 'anti-national activities'

Students' body says decision due to participation in Delhi march against Centre

PALLAVI SMART MUMBAI, APRIL 19



Ramadas Prini Sivanandan

THE TATA Institute of Social Science (TISS) has suspended a PhD student for two years for "repetitive misconduct and anti-national activities", with the Progressive Students Forum (PSF) alleging that the decision was linked to the student's participation in a protest march in Delhi in January against alleged anti-student policies of the central government.

The suspension order, dated April 18, also debars the student, Ramadas Prini Sivanandan, from all campuses of TISS and refers to a show-cause notice sent to him on March 7, questioning his participation in the march along with a list of other activities on Mumbai campus of the institute.

The order states that a committee constituted following the notice submitted its recommendations on April 17.

The show-cause notice said accused Ramadas of misusing the institute's name by participating in the protest under the banner of -PSF-TISS. Since PSF is not a recognised student body of the institute, the notice says, Ramdas using the name created a wrongful impression of the institute funded under the Ministry of Education. The Parliament march in January was organised under the banner of United Students of India, a joint platform of 16 student organisations, against the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Ramadas, a PhD scholar from Dalit community, is a former general secretary of the PSF. He is currently member of central executive committee of Student

Federation of India (SFI), which is the umbrella body of PSF. He is also joint secretary of the SFI Maharashtra State Committee.

The institute, in its March 7 show-cause notice, had also raised objections to social media posts by Ramadas from January, calling upon students to join screening of the documentary "Raam Ke Naam" — a national award-winning documentary by Anand Patwardhan — on January 26, calling it "a mark of dishonour and protest against the Ram Mandir inauguration in Ayodhya". The PSF on Friday said that it has been officially screened in TISS multiple times. "The current TISS administration... wants to censor voices even in the online space," it stated.

The show-cause notice listed other activities such as screening of banned BBC documentary on campus and conducting sit-in outside the TISS director's bungalow at late night with loud sloganeering.

While Ramadas did not want

to comment on the happenings, a student closely associated with him said that he has responded to all notices issued by the institute.

The PSF alleged that actions of the administration highlight the support to the ruling BJP government at the cost of the future of students coming from marginalised backgrounds.

The PSF in a statement said, "Ramadas is also a meritorious student, receiving the National Fellowship for Scheduled Castes by the Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India, for excelling in the UGC-NET examination. The autocratic actions of the TISS administration are a direct attack on marginalised students who hope to pursue higher education in public-funded institutions."

Stating that Ramadas is more like a political activist than a student, a senior administrative official from the institute said, "He has been involved in many violations of discipline codes made for students."

GETS BAIL IN LAST PENDING CASE

Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor walks out of jail after 4 years

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, APRIL 19



Rana Kapoor was arrested on March 8, 2020. Express

GRANTED BAIL by a special court on Friday in the last pending case against him, Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor walked out of jail over four years after his arrest. He was granted bail in a case related to Avantha Realty registered by the CBI.

Kapoor was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 8, 2020 over allegations that he had received kickbacks in a Rs 600-crore loan given by Dewan Housing Finance Limited to a company owned by his family. He has a total of 8 pending cases.

The current case relates to allegations that Kapoor obtained illegal gratification in the form of a prime property in New Delhi, at a value much less than the market price. This was in lieu of extending concessions, relaxations and waivers in the existing credit facil-

ities given to the real estate group by Yes Bank, the CBI had alleged. Kapoor said in his bail application that he was never the sole or the final approving authority of the loan and that the entire management credit committee was involved in collectively approving the loan.

They had also submitted that two others booked in the case were already on bail. They had also submitted that the chargesheet did not have any material to connect the loans and the sale transaction of the New Delhi property.

Special Judge M G Deshpande permitted Kapoor's bail on executing a personal bond of Rs 2 lakh, along with other conditions.

Two undertrials die in Sangrur jail after clash

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUDHIANA, APRIL 19

TWO UNDERTRIALS in their mid 20s died while two others were injured in a clash between two groups inside Sangrur jail on Friday evening.

The deceased have been identified as Harsh and Dharminder while the injured are Gagandeep Singh and Mohd Shahbaz.

Sources said that the two groups clashed for about 15-20

minutes before the jail staff took control of the situation and admitted the four injured to civil hospital.

However, two undertrials succumbed to injuries at the hospital and the two others have been referred to Rajindra Medical College and Hospital, Patiala and are stated to be critical.

Sangrur SSP Sartaj Singh Chahal said that they are investigating the matter and are trying to find out the reason behind the clash. "We have already rounded up eight people," he said.

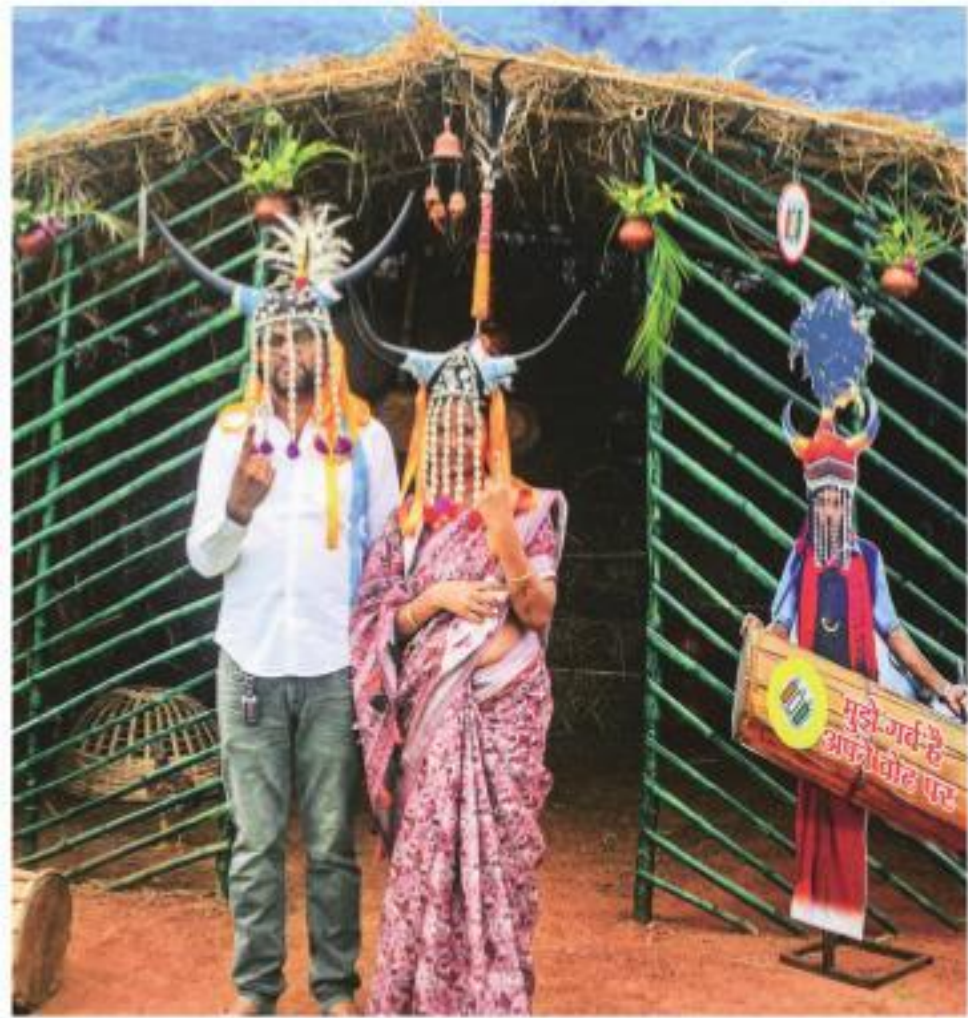
DMi Development Management Institute advertisement for Post Graduate Diploma in Management Development Management SCHOLARSHIPS. Includes details on CAT/XAT/MAT/CMAT scores, tuition fees, and application process.

SAVITRIBAI PHULE PUNE UNIVERSITY (Formerly University of Pune) advertisement for Graduate & Post Graduate Programme 2024-25. Includes application details and contact information.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI ELECTION OFFICE advertisement for online short notice invitations to tender for supply, hiring, erection of furniture items and tentage etc. Includes details on bidding process and contact information.

DELHI POLICE TRAFFIC ADVISORY for IPL T20 CRICKET MATCH on 20-04-2024. Includes map of stadium area, legends for parking and shuttle services, and general instructions for spectators.

6 DECISION 2024



BASTAR: A couple after casting their vote. PTI



COOCH BEHAR: People queue up for voting at outside a polling booth near the India-Bangladesh border. Partha Paul



ARUNACHAL PRADESH: An elderly woman goes to vote. ANI

‘Why should I counter BJP lies on tukde-tukde?’

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

HAVING BEGUN his political journey at Jawaharlal Nehru University, shot to limelight as the original face of “the tukde-tukde gang”, and contested a failed Lok Sabha poll as a CPI candidate from Bihar in 2019, Kanhaiya Kumar is now the Congress candidate from the North East Delhi Lok Sabha seat. He is facing a tough contest in the seat against two-time sitting BJP MP and fellow Poorvanchali face, Manoj Tiwari. In an interview, Kanhaiya talks about his candidature and challenges in the polls. *Excerpts:*



How big is the challenge given the BJP swept all 7 Delhi seats in the past two polls?

I am thankful to the people of Delhi, leadership and workers of the Delhi Congress, and Congress high command for reposing their faith in me.

Through the contest is challenging, what we are seeing on the ground is people are unhappy with this government. The numbers we see on TV and electronic media are bogus. The BJP is repeatedly talking about the same things. Their government has not delivered and does not talk about issues like unemployment, price rise, farmers’ issues, women’s security and economic disparity.

You will face Manoj Tiwari in a Bihar versus Bihar fight...

This is Lok Sabha election, not a local one. The Congress has a national agenda. In our (manifesto), we speak about justice for all. The last 10 years (under the BJP) have been nothing less than ‘anyay kaal’ (period of injustice) where unemployment and prices have increased. This time, the fight is between injustice and justice.

How will you counter the BJP’s ‘tukde-tukde gang’ claims?

Why should I counter it? Lies need not be countered. This would be falling into their agenda of diversion. In fact, the question is on them. All agencies are under them. The Prime Minister and Home Minister are theirs. Who is stopping them (from arresting me) when they can put an elected

CM in jail without a shred of evidence? They have been saying this for the past 10 years because they want to divert the people’s attention (from real issues). It is political propaganda, which means they do not have a real agenda.

If given a choice, would a seat in Bihar have been your first preference?

Obviously, I would have liked to contest from Begusarai. But the Congress is a part of the INDIA bloc and the seat was given to one of our partners.

Congress and AAP, which have been bitter rivals, are allies in Delhi. Will it have an impact on campaigning?

I think in such a situation, party workers and people come together first while the leaders join hands in the end. This alliance has taken shape on the ground to fight against those who want to weaken the country. There is *mitr kaal* (era of ‘friends’, implying rich industrialists) and *anyay kaal* on one side. On the other side are common people seeking justice.

Is your candidature from Delhi a precursor to becoming Delhi Congress chief?

Rajneeti prediction se nahin chalti (Politics does not play out on predictions). I do not think there is any such long-term plan.

POLL DISPATCH

In absence of a wave, ripples in Rajasthan’s ‘Jat land’: BJP and Modi versus local factors

Unlike 2014 and 2019, when the BJP swept Rajasthan, this time a contest is a possibility in 9 to 10 Lok Sabha seats

NEERJA CHOWDHURY
DAUSA, SIKAR, CHURU, JHUNJHUNU, APRIL 19

2024 IS NOT 2014 or 2019. In eastern Rajasthan and the Jat-dominated Shekhawati region, many people say they will vote for Prime Minister Narendra Modi but they are not as vocal as before. Perhaps, there is a sense of acknowledgement that the BJP is here to comfortably win and there is no need to sharply define one’s position. Yet, moving through Dausa, Sikar, Churu and Jhunjhunu — the last three constitute the Shekhawati area — there was not even one person who did not admit that there was a ‘*takkar*’ (contest) this time. It is the local issues that are coming to the fore in several constituencies, making it a Modi versus local battle.

This is how a political was described it. “When you look at it closely, these fights do not reflect a fight between the BJP and the Congress nationally. It is a heavy-weight candidate or a local group rivalry that seems to be overtaking the Modi factor.”

In the last two general elections — which the BJP swept, winning 25 out of 25 — the Modi factor was able to subsume these local issues and may yet do so in many constituencies.

“*Modi thoda struggle mein aa gaye hain* (Modi is struggling a little),” said a shopkeeper, a pro-BJP Brahmin manning a shop near the famous Khatu Shyamji Mandir in Sikar district, where, in the middle of a hot afternoon, hundreds of devotees were trying to catch a glimpse of the highly revered local deity. An entrepreneur in Mandaava in Jhunjhunu said, “Had Modi not been there, it would have been difficult for the BJP to win. This time, there is no *junoon* (enthusiasm).” A BJP leader articulated the sense on the ground, saying, “It may not change the direction of the wind but shifts are being felt.”

There are almost nine to 10 Lok Sabha constituencies in Rajasthan, where a contest can be expected. Among these seats are Dausa, Dholpur, Tonk, Sikar, Churu, Jhunjhunu, Nagaur, Banswara, and Jalore-Sirohi. In



BJP supporters at PM Modi’s rally in Dausa. PTI

Jalore-Sirohi, it is former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot’s son Vaibhav who is trying his luck once again, having lost from Jodhpur in 2019. This time, the BJP has fielded a first-time, district functionary Lumbaram Choudhary, after eliminating its strong leader and three-time winner Devji Patel from the race.

Caste and community factors

But does the state have surprises in store? In Sikar, it is a Jat versus Jat fight. Though he lost the Assembly elections, many

Jats are suddenly seeing virtue in Amra Ram, a CPI(M) candidate supported by the Congress. Pitted against two-time winner Swami Sumedhanand, who has of late lost ground, Amra Ram, some say, “has done people’s work” and is accessible.

The Churu fight has become a visceral Jat versus Rajput battle between Rahul Kaswan and the BJP’s Rajput leader Rajendra Rathore who had his way and replaced Kaswan with paralympic athlete Devendra Jhajharia. Unlike UP, where the Rajputs are on the warpath against the BJP, in

Shekhawati, they are battling for the BJP and it is the Jats who are on the warpath.

Three men sitting on a bench outside the famous Balaji temple in Salasar suddenly started to criticise each other when asked about elections. One was a Jat who said he would vote for the Congress and the other a Rajput in the BJP’s corner, making it an issue of Jat versus Rajput pride.

In Jhunjhunu, too, many BJP supporters bemoaned the BJP’s candidate Shubhkar Choudhary who is seen as no match for Jhunjhunu MLA Brajendra Ola who is the son of Shish Ram Ola who won elections from here half a dozen times. As a Jat farmer put it, “I am voting for Modi. But they could have given a better candidate.”

In Dausa, one of the seats the Congress has a chance of winning, party leader Sachin Pilot organised a huge rally addressed by Priyanka Vadra Gandhi on April 15. It is a constituency that his father Rajesh Pilot once represented and he was elected from here in 2004 at the age of 26. The return of Gujjars to Pilot, a community he belongs to, was visible at the rally and beyond in the Shekhawati region. Having voted for Sachin in 2018 thinking he would become the CM, they de-

serted the Congress in last year’s Assembly elections once it became apparent that he would not hold the top job even if the party returned to power.

Many Gujjars are making common cause with unhappy Jats, and Dalits, who are looking at the Congress as an option, particularly in constituencies where they feel they can strengthen Pilot’s leadership. The Jats are divided this time, unhappy with the way the BJP treated them during the farmers’ agitation. Some said the Jats, known for their pragmatism, might return to the BJP at the last moment given that the party’s formidable election machinery is known for handling the last mile better than the Congress.

In Sikar district’s Nehra ki Dhani village, half a dozen young Dalit men, huddled in an 8x8 kirana shop, said they were going to vote for the Congress. “We don’t have work,” one of them said with some bitterness. “I am a graduate and can’t get a job.” What really has them worried is that if Modi comes back to power “he may change the Constitution and our reservations may go”.

Whatever may be the outcome of these contests, there is a possibility of a *takkar* in almost one-third of Rajasthan’s Lok Sabha constituencies this time.

In poll manifesto, PDP speaks of ‘onslaught’ on Kashmiri identity after Article 370 abrogation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 19

THE PEOPLES Democratic Party (PDP) that is contesting all three Lok Sabha seats in Kashmir on Friday released its manifesto for the polls. In its manifesto, the party brings focus to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir since the revocation of Article 370 in August 2019. The document highlights issues such as the return of power projects to J&K, road connectivity, access to clean drinking water, women and youth empowerment, and upgrade of infrastructure in government schools

among other concerns.

Stating that “there has been an unending onslaught on our collective identity, land, jobs, resources and infringement upon the very freedom to speak”, the manifesto emphasises “the dire need” to raise voice against this in Parliament. The manifesto also talks about the youth “languishing in prisons outside the state”. It adds that “after the unilateral and illegal revocation of J&K’s special status its youth have been the first and worst sufferers of a slew of GOIs unilateral and draconian policies and decisions”.

Earlier in the day, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti led the party’s



PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti

campaign in Pulwama where she rallied support for the party’s candidate for the Srinagar. Mufti said, “The main purpose of the PDP to

seek votes is to tell the country through Parliament what BJP has done in 2019 is not acceptable.”

Mufti also attacked the BJP, accusing it of seeking to “strip away” the rights and resources of the people of J&K, “pushing them towards a state of bonded labour”.

Invoking the legacy of PDP founder Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, her father, she said, “People heaved a sigh of relief when for the first time PDP formed the government in J&K. Not stone or gun — vote is our only weapon and we must use it now to give a befitting reply to the elements who are out to besiege our conscience and identity.”

KEY PLAYERS

An old rival returns, Gujarat ‘giant-killer’ answers Cong call

GOPAL KATESHIYA
RAJKOT, APRIL 19

IN CONTRAST to the recent history of squabbling for tickets within the Gujarat Congress, a different story is unfolding in Rajkot this time. A dozen or so local leaders drove to Paresh Dhanani’s residence in Amreli on April 9 to request him to take on the BJP’s Parshottam Rupala in the Lok Saba polls, two decades after his famous victory over the Union Minister.

A reluctant Dhanani agreed and said if Rupala weathered the ongoing Kshatriya protests against him, he would enter the poll fray. With Rupala filing his nomination papers on April 16 amid protests over allegedly derogatory remarks about Kshatriyas, Dhanani began

his campaign the same day and filed his papers on Friday.

“Dhanani is among a handful of mild-mannered Patidars who are not openly casteist, and is hence acceptable to non-Patidars,” said a Congress leader.

Dhanani had his first brush with politics in 1989 when he was still in school. “A local Congress worker noted my handwriting was good. Before the 1989 Lok Sabha polls, he took me to the Congress office to write voters’ slips. I slipped into politics from then on,” said the 47-year-old.

While in college, Dhanani formed the Students’ Cultural Group of Amreli. In 1997, he founded Parivartan Trust, which he still runs. The following year, he was appointed president of the Amreli district National Students’ Union of India (NSUI), the



Dhanani (bottom row, second from left) with Congress leaders in Rajkot. Express

Congress student wing.

In 2002, the Congress gave him a ticket from the Amreli Assembly seat, pitting him against Rupala who was then a minister in Narendra Modi’s state Cabinet. “Amreli was categorised by the

Congress under its internal ‘C’ group as the party hadn’t won it since 1972. However, we managed to win that election,” said Dhanani, who was 26 when he defeated Rupala, then a three-time MLA and rising star in the BJP.

After the defeat, Rupala, who belongs to the Kadva Patel sub-caste of Patidars, did not contest a direct election for the next 21 years. He became a Rajya Sabha MP and a minister under Modi. Dhanani, who belongs to the Leuva Patel sub-caste of Patidars, however, could not keep up his winning ways and lost in 2007 to the BJP. Five years later, though, he avenged the defeat.

The Congress subsequently gave Dhanani charge of Bihar ahead of the 2015 Assembly polls and Bengal in the following year before its state elections.

In the 2017 Gujarat Assembly elections, which were held against the backdrop of the Patidar quota stir, Dhanani emerged as the key Congress face. The Congress-led alliance won 82 seats, the party’s best-ever showing in Gujarat in

more than two decades. But it still fell short of the majority by nine seats. The BJP’s tally shrunk to 99, its worst showing since 1995. Dhanani was appointed the leader of the Congress Legislature Party, becoming the first Patidar to serve as the Leader of the Opposition in the Gujarat Assembly since 1985.

But the momentum fizzled out for the Congress and Dhanani. He lost the 2019 Lok Sabha polls as the BJP swept all 26 seats. His resignation as a CLP leader was accepted. The following year, he lost the Assembly polls from Amreli.

Dhanani more or less withdrew to his farm in Amreli. Earlier this month, Dhanani said he would not contest the Lok Sabha. But the party called and he has made it a point to respond.

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KEY BATTLE

BJP AGAIN TARGETS 5-0 CLEAN SWEEP IN UTTARAKHAND

POLL POURRI

CONCEPTUALISED BY the EC in 2010, the VVPAT or voter-verifiable paper audit trail system was first used in a Lok Sabha poll in 2019. The VVPAT, an attachment to EVMs, generates a paper slip with the name and symbol of the candidate immediately

after pressing a button on the EVM’s ballot unit. The VVPAT displays the paper slip for 7 seconds through a transparent window before dropping into a sealed box. The system was first tested in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls before a full roll out Assembly polls.

7 DECISION 2024



MAHARASHTRA: Voters outside a polling booth in Aurangabad, Friday. PTI



SIKKIM: Monks wait in queue in Gangtok, Friday. PTI



UTTAR PRADESH: Voters outside a booth in Kairana, Friday. Renuka Puri

In Cooch Behar, BJP, TMC trade assault & intimidation charges; 460 complaints filed

SANTANU CHOWDHURY & SWEETY KUMARI
COOCH BEHAR, KOLKATA, APRIL 19

OVER 460 COMPLAINTS of violence, intimidation, and assault were reported during the first phase of voting for Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal Friday. The EC, however, said the voting was peaceful with overall 77.57% estimated voter turnout in the three seats of Cooch Behar (SC reserved), Alipurduar (ST reserved), and Jalpaiguri (SC reserved).

Cooch Behar, where a maximum number of 112 companies of CAPF have been deployed, reported most incidents of violence. The EC received 218 complaints from the TMC and BJP from Cooch Behar alone.

In Sitalkuchi area of Cooch Behar, where four persons were killed in CISP firing during the 2021 state Assembly polls, the TMC alleged that BJP workers thrashed its polling agents and voters were stopped from entering booths. The BJP, on the other hand, alleged that TMC workers pelted stones at them.

In the Mathabhanga area, a minor clash broke out between TMC and BJP workers following allegations of voter intimidation.

At Chandmari, BJP workers alleged TMC workers had taken control of polling stations and were not allowing voters to enter booths. The TMC, however, denied the charge. Bombs were reportedly recovered from the residence of a BJP booth president in Dinhatia -II and a TMC polling camp in Sitai was also attacked.

Sources said a police team found nine explosives just 200m from a polling booth in Falimari village of Cooch Behar.

Meanwhile, TMC block president

GOV: COMPLAINTS FORWARDED TO EC

Kolkata: West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose Friday said the Raj Bhavan was continuously monitoring the voting process and all poll-related complaints received by the 'Peace Room' would be forwarded to the EC. He said, "Election was conducted in a more peaceful manner than panchayat elections." Stating the Governor is not an official of the poll panel, TMC leader Kunal Ghosh questioned authority of Bose to monitor the poll proceedings. **ENS & PTI**

ident from Bethaguri, Anant Barman, was hospitalised after allegedly being beaten up by BJP members. TMC minister Udayan Guha, who faced protests from a section of women voters in his Dinhatia Assembly segment following the arrest of a local BJP worker, accused the BJP of unleashing "a reign of terror" with the help of Central forces.

Union minister and sitting BJP MP Nisith Pramanik, who is seeking reelection from Cooch Behar, said, "Sensing defeat, the TMC is trying to intimidate voters by instigating its workers against us."

In Jalpaiguri, BJP MLA Shikha Chatterjee got into a scuffle with TMC supporters near a polling booth in Siliguri. While the EC received over 100 complaints from Jalpaiguri, there were 150 complaints lodged in Alipurduar.

"The BJP has understood they are losing. Their loss has been guaranteed because the people of West Bengal know how they have been deprived of their rights," state Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said.

'THIS ELECTION IS TO MAKE COUNTRY MAJOR WORLD POWER'

In Amroha, Modi hits out at Danish Ali: 'Can he be allowed to enter Parliament?'

Takes dig at Pak in MP, slams Cong for not attending Ram temple event

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MEERUT, BHOPAL, APRIL 19

CAMPAGNING FOR THE BJP in Amroha LS seat Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi targeted sitting MP and Congress nominee Danish Ali, accusing him of having objections in chanting "Bharat Mata ki jai".

"Will a person, who cannot accept Bharat Mata ki jai, look good in the Indian Parliament? Should such a person who does not like to pay gratitude to his motherland be allowed to enter Parliament," he asked the people at the Gajraula rally, referring to the local MP.

Last September, Danish Ali was the target of BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri's communal slurs on the floor of LS. That matter is before the Lok Sabha's Privileges Committee.

Meanwhile, in a veiled attack on Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and SP president Akhilesh Yadav, Modi said, "The shooting of the film, 'do shehzade ki jodi' (pair of two princes)", is going on. But their film has already been rejected. Every time these people go out to seek votes from the people of UP, they carry a basket of dynasties, corruption and appeasement," he said.

Referring to his recent visit to Dwarka where he dived off in the Arabian Sea to offer prayers at the underwater city of Dwarka, Modi said, "When I was in Dwarka recently... I witnessed signs of the sunken town and worshipped Lord Krishna myself but Congress ke shehzade kehta hai ki samunder ke niche puja karne layak kuch hai nahi (but the prince of Congress says there is nothing to offer prayers to in the sea at Dwarka)... Those in Bihar who say they are Yaduvanshis, in UP, the leader who takes the benefits of being a Yaduvanshi, I want to ask them, how can they sit with a party that insults Lord Krishna?" Modi said, referring to Congress, SP and RJD being part



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Amroha, Friday. PTI

of the Opposition INDIA bloc.

Meanwhile, in MP's Damoh district Friday, Modi emphasised the BJP government at the Centre is "neither intimidated nor bows down to anyone", and took a veiled dig at Pakistan, saying that "a supplier of terrorism

is now struggling for flour (atta)".

Speaking in the Bundelkhand region of MP, Modi batted for a strong country amid global turmoil and said that "India needs a government that can navigate it through times of war".

"This election is to make the country a major world power..." he said. "A neighbouring country of India, which was a supplier of terrorism, is now struggling for flour. In such global conditions, India is developing the fastest in the world," the PM said.

Attacking Congress over doing "vote bank politics" by "rejecting" the invitation to the consecration ceremony of Ram temple in Ayodhya, Modi said, "The Congress and INDI alliance are engaged in insulting our faith. These people say our Sanatan is dengue and malaria. They are also staunch opponents of the grand temple of Lord Shri Ram built in Ayodhya. These people call the worship of Lord Shri Ram a sham."

Anantnag: Ghulam Nabi bows out of race, says 'want to serve people'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 19

FORMER J&K CM Ghulam Nabi Azad, chairman of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP), has decided not to contest from the Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary constituency, with his party instead fielding Salim Parray from the seat.

On Friday, the last day for filing nomination, Parray submitted his papers at the office of the Anantnag deputy commissioner. He is a sitting member of the Anantnag District Development



J-K ex-CM Ghulam Nabi Azad. File

Council, and is the DPAP spokesperson. Azad said he was not contesting as he did not want to return to Delhi, but wanted to "stay here and serve the people".

On April 2, the DPAP had announced Azad would contest from Anantnag-Rajouri seat, after which he said he would "lead his party from the front". After

Parray filed his nomination, Azad said, "He is a lawyer, an educated person, who used to fight individual cases in the HC. He will now represent our state and its people in India's highest seat of democracy, the Lok Sabha."

About his decision he said, "It has nothing to do with who is contesting and who isn't. After I left Delhi and came here, I was reminded by people you are returning to Delhi (by contesting Lok Sabha). So, I have decided to stay here and serve the people." Parray will face NC's Mian Altaf Laharvi and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti in the South Kashmir seat.

Chhagan Bhujbal says not seeking ticket from Nashik

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, APRIL 19

SENIOR NCP leader and Minister Chhagan Bhujbal Friday said he has decided not to seek ticket from Nashik LS seat so as to end the deadlock over the seat which is also coveted by ally Shiv Sena.

Earlier, both Bhujbal and sitting Shiv Sena MP Hemant Godse were in the race for Nashik ticket. According to Bhujbal, during the seat-sharing talks within the Mahayuti, Deputy CM Ajit Pawar staked claim to the Nashik seat, saying his party had more MLAs in the region and it was Union

Home Minister Amit Shah who had proposed his name.

"During the ruling alliance seat-sharing meeting, we were asked about the candidate for Nashik seat. At that time, the name of former MP Sameer Bhujbal was proposed. However, Amit Shah said I should contest even though I had not asked for a ticket," Bhujbal claimed.

CM Eknath Shinde opposed the candidature of NCP and staked the claim on the seat and nomination for Godse. "To end deadlock, I have decided to withdraw. Mahayuti should declare candidate soon. Otherwise, we may face difficulty winning," Bhujbal said.

No voting in six Nagaland dists amid call for shutdown

SURKTIA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, APRIL 19

THE SIX districts of Eastern Nagaland Friday saw close to no polling in the wake of a "call to abstain" from elections and a total shutdown called ahead of voting day by the Eastern Naga People's Organization to press for their demand for autonomy.

Voting for Nagaland's lone LS seat had taken place Friday, where the contest was between the NNDP's Chumben Murry, the Congress's Supongmeren Jamir and Independent Hayithung Tungeo Lotha.

The overall voter turnout in the state when polling closed stood at 56%. When contacted by *The Indian Express*, Nagaland CEO R Vyasan did not specify how low the voter turnout was in these districts as "data is still trickling in" but said, "going by the overall voter turnout, it appears not much voting has taken place in the region."

Local reports suggest that no voting took place in the region, following a total shutdown which was called by ENPO beginning from Thursday evening. In 2019, the voter turnout in Nagaland was 83.08%.

The six districts of Eastern Nagaland are Kiphire, Longleng, Mon, Noklak, Shamator and Tuensang. They make up over 30% of the state's population and account for 20 of 60 seats in the Nagaland Legislative Assembly. On April 18, the Nagaland CEO had issued a show cause notice to the ENPO.

In response sent to the CEO Friday, ENPO president Tsapikiu Sangtam wrote the shutdown was a "voluntary initiative by the people" and ENPO does not have the means to enforce its orders and resolutions and they "operate solely on basis of voluntary participation and consensus among the Eastern Nagaland people."

OLDEST VOICES

Punjab's 'club of 100' has over 5K voters, ready to get inked

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, APRIL 19

KEHAR SINGH eats on his own, walks around his house and even goes for short strolls nearby. The Ludhiana resident, who celebrated his 107th birthday on January 1, is among the 5,162 voters in Punjab aged over 100. His son Avtar Singh said, "Now he has some hearing issue. Otherwise, going by his age, he is maintaining himself well." The family lives in Lohara village.

A farmer by profession, Kehar has two sons and three daughters besides 12 grandchildren. His wife died a few years ago. Kehar said he was aware of the Lok Sabha elections, but could not express much about politics or the candidates in contention. "Now babuji has grown old and he votes for the party that the entire family chooses. In 2019, he was a bit more active. Now he is hale and hearty and is aware enough to vote, which is more important," Avtar said.

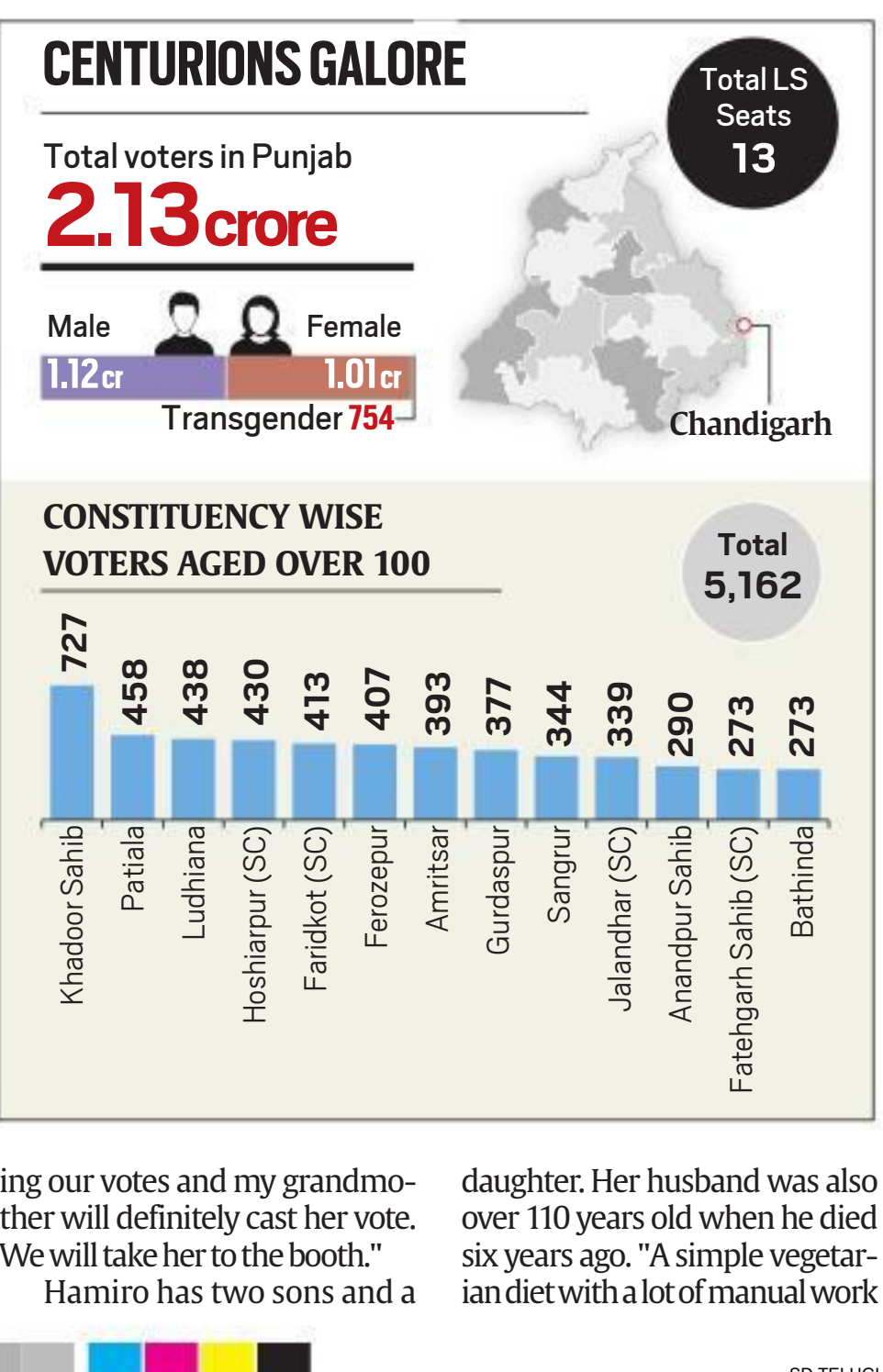
Though there is an option for staff on election duty to visit him at home to help him cast the vote, Kehar's family said he will

go to the booth along with family members. "A simple diet is the key to his long life. He eats seasonal vegetables and roti in the afternoon, and has roti dipped in milk for dinner.

Gumam Kaur, 108, resides in Dallanwal village, Malerkotla district. Her husband died about four decades ago. A mother to three sons and two daughters, Gumam recognises her family members very well. Her elder son Boota Singh is no more and she stays with the family of another son Sucha Singh. Kaur can walk with support and eats simple dal-roti. She too prefers to go to the booth to cast her vote along with family members instead of casting it at home.

Hamiro, 110, lost her husband Bhana Ram about six years ago. Faqir Chand, her grandson, said, "We are from the Bazigar community. My grandfather had migrated from Pakistan to settle here. We are daily wagers." The family lives in Jalla village in Ludhiana's Payal which falls under the Fatehgarh Sahib LS seat.

Faqir said, "My uncle Jameel Singh was village sarpanch till five years ago. Hence, we are well aware of the importance of cast-



seems to be the key to their long lives. Otherwise, we are not rich enough to follow any diet or take specific nutrition," said Faqir.

Major Singh is 101 years old and resides in Ludhiana's Basuwal village. He now has vision problems but his grandson Lakhbir Singh said, "Because of his age, we are not doing the surgery. Otherwise, he can move around the house and do his chores by himself. But one person always stays around him. We are marginal farmers with only two acres of land, but my grandfather had always been voting. He must have seen plenty of elections and is eager to vote even now. We too get encouraged to cast our vote because of him."

An Amritdhari Sikh, Singh has three sons and a daughter, grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well. "We don't find much change in the political scenario over the years. Unemployment has increased, but one's vote has to be cast," Lakhbir added.

A resident of Dewankhera village in Fazilka, Kahno Devi is 101 years old. On June 1, she will be accompanied by her son and grandson to the booth. So is the case with 100-year-old Mallan of

Malukpur village in the district.

As per the instructions from the EC, voters aged 85 and above have the option to cast their vote at home. Nevertheless, several such voters come to the booths with family members and they are also honoured for exercising their franchise.

Talking to *The Indian Express*, Ludhiana deputy commissioner Sakshi Sawhney said, "We are appealing to people to exercise their right to vote. We are reaching out to the elderly to know if they wish to vote at home or in the polling booth. We are happy to see their encouraging response."

Malerkotla deputy commissioner Dr Palavi added, "It is good that the elderly can be a source of inspiration for the young voters as they are still enthusiastic to vote at this age."

Punjab has a total of 2.13 crore voters, of which 1.12 crore are male, and 1.01 crore are female while 754 are transgenders. A total of 5,162 voters are above the age of 100. As per EC, at 727, Khadoor Sahib has the most number of voters aged above 100 followed by Patiala (458), Ludhiana (438), Hoshiarpur (430), Faridkot (413) and Ferozepur (407).

BALLOTIN



Returning Officer of Udhampur parliamentary seat Dr Rakesh Minhas (fourth from right) waits in a polling line in Kathua town on Friday. Arun Sharma

Lone voter exercises franchise in remote Arunachal district

Itanagar: The Malogam polling station in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh recorded cent per cent polling Friday as its lone female voter exercised her constitutional right, officials said. The 44-year-old Sokela Tayang cast her vote around 1 pm, a district official said. The village falls under the Hayuliang assembly in Anjaw district bordering China and in the Arunachal East LS seat. For the single voter, a team of polling officials trekked nearly 40 km on foot through treacherous terrain and set up a booth in the remote polling station. **PTI**

Flowers for voters in MP

Bhopal: Poll officials in MP Friday put their best foot forward to ensure high voting with initiatives like offering flowers and applying 'tilak' on the foreheads of those exercising their franchise. In Shahdol, poll staff welcomed elderly voters with flowers and garlands and applied tilak, leaving several of those who braved the heat happy, officials said. **PTI**

Allowing pleas against poll paper rejections will lead to chaos: SC

New Delhi: There will be "chaos" if the Supreme Court starts entertaining petitions against rejection of nomination papers, a bench comprising CJI D Y Chandrachud and Justice J B Pardiwala said.

The bench, however, permitted Jawahar Kumar Jha, whose nomination as an Independent candidate for the Banka seat for Lok Sabha polls was rejected by the returning officer (RO), to seek appropriate legal remedy.

Jha had sought directions to the EC to curb "arbitrary and malafide" exercise of discretion by the ROs in rejecting nomination papers.

Plea against Sec 144 on grounds of polls: SC sends notice to Govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

THE SUPREME COURT on Friday issued notice to the government on a petition, which alleged that blanket orders under Section 144 were being passed citing elections.

A bench of Justices B R Gawai and Sandeep Mehta issued notice on the plea by activists Aruna Roy and Nikhil Dey, who sought "restraint on the indiscriminate practice of magistrates and state governments passing blanket orders under Section 144 of CrP, 1973 to prohibit any and all meetings, gatherings,

processions and dharmas ahead of every Lok Sabha or Vidhan Sabha elections until the declaration of results". It said "these blanket prohibitory orders directly affect the civil society and general public from freely discussing, participating, organising, or mobilising on issues affecting them ahead of elections".

Appearing for the petitioners, advocate Prashant Bhushan said the SC had earlier laid down that there ought to be some "well-founded apprehension of breach of peace" before Section 144 CrP orders can be passed, and added that blanket orders were being passed in violation of this.

Modi govt will never touch policy on quota or let anyone do it: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, JAIPUR APRIL 19

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah Friday made it clear that the Narendra Modi government will never touch the reservation policy or let anyone else do it.

The home minister also dismissed speculation regarding the government planning to amend the Constitution. "If we had to change the Constitution, we could have done it earlier," he said.

"We will never touch the policy of reservation or let anyone else do it," he told NDTV in an interview. Shah said the BJP-led NDA government has not misused the majority it has in Parliament.

"We have not misused the majority we have had for ten years. The Congress has the habit of misusing majority, not us," he said. Shah said there has been no change in the BJP's commitments and highlighted that the Women's Reservation Act and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) were brought by the Modi government.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah files his nomination papers for the Lok Sabha elections in Gandhinagar on Friday. PTI

He said the opposition Congress has no issues to attack the BJP-led government.

"I have travelled across the country, everyone is waiting to vote for PM Modi for the third time. My roadshow in Gandhinagar on Thursday was in areas where I pasted the party's posters as a common karyakart," he said.

The minister said for 30 years, the people in Gandhinagar have been voting for him — first as an MLA and then as an MP — and it was an emotional journey for him.

Shah said the BJP will register its best performance in south India in the Lok Sabha polls this time. "South is ready to convert PM's popularity into seats," he said.

He also said that the government will do its best to eradicate Naxalism from the country.

Meanwhile, at a rally in Rajasthan's Pali seat Friday, Shah

said "bumper voting" has taken place in the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections. "In the first phase, bumper voting is taking place across the country. Whoever goes in, comes out shouting 'Modi, Modi,'" he said.

The rally took place in Bhopalgarh in Pali, which will go to polls in the second phase on April 26. BJP's candidate there is PP Chaudhary.

Targeting the Congress, Shah said members of the party did not attend the Ayodhya Ram temple consecration ceremony as they were "afraid of the minority vote-bank". The BJP leader said after "500 years", Ram Lalla celebrated his birthday (Ram Navami) at the new temple.

Hitting out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the OBC (other backward classes) issue, Shah said it was the Congress that opposed the Mandal commission report. Prime Minister Modi has worked to honour members of the backward classes and has given constitutional status to the backward classes commission, he said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM. Ref: (i) Tender Notice. 81/2023-24 dated 05.01.2024 (S.No 11) (ii) Tender No. 08235705 due on 15.04.2024.

WESTERN RAILWAY E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No.S/19/2024 Date 17.04.2024. S.N. Short Description of Items Quantity T.O.D.

REVERSE AUCTION. 20 Manufacture and supply of PSC SLEEPERS FOR 60 KG IN 12 TURNOUT (T-4218) 914 Set 22-Apr-24

Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website www.ireps.gov.in and www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in

Like us on: Facebook.com/WesternRly - Follow us on: Twitter.com/WesternRly

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a person (depicted in the photo), Namely: Surender Singh S/o: Lt. Kishori Ram R/o: H. No. 2/87, Lalita Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi has been missing since 23.12.2016 from Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 14A dated 24.12.2016 has been lodged at Police Station North Avenue, New Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Age: 61 Years, Height: 5'10", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Medium, Hair: Black & White, Identification: Mentally Weak and Stitch Mark on both elbow, Wearing: White colour shirt, Sky Blue colour sweater & Blue colour lower and Brown colour slipper in feet.

Any person having any information/clue about this missing person, may inform SHO, North Avenue, New Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbl.gov.in or website: http://cbl.nic.in

Phone: 011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. North Avenue, New Delhi New Delhi Distt., Delhi Ph. No. 011-23093040, 9871396738, DP/3836/NDI/2024 8750406888, 9971587214

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P. C. Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Ashok Kumar S/o Shankar Lal R/o 1197, Janta Flats GTB Nagar Delhi, have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under FIR No. 190/18 dt.05.06.2018 U/s 354/354B/323/506 IPC., has been registered at P.S. GTB Enclave, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said, Ashok Kumar cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, Ashok Kumar has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Ashok Kumar of FIR. No. 190/18 dt.05.06.2018 U/s 354/354B/323/506 IPC., registered at P.S. GTB Enclave, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 24.06.2024.

By Order Ms. Isra Zaidi, MM, Mahila Court No.2, Karkardooma Court, Delhi

जल संसाधन विभाग कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय पुनपुन बाढ़ सुरक्षा प्रमण्डल, पटना सिटी

अतिरिक्तपुनर्निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या -01/2024-25 दिनांक-15.04.2024

(केवल ई-टेंडर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

पत्रांक - 444 1. कार्य का विवरण :-

Table with 6 columns: क्र.सं., कार्य का नाम, प्राकृतिक राशि (लाख रु में), अद्यतन की राशि (रु में), बिल्टन को देय राशि (रु में), कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि, अनुमोदक. Includes items like removal of Jalkumbhi and bed clearance of Badashi Nala, construction of bridge, etc.

कार्यपालक अभियंता पुनपुन बाढ़ सुरक्षा प्रमण्डल, पटना सिटी, करंविहाय्या, पटना। मो: 7463889534

लोकसभा आम निर्वाचन 2024- मतदान महात्योहार, बिहार हे तैयार

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

LATE MAJ MANOJ KUMAR BHANDARI 20 JUN 1964 - 20 APR 2002

In proud memory of Maj Manoj Kumar Bhandari of 6th Battalion The Dogra Regt who made the supreme sacrifice while serving the Nation at Poonch (J&K). Your act of valour, raw courage & devotion to duty will always remain a source of inspiration and motivation to all of us.

"BRAVES DIE, BUT ONLY ONCE" Remembered by Commanding Officer and All Ranks 6 DOGRA.

भारतीय कंटेनर निगम लिमिटेड CONTAINER CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD. NSIC New MDPB Building, 2nd Floor, Okhla Indl. Estate (Opp. NSIC Okhla Metro Station), New Delhi-110020

TENDER NOTICE (E-Tendering Mode Only) Online E-Bids (TWO PACKET) for Terminal Support Services at CONCOR MMLP-Jaipur (Orissa) Terminal and RCT-Dhappar (Punjab) Terminal

Tender No. CON/Area-III & ITSS/JAIPUR & RCT-Dhappar/2024 Name of Work Terminal Support Services at CONCOR MMLP-Jaipur (Orissa) and RCT-Dhappar (Punjab) Terminals

Estimated Cost: Rs. 33,85,323/- (Inclusive of GST) Period of the Contract: 11 Months. Earnest Money Deposit: Rs. 67,706/- (Inclusive of GST)

Cost of Document: Rs. 1,000/- inclusive of all taxes and duties through e-payment. Tender Processing Fee: Rs. 4,720/- inclusive of all taxes and duties (Non-refundable) through e-payment

Date of Sale (On Line): From 20.04.2024 at 11:00 hrs. to 06.05.2024 (upto 16:00 hrs.). Last Date & Time of submission: On 07.05.2024 upto 15:00 hrs.

Date & Time of Opening: On 08.05.2024 at 16:00 hrs. Through e-Payment. For eligibility criteria and complete details please log on to www.concordia.com or eprocure.gov.in or www.tenderwizard.com/CCL. Bidders are requested to visit the websites regularly. Executive Director/Area-III

NORTHERN RAILWAY Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

Table with 4 columns: S. No., Tender No., Brief Description, Qty., Closing Date. Includes items like tapered roller bearing, parking brake cylinder, procurement of BPAC.

NOTE - 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained. Tender Notice NO. 05/2024-2025 Dated : 19.04.2024 1175/2024

Army Institute of Technology Dighi Hills, Pune - 411 015 Tender Enquiry

Table with 4 columns: Sr. No., Description, EMD (DD), Last date of submission. Includes procurement of uniform cloth and mattresses.

Tender Fee : Rs. 1,000/- (DD) Refer www.aitechpune.edu.in for details email : project@aitpune.edu.in, Tele : 7249250184/185

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE Invitation of Tenders through E- Tendering (E-procurement system)

Sr.DMM, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the president of India invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:

Table with 4 columns: S. No., Tender No., Brief Description, Qty., Closing Date. Includes non contact laser scanning based wheel profile measurement system.

NOTE - 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No manual offer will be entertained. Sr. DMM/NSL/P/93245708/2024 Date: 16.04.2024

बिहार सरकार जल संसाधन विभाग कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय पुनपुन बाढ़ सुरक्षा प्रमण्डल, अनिसाबाद पटना।

अल्पकालीन पुनर्निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या -01 /2024-25 (केवल ई-टेंडर पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

पत्रांक - 6787पटना 1. कार्य का विवरण :-

Table with 6 columns: क्र.सं., कार्य का नाम, प्राकृतिक राशि (लाख रु में), अद्यतन की राशि (रु में), बिल्टन को देय राशि (रु में), कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि, अनुमोदक. Includes construction of bridge, water supply, etc.

कार्यपालक अभियंता पुनपुन बाढ़ सुरक्षा प्रमण्डल, अनिसाबाद, पटना। मो: 930863962

लोकसभा आम निर्वाचन 2024- वोट जैसा कुंघ नही, वोट जरूर डालेंगे हम

MOTILAL NEHRU SCHOOL OF SPORTS RAI (SONIPAT) -131023 ADMISSION 2024-25 Class -XI

Process of filling of offline form begins from 20.04.2024. Last date of filling offline form is 25.04.2024

VISIT SCHOOL WEBSITE WWW.MNSSRAI.COM FOR MORE UPDATES

PRINCIPAL & DIRECTOR MNSS, RAI 26140/HRY

SCRAP FOR SALE (E-AUCTION)

E-Auction items are invited from intending buyers for disposal, strictly on 'As is Where is' basis, fire effected Mass Flow Meter, Control Valves, Valve Positioner, Mass Flowmeter, On/Off DOV, Fisher DVC Positioner, Cables & other misc. items - taxes extra.

Salvage belonging to M/s Continental Carbon India Private Limited, Ghaziabad. Material can be inspected at Continental Carbon India Private Limited, Carbon Black Manufacturing Plant, A-14, Industrial Area No. 1, Off NH 24, South Side of GT Road, Ghaziabad-201009 site between 22.04.2024 to 03.05.2024 after taking prior appointment from Mrs. Shakti Bala (9821199447)

E-Auction date/time-04.05.2024 between 03:00 PM to 04:30 PM Interested buyers/bidders have to deposit an EMD (I.D. only) of Rs. 2 Lacs in favour of 'Continental Carbon India Private Limited' payable at Ghaziabad to participate in the e-auction.

One or all bids/offers can be cancelled without assigning any reason. E-Auction forms can be obtained from the Auctioneers Sankor Settlers Pvt. Ltd., 203, 2nd Floor, Usha Kiran Building, Azadpur Commercial Complex, Near Akash Cinema, New Delhi-110033. Contact Mr. Jitender Thakur : 8744013008, 9654772277

B.S. CHAWLA & Co. (SURVEYORS & VALUERS) Delhi/Allahabad

WESTERN RAILWAY-VADODARA DIVISION SIGNAL & TELECOMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT "E-TENDER NOTICE SIGNALLING WORK"

TENDER NOTICE No. S & T/ BRC/24-25/03/SIG Dtd. 15.04.2024 Sr. DSTE/Vadodara acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No. SandT_BRC_24-25_03_SIG. Bidders will be able to submit their original / revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

(1) Name of the Work with its location: Signalling Work such as Alteration in Electronic Interlocking (EI) at Anand Station (M/s Kyoosan make) along with outdoor signalling work in connection with Engineering work of "Vadodara-Geratpur Section: Construction of RUB in lieu of LC 260 at Railway Km 432/6-8 in Anand Yard". (2) Approx. cost of the work : ₹ 75,08,745.56 (3) Earnest Money to be Deposit : ₹ 1,50,200.00 (4) Date & Time for submission of e-tender and opening of e-tender : 13.05.2024 @ 15:00 Hours and 13.05.2024 @ 15:30 Hours. (5) Website particulars and notice for location where complete details can be seen etc.: http://www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, 2nd Floor-Annex Building, DRM's Office, Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara-390 004. 006

WESTERN RAILWAY-VADODARA DIVISION SIGNAL & TELECOMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT "E-TENDER NOTICE REHABILITATION OF ALLIED FACILITIES"

TENDER NOTICE No. S & T/ BRC/21-22/08/SIG-R1 Dtd. 15.04.2024 Sr. DSTE/Vadodara acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites e-Tenders against Tender No. SandT_BRC_21-22_08_SIG-R1. Bidders will be able to submit their original / revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.

(1) Name of the Work with its location: Vadodara Division: Rehabilitation of allied facilities for Track Machine Siding at Pollad station (2) Approx. cost of the work : ₹ 40,27,174.01 (3) Earnest Money to be Deposit : ₹ 80,600.00 (4) Date & Time for submission of e-tender and opening of e-tender : 13.05.2024 @ 15:00 Hours and 13.05.2024 @ 15:30 Hours. (5) Website particulars and notice for location where complete details can be seen etc.: http://www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, 2nd Floor-Annex Building, DRM's Office, Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara-390 004. 007

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY E-Tender Notice No. 02 UBL 2023-24 Dated : 12.04.2024

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Table with 2 columns: Sl. Name of the Work, Approx. Value. Includes Hubballi Division work for total length of 4.1 km in Toranagallu - Ranajitpura Section.

Last date for submission of bids: Up to 11:00 Hrs on 10-05-2024 For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Engineer / Co-ordination Hubballi PLS/19AAS/PRB/SWR/2024-25 4, South Western Railway - SWR

TELANGANA STATE SEEDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, HYDRABAD. SHORT E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Short e-tender is invited by TSSDC for supply of freshly harvested Green manure T/L seed i.e. Dhaincha, Sunhemp and Pilipeppara on need basis for distribution in Telangana State during Vanakulam-2024. Eligible suppliers are requested to participate in the e-tender process. The schedule containing detailed specifications, terms and conditions will be available in the website www.tssdc.telanganagov.in. The bidders may visit https://tender.telanganagov.in and Contact 7337445457/7337445456/63093/39690/99127/56216; 040-23236088. The last date and time of bidding is 29.04.2024 at 5.00 P.M.

R.O. No. : 11932-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2024-25 Date: 19.04.2024. Managing Director

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Anil Dubey, S/o: Sreeram Dubey, R/o: H.No. 7/303, Trilok Puri, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 1459/2014, U/s 420/467/468/471/511 IPC, P.S.: Rajouri Garden, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Anil Dubey cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Anil Dubey has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Anil Dubey accused of FIR No. 1459/2014, U/s 420/467/468/471/511 IPC, P.S.: Rajouri Garden, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 27.05.2024.

By Order Shri Milan Goel Metropolitan Magistrate-02 West District, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.) Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) Amit S/o Karan Singh R/o Ward No. 5, Dushehra Ground, Maham, Distt. Rohtak, Haryana has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in FIR No. 36722/2018, U/s 411 IPC, PS Mukherjee Nagar, Distt. North-West, Delhi and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) Amit can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) Amit has absconded (or is concealing herself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) Amit of FIR No. 36722/2018, U/s 411 IPC, PS Mukherjee Nagar, Distt. North-West, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated 27.06.2024 at 10:00 A.M.

By Order Ms. Neeti Suri Mishra Ld. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Room No. 117, (North) Rohini Courts, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.) Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Sayed Farhan, S/o Mohammad Nadim, R/o Mohalla Chaudhriyan, PS Kotwalli Nagar, District Bulandshahar, Uttar Pradesh has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case FIR No. 107/2024, dated 24.01.2024, U/S 21/25/29 NDPS Act, PS Nand Nagri, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Sayed Farhan can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Sayed Farhan has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Sayed Farhan of FIR No. 107/2024, dated 24.01.2024, U/S 21/25/29 NDPS Act, PS Nand Nagri, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 28.05.2024.

By Order Sameer Bajpai Special Judge (NDPS MCOCA & RIOTS Act) Additional Sessions Judge-03 Shahdara, Room No. 58, 3rd Floor Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Pramod Kumar, S/o Khushi Ram, R/o F-2A, Krishan Vihar, Delhi, Present Add. Village Rampur Manpur, PS Sikkarpur, Distt. Bulandshahar, U.P. has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 545/2021, U/s 279/304 A IPC, P.S. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Pramod Kumar cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Pramod Kumar has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Pramod Kumar accused of FIR No. 545/2021, U/s 279/304 A IPC, P.S. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 27.06.2024.

By Order Ms. Neeti Suri Mishra Metropolitan Magistrate, North Room No. 117 Rohini Court, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Pramod Kumar, S/o Khushi Ram, R/o F-2A, Krishan Vihar, Delhi, Present Add. Village Rampur Manpur, PS Sikkarpur, Distt. Bulandshahar, U.P. has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 545/2021, U/s 279/304 A IPC, P.S. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Pramod Kumar cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Pramod Kumar has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Pramod Kumar accused of FIR No. 545/2021, U/s 279/304 A IPC, P.S. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 27.06.2024.

By Order Ms. Neeti Suri Mishra Metropolitan Magistrate, North Room No. 117 Rohini Court, Delhi

9 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



FOR SON SHINE

AFTER THE Samajwadi Party top leadership decided to field his son Aditya Yadav from Badaun Lok Sabha seat, party national general secretary Shivpal Singh Yadav has become more active in the constituency. He has been camping in Badaun for the past few days to ensure his son's victory in his debut election. Shivpal is addressing rallies and meeting party workers, seeking their support for Aditya. The SP had initially declared former MP Dharmendra Yadav — a cousin of party chief Akhilesh Yadav — as its Badaun candidate. Later, it decided to shift Dharmendra to Azamgarh and replace him with Shivpal in Badaun. However, Shivpal and the local SP unit insisted on Aditya's candidature and the party agreed to give him a chance. Badaun remains a challenging seat for SP, which lost it to the BJP in 2019 Lok Sabha polls despite having an alliance with the BSP.

ONE MORE IN OFFING

THE EDUCATION Ministry on Thursday appointed directors to six IITs — Kanpur, Guwahati, Dhanbad, Goa, BHU and Jodhpur — in one go. After these appointments, only the director's post at IIT-Bombay remains vacant. It is learnt that the government has finalised the names and sent the file to Rashtrapati Bhawan for the final selection. Professor Shireesh B. Kedare from the department of energy science and engineering at IIT-Bombay is reportedly among the frontrunners for the post.

CRPF ADG Nalin Prabhat appointed chief of NSG

New Delhi: Senior IPS officer Nalin Prabhat has been appointed as the Director-General of National Security Guard (NSG), the country's counter-terrorism force, according to a Personnel Ministry order.



Prabhat is 1992 batch IPS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre

Prabhat, a 1992 batch IPS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre, is presently working as Additional Director General in CRPF.

"The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment as the Director General, NSG for a period up to August 31, 2028 i.e. the date of his superannuation," the order said.

Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) chief Daljit Singh Chawdhary

was holding the additional charge of the NSG.

The ACC has also approved the appointment of Intelligence Bureau Additional Director Sapna Tewari as the Special Director in the agency. Tewari has been appointed for a tenure of two years from the date of assumption of charge of the post or up to the date of her superannuation i.e. April 30, 2026. **ENS**

SC upholds tribunal order on service tax on Patanjali camps

Appellate tribunal had held Patanjali liable to pay service tax on yoga camps

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

THE SUPREME Court on Friday refused to intervene with the October 5, 2023, order of the Allahabad bench of Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT), which said Patanjali Yogpeeth Trust was liable to pay service tax on its residential and non-residential yoga camps as it charged an entry fee.

Disposing of an appeal by the Trust, a bench of Justices AS Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said CESTAT was right in categorising it as a "health and fitness service". CESTAT had also rejected the Trust's contention that what it received from participants of the yoga camps was donation.

The Patanjali Trust had approached CESTAT to challenge the October 2012 order of the Commissioner of Customs & Central Excise, Meerut, confirming the demand of service tax amounting to Rs 4.94 crore, and an equal amount as penalty, from it.

Arguing before CESTAT, the Trust contended that its activities were not taxable under the health and fitness services as per the definition as it extended to yoga for physical fitness and not yoga for therapeutic purpose.

The Trust also said that what it accepted from the participants of these yoga camps was voluntary donation and not a consideration for any service to be provided.

Rejecting the Trust's appeal, CESTAT relied on the definition of "health and fitness service" in the



Ramdev and Patanjali MD Acharya Balkrishna after voting in Haridwar. ANI

Clubbing plea: SC seeks status of FIRs

New Delhi: The SC Friday asked the Bihar and Chhattisgarh governments to apprise it of the status of FIRs against Ramdev for his remarks questioning the efficacy of allopathy in treating Covid-19.

The court was hearing a plea by Ramdev seeking clubbing of various FIRs and transfer to Delhi. It adjourned the case till July. **ENS**

Finance Act, 1994 as meaning "service for physical well-being such as sauna and steam bath, turkish bath, solarium, spas, reducing or slimming salons, gymnasium, yoga, meditation, massage (excluding therapeutic massage)." On the Trust's contention that what was received was donation, CESTAT said "it is quite evident that the amounts... was nothing but the consideration for the provision of service taxable under health and fitness services".

Court closes DA case against former principal secretary to Chhattisgarh CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA RAIPUR, APRIL 19

A TRIAL court in Raipur has accepted the closure report filed by EOW-ACB after no case of disproportionate assets was made against Aman Singh, who was principal secretary to former Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh.

The court in an order dated April 16 accepted the closure report filed by the state EOW-ACB after finding that no case of disproportionate assets could be made out against Aman Singh and his wife Yasmin Singh.

An FIR No 09/2020 was lodged when the previous Congress government under chief minister Bhupesh Baghel was in power in the state, based on claims by an RTI activist.

Three years of investigation by the state EOW-ACB failed to substantiate the allegations of dispropo-

■ FIR lodged in 2020 based on claims by an RTI activist

■ Bilaspur HC had earlier quashed FIR, but SC set aside order, saying it was desirable HCs don't quash corruption case FIRs at the investigation stage

■ Closure report filed by state ACB in Dec 2023

portionate assets against Singh and his wife, according to the court order. The closure report was filed by the economic offences wing (EOW) of the state government in December last year before the current BJP government took office.

The trial court has now accepted the closure report and quashed the FIR.

Singh, a former Indian Revenue Service officer, was a powerful bureaucrat in the

Raman Singh-led BJP government in Chhattisgarh and the principal secretary to the chief minister. He resigned from service and joined the Adani group in November 2022.

In February 2020, the EOW of Chhattisgarh registered an FIR against Singh and his wife Yasmeen in an alleged disproportionate assets case.

The Bilaspur HC had two years back quashed the FIR, but the Supreme Court in March 2023 set aside the order, saying it was desirable that the High Courts do not quash corruption case FIRs at the investigation stage, even if it is suspected that the case has been registered by a new government against officers of the previous government.

And now the trial court has accepted the closure report filed by the EOW and scrapped the FIR.

Noted criminal lawyer and Senior Advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, who represented the

Singhs, said the FIR under the then Bhupesh Baghel government was used to "unjustly target Aman Singh, an honest officer, and his wife Yasmin Singh, a renowned artist, forcing them to undergo trials and tribulations for several years".

"However, justice has finally been served with their discharge by the court," he said.

Echoing this sentiment, former Chhattisgarh Chief Secretary Sunil Kumar, who worked with both Congress and BJP CMs, spoke about the adverse impacts of political victimisation on governance and the morale of public servants. "Officers of integrity being targeted for political considerations is demoralising because not everyone can withstand the personal costs of incorruptibility in public service," he said.

Despite claiming the charges were politically motivated, Aman Singh fully cooperated with the investigation.

Mayor who switched to BJP says vote for Nakul Nath

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BHOPAL, APRIL 19

ON FRIDAY when the high-profile Chhindwara constituency in Madhya Pradesh went to polls, Chhindwara mayor Vikram Ahake, who had recently joined the BJP, urged people to vote for former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath's son and sitting Congress MP Nakul Nath.

Ahake, the first tribal mayor of Chhindwara and a former Kamal Nath aide, was elevated to the post of mayor by the former CM. In a video message, Ahake said, "Soon after joining a political party, I was feeling suffocated. I felt that I was not doing the right thing with a person who has developed Chhindwara".

"Nakul Nath has always devoted himself to improving the constituency, be it the education sector, providing treatment to people or carrying out development works," said Ahake.

"In the future, I will get a lot of opportunities to do politics. I don't know what will happen to me, but if I don't stand with my leader Kamal Nath and Nakul Nath today... as they have done a lot for me... I appeal to the voters to ensure the victory of Nakul Nath (and his father Kamal Nath) by a huge margin," Ahake said, who joined the BJP on April 1 in presence of MP CM Mohan Yadav.



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a poll rally in Murshidabad district on Friday. Express

Mamata: Won't support Congress, CPM in Bengal... they're BJP agents

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, APRIL 19

AS THE first phase of the Lok Sabha elections kicked off on Friday, West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee hit out at INDIA bloc allies Congress and CPI(M) and said she would not support them in the state as they were acting as "BJP agents" there. Speaking at an election rally in Murshidabad district, Banerjee called all pre-poll surveys "fake" and said that the BJP would "not get more than 200 seats" in the Lok Sabha elections.

"Some say, we are INDIA, vote for us. INDIA is not here, it belongs to Delhi. Congress and CPI(M) are

not INDIA here. They are BJP. One vote for them means two votes for BJP. Don't even cast a vote [for them]," Banerjee said. "We will lead the Opposition alliance INDIA in the coming days. But in Bengal, CPI(M) and Congress are agents of BJP. So, I will not support them here," she added. TMC has chosen to contest the Lok Sabha elections alone in West Bengal.

Banerjee said the 2024 Lok Sabha polls are nothing less than a "second battle for the country's independence," as BJP's return to power for the third consecutive term would endanger the existence of the Constitution and democracy.

Reiterating her government's stand on the Citizenship

Amendment Act (CAA), Banerjee said, "I would like to request all migrant workers who have come here to celebrate Eid to not go back without voting because if you don't vote in the coming days they will take away your Aadhaar card and your citizenship. I will not let CAA be implemented here."

Slamming the BJP, she said, "The BJP will not get even 200 seats in the country. All surveys are fake. Lakhs of rupees have been poured into the survey. Do not listen to it... BJP will not win."

Targeting the ECI over the deployment of Central forces in Bengal, she said, "How come you are voting with only the central forces... leaving out state police? So that people cannot vote?"

'Added sugar in Cerelac': Govt asks FSSAI to initiate appropriate action against Nestle

Serious concerns over implication on children's health: Consumer Affairs Secy

HARIKISHAN SHARMA NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

TAKING COGNIZANCE of reports on Nestle selling baby products with higher sugar content in India, the Union Consumer Affairs Ministry has asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to "initiate appropriate action" against the company.

In a letter to the FSSAI CEO G Kamala Vardhana Rao on April



Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare

18, Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare said, "As per the news reports, Public Eye, an investigation agency based in Switzerland has published a report highlighting concerning findings about Nestle's manufac-

turing practices in India. According to the report, Nestle Company has been alleged to add 2.7g of sugar per serving to Nestle Cerelac baby cereals sold in India while refraining from such practices in other countries such as Germany, Switzerland, France & UK."

"It may be mentioned that high sugar in baby products raises serious concerns about the potential implications for the health and safety of children in our country. The health and

well-being of our citizens, especially infants and young children, is of paramount importance, and any deviation from safety standards could lead to serious health concerns," Khare said.

"In light of these reports, FSSAI is requested to initiate an appropriate action into the practices of Nestle Company regarding the composition of Nestle Cerelac baby cereals sold in India. Your prompt attention on this matter will be highly appreciated," Khare said.

Govt plans to augment NCC strength to 27 lakh cadets in 10 years

Increase reach to more schools, colleges, focus on border areas; organisational structure of NCC units to be standardised

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

THE MINISTRY of Defence is planning a phase-wise augmentation of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) from the current 17 lakh cadets to 27 lakh in the next 10 years, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

This is aimed at enhancing the reach of the tri-service organisation to a greater number of educational institutions, with a focus on border areas. The Ministry has previously said there was an "increasing demand for NCC from educational institutions throughout the country".

Open to schools and colleges on a voluntary basis, the NCC grooms and trains youth in so-

cial services, discipline and adventure activities. Cadets are also given basic military training in small arms, though there's no liability to take part in active military service after the course.

Upon completion of the NCC training, junior wing cadets (school students) get an 'A' certificate while senior wing cadets (in colleges) get 'B' and 'C' certificates. These certificates have a fixed weightage in selection as Agniveers and in other Government jobs.

According to sources, in the first phase, three lakh cadets will be added to the 17 existing directorates of the NCC covering all states and Union Territories. The next two phases, the sources added, will see the NCC's



NCC trains youth in social services and adventure activities. Cadets are also given basic training in small arms. File

strength go up by three and four lakh cadets, respectively.

The first phase was approved by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in March, with the

Ministry, in a statement, saying, "The additional 3 lakh cadets will take the NCC strength to 20 lakh cadets from just 20,000 cadets in 1948, making it the largest uni-

Abortion plea: SC orders medical exam of 28-wk pregnant minor

Top court lists hearing for April 22

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

THE Supreme Court on Friday directed medical examination of a 14-year-old girl at Sion hospital in Mumbai to ascertain whether her 28-week-old pregnancy, resulting from a sexual assault, can be medically terminated or not.

A two-judge bench of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justice J B Pardiwala, which reassembled soon after the day's proceedings were over, directed that the girl be medically examined on Saturday itself and listed the matter for hearing on April 22 morning.

The Bombay High Court had declined to grant relief following which the girl's mother moved the SC.

Hearing the appeal, the SC noted that there were two medical reports before the HC and the petitioner's grievance was that the second of the two reports "was prepared without any examination of" the minor.

It said, "From the report which has been placed on record, a striking feature has emerged before this court... Prima facie the medical report does not contain an evaluation of the physical and mental status of the minor, particularly having regard to the background leading up to the pregnancy, including the alleged sexual

assault." "Moreover it would be necessary that this court is apprised of whether the carrying of the pregnancy to the full term would impact the physical and mental well being of the minor..." the court said.

The bench said it is "of the view that the petitioner's daughter should be examined afresh by a medical board to be constituted at the Sion Hospital tomorrow (April 20, 2024)" and requested the medical superintendent of the hospital to constitute a medical board for the purpose.

It also asked the standing counsel for Maharashtra to ensure that due arrangements are made for the transportation of the petitioner and her daughter from their place of residence to the Sion hospital and back.

It asked the medical board to "also opine on whether the termination of the pregnancy can be carried out at this stage without any threat to the life of the minor".

The bench directed that a copy of the report be submitted through the standing counsel for Maharashtra on the record of the court at 10.30 am on April 22.

An FIR in respect of the assault had been registered under various sections of IPC and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO).

Child watching porn may not be an offence but using child in porn will be, says top court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

A CHILD watching porn may not be an offence but children being used in pornography is a matter of "serious" concern and may be an offence, the Supreme Court said on Friday.

The observations came from a bench of Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Justice J B Pardiwala while reserving the verdict on an appeal filed by NGOs — Just Rights for Children Alliance of Faridabad and New Delhi-based Chhapan Bachao Andolan — challenging a Madras High Court verdict.

The organisations work for the welfare of children.

"A child watching porn may not be an offence but children being used in pornography may be an offence and is a matter of serious concern," the bench said.

The Madras High Court has ruled that mere downloading and watching child pornography is not an offence under the POCSO Act and the Information Technology law.

The high court, on January 11, also quashed the criminal proceedings against a 28-year-old

man charged with downloading on his mobile phone pornographic content involving children.

On March 11, the top court the Madras HC ruling as "atrocious".

Senior advocate H S Phoolka, appearing for two organisations, assailed the high court verdict and referred to the provisions of the POCSO Act and the Information Technology Act.

The bench said if one gets such material in the inbox then it has to be deleted or destroyed to avoid scrutiny under the relevant laws. If one continues to breach the IT provisions by not deleting or destroying the child pornographic materials then it makes out an offence, it said.

The bench was responding to the submissions of the lawyer, representing the person who was accused of downloading child porn, that the alleged clip came to him on June 14, 2019.

The counsel for the accused, who was exonerated by the HC, said the material was downloaded automatically on his WhatsApp.

The top court, meanwhile, allowed child rights body NCPCL to intervene in the matter.

"Arguments concluded, and judgement reserved," the CJ said.



WORDLY WISE
IF I COULD SAY IT IN WORDS THERE WOULD
BE NO REASON TO PAINT.
— EDWARD HOPPER

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

At the heart of Iran-Israel

The conflict makes it clear that peace in West Asia hinges on resolving Palestine's statehood



BERNARD HAYKEL

IN THE LAST few weeks, Israel and Iran have crossed all the red lines in their decades-long shadow war. Israel did this on April 1 when it bombed an Iranian consular building in Damascus, killing several high-ranking Iranian revolutionary guard officers. On April 13, Iran retaliated by launching an attack from its mainland on Israel. This is the first time Tehran has done this, whereas in the past it relied on non-state proxy militias to do its work, giving it plausible deniability and the cover of ambiguity. Now, however, Iran launched the world's largest combined drone, cruise, and ballistic missiles assault. The war is in the open and no longer being fought in the shadows. As a result, we have witnessed an Israeli retaliation by missiles and drones on Iranian military bases — another step closer to a broader war in West Asia and one that may drag the United States and other Arab countries into the fray, with severe global consequences.

Unlike Israel's successful strike on April 13, Iran's projectiles were entirely blocked by Israel's air force and anti-missile defense systems, albeit with the help of US, British, French allies, and Jordan because many of the drones flew through its airspace. The Iranians intended to do great harm to Israel, despite claims to the contrary, and their failure to accomplish this represents a humiliation. Hence, President Biden counselled Israel not to retaliate but rather to "take the win" of having blocked Iran's attack. Yet, as expected, Israel's Prime Minister and his right-wing government have rejected America's prudent advice and sought to re-establish deterrence by attacking Iran directly.

Unfortunately, this most recent attack will only speed up Iran's nuclear weapons programme, which is close to breakout time. The immediate question now is whether Iran will retaliate again or take a longer time to do so. The messages about this from Tehran have been mixed, with some claiming the most recent Israeli attack to be insignificant, and thus not worth responding to, while other officials have stated that there will be a massive response.

Whatever the case may be, the gloves are off between Israel and Iran, and this is a troubling sign of worse things to come. What makes the leaders of these two countries en-

gage in such high-risk attacks that can destabilise the entire region? The answer lies in the nature of the two regimes in Tehran and Jerusalem, who, despite their differences, share several characteristics: Existential fear, radical politics and arrogance. Let's address the case of Iran first and then turn to Israel.

The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is convinced that the United States, and its regional incarnation Israel, are determined to topple its regime. Iran's leaders are scarred by the eight-year war with Iraq (1980-88) in which Iraq was backed by the Western powers and hundreds of thousands of Iranians were killed and maimed. One of Iran's tools for projecting influence, and thus self-defence, is its revolutionary ideology, namely, the radical Islamist thought of Ayatollah Khomeini — the revolution's leader — with its mixture of anti-imperialism, Islamic supremacism, and social justice. The regime has sought to defend itself by promoting Khomeini's ideology throughout the Middle East, with the creation of loyal militias that would exert pressure through the threat of violence against both the US and Israel. Hezbollah in Lebanon is the prime example of this effort and forms the principal line of deterrence for protecting the Islamic state in Iran. With its 150,000 missiles aimed at Israel and its well-trained militia, Hezbollah constitutes a formidable threat to Israel. This model has been replicated by Iran with comparable militia forces in Syria, Iraq, Hamas in Palestine and the Houthis in Yemen. For example, the Houthis have shown the ability to block maritime shipping through the Red Sea, effectively blocking two choke points, the Bab al-Mandab and the Suez Canal, at Iran's behest. With these militias, an arrogance about power has developed in Tehran, which today is on full display with its claims to want to destroy Israel and to expel the US from West Asia, thereby establishing its own hegemony over the region. In other words, Iran is a revisionist state that seeks to protect itself by dominating West Asia — disruption and instability of the existing order are its top priority because these serve its interests.

Like Iran, Israel's present government is radical and revisionist. It seeks to eliminate the possibility of a future Palestinian state,

thereby denying the people its right to self-determination. It wishes to create a greater Israel in the West Bank and engages in acts of repression of Palestinians and expropriation of their land. In so doing, Israel is allowing the Palestinian cause to fester, which generates radical and violent action, as we saw in the despicable acts on October 7, 2023, but also in many earlier attacks on Israelis. Iran benefits from and encourages such deeds because it focuses attention on the injustice of Israel (and the West) towards the Palestinians, and this resonates deeply throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds and beyond. In Saudi Arabia, for example, a country that is ostensibly about to normalise relations with Israel, the war in Gaza has generated nearly two million individual donations for a total of \$190 million — this effectively means that half the Saudi population has contributed to alleviate Palestinian suffering. For Israelis, however, all this support for the Palestinians amounts to a desire to see Israel destroyed, and this plays on their existential fears.

The war in Gaza has made clear that the denial of Palestinian rights — and unless their right to a state is granted — there will be instability and violence in West Asia. Spoilers against peace and stability, like Iran and the right-wing government in Israel, will take advantage of this chaos to achieve their maximal goals. Desiring a different outcome, the US, Jordan, Egypt and the Arab Gulf states such as Saudi Arabia have been pleading with Israel to give binding commitments for the creation of a Palestinian state. Their proposal is to return to the two-state solution as envisaged by the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. Yet, Israel's existential trauma after October 7, the ideology of its right-wing government and the arrogance produced by its military superiority have so far led it to refuse any acknowledgement of a Palestinian state. Unfortunately, without this, there will be no peace or stability in West Asia, and the open wars between Iran and Israel will escalate with dire consequences for all.

The writer is professor, Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University and the Nelson Mandela Visiting Chair in Afro-Asian Studies at Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala

PUNJABIYAT DIPLOMACY

Maryam Sharif's speech at Kartarpur Sahib seems an olive branch to Delhi. India must proceed with cautious optimism

SPeAKING TO AROUND 3,000 Sikh pilgrims at Kartarpur Sahib, Maryam Nawaz, the Chief Minister of Punjab and heir apparent of three-time Pakistan Prime Minister and PML(N) supremo Nawaz Sharif extended an olive branch to India. She invoked the linguistic and cultural similarity among Punjabis on both sides of the border. Pakistan's Punjab is the country's largest province and much of its political, military and cultural elite is Punjabi. Maryam spoke of friendship with India, religious tolerance and celebrating Eid, Baisakhi and Holi. Quoting her father, she said, "don't fight wars with neighbours... open the doors of friendship... open the doors of your hearts". Behind Maryam's emotional appeal are the hard economic and geopolitical realities confronting Pakistan. Less than a month ago, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Muhammed Ishaq Dar said that "Pakistani businessmen want trade with India" and that his government was "seriously considering" the matter. Rawalpindi and Islamabad are also faced with increasingly restive Western borders with both Afghanistan and Iran. The Army, too, may want a measure of stability on the eastern front.

Maryam's outreach is of a piece with earlier attempts at improving bilateral ties. As Chief Minister of Punjab in 2013, Shehbaz Sharif (now PM) made it a point to visit Punjab on his visit to India. In 1999, Parkash Singh Badal, then CM of Punjab in India, visited Lahore with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. There have also been attempts at deeper cross-border economic and energy cooperation. As recently as 2014 — after Shehbaz's visit in 2013 — Pakistan evinced interest in importing power from India. In India, GAIL was receptive to the idea of supplying natural gas across the Wagah border from Jalandhar. Unfortunately, the cooperation did not materialise, not the least because of the Pakistan Army scuppering them. The PML(N), Nawaz Sharif in particular, has often faced resistance from Rawalpindi because of its overtures to India. Now, though, things appear to be different. Maryam's statement, for example, would not have been possible without at least tacit support from the Army — there is no doubt that the current government in Pakistan is supported by the Army.

A major stumbling block in bilateral ties, especially after the August 5, 2019 abrogation of Article 370, has been Pakistan's intransigence on the "Kashmir issue". The new government seems to be continuing that trend, with President Asif Ali Zardari calling for the restoration of special status this week. PM Shehbaz Sharif too has made similar statements, as has the Army. However, the fact also is that the relationship has been stalled because of the "core concerns" on both sides — terrorism for India and Kashmir for Pakistan. The current moment may provide an opening to pick low-hanging diplomatic fruits, especially restoring trade ties. What is needed over the next few weeks is quiet back channel diplomacy, especially of the kind that led to the 2021 ceasefire along the Line of Control — this ceasefire has largely held. Behind-the-scenes conversations can lay the ground for the next Indian government after the Lok Sabha polls to move the needle forward.

PLAYING TO ANXIETIES

Allahabad Court's varying interpretation of 'love jihad' law has implications. Courts must ensure the law doesn't imperil rights

THE FACT THAT consenting adults should require the state's approval — and protection — for their relationship with a person of their choice is telling in itself. But a report in this paper shows how in UP, the interpretation of a provision of the state's anti-conversion law has led to contrasting outcomes in orders by the Allahabad High Court in matters related to inter-faith live-in relationships. Since August last year, different benches of the Court have dismissed pleas for police protection for at least 12 interfaith couples in live-in relationships, stating the criminalising of such relationships under UP's Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021. In three other cases, including one from early last year, conditional protection was granted. The law has already been challenged in the Supreme Court along with similar laws from several other states but the arbitrary nature of interpretation has implications for those who find themselves at its receiving end.

In February 2020, in response to a written question in the Lok Sabha, then Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy had said, "The term 'love jihad' is not defined under the extant laws. No such case of 'love jihad' has been reported by any of the central agencies". The Constitution empowers citizens with the freedom to practise and propagate any religion, he had added. Yet, the bogey of "love jihad" continues to stoke paranoia. It puts interfaith relationships under intense scrutiny from family, society and state machinery in a manner discordant with the notion of diversity that guides Indian democracy. The anxieties around such relationships have led to the formation of "love jihad" laws in several states, including Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh. Worse, prejudice has put individual rights enshrined in the Constitution under constant threat of violence, infantilised women and undermined their independence and agency.

In circumstances where relationships have to overcome such insurmountable odds, often, the only hope of justice rests with the judiciary. Arbitrary interpretations of an already narrow law set a precedent for other restrictive explications and put young people at grievous risk. The challenge before the court, therefore, is to ensure that it is consistent in upholding the individual's constitutional rights. It also falls upon the Supreme Court to speed up the process of hearing the petitions pending before it on the matter so that the autonomy, dignity and privacy of individuals are not imperilled at the altar of a bad-faith law.

THE VENETIAN BARGAIN

In a troubled world, Venice Biennale's attempt to make room for all, regardless of political stance, is a step in the right direction

AT THIS YEAR'S Venice Biennale, its first Latin American curator Adriano Pedrosa might have intended for the event to be a celebration of diversity and tolerance with its theme, "Stranieri Ovunque" — Foreigners Everywhere. But rumblings of discord, heard in the lead up to the opening of the international exhibition today, are an indication of the enormity of the task.

In February, this year, Italian Culture Minister Gennaro Sangiuliano quelled pro-Palestinian petitions calling for Israel's exclusion from the Biennale, asserting that it will always be a "space of freedom, meeting and dialogue and not a space of censorship and intolerance". But artist Ruth Patir and curators representing Israel rocked the boat. Their exhibits are inside the Israel Pavilion in Venice, but the doors are locked. Taped on a window is a sign that reads, "The artist and curators of the Israeli pavilion will open the exhibition when a ceasefire and hostage release agreement is reached." Across the canal city, meanwhile, are protestors chanting "Viva, viva Palestina!".

The "Olympics of the art world" may stand for free expression, but since its first edition in 1895, the Venice Biennale has seldom managed to remain distant from political influences. The permanent National Pavilions once belonged solely to imperialist powers, starting with Belgium in 1907, followed by Germany, Britain and Hungary in 1909. In Mussolini's Italy, the event became a means for propaganda. In 1974, a year after Augusto Pinochet grabbed power in Chile, the event stood in solidarity with the South American nation, reportedly under the direction of the Italian Communist Party. While there was a ban on South Africa until 1993, when Apartheid was rolled back, the Russian pavilion has not been included since the invasion of Ukraine two years ago. That the Biennale and its curator are now making room for all, regardless of political convictions, is surely a step forward.

A BITTER SWEET

Added sugar in baby food increases threat of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease



ANOOP MISRA

IN 2006, WE published a report describing a cohort of 51 children and young adults with Type 2 Diabetes — this was a surprising finding at the time. Little did we know then that a supplement used at six months of age containing added sugar (such as in Cerelec and others produced by Nestle, as detailed in a recent report by the International Baby Food Action Network, IFBAN) could also contribute to obesity and diabetes. Interestingly, prior to the current report, a study conducted in India in 2021 revealed that 28 per cent of baby food products had a "high sugar profile". These revelations are particularly concerning for several reasons.

First, considering the heightened propensity of Indians for developing diabetes and its complications, every effort must be made to avoid any potential triggers from an early age. Introducing sugar-containing feeds at the age of six months is highly detrimental to Indian infants who are already fragile. Damage to organ systems at this stage leaves permanent metabolic scars.

How does such baby food harm the tender livers and pancreases of infants? Constant exposure to simple sugars places an additional burden on the pancreas to produce insulin (resulting in "hyperinsulinemia"), leading to its exhaustion. This process

also induces resistance to the hormone leptin and in the process contributes to obesity. Both pancreatic exhaustion and excess body fat raise blood sugar levels and release harmful substances known as "inflammatory cytokines", which can damage the kidneys and heart and lead to hypertension. Additionally, formula-fed infants continuously exposed to a predominantly sweet taste are more likely to develop a preference for such flavours later in their lives. This has the potential to foster a dependence on sweet intake, perpetuating early organ damage in adolescence and early adulthood. It would be worthwhile to conduct long-term studies on children who have received such products from an early age to assess their risk of developing diabetes and heart disease.

Second, there is a notable discrepancy in the treatment of developing countries regarding the presence of excess added sugar in infant formulas. While formulas without added sugar are available in developed countries, those in developing nations, including India, often contain added sugars. This double standard is unjustified and unethical, particularly because some developing countries do not even list the amount of added sugar on product labels.

Third, the promotion of sugar-contain-

ing infant formulas in India and other developing countries raises concerns. Cerelec, a popular brand with substantial sales is promoted as "supplementary food for babies from 10 to 12 months", despite containing significant amounts of added sugar. The high sugar content is alarming and is unacceptable for anyone, let alone infants.

Equally concerning are the other unhealthy practices being pursued by other companies — these include influencing doctors, medical societies and media celebrities endorsing unhealthy products and claims that infant formula is healthier than breast milk, etc. There is often also an effort to promote such unhealthy products by engineering expert and celebrity endorsements.

The inclusion of added sugars in infant formulas amplifies the threat of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease at an early age for populations, like India's, with a known propensity to such diseases. It's akin to pouring gasoline on a smouldering flame, intensifying an already critical health concern. Regulation in this matter demands unequivocal stringency.

Misra is chairman, Fortis C-DOC Hospital for Diabetes and Allied Sciences and the author of Diabetes with Delight

APRIL 20, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

CHAOS IN PUNJAB

SIX PEOPLE WERE killed and at least six injured in violence in Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh. Part of the railway track on the Firozpur-Bhatinda section was blown up by extremists. One person was killed and another injured in Chandigarh when Sikhs took out a procession defying prohibitory orders in protest against recent violence. Two policemen and the driver of their car were shot dead by extremists at Ambala Cantonment.

OPPOSITION WALKOUT

REPORTS ABOUT THE landing of a Pakistani

aircraft in Punjab and the arrest of its two occupants sparked off a furore in the Lok Sabha which culminated in a walk-out by the entire Opposition in protest against the government's silence on the incident. Neither the Prime Minister nor the Defence Minister were present in the House.

HATHRAS VIOLENCE

ELEVEN PERSONS, INCLUDING four policemen, were injured in Hathras in group clashes. Following this, Section 144 was promulgated in the town, about 35 km from Aligarh. Twenty-one persons have been arrested by the police on charges of rioting,

arson and damage to public property and more arrests are likely, according to district officials.

ZIA HITS OUT AT INDIA

PAKISTAN PRESIDENT, ZIAUJI Haq, denied reports that his country has a hand in current developments in Punjab, according to Radio Pakistan. "Pakistan does not want to interfere in the internal affairs of any country," he told newsmen in Lahore. Gen Zia said the Home Minister P C Sethi's statement in Parliament about Pakistan's involvement in Punjab affairs was meant to "malign us". "Pakistan believes in principles," he added.



11 THE IDEAS PAGE

Story of one citizen one vote

Independent India's journey to universal adult franchise was a clear and unbroken one. Unlike several democracies, it did not create classes of citizens who could not vote



OPENING ARGUMENT
BY MENAKA GURUSWAMY

INDIA'S GENERAL ELECTIONS commenced this week. This year's elections are being held from April 19 to June 1, with results being declared on June 4. Approximately 970 million Indians out of a population of 1.4 billion are eligible to vote. What a mammoth undertaking for the world's largest constitutional democracy, with the largest electoral project. How did we get here?

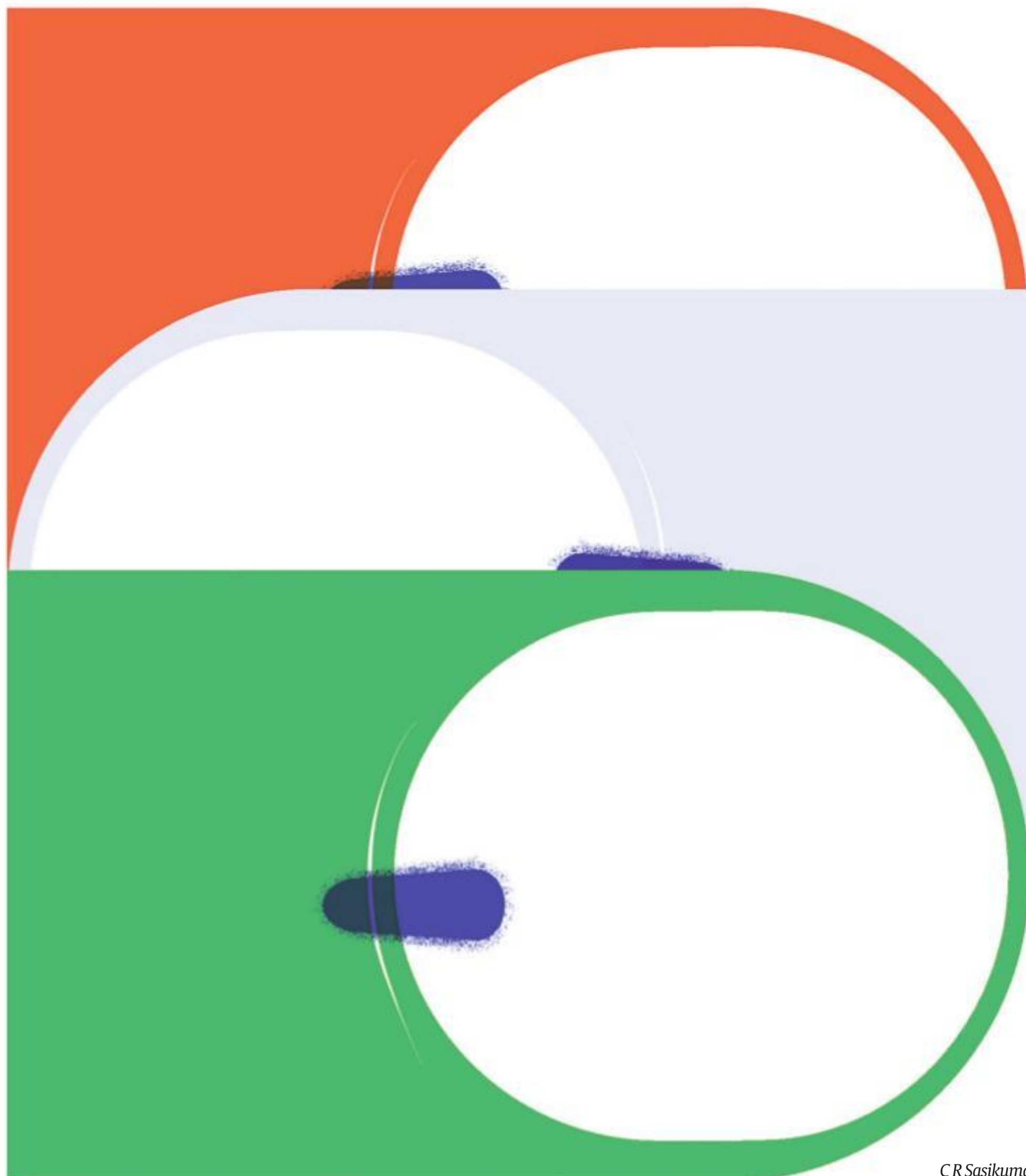
First, what are elections? The word "elections" comes from the Latin "eligere", which means "to pick out". The commencement of the 2024 national elections in India provides us with the opportunity to consider this relatively contemporary concept of one citizen, one vote. This right of "one citizen, one vote" is not one that has existed from time immemorial. Nor is it synonymous with having a functioning and enduring Constitution.

For instance, the United States, whose Constitution was adopted in 1787, initially granted the right to vote only to white men with property. At the time of the birth of the nation, women, African Americans and Native Americans, amongst others, did not have the right to vote. It was through the 15th amendment to the US Constitution that African American men got the right to vote. Yet, their franchise was burdened by having to pay poll taxes and pass literacy tests. In 1920, white women won the right to vote. African American and Native American women would have to fight for many more years to secure the right to vote. In 1971, by the 26th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, the voting age was reduced to 18 years.

How did India get here? India's own journey to universal adult franchise was a clear and unbroken one. It did not create classes of citizens who could or could not exercise their franchise. In the Constituent Assembly, which seated those who drafted the Constitution from 1946 to 1950, there were some who were disconcerted by the challenges of a franchise for all Indians. Some members, like M Thirumala Rao, pointed to the difficulties of franchise without literacy.

On November 23, 1949, Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar made one of the more thoughtful interventions, arguing that for a broad-based democracy like the one India wanted to establish, any property or literacy qualifications would exclude a large number of the "labouring classes and women-folk". Optimistically, Ayyar hoped that large-scale universal suffrage would have the effect of "rooting out corruption", and this would be an incidental return on "democratic elections". He also lauded the dismantling of communal electorates established previously by the British, by independent India's first government. Ayyar made the point that a communal electorate and democracy cannot coexist, since the former prevents "the free growth of democracy on a healthy and sound basis".

India's ambitious universal adult franchise project, imagined and cemented during the harsh and violent years of Partition and nation formation, would come to fruition with the first general elections held between October 25, 1951 and February 21,



CR Sasikumar

1952. It was the largest election ever conducted at the time, with over a sixth of humanity casting their votes. A total of 173,212,343 or roughly 173 million voters were registered.

The Constitution has always located the security of universal franchise in the "superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission." Importantly, the Election Commission controls the preparation for and the conduct of parliamentary and legislative assembly elections in India. Therefore, a neutral, impartial and alert Election Commission is the heart of the project that is India's electoral democracy.

The year 2024 is not just one of general elections in India. It's the year for elections all over the world.

The countries that hold over half the world's population will conduct their elections this year. The year commenced with Bangladesh, followed by Pakistan holding their elections. In March, Russia conducted its elections, with Vladimir Putin, rather predictably, retaining his position. The United Kingdom, United States and South Africa will hold their elections over the course of this year. The United States will

The Constitution has always located the security of universal franchise in the 'superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission.' Importantly, the Election Commission controls the preparation for and the conduct of Parliamentary and Legislative Assembly elections in India. Therefore, a neutral, impartial and alert Election Commission is the heart of the project that is India's electoral democracy.

have two elderly candidates — sitting President Joe Biden and erstwhile President Donald Trump — take on each other for the presidency.

A Reuters report quotes the Institute of International Finance as stating that the "tsunami" of 2024 elections "could add to a record glut of global debt estimated to have hit \$310 trillion by the end of 2023." It adds that by the end of 2024, "countries accounting for over 60 per cent of the world's economic output, and more than half of its population would have voted." Haiti, Indonesia, Cambodia, Iran (with an extremely low turnout of 41 per cent), Portugal, Slovakia, Senegal, Kuwait, South Korea and the Solomon Islands have also already conducted or will hold elections over the course of 2024. The one exception is Ukraine — it was scheduled to hold elections in March, but could not do so due to the conflict with Russia.

With voting in phase one of India's election completed, I wonder what our founding fathers and founding mothers would have made of the electoral democracy that is India? Are we what they envisaged us to be?

The writer is a Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The urgent need to prevent a regional conflagration need not mean relegating Gaza to an afterthought. Far from it: the two issues are closely connected."

— THE GUARDIAN

Playing by the old rules

Instead of complaining about the new politics of the ruling party, the Opposition should try to build a counter-narrative — if it has one



RAM RAJYA
BY RAM MADHAV

AS ELECTION FEVER peaks, political discourse in India is becoming shriller. The Opposition makes a curious argument about the lack of a "level playing field". It also portrays the ruling party's aim of securing 400 seats as a diabolical authoritarian agenda. The tone and tenor of the Opposition makes it seem as though it is the ruling party's responsibility to bring them to power.

Aiming for 400 seats is not creeping authoritarianism. In fact, in the first four decades after Independence, the Congress party, which ruled the country for more than three-and-a-half decades, never secured less than 360 seats, except in 1967 and 1977. In the 1984 elections, riding on a sympathy wave that followed the unfortunate killing of Indira Gandhi, it secured over 400 seats in the Lok Sabha.

Just as none of this could be held against the Congress party, the BJP's desire to cross the 400 seats mark or the Prime Minister's hint that the party intends to remain in power until 2047 cannot be interpreted as a threat to democracy. Like the Congress in the first four decades after Independence, it is the BJP's turn now to be the dominant party in Indian politics.

Democratic politics, globally, is about a dominant leadership, a dominant idea, and the ability to carry that idea to the masses. In the immediate aftermath of Independence, the Congress party had enjoyed all these advantages. It exploited its image as the "party of Independence" even though India's freedom movement was the combined effort of disparate political, social and religious movements under the common umbrella of the Indian National Congress. Suspecting this possibility, Mahatma Gandhi said that Independence having been achieved, Congress had "out-lived its use". He advised that it be disbanded instead of being converted into a "political machine".

Gandhi was disobeyed and a false narrative projecting Congress as the sole "party of Independence" was unleashed, denying a level playing field to other parties, including those led by stalwarts of the Independence movement like Jayaprakash Narayan, Sucheta Kripalani, Syama Prasad Mookerjee and even BR Ambedkar.

It took many decades for the Opposition to build an alternative narrative. The BJP had succeeded in building a wider consensus around the new and dominant idea of cultural nationalism, constitutional unity and a long-term vision for "Viksit Bharat", developed India.

What the Opposition faces today is this new dominant idea championed by a popular leadership and an effective party mechanism that effortlessly communicates the idea to the masses. Instead of complaining about the new politics of the ruling party, the Opposition should try to build a counter-narrative, if it has one. Sadly, it is stuck in the old politics of caste and communal faultlines,

dynastic entitlement and a general lack of a coherent vision. The field is level and very much open, but the players in the Opposition want to play by the old rules.

Election manifestos may not always fully translate into action, but they are an important indicator of the vision and priorities of a party and its leadership. A cursory look at the same released by both the BJP and the Congress reveals that when it comes to building a new aspirational narrative, the Opposition lags miles behind.

The Congress manifesto is as usual about many freebies. It contradicts itself by saying that it will conduct a caste-based census, while at the same time rhetorically asking people to "look beyond caste". The BJP manifesto is bereft of any freebies but commits to continuing its welfare programmes.

The real contrast can be seen in the issues of the future. On environmental issues, the BJP promises to build on the PM's clarion call for LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment) and also calls for a fusion of traditional and modern methods to ensure adoption of a more sustainable lifestyle. The Congress manifesto talks of rolling out the Green New Deal Investment Programme aimed at providing green jobs. On the issue of conservation of rivers, the BJP talks in specific detail about the ways to improve the prevalent situation, whereas the Congress makes only a passing statement about greater collaboration with state governments. While the Congress manifesto lacks specifics about environmental governance, the BJP presents its approach in greater detail.

On issues relating to technology and innovation too, the Congress manifesto lacks a coherent approach. It does make a brief one-line mention of artificial intelligence being a future challenge. But a document that runs into almost 40 pages mentions innovation only twice, and technology four times.

The BJP manifesto, on the other hand, talks about leading in technological innovation and cutting-edge research. It talks about Gaganyaan, Bharat's first human spaceflight mission, and landing an astronaut on the moon, a sign of Bharat's progress and prosperity in Amrit Kaal. It talks about a comprehensive ecosystem under the India AI Mission to position Bharat as a global leader in AI innovation and build domestic capacities to ensure tech sovereignty. Building Digital Public Infrastructure for agriculture, advancing the growth of Open Network for Digital Commerce, and increasing digitisation of land records, are some of the other highlights from its manifesto.

One area where the Congress manifesto says more than BJP's is on the LGBTQ+ issues. "The Congress will bring a law to recognise civil unions between couples belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community", the Congress announced, while the BJP reiterated its earlier commitment of issuing identity cards to transgenders and including them in Ayushman Bharat scheme. On the question of same-sex marriages, all parties remain non-committal. While the Congress talked about a law to permit "civil union", the government argued in the Supreme Court earlier that it was an agenda limited only to "urban elite".

Prime Minister Modi insisted that elections are not about the manifestos of parties, but "the people and their dreams". It is on this that the Opposition fails to impress.

The writer, president, India Foundation, is with the RSS

Reviving the cycle

Centre has been meeting capex targets. Private sector and states have been patchy



MADAN SABNAVIS

AN ISSUE THAT has been nagging policy makers is the revival of the investment cycle. While the central government has been meeting its target on capex in the last few years, the trajectory in case of the private sector and state governments is less certain.

At the aggregate level, the gross fixed capital formation provides some clues to what is happening. The good news is that the investment rate has improved from 30.8 per cent in 2022-23 to 31.3 per cent in 2023-24. This is encouraging given that this ratio had gone down to 27.2 per cent in 2020-21. In 2022-23, 59 per cent of this was in construction of "dwellings". The boost to housing provided by the government has resulted in this increase in capital formation which is good for the economy. But, considering that the share of plant and machinery had come down from 36 per cent in 2017-18 to 30.7 per cent in 2022-23, at the aggregate level, there is still some distance to traverse.

On the trends in private sector investment, one source of data is the CMIE's data on new investment announcements. In 2023-24, it had touched Rs 27.1 lakh crore, which, though is lower than the Rs 39 lakh crore worth of announcements in 2022-23, was the second highest in the last decade. This, of course, refers

only to intentions which may not necessarily materialise. But, clearly, there is some promise insofar as companies are looking towards investing more. Of the total intentions, 85 per cent came from the private sector, of which 11 per cent is from foreign companies.

There are also other indications of activity. Debt issuances were at a high of Rs 11.1 lakh crore in 2023-24, as against Rs 9.64 lakh crore in 2022-23. However, 71 per cent of this amount was raised by the financial services sector. Does this suggest that activity is not that broad based?

The CMIE data throws some light here. Of the Rs 27.1 lakh crore of investment announcements, the highest share was accounted for by the power sector. One possibility here is the thrust being given to renewables is leading to a sizable expansion in capacity. The Production Linked Investment (PLI) scheme of the government which covers solar panels, etc., could have been a trigger for greater investments.

The second, most important sector was transport services. Here, airlines have contributed to the increase in investment intentions — the two large airlines companies have made announcements which point towards a dramatic expansion in their fleet over the

coming years. But as these will be met through imports, the effects of backward linkages to domestic industry will be missing, even as they improve airline traffic and generate value addition for the forward-linkage segments such as airports and related services.

The other industries which have made significant announcements are chemicals, machinery, metals and auto. Together, these six industries account for 90-92 per cent of all announcements. The significant aspect of this list is that there are no consumer-oriented industries, even those in the electronics space where the PLI scheme has been a game changer. Based on these trends, one could argue that even as the private investment cycle has picked up, it is not yet broad based. It is restricted more to industries which have government capex as front-loading investments. Hence, metals and machinery are doing well due to government spends on roads and railways.

The next question is: Why are not companies in the consumer goods segment investing? The answer lies in the fact that there is still excess capacity in these industries. Typically, companies invest more in capital as demand rises and capacity utilisation rates come closer to the 80 per cent mark.

But, demand has been affected over the last few years for a variety of reasons. First, more productive jobs, which substantially increase purchasing power, have not been created. While employment has increased in construction and logistics, the wages in these sectors are not that high. A number of large companies are going slow on hiring. Second, rural demand has not quite picked up due as farm production is not steady. Third, high inflation, which now adds up to 24 per cent in the last four years, has eroded the consumption power of households. High food inflation reduces room for discretionary spending. The pent-up demand had ebbed.

On the other hand, state governments have tended to slow down on their capex in order to meet their fiscal targets. In 2022-23, states spent Rs 6.08 lakh crore as against a revised estimate of Rs 7.32 lakh crore. Considering that put together capex by states accounts for a sizable share of overall investments in the economy, how states spend will also have a bearing on the investment cycle in the country.

The writer is chief economist, Bank of Baroda and author of Corporate Quirks: The darker side of the sun. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNEXPECTED GRACE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A cycle for Tarun' (IE, April 19). The primary duty of the police is to maintain law and order and ensure a peaceful environment. However, most of the public fears the police, and stays away. It was courageous of Tarun, the son of poor parents, to approach the police with his problem. SHO Ram Manohar Mishra went out of his way to get the nine-year-old a cycle. He acted with unexpected grace, that it somewhat restores faith in the police. This image and behaviour need to be replicated throughout the country.

Subhash Vaid, New Delhi

THE YOUTH VOTE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Helping the young vote' (IE, April 19). Youth indifference towards voting stems from their preoccupation with higher education and career options. The falling standards of modern politics contribute to their disenchantment. Although the government has recently launched a nationwide outreach campaign involving educational institutions, it would be more effective if the exercise was integrated with the student registration process, so that their enrolment as vot-

ers is completed automatically.

Kamal Laddha, Bengaluru

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Helping the young vote' (IE, April 19). It is a matter of concern that a large number of India's young citizens have shown no interest in voting. Young voters find it difficult to relate to political leaders whose average age is above 50. There are often gaps in campaigns to raise voters' awareness. Many young citizens who sign up as voters may not end up voting. Therefore, it is important not only to motivate young persons to register but also to cast their votes.

SS Paul, Nadia

AN EASY JOB

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Clash of aspirations' (IE, April 19). The debate on employment in India generally misses vital issues like the quality of labour and the approach of the aspiring youth. Lured with conditions of socialist-era government jobs, every young person in India aspires to a government job that has zero accountability. Jobs in the private sector require physical and mental devotion. Sadly, Indian youth display both these qualities while employed abroad.

Shubhada H

Classifieds

PERSONAL

J, Jasbir Kaur w/o Gurmeet Singh r/o B-156, Hari Nagar, Clock Tower, Delhi-110064 assumed my surname KAUR and name JASBIR

0040724665-2

J,C-338463X, Ex. Subedar Vinod Kumar, S/o Shri Telu Ram, R/o Village Tilafra, Po-Jaroda Panda, PS-Nanauta, Tehsil-Rampur Maniharan, Distt. Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh-247451, do hereby declare that my daughter name has been wrongly written in my Army Discharge Book documents as Manshi Sharma instead of correct name i.e. Mansi Sharma. She shall be known as Mansi Sharma for all purpose in future.

0040724668-1

I, Gurmeet Singh s/o Avtar Singh r/o B-156, Hari Nagar, Clock Tower, Delhi-110064 assumed my surname SINGH and name GURMEET

0040724665-1

I, GURJEET SINGH S/O TARA SINGH R/O F-141, SADH NAGAR-2, GALI NO-38, PALAM COLONY, NEAR POST OFFICE, PALAM COLONY, DELHI-110045 have changed the name of my minor daughter EKAS ALIAS EKAS SINGH to EKAS SINGH for all Purposes.

0070899446-1

I, GAUTAM BISWAS S/O LATE SHRI ANANTA GOPAL BISWAS R/O Q-320, SECTOR-21, JALVAYU VIHAR, NOIDA, U.P.-201301, have changed my place of birth KANHRAPARA to KANCHRAPARA for all purposes.

0070899402-1

I, Dinesh W/o SH. Pradeep Burman R/O Flat No-9 3rd floor, plot no 179, Vipin Garden New Delhi-110059 have change my name Dinesh to Siddhi Burman for all future purpose.

0040724659-1

I, AVITA SANORIA, W/O MR. DEEPAK SANORIA, R/O H.NO. 2805, GALI RAJPUTANA, SUBZI MANDI, DELHI-110007 has changed my name to Babita Sanoria for all future purposes

0040724666-1

I, Amit Angirish S/O Navin Chandra Angirish, R/O C-4, F-2, Block-C, Dilshad Colony, Old Seemapuri, East Delhi, Delhi-110095, I have changed the name of my minor Son Nimai Angirish aged about 11 Years and He shall hereafter be known as Arjun Angirish

0070899361-1

I, Ajay Kumar Malik S/o Jaipal Singh R/o 36, Panchsheel Green-2, Sec-16, G.Noida have changed my name to Ajay Kumar.

0070899441-1

I, Sumit Mittal S/o Sh. Sham Lal Mittal R/O 19/249, Second Floor, Shivalik Road, Malviya Nagar, Behind Begampur Bus Stop, Malviya Nagar, South Delhi, Delhi-110017 have changed my name to Sumit Mittal for all purposes.

0040724662-4

I, Santosh Kumari Sharma W/O, Ramesh Kumar Sharma R/O B-118, Dev Kunj Street No-8 Raj Nagar-II Palam Colony, New Delhi-110077, have changed my name to Santosh Sharma.

0040724686-1

I, Qayoom Khan R/o Shahabab Bala, Awantipora, Pulwama Jammu and Kashmir 192122, inadvertently my son's name and date of birth was incorrectly recorded in his document i.e. Mohd Imran Khan DOB 11.01.1999, whereas the Correct name is Imran Qayoom Khan and correct Date of birth is 18.02.2001 vide affidavit date 15.04.2024

0040724759-1

I, Chetram S/o Sh. Khemchand R/o 1020, Near New Mandir, Dipalpur(28), Deerpalpur, Sonipat, Haryana-131021 have changed the name of my minor daughter from Chetna to Chetna Antil Bazard for all purposes.

0040724662-1

I, Mohd Asif S/o Yusuf R/o 716, Gali-4, Islam Nagar, Ghaziabad have changed my name to Mohammad Asif.

0070899443-1

I, Chetram S/o Sh. Khemchand R/o 1020, Near New Mandir, Dipalpur(28), Deerpalpur, Sonipat, Haryana-131021 have changed the name of my minor daughter from Meghna to Meghna Antil Bazard for all purposes.

0040724662-1

I, Mohd Asif S/o Yusuf R/o 716, Gali-4, Islam Nagar, Ghaziabad have changed my name to Mohammad Asif.

0070899443-1

I, Sunita Devi Verma, W/O, ASHOK KUMAR VERMA, ADD-85, GANAG VIHAR EXTN, DELHI-110051, changed my name to SUNITA VERMA, for all future purposes.

0040724765-1

I, SHEETAL SANAG, D/o-OM PRAKASH, R/O 67/6, GROUND FLOOR, ZAMRUPUR, GREATER KAILASH, PART-1, NEW DELHI-110048, inform that in my, 10th & 12th Certificate my, mother name (RADHA SANAG) & my, father's name (OM PRAKASH SANAG) wrongly-written. My mother's correct, name is RADA DEVI and father's name OM PRAKASH, for all, future purposes.

0040724768-1

I, Sunita Devi Verma, W/O, ASHOK KUMAR VERMA, ADD-85, GANAG VIHAR EXTN, DELHI-110051, changed my name to SUNITA VERMA, for all future purposes.

0040724765-1

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I, NARESH KUMAR, S/O SH. KANHAIYA LAL residing at N-490, J.J. COLONY, RAGHUBIR NAGAR, TAGORE GARDEN, WEST DELHI NEW DELHI-110027, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as NARESH in my daughter's Hansa Rani Aged about-17-years HIGH SCHOOL (10th-class) educational documents. The actual name of mine is NARESH KUMAR, which may be amended accordingly.

0040724765-10

I, Shashibala Kumari, D/o-H.K. Singh, R/O 9-1-364/B/74/1, Babughat, langer house, golconda-500008, have changed my name from sashibala to shashibala kumari for all future purpose.

0040724764-3

I, shanu Kumari, D/o-H.K. Singh, R/O 9-1-364/B/74/1, Babughat, langer house, golconda-500008, have changed my name from Sanu to shanu kumari for all future purpose.

0040724764-4

I, hitherto known as Mehraj W/o Nasir Khan, residing at H.No.-170, Barathgarh Walli Gali, Brahman Basti, Gharoli-Village, Delhi-110096, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Mehraj Hakim Ali.

0040724763-2

I, hitherto known as Aasim alias Aasim Ali Son of Sadik Residing at H.No.1060, 4th Floor, Sector-29, Rohini, Badli, Samaypur, Delhi-110042, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Aasim Ali.

0040724764-5

I, VIKAS ARORA, S/O JAGDISH ARORA R/O E-540, FIRST-FLOOR, GREATER KAILASH PART-2, NEW DELHI-110048, Have change my name is VIKAS to VIKAS ARORA.

0040724763-4

I, VIJAY KUMAR, S/O MAYA DASS BHATIA, R/O WB-105, UG, GANESH-NAGAR-II, SHAKARPUR, DELHI-110092, Have Changed My Name To VIJAY KUMAR BHATIA, Permanently.

0040724795-3

I, Syed Taslim Ahmad, S/o-Sayed Shamim Ahmad, R/o-F-34, F/F Street 6/4, Zakir Nagar Okhla, Delhi, have changed my name to Taslim Ahmed, for all purpose.

0040724776-2

I, Sunil Kumar Saini, S/o Sh. Kuldeep Kumar Saini, R/o-House. No.1276, Saini Mohalla, Near-Saini Choupal, Jharsa, Tehsil & District-Gurugram, Haryana, inform that Sunil Kumar Saini and Sunil, both names are same person.

0040724768-7

I, Smti Rekhamoni Sut Hazarika, W/O-Manash Jyoti Hazarika, R/O-Dakua, District-Lakhimpur Assam. I want to changed my name from Rekhamoni Sut used before marriage and is in my school certificates To Rakhamoni Sut Hazarika after marriage as in my Aadhaar card for further all purposes vide affidavit No- In-As83320620092662W dated 22-03-2024.

0020475118-1

I, Shreedhar S/o Neelmani Nagar, R/o H.No.1740, Ram Gali, Sohan gari, Delhi-110007, have changed my name to Shreedhar Nagar.

0040724763-7

I, Ramdhairya S/o Amar Dev Singh R/O 36/312 Trilok Puri, Delhi-110091, have change my name to Ram Dhairy Singh for all purposes.

0040724680-1

I, Shiba Khan, W/O-Harshvardhan Sharma D/O Shabbir Hussain Khan, R/O-B-4/100 Yamuna Vihar, Delhi-110053, Have Changed My Name To Khushhee Sharma After-Marriage, for all purposes.

0040724768-2

I, Satish Son of, Sugan Chand, R/O House, no-1985,, Malka Ganj, Main-road Sabzi-Mandi New-Delhi-110007, Have changed my name to Satish Kumar, Permanently.

0040724776-6

I, Satish Saraogi, S/o Mahendar Saraogi, R/o 129-130, 1st-floor, Pocket-14, Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Satish Sarawagi.

0040724763-1

I, SUNITA DEVI VERMA, W/O, ASHOK KUMAR VERMA, ADD-85, GANAG VIHAR EXTN, DELHI-110051, changed my name to SUNITA VERMA, for all future purposes.

0040724765-1

I, SHEETAL SANAG, D/o-OM PRAKASH, R/O 67/6, GROUND FLOOR, ZAMRUPUR, GREATER KAILASH, PART-1, NEW DELHI-110048, inform that in my, 10th & 12th Certificate my, mother name (RADHA SANAG) & my, father's name (OM PRAKASH SANAG) wrongly-written. My mother's correct, name is RADA DEVI and father's name OM PRAKASH, for all, future purposes.

0040724768-1

I, Sunita Devi Verma, W/O, ASHOK KUMAR VERMA, ADD-85, GANAG VIHAR EXTN, DELHI-110051, changed my name to SUNITA VERMA, for all future purposes.

0040724765-1

I, SHEETAL SANAG, D/o-OM PRAKASH, R/O 67/6, GROUND FLOOR, ZAMRUPUR, GREATER KAILASH, PART-1, NEW DELHI-110048, inform that in my, 10th & 12th Certificate my, mother name (RADHA SANAG) & my, father's name (OM PRAKASH SANAG) wrongly-written. My mother's correct, name is RADA DEVI and father's name OM PRAKASH, for all, future purposes.

0040724768-1

I, Sunita Devi Verma, W/O, ASHOK KUMAR VERMA, ADD-85, GANAG VIHAR EXTN, DELHI-110051, changed my name to SUNITA VERMA, for all future purposes.

0040724765-1

I, SHEETAL SANAG, D/o-OM PRAKASH, R/O 67/6, GROUND FLOOR, ZAMRUPUR, GREATER KAILASH, PART-1, NEW DELHI-110048, inform that in my, 10th & 12th Certificate my, mother name (RADHA SANAG) & my, father's name (OM PRAKASH SANAG) wrongly-written. My mother's correct, name is RADA DEVI and father's name OM PRAKASH, for all, future purposes.

0040724768-1

I, Sunita Devi Verma, W/O, ASHOK KUMAR VERMA, ADD-85, GANAG VIHAR EXTN, DELHI-110051, changed my name to SUNITA VERMA, for all future purposes.

0040724765-1

I, SHEETAL SANAG, D/o-OM PRAKASH, R/O 67/6, GROUND FLOOR, ZAMRUPUR, GREATER KAILASH, PART-1, NEW DELHI-110048, inform that in my, 10th & 12th Certificate my, mother name (RADHA SANAG) & my, father's name (OM PRAKASH SANAG) wrongly-written. My mother's correct, name is RADA DEVI and father's name OM PRAKASH, for all, future purposes.

0040724768-1

I, Sunita Devi Verma, W/O, ASHOK KUMAR VERMA, ADD-85, GANAG VIHAR EXTN, DELHI-110051, changed my name to SUNITA VERMA, for all future purposes.

0040724765-1

I, SAKSHAM SHUBHAM SOODEN, S/O SHUBHAM SOODEN, R/O-1908, Tower-2 Mentova, Mahagun Mezzaria, Sector-78, Noida, PO:Noida, DIST:GautamBuddha Nagar, U.P.-201301, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SAKSHAM SOODEN, FOR ALL PURPOSE

0070899398-1

I, ROHAN KUMAR S/O SH. DINESH KUMAR KANOJIA R/O HOUSE NO-733, 3RD FLOOR, PRAKAR VIHAR, FSS RD ROAD, NEAR TMM ACADEMY, NYAY KHAND-1, INDIRAPURAM, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201014 do hereby solemnly inform that in 10th class certificates, my father's name is wrongly mentioned as DINESH KUMAR instead of DINESH KUMAR KANOJIA, both are one and the same person.

0040724768-9

I, RIMJHIM PRASAD, W/O AMIT KUMAR PRASAD, ADD-P-10, green-park ext, new delhi-110016, changed my minor child name SHAURYA TO SHAURYA KASHYAP, for all, future purposes.

0040724776-9

I, Priya Agarwal W/o Mr. Amit Kumar Agarwal, R/O H.No.468, Kothiyat DM Road, Dr. SC Gupta Wall Gali, Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh-203001, have changed my name to Priya Aggarwal.

0070899414-1

I, Pawan Kumar, S/O SHRI KRISHAN R/O B-4/259-260, THIRD-FLOOR, SECTOR-7, ROHINI, DELHI-110085, CHANGED MY DAUGHTER'S NAME, FROM MOULI TO MOULI GOLA.

0040724681-2

I, PARUL D/O MANOJ R/O HNO.48, NEAR PLATINUM GYM, HAIDERPUR, DELHI-110088, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PARUL SHARMA, FOR ALL PURPOSES.

0040724763-6

I, RAJNIV D/O AJAY SHANKER, R/O-A-1, Third Floor, Jangpura Bhogal, Bhogal Shahi Masjid, Bhogal, New Delhi-110014, have changed my name, from Naina, to Naina Sharma, for all purposes.

0040724669-1

I, SAURAV BAKSHI, S/O SANJAY BAKSHI, R/O 10/171, Dakshin Puri Extn. New Delhi-110062, have changed my name to SOURAV BAKSHI, for all purposes.

0040724523-1

I, Krittika D/O Dharampal Singh, R/o W-274, Gali No-3, Guru Nanak Nagar, Tilak Nagar, S. O West Delhi, Delhi-110018, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Krittika Singh

0070899360-1

I, Sonal, W/O Rahul Gupta R/O T-190a, Street No 5, Gopal Dairy Wali Gali, Shukkar Bazar, Uttam Nagar, D.K Mohan, West Delhi-110059, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Sonal Gupta

0070899358-1

I, Sonam Arora W/o Nipun Aggarwal R/O R-22, Sec-11, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, UP-201301, have changed my name to Sonam Aggarwal for all future Purposes.

0070899412-1

I, Mohd Naadeem, MOHD NAEDEM UL ISLAM, S/O FAKHAR UL ISLAM ADD-2901, GALI SAKKO WALI MOHALLA SHAHGANJ-CENTRAL, DELHI-110006, changed my name to NAEDEM UL ISLAM, for all, future purposes.

0040724776-8

I, Original Gunja, W/o-Kundan Kumar, R/O-B-601, Pearl Height Apartment, Ramprastha Greens, Sec-9, Vaishali, Ghaziabad-201019, have change my name from Gunjan Devi to Kumari Gunja for all future purpose.

0040724764-1

I, KJM SWETA POONIA, (UID-579479321682) D/O-SH.DHARAM PAL SINGH, R/O PLOT.NO.13-A-CHAUHAN ENCLAVE, NAJAFGARH, NEW DELHI-110043, have change my, name KM SWETA POONIYANA TO KM SWETA POONIA, for all, future purposes, and my correct, name is KM SWETA POONIA.

0040724768-6

I, KARM VIR S/O LAKHA RAM R/O VILLAGE DOHAR KHURD TEHSIL ARNAUL, MAHENDRAGARH, HARYANA-132001, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO KARMVIR YADAV.

0040724768-1

I, Jagjit Kaur, W/O, Manmohan Singh, R/O WZ-65AB, gali, no.25, MBS- Nagar, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Jagjeet Kaur, for all Purposes.

0040724765-2

I, ISHU SUGANDH, D/O SUBHASH, R/O H.NO. 833 CHANDNI MAHAL DARYAGANJ DELHI-110002, have changed my name to EESHA SAQIB.

0040724768-4

I, Aayushi Kwatra, D/o Arun Kwatra, R/O House No.3, Shiv Puri, Krishna Nagar, Delhi-110051, have changed my name to Ayushi Kwatra, permanently.

0040724768-3

I, Akhil kumar, S/o-H.K. Singh, R/O 9-1-364/B/74/1, Babughat, langer house, golconda-500008, have changed my name from Akhil to Akhil kumar for all future purpose.

0070899426-1

I, Shiv Raj Singh S/o Narayan Thakur R/O Village Basai Sector-70, Noida Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P.-201307 Have changed my to Shivraj Thakur for all future purposes.

0020475116-1

I, STUTI BISWAS W/O GAUTAM BISWAS R/O Q-320, SECTOR-21, JALVAYU VIHAR, NOIDA, U.P.-201301, have applied for change of my name STUTI BISWAS to STUTI BISWAS in my spouse passport.

0070899362-1

I, GAZAL OJHA, W/O-MADHAV OJHA ADD-17/1117, SHIV-MARG SHIVAJI PARK SHAHDARA EAST DELHI 110032, changed my-minor child name AARNA TO AARNA OJHA, for all, future purposes.

0040724776-1

I, CHANDNI, CHANDNI SINGH, W/O VIKRAM SINGH, R/O A-1101, SKYTECH MATROTT, SECTOR-76, NOIDA GAUTAMBUDH-NAGAR UP-201301, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO CHANDNI JAIN, FOR ALL, FUTURE PURPOSES.

0040724776-9

I, Anamica Tyagi, W/O Anuj Tyagi R/O, Flat-No.602, Gaurav-Residency, Chandner-Nagar, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201011, have changed my name to Anamika Tyagi.

0040724776-9

I, NISAR S/O MOHD SALIM R/O 828, GALI KHAJOR WALLI, JWALA NAGAR, SHAHDARA, Delhi-110032 have Changed my name to NISAR AHMED for all future purposes.

0070899414-1

I, Pramod Maggo S/O Raj Kumar R/O HNo-26, Nishant Kunj, Pitampura, Delhi have changed my name from Pramod Maggo to Pramod Kumar Maggo permanently

0040724709-3

I, RAVINDER S/O BALWANT SINGH R/O 1178, Rathdhana (64), Sonipat, Haryana-131001 I have changed my name RAVINDER SINGH permanently.

0040724664-1

I, Rajni Maggo W/o Pramod Kumar Maggo R/O G-203, Jhulelal Apartment, Pitampura, Delhi have changed my name from Rajni Maggo to Rajni Maggo permanently

0040724709-2

I, Rajender Kumar S/O Badu Ram have lost my original property documents i.e. (1) GPA (2) Agreement for sale (3) Receipt in respect of Property no. 174/B, measuring area 50 sq.yards, out of Kharsa No. 256/4 min, gali no 11, main Chander Vihar, Mandawali East Delhi-110092 executed by Mr. Sant Ram S/O Ram Lal in favour of Mrs. Shanti Devi W/o Badu Ram on 22.08.1984. Finder inform Rajender Kumar 8826836871

0040724715-1

I, Ranj W/O Lal Chand Verma, R/O Flat No-134, Ground-Floor, Pocket-6, Plot.no-4/5, Nasirpur, Dwarka, New Delhi-110045, have lost my all DDA-Papers Allotment-Letter, Demand-Letter and Passion-Letter NOC for electric and water-connection and all related-Documents Finder contact-7011577021

0040724776-11

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MURDER OF CORPORATOR DAUGHTER IN KARNATAKA COLLEGE

Punish him in a way no one thinks of harassing a woman: Accused's father

Protests in Bengaluru, Hubballi; victim's father says she rejected man's advances

KIRAN PARASHAR
BENGALURU, APRIL 19

A DAY after the daughter of a Congress corporator in Karnataka was stabbed to death by a former classmate on her college campus, the father of the accused said on Friday that his son should be "punished in such a way that no man thinks of harassing a woman".

Baba Saheb Subani, a school-teacher and the father of 23-year-old Fayaz, told the media that eight months ago, the family members of the victim, Neha Hiremath, had called him and informed that his son was troubling her.

"I came to know about this incident (murder) around 6 pm on Thursday. I was shocked. He (Fayaz) should be punished in a way that no one dares to do such a thing in future. Neha was like my daughter, I apologise to her family members," he said.

Subani said he wanted to make his son a soldier and had sent him to the gym to train for it. "For six years, my wife and I have been living separately. Fayaz stayed with his mother," he said.

"It has been three months since I spoke to Fayaz; he called me whenever he needed money. I admit my son has made a mistake. It is also true that Fayaz and

Neha were in a love relationship and he told me he wanted to marry her, but I refused it by folding my hands," said Subani.

The victim's father, Hubballi Dharwad Municipal Corporation (HDMC) corporator Niranjan Hiremath, said Fayaz killed his daughter for spurning his advances. Speaking to the media on Friday, Hiremath said his family knew that Fayaz was pestering Neha to accept his proposal. "When my daughter was pursuing BCA, he (Fayaz) also enrolled in the same college but failed. He was pestering my daughter for a love relationship but she refused. When he continued to pressurise her, she informed her mother. My brother and others had warned him and also informed Fayaz's parents about it. Despite all this, I lost my daughter," he said.

Investigation into the murder of 21-year-old Neha has revealed that Fayaz, her former classmate at KLE Technological University, killed her for allegedly rejecting his advances, said the police. On Thursday, Neha, a first-year MCA student, was stabbed to death by Fayaz on the college premises. The incident was captured on CCTV camera. Fayaz, who too was injured in the attack, was taken to the hospital, along with the victim, and arrested later in the evening. On

Friday, the police produced him before the magistrate who sent him to 14-day judicial custody.

Members of Akhili Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) in Bengaluru and Hubballi staged massive protests, demanding justice for Neha and safety for women on campus. Members of the Muslim community also staged a protest on Sankeshwar-Savadatti highway, demanding severe punishment for the accused. Anjuman-e-Islam, Hubballi, demanded an impartial investigation.

Hiremath said his wife had gone to pick Neha from the college. She was waiting at the gate when Fayaz reached Neha and stabbed her multiple times.

He said they were looking for a groom for Neha, which may have come to Fayaz's knowledge and he decided to kill her. "The government has given priority to women's education and jobs. If they are not safe, what is the point of all this? There must be a policy to hang such people," said the grieving father. "If this can happen to the daughter of a corporator, how safe are the common people?" he said.

Hiremath said it may have been a case of "love jihad". "I do not know why youngsters are taking the wrong path. I feel that 'love jihad' is spreading rapidly," he said.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah condemned the incident and said he has directed the state DGP to initiate stern action against the accused. "I also request the public to not take law into their hands. It is our responsibility to provide justice to the family," he said.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka said it was a shameful incident and questioned the law and order situation in the state.

Former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai demanded that the state government constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to look into the incident. "The state government must consider this incident seriously and CM Siddaramaiah must not wash off his hands by tweeting."

'Encounter policy'

Karnataka Labour minister Santosh Lad said the incident must not be politicised, but the government should bring in a policy to "encounter" such people. "It is an inhumane act and it is disheartening to see the parents," he said.

"I am requesting the state and the Centre to bring in a policy to encounter such criminals. We need to act to prevent such incidents from happening in future," he said.

MANDI LS SEAT

Amid contest with Kangana, Vikramaditya invokes RSS 'connection'

SAURABH PARASHAR
SHIMLA, APRIL 19

HIMACHAL PRADESH PWD minister Vikramaditya Singh Friday invoked his family's "age-old connection with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh" and the anti-conversion law brought by his father and former chief minister Virbhadra Singh to target BJP's Lok Sabha candidate from Mandi Kangana Ranaut on what he termed as "an attack on the Sanatan Dharma and Dev Samaj culture of Himachal Pradesh".

Vikramaditya, who has been fielded by the Congress to take on Ranaut in Mandi, the seat that his mother currently represents, urged RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat to intervene and ensure that there are "no more attacks on state's Dev sanskriti, Dev lok niti and Sanatan Dharma".

"The Dev sanskriti, Dev lok niti and Sanatan Dharma is under attack in Himachal Pradesh today. The manner in which statements are being made on what to eat and what not to eat, it has emerged as a serious issue... We want to contest the elections on the planks of development and the works that we have done. It is also equally important that we respect and preserve our Dev sanskriti and Sanatan Dharma," Vikramaditya said in a video message on his Facebook page.

While he didn't name Ranaut, it is apparent the message is targeted at her. A source close to Vikramaditya said he was referring to Ranaut's comments denying she eats beef and a statement in which she claimed Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an 'ansh' (part) of Lord Ram.

"It can be said that Narendra Modi is an 'ansh' of Lord Ram and Vishnu who takes care of us," Ranaut had said last week.



A SPECTACLE UNFOLDS

Thousands on Friday attend the Thrissur Pooram, the iconic festival held annually in the central Kerala city. The ceremonies, involving 30 caparisoned elephants, took place on the sprawling grounds of the Vadakkunnathan Temple. PTI

SC seeks Centre, Assam reply on fresh plea challenging CAA rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

THE SUPREME Court Friday sought replies from the Centre and Assam on a plea challenging the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024, meant to operationalise and regulate the process of granting citizenship to non-Muslim migrants who came from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan before December 31, 2014.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice JB

Pardiwala took note of the submissions of a lawyer representing petitioner Hiren Gohain, a Guwahati resident, and issued notices to the state government and the Union ministries of Home Affairs and External Affairs. The top court also ordered that the fresh plea be tagged with those pending on the issue.

The latest plea on the issue said: "The uncontrolled influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh to Assam has caused huge demographic changes in Assam. The indigenous people, who were once

the majority, have now become a minority in their own land." Recently, the bench, while refusing to stay the operation of the CAA Rules, asked the Centre to respond to the applications seeking a stay on their implementation till the SC has disposed of the pleas challenging the validity of Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

Gohain, in his plea, said the CAA Rules, 2024 are "ultra-vires to the Constitution" as they are "palpably discriminatory, manifestly arbitrary, illegal and against the basic structure of the Constitution".

'You are just a constable': Spurred by senior's barb, Andhra Pradesh man cracks UPSC exam

RAHUL V PISHARODY
HYDERABAD, APRIL 19

IN AUGUST 2018, Uday Krishna Reddy, then a constable in Telangana, was humiliated by a senior officer just because he was preparing for the civil services. The words "you are just a constable" ringing in his head, he resigned the same day.

Six years later, 30-year-old Reddy has secured the 780th rank in the 2023 UPSC exam, whose results were announced Tuesday. And he has not stopped dreaming yet, saying he will con-

tinue to prepare to achieve his goal of becoming an IAS officer. Reddy, who is from Andhra Pradesh's Prakasam district, was selected as a civil police constable in 2012. He worked from 2013 to 2018 in the department and resigned the day his circle inspector insulted him in front of his colleagues.

"My circle inspector did not like the fact that I was preparing for civils in my leisure. He would make fun of my preparation, and assign me duty out of turn to demotivate me. One day he mocked my preparation in front of 60 colleagues and gave me an

extra hour of drill as punishment when I was slightly late. He just wanted to limit my career progress," Reddy told The Indian Express.

Though Reddy sent in his resignation the same day, the senior officer, according to him, did not forward his letter, marked him absent from duty, and issued a deserter notice a year later. "He took out his grudge against me by not accepting my resignation. I had to then request the SP to relieve me, while I worked on my preparation," he said.

Reddy, who lost his parents at a young age, grew up with his

grandmother and studied in a Telugu-medium government school. Reddy said he pursued his IAS dream in the face of educational and financial barriers.

A graduate, he thanked his mentor Sarat Chandra from Sarat Chandra IAS Academy and his family members for instilling confidence in him.

It was only in his fourth attempt that he tasted success though. In the second and third attempts, he failed to clear the prelims.

Reddy said he focused on covering the syllabus thoroughly to excel in each of the topics.

Chhattisgarh woman dead, seven missing as boat capsizes in Mahanadi in Odisha

SUJIT BISOYI
BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 19

ONE PERSON died and seven were missing when a boat carrying them capsized in the Mahanadi river in Odisha's Jharsuguda district Friday.

The deceased is a 35-year-old woman from the neighbouring state of Chhattisgarh. The missing persons comprise four women and three children. All of

them are from Raigad district of Chhattisgarh, said officials.

The boat was ferrying over 50 people from Kharsia area in Raigad to a temple in the middle of the river under Ambabhona block of Odisha's Bargarh district. The vessel capsized midway. Local fishermen rescued around 35 people. Police, fire service personnel and senior district officials rushed to the spot to oversee search and rescue operations. Raigad district collector

Kartikeya Goel, who reached the spot, said: "We are getting full co-operation from the Jharsuguda district administration. The Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force personnel are carrying out search operations while scuba divers from Bhubaneswar are also being deployed. The evacuees have been taken to a safe shelter and given food. We will send them to their homes."

The search operation was continuing late into the night.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed concern over the incident and announced an ex-gratia of ₹4 lakh for the family members of the deceased persons. Patnaik also directed the Chief Secretary and Special Relief Commissioner to coordinate the operation.

As per the CM's directions, at least five scuba divers and two search cameras were sent to Jharsuguda by special flight, said officials.

09016 Bhagalpur - Valsad Special Train			
STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 09016	
		ARR.	DEP.
Bhagalpur	---	---	05:00
Lucknow	00:30	00:40	---
Valsad	02:30	---	---
Days of Run : 09016 Ex. Bhagalpur on 20.04.2024. Accommodation : Sleeper			
Stoppages : Sultanganj, Munger, Begusarai, Barauni, Samastipur, Muzaffarpur, Chakia, Bapudham Motihari, Sagauli, Bettiah, Narkatiaganj, Gorakhpur, Basti, Gonda, Barabanki, Lucknow, Kanpur Central, Farrukhabad, Mainpuri Jn., Shikohabad Jn., Tundla, Agra Fort, Bharatpur, Gangapur City, Sawai Madhopur, Kota, Ratlam, Dahod, Godhra, Vadodara, Bharuch, Ankleshwar, Sayan, Surat and Udhna stations.			
09032 Gorakhpur - Valsad Unreserved Special Train			
STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 09032	
		ARR.	DEP.
Gorakhpur	---	---	05:00
Lucknow	10:30	10:40	---
Valsad	12:30	---	---
Days of Run : 09032 Ex. Gorakhpur on 20.04.2024. Accommodation : General			
Stoppages : Basti, Gonda, Barabanki, Lucknow, Kanpur Central, Farrukhabad, Mainpuri Jn., Shikohabad Jn., Tundla, Agra Fort, Bharatpur, Gangapur City, Sawai Madhopur, Kota, Ratlam, Dahod, Godhra, Vadodara, Bharuch, Ankleshwar, Sayan, Surat and Udhna stations.			
09048 Malda Town - Udhna Unreserved Special Train			
STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 09048	
		ARR.	DEP.
Malda Town	---	---	20:00
Barabanki	21:33	21:35	---
Udhna	01:00	---	---
Days of Run : 09048 Ex. Malda Town on 21.04.2024. Accommodation : General			
Stoppages : Sahibganj Jn, Bhagalpur, Sultanganj, Munger, Begusarai, Barauni Jn, Samastipur Jn, Muzaffarpur Jn, Bapudham Motihari, Narkatiaganj Jn, Gorakhpur Jn, Basti, Gonda Jn, Barabanki Jn, Aishbagh, Kanpur Central, Etawah Jn, Tundla Jn, Agra Fort, Bayana Jn, Gangapur City, Sawai Madhopur, Kota Jn, Nagda Jn, Ratlam Jn, Godhra Jn, Vadodara Jn, Bharuch Jn, Sayan and Udhna stations.			
07031/07032 Secunderabad - H. Nizamuddin - Secunderabad Special Train (Weekly)			
STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 07031	
		ARR.	DEP.
Secunderabad	06:30	---	---
H. Nizamuddin	---	---	04:00
Days of Run : 07031 Ex. Secunderabad on every Sunday from 21.04.2024 to 30.06.2024 and 07032 Ex. H. Nizamuddin on every Tuesday from 23.04.2024 to 02.07.2024			
Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, Sleeper & General.			
Stoppages : Kazipet, Ramagundam, Mancherial, Bellampalli, Sirpur Kaghaznagar, Balharshah, Nagpur, Itarsi, Bhopal, Bina, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Gwalior and Agra Cantt stations.			
07621/07622 Hazur Sahib Nanded - H. Nizamuddin - Hazur Sahib Nanded Spl. Train (Weekly)			
STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 07621	
		ARR.	DEP.
Hazur Sahib Nanded	00:35	---	---
H. Nizamuddin	---	---	21:40
Days of Run : 07621 Ex. Hazur Sahib Nanded on every Saturday from 20.04.2024 to 27.04.2024 and 07622 Ex. H. Nizamuddin on every Sunday from 21.04.2024 to 28.04.2024			
Accommodation : 1st AC, AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General.			
Stoppages : Purna, Parbhani, Selu, Partur, Jalna, Aurangabad, Manmad, Jalgaon, Bhusaval, Khandwa, Itarsi, Bhopal, Bina, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Gwalior, Agra Cantt and Mathura Jn stations.			
05583/05584 Raxaul - Anand Vihar (T) - Raxaul Express Special Train			
STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 05583	
		ARR.	DEP.
Raxaul	05:30	---	---
Moradabad	13:00	13:10	---
Anand Vihar (T)	---	---	09:00
Days of Run : 05583 from Raxaul on 20.04.2024 and 05584 from Anand Vihar (T) on 21.04.2024			
Accommodation : Sleeper			
Stoppages : Narkatiaganj Jn, Bagaha, Gorakhpur, Basti, Gonda, Sitapur, Moradabad and Ghaziabad stations.			
05537/05538 Darbhanga Jn. - Daurai - Darbhanga Jn. Express Special Train (Weekly)			
STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 05537	
		ARR.	DEP.
Darbhanga Jn.	06:50	---	---
Sitapur Jn.	16:10	16:20	---
Daurai	---	---	23:45
Days of Run : 05537 Ex. Darbhanga Jn. on every Saturday from 04.05.2024 to 29.06.2024 and 05538 Ex. Daurai on every Sunday from 05.05.2024 to 30.06.2024			
Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General.			
Stoppages : Sitamarhi, Baigania, Raxaul Jn, Narkatiaganj Jn, Kaptanganj Jn, Gorakhpur Jn, Khalilabad, Basti, Gonda Jn, Sitapur Jn., Shahjahanpur, Budaun, Kasganj, Hatras City, Mathura Jn., Bharatpur Jn, Bandikui Jn, Jaipur Jn., Kishangharh and Ajmer Jn stations.			
08103/08104 Tatanagar Jn. - Varanasi Jn. - Tatanagar Jn. Special Train (Weekly)			
STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 08103	
		ARR.	DEP.
Tatanagar Jn.	22:30	---	---
Varanasi Jn.	---	---	09:30
Days of Run : 08103 Ex. Tatanagar Jn. on every Thursday from 25.04.2024 to 27.06.2024 and 08104 Ex. Varanasi Jn. on every Friday from 26.04.2024 to 28.06.2024			
Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General.			
Stoppages : Purulia Jn, Bokaro Steel City, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Jn Gomoh, Koderma, Gadya Jn., Dehri On Sone, Sasaram and Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn. stations.			
09044 Barauni Jn. - Banda Terminus Unreserved Special Train			
STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 09044	
		ARR.	DEP.
Barauni Jn.	---	---	10:20
Barabanki Jn.	01:33	01:35	---
Banda Terminus	07:05	---	---
Days of Run : 09044 Ex. Barauni Jn. on 20.04.2024. Accommodation : General			
Stoppages : Samastipur Jn, Muzaffarpur Jn, Bapudham Motihan, Narkatiaganj Jn, Gorakhpur Jn, Basti, Gonda Jn, Barabanki Jn, Aishbagh, Kanpur Central, Etawah Jn, Tundla Jn, Agra Fort, Bayana Jn, Gangapur City, Sawai Madhopur, Kota Jn, Nagda Jn, Ratlam Jn, Godhra Jn, Vadodara Jn, Bharuch Jn, Sayan, Surat, Vapi, Boisar and Borivali stations.			
01667/01668 Rani Kamalapati - Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratappgarh Jn. - Rani Kamalapati Express Special Train (Weekly)			
STATIONS		TRAIN NO. 01667	
		ARR.	DEP.
Rani Kamalapati	15:35	---	---
Lucknow	04:50	04:55	---
Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratappgarh Jn.	---	---	01:05
Days of Run : 01667 Ex. Rani Kamalapati on every Monday from 22.04.2024 to 24.06.2024 and 01668 Ex. Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratappgarh Jn. on every Tuesday from 23.04.2024 to 25.06.2024			
Accommodation : AC 3 Tier.			
Stoppages : Bhopal, Vidisha, Bina Jn, Lalitpur, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Orai, Bhimsen, Kanpur Central, Lucknow, Raebareilly Jn and Amethi stations.			

14 BIG PICTURE



THE KOTLA FACTORY

In heart of Delhi, a village of sport strugglers

A national record-holding steeplechaser from Bulandshahr, a hurdler from a Haryana village, a sprinter from Moradabad. Athletes by day and gig workers by night, they are among hundreds of budding players whose track and field dreams begin in the densely-packed lanes of Kotla Mubarakpur.

ANDREW AMSAN spends time in the Delhi neighbourhood, tracking their long, daily sprints
Photographs by ABHINAV SAHA

FOR ANKIT Kumar, 21, a state-ranked hurdler, life is an unending race against time. When not trying to beat his coach's stopwatch at the Jawaharlal Nehru (JLN) Stadium, he is trying to stick to the ETA while delivering orders for a quick-commerce grocery app.

The son of a welder from Kundli in Haryana, Ankit stays in a windowless room at Kotla Mubarakpur, an urban slum not far from JLN. It's a space that he shares with four others. Ankit's roommates and close to 1,000 other athletes at Kotla lead a similar double-life. They fund their track-and-field dreams by working as gig workers — the flexibility and independence of the industry allowing them time to move between two very distinct worlds.

"We try to complete a few orders in the morning before the afternoon sun comes out and we continue later after evening practice. I deliver from 8 pm to 2 am on most days. It affects my post-practice recovery but option *kya hai* (there's no choice)," says Ankit.

As they flock to Kotla from villages in states neighbouring Delhi, many of these youngsters exercise that only "option" they have: undertake the journey to Delhi, hoping the Capital will give them a chance to make it in the impossibly competitive world of track and field. Back home, where there are no coaching and training facilities worth talking of, their dreams run into a series of obstacle courses. For instance, the West UP town of Meerut, known as a sports manufacturing hub, doesn't have a single synthetic track for training. JLN, though poorly maintained, with a patched-up track in the main arena and a practice track that's not fit for elite training, is still the best option for many of these youngsters. They know that they are on their own until they break into the national level, which is when they can hope for some kind of state support.

Kotla and its thousand dreams

When Ankit came to Delhi in 2018, he knew where to go. On the athletics circuit, he had heard that Kotla Mubarakpur was the ideal place for those wanting to follow in the footsteps of Neeraj Chopra, India's first-ever Olympic track-and-field gold medalist. It's Kotla Mubarakpur's proximity to JLN and its budget spaces, unlike the more upmarket areas of Defence Colony or South Extension nearby, that draw Ankit and hundreds of others like him to the neighbourhood.

The area's open drains, complex maze of bylanes and the unmissable 'bad elements' don't make Kotla the ideal neighbourhood for those hoping to climb podiums. But as they keep saying around here, "option *kya hai*?"

In one such lane lives youth steeplechase national record-holder Sonam. The daughter of a brick kiln labourer from a Dalit settlement in Hurthala village in Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh, Sonam made Kotla her home when she was 15. She is now 19 and has grown used to the place. "*Yahan ki mehak hi alag hai, na* (This place has a distinct scent doesn't it)?", she jokes, embarrassed by the foul smell emanating from the litter outside her room.

While Sonam, with multiple junior national titles, is among the more accomplished athletes, most of the Kotla athletes are still trying to find their feet. A good number of them are state medallists and regularly take part in private running events for prize money. Sonam had to work as a delivery agent until she broke Parul Chaudhary's decade-old 200m Youth national record at the Khelo India Youth Games last year. She is now part of the Khelo India scholarship, where she receives a monthly stipend of Rs 10,000.

"This is one of the better lanes to live in," assures Sonam's coach Sanjeev. He smiles and adds: "Option *kya hai*?". Sanjeev speaks for most of the athletes who have made Kotla their home. Their shared sporting



(Clockwise from above): Ankit Kumar trains at JLN Stadium; after evening practice, he works as a delivery boy for a quick-commerce app; Sonam, a steeplechaser from a Bulandshahr village, has been living in Kotla for four years; when he is not training, Kanta Prasad works at a juice kiosk outside the stadium



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ANKIT KUMAR, 21

EVENT: 400m hurdles
LEVEL: State-level medallist

5:30 am

Wakes up and reaches the stadium by 6 for morning training

6-9 am

After warm-up, workouts and drills, takes a quick shower before work

10 am -1 pm

Goes to the nearest hub on his rented e-bike to make deliveries in Kotla

1-4 pm

Prepares lunch for himself and his roommates before taking a nap

4-7 pm

Returns to the stadium for evening training and drills at the practice track

8 pm-12 am

Heads to the hub once again to take up more orders for delivery

dreams have given Delhi's urban landscape another pocket of aspiration. If North Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar is where the country's UPSC aspirants head to and Mandi House attracts theatre artistes, Kotla Mubarakpur has now emerged as a village of sporting strugglers.

The Mukherjee Nagar of sports

Just as coaching classes and photocopy kiosks mushroom around education hubs, auxiliary businesses catering to the athletes fight for space in this densely-populated area. The neighbourhood's fruit juice shops, kiosks selling boiled eggs, sports apparel outlets and chemist shops are mostly frequented by fit and lean boys and girls.

Naveen Kumar is one such beneficiary of the Kotla-JLN ecosystem. His clothes store, which he has been running for over

seven years, supplies "foreign reject" apparel to athletes. Hand-me-down domestic branded clothes also make their way to Naveen's collection. If bargained right, a T-shirt can be bought for as less as Rs 50. Stores such as these are lifesavers for athletes living on a shoestring budget.

"Athletes tell me in advance what kind of apparel they need and I sort it from the pile of clothes that arrive," Naveen explains. "I don't know where they get these clothes from. Once we got a jersey of some school in Australia," says Sonam's coach Sanjeev.

Steeplechaser Mohammed Abbas does have issues with Kotla's poorly ventilated rooms and dingy lanes, but is happy to adjust for the convenience that comes with living in the area.

"You will get everything here and for a

reasonable price. There are good food options and they all treat athletes nicely," says the 19-year-old state medallist who works part-time as a BPO call agent.

Manoj Kumar, co-owner of the popular Kailash restaurant, says 60 per cent of their revenue comes from sportspersons. "I can't give you the number of athletes visiting each day but if you come this evening, you will find them taking up all the tables. There is hardly any space left for others," says the manager.

For most athletes, though, eating at a budget dhaba is a luxury so on most days, they cook their meals. In Ankit's room, the responsibilities have been divided. "Two are in charge of cooking, one has to do the cleaning and we also have one person whose job is to run errands (from the third floor)," explains Ankit's roommate, Ashish.

Rooms without fans and a ticking body clock

The rent for a single room, shared by three or more athletes, ranges from Rs 3,000 to 6,000. Azad Gautam, a middle-distance runner who had to go on a hunger strike to persuade his family to let him come to Delhi, shares a room with three others. The room doesn't have a ceiling fan and Delhi's unforgiving summer months have begun to kick in. "The budget is a little tight this month. We will see if we can get a fan soon," he says. "At least this area has some sunlight; some athletes live in areas where you can't tell if it is night or day," adds steeplechaser Abbas, who lives on the floor above Azad's.

Azad has seen worse — his room in Kotla Mubarakpur is an upgrade from his home in Bulandshahr. "*Barish mein chhath tapakti thi gaon mein* (At our village home, the roof

would leak during the rains). Until my elder brother found a job, we didn't have enough for three proper meals. *Woh ek sangharsh tha, aab ye ek sangharsh hai* (that was one struggle, this is another)," says Azad, who moved to Delhi early this year.

The "sangharsh" is relentless. With every passing year, the pressure from family to quit and take up a job keeps mounting.

Abbas, who has been trying to win a national-level medal for over five years, compares the lives of Kotla's athletes to those of UPSC aspirants.

"Everything is temporary, tension is permanent. Every day before going to bed, doubts creep in. Every morning when we wake up, there is pressure to achieve something. Athletes have a very short career. I know I have very little time left," says the 18-year-old.

Since most athletes are in their early 20s, they know they need to make a breakthrough quickly. They have to make the most of their 20s when their bodies are at peak fitness levels. "We know that we have to get our breakthrough before we turn 28-29. There are many senior athletes at JLN who are still hoping to bag their first national medal. It is tough," says Abbas.

A medal at the Athletics Federation of India's national-level meets is the bare minimum these youngsters have to achieve if they hope to ever turn pro. A medal at the nationals makes them eligible for applying in PSUs and other central government agencies. But a national medal in athletics is not easy. "Out of every 100 athletes who start off, only five will eventually be able to make a career out of it. We know this fact but yet we give it everything we have got. We athletes are a little crazy but that's also what pushes us," says Abbas.

There's also the stress of societal and family pressure to "settle down". "If I had still been in my village, my parents would have got me married off. My dreams of representing India would have been put to rest. But now that I have come here and earned a name for myself, the mindset of people in my village is changing," says Sonam.

Kanta Prasad, who bagged two medals in long-distance running at the Delhi state meet this year, ran away from his home in Hamirpur district of UP in 2017 to escape marriage. After working in Ghaziabad as an office boy for a few years, he decided he had had enough. "I walked up to an auto and asked him to drop me off at the best athletics stadium in the region. He said it would cost me Rs 150 and dropped me at JLN. I had only seen JLN in photos and was mesmerised by what I saw. Those canopies at the main stadium gave it such a grand look," he recalls. Kanta now works at a juice stall at JLN's Gate No.1. He can't afford a room at Kotla yet so sleeps on top of a kiosk in the open.

Then there is sprinter Mohammed Airaf, who also doubles as the hairstylist of most of the JLN athletes. The Moradabad resident has been a full-time barber since he was 10. After a rigorous day at the stadium, he barely gets any rest since the 19-year-old has to rush to the salon he works at in Kotla on a "50/50 deal" — he gets to keep half of his daily earnings; the other half goes to the owner in lieu of using the salon's facilities.

"I didn't know he was a barber when one of my students brought him to train under me. He is still young but has a lot of hunger to do well. For now, his cutting skills are better than running," says Delhi state chief coach Dinesh Rawat, who is now a regular customer at Airaf's salon.

Amidst all these struggles, sports remains the only balm. The hours spent slogging at the stadium remain their only escape. Abbas sums it up: "When we leave Kotla's dingy area and enter the stadium it's like *jahannum ki aag se nikal kar jannat me agaye* (We have escaped the fires of hell and reached heaven". After all, option *kya hai*.

15 ECONOMY

GOLD	USD RATE	OIL	SILVER
₹74,000	₹83.48	\$87.60	₹86,600

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of April 18

SENSEX: 73,088.33 ▲ 599.34 (0.83%) NIFTY: 22,147.00 ▲ 151.15 (0.69%) NIKKEI: 37,068.35 ▼ 1,011.35 HANG SENG: 16,224.14 ▼ 161.73 FTSE: 7,835.33 ▼ 41.72 DAX: 17,739.85 ▼ 97.55

International market data till 1900 IST

BRIEFLY

ABRFL board okays vertical demerger

Mumbai: The board of Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail (ABRFL) has approved the proposal of a vertical demerger of Madura Fashion and Lifestyle business into a newly incorporated entity named as Aditya Birla Lifestyle Brands. **ENS**

Jio Financial net profit rises

Mumbai: Jio Financial Services on Friday reported a net profit of Rs 311 crore for the January-March quarter of financial year 2023-24. This was a 6 per cent increase from Rs 294 crore reported during the December quarter of FY24. **ENS**

Tata seeks waiver from listing NBFC

New Delhi: Tata Group has sought a formal waiver from the central bank to avoid listing Tata Sons, its holding company and non-banking finance firm, on stock exchanges, *Bloomberg News* reported, citing people familiar with the matter. **REUTERS**

MINUTES FROM THE RBI'S MPC MEETING

'Disinflation gains achieved over two years have to be preserved'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 19

EVEN AS consumer price-based inflation has seen moderation in the past two years, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) remained cautious over food inflation risks which may hamper the disinflation process, the minutes of the meeting held on April 3-5 showed on Friday.

In the monetary policy announced on April 5, the six-member MPC left the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent and kept the policy stance as withdrawal of accommodation. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said looking ahead, the baseline projections show inflation moderating to 4.5 per cent in 2024-25 (FY25) from 5.4 per cent in 2023-24 and 6.7 per cent in 2022-23.

"The gains in disinflation achieved over last two years have to be preserved and taken forward towards aligning the headline inflation to the 4 per cent target on a durable basis," Das wrote in the minutes of the MPC.

"This success in the disinflation process should not distract us from the vulnerability of the inflation trajectory to the frequent incidences of supply side shocks, especially to food inflation due to adverse weather events and other



RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. File Photo

factors," he said. Das voted for keeping the policy repo rate unchanged and to continue with the focus on withdrawal of accommodation.

Overlapping food price shocks, apart from imparting volatility to headline inflation, may also result in spillovers to core inflation. Lingering geo-political tensions and their impact on commodity prices and supply chains are also adding to uncertainties in the inflation trajectory. These considerations call for monetary policy actions to tread the last mile of disinflation with extreme care, the Governor said.

Monetary policy transmission is continuing and inflation expect-

tations of households are also getting further anchored. At this stage, we should stay the course and remain vigilant, he said.

RBI's Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra said the recent inflation prints and high frequency data on salient food prices indicate that food inflation risks remain elevated.

A relatively shallow and short-lived winter trough is giving way to a build-up of price momentum as summer sets in, with forecasts of rising temperatures up to May 2024. Some global food prices are firming up in an environment of rising input costs and supply chain pressures, Patra, who voted for status quo on the policy rate and stance, said. In the MPC minutes,

EXPLAINED
India's growth prospects

THE GROWTH prospects of the Indian economy in FY25 look bright, said RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, adding lingering geo-political tensions and their impact on commodity prices and supply chains are adding to uncertainties in the inflation trajectory.

Patra wrote that the headroom provided by the steady core disinflation and fuel price deflation does not assure a faster alignment of the headline with the target.

"Consequently, headline inflation can be expected to remain in the upper reaches of the tolerance band until favourable base effects come into play in the second quarter of 2024-25. Hence, conditions are not yet in place for any let-up in the restrictive stance of monetary policy," the Deputy Governor said. MPC member Rajiv Ranjan CPI headline inflation moderation remains on anticipated lines, though the diverging trajectory between food and core inflation continues. **FULL REPORT ON** www.indianexpress.com

Private general insurers push up market share, competition set to intensify

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, APRIL 19

PRIVATE SECTOR non-life insurance companies have increased their market share in the financial year 2023-24 (FY24) amid intense competition in the sector, mainly in the health and motor businesses. The overall market share of private non-life insurers has witnessed a sustained increase to 65 per cent for FY24 from 62 per cent in FY23 and 59 per cent in FY22 highlighting the persistent growth differential between the public and private sectors.

The non-life general insurance industry reported a lower growth during FY24 with a premium income of Rs 2.89 lakh crore, a rise of 12.78 per cent compared to the 16.3 per cent growth in premium income at Rs 2.56 lakh crore in FY23, according to figures released by the General Insurance Council.

Competition is likely to increase, especially in the health segments as new companies have commenced operations while others are waiting in the wings to enter the segment. Till date, motor third party rate hike has not been announced for FY25, which could impinge on the growth.

Additionally, tensions around the Red Sea and the Iran-Israel conflict may impact the marine segment. However, intensified competition, an uncertain international geopolitical environment and elevated inflation may negatively affect economic growth and subsequently impact the non-life insurance sector.

The industry's growth is driven by the health and motor insurance segments. However, compared to last year, there was a decline in growth due to a fall in liability, crop insurance and credit guarantee, while fire and marine segments reported subdued growth numbers compared to last year.

Further, for the month of March 2024 as well, the growth rate was comparatively lower as growth in health was offset by slower growth in motor and a fall

LIFE INSURANCE SEGMENT GROWS 2%

Mumbai: The life insurance industry has reported a premium collection of Rs 3.77 lakh crore, representing a two per cent growth in FY24 as against Rs 3.70 lakh crore in FY23. LIC's premium collection declined by 4.04 per cent to Rs 2.22 lakh crore during the year.

However, LIC saw a 26.41 per cent increase in the total premium collected for the month of March 2024 at Rs 36,300 crore from Rs 28,716 crore a year ago.

According to data released by Life Insurance Council, while the life insurance indus-

try saw its new business premium (NBP) collection coming in at Rs 60,213 crore in March 2024, there is a 41.5 per cent growth in group premiums, with a similar increase in group single premiums being the biggest contributing factor to the rise in new business premium.

Even if group premiums contribute nearly 60 per cent of the overall NBP, life insurers have also been focusing on encouraging first-time life insurance buyers, resulting in a 3.69 per cent growth in individual premium collections for FY24. **ENS**

in the fire segment. New India Assurance has remained the leading player with a premium income of Rs 37,035 crore in FY24, a rise of 7.40 per cent over the last year.

PSU general insurers' March 2024 numbers rose by 9.9 per cent, more than double the 4.0 per cent in March 2023. However, the annual performance, although positive, was muted by nearly 130 bps compared to last year. On the other hand, the private sector general insurers reported a growth of 9.5 per cent for March 2024 as against 13.2 per cent in March 2023.

"The FY24 numbers have demonstrated robust growth which can be primarily attributed to group health and motor insurance (premiumisation of the market with SUV sales increasing their share in the PV segment," said a CareEdge Ratings report.

Meanwhile, specialised insurers posted a drop of 28.9 per cent in March 2024 compared to a rise of 14.1 per cent in March 2023. Similarly, the FY24 numbers continued to reduce by 29.3 per cent vs. a growth of 5.1 per cent in FY23. This has been primarily because crop insurance premiums of Agriculture Insurance Company reduced by 32.1 per cent for FY24, as select public sector general insurers and a few pri-

private general insurers picked up a larger proportion of crop insurance premiums.

Standalone private health insurers (SAHI) continued their growth momentum as the March 2023 numbers topped the Rs 4,000 crore mark from Rs 3,000 crore in February 2024 and coming in higher by 25.9 per cent over March 2023 as they continue to gain share in retail health from PSU insurers and increasing their share of the group health pie.

Further with IRDAI approving two SAHIs in F24, competition is expected to accelerate even further in FY25. Health insurance premiums continue to be the primary growth driver of the non-life insurance industry. This has increased the segment's market share from 33.3 per cent for FY22 to 37.6 per cent for FY24. The health segment has grown by 20.2 per cent for FY24, which is lower than the growth of 23.2 per cent witnessed for FY23.

"The industry's growth will continue to be driven by the health and motor insurance segments as they account for around 68 per cent of the premiums. Broadly speaking the first quarter of the financial year accounts for around 20 per cent of the sector's premiums and this trend is likely to persist in FY25," CareEdge Ratings said.

SEBI proposes norms for price discovery of investment companies

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 19

MARKETS REGULATOR Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) on Friday proposed to lay a framework for price discovery of shares of listed investment companies (ICs) and listed investment holding companies (IHCs) whose market price is at significant discount to their book value.

ICs are companies that earn major revenue from interest, capital appreciation from investments made, and do not include rental income which is classified under diversified commercial services. IHCs are holding companies with holding of 51 per cent or more in other company.

In the draft norms, SEBI said a special call-auction mechanism without price band may be enabled for listed ICs and IHCs, whose shares are trading beyond a certain discount to their book value. For this, stock exchanges will co-ordinate amongst themselves and provide the special call-auction mechanism for such companies, it recommended.

The concept of price bands had been put in place as a risk management and surveillance measure for ensuring orderly trading, appropriate price discovery and promote market integrity.

Currently, shares of a few listed ICs or IHCs are getting traded infrequently but at a price which is significantly lower than the book value disclosed by the listed entities in their last audited financial statements.

SEBI also suggested certain criteria for identification of ICs and IHCs eligible for special call auction. "The scrip should have been listed and available for trading at least for a period of 1 year and the company should have been compliant with all the LODR (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirement) Regulations including submission of audited financial results," the draft norms said. Total assets of the company invested in shares of other listed companies may be at least 50 per cent. The 6-month VVAP (volume weighted average price) of the security may be less than 50 per cent of the book value of such companies.

of GIC Re and needs to reduce it to 75 per cent by August this year to meet the minimum public shareholding (MPS) of 25 per cent in the company. However, the company may get a one-year extension to meet MPS norms. "An extended period of one year to meet MPS norms is expected," the official, quoted above said.

Depending on the market appetite, the government could sell around 10 per cent stake in one or in a couple of tranches in FY25, or latest by August next year.

Some of the state-run companies which met MPS norms have seen their share prices rise exponentially. For instance, after Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) met the MPS norm in March last year, its share price doubled.

GIC is the only Indian reinsurer, which provides support to direct insurers in India and receives obligatory cessions on every policy by domestic general insurers. In the roadshows, the GIC showcased its dominant position in the domestic market with a 67 per cent share gross reinsurance premium of \$4.4 billion (FY23). The rest of the shares are with foreign reinsurance branches (FRBs). **FE**



TESLA TO RECALL 3,878 CYBERTRUCKS

Tesla is recalling 3,878 Cybertrucks to fix an accelerator pedal pad that could come loose, the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said on Friday. **Reuters**

Tesla likely to set up India plant before govt's three-year deadline

JATIN GROVER & RISHIRAJ
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

ELON MUSK'S Tesla will set up its India assembly plant earlier than the three-year deadline which the government's new electric vehicle (EV) policy has laid down for global companies choosing to import their cars at concessional duties.

The company is also likely to meet the localisation content ahead of schedule. Tata group's semiconductor fabrication plant, which will come up at Dholera in Gujarat, has been identified as one of the major suppliers of chips to Tesla. Government sources said Tesla has indicated that it will source 30-40 per cent of chips and forging for its vehicles from India. "These two components com-

prise around 40-50 per cent of what goes into making of EVs, so it makes sense for Tesla to set up its assembly plant in the country as early as possible," said a source.

Tesla will also be supplying chips and forgings sourced from India to its plants in the US, but it makes sense to assemble the products closer to the point where the components are sourced from, sources said. **FE**

IMF APPLAUDS INDIA FOR FISCAL DISCIPLINE IN ELECTION YEAR

'Growth at 6.8% is very good..'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, APRIL 19

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund (IMF) has applauded India for maintaining fiscal discipline in an election year, saying that the Indian economy is doing well and continues to be the world's bright spot.

"At this point in time, India's economy is doing well. Growth at 6.8 per cent is very good. Inflation's coming down. We have to make sure that inflation comes down to target and it is there on a durable basis. Macro fundamentals look pretty good," Krishna Srinivasan, Director, Asia and Pacific Department, at the IMF told *PTI* in an interview.

"One thing I would say is that maintaining fiscal discipline, especially in the election year, for me, has been quite a highlight because countries do embark on fiscal adventures in the election year. "This government has main-



IMF headquarter in Washington. Reuters File

Seth: India is a stand out performer

Washington: Despite a challenging global scenario, India's economy has shown robust growth over the past year backed by sustained consumption and investment demand, a top Indian official told members of a World Bank committee.

The GDP growth estimate for the fiscal, which has been revised upwards from 7.3 per cent to 7.6 per cent in the second advance estimates, highlights the enduring strength and resilience of the Indian economy, India's Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said. **PTI**

VI FPO: Gets bids for half of shares so far

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

DEBT-SADDLED telecom operator Vodafone Idea Ltd's Rs 18,000 crore follow-on offering (FPO) on Friday picked up momentum with close to half of the issue being subscribed, largely by institutional investors.

Over Rs 12,000 crore, including Rs 5,400 crore from anchor investors, has been raised by the end of day 2 of the FPO, according to stock market information.

Of the 1,260 crore shares on offer, 617.46 crore shares were subscribed on Friday, according to information on the BSE.

EPFO net subscribers' addition grows over 19%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

RETIREMENT FUND body EPFO registered over 19 per cent growth year-on-year to 1.65 crore members in 2023-24, as per the latest payroll data, showing improvement in the employment situation in the country.

"In last 6 and half years alone, more than 6.1 crore members joined the EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) fold, indicating formalisation of the job market," a labour ministry official told *PTI*. The data shows that the EPFO had added 61.12 lakh net subscribers in 2018-19, which increased to 78.58 lakh in 2019-20.

However, it dipped to 77.08 lakh in 2020-21, mainly due to the pandemic effect and improved again to 1.22 crore in 2021-22 and 1.38 crore in 2022-23.

NPCL NOIDA POWER COMPANY LIMITED
CIN: U31200UP1992PLC014506
Notice Inviting Bids for Procurement of Power on Medium Term basis

Bids are invited by "Noida Power Company Limited having its registered office at Electric Sub-station, Knowledge Park-IV, Greater Noida - 201310 (U.P.)" for procurement of 50 MW power from 01.07.2024 to 31.03.2026 in accordance with Guidelines dated 30.01.2019 issued by Ministry of Power, GOI. Bid Document is available on DEEP Portal of www.mstcecommerce.com.

The Company reserves the right to reject all or any of the Bids or cancel the bidding process at any stage without assigning any reasons whatsoever and without any liability.

For any clarification, contact at e-mail id powertrading@noidapower.com or mobile no. 9718804966.
Head (Power Purchase)

TAMIL NADU CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION
Head Office, 12, THAMBUSAMY ROAD, KILPAUK, CHENNAI-600 010.
Ph. No. (044) 26426773; Email id : tnccsc@nic.in
CIN:U15137TN1972SGC006157

SHORT E-TENDER NOTICE
BS6/016713/2024 **Date: 18.04.2024**

Short E-Tender No: BS6/016713/2024-TNCCS/24-25

Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation invites Online electronic tender for the Purchase of "20,000 Metric Tonnes of Tur dal (Split - Husked & Fatka) [Indigenous] / Tur Dal (Split Husked-Imported) / Lentil locally known as Canadian Yellow Lentil (Split - Husked & Laired No.2) / Lentil locally known as Canadian Yellow Lentil (Whole - Husked & Laired No.2) as per AGMARK specifications"

Complete short e-tender document can be viewed and downloaded from <https://ntenders.gov.in/nicgp/app>

The bidders have to participate online bidding only with Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class-II or Class-III

Last Date and Time for Online Submission: **30.04.2024 up to 07.00 P.M.**

DIPR/1714/Tender/2024 **MANAGING DIRECTOR**

CONCOR CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.
(कार्गो वाहतूक व न्याय सेवा - A Navratta Govt. of India Undertaking)

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

CONCOR invites E-Tender in Single Packet System of tendering for the following work:-

Tender No.	CON/EPA-III/EoIF-6832/Track work at ICD-WFD 2024
Name of Work	Renovation of turn-outs and approach track at ICD-WFD
Estimated Cost	Rs. 198.93 lakhs (including GST)
Completion Period	08 Months (Eight Months)
Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 2.49,470/-
Cost of Tender Document (Non-refundable)	NIL
Tender Processing Fee (Non-refundable)	Rs. 3,540/- (inclusive all taxes & duties through e-payment)
Date of sale of Tender (online)	20-04-2024 (from 15.00 Hrs) to 12-05-2024 (upto 17.00 Hrs)
Date & Time of submission of Tender.	14-05-2024 (upto 17.00 Hrs)
Date & Time of Opening of Tender.	17-05-2024 (at 15.00 Hrs)

For financial eligibility criteria, experience with respect to similar nature of work, etc, please refer to detailed tender notice available on website www.concorindia.co.in, but the complete tender document can be downloaded from website www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL only. Further, Corrigendum/Addendum to this tender, if any, will be published on website www.concorindia.co.in, www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL and CPP Portal only. Newspaper press advertisement shall not be issued for the same.

GGM (P&S)/Area-III
Phone No.: 011-41222500

EXPLAINED CULTURE



Maryam Nawaz having langar at Kartarpur Sahib on Thursday. PTI

What Maryam spoke about: Punjabiya, cultural bonds that tie India, Pak Punjab

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR & ARJUN SENGUPTA
 AMRITSAR, NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

ON THURSDAY, the Chief Minister of Pakistan's Punjab province, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, spoke of her Punjabi identity while advocating better ties with India before 3,000 Sikh pilgrims at Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib. "You are from Punjab [India], I am from Pakistan, but I am also a true Punjabi," Maryam said, and quoted her father, former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif: "Don't fight wars with neighbours, open the doors of friendship, open the doors of your hearts."

The shared Punjabi identity has been invoked on several occasions by politicians on both sides of the border to advocate closer bilateral ties. Where is *Punjabiya* (literally, Punjabiness) placed in the relationship between the two countries?

Common Punjabi identity

Maryam said she was Pakistani, but "also a pure Punjabi", there was a relationship between Punjabis on both sides, and "Punjab resides in our hearts".

More than 75 years after Punjab was divided in 1947, and in spite of the four wars between India and Pakistan, there are many who continue to feel the bond. They feel united by their common culture and identity — by *Punjabiya*.

"While there are traumatic memories of Partition, there are also bonds of empathy, and a shared culture. Many on both sides of the border share a sentiment that the time has come to overcome the tragedy, restore the sense of loss," foreign policy and strategic affairs expert C Raja Mohan said.

Several attempts have been made to unite members of families that were torn asunder during Partition. Punjabi diaspora communities have acted as a unifying force. Indian and Pakistani actors came together in the Punjabi film *Aaja Mexico Chaliye* (2022), which was about the dangerous donkey route taken by Punjabis from both countries trying to migrate to the West.

Punjabi films from India are extremely popular in Pakistan, despite an official ban on their screening since 2016. *Carry on Jatta 3* (2023) was a huge hit in Pakistan, where the film skirted the ban by working with Pakistan-based distributors, and production houses based in the UK or Canada. *Maujaan Hi Maujaan* (2023) was far more popular in Pakistan than in India.

There are deep cultural connections in music too, from the poetry of Bulle Shah to the Punjabi rap of Sidhu Moosewala, who was as popular in Pakistan as in India.

Space for paradiplomacy

Punjabiya has long been used in attempts to improve Indo-Pak relations, with Punjabi politicians from both sides

taking the lead.

Then Punjab Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal visited Pakistan as part of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's delegation in 1999 to discuss trade and the maintenance of Sikh shrines in Pakistan. During his first term as Chief Minister (2002-07), Capt Amarinder Singh made two trips to Pakistan, for the World Punjabi Conference in Lahore in 2004, and the inauguration of the Nankana Sahib-Mannawala dual carriageway in 2006.

In 2004, Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi, then Chief Minister of Pakistani Punjab, came to Patiala for the All Punjab Games. In 2012, then Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal visited Lahore for the final of the Asia Kabaddi Cup, and jointly inaugurated with then Pak Punjab Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the Punjab Youth Festival and Indo-Pak Dosti Cup for the differently abled.

That same year, Shehbaz Sharif visited India for the inauguration of the Integrated Check Post (ICP) at the Attari-Wagah border.

Shehbaz, who is now Pakistan's Prime Minister, came back in December 2013 as the chief guest at the World Kabaddi Tournament final between India and Pakistan in Ludhiana. He met then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and then Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal. "In international relations—speak, this is known as paradiplomacy," Raja Mohan said. "Beneath the level of nation states, there is often a scope for provincial, or even local transnational exchanges, which ultimately aid relations between nations. People-to-people contact, and trade [between the two Punjab] can ultimately be a bridge for national reconciliation between India and Pakistan," he said.

The role trade can play

The Attari-Wagah land route was opened in 2005, with truck movement beginning in 2007. The ICP at Attari provided facilities for fast and cost-effective land trade between India and Pakistan. According to a government calculation in 2014, the trade potential for the ICP was \$10 billion.

This route was shut in 2019, after Pakistan suspended trade following the abrogation of Article 370. But many on both sides are convinced that trade between the two Punjab, and between India and Pakistan, is mutually beneficial.

Taranjit Singh Sandhu, former Indian Ambassador to the United States and now the BJP candidate for the Amritsar Lok Sabha seat, told *The Indian Express* that he "will certainly push for opening the route for trade" once again.

In March, Pakistan Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar said at a press conference in London that "Pakistani businessmen want trade with India to resume", and that the new government will "seriously look into matters of trade with India".

Of India's 969 million electors, more than 18.4 million are between the ages of 18 and 19. This is the story of elections to India's House of the People, for the younger readers of *The Indian Express*.

A third term for Nehru, but Cong begins to lose its sheen

1962: War with China followed months after the LS election. The increasing Opposition consolidation would have an impact in 1967

SHYAMLAL YADAV
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

BY THE time the elections of 1962 came around, the Election Commission of India (ECI) had finetuned many of its procedures. The election saw the highest turnout of voters until then — and even though the Congress won decisively, the first clear instances of political criticism of the party became visible.

This happened despite Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in his second term having overseen the successful liberation of Goa, Daman, and Diu in a military operation that ended more than 400 years of Portuguese rule over these territories.

New CEC, new challenges

The first Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sukumar Sen retired in 1958, and was succeeded by KVK Sundaram. The big change in the 1962 election was the abolition of two-member seats, a system that was intended to provide representation to the general category in certain reserved (SC/ST) seats.

In the first two elections, some constituencies — including Nehru's Phulpur and Feroze Gandhi's Rae Bareilly — sent two members to Lok Sabha. (There was even a three-member seat in West Bengal in the first Lok Sabha.) In 1957, Congress heavyweight and the future President of India V V Giri came third in Parvathipuram, Andhra Pradesh, one of the two-member seats, behind two Scheduled Tribe (ST) candidates. Around the country, SC/ST candidates were elected at nine single-member 'general' seats.

Giri challenged the election of the second ST candidate, Dippala Suri Dora, in the Supreme Court, but got no relief. As the demand for restricting SC/ST reservation to single-member constituencies gained momentum, Parliament passed The Two-Member Constituencies (Abolition) Act, 1961.

A second change in the 1962 election came as a consequence of the creation of the new states of Gujarat and Maharashtra in 1960, and the Union Territories of Goa, Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli in 1961, and the accompanying realignment of administrative boundaries.

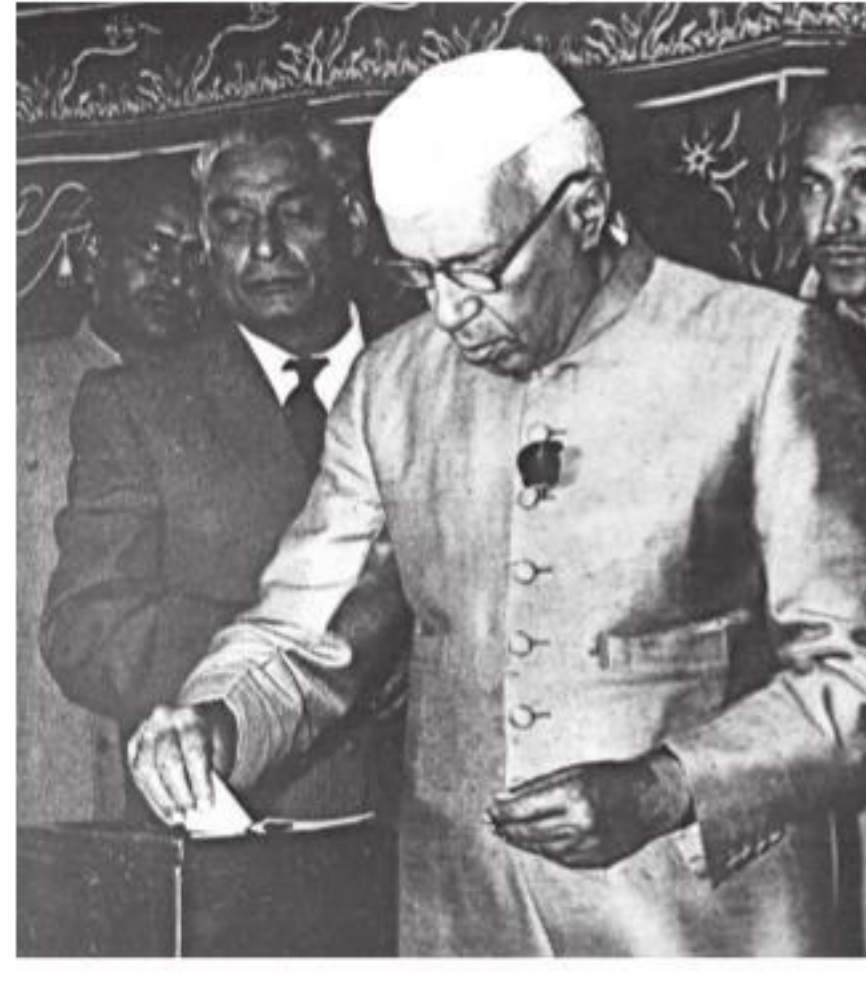
10-day vote, 3-week count

Ten days, from February 16-25, is all it took for almost 21 crore Indians to vote for India's third Lok Sabha.

A total 1,985 candidates contested the election, in which 55.43% of the 21.63 crore electors cast their votes — well above the 47.54% turnout in the 1957 election. The best turnout in 1962 was in Nagapattinam (80.66%); the worst in Bhanjanagar, Orissa (12.04%).

Votes were cast for 387 general, 76 SC, and 31 ST seats in Lok Sabha, and 3,121 seats in state Assemblies, including 693 reserved seats. The national parties were, besides the Congress, the Communist Party of India (CPI), Praja Socialist Party (PSP), and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), which was the precursor to today's BJP.

The practice of putting indelible ink on the voter's left forefinger, seen in the first two elections, continued in 1962 as well. But an experiment with issuing photo identity cards was abandoned after a test before a byelection to the Calcutta South-West Lok Sabha seat was not successful.



DECISION 1952-2019
A HISTORY OF LOK SABHA ELECTIONS PART 3

J B Kripalani (sitting, facing camera, extreme right) campaigns in Bombay City North before the 1962 election. (Left) Nehru votes in Allahabad. PMML

Just before the election, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the last Governor-General of India, merged his Indian National Democratic Congress with some smaller groups in Bihar and Himachal Pradesh to form the Swatantra Party, which was recognised as a state party in six states.

However, none of the Opposition parties managed to dent the Congress electorally in

1962. The party won 361 seats in Lok Sabha; the next biggest party in the House was CPI with 29, followed by BJS with 14. Thirty-five women were elected.

In the Assembly elections, the Congress returned to power in all states except Kerala. Barring Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, it got clear majorities everywhere.

Ram Manohar Lohia of the Socialist Party lost to Nehru in Phulpur. Vijayaraje Scindia, who contested on a Congress ticket, won in Gwalior.

Among the Opposition leaders, J B Kripalani contested from Bombay City (North) as an Independent and lost. Atal Bihari Vajpayee of the BJS lost both in Balrampur and Lucknow, but was subsequently elected to Rajya Sabha. Vajpayee's party colleague Balraj Madhok lost in New Delhi.

After the election, at its national executive in Kota, Rajasthan, on May 24, 1962, the BJS would pass a resolution accusing central and state ministers of "heavily misusing" government machinery during the elections. The party would demand that governments at the Centre and in states should resign three months ahead of every election so that a level playing field could be ensured.

China war, other problems

On April 10, 1962, Nehru, then 73, took oath for a third term as Prime Minister. He had been greatly disturbed by what he saw as the articulation of separatist voices during the election campaign, and had told Lok Sabha on March 19 that he had been "shocked beyond measure at what the opponents of the Congress did".

"...All the tendencies which have been so obvious in this election, caste tendency, communal tendencies and the like which are harmful and which disintegrate the country have to be met as far as possible unitedly... Elections upset our thinking apparatus and put passions in control of us and of others... If it is war, it will be war but it will not be accepted. When I find that not only the people who talk about them but others encouraging such parties and asking people to vote for them, it shows that something has gone wrong in somebody's thinking completely..." he said.

Nehru was speaking about the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which had run a radical campaign and won seven seats in Madras and emerged as a major force there. A year earlier, in 1961, the National Integration Council (NIC) had been established to find solutions to "the evils of communalism, casteism, regionalism, linguism and narrow-mindedness".

Besides the rising tides of linguist nationalism and subregional aspirations, Nehru's government also grappled with food shortages and general social unrest. Then, on October 20, 1962, China invaded, dealing a body blow to Nehru's trustful foreign policy doctrine of *Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai*. Although China declared a unilateral ceasefire after a month, Nehru and the Congress could never recover from the setback.

Of the 10 bypolls held between the 1962 Lok Sabha election and July 1963, the Congress could win just four — Lohia entered Lok Sabha from Farrukhabad, and Kripalani from Amroha. In August 1963, Nehru's government faced its first no-confidence motion.

The gradual consolidation of Opposition parties had an impact in multiple states in 1967. But Nehru was not alive to see the decline of his party. After serving for 16 years and 286 days — the longest prime ministerial tenure in India so far — Nehru passed away following a fatal heart attack on May 27, 1964, in New Delhi.

EXPLAINED ECONOMICS

Musk set to arrive: potential win-win for Tesla and India, some challenges too

ANIL SASI
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

ON HIS visit to India over the weekend, Tesla Inc. CEO Elon Musk could make a pledge to pump more than \$2 billion into a car manufacturing facility in the country, and make a statement on a longer-term investment commitment. He is scheduled to participate in a roundtable with India's space startups, and have a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday.

Musk's India visit comes as his flagship company Tesla goes through some difficulties, with sobering sales numbers resulting in falling stock market valuations.

The promise of India

Electric passenger car sales have been strong in India, albeit on a tiny base. The government has rolled out a policy tailored for Tesla to import 8,000 electric cars annually into India at a sharply reduced 15% duty. Analysts project that around 5% of all automobiles in India will be EVs by 2030 — up

from the 2% currently, but much lower than the government's target of 30%.

Tesla setting up a manufacturing facility could be the 'Apple moment' for India's auto sector. The success of ramping up cell phone assembly by Apple suppliers in India, riding on production-linked incentives, is seen as a landmark in India's bid to move up the assembly value chain for handphones. The tariff policy break for Tesla is consistent with the government's approach to tap marquee brands and sectoral flagbearers: Apple in electronics manufacturing, Micron for semiconductor chips, and Tesla in EVs.

Ahead of Musk's visit, the first consultation meeting was held on Thursday with automobile industry players, including Tesla representatives, to evolve guidelines to operationalise the government's new EV policy released last month.

Earlier on April 16, the Finance Ministry notified amended Rules under the Foreign Exchange Management Act to operationalise its decision to allow up to 100% foreign direct investment for the space sector through three categories of liberalised entry routes.

On his two-day visit, Musk is expected to make a push for Starlink, a project by his company SpaceX, to offer high-speed Internet using a constellation of thousands of low Earth orbit satellites.

India is also an important market for Musk's other venture, social media platform X. With elections underway, X has been able to skirt around major controversies: a record that Musk is keen to keep intact — unlike in 2019, when Twitter, as X was known then, had multiple run-ins with the government.

EV sector's challenges

But the auto sector agenda is clearly the focus of Musk's visit. He is likely to market the tangential impact that Tesla's manufacturing plans can have on India's EV vendor ecosystem, and dangle the incentive of potentially using the country as a future export hub.

This is at a time when EVs in general and Tesla in particular are at a seeming fork in the road. For Musk, India's untapped market could be as important as the EV story is for India, especially at a time when Tesla has

been outsmarted by local players in China, and the industry as a whole is facing tech disruptions and a general demand slowdown.

But India poses multiple challenges — it is still a relatively small luxury car market, and Tesla is unlikely to have a mass market product anytime in the foreseeable future. The current EV leader in India, Tata Motors, has tasted success by actually moving down the value chain and by customising its internal combustion models, rather than designing EVs ground-up.

Tesla's lowest-priced car, Model 3, is learnt to have faced ground clearance issues when tested in Indian conditions. The car could need some reengineering to ensure it can negotiate speed breakers and bad roads. Plus, there is the issue of putting up charging infrastructure.

India's new EV policy

The Centre's new EV policy, which effectively lowered import duties to 15% from 100% on car models costing over \$35,000 if its manufacturer promised to invest \$500 million in setting up a local factory, marks a part reversal of the domestic manufacturing policy push, given that the duty cuts are aimed at en-

abling a carmaker to import fully built cars. Also, the waiver is specifically for models of electric cars with combined cost, insurance, freight prices of \$35,000 or more — a landed cost of more than Rs 35 lakh, a segment that does not generally qualify for a tax sop.

While the import numbers may be limited to 8,000 units annually, the new policy does allow Tesla to test out the "market potential" before taking a full-scale plunge into manufacturing. The policy comes after the Centre turned down Tesla's demand for upfront import duty cuts less than 24 months ago.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, the new policy "is designed to attract investments in the e-vehicle space by reputed global EV manufacturers" and seeks to "provide Indian consumers with access to latest technology, boosting the Make in India initiative, strengthening the EV ecosystem by promoting healthy competition among EV players..."

However, in July last year, the Centre reportedly turned down China-based BYD's proposal to build a \$1-billion EV plant in partnership with Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd.

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17 REVIEWS

CINEMA & MUSIC

New World, Old Battle

The director and actors of the two-part *Rebel Moon* space saga talk about the making of the mythological sci-fi



ALAKA SAHANI

WHEN THE Zack Snyder-directed space saga, *Rebel Moon Part One: A Child of Fire*, released on Netflix in December last year, it introduced viewers to a posse of galactic adventurers. After it ended with a cliffhanger, the space adventure moves forward with its sequel — *Rebel Moon — Part Two: The Scargiver* — that has now dropped on the streamer. Calling this two-part visual spectacle “a mythological sci-fi”, Snyder notes that *Rebel Moon* has given him an opportunity to work on grand ideas “without the boundaries of our terrestrial world”.

The story unfolds in a far-flung corner of the universe, where the peaceful moon colony Veldt is being forced to surrender their harvest to the military horde of Motherworld, governed by the brutal Imperium. Desperate to protect her adopted home, a mysterious young woman, Kora, embarks on a high-stakes interstellar mission to gather warriors from around the galaxy who will help deliver them from evil.

Moments into *The Scargiver*, the viewers are reacquainted with Kora (Sofia Boutella) and the surviving warriors preparing to sacrifice everything as they fight alongside the brave people of Veldt, to defend a once peaceful village and, now, home to those who have lost their own in the fight against the Motherworld. Talking about the celluloid saga, Snyder says, “By creating a separate reality we can superimpose our problems, conflicts and our mythology on it. Through that we learn about ourselves. That’s what this mythological sci-fi offers us.”

Though the movie’s setting is grand with elaborate action sequences, the conflict remains as basic as the fight over acquiring food grains. “When you have this mythological battle on a large scale, I decided to make the conflict elemental,” says Snyder, who has directed *Watchmen* and *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*.

In the sequel, the storyline involving Boutella and Michiel Huisman, who plays the role of Gunner, takes centre stage. As Kora, Boutella fights against the Imperium she deserted, while Gunner, a modest farmer from Veldt, emerges as a key fighter. For Huisman, it was a dream to be part of a story that is so imaginative and explores a new universe. “While watching the opening of *Part One*, I was thinking: ‘Wow I really am in a space movie’,” the Dutch actor recalls.

Recounting her experience of filming the visually-stunning scenes, Boutella says: “I’ve never experienced any film set this way. So much of it was real — be it the explosion, sand or wind. We got to react to what was happening around us. Sometimes we also acted in front of the green screen. That is something I enjoyed too. I love using my imagination.”



LOVE SEX AUR DHOKHA 2 ★★★

Director: Dibakar Banerjee Cast: Tusshar Kapoor, Swastika Mukherjee, Mouni Roy, Anu Malik, Sophie Choudhury, Urfi Javed, Paritosh Tiwari, Bonita Rajpurohit, Abhinav Singh, Swaroopa Ghosh, Nimrit Ahluwalia

The Light in the Dark

SHUBHRA GUPTA

IT’S BEEN 14 years since the original *Love Sex Aur Dhokha*, a pathbreaking film which held up multiple mirrors to societal ills of the time: ‘honour killings’, TV ‘reality shows’ using sex videos for blackmail and TRPs, and a ‘Me-Too’ segment much before it started spilling out of the dark crevices of the entertainment industry.

But as soon as this part two begins, we are plunged into a much darker, much more savage universe, so hard-edged that the earlier era seems relatively innocent, almost prehistoric. Like the earlier iteration, this new film, written by Banerjee, Shubham and Prateek Vats (*Eeb Allee Oool!*), is expressly created to provoke and challenge, in order for us to ask the questions that we should all be asking: How did we get here? And where do we go from here?

In the first *LSD*, cinematographer Nikos Andritsakis surrounded us by multiple

cameras — the CCTVs, the video cameras, the cell-phones, hand-held, shaky, picking up the rhythms of lived lives — a dizzying array of seeing eyes which showed us that we are always on show.

There are as many cameras, now even more pervasive, and big-brother-big-boss type in *Love, Sex, Dhokha*, which has decisively morphed into ‘Like, Share, Download’. Social media is a giant, with a constantly open maw, hungry for shock and sensation, all niceties downplayed to upsell people as ‘products’. We all seem to be functioning in a giant talent/entertainment show, where we can only ostensibly be ‘on’ and ‘off cam’, but we are always being assessed for ‘marks’: Anu Malik, Mouni Roy and Tusshar Kapoor appear as ‘judges’ with their numbered placards. Noor, the trans person (Tiwari) vying for the top slot, is always on the spot: will she dance in front of her disapproving mother (Ghosh), will her ‘boyfriend’ kiss her on camera, will he even touch her if she eats non-veg during

‘pious’ days? With flashes, in smartly-inserted subversive scenes of the minorities and the oppressed being routinely trampled, even as 75 years of Indian Independence are being celebrated.

The second segment, which uses another LGBTQ person (Rajpurohit) to question corporate venality and skewed power structures, has Swastika Mukherjee in a career-best performance, stuck in a position with zero wiggle room. Only if she crushes someone weaker, will she be able to help herself. And the third one looks at the world of ‘content creators’ personified by Shubham (Singh), ‘influencers’, and the unending quest for millions of followers: how far will you go? This one, featuring Urfi Javed in a walk-on part, the influencer to beat all influencers, is the noisiest and the most all-over-the-place, but also the scariest: a TV anchor who may or may not resemble someone in real-life, stomping about the studio in a VR headset, leads us into a pretty world of green grass and blue

waterfalls and serene bodies in yogic poses. Is this where we, the dead-beat citizens, will end up? Are we all memes? Is our Orrification complete? Is this our future?

This is Banerjee at his angriest, his rage leaching out of every frame. (*Tees*, his previous film, a futuristic look at the past and present, is stuck in limbo). Wait, let me dial back. This is not just an angry film. *Love Sex Aur Dhokha 2* is a scream of rage, mixed with a confounded befuddlement. It’s been a while since I’ve seen a Hindi film as politically and socially trenchant as this one. Up till now, I’ve always thought of *LSD* as the director’s best film: it was a clear first on many counts, a meta-film that spoke to our internalisation of films-as-pop-culture, seeped into our DNA, and troubling questions of the barrier between what can be seen, and what should be seen, while keeping an eye on the moral centre. This *LSD* redux is not as original, but is as sharp, and as impactful. When Banerjee cuts us, we bleed.

An Everyday Affair

DO AUR DOPYAAR

★★★

Director: Shirsha Guha Thakurta

Cast: Vidya Balan, Pratik Gandhi, Ileana D’Cruz, Sendhil Ramamurthy

SHUBHRA GUPTA

IT’S BEEN A MARRIED couple in the midst of an affair each, wondering where they are at loyalty-and-betrayal-wise, feels like a neatly-tied bow on a case full of roiled feelings. Dental practitioner Kavya Ganesan (Balan) and reluctant businessman Anirudh aka Ani Bannerjee (Gandhi) are a classic example of a pair having fallen out with each other: no smiles, no warmth, each occupying their side of the bed, sleeping with their phones.

Each has a tasty bit on the side, she cosy-ing up to Vikram (Ramamurthy) a photographer who trots the globe in search of the right picture, and he doing ditto with the clearly much-younger Nora (D’Cruz), a struggling actress waiting anxiously for her first big break.

Crossed wires and four people is a classic rom-com set; bored marrieds looking for excitement is even more so. But *Do Aur Do Pyaar*, based on the 2017 Debra Winger-Tracy Letts starrer *The Lovers*, promises freshness both as to plot and cast. We have two illicit relationships, running parallel, and two actors — Gandhi, such a hoot in last month’s caper *Madgaon Express*, and Ramamurthy, splashing out as a dishy dad in *Never Have I Ever* — neither of whom has been seen in such a role.

So is it double the fun? It does spring to

life intermittently, but I expected more: more feelings, more depth. A floundering marriage story is one of the oldest stories in the book, needing new insight into frailties and weaknesses and wounded egos.

Here the cuts stay slight: how do two people not have the slightest idea that there is someone else in the equation, especially a couple, we are told in a sequence seemingly created for just such information to be imparted to us, has done the whole falling-in-love and running-away-with-each-other thing, and who presumably know each other inside out?

We do get the backstory of the two people at the centre of the movie, and how they got together. When we see Kavya and Ani circling back towards each other, the residual sparks they once shared are clearly visible, and that gives them heft: we don’t see that sizzle, ironically, when they are with their ‘others’; these secondary characters never feel fully fleshed out.

In the original film, the straying couple is much older; here Ani and Kavya are only in their late 30s, so where’s the fire? Sure, there are hidden text messages, leading to smiles and sighs, but neither pair makes you feel as if they want to jump their lovers’ bones. Sure, even extra-marital passion can start feeling familiar, but a glimpse of the time when it was all new and exciting, would have been an added flavour.



The most impactful segment is one in which Ani and Kavya are left to negotiate spikiness in the latter’s family home in sylvan Ooty, where we see her thirsting for her disagreeable father’s affection. The gathering at her thaaatha’s (grandfather) funeral is suffused with a mordant-humour-in-seriousness vein: a steamy sequence, plumb in the middle of the mourning household, is funny, as are the cross-currents amongst relatives curious about the ‘mapillai’ (son-in-law) back home for the first time.

The actual discourse amongst the married couple and the lovers, on the other hand, is much more constructed and underlined. More than one sequence between Balan and Ramamurthy feels dialogue-heavy, and when D’Cruz and Gandhi are together, you can never shake off the feeling of him hounding her. Just what made these people

leap at each other, and why aren’t we shown that initial spark?

Of the foursome, Balan, who expectedly gets top billing, is all practised ease, breaking out in a climactic slanging match. They fight over steel *bartan* and baigun posto, and it finally feels real. Ramamurthy and D’Cruz do their jobs. The real gift is Gandhi, both as the spouse who feels done against, as well as the confused cheat, while also showing some mean moves on the dance floor.

Humans are strange creatures. They long for what they don’t have, and when they do get it, they don’t want it any more. This is the premise, and for a Bollywood movie, it’s new enough. Rekindling banked embers can be a thing. Again, something not done to death in our rom-coms. When these strands are playing out, the film has a satisfactory sting, but it makes us wait for those bits.

STREAMING WATCH LIST

BY ALAKA SAHANI



ANYONE BUT YOU

NETFLIX

Things go awry between Bea (Sydney Sweeney) and Ben (Glen Powell) after an amazing first date. Though they look like the perfect couple, their fiery hot attraction turns ice cold, till they find themselves together at a destination wedding. The Will Gluck-directed film is loosely based on *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare.



PARIS, TEXAS

MUBI

A host of Wim Wenders movies are streaming on MUBI, including *Paris, Texas*. It has Travis walking out of the Texas desert after disappearing for four years. He now tries to bring his family back together. The other movies by Wenders that are on the platform include *Wings of Desire*, *Alice in the Cities*, *Kings of the Road*, *Room 666* and *Tokyo-Ga*.



DREAM SCENARIO

LIONSGATE PLAY

Actor Nicolas Cage plays a professor who suddenly finds fame. As millions of strangers start seeing him in their dreams, his life turns upside down. Things take a turn for the worse when those dreams turn into nightmares, causing public outrage against him. He must navigate the crisis. Directed by Kristoffer Borgli, the film’s cast includes Jessica Clement and Julianne Nicholson.



FALLOUT

PRIME VIDEO

Two hundred years after the apocalypse, the gentle denizens of luxury fallout shelters are forced to return to the irradiated hellscape their ancestors left behind and are shocked to discover an incredibly complex and highly violent universe waiting for them. The eight-episode show is based on one of the biggest video game series.

The Stories we Forget

CIVIL WAR ★★★

Director: Alex Garland Cast: Kristen Dunst, Wagner Moura, Cailie Spaeny, Stephen McKinley Henderson, Nick Offerman

SHALINI LANGER

WHAT KIND of American are you?” asks a nameless soldier (Jesse Plemons) in fatigues, wearing a pair of sunglasses as red as can be, pointing a loaded gun and casually scratching his cheek. In a film filled with several numbingly shocking — and, yes, shockingly numb — moments, this is perhaps the most tantalising.

We wait for Alex Garland’s much-anticipated *Civil War* to finally address the Donald Trump-sized elephant in the room. However, it is not to be.

One can only surmise why Garland has chosen to go down this road, of a divided America at war with each other, and then opted to remove all the signposts.

The English writer-director had drawn some negative chatter about playing with fire at a time when the US stands so polarised ahead of its presidential election. Could that be the reason his *Civil War* draws battle lines which don’t fall along any noticeable Red and Blue lines?

A more charitable explanation is that he intends *Civil War* to be a parable of our times, where widening societal divides, left unchecked, could lead even the first world to this madness.

The land of the free is, of course, also the land of freely available guns, consumerism, huge inequalities, anti-immigrant rhetoric, and Disney World. So, casual, mindless violence sits next to casual, mindless oases of indifference. Snipers shoot from picture-perfect houses set amidst vast greens. Teenage killers



pose happily in between hanging men who are bleeding to death. And there is no telling one side from the other.

The only two distinguishable opposites are a President desperately hanging on to power (Offerman), who has entered his ‘third term’,

which means he has gone against the Constitution; and some heroic journalists.

The latter, riding an SUV into the heart of the battle, include celebrated war photographer Lee (an achingly exhausted Dunst), her gung-ho reporter Joel (a painful Moura), a

wannabe war photographer Jessie (an out-of-depth Spaeny), and the dyed-in-the-wool Sammy (a ticking-the-boxes Henderson).

As per the snatches of information which come our way, a ‘Florida Alliance’ comprising the unlikely team of California and Texas has declared secession from the US government. Now these ‘Western Forces’, which may or may not have help from some other states, are headed to the White House to take over the country.

The brainwave that Joel and Lee are chasing is to get the President’s interview before that happens, if it does, and photograph him at it. As per Joel, “it’s the only story left to tell”. Huh? Along the way, horrors pile on, as they do when people turn upon people, including a mass grave, hanging bodies, random firing, sniper shootout etc etc, but Garland focuses more often than not on the photos taken by Lee and Jessie.

It doesn’t occur to Joel to ask questions even when they reach a refugee camp where people left homeless overnight are sheltering, with perhaps many stories left to tell. Instead, he joyously joins a group of children who are skipping ropes, even as Lee and Jessie have a

casual conversation about life as their photo roll dries in the breeze.

It doesn’t say much for journalism as practised by Joel and Lee, or by Jessie, who is like a child let loose with a camera. However, it perhaps says much for how immune one quickly becomes to things around us.

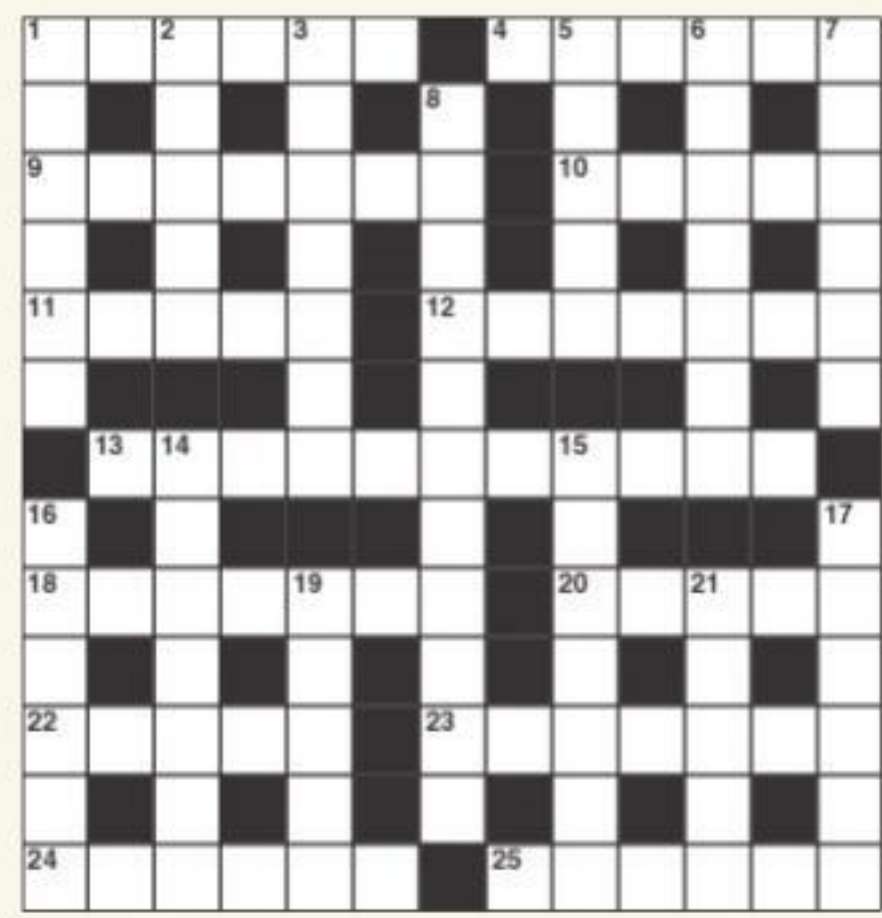
As helicopters hover overhead and Humvees roll on the ground, one wonders whether Garland is also drawing a parallel to the many wars America has waged in distant lands, casually indifferent to the destruction it wreaks.

Now, as Garland shocks us with visuals of the war reaching the White House, with its defences shattered by the ‘rebels’ professionally and ruthlessly — and as we watch it in the knowledge of the January 6, 2021, ‘insurrection’ following Trump’s loss — tragedy hits home in the figure of Dunst.

The veteran of many a combat, who draws her camera when others would flee, crumbles before our eyes in the face of what is befalling all that ‘journalism’ is meant to uphold.

The tragedy of *Civil War* — and its journalism — is that she is the only good story it tells.

CROSSWORD 5343



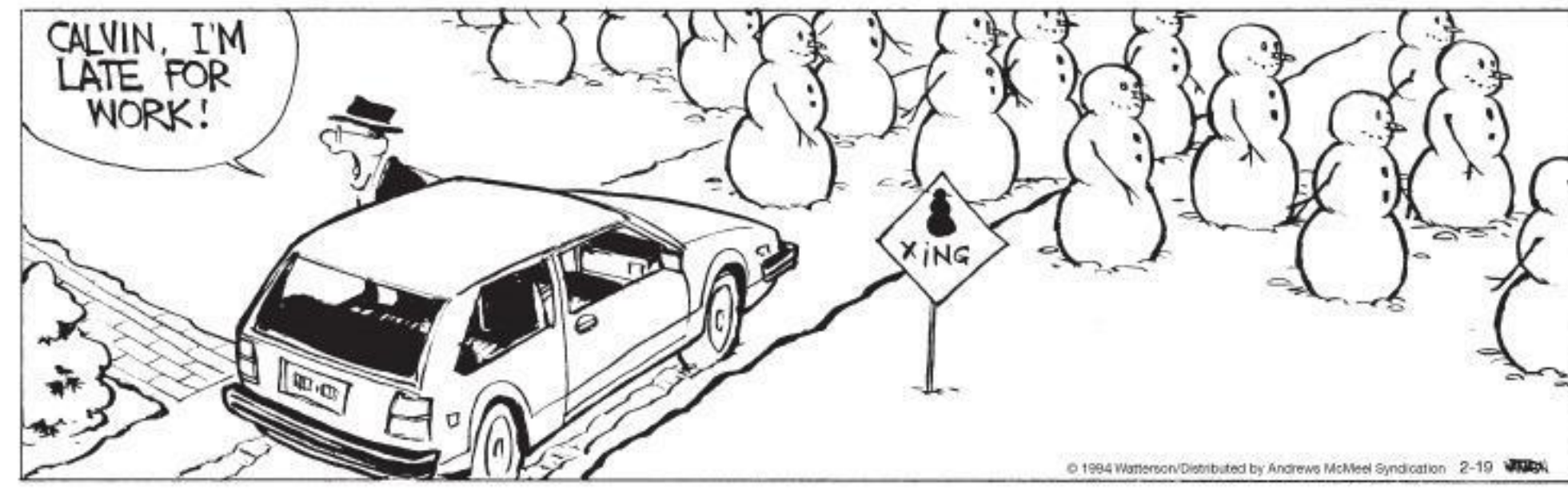
- ACROSS**
- 1 Quiet chap's drink? (6)
 - 4 Pilot's error did the damage (6)
 - 9 Hang on for doctor coming to a painful complaint (4,3)
 - 10 Where the goat goes without corn (5)
 - 11 Ten is about all right as a symbol (5)
 - 12 It ends a flight in two ways (7)
 - 13 Star usherette? (7,4)
 - 18 He mingles with the crowd to get food (7)
 - 20 A question of choice (5)
 - 22 Find me in a disturbed state (5)
 - 23 Here in France a cape is needed for the extreme cold (7)
 - 24 Quick, the doctor's in the river (6)
 - 25 Renee's calm disposition (6)
- DOWN**
- 1 A steed in not very frisky form (6)
 - 2 A person is surprised if you take him this (5)
 - 3 Elevated road had flooded (7)
 - 5 Nut found in a ripe Canadian peach (5)
 - 6 Suggested one politician was untruthful (7)
 - 7 Objects to nights out? (6)
 - 8 Unlawful gatherings? (6,5)
 - 14 Self-praise arises when times go badly (7)
 - 15 The end of the current recession (3,4)
 - 16 Intelligence team headed by a copper (6)
 - 17 Modest tea set out (6)
 - 19 Stay from December 1st to spring (5)
 - 21 One-man woman (5)

Solutions Crossword 5342: Across: 1 Observe, 5 Miller, 8 Round and round, 9 Sital, 10 Satchel, 11 Stride, 12 Whined, 15 Auction, 17 Upset, 19 One for the road, 20 Testy, 21 Striker, 23 Down: 1 Ogres, 2 Squash rackets, 3 Riddled, 4 Ernest, 5 Merit, 6 Laughing stock, 7 Raddled, 11 Seaport, 13 Hauteur, 14 Unites, 16 Ivory, 18 Tudor

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

It is as hard to _____ when men are sneering at you as when they are shooting at you - Woodrow Wilson (2,4,4)

GMOOR **EENPDD**

CNTUU **ABLPYY**

SOLUTION: GROOM, UNCUR, DEFEND, BFLAY
Answer: It is as hard to **defend** when men are sneering at you as when they are shooting at you - Woodrow Wilson

Difficulty Level 5s

Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

SUDOKU 5537

9	6		8					
1		2	5					3
7								2
1		2		3				
2		5	9			4		
4			8			6		
6								9
4		3	2					6
3		7		2				

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5536

3	4	6	5	8	9	2	1	7
7	2	1	4	3	6	9	8	5
8	5	9	2	1	7	3	6	4
1	3	5	8	7	4	6	9	2
2	8	7	6	9	3	5	4	1
6	9	4	1	2	5	8	7	3
5	1	8	9	4	2	7	3	6
4	6	3	7	5	8	1	2	9
9	7	2	3	6	1	4	5	8

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

MOU - EIL



EIL & Detect Technologies Pvt.Ltd. signed an MoU for Real Time Artificial Intelligence based Monitoring for Implementing Safe Practices at Construction Sites & Progress Monitoring for clients in India & abroad. The MoU was signed by R Gupta, Dir. (Proj.), EIL, & TK Mishra, Chief Strategy Officer, Detect Technologies Private Ltd. in the presence of V Shukla, CMD, EIL & V Kumar, Chief Business Officer & R Ramchandran, Dir., Detect Technologies Pvt. Ltd.

FOUNDATION DAY — PNB

Celebrating its 130th Foundation Day at PNB's Corporate Office in New Delhi, PNB unveiled its commemorative history book, introduced new digital offerings & launched a few CSR initiatives – all aimed at honoring the bank's rich legacy, enhancing customer experience & contributing to environmental sustainability & community empowerment.



EVENT — NBCC



Public Sector Day 2024 was celebrated recently at New Delhi's SCOPE Complex. On this occasion, the first-ever PSUs' Club Scope Social Interaction Centre was successfully delivered to SCOPE. The project was executed by NBCC Services Limited (NSL) at a cost of over Rs 9 Crores.

FELICITATION CEREMONY — INDIANOIL

Sukla Mistry, Dir. (Refineries), IndianOil has been conferred with an honorary Doctorate degree in a pre-convocation ceremony held at the SCOPE Convention Centre in New Delhi. The degree was presented by Dr. Ananya Mukherjee, Vice-Chancellor, Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence for her contribution in recognition of her unique contributions to the Indian refinery and petrochemical sectors.



FOUNDATION DAY — PNB



PNB celebrated its 130th Foundation Day recently, wherein the bank organized various activities to commemorate its glorious history – health check-up camps organized by Dehradun's at various locations, distribution of school bags to needy students & fans to institutions that need them. On the occasion, Circle Head, Dehradun, Viraj Dogra paid tribute to the visionary founders of the bank & expressed gratitude to its esteemed customers.

INAUGURATION — MUTHOOT FINANCE

Muthoot Finance has further solidified its presence of 6400+ branches in India with the grand inauguration of its first-ever Delhi Metro Rail Station branch in Okhla NSIC. The ceremony held recently was graced by esteemed dignitaries including Robin Hibu, Special Commissioner of Delhi Police, alongside Alexander George Muthoot, Joint MD of The Muthoot Group.



AWARENESS PROGRAM — DISTRICT WEST



Under the guidance & leadership of Dr. Kinny Singh, IAS, DEO (West) organized a special awareness program for women voters under the aegis of SVEEP recently at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University in Dwarka. Manisha Saxena, IAS, DG, M/o Tourism, GoI, graced the occasion as its Chief Guest. Nukkad Natak & a cultural program by the artist of Nirmal Chaya & students of Shivaji College was also organized.

CHAMPIONSHIP

Powerful performances were seen across all categories at the India Open International Karate DO Championship, which took place in New Delhi's Talkatora Stadium. Kids from all over India participated in it & did well, particularly those from Delhi NCR. Ankit Thapa & Vyom Pal received gold medals in the kumite competition. Viraj Katayyan, Saanvi Vashishtha, Shreyans, & Raag Sirohi all performed admirably & earned bronze medals.



CORPORATE BRIEFS

INAUGURATION—CCIC

Zena Chung, Founder & President, Indo-Korea Business Culture Centre (IKBCC) and Economic Trade policy advisor for Gyeongsangbuk-do province of South Korea along with Heikki Ranta Chairman, Finncham Korea visited the Cottage at Janpath and appreciated the efforts of the Cottage in showcasing diverse range of Art and Craft from different parts of India in a elegant display and stated that they recommend the Cottage as a one stop destination of authentic Handicrafts and Souvenirs in India. During their Visit, Manoj Lal, Managing Director, The Central Cottage Industries Corporation of India Ltd highlighted the opportunities for Korean Enterprises to source Indian Handicrafts through the Cottage network across the country.



PUBLIC SECTOR DAY CELEBRATION—SCOPE

As part of its Public Sector Day celebrations, SCOPE inaugurated the 'SCOPE Social Interaction Centre' at the SCOPE Complex in New Delhi. SSC was inaugurated by SK Gupta, Chairman, SCOPE & CMD, GAIL in the presence of Atul Sobti, DG, SCOPE, BK Upadhyay, VC, SCOPE & CMD, Goa Shipyard, Dr. Vasundhara Upmanyu, Joint Secy., Department of Public Enterprises, Lucas L. Kamsuan, Joint Secretary, DPE, Michiko Miyamoto, Country Director, ILO India, Gurdeep Singh, CMD, NTPC, KS Murthy, CMD, BHEL, Amarendu Prakash, Chairman, SAIL, Vartika Shukla, CMD, EIL, KP Mahadevaswamy, CMD, NBCC, PK Purwar, CMD, MTNL, Members, SCOPE Executive Board, Chairmen, Directors of PSEs & Senior officials from ILO, DPE, SCOPE associates were also present. During the event, a coffee table book, 'Samaveta' - a succinct representation of vision and role of SCOPE, & a special issue of SCOPE's monthly magazine KALEIDOSCOPE on 'PSEs - Envisioning Viksit Bharat' were also released.



ANANTH TECHNOLOGIES - AWARD

ATL Founder, CEO & Chairman Dr. Pavuluri Subba Rao has been conferred with the Aeronautical Society of India (ASI)'s 'Aryabhata award' and also presented with the title of ASI's 'Distinguished Fellow'. The Aryabhata award is in recognition of Dr. Rao's tremendous lifetime contribution to the promotion of Astronautics in India. It is a great honor to receive this prestigious award from S Somanath, President, ASI and Chairman, ISRO and from Dr Kiran Kumar, former Chairman ISRO. Dr. Rao was a scientist at ISRO and in 1992 incorporated Ananth Technologies Limited to indigenously design and develop some of the most sophisticated avionics for ISRO and Defense in India. Ananth currently employees 1600+ across its three Centers of Excellence in Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Thiruvananthapuram. ATL has contributed to 98 satellites and 78 launch vehicles so far for Indian space programs.



RUSSIAN EMBASSY - CYCLE RALLY

On April 14, New Delhi hosted the Russian-Indian friendship cycling rally dedicated to the 77th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the two countries and the 40th anniversary of the first Indian cosmonaut Rakesh Sharma's spaceflight as part of the Soviet-Indian crew. The event was organized by the Russian Embassy in India jointly with the Confederation of Indian Cyclists. It brought together more than 600 people — the Embassy's staff, compatriots living in India, students of local and Russian universities, representatives of the diplomatic corps and the public, journalists — united by a passion for cycling. Among its participants was Russian Ambassador to India Denis Alipov who underscored the significance of such events that confirm the strong friendship ties between the two countries. On April 3, the 40th anniversary of the first-ever Indian space flight aboard the Soviet Soyuz T-11 spacecraft, the Russian ambassador to India extended his wishes to all the Indians. Sharma scripted history by becoming the first Indian to reach outer space on board the Soviet rocket Soyuz T-11, launched from Baikonur Cosmodrome in the then Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic.



CONCOR and PSA MESA Supply Chain Pte. Ltd. have signed an MoU recently to collaborate in offering seamless and cost-effective end-to-end logistics service to customers. The MoU was signed in New Delhi in the presence of Sanjay Swarup, CMD, CONCOR & Vincent Ng, Regional CEO of Middle East South Asia, PSA International, along with senior officials from CONCOR and PSA.

Punjab & Sind Bank To facilitate farmers and traders in providing low interest rate loans, Punjab & Sind Bank exchanged a MoU with the WDRA in the presence of Swarup Kumar Saha, MD & CEO Punjab & Sind Bank, TK Manoj Kumar, Chairperson, WDRA and other senior officers of Punjab & Sind Bank and WDRA. The MoU was signed with the intent of promoting awareness about finance against e-NWR (electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipt). Combined with the inherent security and negotiability of the e-NWR system, the Produce Marketing Loan will go a long way in improving rural liquidity and increasing farmers income.

SOUTH DISTRICT Office of District Election Officer, South Delhi orchestrated a remarkable event, the Walk2Vote - Walkathon. The event was organised under the Systematic Voters Education & Electoral Participation initiative of Election Commission of India. The Walk2Vote - Walkathon commenced from the Office of District Magistrate (South District), MB Road, Saket, & culminated at The Garden of Five Senses, Saidulajab, Saket. The event witnessed a confluence of district election officials, students from colleges & schools, & members of the general public, all united in the spirit of voter awareness & participation. The Walkathon transitioned seamlessly into a vibrant cultural program, graced by esteemed dignitaries including District Magistrate & District Election Officer Mekala Chaitanya Prasad, Additional District Magistrate Dr. Pranjal Hazarika, & SDM Election Ms. Anita Rana.

Collaboration OF NIFTEM-K & University of Melbourne NIFTEM Kundli & the University of Melbourne have signed an MoU to boost research & academic cooperation in food processing technology. The agreement, finalized on April 12, 2024, saw the presence of Dr. Surinder Singh Chauhan from Melbourne India Postgraduate Academy & Dr. Harinder Singh Oberoi, Dir. of NIFTEM-K.

TRANSSION INDIA A new report from CyberMedia Research (CMR), India's premier technology market research and advisory firm, reveals a dynamic shift in consumer preferences within the country's mobile phone market. While feature phones remain a lifeline for many, India is experiencing a surge in digital acceleration, driving a renewed interest in affordable 4G smartphones and even 5G offerings within the sub-INR 10,000 segment. Arijet Talapatra, CEO, Transsion India, said, "itel's focus on device features & user-friendly design not only advocates user preference, but also ensures that individuals in deep Bharat stay connected with their loved ones, access important information, and become an important part of India's socio-economic development."

DISTRICT EAST Amol Srivastava, IAS, District Magistrate (East Delhi) & Returning Officer for East Delhi Parliamentary Constituency informed that in the run-up for the forthcoming general election scheduled for 25.05.2024 in Delhi, the district administration is taking all requisite measures well in advance to ensure free, fair, participative & peaceful manner conduct of the election. He further informed that East Delhi Parliamentary Constituency comprises 10 Assembly Constituency/segments belonging to three revenue districts. While 06 Assembly segments fall under East Delhi, out of the remaining four, two each belong to Shahdara and South East District. A total of 1864 polling stations will be set up to facilitate more than 20 lakh voters of EDC-03. The district administration has taken due measures to ensure that first-time voters numbering more than 21000 approximately do participate in the "Chunav ka Parv, Desh ka Garv".

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
Appropriately for the time of year, today's planetary picture remains optimistic. Seldom will you have been so determined to get your own way, especially where money is concerned. Pay off debts before relationships are soured. You see, money is a surprisingly emotional issue.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
You must be free to branch out in a new direction if that is what you want. It's neither fair nor reasonable for other people to hold you back, however noble and selfless their intentions. Colleagues are expecting more of you than they should, but just for now, you might go along.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Original ideas will fire your imagination, and you'll be ably assisted by the friendly presence of Mercury in a supportive sign, encouraging you to come out into the open and put yourself on the line. Partners have the right to know your intentions.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You were born with profound creative talents but you've not always been diligent in expressing them as they deserve. The result could be a rather frustrating period, but one filled with time to make up for lost opportunities. You'll come out of this period with hope in your heart.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
You have the courage to live in the present even though it does seem inevitable that unfinished business from the past must now be cleared up. You'll manage your personal affairs with great personal tact and diplomacy, much more so than other people expect.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
Amid the chaos and confusion you stand alone, able to think clearly and even come up with answers which have eluded other people for so long. The key may lie in financial arrangements which may now have to be revised. On the other hand, when partners have made their intentions plain, you can carry on.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Statements attributed to a close friend may have been an eye-opener as far as you are concerned. Yet the truth is that you may have closed your mind to a major possibility for much too long. If ever there was a time to open up to new alternatives, now.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
Be wary of those who promise you the earth, but don't mislead other people with your own outrageous claims, either. It's essential that you keep your feet planted firmly on the earth, even if this means you abandon an ideal or two. At least, just temporarily.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
Although you may feel shaken after recent hurts and slights, you must now begin to reorganise your life. If you are totally honest with yourself, you'll realise that there is more than a grain of truth in partners' criticisms of your behaviour.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
You may still be in a state of shock, or, at least, mildly surprised. This is one of those times when people you trust and love are likely to land bombshells on you. However, if you try to play the little lost innocent, it won't work. So, you'd better play it straight and not take any risks.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
This is a romantic time for many people, even if they don't have the courage to admit it. You, on the other hand, are frank and honest enough to be totally open about your feelings, a fact which will help put others at ease. That, after all, is one of your great gifts.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Everything that has occurred in the past few days has positive potential if only you would recognise it. There is no situation so trivial or insignificant that you can't learn something from it of lasting value. Your financial situation is about to shift, as well, so get ready.

PLAYING TODAY

IPL: DC vs SRH, 7.30pm:
Live on: Star Sports Network & streaming on Jio Cinema

IPL SNIPPETS

STANDINGS

TEAM	M	W	L	T	PTS	NRR
RR	7	6	1	0	12	0.677
KKR	6	4	2	0	8	1.399
CSK	7	4	3	0	8	0.529
SRH	6	4	2	0	8	0.502
LSG	7	4	3	0	8	0.123
DC	7	3	4	0	6	-0.074
MI	7	3	4	0	6	-0.133
GT	7	3	4	0	6	-1.303
PK	7	2	5	0	4	-0.251
RCB	7	1	6	0	2	-1.185

Impact Player Rule: Ponting agrees with Rohit, says it's not ideal

Backing India captain Rohit Sharma's view on the Impact Player rule, Delhi Capitals coach Ricky Ponting said it might be good for spectators but not ideal for coaches and players. "I read some interesting answers from Rohit Sharma on this yesterday. The Impact Player rule is taking the all-rounders out of the game a little bit," Ponting told reporters ahead of Delhi Capitals' clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad. "You know you can play your specialists. You can play a specialist batsman down to No.8, and then you can change him in the second innings. Rohit gave examples of Shivam Dube and Washington Sundar not bowling. I think for a coach and for the players, it's probably not ideal, but I think what this game tries to do is entertain people," the legend said. **ENS**

Taking Bumrah off not the right move: Moody

Former Australian all-rounder Tom Moody feels Mumbai Indians did not use pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah optimally during the IPL clash against Punjab Kings which allowed them to fight back from a difficult position and come within touching distance of MI's total. The India mainstay bagged two wickets in the second over, dismissing Curran and Rossouw, but just when PBKS looked down and out, he was taken out of the attack, allowing the home team to claw back. "Again, Mumbai leaning on him so much to turn their fortunes around. He bowled two overs early on and had the Punjab Kings on their back. But, interestingly enough, he didn't bowl another over until the 13th," said the former Australian cricketer on Star Sports Cricket Live. "He's at the peak of his powers at the moment. And that's my point of where I think the Mumbai Indians let the Punjab Kings back into this contest." **PTI**

Hardik fined Rs 12 lakh for slow over rate

Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya has been fined Rs 12 lakhs for his team maintaining a slow over rate during their thrilling nine-run victory over Punjab Kings in the Indian Premier League. Mumbai Indians, thanks to Suryakumar Yadav's blazing 78 off 53 deliveries, posted a competitive 192/7 and then dismissed PBKS, despite Ashutosh Sharma's stunning 28-ball 61 and Shashank Singh's 41, for 183 in 19.1 overs. MI rose to seventh from ninth position on the points table following their third win in seven games in IPL 2024. **PTI**

Giants > Kings

Dhoni gives late impetus to CSK innings but Rahul & De Kock make short work of chase with century opening partnership

SYNOPSIS

Despite a late comeback by Chennai Super Kings with the bat, KL Rahul led from the front with a 53-ball 82 as Lucknow Super Giants get back to winning ways.

VENKATA KRISHNA B

APRIL 19

Giant steps straightaway

At the halfway mark, the momentum was very much in favour of Chennai Super Kings after a late burst. On a two-paced pitch, a target of 177 was not going to be easy, if Lucknow stuck to their template of saving wickets and freeing up at the end. On such pitches, playing big hits off the older ball always comes with a risk, especially if one factors in the huge outfield at the Ekana stadium.

So KL Rahul and Quinton de Kock came out with a different template. In home conditions, Lucknow's batsmen have a knack of getting the job done by taking calculated risks. Fully aware of how this pitch would play, Lucknow's openers straightaway got down to putting pressure on Chennai's attack. With Deepak Chahar still struggling, Rahul wasted no time in going after him. A straight six off a good length delivery revealed his intentions. This was not going to be a night when Rahul was content to going at a strike rate in the 120s. So out came those drives and whips as De Kock went at his usual pace. The three sixes and five boundaries in the Powerplay meant Lucknow had 54 runs on board and the asking rate was in control.

For a team used to defending totals with ease at Ekana stadium, what followed was Lucknow showing they can master the chase as well.

A smooth ride

In a season where even totals in excess of 200 haven't been safe, after a strong start, Lucknow didn't need to do anything extraordinary. But it didn't mean Rahul went into a shell. With Matheesha Pathirana being Chennai's trump card, he straightaway put him under pressure, taking him down for a six. Then in Ravindra Jadeja's third over, he played those trademark cuts, against the bowler who was already deflated after Pathirana had dropped De Kock in his previous over.

With the score being 89/0 after 10 overs meant Lucknow were now jogging in their chase. After two quiet overs, they picked up the pace again as Rahul and De Kock slowly shut the door before departing. The only question at that stage was how soon Lucknow would get there and boost their run rate.

But, despite having wickets at hand, they never showed any urgency as they crossed Chennai's total with only an over to spare.

Surprises on and off the field

Unless forced, Chennai isn't a team that likes to change its personnel. But this has been a very strange season, where they have been more proactive with regards to making changes to the XI. For a franchise known to give long ropes to resources they trust massively, it came as a big surprise when Daryl Mitchell was dropped and in came Moeen Ali.

The changes didn't stop there. They continued to open the batting with Ajinkya Rahane. But, when they lost Rachin Ravindra and Rituraj Gaikwad inside the Powerplay, in walked Jadeja. Chennai's coaching staff have been talking about having fluidity in the middle order where



(Above) LSG skipper KL Rahul slammed 3 sixes and 9 fours en route his match-winning 53-ball 82 against CSK and shared a 134-run opening partnership with Quinton de Kock (right). **Sportzpics**



everyone has to be comfortable at any position. But with Jadeja coming in at 4, at the fag end of the Powerplay, one had to keep an eye on how he went against spinners. Thanks to his limitations as a T20 batsman, spinners have found it easy to tie down Jadeja.

But for a change, Jadeja overcame that weakness. He is a batsman with a strike rate of 97.02 against leg-spinners in T20s, and Ravi Bishnoi nearly had him off the second ball he bowled to Jadeja. But thereafter despite cutting down on the risk, the left-hander managed to find boundaries of Bishnoi and Krunal Pandya.

As Chennai lost the wickets of Rahane, Shivam Dube and Impact Player Sameer Rizvi, Jadeja in the company of Moeen went back to do what he knows best.

Keep the score ticking without taking risks. It meant Chennai went 34 deliveries without a boundary, but with half the side back in the hut, their immediate focus was on keeping wickets in the hand for a late surge.

The finishing touches

Having gone at a run rate of 7.06 into the death overs, for Chennai to remain in the game at the halfway stage, they needed boundaries. After finding a four in the 15th over – their first since the 10th over – Jadeja brought up his fifty with Deepak Hooda tipping an offering over the boundary rope for a six. It signalled a change of momentum.

EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER

HOT HEADS, CALM MINDS AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN AT THE GAME



MS Dhoni smashed a 9-ball 28 against LSG. **PTI**

MSD's 101

You know what to expect. You wonder perhaps if you are being naive expecting it to happen every time. Yet, you believe. If you have been a fan of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, you have had this feeling many times. And repeatedly in IPL 2024, he has delivered. He smashed the ball around at the Wankhede, stepping it up a notch at the Wankhede, smashing three sixes in the last over to push Chennai's score to match-win-

ning. And in Lucknow, he made it happen once again, smashing a 9-ball 28. The master of the last over, Dhoni went after Yash Thakur, hitting a six and two fours. That six over long on, was MSD 101. Standing deep in the crease, expecting the bowler to miss the length just by a fraction, then smashing it over the fence. It was a near replica of that Wankhede six, just without the twirl. And it travelled 101m.

Rachin needs a spark



After starting the tournament on an impressive note with scores (and more importantly, eye-catching knocks) of 37 and 46, Rachin Ravindra has gone off the boil. His scores since the start have been 2, 12, 15, and 21 coming to Lucknow and he needed runs to get himself going again. But it wasn't to be as Mohsin Khan sent him back for a first-ball duck. From looking like arguably the signing of the auction in the early stages, Rachin's slump has been quite sharp. CSK aren't known for chopping and changing but they have already had to take a call on one New Zealander, with Daryl Mitchell left out against LSG. Rachin needs to find a spark again as his purple patch in India starts to fade off.

Not a happy homecoming for Rizvi

Despite having to bat first, Chennai were made to use a batting Impact Sub as they struggled to find momentum. So when they lost their main man Shivam Dube cheaply, they quickly turned to local lad Sameer Rizvi who comes with a reputation for big-hitting, having made his name in the UP league. But the Meerut lad lasted just five deliveries with little impact. His dismissal was reminiscent of Ollie Pope's in the recent Test series, for how far out he had come out of his crease to be completely beaten by the turn and bounce generated by Krunal Pandya. After a cameo on debut, Rizvi has had a couple of tough outings. A learning curve for the youngster.



FINE CATCH

Jaddu jaadu



Matheesha Pathirana, who had earlier in the season taken a stunning reflex catch at short-third, dropped a skier to

give Quinton de Kock a reprieve. The bowler was Ravindra Jadeja. KL Rahul mishit one behind square, Mustafizur Rahman ran alongside the ball almost the whole way from short third, didn't bother putting in a dive, and escorted it to four. The bowler was Ravindra Jadeja. He wasn't pleased. But late in the piece, Rahul smashed one towards point. But this time, the fielder was Ravindra Jadeja. The ball was flying to his left, and Jadeja flung himself as he does often and put his left hand arm out for a stunner. A few replays were needed to confirm the catch but on a forgettable night on the field otherwise, Jadeja came up with a catch to remember.

We'll have more good days than bad: Head on SRH's fearless approach

PRATYUSHRAJ

NEW DELHI, APRIL 19

FEW BOWLING units would not dread a line-up that wields the destructive capabilities of Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Aiden Markram and Heinrich Klaasen. After racking up two scores in excess of 250 in the tournament so far – with the two highest totals in Indian Premier League history – there is a bubbling buzz around them.

Openers Head and Abhishek have scored 235 and 211 runs at intimidating strike rates of 199 and 197 respectively. Klaasen, who came out to bat at No.3 in the last match, is striking at 199. Then there is Markram, who can change the tempo any time.

Will they reach the 300-run mark in the tournament? If one believes the words of Sunrisers captain Pat Cummins, they are looking to do that. In his dressing room speech post their win against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) Cummins made it clear that he wants to instill fear in opposition bowlers' minds with their aggressive

strokeplay.

"It's not going to work every game. But I can tell you, everyone's terrified of when they come up against us and we have got to blow some teams out of the water before they have even walked out on the field."

Sunrisers' approach has been to go on an all-out attack against all opponents. In this tournament, the 250-run mark has been breached four times, Sunrisers doing so twice.

Head says the mantra of their team is to adapt to conditions quickly and maximise the Powerplay.

"Here at the Sunrisers, the aim has been to take control of the Powerplay. Myself and Abhi (Abhishek) and Klaas (Klaasen) are able to do that," Head said during a select media interaction on Friday.

The Australian opener, who has had a great 18 months for his country, said captain Cummins and the coaching staff are completely backing this fearless approach and even their Plan B is to keep the scoreboard moving with a good strike rate as it gives their team "more good days than bad."

"Our Plan B probably came out against Punjab Kings, where it didn't quite go to



Travis Head (right) and Abhishek Sharma have scored 235 and 211 runs at intimidating strike rates of 199 and 197 respectively. **Sportzpics/BCCI**

plan," Head referred to the match where they lost three wickets inside the Powerplay.

"It was probably the worst we've played

this tournament and we found a way to get to 185 (182) by keeping that positive approach and keeping the runs moving. Yes, we're going to lose wickets. Our aim is to set

8 SCORES ABOVE 220

SRH - 287/3, 277/3
KKR - 272/7, 223/6
RCB - 262/7
MI - 246/5, 234/5
RR - 224/8

a target and defend it. We're aggressive but we still sum up the conditions and understand that it's not going to work always. But it's working so far.

"There's going to be a game where it may not come off and we've seen that against the Kings in the first half, but Nitish (Reddy) played an exceptional knock to get us to where we needed. Also to understand that yeah, it's okay if it doesn't work and we got to keep the belief and keep moving and hopefully we'll have more good days than bad."

On balancing between formats

Head says for him Test cricket is the ultimate format but he tries to balance it as

per the World Cups.

"I still feel like Test cricket will be the ultimate one for most countries. Obviously there's some situational stuff with some different countries with opportunity in terms of how many Test matches they play compared to others. But I think Test cricket is ultimate," he said.

"I feel you've to prioritise the formats. This year, there is a T20 World Cup, so my focus is to play more T20 cricket. There's a T20 World Cup coming up, so everyone will be eager to play T20 cricket and then it'll flip the cycle again.

And we have a Champions Trophy next year and then another one-day World Cup. So everyone's mind will start turning to one-day. I am someone who wants to play three formats, just got a taste of that. I'm very new to it all and it is tough. We don't see many guys do it for long periods of time. So some things may need to give in and one may end up missing a series here or there but ultimately,

I think you want to be playing Test cricket as much as you can and take the white-ball formats as per the World Cups," the left-hander said.

Blowout in Bishkek: Deepak, Sujeet miss weigh-in, Aman outclassed

MIHIR VASAVDA
APRIL 19

IN THREE out of the last four Olympics, India's male wrestlers have returned with at least one medal. This time, they are struggling to even qualify.

Owing to a combination of factors — misfortune, luck of draw and sub-par quality talent and limited run-up tournaments — India's men's freestyle wrestlers have been unable to win quotas for the Paris Olympics, extending their abysmal run. It leaves them in a major spot of bother with just one more chance left to qualify at the World Qualifiers from May 9-12.

The first day of the Asian Olympic Qualifiers for India with one of the country's top medal potential, Deepak Punia, being stopped from competing in the 86 kg category as he reached the venue late, even though he reached Bishkek against all odds after being stuck in flooded Dubai since Tuesday.

The nightmarish day, from India's point of view, ended with a prodigy, Aman Sehrawat, being handed a harsh reality check

after he was pinned by Uzbekistan's Gullomjon Abdullaev in a little over two minutes in the 57 kg category semifinal.

India should still earn quotas in these two weight classes during the final qualification tournament in Istanbul next month.

But in other weight divisions — 65 kg where Sujeet Kalkal, too, was not allowed to compete; 74 kg where Jaideep could not make it beyond the quarterfinals; and the heavyweights (97 kg and 125 kg) where India have traditionally struggled and in which Deepak Nehra and Sumit lost in their first bouts — India is staring at a realistic possibility of missing out on Olympic berths in men's divisions.

India has so far secured just one Olympic quota in wrestling, with Antim Panghal getting the job done at the World Championships last year in the 53 kg category. On Saturday, Vinesh Phogat will hope to add to India's tally when she returns to international competition in more than a year, competing in 50 kg.

The picture might not have been so gloomy if Punia and Kalkal were not struck by misfortune. The two wrestlers, who were stuck at the Dubai International Airport since Tuesday, reached Bishkek, the host city,



Deepak Punia (L) and Sujeet Kalkal missed the weigh-in because of a delayed flight from Dubai. File

shortly after 8 am on Friday. By then, however, the weigh-in, where wrestlers have to record their body weights and show they meet the criteria, had already begun.

Although the duo pleaded their cases, the organisers did not make any exemptions. Even the pleas made by Wrestling Federation of India president Sanjay Singh fell on deaf ears.

Punia and Kalkal, along with their coach Kamal Malikov and physio Shubham Gupta, were stranded at the Dubai airport owing to

India have so far secured just one Olympic quota in wrestling, with Antim Panghal getting the job done at the World Championships last year in the 53 kg category.

the record rainfall that led to floods and caused disruption. According to Kalkal's father Dayanand, they spent two nights sleeping on the floor of the airport and could not get proper food.

As the flood situation improved, Punia and Kalkal's flight — which was originally scheduled to leave at 10.45 pm local time — eventually took off post-midnight. The delay in departure meant that Punia and Kalkal, who were already in a race against time, could not reach the venue where the weigh-in was taking place, even though they travelled there straight from the airport.

It is learnt that the organisers pointed out that the rest of the Indian team was already present and an exemption couldn't be made

for just two wrestlers.

Punia, who narrowly missed out on a medal at the Tokyo Olympics, was training in Dagestan, Russia, along with Kalkal, who qualified in the 65 kg category ahead of Tokyo bronze medallist Bajrang Punia.

In their absence, the onus to clinch the first quota in men's freestyle fell on the young shoulders of Aman Sehrawat. The 2023 Asian champion and Asian Games bronze medallist showed why he is considered one of India's rising stars. He notched up comfortable wins over Yerassyl Mukhtaruly of Kazakhstan (10-0) and South Korea's Sunggwon Kim (11-1) to enter the semifinals.

In the must-win bout — only the two finalists are awarded Olympic quotas — Sehrawat fell miserably short. Abdullaev, his seasoned opponent, started aggressively with a take-down in the opening seconds and followed up with a four-point throw. He then managed another take-down and pinned Sehrawat on the mat to wrap up the bout in just 2 minutes and 17 seconds to crush India's hopes.

Whether the same wrestlers travel for the last qualifiers or if the team will be changed based on performances on Friday, is yet unclear.

World qualifiers, the last chance

INDIA'S HOPES of securing a quota in the men's freestyle come down to the final event that will take place in Istanbul from May 9 to 12. The chances of winning a berth are marginally higher at the World event. A majority of the top wrestlers will have already won a quota and will not participate, thus making the draw easier. Secondly, unlike the ongoing Asian qualifiers where only the two finalists are awarded a quota place, the world qualifiers will offer an additional place. A bout will be organised between the two third-placed wrestlers and the winner of that bout will also obtain one quota place for their country.

EXPLAINED
E.

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BRIEFLY

Runner Shalu cleared of doping after DNA test

New Delhi: The National Anti-Doping Agency's appeals' panel has exonerated middle-distance runner Shalu Chaudhary of doping charges and lifted her four-year ban after DNA testing revealed that her urine sample had either been tampered with or contaminated at the time of collection. The 30-year-old Chaudhary was banned last year after she lost her appeal to NADA's disciplinary panel. She was suspended for the alleged use of two substances including a stimulant and peptide hormones. The runner, who is a national-level medallist in 800m, subsequently sought a DNA testing of her urine sample, a plea that was rejected by the disciplinary committee but accepted by the appeals panel. **PTI**

Esha, Bhavesh top trials on Day One

New Delhi: Esha Singh topped the women's 25m pistol qualification while Bhavesh Shekhawat led the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol charts on day one of the Olympic Selection Trials on Friday. Esha totalled 585 across her precision and rapid-fire rounds in the women's sport pistol T1 qualification, to steer two points clear of Simranpreet Kaur Brar, who finished second. Manu Bhaker (582) was a close third while Abhidnya Patil (577) and Rhythm Sangwan (574) were fourth and fifth respectively at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range. In the men's rapid-fire pistol, Bhavesh (580) took the top billing as he was rewarded for being the most consistent shooter through the day. **PTI**

Half marathon winner disqualified

Bangkok: Organisers have revoked He Jie's first place in the Beijing Half Marathon last weekend after an investigation confirmed that three other runners had slowed down to let him win the race. All four runners were disqualified and had to return their medals and award money. Chinese online users had shared the video from the final moments of Sunday's race out of suspicion that it had been rigged. The footage showed three African runners letting He, China's top long-distance runner, move ahead of them shortly before they were about to reach the finish line. The three runners deliberately reduced their pace, according to a statement from a committee set up to investigate the race. **PTI**

Dipa finishes fourth at Apparatus WC

New Delhi: Gymnast Dipa Karmakar signed off with another credible fourth place finish in women's vault final at the FIG Apparatus World Cup, a Paris Olympics qualifying event in Doha. Dipa, who had finished fourth at the Baku Apparatus World Cup in Azerbaijan last month, missed out on a medal by a whisker after coming up with a score of 13.333. Panama's Navas Karla (13.850) claimed the gold medal, while An Chang Ok of Korea (13.833) and Georgianna Valentina (13.466) won the silver and bronze respectively. Dipa had finished sixth in the qualifying round of the Paris Olympics qualifier. The other Indian in fray, Pranati Nayak had failed to qualify for the final after finishing 11th in the qualifying round. Dipa, who battled two knee operations in 2017 and 2019 due to ACL tears and a 21-month suspension due to a doping violation, thus failed to qualify for the Paris Games in vault. **PTI**

Gukesh black with a bang

Playing with black pieces, Indian GM beats Abasov to go into joint lead with Nepo and Nakamura

VINAYAK MOHANARANGAN
APRIL 19

WITH THREE rounds to go at the Candidates, Ian Nepomniachtchi had the top spot in the Open section all to himself. Destiny in his hands. Another shot at being the World Champion.

Then Round 12 happened where a series of results blew the tournament wide open. From an Indian perspective, the day saw D Gukesh force his way back into the reckoning as he masterfully plotted his way to the top of the leaderboard, completing a win with black pieces against Nijat Abasov.

It took a surprise opening, a well-thought-out series of first 14 moves, and a solid end-game, as he displayed maturity that belied his age.

Gukesh, Hikaru Nakamura, and Fabiano Caruana all had to win to keep the pressure on Nepomniachtchi. So, they did. Nepomniachtchi himself had to be held back so that he wouldn't stay in complete control. So, R Praggnanandhaa stepped up, bouncing back from a personally damaging defeat in the previous round.

Gukesh has said on a few occasions that he sees the Candidates as an individual tournament and it is unnatural to expect his fellow countrymen to join hands with him. Pragg and Vidit are now both effectively out of contention for the top spot, but in Round 12, the former did his part for Gukesh's cause. In a match that never edged in anyone's favour, Pragg played out a solid draw against Nepo, who might look back and rue not being more ambitious in this round if he doesn't win the tournament.

And just like that, with two rounds to go, four men are in with a serious shot of winning the event. That Nakamura and Caruana are in the mix is in keeping line with pre-tournament expectations.

That Nepomniachtchi has largely remained in control was also expected, after all, he is the latest challenger to the World Championship title. But Gukesh has impressed one and all, even being in the mix till this time, but now all the more so as he goes into the last two rounds with a genuine shot.

The great Magnus Carlsen doesn't get much wrong when it comes to chess. His assessment to chess.com, "I think it's probably more likely that (Gukesh) will have a bad event than a good event" has been met with a solid response on the boards by the Indian teenager.

The 17-year-old, playing with black, knew he had to force his way through with surprise moves to throw his opponent off at the start. Abasov might be at the bottom of



D Gukesh, playing with black pieces, got the better of Azerbaijan's Nijat Abasov in Round 12. Michal Waluszka/FIDE flickr

the standings but he hadn't lost a match all tournament with white pieces till now so Gukesh charged in.

For his first 14 moves, Gukesh barely took any time off the clock as he reeled off well-prepared moves while Abasov was forced into taking his time.

"I felt I was outplaying him but he did have some drawing chances in the end-game. I surprised him in the opening with this line," Gukesh said in his post-match analysis. He was referring to move 11 where he retreated his knight to h7, a move that GM David Howell said for Chess.com that nearly made him jump out of his chair for the sheer audacity of it. "I just thought this would be an interesting line for the game I mean, it is obviously not one of the main lines but seems quite interesting and it worked in the game so yeah, can only be happy about that," Gukesh added.

From there on, despite Abasov recovering well to the initial challenge, Gukesh remained just ahead before a 40th move blunder by his opponent under time pressure. It helped Gukesh gain control and calmly play out a win. In Round 13, the other two leaders — Nakamura and Nepomniachtchi — face off,

OPEN, ROUND 12 RESULTS

- H Nakamura 1-0 A Firouzja
- N Abasov 0-1 Gukesh D
- F Caruana 1-0 V Gujrathi
- Ian Nepo ½-½ Pragganandhaa R

WOMEN'S, ROUND 12 RESULTS

- K Lagno ½-½ L Tingjie
- A Muzychuk 0-1 R Vaishali
- A Goryachkina ½-½ H Koneru
- N Salimova ½-½ T Zhongyi

STANDINGS: OPEN CATEGORY

Pos.	Player	Points
1.	Gukesh, Nepo, Nakamura	7.5
4.	Caruana	7pts
5.	Pragganandhaa	6 pts
6.	Vidit	5 pts
7.	Firouzja	4.5 pts
8.	Abasov	3 pts

and one or both of them will drop points. Gukesh could potentially be in the lead all by himself if he wins and the two veterans cancel each other out. He takes on the enigmatic Firouzja, the Iran-born French Grandmaster, who is 7th.

Firouzja challenge

But Gukesh's only defeat in the tournament so far came against Firouzja. In the Round 7 game, Gukesh seemed to have a slight advantage till he ran into trouble on the clock and blundered in the end, to suffer a heartbreak. He reflected on that defeat too on Friday.

"In time scrambles anything can happen, that was also not a bad game throughout but yeah I just messed it up under the time pressure. But it happens, you know in 14 rounds of course you are not going to have success. Glad it was over and I got over it."

And so, three pre-event favourites and a youngster will head up the weekend knowing anything is possible. "Whoever plays good chess in the last two rounds and manages to remain focused, I think that person would have a pretty good chance," was Gukesh's matter-of-fact response on what is going to be key.

Olympic medal hopeful shuttlers must dance the stress away

SHIVANI NAIK
APRIL 19

THE CLAMOUR for the Paris medal is going to get relentless by the day for Indian shuttlers. It's in this crucible of unreal stress and singing expectations from the Olympics-bound shuttlers that one hopes the Super Seven headed to the Games don't give up on a very, very important ritual — Insta reels of them dancing away to their favourite numbers.

A happy medley before soppy medals, if you will.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, PV Sindhu, HS Prannoy, Lakshya Sen and Ashwini Ponnappa-Tanisha Crasto, could do with the occasional prance, after a long, exhausting qualification cycle. A flimsy frolic, a trifle of a twirl set to music, would do no harm, even if it irritates the purists.

Satwik-Chirag are most associated with dancing celebrations, after a title victory, and have spoken of giving Arabic Kuthu and Naatu Naatu a try, in the upcoming tournaments. Dance has united the two Indians in success in the past, including a special Gangnam jig at Korean Open. The duo shouldn't shy away from this jolly aspect of their personality — a release, a retreat from

the encumbering pressure.

PV Sindhu had shot some dance reels when Arabic Kuthu and Gomi Gomi hit the airwaves. And there's really no reason why the double Olympic medallist, on whom immense expectations are hung for a third, shouldn't let her hair down once in a while.

HS Prannoy, a Thomas Cup champ, is stuck with a reputation of being too serious and cerebral, and he might well be both. But the seasoned shuttler can shake a leg and reel away the compounding pressure of making an Olympic chance count.

Lakshya Sen's father DK Sen, a coach from the hills, had once spoken of how he incorporated pahaadis in training to improve his footwork. Tanisha is an exuberant personality and Ashwini, though quite introverted, can be trusted to join in, and give her third Olympic outing a happy dancing preamble.

Dance in DNA of Indians

Indians dance; it's in their DNA of self-expression.

Olympics can turn into an athlete's version of deadly dull board exams. In such an environment, shuttlers should solemnly swear to pick their tune from India's many available film songs, and give it a go ahead of Paris, perhaps the only edition where



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty shake a leg on court. File

Breaking (dance) offers a gold medal and freestyle dancing is mainstreamed.

The world's most successful sporting nation USA, gladly celebrates its dancing-athletes. The greatest will always be NBA giant

The greatest — Muhammad Ali — needed no rehearsing to dance in the ring. And he started the tradition of admiring pugilists' dancing feet in sneakers.

Shaquille O'Neal, a natural talent who combined American exhibitionism with a hoot of hip hop hooves. Check out his sideways moonwalking and the freestyle dance-offs with Justin Bieber. Steve Nash did it one better, and Dwight Howard was earnest in following O'Neal's footsteps. But the basketball legends showed their sense of rhythm beyond the dunks and fadeaways, making sport merrier than stats, rings and cut-throat competition.

But it is the other breed of super athletes, who've done dancing justice — the boxers. While Evander Holyfield pulled off a stiff shoulder variant of cha cha on Dancing with the Stars, Floyd Mayweather was seriously impressive cracking a Paso doble style ahead of his fight with welterweight Brit Ricky Hatton. "I look at dancing as part of my workout," Mayweather would say.

The greatest — Muhammad Ali — needed no rehearsing to dance in the ring. And he started the tradition of admiring pugilists' dancing feet in sneakers.

Holyfield truly put dance on the athlete's pedestal by hiring a ballet instructor as part of his training routine. Sport is more grace than macho, and the biggest eye-popping name to acknowledge this was Arnold Schwarzenegger who took ballet classes to perfect bodybuilding poses.

Famous footballer Rio Ferdinand had a ballet scholarship, and Kobe Bryant is known to have taken tap dancing classes to strengthen his ankles. But it's no secret that dance accords rhythm, muscular control and coordination to body movements in sport, and smoothens transitions as one move segues into the next. And while four months out is too late to get Indian shuttlers to include dance in their training, nobody ought to put them in a corner for a small jig here and there, that goes up occasionally on their social feed.

Mark Knopfler's Walk of Life was a good soundtrack merging sport with a little sashy. But the Indian shuttlers — they are clued in alright, and will find their own perfect EDM. Medals may or may not follow, but by god, there will be dancing.