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Hindustan Times

IPL imprint missing in World T20 India squad

Rasesh Mandani
letters@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: Every time India's national selectors sit to pick the squad for an ICC T20 World Cup, fans hope they will channel the spirit of 2007—when a young team led by Mahendra Singh Dhoni led the country to its only world title in the shortest format at the inaugural edition.

Few Indian teams since then have managed to replicate their verve, and that, in essence, will be the challenge for the squad being led to the 2024 edition by Rohit Sharma. Many of the old, experienced pros are back in the mix as the selectors chose to ignore the Indian Premier League (IPL) and stuck to "tried and tested" players. In other words, they went with a formula that hasn't paid dividends in 17 years.

In a format that has evolved so rapidly in recent times, India will now have to hope that their older stars are ready to approach the tournament with the unre-

BCCI names 15-man squad

BATTERS Rohit Sharma (captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Shivam Dube

BOWLERS Jasprit Bumrah, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Mohd Siraj

WICKET KEEPERS Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson

ALL ROUNDER Hardik Pandya (vice captain), Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel

RESERVES: Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Khaleel Ahmed and Avesh Khan



strained abandon it requires. The squad, on the whole, has hardly any surprises once you accept you're in more-of-the-same territory. So, as expected, Rohit Sharma will lead the side and out-of-form Hardik Pandya will be vice-captain — both appoint-

ments were announced by BCCI secretary Jay Shah as early as February.

The return of Rishabh Pant, 16 months after a horrific car crash, does give the line-up a heart-warming feel though. It will be his

continued on →7

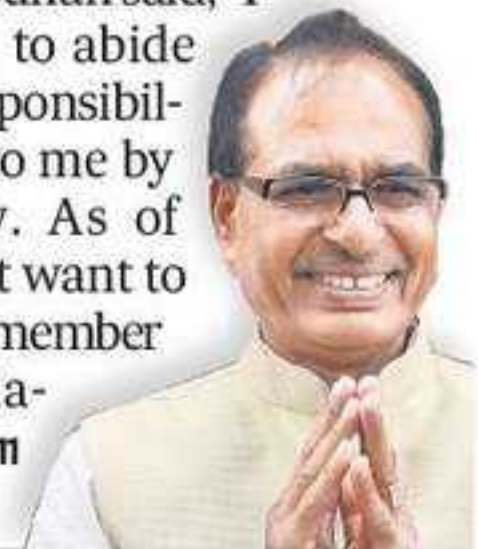
NO DOUBT THAT MODI IS COMING BACK AS PM, SAYS SHIVRAJ

Shruti Tomar
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BHOPAL: Shivraj Singh Chouhan, 65, the former CM of Madhya Pradesh and the BJP candidate from the Vidisha Lok Sabha seat, said he is confident that people will vote the party to power at the Centre for a third time.

"I am confident that this time too the people will vote for the BJP to make Narendra Modi Prime Minister for the third time," Chouhan said in an interview to HT.

When asked whether he sees himself as a senior party leader or a Union minister in the Capital after PM Modi said at a rally that he wants to take Chouhan to Delhi, Chouhan said, "I am ready to abide by any responsibility given to me by the party. As of now, I just want to become a member of Parliament." →P11



'Why was Kejriwal arrested just before polls': SC asks ED to reply

Utkarsh Anand
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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday posed a series of probing questions to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) while hearing Arvind Kejriwal's petition against his arrest in the Delhi excise policy case — and even redirected to the agency a question by his counsel about the

arrest coming close to the Lok Sabha elections — as it underlined the importance of liberty and highlighted concerns over the timing and procedural aspects of the Delhi CM's arrest.

"Liberty is extremely, extremely important. We can't deny that," said the bench, asking the agency to come prepared on May 3 with answers to a number of pointed queries. →P3

Delhi court dismisses Sisodia's second bail plea in liquor case

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Tuesday denied bail to senior Aam Aadmi Party leader Manish Sisodia, arrested in connection with alleged irregularities in the promulgation of

the Delhi excise case. Sisodia sought bail on the grounds that he has been detained for over 11 months and has not been implicated in the alleged offence. →P3



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NUMBER THEORY

Caste divisions and assets: The political traction of redistribution in India

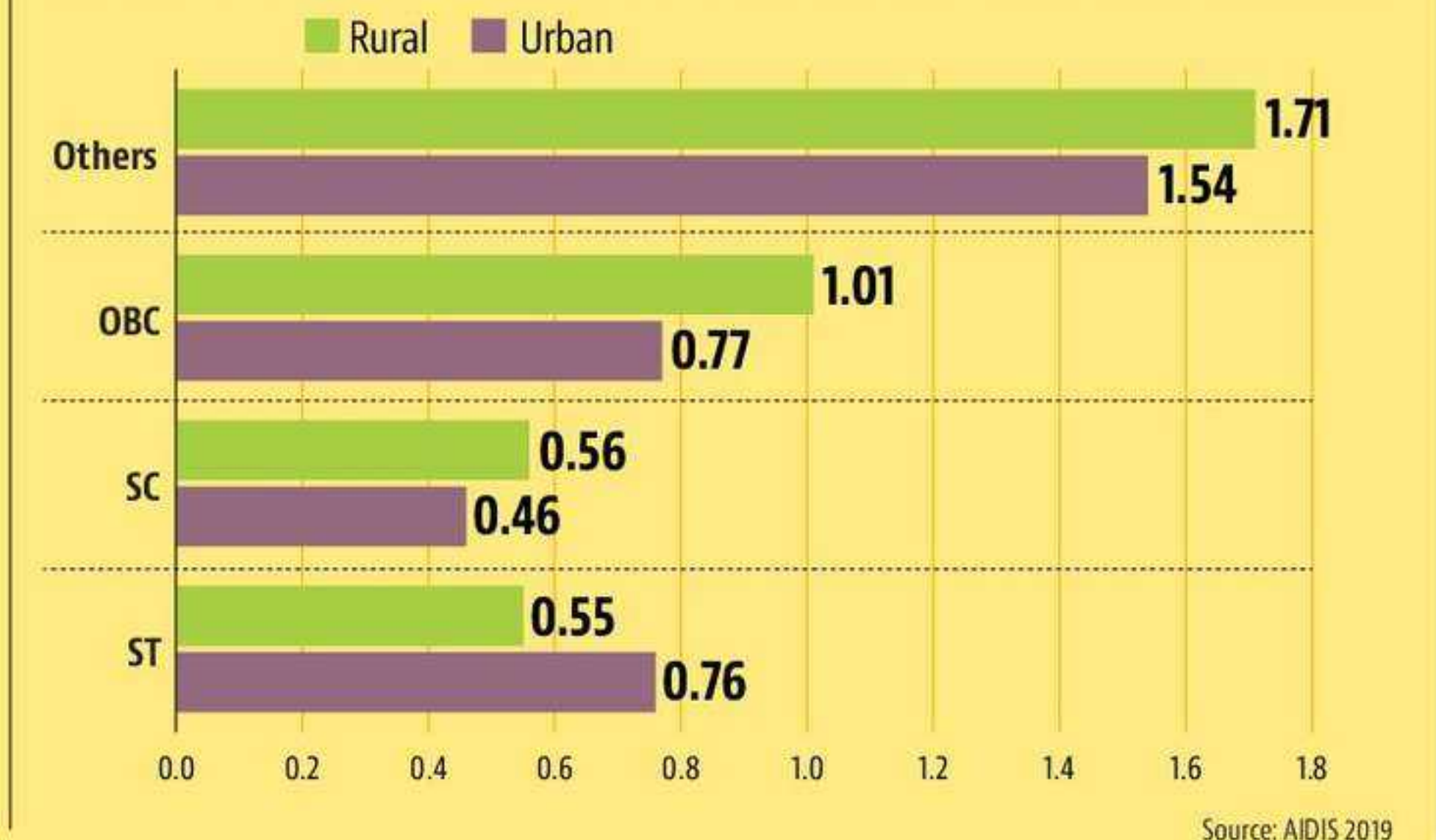
By Abhishek Jha and Roshan Kishore

The first part of this series looked at the link between caste and asset inequality in India using AIDIS data and found that while the OBC, SC and ST population has a much smaller share in asset ownership than in population, the extent of relative asset poverty among OBCs is much lower than what it is for the SC-ST population. But is caste the only determinant of asset inequality in India? Here is what the AIDIS data tells us about this question.

1 Rural-urban divide matters when it comes to asset inequality

Whether one lives in a city or a village also plays a big role in determining asset inequality in India. Just 31% of the population in AIDIS is located in urban areas, but it owns 46% of the total assets, which makes its relative share in asset ownership 1.5 compared to just 0.8 in rural areas. In fact, a slightly deeper analysis of AIDIS data shows that social hierarchies change significantly when it comes to asset inequality in rural and urban areas. OBCs, for example, have a proportionate share in asset ownership in rural areas and their overall relative share being lower than one is a reflection of their relative asset poverty in urban areas. To be sure, persons who do not belong to SC-ST-OBC categories have a much higher relative share than OBCs in both rural and urban areas.

Share in assets relative to share in population

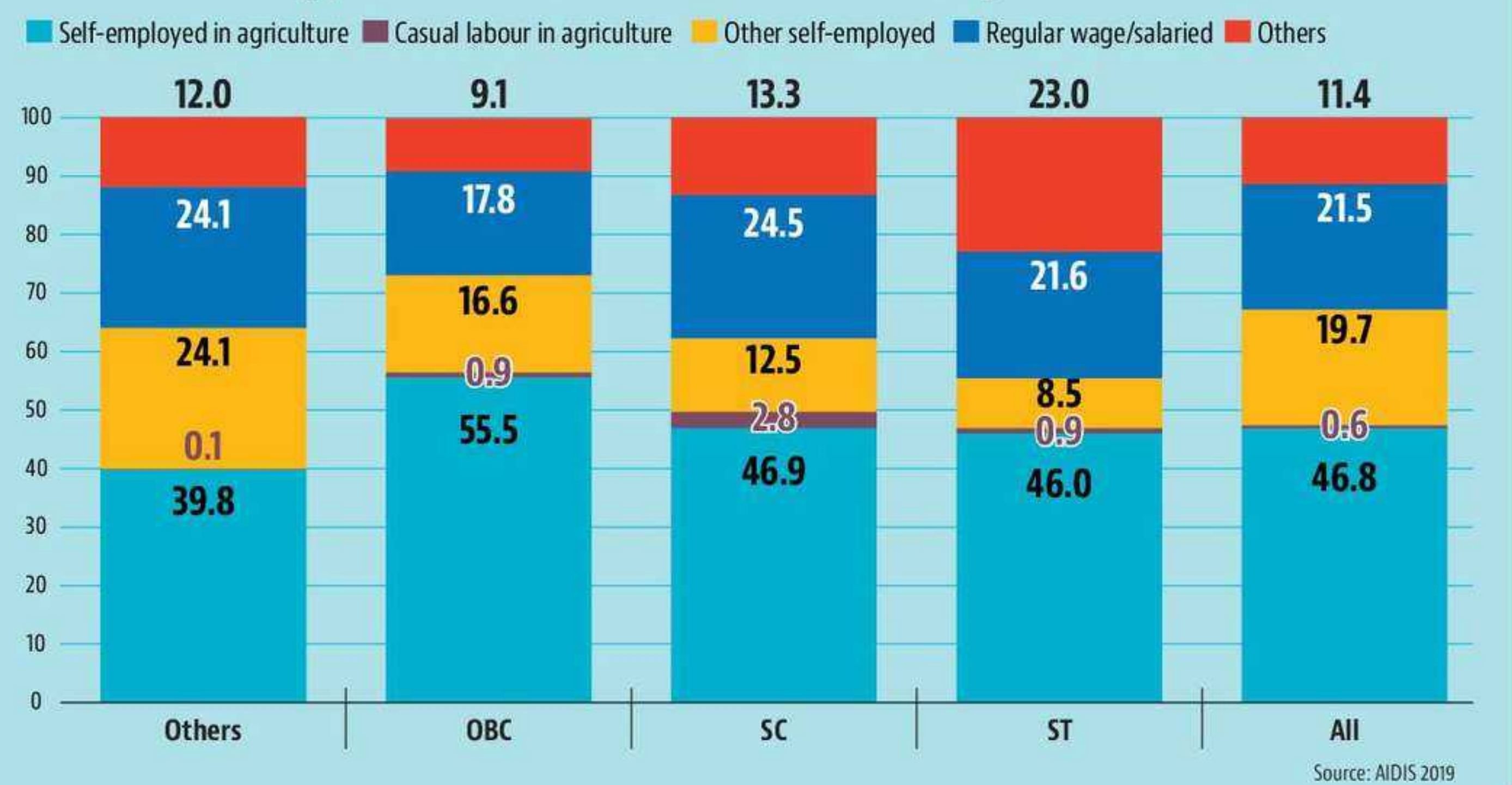


2 The rural-urban divide is basically a reflection of asset inequality across professions

An analysis of professional break-up (the survey just classifies households by their biggest source of income in the past year) of the richest 10% asset holders makes it clear in the AIDIS data. 55.5% of the OBC population, who live in top 10% richest households, listed self-employment in agriculture as their main source of household income. Only 18% listed a regular wage or salaried job as their main source of income. For the overall population, these

numbers are 46.8% and 21.5%. For those among SC, ST, OBC castes, these numbers are 39.8% and 24.1%. Given the fact that OBCs are relatively scarce among those who have made their fortunes in salaried jobs, an argument can be made that the promise of increasing reservations might make them vote for a party which is championing this issue. Can the Congress hope to improve its chances in 2024 based on this agenda?

Household type distribution of those in top 10% asset class (in %)



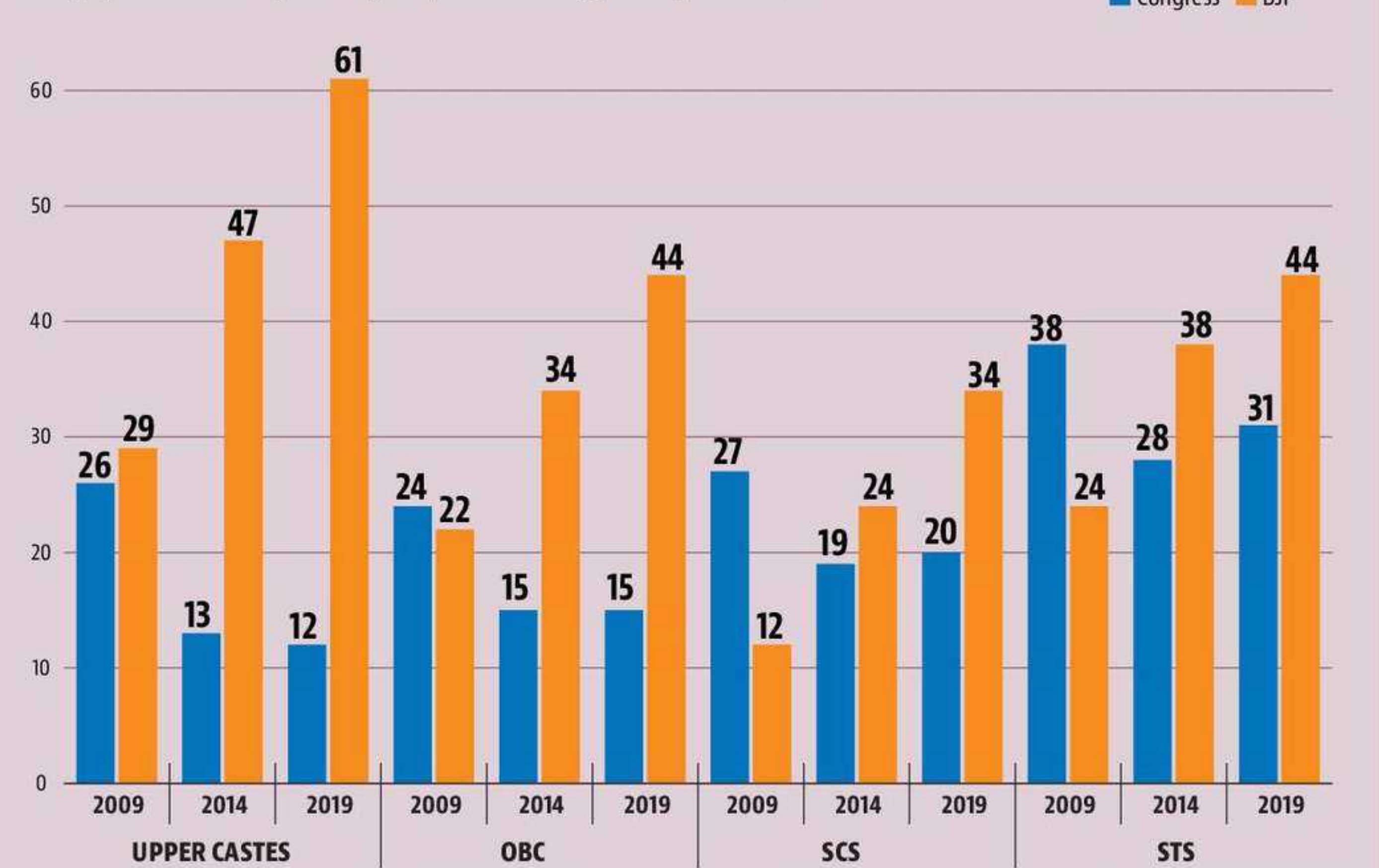
3 The Congress's political problems are hardly confined to OBCs

While the Congress is selling the demand of a caste census as a game-changing idea for a very large share of the electorate, its political appeal and therefore any potential gains should primarily be limited to OBCs. This is because SCs and STs already have proportionate reservations in India and its OBC reservation which had to be capped at 27% because of the 50% limit. Can this bring about a revival of Congress's fortunes? Data from National Election Studies conducted by CSDS-Lokniti suggests that it might be difficult. The Congress was only marginally ahead of the BJP among OBCs in the 2004 and 2009

elections – the Congress finished with more seats than the BJP in these elections – and its main lead over the BJP came with a much bigger advantage among SC and ST voters.

In the 2014 and 2019 elections, when the Congress suffered its worst ever defeats and the BJP earned consecutive parliamentary majorities, the party lagged behind the BJP among all major social groups. Lokniti data also shows that movement in support for the Congress across elections follows the same trend across social groups.

Support for party by caste group (in %)



Source: Kumar, S. (2020). Verdict 2019: The expanded support base of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Asian Journal of Comparative Politics, 5(1), 6-22



Hindustan Times

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JD(S) suspends Prajwal as sex abuse row spirals

HT Correspondent

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BENGALURU: A cornered Janata Dal (Secular) on Tuesday suspended sitting MP and Hassan candidate Prajwal Revanna over allegations of mass sexual abuse as ally Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) distanced itself from the incident, which has rocked the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), and blamed the Congress for not taking action on the charges that have sparked sweeping criticism.

The suspension order, former chief minister and Prajwal's uncle HD Kumaraswamy said, would be in force as long as the special investigation team (SIT), set up by the Karnataka government on Saturday, submits its report. "If the allegations are found to be true, he will be removed from the party permanently," he added.

In the week before Lok Sabha elections in Hassan, a pocket borough of the JD(S) that went to the polls on April 26, videos emerged purportedly showing sexual acts by the 33-year-old leader with multiple women, sparking allegations of abuse and assault. Preliminary investigations showed that a pen drive in Hassan contained 2,976 videos, some a few seconds long and others that last a few minutes, with most seemingly recorded from a mobile

continued on →14

Furore over Revanna continues

REVANNA SUSPENDED

The JD(S) leadership on Tuesday suspended Prajwal Revanna over allegations of mass sexual abuse. The suspension will be in force till Karnataka government's SIT submits its report.

"If the allegations are found to be true, he will be removed from the party," said HD Kumaraswamy.



WHERE IS PRAJWAL REVANNA?

Prajwal Revanna left the country for Germany on April 27, one day after the elections. His father HD Revanna said on Monday that he would return if he was called for investigation.

BJP TARGETS CONGRESS GOVT

Amit Shah said the BJP stood with 'women power' "I want to ask Congress and Priyanka [Gandhi] ji who are demanding action... The state has a Congress government. Why they have not taken any action till now?"

CONGRESS HITS BACK AT BJP

Congress's DK Shivakumar demanded that the BJP make it clear whether or not it is with JD(S) "I was told that senior party leaders helped him [Prajwal] leave the country... They [BJP] have to make it clear whether they want to be aligned with such people."

Former driver says he handed pen drive of abuse to BJP leader

Arun Dev

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BENGALURU: The former driver of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna said on Tuesday that he gave a pen drive filled with videos showing purported sexual acts by the JD(S) leader with multiple women, which have sparked alle-

gations of mass sexual abuse, to a local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and not the Congress.

His comments — via a video statement uploaded on social media — came on a day Prajwal was suspended from the party amid mounting criticism of the leader who is also the Lok Sabha candidate from Hassan, which

voted on April 26.

Karthik, who goes by a single name, said he approached Devaraje Gowda, who was fighting against the JD(S) first family politically, to "seek justice" after the Revanna family harassed him and forcefully transferred a parcel of land he owned to their name.

→P11

Three women among 10 Maoists killed in C'garh

Ritesh Mishra

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RAIPUR: Ten alleged Maoists, including three women, were killed in an encounter with the Chhattisgarh Police in the state's Narayanpur district early on Tuesday morning in increasing evidence of sustained aggression by security forces in the region since the turn of the new year. The exchange of fire comes two weeks after 29 Maoists were gunned down in the neighbouring Kanker district — the biggest blow to Left Wing Extremists in eight years and the biggest ever in Chhattisgarh. Overall, 91 Maoists have been killed in the first four months of 2024, more than the 22 and 30 Maoists killed in all of 2022 and 2023 respectively. There have also been some signs a counter reaction from the Maoists, with 20 civilians killed by the insurgents so far in 2024, as against



The Maoist camp where the encounter took place in Narayanpur. HT

41 in all of 2023. At least three of the civilians killed this year were politicians associated with the BJP.

Sunderaj P, inspector general of police (Bastar range), said that Tuesday's encounter took place at around 6am in the forests between Tekmeta and Kaakur villages in the Abhujmaad

region of Narayanpur district.

"A joint team of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the Special Task Force (STF) was out on an anti-Naxal operation on Monday night after specific inputs of senior Maoists in the forests. As soon as they reached Kaakur village, the Maoists

continued on →7

ANOTHER SUICIDE IN KOTA, SECOND WITHIN 24 HOURS

JAIPUR: A 20-year-old student, who was preparing for the National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) for admission in undergraduate medical courses, died by suicide in Kota district of Rajasthan on Tuesday, in the second such incident in the coaching hub over the last 24 hours and the ninth this year, police said.

→P12

PATANJALI TOLD TO SUBMIT ACTUAL CLIPS OF APOLOGY

Utkarsh Anand

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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed yoga guru Ramdev and Patanjali managing director Balkrishna to submit copies of newspaper pages that show the actual size of their published apologies for misleading previous advertisements and a press conference that went against the court's order, seeking to verify the sincerity and visibility of the unqualified apology issued by the two in a contempt case.

→P14

CANADA REDUCES HOURS STUDENTS CAN LEGALLY WORK

TORONTO: Canada has announced that international students will be able to work off-campus for only up to 24 hours per week, starting this fall semester in September, refusing to extend a temporary policy that allowed students from across the world, including those from India, to work up to 40 hours a week in the country. The new rule came into effect on Tuesday.

→P7

MAN WITH KATANA GOES ON STABBING SPREE IN LONDON SUBURB; 1 KILLED

HAINAULT: A 14-year-old boy died on Tuesday after a man wielding a sword stabbed the youth, two police and two other people, in a street attack in east London, police said. The man used what appeared to be a Samurai-type sword in the Hainault district shortly before 7am (local time). Police said they arrested a 36-year-old man using Taser stun weapons and took him into custody. The incident is not believed to be terror-related, they said.

→P17

Shah lashes out at Cong over doctored video clips

Utpal Parashar

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DHUBRI: Union home minister Amit Shah launched an attack on the Congress on Tuesday, accusing the party of spreading lies through fake videos, reiterating that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) supports reservations for scheduled castes, tribes and other backward castes (OBC), and sought to lay blame at the door of the Congress state government in Karnataka for the lack of action



Amit Shah

against member of Parliament Prajwal Revanna and his father HD Revanna, both part of the JD(S) which is a BJP ally, and have been accused of mass sexual harassment.

→P11

MODITO VISIT AYODHYA ON MAY 5 →P10

{ INC PLENARY IN OTTAWA }

India advocates consensus-backed moves to end plastic pollution, not a voting-based approach

Jayashree Nandi

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NEW DELHI: India emphasised the need for a pragmatic approach to a legally binding international instrument on plastic pollution, a consensus-backed move as against a voting-based approach, and a decision guided by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities during the closing plenary of the fourth session of the

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) in Ottawa late on Monday.

INC-4 concluded with an advanced draft text of the instrument and agreement on inter-sessional work ahead of the fifth session (INC-5) scheduled in November. Over the course of INC-4, delegates discussed emissions and release, production, product design, waste management, problematic and avoidable plastics, financing, and a just

transition, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said on Tuesday.

INC members agreed on inter-sessional work — expert meetings that take place between the official INC sessions — expected to catalyse convergence on key issues. In addition, the members decided to create an open-ended legal drafting group at INC-5, serving in an advisory capacity by reviewing elements of the draft revised text to ensure legal

soundness, the UNEP added.

"We are committed to take this work forward through inter-sessional work. In our endeavour to address plastic pollution we need to collectively work, be realistic and with consensus so that we have concrete outcomes that feed into INC-5 which is aimed at agreeing to elements that will be part of the instrument," Naresh Pal Gangwar, head of the Indian delegation,

continued on →14

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BUSINESS TRIALS UNDERWAY

Full body scanners at key airports soon



Major airports of the country, including Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, are undertaking trials of full body scanners at the airports — a step that may move them towards hassle-free passenger movement at terminals. The full body scanners were expected to be installed at all major airports with an annual passenger traffic of 10 million passengers, but the timelines have been postponed due to delays in import of the equipment. However, Delhi and Bengaluru are expected to be in advanced stages of installing these machines. The Delhi airport aims to install the full body scanner by the second half of this fiscal year, while the Bengaluru airport is undertaking trials, two people aware of the development told Mint. The installation is likely in 2-3 months, they added.

→P18

WORLD SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER

Depardieu to be tried for '21 sexual assaults



French screen legend Gerard Depardieu will go on trial for sexual assault in October, the Paris prosecutor said on Monday after police questioned the actor over claims made by two women, the latest in a litany of such charges. The 75-year-old star, who has made more than 200 films and television series, was charged with rape in 2020 in a separate case and was forced to put his career on hold last autumn as allegations of sexual harassment and assault mounted against him. He denies any wrongdoing. After police questioned Depardieu on Monday, the Paris prosecutor said he would face charges over the assaults allegedly committed in September 2021 during the filming of "The Green Shutters" movie. AFP

electionsonhtapp

READ

Looking back, we tend to see the giants in India's electoral history. Any child can name them. But what of the leaders that more quietly drove policy, untangled the chaos of the early years, helped expand the electorate and reflect its many voices? Meet some of these, as we look back on independent India's electoral history through six defining eras.



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WORLD PROTESTS OVER GAZA

Activists take over Columbia building



Protesters at Columbia University barricaded themselves inside a campus building on Tuesday, escalating a stand-off with school officials as pro-Palestinian protests spread across the US. The occupation of Hamilton Hall at the university in New York came hours after administrators said they had begun suspending students for failing to comply with an order to disperse. Masked individuals smashed windows and moved metal tables to block the building's entrances, images shared overnight on social media showed. "After 206 days of genocide and over 34,000 Palestinian martyrs, Columbia community members took back Hamilton Hall just after midnight," the group said in a statement.

→P17

MY INDIA 'MEIRA PAIBIS' INVOLVED

11 militants snatched from army's custody



An Indian army column that had nabbed 11 members of the radical group Arambai Tenggol, along with a large cache of weapons, were stopped by women protesters in Manipur who then snatched the men from the army's custody, said officials. Though Manipur Police confirmed the incident in a statement, it did not name the 11 men or reveal the identity of the people in the mob. The police, however, confirmed that the army's Mahar regiment caught 11 "armed miscreants dressed in police fatigues" and were returning after the operation when the women grabbed the 11 men. The army had recovered 3 AK-series rifles, 5 INSAS, 2 SLRs, 2 hand grenades and bullet proof jackets from the men. "It was a planned blockade. But the column managed to keep the weapons safe," said an official.

→P14

Study underlines gender difference in disease impact

Rhythm Kaul

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NEW DELHI: Males are disproportionately affected by illnesses that lead to an early death, while women live longer but endure higher levels of illness through their lives, according to a global study published in The Lancet Public Health, which highlighted stark differences between females and males in major causes of disease burden and underscored the need for gender-responsive approaches to health.

Males also experienced 45% more "health loss" from Covid-19 than females, the study said.

Globally, there are substantial differences between females and males (aged 10 and older) when it comes to health, with limited progress in bridging these health gaps over the past 30 years, according to the study titled "Differences across the lifespan between females and males in the top 20 causes of disease burden globally: a systematic analysis of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021", which examined disparities in the 20 leading causes of disease burden between females and males, across ages and regions.

Non-fatal conditions that lead to health loss (illness and/or death) and disability, including musculoskeletal conditions, mental health conditions, and headache disorders, particularly affect females, while males are disproportionately affected by conditions that lead to more premature death, such as Covid-19, road injuries, cardiovascular diseases, and respiratory and liver diseases.

The study said that both biological as well as social factors were behind these differences. Importantly, these health differences between females and males continue to grow with age, leaving females with higher levels of illness and disability throughout their lives, because they tend to live longer than males.

"The timing is right for this study and call to action — not only because of where the evidence is now, but because Covid-19 has starkly reminded us that sex differences can profoundly impact health outcomes," said senior author Luisa Sorio Flor at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), University of Washington, USA.

"One key point the study highlights is how females and males differ in many biological and social factors that fluctuate and, sometimes, accumulate over time, resulting in them experiencing health and disease differently at each stage of life and across world regions. The challenge now is to design, implement, and evaluate sex- and gender-informed ways of preventing and treating the major causes of morbidity and premature mortality from an early age and across populations."

The modelling research uses data from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021 to compare the total number of life years lost to illness and premature death — a measurement known as disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) — for the 20 leading causes of disease burden, including Covid-19, road injuries, and a range of cardiovascular, respiratory, and liver diseases, health loss was higher in males in 2021.

THE STUDY WHICH HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR GENDER-SPECIFIC OUTLOOK TO HEALTH SAID THAT BIOLOGICAL AS WELL AS SOCIAL FACTORS WERE BEHIND THESE DIFFERENCES

For example, overall Covid-19 was the leading cause of health loss in 2021, with males experiencing 45% more health loss from Covid-19 than females (3,978 vs 2,211 age-standardised DALYs per 100,000). Covid-19 disproportionately affected men in all regions, with the widest sex difference observed in sub-Saharan Africa (10,559 vs 5,565 DALYs per 100,000) and Latin America and the Caribbean (8,124 vs 4,473 DALYs per 100,000).

Ischaemic heart disease had the second largest absolute difference in health loss between females and males, with males experiencing 45% more health loss from heart disease compared to females (3,599 vs 1,987 DALYs per 100,000) in 2021. The greatest difference was seen in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, where males experienced a 49% higher burden than females (6,789 vs 3,456 DALYs per 100,000).

For conditions with a disproportionate burden in males, such as ischaemic heart disease, lung cancer, and chronic kidney disease, sex differences tend to be small at young ages and widen over the life course. The exception is the disproportionate toll of road injuries on young males (aged 10-24 years) in all world regions.

"Our findings shine a light on the significant and unique health challenges faced by males", said co-lead author Dr Vedavati Patwardhan from the University of California, San Diego, US. "Among these are conditions that lead to premature deaths, notably in the form of road injuries, cancers, and heart disease. We need national health plans and strategies to address the health needs of men throughout their lives, including interventions targeting behavioural risks such as alcohol use and smoking that typically begin at a young age."

Among the conditions evaluated, the study suggests that the biggest contributors to health loss globally disadvantaging females are low back pain, depressive disorders, headache disorders, anxiety disorders, other musculoskeletal disorders, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and HIV/AIDS. These conditions predominantly contribute to illness and disability throughout life as opposed to leading to early death. The largest absolute difference in health loss disadvantaging females was seen for low back pain, with DALY rates more than a third higher for females than for males in 2021 (1,265 vs 787 DALYs per 100,000). Regionally, this gap was most pronounced in South Asia, where rates were over 50% higher in females (1,292 vs 598 DALYs per 100,000), and in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, where female rates were about 30% higher (1,807 vs 1,256 DALYs per 100,000).

It said that mental health conditions disproportionately impact females in all world regions.

ANOTHER RECORD TOP OF THE CHARTS

Taylor Swift's new album claims top 14 spots

Taylor Swift achieved yet-another record-shattering domination of charts as her new album surpassed unprecedented heights that her own previous album had set, claiming the top 14 positions on the Billboard Hot 100 songs charts.

14/14 COMPLETE DOMINATION

The Tortured Poets Department, released this week, pulled off the most record-shattering weeks in the history of Billboard Hot 100. Top 14 songs, led by "Fortnight," featuring Post Malone, in the Billboards tracks list are all from her album. It was followed by "Down Bad," "I Can Do It With a Broken Heart," "The Tortured Poets Department," and "So Long, London."

If that isn't enough, yet another track from the album "I Can Fix Him (No Really I Can)" is on the 20th spot as well. And if that isn't enough still, all remaining tracks from the 31-track album also find their way in the Top 55! The lowest being "Robin" on the 55th spot.

Taylor Swift Others

| | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--|----|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Fortnight | The Tortured Poet's Department | 2 | Down Bad | The Tortured Poet's Department |
| 3 | I Can Do It With A Broken Heart | The Tortured Poet's... | 4 | The Tortured Poet's Department | The Tortured Poet's... |
| 5 | So Long, London | The Tortured Poet's Department | 6 | My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys | The Tortured Poet's... |
| 7 | Burt Daddy I Love Him | The Tortured Poet's Department | 8 | Florida!!! | The Tortured Poet's Department |
| 9 | Who's Afraid Of Little Old Me | The Tortured Poet's... | 10 | Guilty As Sin? | The Tortured Poet's Department |
| 11 | Fresh Out The Slammer | The Tortured Poet's Department | 12 | lomi | The Tortured Poet's Department |
| 13 | The Alchemy | The Tortured Poet's Department | 14 | The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived | The Tortured Poet's... |
| 15 | Beautiful Things | Benson Boone | 16 | Too Sweet | Hozier |
| 17 | Like That | Future, Metro Boomin... We Don't Trust You | 18 | Lose Control | Teddy Lewins |
| 19 | Push Ups | Drake | 20 | I Can Fix Him (No Really I Can) | The Tortured Poet's... |

"My mind is blown. I'm completely floored by the love you've shown this album... 2.6 million are you actually serious? Thank you for listening, streaming, and welcoming Tortured Poets into your life. Feeling completely overwhelmed." — TAYLOR SWIFT, on X

Records, records, and more records

- Previously, she was the only artist to ever monopolize the top 10 when her last album, 2022's "Midnights" took over the charts.
- The album, of course, debuted on the 1st spot on global rankings, tying Swift with Jay-Z for second-most No. 1 albums at 14. Only The Beatles, with 19 No. 1 albums, have had more.
- The album has amassed 2.61 million equivalent album units, according to Luminate, the industry data and analytics company. A shocking 1.91 million of those units come from traditional album sales — people purchasing downloads, CDs, cassettes and vinyl. Vinyl accounts for 859,000 units sold, the highest number of vinyl sales in modern history.
- It is already the top-selling album of 2024, eclipsing Beyoncé's "Cowboy Carter," which sold 228,000 units.

891.34mn

streams for the album made it the biggest streaming week for an album in history, according to Luminate.

Despite mixed critical reviews

The success in charts for the album comes despite it receiving mixed reviews (at best) for the album. While some critics praised the album for its "unbridled emotion" and "moments of genuine humor." Others say that Swift has reached a crossroads in her creative process, calling for a stricter edit. The New York Times also gave mixed reviews. It said that the album was a return to form "at times." It also said her lyricism starts to feel "unrestrained, imprecise and unnecessarily verbose" in parts of the album as "breathless lines overflow and lead their melodies down circuitous paths."

FLOODING, LANDSLIDES DATE SHIFTED

Rain clouds hang over momentous J&K polls

Mir Ehsan

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SRINAGAR: The mountains of Jammu and Kashmir are in the throes of a crucial Lok Sabha election. Spread over five phases, these are the first major elections after the revocation of Article 370 in August 2019; the first major election after a controversial delimitation process in May 2022; the first major election after it lost its status as a state. But as new alliances are forged and broken — the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the National Conference (NC), both until recently part of a larger opposition umbrella failed to reach consensus — politicians canvassing the area for votes have a new challenge to contend with: the inclement weather.

On Tuesday, the Election Commission postponed polling in the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat, pushing it from May 7 to May 25, owing to the temperate climate. The upper reaches of Kashmir have seen rampant rain and snowfall since April 26, which has thrown electioneering and daily life out of gear. On Monday, 336 families were evacuated from the district, with Pohru Nallah in Seelu Kupwara, a tributary of the Jhelum breaching the danger level of 1578.9 metres, causing water to

enter villages and submerging portions of the Kupwara highway. Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan said that shelter homes have been established, with some families moved to them, and others relocated to safer zones.

"There was an intense western disturbance which had an impact and there was a moisture incursion from the Arabian Sea. There has been inclement weather for the past week. There was not only rain but snowfall as well in the higher reaches. This impacted transportation and landslides were reported at several places," Mukhtar Ahmed, an official from the IMD Srinagar said.

But beyond the efforts by the administration to restore normalcy, the weather has meant that politicians have had to re-adjust their campaigns. While Udhampur and Jammu Lok Sabha constituencies have voted in the first two phases, three seats in Kashmir — Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag — go to the polls in the fourth and fifth phases of the elections respectively.

On Tuesday, former chief minister and NC vice president Omar Abdullah visited flood-affected regions in Kupwara and Baramulla. "I stopped the election campaign and visited the flood affected areas today to see



A woman removes water from her flooded house in Kupwara district of North Kashmir on Tuesday.

the losses caused by floods. We will try to help the affected people. This area needs a proper flood management plan which will not happen overnight," Abdullah, who was accompanied by other NC leaders said.

Abdullah is set to file his nomination for the Baramulla constituency on May 2, and among his opponents will be PDP candidate Fayaz Mir, and Peoples Conference chairman Sajjad Lone, both of whom also spent time in Kupwara on Monday. Mir demanded compensation to those affected and Lone said, "Even horticulture has suffered huge losses. We will write

to authorities about adequate compensation."

PDP spokesperson Tahir Sayeed said all of the party's programmes were cancelled due to floods in Kupwara and Baramulla.

"Our party leaders and workers have been busy with relief and rescue work in Kupwara, Baramulla and other areas of Kashmir," he said. The rainfall over the past week has also forced political parties to cancel rallies and roadshows over the past week, and instead hold meetings inside homes.

Over the past three days, NC,

PDP, Apni Party and PC have cancelled more than a dozen programmes in Kashmir.

"Our campaign in the last two days has remained confined to houses or limited to small meetings due to heavy rains," said Congress general secretary Mir Iqbal, who is canvassing for Omar Abdullah in Baramulla.

The postponement comes after a string of representations from political parties.

On Sunday, several parties, including the Democratic Azad Progressive Party and Apni Party, also wrote to the Election Commission of India (ECI), asking for polls in Anantnag to be postponed because of the closure of the Mughal Road, which serves as the only road link between Anantnag-Poonch and Rajouri. It prompted ECI to seek a report from the J&K administration and chief electoral officer (CEO) regarding weather and the accessibility of roads.

The commission said it received representation from various candidates and four parties — Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), PC, Apni Party and Nationalist People's Front — requesting for rescheduling of the poll date owing to bad weather conditions.

The postponement, however, triggered criticism from NC, PDP and Congress.

"The rescheduling of Anantnag PC is a concern that should worry all who believe in the

independence of our poll bodies. It's troubling that the opinions of political parties not even in the race were taken into account. No matter what they do, Insha Allah @JKNC will win the seat," NC spokesperson Imran Dar said in a post on X.

PDP accused the BJP of being the reason behind the change in schedule.

"The sheer nervousness of Delhi after witnessing overwhelming support of people towards Ms. Mufti has forced them to change the election date & facilitate the proxy parties of BJP to do the murky business in the electoral process," PDP spokesperson Mohit Bhan said on X.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) in Srinagar has, however, predicted that the weather will improve from Wednesday, which political parties hope will bring campaigning back on track.

"For the next five days, the weather will be dry and sunny in most parts of J&K," IMD said in its daily bulletin. And yet, even as key elections in the three seats approach, Akhtar Khan, a 26-year-old student at Kashmir University said that the weather, and the responses of political parties to the difficulties faced by people, is now a key electoral issue. "The weather is becoming an important aspect of the politics in Kashmir," said Khan, who is based in Srinagar.

Liberty extremely important: SC quizzes ED on CM arrest

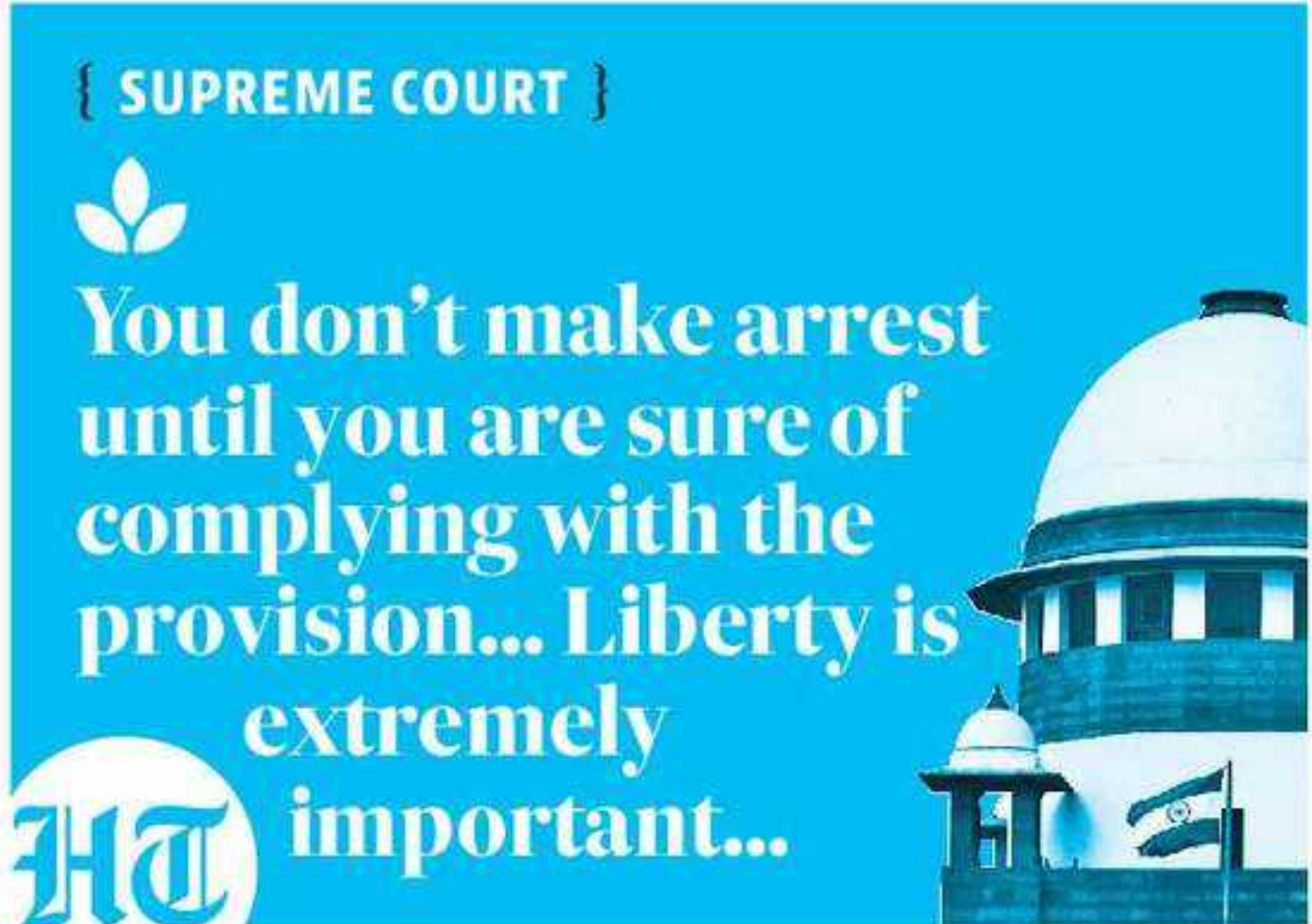
Utkarsh Anand
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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday posed a series of probing questions to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) while hearing Arvind Kejriwal's petition against his arrest in the Delhi excise policy case — and even redirected to the agency a question by his counsel about the arrest coming close to the Lok Sabha elections — as it underlined the importance of liberty and highlighted concerns over the timing and procedural aspects of the Delhi chief minister's arrest.

"Liberty is extremely, extremely important. We can't deny that," said a bench of justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta, asking the agency to come prepared on May 3 with answers to a number of pointed queries.

The bench raised questions regarding the initiation of criminal proceedings without adjudicatory proceedings, citing previous legal precedents. "Without there being adjudicatory proceedings, can you have criminal proceedings initiated?" the court asked, referring to the absence of attachment proceedings in Kejriwal's case and demanding evidence of the CM's involvement.

It asked additional solicitor general (ASG) SV Raju, representing the agency, to clarify how the court should interpret Section 19 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), highlighting



the onus placed on the prosecution and the accused regarding arrest. The bench pondered whether the threshold for bail should be higher to ensure fairness and consistency in determining guilt.

"The threshold of Section 19 casts onus on the prosecution which is fairly high and thus asking for regular bail does not happen as they are confronted with Section 45 and onus shifts on them... So, how do we interpret it? Do we make the threshold much higher?" asked the bench, pointing out that Section 45 of the PMLA is based on a reverse onus, requiring an accused to show absence of guilt for being released on bail.

The bench also deliberated on the time gap between the initiation of proceedings and the subse-

quent arrest, citing the provisions of Section 8 of the PMLA, which imposes a limit of 365 days on the completion of an investigation.

As Raju responded that there are times when the investigations cannot be completed in 365 days on account of the complex nature of crimes and addition of accused, the bench retorted: "Then, the other way is you don't make arrest until you are sure of complying with the provision... liberty is extremely important."

The court also asked the ASG to address the timing of the arrest, referring to a vehement submission by senior counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who appeared for Kejriwal. Singhvi cited the proximity of Kejriwal's arrest to the general elections, raising questions about the motive behind the timing.

The court also sought a clarification on the implications of its previous findings in the Manish Sisodia case, questioning where Kejriwal's case stands in the light of such precedents. "As far as the Sisodia judgment is concerned, there are two parts. One in favour of accused and the other against accused. Which part does this case fall in?" it asked Raju, who replied that the present case was not one where Kejriwal was seeking bail.

By a judgment in October 2023, the top court had dismissed former Delhi deputy CM Sisodia's bail plea while noting the allegation levelled by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and ED that the now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-22 profited wholesale distributors by ₹338 crore, which amounted to a public servant being bribed. The judgment, at the same time, held that detention or jail before being pronounced guilty of an offence should not become punishment without trial and that if the trial gets protracted despite assurances of the prosecution, the prayer for bail may be meritorious.

The Delhi CM had rushed to the Supreme Court on April 10, less than 24 hours after the Delhi high court rejected his plea against the arrest on March 21 while holding that ED possesses adequate evidence to suggest Kejriwal's involvement in money laundering related to the excise policy case.

Replying to the Delhi CM's peti-

tion by filing an affidavit last week, the agency told the court that there are no special provisions under the PMLA that differentiate the arrest of a chief minister and an ordinary citizen. Calling Kejriwal "the kingpin and key conspirator of the Delhi excise scam", ED stressed that the decision to arrest him was made based on substantial evidence and legal grounds. It refuted the AAP convener's contention regarding the timing of his arrest — that it was to disable him from campaigning for his party during the Lok Sabha polls — and highlighted the CM's alleged evasion of investigation for nearly six months during which he skipped nine of the agency's summonses.

Rebutting ED's contentions, Kejriwal, filing his rejoinder affidavit on Saturday, vehemently contested his arrest, labelling it as "illegal" and an "unprecedented assault" on the pillars of democracy, besides condemning the agency's actions as a glaring display of "high-handedness".

The CM's affidavit said his arrest not only violates his rights but also undermines the nation's democratic fabric, portraying his arrest as an unprecedented attempt to undermine the principles of free and fair elections and federalism. Kejriwal, who remains in judicial custody, painted the case against him as a calculated move by the ruling central government to suppress its political opposition, particularly AAP, and its leadership.

HC pulls up Delhi govt over vacant posts in child rights commission

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi high court on Tuesday pulled up the Delhi government for prolonged vacancies in the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR).

A bench led by acting chief justice Manmohan expressed dismay over the Delhi women and child development minister's inaction in addressing the issue, noting that a proposal to invite applications for filling the vacant posts was pending since August last year.

"Where there is a will, there is a way. Will has to be there. From

August to March, nothing has happened," remarked the bench, also comprising justice Manmeet PS Arora.

The court observed that the reasons for lack of progress between August 2023 and March 2024 were not apparent from the file. This criticism from the HC comes a day after it criticised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government for its failure to provide textbooks and uniforms to students in municipal schools. The court on Monday characterised the government's explanation as "shedding crocodile tears" and highlighted that the real issue at hand was power, control, turf dominance, and credit.

In the current case, the court was addressing a plea filed by the National Child Development Council, a child welfare organisation, seeking directions to the Delhi government to expeditiously fill vacant posts of chairperson and members in DCPCR within a fixed time period.

The plea said the right's body was functioning without a chairperson since July 2023 and keeping the post vacant for so long was violative of DCPCR Rules.

The court issued notices to the Centre, Delhi government and DCPCR, posting the next hearing to July 16. The Delhi government did not respond to requests for comment.

Mosquito menace stings Delhi, MCD notices to breeding sites

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NEW DELHI: The gradual rise in temperatures over the past month has brought with it increased complaints of mosquito menace from residents' welfare associations (RWAs), even as civic officials inspected 900,000 sites and issued 15,000 legal notices to curb the menace.

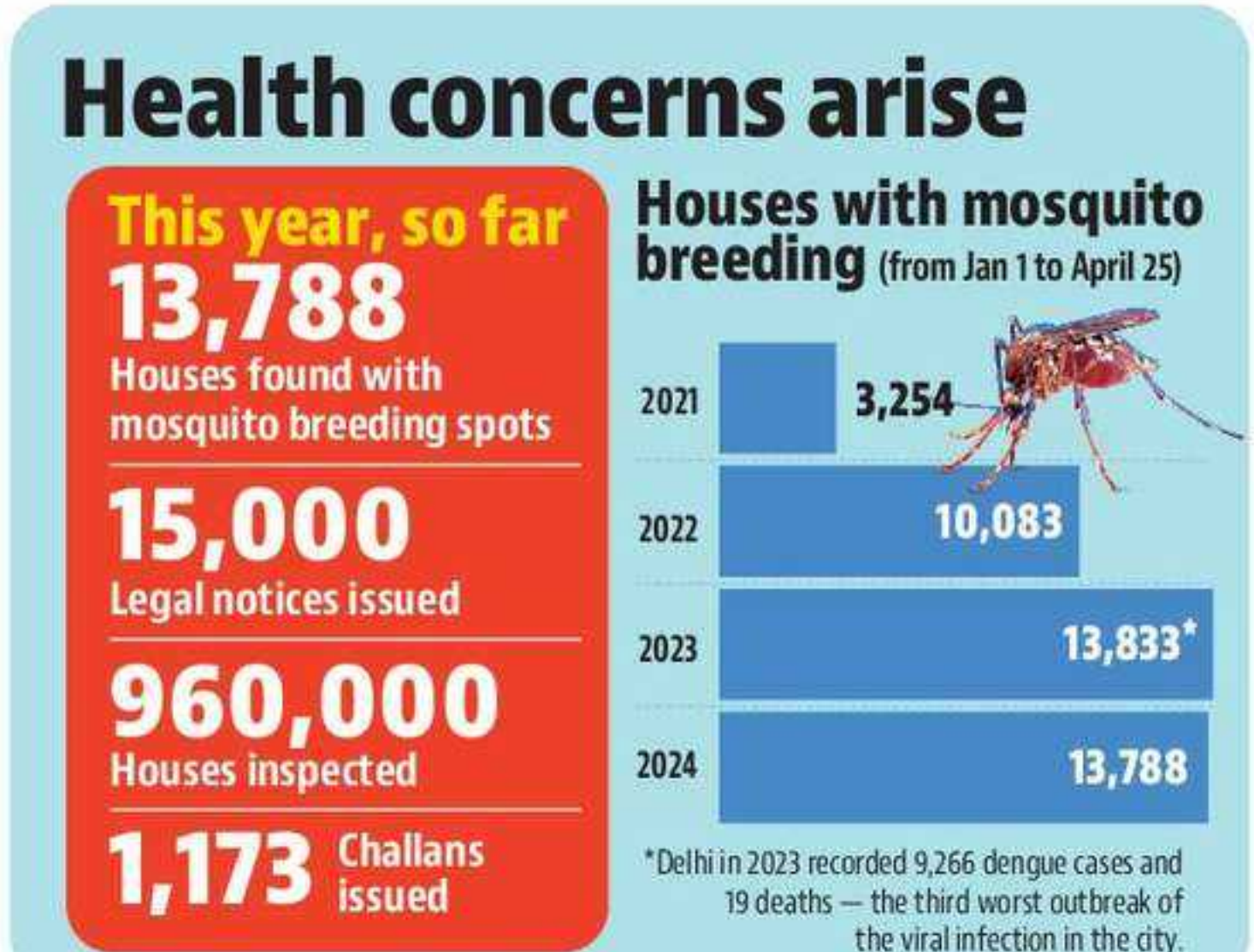
Officials of the municipality said most of the mosquitoes are of the Culex genus, which causes skin irritation, but acknowledged that April provided favourable breeding conditions.

They have written to RWAs, market associations, government departments and institutions to tackle breeding and curb the spread of vector-borne diseases. They said around 4,600 workers are undertaking anti-mosquito drives.

RWAs raise concerns

Atul Goyal, the head of Urja (United RWAs Joint Action), an umbrella RWA body, said that there has been a rapid rise in mosquitoes over the past few weeks, probably due to drains not being cleared.

Ashok Bhasin, head of the North Delhi Residents Welfare Federation, said that areas



along the Najafgarh drain are witnessing increased mosquito density. "The major drains have not been cleared, except the one towards Anand Parbat. Mosquitoes are turning out to be big irritants, especially during the night. Lack of sanitation and poor state of drains are the underlying cause."

BS Vohra, head of the East Delhi RWA Joint Front, said: "There is a clogged and dirty drain near Road 57, which is a hot spot for mosquito breeding. Agencies should take precautions early as Delhi witnessed

many dengue cases last year."

Favourable weather

A senior civic official, on condition of anonymity, said that April usually witnesses a steep increase in mosquito density due to favourable environmental conditions.

"Mosquitoes need temperatures above 30°C, high humidity and stagnant water for breeding. After a period of relative dormancy during winter, an increase is annually witnessed in this period," the official said.

"Most of the mosquitoes that

are being detected in the city are of the Culex genus, which do not cause dengue, malaria and chikungunya. Culex mosquitoes cause skin irritation. We are not detecting high presence of disease-causing Anopheles genus, which causes malaria, or the Aedes Aegypti genus that causes dengue and chikungunya," the official said.

Action taken, breeding sites identified

Civic officials say that things are under control. On April 2, the municipal commissioner of Delhi wrote to RWAs, market associations and institutions warning that "the season of vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, dengue, chikungunya etc, in Delhi has started" and it has become imperative that all agencies concerned must take preventing measures.

A second civic official said that around 13,788 houses were found to have mosquito breeding spots. "We have also issued more than 15,000 legal notices to owners of premises where favourable mosquito breeding conditions are detected. 'MCD 311' app is being used to monitor the campaign," the official said.

"Fogging is carried out in monsoon," the official said.

21-YEAR-OLD AIIMS STUDENT DIES BY SUICIDE AT HOSTEL

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NEW DELHI: A 21-year-old student of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) allegedly died by suicide in her hostel room on Tuesday afternoon, police officers aware of the matter said, adding that a note purportedly left by the woman was recovered from the room in which she cited pressure from studies as the reason behind the extreme step.

Police said the woman's body was first seen by her friend, who alerted the authorities. AIIMS then informed the police about the death at 11.30am, a senior police officer said. When police arrived on the scene, they took the woman to the hospital where she was pronounced dead. "The woman was from Bihar and was pursuing her Bachelor's in Nursing. Her parents were informed," the officer said.

Police said that she was preparing for the Bihar Public Service Commission and also attending regular nursing classes.

In a statement, AIIMS said the police are investigating the case.

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Delhi excise case: City court dismisses Sisodia's bail plea

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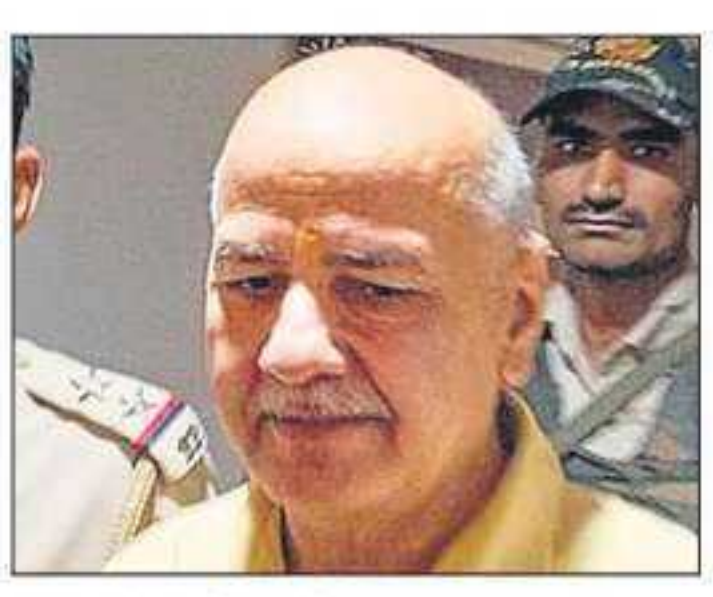
NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Tuesday denied bail to senior Aam Aadmi Party leader Manish Sisodia, arrested in connection with alleged irregularities in the promulgation of the Delhi excise policy 2021-22.

Sisodia had approached the court, seeking bail on the ground that he has been detained for more than 11 months and has not been implicated in the alleged offence. He also sought bail stating that there has been a delay in commencement of trial in the case.

The court, however, turned down his plea.

This is the second time that the court has denied bail to Sisodia, the former deputy chief minister of Delhi — the court had rejected a previous bail plea in January.

The Delhi government's 2021-22 excise policy aimed to revitalise the city's flagging liquor business, but was scrapped after lieutenant governor VK Saxena recommended a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into alleged irregularities in the regime.



CBI arrested Sisodia on February 26, 2023, stating that it had recovered several incriminating evidences in the case, and to conduct a fair investigation, his custody was required. The AAP leader was later sent to Tihar Jail by Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court, from where he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) — which is carrying out a separate probe into the policy in connection with alleged money laundering — on March 9, 2023.

Senior advocate Mohit Mathur, appearing for Sisodia, had earlier argued that both CBI and ED submitted that they have completed their probe against his client. He added that since the AAP leader's arrest, there has been no significant progress in the trial, and he cannot be

incarcerated indefinitely.

Opposing the bail, CBI availed that Sisodia does not satisfy the triple test for granting bail. It was highlighted that Sisodia is an influential person and had held post in the Delhi government. It was also stated that there have been instances where he destroyed mobile phones and a file containing crucial evidence was found to be missing, which has still not been recovered.

CBI also availed that Sisodia was the "kingpin" of the alleged scam, and the person on whose directions the alleged officials acted while formulating and implementing the policy.

Meanwhile, ED argued that the excise policy was an "ever-green vehicle" for illegal gains and was meant for recoupment of gains for future generations also. It was also submitted that there was no calculation done, while the policy was being formulated, to justify the increase in the wholesaler's profit margins.

Arguing on the aspect of delay, ED submitted that the delay in the trial of the case has not been caused by the prosecution but by the accused.

Raj Babbar named Congress pick for Gurgaon LS seat

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GURUGRAM: The Congress on Tuesday said it will field former MP Raj Babbar from the Gurgaon Lok Sabha constituency. Actor-turned-politician Babbar will face off against Union minister Rao Inderjit Singh, the incumbent MP and BJP nominee for the seat.

The Jannayak Janta Party, meanwhile, has fielded rapper Rahul Yadav "Fazilpuria" from the constituency.

The Gurgaon constituency has 2,546,916 voters, of whom 1,347,521 are male, 1,199,317 are female and 78 are transgender. The Congress said the seat has 300,000 Punjabi voters — a community Babbar belongs to.

Senior party leaders said that Babbar's candidature was backed by former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda. They said the fact that Babbar got the ticket underlines the clout Hooda still commands in Haryana, a state where assembly polls are due later this year.

Party functionaries also noted

that the Congress decision to field Yadav candidates in the 2014 and 2019 seats did not pay dividends, which is one of the reasons why the party decided to go for Babbar.

"The Congress in the past fielded local Yadav candidates, but they could not make a dent against Singh. So, this time, we have brought a popular leader from the Punjabi community, who will get votes from them, from the traditional Yadav and Muslim voters," Congress leader Sukhbir Kataria said.

But a section of Congress leaders said that as an outsider, Babbar's candidature will have a limited impact. "I feel there is a conspiracy within the Congress to finish off senior party leaders in Haryana," said Congress leader Captain Ajay Singh Yadav, who was a strong contender for the Gurgaon seat.

The BJP too noted that Babbar is an outsider in Gurgaon. "We are seeking votes on our own work. But Babbar being an outsider will definitely help BJP," said Manish Mittal, the BJP in-charge for the Gurgaon seat.

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|---|---|
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(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi - 110029

FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATE EXAMINATION - JUNE 2024

NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the next FMGE on **6th July 2024**.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBEMS website <https://natboard.edu.in> for details pertaining to eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination and other details.

| Important Dates | |
|---|---|
| Online Submission of the Application Form | 29 th April 2024 (1 PM Onwards) to 20 th May 2024 (Till 11:55 PM) |
| Date of Examination | 6 th July 2024 |
| Declaration of the Result | By 6 th August 2024 |

Candidate Care Support: +91-7996165333 • Helpline Portal on applicant login page • Communication Web Portal on NBEMS Website

Contenders share plans for West Delhi

{ KAMALJEET SEHRAWAT } BJP CANDIDATE

Sehrawat, a former south Delhi mayor, wants to push the use of solar energy, augment water supply and carve out parks in the constituency

Kamaljeet Sehrawat, a former mayor of the erstwhile South Delhi municipal corporation and the incumbent councillor from a ward in Dwarka, spoke about issues in West Delhi and her priorities, if she wins the parliamentary constituency. She says the pre-poll alliance between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress will have no bearing on the outcome of the elections, and claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will retain the seat, by a bigger margin of votes. Excerpts from an interview with HT's Jasjev Gandhi and Hemani Bhandari.



VIPIN KUMAR/HT PHOTOS

There is an interesting mix of urban and rural voters in West Delhi. Do you have a separate plan for the two electorates?

Yes. There are separate plans for each colony. You cannot focus on one and leave out the other. I want to connect with youngsters in particular by raising local issues.

Our focus on nationalism is helping us connect with a majority of people. We want to connect youngsters with the Safai Abhiyan too. I want to replace Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with Cultural Society Responsibility.

What is your vision for West Delhi and the key focus areas, if you win?

Each village needs a beautiful park, sports facilities and old community halls need to be repaired.

The Centre has also come up with Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana which aims to provide subsidies to people to install solar panels. I want to popularise this scheme, not just in villages, but in apartments and colonies too. I also want to develop a dedicated app for West Delhi, so people in the constituency can register their complaints.

What, according to you, are the most pertinent problems of West Delhi?

Parks are missing in many neighbourhoods, particularly in



Next year, there will be assembly elections. Will they (AAP and Congress) have an alliance at the state-level? No. It is only for survival. I can guarantee their combined vote share will be down by 5%.

and around villages. Water supply too is a long-standing problem. We need two separate water lines - one for drinking water and the other for treated water from STPs for use in household work.

You have been a mayor in the erstwhile South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), and an incumbent councillor. Will your experience help you?

I have done BCom (Hons), MCom and BA. I was a PGT (postgraduate teacher) commerce in Kendriya Vidyalaya. I have also done LLB, CS (Inter) and PGDCA. When I became the SDMC mayor in the MCD, my first priority was ensuring energy efficiency. I passed a proposal to replace all sodium lamps in street lights with energy-efficient LED lights. This helped cut the civic body's monthly expenditure on power from ₹18 crore to just ₹2 crore. But nobody remembers these things. They only remember free electricity.

Opposition has often said

that the BJP's politics is centred around religion. Do you agree?

We do focus on religion, but that does not mean we disrespect other religions. We respect every religion.

What are your thoughts on your opponent Mahabal Mishra?

My education is quite different from his. I can read my own files. Secondly, I know what I want to achieve. My waste-to-wonder park project, energy savings projects. As a mayor, I was able to showcase my leadership and my vision.

The AAP and the Congress have put up a common candidate. Will it make a tougher fight?

No. They will lose by an even bigger margin this time. How can you have an alliance with a party that does not have the same vision as you?

{ MAHABAL MISHRA } AAP-CONG CANDIDATE

A former councillor, MP and three-time MLA, Mishra wants to open a university campus, and also build colleges and stadium in the area

Former MP Mahabal Mishra, the Congress candidate from the West Delhi Lok Sabha constituency, talks about his plans for the seat, the poorvanchali voters in his constituency, his switch from the Congress to the Aam Aadmi Party and the arrest of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. He spoke to HT's Hemani Bhandari and Jasjev Gandhi. Edited excerpts:

What are the issues of West Delhi that you would like to address if you win?

People still remember my work in the area when I was a Congress MP from the seat in 2009. I played an integral role in the making of Asia's largest Ayurvedic Hospital in Najafgarh (Chaudhary Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan which started in 2009), Dada Dev Hospital in Palam, a super speciality hospital in Janakpuri, Dilli Haat, several dispensaries, Deen Dayal Upadhyay College in Dwarka, and most importantly, getting Metro connectivity up to Najafgarh. But, the area still faces a number of problems. I will work on getting a university campus opened in West Delhi. Parking is also a huge problem in Delhi. I will also get colleges and a stadium built in the area. I will also work on programmes for upliftment of women and youngsters.

How's this poll different from 2014 and 2019?

I think change is in the air. It's not like 2014 and 2019. People have realised that this is 'jumble ki sarkaar'. People have understood that all the promises made by the BJP are meant only for winning polls, and nothing is implemented on the ground. Whatever Kejriwal promised has become a reality. All promises such as free water and power, mohalla clinics, free diagnostic tests, good education... have been fulfilled. The BJP promised jobs for 20 million youngsters and MSP to the farm-



BJP promised jobs for 20 million young people and MSP to farmers. They have failed to fulfil these. They are still talking about religion and caste. I hope the youth will think and make an informed choice.

ers. They have failed to fulfil their promises. They are still raising religion and caste. Hope the youth will think and make an informed choice.

But even your party talks about "Ram Rajya" and holds recitation of Hanuman Chalisa

Yes, but we do not demean other religions. I have been going to Ayodhya for the last 40 years with my family - much before the BJP made it a political issue. We don't publicise it. They have made a song titled, "Jo Ram Ko Laya Hai...Usko hum layenge". Someone should ask them: can anyone bring Ram? He is the almighty.

How do you see your competition, Kamaljeet Sehrawat?

I have served in the army. I have been a councillor, three-time MLA and an MP. For 12 years, I worked with DDA and played a key role in designing the Delhi's Master Plan 2020. There's a huge difference in our experiences and people can understand that. She is new, and

will have to learn before she can start executing her plans. I will implement my plans from the day I get elected.

How will Kejriwal's arrest impact these elections?

I believe it will bring us sympathy votes. People are sad that the man who used to help them has been put in jail. People know that he has been jailed illegally and wrongfully. Also, the man who was taking education to new levels, Manish Sisodia, has also been wrongfully arrested. Satyendra Jain as well. It's clear that the arrests are strategic because if Kejriwal would have gone among the people, it would have a huge impact.

There's a significant number of Poorvanchali voters in Delhi and you are from Bihar. Will it work in your favour?

This is the second generation Poorvanchali voters. They are not just labourers. They are educated and can think about their future. They will vote for people who promise to work for the development of their children.

Punjab CM meets Kejriwal in Tihar

Alok KN Mishra

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) may silence Arvind Kejriwal by arresting him, but "they cannot silence his thoughts".

Mann's statement came after he met Kejriwal, the Delhi chief minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener, at Tihar jail on Tuesday - the second meeting between the two CMs at the prison complex since Kejriwal's arrest in March in connection with alleged irregularities in the Delhi excise policy 2021-22.

"Arvind Kejriwal asked me about Delhi and the country. I said I have come via Gujarat, and the AAP is getting a mind-blowing response in Bharuch and Bhavnagar (the two parliamentary seats in the western state where the AAP has fielded candidates)... People all over the country are saying that they (the BJP-led central government) were to arrest Arvind Kejriwal. I told him that they may think that by putting one person in jail, they will silence the voice of the party... They may silence Kejriwal's voice by arresting him, but they cannot silence his thoughts," Mann said, while speaking to the media outside

Tihar jail.

Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 21 in connection with alleged irregularities in the excise policy and is currently in judicial custody at Tihar. The AAP has dismissed allegations of wrongdoing, and has said that the arrest is "politically motivated" and "is part of a conspiracy to crush the AAP".

Despite being lodged in prison, Kejriwal has not stepped down as chief minister, and the AAP has said that no existing laws bar a sitting CM from holding office in case of an arrest, unless the allegations are proven and the person is convicted.

Mann said that he informed the AAP convener about his campaign visit to Assam. "He (Kejriwal) asked me to come to Delhi and take campaigners from Delhi to Punjab. He further told me that wherever there is a programme of the INDIA bloc... our leaders must attend. Kejriwal said this election is not an election to be won or lost, it is an election to save the Constitution and democracy," Mann said.

He said that their meeting was held across a glass window. "Perhaps they have decided that they will not allow us to meet directly," the Punjab CM said.

BJP did not comment on Mann's remarks.

Cong names interim chief for its Delhi unit

Alok KN Mishra

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Former Badli legislator Devender Yadav was on Tuesday appointed the interim president of the Congress party's Delhi unit. All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary KC Venugopal said in a press statement.

Yadav will also continue in his role as the Congress in-charge for Punjab, Venugopal said.

Thanking the party's leadership, Yadav in a post on X said that he will try his best "to tread the coveted and ideologi-

cal vision the party has laid for me and give my 100%".

The development comes three days after Arvinder Singh Lovely on April 27 resigned from the post. To be sure, the Congress and the AAP are only in alliance in certain states - Delhi, Haryana, Gujarat and Chandigarh. In others, such as Punjab and Goa, the two parties will be contesting against each other. This will leave Yadav in a very peculiar situation, given his responsibilities as the AICC Punjab in-charge - he will have to back AAP Lok Sabha candidates in the Capital, but oppose them in Punjab.

INDO-SWISS TRAINING CENTRE
CSIR-Central Scientific Instruments Organisation
(Council of Scientific & Industrial Research,
Ministry of Science and Technology, Govt. of India)
Sector 30-C, Chandigarh-160 030

ADMISSION NOTICE (Session: 2024-25)

Online applications are invited for the following AICTE approved Diploma Courses:

- 3-Year Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (Tool & Die);
- 3-Year Diploma in Electronics Engineering;
- 4-Year Advanced Diploma in Die & Mould Making;
- 4-Year Advanced Diploma in Mechatronics & Industrial Automation, being conducted by Indo-Swiss Training Centre (ISTC) at CSIR-CISO, Chandigarh.

The Entrance test for admission to these courses will be held at Chandigarh on 07th July, 2024.

The detailed information is given in the "Information Brochure-2024" available on the websites www.istc.ac.in and www.csiso.res.in w.e.f. 01-05-2024.

The last date for applying is 03.06.2024. For further information, please contact:
Phones: 0172-2672263 / 2672484 / 2672485 / 2672424 / 2657264
Email: principal@istc.csiso.res.in

Note: Keep visiting url: <https://career.csiso.res.in/istc2024> for regular updates.

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A-13, Sector -1, Noida - 201381 (U.P.), Phone: 0120-2474050 & 2544036

Brief Employment Notice No. IWAI-17011/3/2024-ADMIN
RECTT Dated 29.04.2024

"IWAI invites application from Indian Nationals working in offices of Central/State Govt./Public Sector Undertakings/Statutory or Autonomous bodies for filling up of One vacant post of **Senior Accounts Officer (SAO)** on deputation basis, for a period of 03 years."

The last date for receipt of application is 45 days from date of publication of this advertisement in Employment News. Applications in prescribed proforma Through Proper Channel to be addressed to the Assistant Secretary (Admn. & Estt.), IWAI, A-13, Sector-1, Noida-201301 (U.P.), along with self-attested copies of certificates, last 5 year's APAR's, etc. through Registered Post / Speed Post only. For further details, visit www.iwai.nic.in.

Sd/-
SECRETARY

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male namely **Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown was found dead on 21.04.2024 at 06:00 PM on Surya Nagar, Red Light Near Power House Wali Foot Path, Vivek Vihar, Delhi.** In this regard **DD No. 64 A, dated 21.04.2024,** has been lodged at Police Station, Vivek Vihar, Delhi. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under:

Name: Unknown, Age: 45-46 Years, Height: About 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: White Colour Shirt.

If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.

SHO
Police Station, Vivek Vihar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-22150370, 7065036021

DP/5114/SHD/2024

EMPANELMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT AGENCIES

Applications are invited from INS Accredited Advertising Agencies for empanelment in South Eastern Railway for Public Relations activities and allied works. The application form can be downloaded from the website www.ser.indianrailways.gov.in (Department) → **Public Relations** → **Tender** from 3rd May, 2024 till 12.00 hrs. of 4th June, 2024. All other relevant details and eligibility criteria are also available in the above website.

The cost of application form is Rs. 5,900/- (non-refundable) (Rs. 5,000/- + 18% GST Rs. 900/-) to be paid either by Demand Draft, drawn in favour of "FA & CAO, South Eastern Railway" payable at Kolkata or can also be deposited in cash to the Chief Cashier, South Eastern Railway, Garden Reach. Demand Draft/Money receipt for the cost of application form is to be submitted separately at the time of submission of application.

The duly filled in application form including all relevant self-attested documents are to be dropped/submitted in a Sealed Envelope in a box kept at the Office of the **Chief Public Relations Officer, 11, Garden Reach Road, Kolkata-700043 available on all working days from 11:00 hrs. to 16:00 hrs. from 3rd May, 2024 to 4th June, 2024.** No application will be entertained after the date and time specified above.

(PR-99) Chief Public Relations Officer

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HT City

SRK: I HUGGED RISHABH, ASKED HIM, 'ARE YOU WELL?'

CHECK OUT TODAY'S EDITION

NORTHERN RAILWAY
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Name of work and its location:- 30-ELECT-15-T-2024-25-E3 Electrical work in connection with i) Development of Goods Shed at PTNR station in the section of SSEW/DL/Line under ADEN/DLI. ii) Development of Goods Shed at DKZ in the section of SSEW/DL/Line under ADEN/DLI.

Approx cost of the works in :- Rs. 187.03 lacs

Address of the office :- Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

Bid Security:- Rs. 243500.00

Date & time of submission of tender :- 24.05.2024, 12.00 Hrs.

Opening of tender :- 24.05.2024, 12.00 Hrs.

Website & notice board :- www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi. 1285/2024

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Corrigendum

In reference to the advertisement no. I-33/ER/ACAD/2023-24, faculty positions for the departments of Nephrology (Transplant Immuno Genetics), Molecular Medicine & Biotechnology and Neurology (Neuro-Chemistry) it is notified that for the post of Assistant Professor in the above mentioned positions, three year of post Ph.D. experience is essential in respective field.

Advt. No. I/02/ER/ACAD/2024-25 Director

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused (1) **Mohan Lal Aggarwal**, S/o Late Kishan Chand, R/o (1) 208, Sir Kartar Colony, 8 Mohla, Panipat, Haryana, (2) 89/1, Radhey Puri Extension 2, Second Floor, Delhi, (3) B-395, Nirman Vihar, Delhi, (2) **Ankur Aggarwal**, S/o Mohan Lal Aggarwal, R/o As above, have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR no. 395/2022, U/s 420/468/471/120B/34 IPC**, registered at **P.S. Jagat Puri, Delhi**, and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused **Mohan Lal Aggarwal** and **Ankur Aggarwal**, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Mohan Lal Aggarwal** and **Ankur Aggarwal**, have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Mohan Lal Aggarwal** and **Ankur Aggarwal**, of case **FIR no. 395/2022, U/s 420/468/471/120B/34 IPC, P.S. Jagat Puri, Delhi**, are required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **31.05.2024**.

By order
Aayushi Saxena,
Metropolitan Magistrate - 05,
Room no. 07,
Karkardooma Court, Delhi

DP/5105/SHD/2024
(Court Matter)

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Rajesh, S/o Lt. Sh. Suraj Bhan, R/o H.No. T-85, Punjabi Basti, Baljeet Nagar, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 31/2014, U/s 394/411/34 IPC, P. S. Anand Parbat, New Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Rajesh** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Rajesh** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Rajesh** accused of **FIR No. 31/2014, U/s 394/411/34 IPC, P. S. Anand Parbat, New Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **07.06.2024**.

By Order
Sh. Shubham Devadiya
Metropolitan Magistrate-05 (West)
Room No. 336-A
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

DP/4538/CD/2024

REQUIRED PRINCIPAL (REGULAR) FOR ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL, (CBSE AFFILIATED)

| Army Public School located at | Upto Class | Application be forwarded to |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Army Public School Shankar Vihar, New Delhi - 110010 | XII Senior Secondary School | Director AWES AWES Cell HQ Western Command PIN-908543 c/o 56 APO Email - dirawes.wc@awesindia.edu.in |

- Qualification & Experience: As per CBSE Bye-Laws 2018, Chapter 5 Article 5.3 with following Qualitative Requirements:
 - Master Degree or Honours Degree of a Foreign University recognized as equivalent to the Master's Degree of an Indian University by UPSC or Honours Degree of such Indian Universities as may be recognized equivalent to the Master's Degree by UPSC/Association of Indian universities (AIU).
 - B. Ed or M. Ed & IT literate.
 - Experience required as under (any one of the following):
 - At least 3 years experience of administrative charge of recognized College having intermediate or higher classes/5 years experience of administrative charge of a recognized High School.
 - At least 5 years experience of teaching in a recognized college or Higher Secondary School or an equivalent teaching experience in a Teachers Training Institute.
 - At least 8 years teaching experience in a recognized High School.
 - At least 5 years experience including 3 years educational administrative experience and 2 years teaching experience in a recognized High or Higher Secondary School or a Teacher Training Institute.
- Age:** Below 55 Years (Ex-servicemen below 57 Years) as on last date of submission of application.
- Pay & Allowances:** Negotiable, along with the other perks as per AWES guidelines. Special incentives for outstanding meritorious candidates.
- Selection Process:** Through panel interviews (only candidates short listed, based on qualification, experience and other criteria as may be considered by the management, will be called for interview).
- How to Apply:** Download Application Form from school website www.apsshankarvihar.edu.in and submit the same duly filled and affixed with latest photograph, along with self attested educational, experience certificates/ testimonials, to the given address.
 - Only hard copy of application with supporting documents will be considered.
 - Last date for receipt of application: 27 May 2024. (No TA/DA admissible)
 - Expected date of joining of the new incumbent 15 Sep 2024

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
4th Floor, Chandernagore Building, 36 Janpath, New Delhi-110001
Phone: 23353503 FAX: 23753923

Petition No. 61/TL/2024 Dated: 26.4.2024

NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003

An application under Sections 14, 15 and 79 (1) (e) of the Electricity Act, 2003 (the Act) has been made by Halvad Transmission Limited, C-105, Anand Niketan, New Delhi-110021, to establish the "Transmission scheme for evacuation of additional 7 GW of RE Power from Khavda RE Park under Phase III Part A" on a Build, Own, Operate and Transfer basis (hereinafter referred to as "the project") consisting of the following elements:

| S. No. | Name of the Transmission Element | Scheduled COD in months from Effective Date |
|--------|---|---|
| 1. | Establishment of 765 kV Halvad switching station with 765 kV, 2x330 MVA bus reactors | 24 months |
| 2. | KPS2 (GIS) - Halvad 765 kV D/c line | |
| 3. | 240 MVA switchable line reactor on each ckt at both ends of KPS2- Halvad 765 kV D/c line. | |
| 4. | 2 nos. of 765 kV GIS line bays at KPS2 for termination of KPS2 - Halvad 765 kV D/c line | |
| 5. | LILO of Lakadia - Ahmedabad 765 kV D/c line at Halvad | |

Note: Developer of KPS2 shall provide space for implementation of 2 no. of 765 kV line bays along with switchable line reactors for termination of KPS2 (GIS) - Halvad 765 kV D/c line

- The Central Transmission Utility of India Limited vide its letter dated 10.1.2024 has recommended for the grant of a transmission licence to the applicant to establish the proposed transmission system.
- Based on the material available on record, the Commission vide order dated 24.4.2024 in Petition No. 61/TL/2024, has proposed to issue transmission licence to the applicant for establishment of the transmission scheme as noted in para 1 above.
- A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for the grant of an inter-State transmission licence to Halvad Transmission Limited before the Commission can be accessed at the website www.adanienergysolutions.com or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.
- Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act that suggestions or objections, if any, to the Commission's proposal to grant a transmission licence to the applicant, as aforesaid, be sent to the undersigned by **13.5.2024** at the above noted address. The suggestions or objections received after the specified date shall not be considered.
- The application shall be taken up for the further hearing by the Commission on **22.5.2024**. Any person who files suggestions or objections may in his/her discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.

Sd/-
(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)
Secretary

AAP, BJP picks file papers on Day Two of nominations



Sahi Ram Pahalwan with Atishi in Okhla on Tuesday. RAJ K RAJ/HT



Bansuri Swaraj at Prithviraj Road on Tuesday. SANCHIT KHANNA/HT

Paras Singh
paras@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party's South Delhi nominee, Sahi Ram Pahalwan, and Bharatiya Janata Party's New Delhi candidate, Bansuri Swaraj, were among 15 candidates who filed their nomination papers across the seven Lok Sabha constituencies on Tuesday, taking the overall count of nominations so far to 30, officers aware of the matter said.

Pahalwan and Swaraj reached the office of the returning officer after holding roadshows accompanied by ministers and senior party leaders in their respective constituencies.

Sahi Ram Pahalwan

The incumbent legislator from Tughlakabad, started his day at 9am at Tehkhand village's Durga temple and undertook an 8-km-long roadshow, passing through Kalkaji and the Ravidas Temple in the neighbourhood.

The roadshow ended at the district magistrate's office in Mehrauli. The AAP candidate was accompanied by Delhi ministers Saurabh Bharadwaj and Atishi along with party MLAs, municipal councillors and supporters. AAP workers moved along the entourage with brooms in their hands.

Addressing his party workers and supporters during the roadshow, Pahalwan said the people will elect the person who has worked for society.

"This time, the results will be

opposite to last elections, and the BJP will be at the last position. Arvind Kejriwal has been arrested but his wife Sunita is trying to fill in the void. The people are standing against the BJP's 10 years of misrule and are standing with the nine years of development of Arvind Kejriwal. Delhi will fight, the INDIA block will win."

Atishi said the BJP had thought that if they arrest Kejriwal, the AAP will not be able to campaign. "The AAP is not campaigning, rather, the people are campaigning for our contest, the people of Delhi will help us win the elections."

Bharadwaj said the 2023 Lok Sabha polls are different from 2019 and 2014. "In the last polls, people had a lot of expectations from the BJP. All those expectations have vanished. People are afraid whether democracy and elections will survive or not. Whether the Constitution and [caste] reservations will survive or not."

According to the affidavit filed with the returning officer, Sahi Ram, 63, 11th pass from Badarpur Government Senior Secondary School.

The affidavit says that Pahalwan has moveable assets worth ₹34.8 lakh and immovable assets of ₹1.04 crore. He has liabilities worth ₹3.2 lakh in the form of bank loans. The affidavit shows

that he has been convicted in three cases — pasting of posters and defacement of property, assault for an issue related to road construction by MCD and altercation during a demolition drive by DDA. Fines were imposed in these cases.

Bansuri Swaraj

The BJP's Bansuri Swaraj, the daughter of former external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj, held a "hawan and puja" before starting the roadshow from Tughlaq Lane to Jam Nagar House near India Gate in New Delhi to file her nomination papers. In the roadshow, Swaraj was accompanied by Union minister Hardeep Puri, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva and her father Swaraj Kaushal.

The roadshow accompanied by a bike rally by BJP workers started at 10.15am from Tughlaq Lane and passed through Prithviraj Road, Shajahan Road, and India Gate C-hexagon before coming to an end at Jammagar House on Akbar Road at 11.30am.

Swaraj said that she was overwhelmed with the blessings being showered by the people. "This is a national election and we are fighting on the basis of a 10-year report card of the works carried out by the BJP government. In Delhi, CM Arvind Kejriwal has not allowed many

schemes of the central government to be implemented in Delhi out of politics of resentment (dvesh). We are determined to implement Ayushman Bharat in Delhi," she added. She said the BJP will accomplish the goal of "viksit bharat" (developed India).

Union minister Hardeep Puri said that Sushma Swaraj was the ideal face of Indian politics and "glimpses of her can be seen in her daughter Bansuri Swaraj". "400 seat mark is a sentiment. We got 303 seats last time. 15% more seats would take us to 345, and with allies, we will get more than 400 seats. The BJP will win all seven seats in Delhi," Puri said.

According to her poll affidavit, Swaraj, 40, has a Master's of Studies from St Catherine's College, University of Oxford. She is also a barrister of law from Inner Temple, London. She did her BA (Hons) from University of Warwick (UK) and schooling at the Vasant Valley School, Delhi. According to the affidavit, Bansuri Swaraj owns moveable assets worth ₹11.27 crore and immovable assets worth Rs 10.52 crore, which also includes inherited assets. The affidavit says that she owns two vehicles — a Mercedes Benz and Toyota Rumion and 2022grams gold inherited from her mother and grandparents. The immovable assets include land in Palwal, Haryana and residential property at Jantar Mantar Road and Hailey Road.



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The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world, and bestows a newborn with the first touches of affection, which is why baby massages bond the mother with the infant together. It's a promise to care pehle pal se

This expression of mother's love is key to the growth of babies, however, for new mothers out there, it can be a tad overwhelming to give your baby their first massage correctly. Johnson's Baby identified this unsaid worry most mothers face, and made it a mission to reinforce the benefits of baby massages and empower new mothers with the knowledge to perfect it.

A key to their growth

When a mother lovingly massages her little one, it strengthens their precious bond and brings a host of benefits. Some of which include improved blood circulation, ensuring those tiny muscles grow strong and delicate bones stay healthy. It also soothes their little tummies, enhances digestion, and also forms a shield for their delicate skin that keeps rashes away.

Massage your little one the right way

Johnson's Baby identified in a survey* that 40% of mothers struggle with the

*Data collected by company through FirstCry Parenting survey. [N= 596, April 2024]

Disclaimer: The views expressed are those of the author/brand and not of Hindustan Times.



right massaging techniques. To ease those worries Johnson's Baby launched #FirstMassageKitaiyari — an influencer campaign on social media channels engaging new mums about massaging techniques, highlighting wrong practices and sharing insights on the right amount of pressure. Here are some tender tips to help you prepare for this special moment:

- Apply baby oil to your palms
- With gentle strokes on your baby's legs move upwards. Repeat the same for their arms
- With circular motions, massage the chest and tummy
- Massage their back, mirroring the same gentle technique
- Massage the head with fingertips to avoid discomfort

Choice of oil matters

Oil massages are crucial for a baby's skincare routine. It lowers cortisol levels and reduces stress. According to the survey, 30% of mothers still use vegetable oils, unaware of the harm they inflict on their baby's skin. Mustard oil can lead to irritation and olive oil with high levels of oleic acid, can dry up their delicate soft skin.

What Doctor's say

The Indian Academy of Pediatrics guidelines say that oil is a source of nutrition and helps babies gain weight. Doctors suggest avoiding vegetable oils for massages as they disrupt the skin barrier, and to avoid heating the oil before the massage.

Why Johnson's Baby Oil

Johnson's Baby Oil, tailored for your little one, is crafted with gentle, baby-safe ingredients including Vitamin E, to condition and nourish their delicate skin. Its light, non-sticky texture protects baby's skin barrier from day 1, free from harmful chemicals.

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Work at Naraina flyover to cause chaos in west Delhi

Karn Pratap Singh
karn.singh@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A carriageway of the Naraina flyover, leading from Dhaula Kuan to Mayapuri, will be shut for vehicular movement from Thursday for around 20 days in order for the Public Works Department (PWD) to carry out repairs, the Delhi Traffic Police said. After repairs on this carriageway are complete, the opposite carriageway will be shut, with the entire project stipulated to take around a month, PWD officials said.

Measures have been taken to minimise inconvenience to motorists during the period, at least two senior traffic police officers aware of the matter said on Tuesday. However, traffic in western parts of the city, which is already contending with traffic jams due to construction of a subway and flyover and underground cabling work on the Ring Road near Bharat Darshan Park in Punjabi Bagh, is set to be hit. "As maximum traffic will be diverted onto the Ring Road under the Naraina flyover, the volume of traffic will increase on this alternative route, which usually remains choked due to its narrow driving space, locals shops, and traffic signals. Road adjoining the flyover will also face a high volume of traffic," one of the officers cited above said, requesting anonymity.

In for a tough commute

Police said measures have been taken to minimise inconvenience to motorists



At least 15 traffic police personnel will be deployed around the flyover, the second traffic police officer cited above said. A PWD official said the repair must be done across the width of the flyover and so, both carriageways will have to be closed for around 15 days each. "There are three expansion joints that have become loose and are making noise. These will have to be replaced," the PWD official said.

Experts said that the repair of the flyover could have been delayed. S Velmurugan, chief scientist and head of traffic engineering and safety divisions at Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) said at least one of the three lanes of the carriageway should have been left open. "When there is already work going on at the Punjabi Bagh flyover, this work should have waited till that was over."

Sarita Vihar flyover repair on hold
Repair work of Sarita Vihar flyover on Mathura Road, which was to start in the first week of May, is set to be delayed. "PWD has not published an advertisement in newspapers or informed the public through other media platforms about their plan to shut the flyover for vehicular movement," a traffic police officer said.

Evacuation at city hospital after bomb threat, later declared hoax

NEW DELHI: The Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya in Delhi's Shahdara received a bomb threat through email on Tuesday morning, which was later found to be a hoax, police officers said. Police said unidentified accused sent the threat to a senior hospital staffer at 10am and marked it to 40-50 other people, after which the bomb disposal squad was called in. Staffers, doctors, visitors and 12 patients were evacuated from the hospital. At 1-2pm, the search operation was called off.



Police search for the bomb at the hospital on Tuesday. RAJ KRAI/HT

TWO MEMBERS OF BISHNOI GANG ARRESTED IN NUH GURUGRAM/NEW DELHI

A joint team of Haryana and Delhi Police arrested two members of the Lawrence Bishnoi-Rohit Godara gang after a shoot-out in Nuh village in Haryana on Monday, said police officers aware of the matter. The incident took place near Tauru-Nuh Road, close to Palla Pahadi village. Both suspects sustained gunshot wounds. The two were identified as Vishal and Ravi, who allegedly shot dead Gurugram scrap dealer Sachin Munjal in Rohtak on February 29, police said.

Delhiwale

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An encounter with Neera's babies

A citizen's life with flowers

{ PRIVATE CAPITAL } Every morning, she gets up at five, walks into the dining room, opens the door outside to the porch, and there, "I look at my babies."

Her babies are adeniums, which are "such uncommon flowers in Delhi that I didn't spot them even in my trip last year to that famous garden beside Humayun's tomb."

Mother to an investment banker and a multinational's business head, Neera Chopra unites some of the best blessings of existence. A proud alumna of Lucknow's Loreto Convent ("from kindergarten to BA in political science"), she lives with her lawyer husband in north Delhi's genteel Rajpur Road. Almost a bungalow, her apartment lies close to the lieutenant governor's residence. A gigantic rubber tree guards the front lawn.

Amidst all these satisfactions earned from a lifetime of devotion to the household, the gentle lady feels most possessive about her collection of adeniums. She often shares their phone photos on her WhatsApp group of fellow "Loreto girls."

In her 70s, Neera was introduced to the adenium following her marriage in 1971, when a neighbour presented her with a plant sourced from Chandigarh. It didn't survive, but Neera fell

for its flowers "because they were pink, and I love pink... Also because they were uncommon, and I always want something unusual."

She eventually bought a few seeds of the plant from Lucknow's famous Botanical Garden.

Some 25 years later, this evening, the descendants of those seeds adorn Neera's domestic universe—about a hundred potted plants. "Mere bachche... They make my house look beautiful, they bring pink to my life." The flowers are watered twice a day, with help from gardener Pappu.

Last year, Neera's friend Anita Kochar had a house warming party at her apartment in Gurugram's Palm Springs. Neera gifted her two adenium plants. A month back, the grateful recipient WhatsApped to her a happy update: "Hi Neera, ur babies are beginning to sprout little shoots."

By now, the evening is sinking deeper into Rajpur Road. A bird somewhere is tweeting loudly, longingly. Neera remarks that these flowers bloom throughout the year, but during summer months their pink colour fades as morning progresses to noon. By next morning though, refreshed after a restful night, the flowers regain their "hot pink."

Graciously condescending to a request, Neera puts on her favourite "hot pink" lipstick to pose with her "babies." See photo.

Also seen—Neera's granddaughter Jia.



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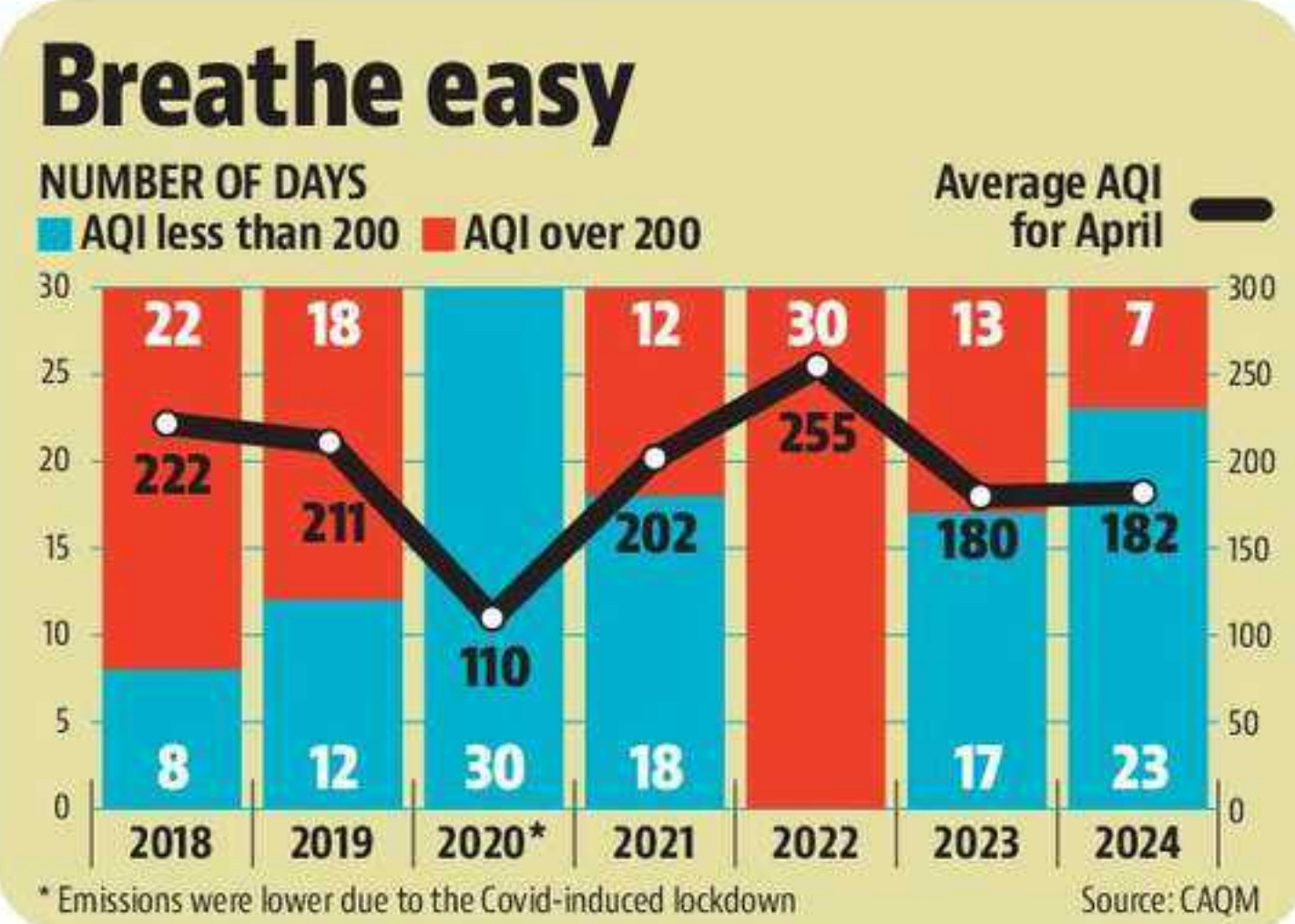
HT TWTW
THE WEEK THAT WAS
A quiz on the week's development.

First Voice. Last Word.

Delhi logs cleanest April air in 6 years: CAQM data

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The air quality index (AQI) in Delhi was lower than 200 on 23 days in April, with the month recording the highest number of such days in the last six years, barring 2020, data shared by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the National Capital Region on Tuesday has revealed.



CAQM credited the improvement in air quality to favourable weather conditions and comprehensive efforts by stakeholders to control air pollution.

An AQI below 200 is classified into three categories considered acceptable in terms of air quality. It is "moderate" when the reading is between 101 and 200; "satisfactory" when between 50 and 100, and "good" below 50, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Similarly, an AQI over 200 is divided into three categories that are considered in the unacceptable range in terms of pollution. It is "poor" when between 201 and 300, "very poor" when between 301 and 400 and "severe" when over 400.

Data shared by CAQM since 2018 showed that Delhi recorded 23 days with an AQI below 200 in April 2024, compared to just 17 days last April; zero days in 2022; 18 days in 2021; all 30 days in 2020; 12 days in 2019 and eight in 2018.

To be sure, 2020 is an outlier as emissions that year were lower due to the Covid-19 induced

lockdown.

"As a result of favourable meteorological or weather conditions coupled with consistent, comprehensive and concerted efforts by Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and adjoining areas and various stakeholders to control air pollution in NCR, Delhi recorded maximum number of 'good' category to 'moderate' category air quality days in April 2024 as compared to the corresponding period of last six years starting from 2018 (except 2020 - the year of lockdown due to Covid), denoting a marked improvement," CAQM said in a statement on Tuesday.

In must be noted that the average AQI this April — 182 — was marginally worse than last year's reading of 180.

Delhi, much like previous years, was ranked the world's most polluted capital city in the

world in 2023, recording an annual PM2.5 concentration of 92.7 µg/m3, beating Dhaka in Bangladesh (80.2 µg/m3). Though pollution levels in the Capital are worst during the winter months, they can remain fairly high in the summer too.

Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director, research and advocacy at the Centre for Science and Environment, said though a marginal improvement has been seen this time, the levels were still beyond the permissible standards.

"In a more open and well-ventilated atmosphere, the impact of dust pollution — especially wind-blown dust increases. This is also the time when the number and frequency of days exceeding ozone standards increases. To combat these, we require deeper control measures, particularly on combustion sources," she said.

10 MAOISTS KILLED

began to fire at the forces. After the exchange of fire stopped, the bodies of nine Maoists, including two women cadres, have been recovered from the spot," he said.

A senior police officer involved in the operation said that the security forces left the Majpur camp, around 50km from the district headquarters of Narayanpur, and around 150 personnel walked 20km through the night to reach Kaakur village. "This is the core area of the Maoists in Abujhmad — it borders Narayanpur, Kanker and Gadchiroli (in Maharashtra) districts. We had specific inputs about senior leaders camping in the area, which included information about the presence of a divisional commander," the officer said.

Two of the Maoists were identified as divisional committee members Vinay, alias Ashok, and Joganna.

Sunderaj said that an AK-47 rifle and a cache of other weapons and explosives have been recovered from the spot, but further details will be available once teams return to camp. "The identity of all Maoists is yet to be ascertained," the IG said, adding that the deceased cadres were likely from the Abujhmad division committee and the North Bastar division committee of the CPI (Maoist).

Though Narayanpur is a separate district, it falls in the Kanker Lok Sabha constituency which went to polls on April 26. Narayanpur and Kanker are among the seven districts that form the Bastar division.

In many ways, Tuesday's encounter is a part of a larger battle playing out in Bastar, where security forces have become more aggressive in recent months. Their advance has been aided, security officers say, but an infrastructure push that has seen the creation of 17 new forward camps since December 2023 in what until now were core Maoist-controlled areas. These, officers said, have aided a civilian outreach and facilitated more efficient operations since they allow security forces to act on intelligence inputs faster and reach encounter spots sooner.

The action is leading to an increase in the administration's influence, and in turn, aid its ability to gather new intelligence. Tuesday's exchange also abets the argument for an expanded area of influence for security forces because it took place in Abujhmad — 4,000 square kilometre of forests that straddle Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. Abujhmad is an amalgamation of the Gondi words "Abujh" and "Maad" and literally translates to "hills of the unknown" — an area that is yet unmapped by Union government. Several attempts at conducting preliminary surveys in the region have taken place since 2017, but each has been stymied by the extremely difficult geography, lack of infrastructure, and heavy Maoist fortification. It is because of this administrative vacuum that most security officers in Bastar

{ FROM PAGE 1 }

refer to the area as the "last bastion of the Maoists", where the most senior cadre, including the politburo and the central committee of the CPI (Maoist), take refuge through the year.

Experts said that it was encouraging to see security forces operating so deep inside the Abujhmad forests. "Such operations reflect that forces have credible inputs, and they are aggressive now. In the last three months, impactful operations have taken place which have rattled the Maoists," RK Vij, former special director general of police, said.

Tuesday's encounter also comes in the middle of a heated Lok Sabha campaign in Chhattisgarh, with seven of its 11 seats set to go to the polls in the third phase of the elections on May 7. To be sure, voting has already taken place in four Lok Sabha constituencies. On April 22, Union home minister Amit Shah mentioned the increased aggression during the party's campaign, and said that a systematic campaign to end Maoism was taking place under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. "Elect Modi ji for a third term, and Maoism will be eradicated from Chhattisgarh in two years," Shah told a rally in Kanker, days after the April 16 operation.

On Tuesday, Vijay Sharma, Chhattisgarh's deputy chief minister, reiterated a call to the Maoists to begin talks. "If any Maoist, or a big or small group wants to talk through video call or a mediator, we are ready and will arrange better rehabilitation for them. We urge them to join the mainstream. We want peace to prevail in Bastar and development to take place there," he said. To be sure, calls for negotiations, from both the Maoists and the state government, have existed nominally for several years but have largely failed to materialise for what both sides see as unreasonable conditions.

The government has maintained that Maoists must lay down their arms before any talks, while the Maoists have asked for a complete pullback of forces before any conversations can take place. "The Congress government had developed a trust with the people of Bastar... Now the residents of the village are supporting security forces, which are leading to operational success," said Sushil Anand Shukla, the Congress's chief spokesperson in the state.

WORLD T20 INDIA SQUAD

first taste of international cricket since the accident. The 26-year-old, who hasn't put a foot wrong for Delhi Capitals in IPL 2024, impressing with the bat (398 runs from 11 games) and proving his fitness behind the stumps, will be the first-choice wicketkeeper. Pant's big-match temperament could be an asset in this tournament, like in any other.

Virat Kohli, who has topped the run-scoring charts in the current IPL season as an opener for RCB, gets a place in the squad as well.

But will he get his preferred batting position in the Indian team as well or will Yashasvi Jaiswal open the innings with Sharma? That is a decision the

selectors have, for now, left to Sharma and the team management. To put things in perspective, Kohli has batted at a strike rate of 147.49 in this IPL, as compared to 154.65 by Jaiswal. In T20, needless to say, this is a stat that matters.

Next in the line-up is Suryakumar Yadav, who, after returning from an injury layoff, has only played six matches for Mumbai Indians this season. With a strike rate of 171.55 in T20s, he remains the game-changer for India in a line-up that still seems to lack the power-hitting capability of some of the other top T20 World Cup contenders.

Sanju Samson, in the squad as a keeper-batter, could add to the big-hitting chops, but playing him will require Sharma and the team management to take a leap of faith. With Pant slotted into the playing 11, the Rajasthan Royals skipper will only play if one of the seniors is benched.

It is in this scenario that India could have found a place for Rinku Singh. The left-hander hasn't got a proper go at Kolkata Knight Riders this season but he has performed the finisher's role exceptionally in India colours, and hence is disappointed to miss out. He has been named in the reserves.

India's selectors opted for Shivam Dube instead. The big-hitting left-hander has made a huge impact with Chennai Super Kings, especially in the middle overs against spin. He can bowl, too, but CSK has opted to focus on his batting alone. Whether India can find a place for him in the 11 remains to be seen, but on current form Dube should be accommodated. His biggest competition will be vice-captain Pandya.

Pandya, the all-rounder, is coming back into the T20 team after an ankle injury sustained during last year's ODI World Cup at home. That forced him to sit out the Afghanistan series in January. He hasn't looked anywhere close to his best in IPL but is seen as probably India's only tested medium-pace all-round option.

On the spin all-rounders' front, it would've been hard to look beyond Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel. If anything, Axar has been more impressive with bat and ball. But Jadeja's fielding always adds to his overall package.

Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal have a chance of reviving the #KulCha chants, but it is unlikely that India will play them both in the same match. Jasprit Bumrah leads the pace attack but the opposition will surely look to target the second pacer in the line-up. Mohammed Siraj and Arshdeep Singh tend to go for runs, and that is another weakness in the squad.

The tracks in the West Indies, where the second half of the World Cup will be played, are said to be on the slower side and that should see spinners have a say. But given the way the T20 game has been evolving in the last few years, if it comes down to a pure power-hitting contest, India might find themselves wishing they had been a bit more adventurous with their picks.

The selectors have gone with the big names but as the last few ICC tournaments have shown, it takes more than that to win a World Cup. Just ask Dhoni and his young band from 2007.

OFFICE OF THE RETURNING OFFICER
NEW DELHI PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY (NDPC-04)
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE, NEW DELHI DISTRICT
12/1 Jam Nagar House, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi - 110011
Email: sdmend@delhi.nic.in

F.No. RO-NDPC-04/LS-2024/4687 Dated: 29.04.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
Regarding appointment of expenditure Observer, General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 to New Delhi Parliamentary Constituency-04 (NDPC-04), NCT OF DELHI

This is for information of political parties and General Public/Voters of General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 of New Delhi Parliamentary Constituency-04 (NDPC-04), that the Election Commission of India has designated the following officer as Expenditure Observer for General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 for New Delhi Parliamentary Constituency-04 (NDPC-04).

| Allotted Parliamentary Constituency No. & Name | Name of Observer | Mobile/TeI No. & Email | Time & Date | Office Address |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| 04-New Delhi Parliamentary Constituency | Mr. Sanjay Kumar Lal, IRS | expenditure monitoringndd@gmail.com (Mobile No: 8826728469) | Public Meeting Time: Between 12.00 to 01.00 PM First Inspection: 29.04.2024 to 01.05.2024 (02.00 PM to 05.00 PM) Second Inspection: 05.05.2024 to 25.05.2024 (02.00 PM to 05.00 PM) Third Inspection: 25 th day of declaration of election result (28.06.2024) | Atal Adarsh Balika Vidyalaya, Gole Market, New Delhi-110001 |

The Expenditure Observer will be available to General Public on all working days as per time/date/venue mentioned in aforesaid table. Any complaint with respect to malpractices in Election and violation of Model Code of Conduct may be reported at the contact number given above.

(Isha Khosla), IAS
Returning Officer, NDPC-04

DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0022/24-25

GOVT. OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICE (SOUTH)
M.B. ROAD, SAKET, NEW DELHI-110068
PHONE NO. 011-20860810, Email: esdmsouth.delhi@gov.in

F.7(515)/DEO(S)/Advert. Leading/2024/1789 Dated:- 30.04.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
Regarding appointment of Expenditure Observer, General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 to South Delhi Parliamentary Constituency-07 (SDPC-07):

This is for information of Political Parties and General Public/Voters of General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 of South Delhi Parliamentary Constituency-07 (SDPC-07), that the Election Commission of India has designated the following officer as Expenditure Observer for General Election Lok Sabha 2024 for South Delhi Parliamentary Constituency-07 (SDPC-07):

| Allotted Parliamentary Constituency No. & Name | Name of Observer | Mobile no. & Telephone No. | Time & Date | Observer Office Address |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| 07-South Delhi Parliamentary Constituency | Shri Shah Nawaz UI Rahman, IRS | 7428449648 011-20904260 | Meeting time 11.00 AM. To 12.00 P.M. w.e.f. 05.05.2024 till completion of Election. | Ground floor, Room No. 04, Office of SDM (Saket), M.B. Road, Saket, New Delhi |

The Expenditure Observer will be available to General Public on all working days as per time/date/venue mentioned in aforesaid table. Any complaint with respect to malpractices in Election and violation of Model Code of Conduct may be reported at the contact number given above.

(M. Chaitanya Prasad, IAS)
Returning Officer, SDPC-07

DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0024/24-25

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STATEMENT OF STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024 (₹ in Crore)

| Sr. No. | PARTICULARS | STANDALONE | | | | CONSOLIDATED | | | | | |
|---------|---|------------|------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | AUDITED | | AUDITED RESULTS | | AUDITED | | AUDITED RESULTS | | | |
| | | 31.03.2024 | 31.12.2023 | 31.03.2023 | 31.03.2024 | 31.03.2024 | 31.12.2023 | 31.03.2023 | 31.03.2024 | | |
| 1 | Revenue from Operations | 219,875.55 | 223,012.37 | 226,492.05 | 866,345.38 | 934,952.66 | 223,649.85 | 226,892.08 | 230,711.56 | 881,235.45 | 951,409.94 |
| 2 | Other Income | 1,656.98 | 1,452.91 | 1,638.11 | 4,780.82 | 6,235.22 | 1,453.52 | 1,268.23 | 1,278.04 | 3,842.85 | 4,261.70 |
| 3 | Total Income | 221,532.53 | 224,465.28 | 228,130.16 | 871,126.20 | 941,187.88 | 225,103.37 | 228,160.31 | 231,989.60 | 885,078.30 | 955,671.64 |
| 4 | Total Expenses | 215,200.23 | 213,697.08 | 215,915.20 | 818,781.99 | 931,489.74 | 217,920.27 | 216,802.74 | 218,320.50 | 829,336.44 | 941,496.14 |
| 5 | Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax and share of associates/ joint ventures) | 6,332.30 | 10,768.20 | 12,214.96 | 52,344.21 | 9,698.14 | 7,183.10 | 11,357.57 | 13,669.10 | 55,741.86 | 14,175.50 |
| 6 | Share of Profit/(Loss) of Associates and Joint Ventures | - | - | - | - | - | 236.54 | 647.71 | 89.51 | 1,545.93 | 862.19 |
| 7 | Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before Tax | 6,332.30 | 10,768.20 | 12,214.96 | 52,344.21 | 9,698.14 | 7,419.64 | 12,005.28 | 13,758.61 | 57,287.79 | 15,037.69 |
| 8 | Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after Tax | 4,837.69 | 8,063.39 | 10,058.69 | 39,618.84 | 8,241.82 | 5,487.92 | 9,224.85 | 10,841.23 | 43,161.15 | 11,704.26 |
| 9 | Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after Tax attributable to Equityholders of the Parent | - | - | - | - | - | 5,148.87 | 9,029.56 | 10,289.82 | 41,729.69 | 9,792.12 |
| 10 | Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/ (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)) | 11,570.82 | 10,288.50 | 10,929.53 | 52,975.06 | 6,778.09 | 12,251.98 | 11,903.26 | 11,160.19 | 56,169.15 | 11,415.90 |
| 11 | Total Comprehensive Income for the period attributable to Equityholders of the Parent | - | - | - | - | - | 11,886.60 | 11,707.29 | 10,601.46 | 54,709.05 | 9,492.42 |
| 12 | Paid-up Equity Share Capital (Face value - ₹ 10 each) | 14,121.24 | 14,121.24 | 14,121.24 | 14,121.24 | 14,121.24 | 14,121.24 | 14,121.24 | 14,121.24 | 14,121.24 | 14,121.24 |
| 13 | Other Equity excluding revaluation reserves | - | - | - | 162,943.42 | - | - | - | - | 169,644.71 | 125,948.68 |
| 14 | Securities Premium Account | - | - | - | - | - | 79.94 | 76.74 | 76.74 | 79.94 | 76.74 |
| 15 | Net Worth (Total Equity excluding Non-controlling Interest) | 176,714.98 | 165,144.05 | 134,757.54 | 176,714.98 | 134,757.54 | 183,416.27 | 171,637.04 | 139,720.24 | 183,416.27 | 139,720.24 |
| 16 | Outstanding Debt | 116,495.74 | 106,190.42 | 132,495.45 | 116,495.74 | 132,495.45 | 123,453.57 | 115,002.25 | 140,114.82 | 123,453.57 | 140,114.82 |
| 17 | Debt Equity Ratio (Times) | 0.66 | 0.64 | 0.98 | 0.66 | 0.98 | 0.66 | 0.65 | 0.98 | 0.66 | 0.98 |
| 18 | Earnings per Share (₹) (Basic and Diluted) (Face value - ₹ 10 each) | 3.51 | 5.86 | 7.30 | 28.77 | 5.98 | 3.74 | 6.56 | 7.47 | 30.30 | 7.11 |
| 19 | Capital Redemption Reserve | - | - | - | - | - | 0.42 | 0.41 | 0.41 | 0.42 | 0.41 |
| 20 | Bond Redemption Reserve | - | - | 1,013.20 | - | 1,013.20 | 18.75 | 18.75 | 1,031.95 | 18.75 | 1,031.95 |
| 21 | Debt Service Coverage Ratio (Times) | 1.19 | 2.72 | 5.37 | 2.17 | 1.30 | 1.30 | 3.02 | 3.96 | 2.32 | 1.42 |
| 22 | Interest Service Coverage Ratio (Times) | 5.54 | 8.35 | 7.59 | 9.08 | 3.39 | 5.93 | 9.28 | 7.96 | 9.37 | 3.96 |

Notes:
1. The Board of Directors have recommended the final dividend of ₹7.00 per equity share (face value of ₹10/- per equity share) in this meeting for FY 2023-24 subject to approval by the members of the Company in the Annual General Meeting. This is in addition to the interim dividend of ₹5.00 per equity share paid during the year by the company.
2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 & Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites i.e. BSE Limited (URL: <https://www.bseindia.com/xml-data/corpfiling/AttachLive/06d9a24-54e-4742-aa5-6541e289a9e9.pdf>) & National Stock Exchange of India Limited (URL: https://nsearchives.nseindia.com/corporate/IOC_30042024143835_IOC_Results_Q42324_S.pdf) and also on the company's website (www.iocl.com).

Place: New Delhi
Dated: 30th April, 2024

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD
(ANUJ JAIN)
DIRECTOR (FINANCE)
DIN: 10310088

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Established by Govt. of NCT of Delhi)
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Website: www.ipu.ac.in

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
The University invites online tender from reputed firms through e-procurement portal of GNCTD-
www.governmentprocurement.delhi.gov.in for Supply & Installation of Lab Equipments for Mechatronics Lab at USAR, East Delhi Campus of the University. Cost of the work is Rs 47.90 lakh (approx.). Last date of submission of complete tender is 8th May 2024 upto 01.00 p.m.
Further details are available on the University website www.ipu.ac.in
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(Authorized Signatory)

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SPOTLIGHT ELECTIONS 2024

HT looks at some key constituencies across the country that encapsulate the issues shaping the ongoing Lok Sabha electoral contest
Amid welfare push, the shifting sands of Dalit politics

Dhruvo Jyoti and Hemendra Chaturvedi
letters@hindustantimes.com

AGRA: Clumps of darkness are descending on a young man as he rappels down the remnants of a 60-foot stage, its skeleton stripped of its cloth finery but still held up by gaunt poles of bamboo. As he swings around on a pole, undoing knots of coir, debris of a joyous celebration are strewn all around a vast field – wrappers of myriad hues, half-eaten plates of fried delicacies, an errant *chappal* or two.

Walking up the field is an elderly gentleman in an expertly tailored white safari suit. His stride is tempered with age, his footing unsure on the pockmarked surface. Yet, this 80-year-old's memory is sharp – right from the day he met Dr BR Ambedkar in March 1956, when he was 12, to the alleys this year's Ambedkar Jayanti show needs to avoid.

But he is most proud of the three-day revelry centred around the Constitution framer's birthday that he has helped organise – Bhim Nagari, a 30-year-old affair where Ambedkarites take over a neighbourhood, decorate it in motifs of blue, and organise a fair that attracts tens of hundreds of people from across the heartland. "We organise community weddings, felicitate achievers from our localities, and call senior ministers and academics. It is both a celebration and a reclamation of our dignity," said Kartar Singh Bhartiya, the chief organiser and a local advocate. "It is what makes Agra India's Dalit capital."

This year, the stage was designed in the likeness of the London School of Economics, where Dr Ambedkar received his first doctoral degree. A kilometres-long shobhayatra with a hired elephant walked around the city all night on April 14, Ambedkar's birthday, before converging in the Bhim Nagari grounds.

But lurking behind the 90-odd floats depicting the lives of Ambedkar, Ravidas and Buddha are the shifting sands of Dalit politics in a region where the community not only makes up a third of the electorate but also is among the most prosperous and conscious of its kind in the country.

Agra encapsulates the churn within the community and the battle of two ideas shaping the general elections; on one side is the Bharatiya Janata Party that has married personality driven welfare with Hindu cultural iconism and built a populist model to cleave the Dalit communities. On the other is a ground-up emancipatory model once championed by the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) that built grassroots network of leaders, but which has since atrophied. Other parties – notably the Samajwadi Party and Congress alliance – are attempting to replicate this model but with different success.

It is a moment of extraordinary stress for a community with upwards of 250 million people who continue to battle pervasive discrimination and structural barriers. "We always had political shelter in stalwarts such as Ambedkar and Jagjivan Ram. Now, our education and prosperity may be increasing, but our political power is stagnant," Bhartiya lamented. "It will have dire consequences."

The Valmikis
In Lohamandi, a debris-choked sewage canal is the permanent courtyard for lumps of misshapen brick houses. It meanders its way through the colony and breaches its banks every monsoon. The neighbourhood is populated largely by municipal workers from the Valmiki community (a Dalit sub-caste) which forms the bedrock of the BJP's social coalition.

The group languishes at the bottom of socioeconomic indicators. Most of the 200 families in Lohamandi are employed as sewer cleaners or municipal sanitation workers. Young men find private jobs hard to come by and staying in school even harder. A mixture of resentment at the better fortunes of the Jatavs (the Dalit sub-caste that is the BSP's core base) and anger that no other party paid them the respect of direct outreach pushed them towards the BJP.

Critical to this endeavour was the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. "When I was young, they came and recruited me. In Seva Bharti, they gave 10 machines per neighbourhood and training for free to all women. Our boys would work for as little as Rs 3,000 a month. They gave us jobs in shakhnas," said Nandkishor Valmiki.

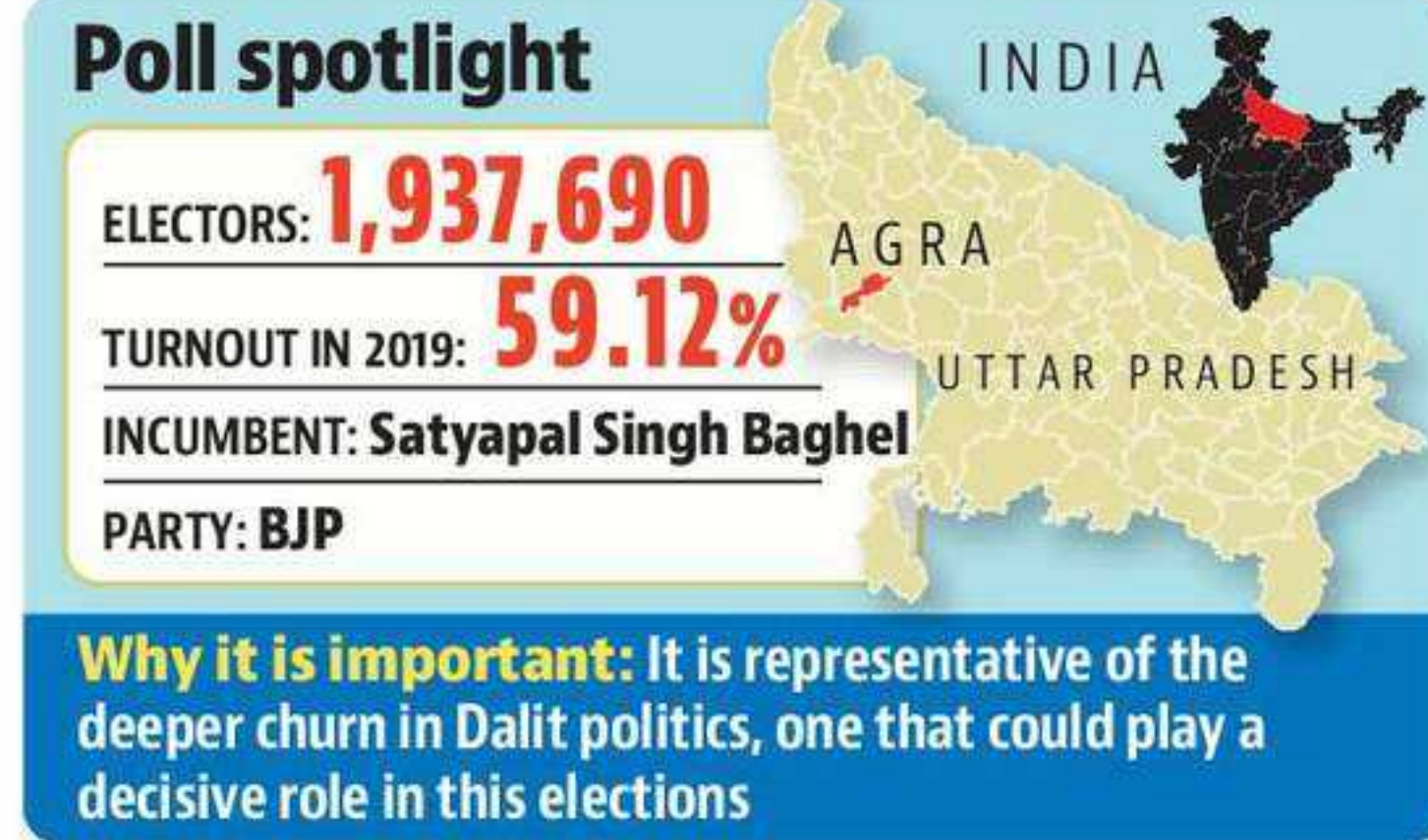
Valmiki calls himself a *kattar hinduvadi* (orthodox Hindu). He spends his days scouring social media and neighbourhoods for signs that people are trying to convert out of Hinduism, and uses force, coercion, inducements, even violence to stop them. There are cases in local police stations against him, but no probe gets too far, he brags. "All Valmikis are nationalists and Hindus. Look at the programmes where RSS has linked the Ramayana to our community. Even an airport is now named after Maharshi Valmiki."

This is not an uncommon sentiment in Lohamandi. Valmikis are the second-largest SC group in this region and their impoverishment means that the BJP's targeted welfare, especially free ration, is of particular salience, as is the BSP's weakness in reaching out to smaller Dalit groups. This mirrors the BJP's strategy of co-opting smaller Dalit communities using welfare, invoking cultural heroes (Ramayana for the Valmikis, Maharani Uda Devi for another large SC group in central UP, Pasis) and pointing out dissonances with larger Dalit groups. This strategy is central to its remarkable growth in UP on the back of a coalition that comprises upper castes, and the non-dominant sections of backwards and Dalits.

Yet, this coalition is not without its strains, forcing the BJP to tend to fault lines constantly. On the ground, many communities who back the BJP don't get along with each other, and especially don't get



Ambedkar visited Agra in 1956, a key date for the movement. HT



along with Dalits. The 2021 death of a local boy in police custody, and the brutal murder and rape of a woman in Hathras in 2020 are irritants. Similarly, complaints are common of other groups underpaying the sewer workers, and the local municipality never paying any attention to the sewage and the lack of schools and hospitals. "Many of us are trying to come out of traditional occupations and the stigma associated. We grew up facing discrimination, and our children face the same thing," said Sandeep Valmiki, an activist. "We were not given the respect we were promised. But where else will we go?"

The Jatav's dilemma
Not far from Lohamandi is the neighbourhood of Ratanpura, a maze of small-scale shoe part manufacturers, lathe machines, artisans and leather workers, each functioning out of airless crevices lining cramped alleys. For decades, it was the beating heart of

prosperity that propelled the Dalit movement in northern India as the Jatavs used the shoemaking business to finance the movement, fund schools and hostels, and help politicians from a community with historically few resources at its disposal. If you had a piece of leather and an hour to spare, it was said, a stroll through the neighbourhood was all it took for you to take home a finished shoe.

Today, Ratanpura is a shadow of itself. The 40-plus shops have shrunk to just a handful as the business has shifted to the infinitely more productive industries on either side of the expressway. Some of these are also owned by Jatavs but they employ far fewer people. On a scorching Saturday afternoon only a small shanty is open where two men are sitting on skiving machines, wielding sharp edged tools to tear through strips of leather being expertly folded into place. Shivam Jatav has worked here

for 12 years, but his labour counts for less and less. "What would earn ₹50 earlier fetches ₹20 now. We do odd jobs repairing bikes but we don't have any other skill," he said. Shivam, his father and younger brother get out of the house at 9am and return by lam, earning not more than ₹450 rupees a day. "Whoever we go to for a job asks if we have a high school degree. If we don't, are we human?"

The depressed economic outlook is also having an impact on the political mood. After winning over the smaller communities, the BJP is hoping to make inroads among the Jatavs, taking advantage of the weakening position of the BSP, which fell to just 12.88% voteshare in the 2022 assembly elections, its worst showing in two decades. "This time, we'll get a sizeable chunk of Jatav votes for sure," said Pramod Gupta, former deputy mayor from the BJP.

But its efforts are facing some headwinds on the ground. "I came to the BJP from the BSP. There was a time when the BJP wasn't allowed to enter this area, known as Mayawati's stronghold," said Kamal Paras, a local BJP leader. "We changed that, but in this election, we are facing a tougher time because of the lack of jobs for our community boys. I don't know how many Jatavs will vote for us."

The Constitution concern
The chaos of Ratanpura is a world away from the tranquil calm that envelops the Buddha Vihar in Chakki Pat. It is here on March 18, 1956 that BR Ambedkar addressed a huge public meeting in what is considered a turning point for anti-caste movements. "I went with my father. Dr Ambedkar walked with a stick. We contributed ₹2,000," Bhartiya said. The receipt, signed by India's first law minister, is now proudly displayed in their drawing room.

On still summer afternoons, attendance in the Vihar is sparse. Inside, the whitewashed ceiling and walls are adorned by frescoes of Ambedkar and Buddha, and a couple of people mill about. An undercurrent of tension is coursing through the neighbourhood. Rumour upon rumour is being

fuelled, sometimes by dubious videos and sometimes by opposition leaders, that the Constitution will be under danger if the BJP returns with 400 seats – a claim that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly and publicly denied.

But the rumours haven't been quelled. "A part of this is also the mentality of the local leaders. Modi might say something else but local leaders keep bragging that the Constitution should be changed. That shadow will always be there," said Devid Nandan Som, a business leader from the community. "The mentality of the *senapati* might be good, but what is happening on the ground?"

That this is a matter of concern for the BJP has been underlined by the urgent response by Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah. But on the ground, local BJP leaders are having to contend with the emotive relationship of Dalits with the Constitution, implicit in which is the question of reservation. "If the question is about the Constitution or reservation, no matter what the party, all Dalits will come on the streets," said Bhartiya.

The churn and its fallout
The parliamentary constituency of Agra is reserved for scheduled castes and one that the BJP has had a vice-like grip on since 2009. In the last Lok Sabha elections, Union minister SP Singh Baghel – who switched from the BSP in 2014 – won by 200,000 votes against a combined SP-BSP candidate. This time, he is facing off against a SP candidate who is from the Jatav community and a BSP pick Puja Amrohi, the daughter of a former lawmaker. "The Jatav vote is breaking, the question is where do they go. Those who want jobs and those who want rations, both are with us," said Rambabu Harit, a former BJP minister. He is

BJP HAS MARRIED SC GROUPS WITH ITS CORE VOTE. THE OPPN IS TRYING TO DENT THIS BY SAYING CONSTITUTIONAL VALUES ARE AT RISK

confident that the BSP's core Jatav voter is wayward. "They know that voting for BSP is a vote wasted."

Favouring the BJP is not just caste dynamics but also the party's work ethos of being present on the ground between elections – a factor crucial for a community that battles violence, and needs access to the police station and the local lawmaker. "The BJP works non-stop, and its workers are always accessible. The Opposition only wakes up before the elections," said Suresh Soni, an advocate.

The Opposition believes that it can use the emotive hold of the Constitution and economic hardships into a potent narrative. "Our candidate is also a Jatav who has a presence on the ground. Both Dalits and Muslims will unite to save the Constitution," said Wajid Nisar, the local SP chief.

The balance in this fight could be held by the BSP, which continues to command some loyal voters in traditional strongholds such as Chakki Pat, though that number is dwindling among the young. "Yes, we get rations but we only like the elephant (the BSP's election symbol). You cannot underestimate a woman who was CM four times," said Ranjit Kumar Singh, a clerk, referring to Mayawati.

But there is a loss of trust with the BSP – Soni said he was disenchanted because the party had not taken a strong stand on major cases, atrocities or helped local people – which has also cast a depressing shadow on anti-caste movements, whose node is Agra. The BSP was once more than just a political party, its volunteers worked as a bulwark against grassroots caste violence, ran hostels and camps where the teachings of stalwarts such as Ambedkar and party founder Kanshi Ram were taught, and stitched together a network of support that boosted the confidence of the community and helped them excel. "Our community has now become rudderless, and we are lurching from one party to the other," said Som. "Where are our leaders?"

This is the 15th in a series of election reports from the field that look at national and local issues through an electoral lens.

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SPOTLIGHT ELECTIONS 2024

Shah slams Cong over fake clip, reiterates BJP's quota promise

Utpal Parashar

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DHUBRI: Union home minister Amit Shah launched into an attack on the Congress on Tuesday, accusing the opposition of spreading lies through fake videos, reiterating that the BJP supports reservations for scheduled castes, tribes and other backward castes (OBC), and sought to lay blame at the door of the ruling Congress in Karnataka for lack of action against MP Prajwal Revanna and his father HD Revanna, both part of the JD(S) which is a BJP ally, and have been accused of mass sexual harassment.

Speaking at a press conference in Assam's Guwahati, a state where four seats will go to the polls in the third phase on May 7 (the remaining 10 seats in the state have already completed polling), Shah said that he wanted to make it clear that the BJP supports ST, SC and OBC reservations and have always tried to ensure that they are preserved. "This has been publicly stated by PM Narendra Modi as well on several occasions," he said.

The Union home minister's comments come in the middle of a raging political controversy that has become one of the central motifs of the Lok Sabha campaign over the past week, with the Congress latching on to comments by state level BJP leaders that seemed to indicate that the 400 plus target set by the NDA was with a view to changing the constitution, and the BJP alleging that it is the Congress that threatens reservation and wealth, and intends to distribute the benefits of both to Muslims.

Like Modi in the last week, Shah said that the Congress had granted reservations to Muslims in unified Andhra Pradesh which led to a decrease in the state's OBC reservations, and said that in Karnataka too, the Congress brought in a 4% reservation for Muslims without a survey. "BJP is clear that reservations based on religion isn't constitutional and whenever we are in power in these states, we will overturn the reservations (for Muslims



Union minister and BJP leader Amit Shah greets his supporters during a roadshow in Guwahati on Tuesday

'Mamata skipped Ram Temple event to not offend infiltrators'

KOLKATA: Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday alleged that West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee did not attend Ram Temple consecration event in Ayodhya, as she didn't want to offend her "infiltrator" vote bank.

"For years, people of our country and Ram devotees wanted a Ram temple to be built in Ayodhya. But the Congress, TMC and the communists didn't want it. Invitations for the consecration ceremony were sent to both Mamata didi

and her nephew (Abhishek Banerjee), but they did not attend it, as she was afraid that infiltrators, who are her party's vote bank, might get offended," Shah said at a rally at Memari in Purba Bardhaman district. The TMC soon hit back at Shah, with party spokesperson Kunal Ghosh saying: "The BJP government has failed to safeguard the interest of each and every section be it farmers, workers, youths and jobless. Hence it is churning up such issues."

done by Congress governments) and give justice to SC, ST and OBCs there," he said.

Shah said Congress had twisted BJP's goal of bagging 400 seats with misinformation. "BJP had been given complete majority by the country's public twice in 2014 and 2019. We have been in power with complete majority for past 10 years. But unlike Congress, which imposed Emergency (in 1975) and throttled democracy, to extend tenure of Lok Sabha or make changes to the constitution... we

have done no such thing," he said.

He added that the Congress had resorted to making fake videos of him and other BJP leaders. Since Monday, at least four police cases have been filed in Delhi, Assam, Maharashtra and Gujarat against different Congress workers and leaders. The Delhi Police has also summoned Telangana CM Revanth Reddy, who on Monday said that "no one here is afraid" of such notice. Shah said: "They (Congress) have made (fake) videos of me and other BJP leaders

and spread them. In this chief ministers and state unit presidents have been involved. We have the original recordings of those videos and when they were made public, the truth has come out in the open and Congress leaders are facing criminal offences now."

His reference is to viral videos that showed him saying that the BJP plans to remove 4% reservation for Muslims in Telangana. But in the doctored video, the Union minister is heard saying that his party plans to remove reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs. He also said that the BJP's stance on allegations of sexual abuse against JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna and his father HD Revanna—the grandson and son of former Prime Minister and party patriarch HD Deve Gowda—was clear and that such incidents could not be tolerated.

"Law and order is a state issue. Why hasn't the government in Karnataka done anything? We are in favour of investigation and our partner JD(S) has also stated that they will take action on him (Revanna)..." Shah said.

Around the same time as his conference, the JD(S) was suspending Revanna from the party.

The minister said that in the first two phases, during which 190 seats went to the polls, the BJP and its allies were well on their way to their articulated target of 400 seats for the NDA. "We see big electoral success in Assam, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand... In addition, in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu where voting has taken place, the initial trends show that BJP has got very good response..."

Hitting back, Congress leader Debabrata Saikia said: "The law should treat everyone equally... I filed cases against former assembly deputy speaker for offensive remarks against Mahmooda Gandhi and AIUDF chief Bahadruddin Ajmal for derogatory remarks on Hindu women. While no action was taken in the cases, our worker was arrested in Assam after he apologised and even deleted the post."

2 LINKED TO AAP, CONG HELD IN GUJ OVER FAKE VIDEO

AHMEDABAD: Two people linked to the Opposition Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Gujarat have been arrested in connection with the viral doctored video of Union home minister Amit Shah, a senior officer from Ahmedabad police crime branch said on Tuesday.

The accused have been identified as Congress legislator Jignesh Mevani's personal assistant Satish Vansola and AAP's Dahod district unit chief Rakesh Bariya.

"They were arrested on Monday night based on a complaint filed by a crime branch official," Lavina Sinha, deputy commissioner of police, Ahmedabad crime branch, said. "The accused edited video of the speech made by Shah, uploaded it on social media platforms without permission and with the intent of creating disharmony among communities..."

Police said that Vansola and Bariya had shared the alleged doctored video of Shah on their social media platforms. "Both have confessed to their offences," a police officer said, requesting anonymity.

Reacting to the arrest, Gujarat BJP spokesperson Yagnesh Dave said: "Those circulating fabricated videos of our home minister should be aware that our country's cyber laws are robust, and they will be apprehended swiftly..."

State Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi, however, asked: "If action is taken for a video involving BJP leader Amit Shah, then what about the numerous fake videos in the past where the BJP has falsely attempted to portray Congress leaders in a bad light?"

AAP's state spokesperson Karan Baro called it an "attempt to pressure AAP and create an atmosphere of fear".

Meanwhile, a team from the Delhi police's special cell on Tuesday questioned a Youth Congress leader from Madhya Pradesh over a deep fake video of Amit Shah.

RALLY TRACKER

BJP

- 1 Narendra Modi, PM
Maharashtra: Osmanabad
Telangana: Zaheerabad
- 2 Amit Shah,
Union home minister
Bengal: Bardhaman Purba
- 3 JP Nadda, BJP chief
Karnataka: Haveri
- 4 Rajnath Singh,
Defence minister
Madhya Pradesh:
Khandwa and Khargone

CONGRESS

- 1 Mallikarjun Kharge,
Congress president
Chhattisgarh:
Janjgir-Champa
- 2 Rahul Gandhi,
Congress leader
Madhya Pradesh: Bhind

TMC

- Mamata Banerjee,
West Bengal CM
West Bengal: Malda



"Cong means corruption, it means commission. What is INDI Alliance? (We say) our leader Modi ji will become PM (if BJP comes to power) and INDI Alliance says they will have 5 PMs in 5 years..."

"A BJP minister has recently said they will never allow me to stop NRC in Bengal. I take up the challenge. We will not allow NRC in Bengal. We will not allow UCC in Bengal."

BJP will 'tear apart' the Constitution if it comes back to power: Rahul

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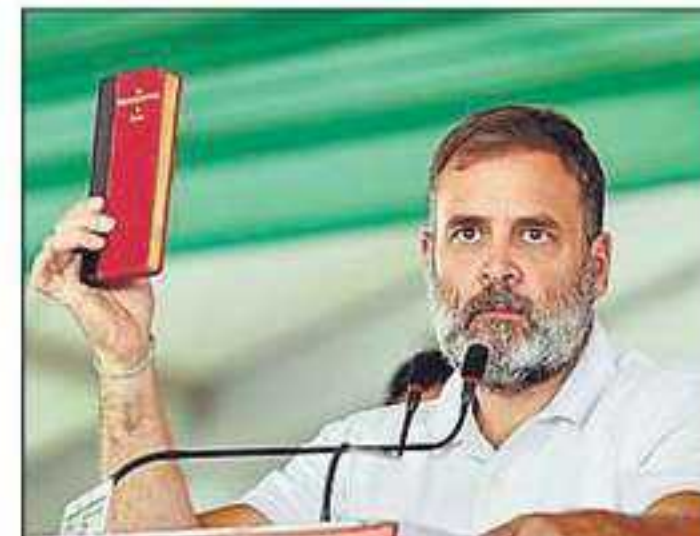
BHOPAL: If the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) returns to power at the Centre, it will "tear apart" and "throw away" the Constitution that safeguards the rights of the poor, Dalits, scheduled tribes and other backward classes, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged on Tuesday.

"Now, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah and their MPs have made up their mind that if they get elected, they will tear apart and throw this (Constitution) book. The BJP wants this book to be thrown away and only 20 to 25 billionaires should run the country," Gandhi alleged while holding a copy of the Constitution, at a rally in Bhind district of Madhya Pradesh.

Bhind is among eight Lok Sabha seats in MP that are set to vote in the third phase on May 7.

Asserting that the Congress and the INDIA bloc constituents are fighting to save the Constitution, the MP said: "This (Constitution) is the soul of the poor and no one can touch it. No power in the world can change it. These BJP people are dreaming. The Congress, along with BR Ambedkar and the countrymen, fought against the British and drafted the Constitution, which is the voice of India."

Opposition leaders have been alleging that the Constitution will



Rahul Gandhi

be under danger if the BJP returns with more than 400 seats—a claim that both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah have repeatedly and publicly denied.

Last week, Modi had said that even if Dr BR Ambedkar, the architect of the constitution, told him to change the Constitution and end reservations, it will not happen. His call for over 400 seats for NDA was meant to "destroy the conspiracies of the Congress and INDIA bloc", he said.

Shah, too, has accused the Congress of "spreading lies" about the Constitution. During the rally, Gandhi also targeted the BJP-led Centre over the issue of reservation in jobs and education for underprivileged sections. "They (BJP) say they are not against reservation. If you (ruling dispensation) are not against reservation, then why are you privatising the public sector, the Railways?" he asked.

CONG'S KHURSHID, NIECE BOOKED IN U.P. OVER 'VOTE JIHAD' REMARK

KANPUR: Senior Congress leader Salman Khurshid and his niece and Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Maria Alam Khan were booked by the Uttar Pradesh Police on Tuesday after the latter allegedly appealed to the people to practise "vote jihad" in general elections.

Addressing a public meet in Farrukhabad on Monday, Alam appealed to the people to do "vote jihad", asserting that "vote jihad is necessary for the minority community". "Together do vote jihad—with intelligence, without being sentimental and with silence," she said in the presence of Khurshid.

After the video went viral, the Kaimganj police registered an FIR against Alam and Khurshid based on a complaint filed by in-charge of a flying squad team Dr Manoj Kumar. Both leaders have been charged under sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and 295A (act done with intent to outrage religious feelings) of the Indian Penal Code, and Section 125 of the Public Representation Act (promoting or attempting to promote on grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language, feeling of enmity or hatred), an officer said.

Asked about Alam's remarks, Khurshid said he avoids using such words because their literal meaning is misinterpreted. "Jihad means to fight against a situation. Her intention must have been to carry out vote jihad to protect the Constitution," he told PTI.

Patnaik files papers for Odisha polls



Chief minister Naveen Patnaik files his nomination papers for the Odisha assembly elections from Hinjili constituency, where he will be seeking re-election for a sixth term, on Tuesday.

Modi writes to BJP candidates in fray during 3rd phase

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has written to BJP candidates who will contest in the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections, and has requested them to spread the word against Congress' "regressive" policies. "I request you to make the public aware of the regressive politics of Congress and the INDI alliance... They want to snatch people's hard-earned money and give it to their vote banks. Congress has even said it will support dangerous policies like 'inheritance tax'. The country needs to unite against them," he said in the letter.



Congress's Akshay Kanti Bam has joined the BJP.

Cong won't back any candidate in Indore: Patwari

INDORE: Out of the electoral race after its candidate withdrew his nomination, the Congress on Tuesday said it will not support any other candidate in the Indore Lok Sabha seat of Madhya Pradesh. The development comes a day after Congress's Indore candidate Akshay Kanti Bam withdrew his nomination on the last day of withdrawal, and joined the BJP. Hitting out at the BJP, state Congress chief Jitu Patwari said: "By murdering democracy in Indore on April 29, the BJP has turned the country's cleanest city into the most politically polluted one." He further urged voters to press the NOTA button to teach the ruling BJP a lesson.

PM's Ayodhya roadshow on May 5

HT Correspondents

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LUCKNOW/AYODHYA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to hold a roadshow in Ayodhya on May 5, with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders in Uttar Pradesh stressing that the grand event will set the narrative for the remaining phases of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

Ayodhya, which comes under Faizabad parliamentary constituency, will go to polls on May 20 in the fifth phase of the general elections. Uttar Pradesh, which sends the maximum 80 members to the Lower House, is polling across all seven phases, including the 16 seats that have already voted in the first two phases on April 19 and 26.

"Modi ji will hold a roadshow in Ayodhya on May 5. We are preparing for the same," BJP's Faizabad lawmaker Lallu Singh said, adding the mega roadshow is expected to start from the banks of the Saryu river around 5pm and cover the 13-km stretch of the newly laid Ram Path, which features both Hanumanagarhi and the grand Ram temple.

"It will be a grand event, in which BJP leaders as well as

We will never allow quota based on religion, says Modi

HYDERABAD: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asserted that he would not allow religion-based reservations to be given to Muslims at the cost of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

"As long as Modi is alive, he will not let the rights of the SCs, STs and OBCs be given away to the Muslims in the name of reservations. We shall never allow religion-based reservations, as was resolved by the members of the Constituent Assembly while drafting the Indian Constitution before 1950," he said at a public rally in Medak district.

Recalling the long-standing

demand from nearly 36 communities, including Marathas and Ligayats, to be included in the OBC list, Modi said: "The Congress, which came to power both at the Centre and in combined Andhra Pradesh between 2004 and 2009, granted reservations to the Muslims overnight by snatching away the rights of OBCs."

Slamming the comments, state Congress spokesperson G Niranjan said Modi's speech intended to create communal and caste differences among the people. "We requested the EC to seek a detailed report from the local election officers and take action against Modi," he said.

commoners are expected to participate in a big way," Singh said, without confirming if Modi will visit the grand temple.

Modi's proposed roadshow will coincide with the beginning of the silent period ahead of the third phase elections on May 7, when 95 constituencies across the country and 10 in Uttar Pra-

Shiv Sena fields LS candidates for Mumbai North West, South seats

Surendra P Gangan and Yogesh Naik

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MUMBAI: Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, before he joined the Shinde-led Sena on March 10. He will now be contesting against his former Shiv Sena (UBT) colleague Amol Kirtikar.

The South Mumbai seat had three other aspirants—Rahul Narvekar and Mangal Prabhut Lodha of the BJP and Milind Deora (Shiv Sena)—but internal surveys conducted by the two ruling parties went against them. "We felt that if we fielded a non-Marathi BJP candidate in Lodha, it



Ravindra Waikar and Yamini Jadhav

would have fed into the Marathi-versus-Gujarati card which the Sena (UBT) has been playing in other Mumbai seats," said a Sena leader aware of the matter.

Jadhav, an incumbent MLA from Byculla, will take on Mumbai South MP and Thackeray loyalist Arvind Sawant.

Deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis said: "We were interested in fighting Mumbai South... But the decision that the BJP and Sena would contest three Mumbai seats each was taken long ago."

The undivided Shiv Sena had bagged Mumbai South, Mumbai Central, and Mumbai North West Lok Sabha constituencies in the previous elections.

Meanwhile, the Congress on Tuesday fielded Bhushan Patil from the Mumbai North Lok Sabha seat, where he will take on Union minister Piyush Goyal of the BJP. Patil is a former treasurer of the Mumbai Congress.

{ NDA MANIFESTO FOR ANDHRA POLLS }

Aid for women, 2mn jobs among key promises

Srinivasa Rao Apparasu

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HYDERABAD: Creation of two million jobs for the youth over the next five years, payment of unemployment allowance of ₹3,000 per month to jobless youth, ₹1,500 monthly aid to poor and destitute women, free bus travel for women in state-run public buses and three free gas cylinders to every poor household are some of the key promises made by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Andhra Pradesh for the assembly and Lok Sabha elections to be held on May 13.

The manifesto, titled Praja Galam (people's voice), was released by Telugu Desam Party chief N Chandrababu Naidu at his residence in Amaravati in the presence of Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan and Bharatiya Janata Party state in-charge Siddharth Nath Singh.



TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan release the NDA manifesto in Andhra Pradesh.

incorporating the ideas of both the TDP and JSP, along with suggestions of the BJP, Naidu said. "This manifesto was endorsed by the BJP, and the TDP and Jana Sena have taken the responsibility of implementing it," he said.

The NDA, if voted to power, would extend financial assistance of ₹5,000 to every mother sending their children to school under the

Thalliki Vandhanam scheme, the TDP promised. A TDP-led government would take up a first of its kind initiative called a skill census across the state to identify youth with skills and provide them training to increase productivity.

The manifesto also promised to increase the social security pension to ₹4,000 per month and implement it from April. "We will

give ₹6,000 pension for the partially disabled and ₹15,000 for fully disabled people," he said.

Naidu also promised allocation of two cents of land in towns and three cents in villages for the people below the poverty line to build houses. Other major promises made in the manifesto include development of Amaravati as the capital, provision of pensions for other backward classes from the age of 50 years, besides providing 34% reservations for the OBCs in local bodies, spending of ₹10,000 crore every year to provide self-employment to OBCs, free electricity up to 200 units for handlooms and 500 units for power looms, payment of an honorarium of ₹25,000 to the Nayi Brahmins working in temples, among others.

Reacting to the manifesto, YSRCP chief and minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said the absence of PM Narendra Modi's photograph "proves that the promises are unattainable."

SPOTLIGHT ELECTIONS 2024



Jamyang Tsering Namgyal
NAMGYAL TO FIGHT FROM LADAKH SEAT AS INDEPENDENT

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NEW DELHI: Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Ladakh, has decided to contest the Lok Sabha elections as an independent candidate from the Union territory, according to a person aware of the developments.

Namgyal, who had won the elections in 2019, was recently dropped from the BJP's list of candidates. The party, instead, fielded Tashi Gyalson, a former general secretary of its Ladakh unit, from the seat.

"On Tuesday, Namgyal collected the nomination papers from the returning officer. He will contest the election as an independent from Ladakh constituency," the person cited above said, seeking anonymity.

On whether any senior party leader has reached out to Namgyal to reconsider his decision, the person said: "There was a meeting with a minister, but Namgyal has decided to go alone."

Although the person did not give details about the meeting, Union minister Kiren Rijiju was in Ladakh on Monday and it is speculated that he conveyed the BJP leadership's message to the lawmaker. Polling in the seat will be held on June 1. In a post on Facebook on April 23, Namgyal said he was replaced "without any transparent and compelling justification".

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ECI releases voter turnout data; most regions see dip

Aditi Agrawal and Nishant Ranjan
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NEW DELHI: Eleven days after the end of the first phase of the general elections, and four days since the second phase, the Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday officially released disaggregated voter turnout data which showed that 84% of parliamentary constituencies saw declines of varying magnitude in turnout figures.

Phase 1 saw a voter turnout of 66.14% while the voter turnout was 66.71% in Phase 2, according to the EC data released on Tuesday.

HT had reported the phase-wise voter turnout figures on Monday.

In 2019, the corresponding figures for the seats in these respective phases were 69.4% and 69.6%. The poll body specified on Tuesday that the final turnout will only be available after postal ballots are added to the total vote count.

The numbers mean that of the 166.3 million people who were eligible to vote in Phase 1 across 102 constituencies, about 110 million people voted, while of the 158.8 million people who were eligible to vote across 88 constituencies in Phase 2, about 106 million people voted.

The data showed that of the 176 seats for which a turnout comparison is possible with the 2019 Lok Sabha elections (the rest have undergone delimitation), varying degrees of decline was noted in 148.

A comparison is not possible for 12 constituencies (10 in Assam and two in Jammu & Kashmir) as their boundaries were redrawn after the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. A comparison of Outer Manipur PC is not possible because it went to polls partially in both phases.

In terms of states and Union territories, of the 19 states and UTs that voted in the first phase where a comparison with 2019 is possible, 16 saw a decline, while turnout fell in eight of the

How voter turnouts have changed

| PHASE 1 | Voting turnout (%) | | PHASE 2 | Voting turnout (%) | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------|------------------|--------------------|-------|
| | 2019 | 2024 | | 2019 | 2024 |
| Andaman & Nicobar Islands | 65.1 | 64.1 | Assam* | — | 81.17 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 81.1 | 77.68 | Bihar | 62.9 | 59.45 |
| Assam* | — | 78.25 | Chhattisgarh | 75.1 | 76.24 |
| Bihar | 53.5 | 49.26 | Jammu & Kashmir* | — | 72.22 |
| Chhattisgarh | 66.2 | 68.29 | Karnataka | 68.9 | 69.56 |
| Jammu & Kashmir* | — | 68.27 | Kerala | 77.8 | 71.27 |
| Lakshadweep | 85.2 | 84.16 | Madhya Pradesh | 67.6 | 58.59 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 75 | 67.75 | Maharashtra | 62.8 | 62.71 |
| Maharashtra | 64 | 63.71 | Manipur* | 83.9 | 84.85 |
| Manipur* | 82.5 | 76.1 | Rajasthan | 68.4 | 65.03 |
| Meghalaya | 71.4 | 76.6 | Tripura | 82.8 | 80.36 |
| Mizoram | 63 | 56.87 | Uttar Pradesh | 62.1 | 55.19 |
| Nagaland | 82.9 | 57.72 | West Bengal | 80.6 | 76.58 |
| Puducherry | 81.2 | 78.9 | Overall** | 69.6 | 66.71 |
| Rajasthan | 63.9 | 57.65 | | | |
| Sikkim | 81 | 79.88 | | | |
| Tamil Nadu | 72.4 | 69.72 | | | |
| Tripura | 81.9 | 81.48 | | | |
| Uttar Pradesh | 66.6 | 61.11 | | | |
| Uttarakhand | 61.6 | 57.22 | | | |
| West Bengal | 84.8 | 81.91 | | | |
| Overall** | 69.4 | 66.14 | | | |

* Data in Assam and J&K not comparable with past elections due to delimitation
* Manipur Outer seat voted in both phases, so is counted twice

11 provinces in the second phase.

To be sure, a small decrease in turnout can possibly be compensated when postal ballots are counted, which is already factored in the 2019 turnout data but not in the 2024 numbers.

However, of the 148 constituencies where Tuesday's figures lagged those in 2019, 124 registered a decline of more than two percentage points.

Of these 124 seats, 57 registered a turnout decline of more than five percentage points and seven of more than 10 percentage points.

The seven seats with the biggest decline in turnout are: Nagaland (25.2 percentage points decline compared to 2019); Sidihi in Madhya Pradesh

(13 percentage points); Mathura in Uttar Pradesh (11.6 percentage points); Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh (11.31 percentage points); Rewa in Madhya Pradesh (10.9 percentage points); Pathanamthitta in Kerala (10.9 percentage points); and Shahdol in Madhya Pradesh (10.1 percentage points), according to data analysed by HT.

PC [parliamentary constituency] and AC [assembly constituency] wise data is also updated regularly on the voter turnout app as updated in IT system by Returning Officers through Form 17C. Copy of Form 17C are also provided for every Polling Station in a Constituency to all candidates though their polling agents.

Actual data of Form 17 C shall prevail which is already shared

with candidates. Final turnout will only be available post-counting with counting of postal ballots and its addition to total vote count," the poll body said in its press release.

In the first round of voting, 66.22% of male voters exercised their right to vote, while 66.07% of female voters cast their ballot. 31.32% of eligible voters from the third gender voted, the data showed.

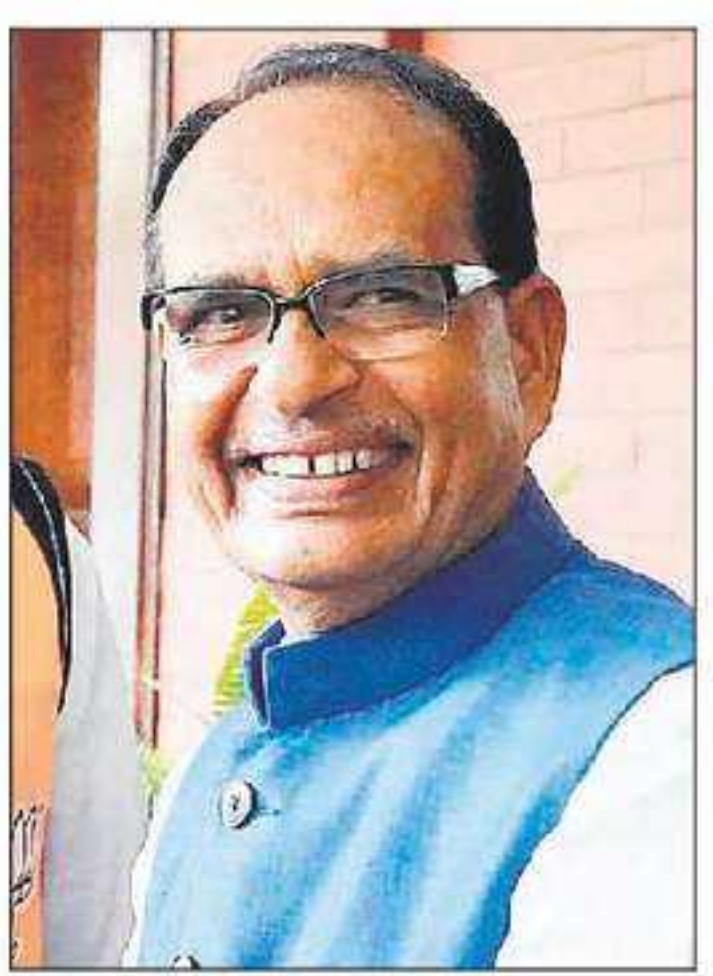
In the second phase, 66.99% eligible male voters cast their ballots, while this figure was 66.42% for female voters. Around 24% of third gender voters showed up to vote.

The poll panel, however, did not release data about people above the age of 85 or those with disabilities — the two categories eligible for home voting.

{ SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN } MADHYA PRADESH EX-CHIEF MINISTER

'No fight in MP; sure Modi will be PM again'

BHOPAL: Shivraj Singh Chouhan (65), former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate from Vidisha Lok Sabha seat, spoke to Shruti Tomar about his journey as chief minister and his road map for Vidisha parliamentary seat. Edited excerpts:



Uttar Pradesh and other states.

In the last three Lok Sabha polls, you were the chief minister and in charge of delivering the state for your party. Are you more relaxed this time as there is no such pressure?

Who wants to be relaxed. This (politics) is a medium to serve the people. I am still holding rallies and doing roadshows across the state and in other parts of the country. In the last three Lok Sabha elections, especially the last two, the BJP came out with the best results in Madhya Pradesh.

All of us, including chief minister Mohan Yadav, are working hard to ensure clean sweep for the BJP (this time). I am confident that this time also the people will vote for the BJP to make Narendra Modi Prime Minister for the third time.

After a dip in the voting percentage in 12 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state, where polling has been completed, especially among female voters, there is a sudden demand for you from candidates.

(Laughs) Yes, candidates want me to hold rallies and roadshows because people love me as their family member. I have a special emotional connection with women, and therefore, in rallies, I am requesting them to come out and vote. I am hopeful that the voting percentage will increase in the third and the fourth phases in Madhya Pradesh. After May 12 (when polling ends in the state), I will hold rallies in

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at a rally in Harda that he wants to take you to Delhi. How do you see yourself in Delhi — as a senior party leader or a Union minister?

As I have always said, I am a worker of a disciplined party. I am ready to abide by any responsibility given to me by the party. As of now, I just want to become a Member of Parliament.

In the last three months, many Congress leaders and workers have joined the BJP; even the Congress candidate from Indore joined the BJP. The Congress is calling it undemocratic.

INDIA bloc leaders are behaving like uncultured people. Imposing the Emergency was an undemocratic behaviour. Many leaders of the Congress are getting inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and joining the BJP as they are upset with the Congress leadership. They also want to see Modi as Prime Minister.

You are holding a Jan Ashirwad Yatra and meeting different social organisations in Vidisha. How do you do see this election?

I always believe in giving my 100% in every election to spread

our party's message and popularise the schemes among the people. Through this, I am also getting an opportunity to interact with the people in my constituency closely. There is no fight at all in Vidisha or any other parts of the state.

In your speeches, you are talking about the Ladi Behna, Ladli Laxmi and Kanyadaan schemes, which were started by you when you were the chief minister. You are not talking about national issues such as redistribution of wealth and Muslim reservation that is being raised in rallies across the state.

This election is about development done by Modi ji and the BJP-led state government in Madhya Pradesh. The Ladi Behna, Ladli Laxmi and Kanyadaan schemes have proved to be game changers and now, people celebrate the birth of a girl child and never treat her as a burden. So, we cannot avoid the discussion on these schemes. But we are also informing the people about how the Congress leaders have lost their mind and are talking about destructive things.

You have returned to Vidisha after two decades (after being MP from 1991 to 2004). Vidisha comes in the list of aspirational districts in the NITI Aayog report. Despite being the bastion of the BJP, why does it lack in development?

Whatever development people are seeing in Vidisha has been done by me as an MP or as chief minister of Madhya Pradesh. I have made a roadmap for making Vidisha the most developed place in India.

If you win the Lok Sabha polls, will your son Kartikya Singh Chouhan contest the election from (your) Budhni assembly seat?

The BJP is a disciplined party. The party leadership will decide who is the suitable candidate to take the development of Budhni forward.

Prajwal's ex-driver says gave videos of abuse to BJP leader

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BENGALURU: The former driver of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna said on Tuesday that he gave a pen drive filled with videos showing purported sexual acts by the Janata Dal (Secular) leader with multiple women, which have sparked allegations of mass sexual abuse, to a local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and not the Congress.

His comments — via a video statement uploaded on social media — came on a day Prajwal, the grandson of JD(S) chief and former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, was suspended from the party amid mounting criticism of the leader who is also the Lok Sabha candidate from Hassan, which voted on April 26.

Karthik, who goes by a single name, said he approached Devaraje Gowda, who was fighting against the JD(S) first family politically, to "seek justice" after the Revanna family harassed him and forcefully transferred a parcel of land he owned to their name. Devaraje Gowda had contested the 2023 assembly polls from Holenarasipura constituency on a BJP ticket, but lost to Prajwal's father, HD Revanna.

"I don't know whether he (Devaraje) distributed the pen drive or gave it to someone else for the purpose, or BJP people did it. But I did not give the pen drive to anyone except him. Now, he is blaming me for giving it to Congress leaders. If I were to give it to Congress leaders, why would I approach him for justice?" Karthik asked in the clip.

The video message came hours after Devaraje Gowda accused Karthik of sharing the videos with the Congress first.

"Karthik, the driver of Prajwal Revanna, came to me and said he was being harassed. He said that he (Prajwal) has several obscene videos. I asked if he had given this video to anyone. Karthik said he had given the obscene videos to the Congress president." Gowda told reporters earlier in the day.

He said that neither the JD(S) nor the BJP would release the vid-



Prajwal Revanna

eos as it would go against the National Democratic Alliance candidate. "If there was someone benefiting from this, it was the Congress. Only for his political gain, the Congress candidate (Shreyas Patel) has mortgaged the modesty of women seen in the videos," Devaraje Gowda said.

He said he was waiting for the Karnataka government's special investigation team (SIT) to serve him a notice where he will release important documents. The BJP leader said Congress leaders will fall in the ditch they had dug for others.

But Karthik contradicted Devaraje Gowda. He said he had approached G Devaraje Gowda for justice. "Devaraje Gowda told me to hand over the photos and videos which he promised to hand over to the judge to help vacate the stay. Trusting him, I gave him a copy, which he used," the driver said.

"Other than Devaraje Gowda, I did not give this video to Congress leaders or anyone else. I did not give the videos and photos to Congress leaders because they were quite close to Prajwal. Hence, I approached Devaraje Gowda, but he too cheated me," Karthik alleged.

The driver said that he worked with Prajwal for the last 15 years but left him a year ago. "The reason (for distancing from Prajwal) was that my land was taken away and my wife was beaten up. I was mentally tortured. Since my land was taken away, I came out of the job and started my fight (to get back land)," Karthik said in the message.

On Saturday, Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah set up a SIT to probe the charges, following a request from the Karnataka State Women's Commission.

S.I.T. SUMMONS JD(S) MP, HIS FATHER FOR PROBE IN SEXUAL HARASSMENT CASE

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BENGALURU: A special investigation team (SIT) probing the sexual harassment charges against Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna and his father, HD Revanna, has summoned the two Janata Dal (Secular) leaders, according to an officer aware of the developments.

"Both the leaders have been summoned by SIT for interrogation," the officer said, seeking anonymity.

The officer, however, did not share details such as when have the two leaders been summoned. On Saturday, Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah set up the probe panel to probe the charges against the two JD(S) leaders, following a request from the Karnataka State Women's Commission.

On Sunday, the first FIR was registered in the case, against both Prajwal and his father, based on a complaint by a woman who used to work in their home and alleged abuse between 2019 and 2022.

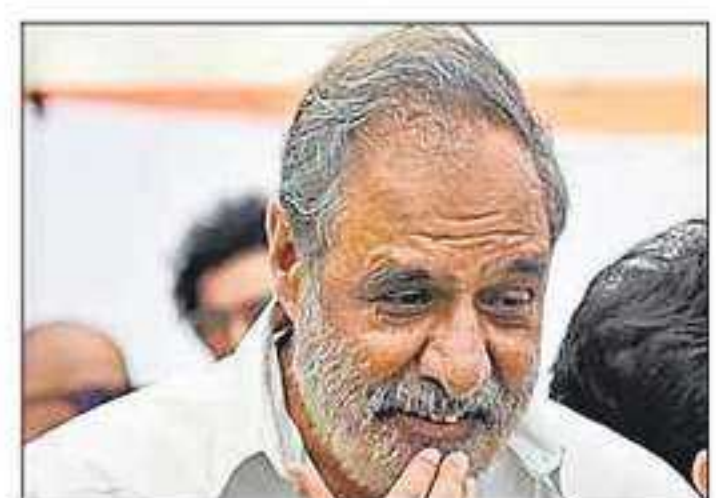
Cong fields Sharma from Kangra; no word yet on Amethi, Rae Bareilly

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NEW DELHI: The Congress on Tuesday fielded former Union minister Anand Sharma from Kangra in Himachal Pradesh and former MP Raj Babbar from Gurgaon in Haryana, as it released a list of four candidates, even as party workers waited for the announcement on Amethi and Rae Bareilly — the two constituencies in Uttar Pradesh that are closely associated with the Gandhis.

Sharma (71) will be fighting his first Lok Sabha elections from Kangra after serving four terms in the Rajya Sabha. He retired from the Upper House in 2022 and was not renominated by the party. He was one of the key faces of the rebel or now defunct G23 group that had sought organisational reforms in the party.

"It is the Pranab Mukherjee moment for Sharma. Mukherjee (the late Indian president) was in the Rajya Sabha for five terms before he won a Lok Sabha election from West Bengal (Jangipur seat) in 2004. Similarly, Sharma has got his chance now," a senior Congress Rajya Sabha MP said,



Anand Sharma

seeking anonymity.

Babbar, who started his political career with the Janata Dal, moved to the Samajwadi Party before joining the Congress in 2008. He was a three-term Lok Sabha MP and two-term Rajya Sabha member. A former Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee chief, he was earlier elected to Parliament from Agra and Ferozabad.

According to party functionaries aware of the details, Babbar's candidature was backed by former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda amid opposition by another section of party leaders.

"This (Babbar's candidature) shows the clout of Hooda in Haryana (where assembly elections are due to be held later this year). If we want to win Haryana, we have no other option," a senior Congress

leader said, also on condition of anonymity.

Besides Sharma and Babbar, the Congress announced the candidature of Satpal Raizada from Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh and Bhushan Patil, one of the vice presidents of the party's Mumbai unit from Mumbai North.

The grand old party, however, is yet to announce the candidates from Amethi and Rae Bareilly, where the last date of filing nominations is May 3 and voting is on May 20. A senior leader, who recently met party leader Rahul Gandhi, said the latter smiled when he was informed that all eyes are on the Congress candidates in these two seats.

The BJP has fielded Union women and child development minister Smriti Irani from Amethi, where she defeated Rahul Gandhi during the 2019 general elections. Reports suggest the party may field its Pillibhit lawmaker Varun Gandhi from Rae Bareilly.

The Congress is fighting on 17 out of 80 seats in Uttar Pradesh as part of its alliance with the Samajwadi Party. It has already announced the names of its remaining 15 candidates.

Cong vs BJP: LS debutants fight it out for key seat in Guj

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AHMEDABAD: "Back in 1947, our revered freedom fighters like Sardar Patel, Mahatma Gandhi, Baba Saheb Ambedkar and others received support from businessmen like the Tatas and Birlas to liberate India from British rule. Today, in 2024, it's the marginalised communities extending financial support to me to defend our democracy," says Geniben Thakor, a Congress MLA who is fighting the Lok Sabha polls from Gujarat's Banaskantha seat.

"The BJP wants to change the Constitution if they are voted back to power. They want to do away with reservations. This election is a fight to save the Constitution," she adds.

A two-time-time legislator from Vav, Thakor is fighting her first Lok Sabha election against BJP candidate Rekha Chaudhary,

granddaughter of Galbabbhai Chaudhary, who founded the Banas Dairy — the biggest dairy of Gujarat that procures milk from at least 450,000 farmers every day. The 48-year-old rose to prominence in the state during the 2017 assembly polls, when she clinched victory over Banas Dairy chairman and BJP stalwart Shankar Chaudhary in Vav constituency. She managed to retain the seat in 2022, despite her party's overall dismal performance in the state where it secured 17 out of 182 seats.

"We have seen for the last 30 years that our sons and daughters who work hard to score in their exams suffer due to paper leaks. We need to fight these elections against those who are behind such acts," Thakor says, referring to instances wherein question papers of public service exams have been leaked in the state, as she addresses a huge gathering consisting of Thakors and Dalits in



Geniben Thakor and Rekha Chaudhary

Tharad. There are close to 1,900,000 voters in Banaskantha constituency. The area boasts the highest number of Thakor voters, totalling approximately 450,000. The Patidars, which includes the Leuva, Kadva and Chaudhary Patidars, comprise around 380,000 of the electorate.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, BJP's Parbatbhai Patel won the seat by defeating the Congress's Parthi Bhatol by a margin of 368,000 votes. The party had won the seat in the 2014 elections as well. Besides, the state has also

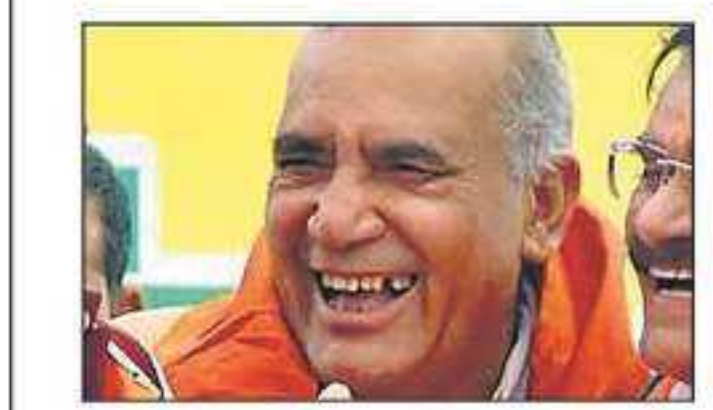
been a BJP stronghold since 2012. While the BJP has a strong presence in the urban areas of Banaskantha, including Palanpur and Deesa, the Congress has made significant inroads in areas like Tharad, Deodhar, Danta and Dhanera. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold a rally in Deesa of Banaskantha on May 1.

Accompanied by Dalit leader and Vadgam MLA Jignesh Mevani, a star campaigner for the Congress in the state, Thakor raises various issues, including instances of exam paper leaks and highlights

her party's poll promises such as providing 50% reservation for women in all central government jobs and financial assistance to poor women.

The BJP, said party leaders familiar with the matter, is trying to frame the contest as one between Thakors and the other castes. A consolidated vote by Patidars — of whom Chaudharys are a sub-caste — and other non-Thakor caste groups will give the party its best chance of clinching the seat, where Thakors largely vote as a single front. "The Thakors outnumber the Patidars, and Geniben emerges as a natural leader among the contenders. With the backing of the BJP's strong Sangathan, it's shaping up to be a close contest," says Vidyut Joshi, a political expert and retired vice-chancellor of Bhavnagar University.

Rekha Chaudhary, an engineering professor, is making her poll debut as a BJP candidate from this



BJP leader expelled for 'hate speech' in J&K

JAMMU: Jammu & Kashmir BJP chief Ravinder Raina on Tuesday expelled a senior party leader for "hate speech" and "using unparliamentary language" during an election meeting in Poonch district. The J&K BJP chief passed the order on the basis of the recommendation by Sunil Sethi, the chairman of the party's disciplinary committee. "It is highly deplorable and such behaviour by a senior leader is gross indiscipline and cannot be tolerated in a disciplined party like the BJP. It is as such recommended that he should be immediately expelled for six years," Sethi said.

In fresh setback to Cong in MP, 2 more leaders move to BJP
BHOPAL: In a fresh blow to the Congress in Madhya Pradesh, party MLA from Vijaypur, Ramniwas Rawat, and mayor Sharda Solanki joined the BJP on Tuesday in Morena.

"Rawat was supposed to join the BJP in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week. However, the Congress said his issues would be resolved. Nothing happened," a close aide said.

Repolling to be held at 1 booth in Aimer LS seat on May 2
JAIPUR: Repolling will be held at one polling booth in the Aimer Lok Sabha constituency on May 2 as a register got misplaced, Rajasthan chief electoral officer Praveen Gupta said on Tuesday. Voting in the constituency was held in the second phase of the Lok Sabha polls on April 26. On a report of the returning officer and the general observer for the Aimer parliamentary constituency, voting held on April 26 at the polling booth at the Nandsi government senior secondary school has been declared to be void, Gupta said.

While campaigning, she highlights the achievements of the BJP-led Centre, such as the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir, and also says that her candidature has the support of the Prime Minister. She also addresses the issue of water scarcity in the region. "I want to get employment for the youth of our region. I want to bring projects like setting up of semiconductor factories and green hydrogen in our constituency," she says.

Vajjibhai Parmar, a car dealer in Tharad, says there could be a close fight between the Thakors and Chaudharys. "There is development in the region. But then there are also issues of water. Geniben hails from a poor family and her track record is very good. If people can give her money for crowd funding, they may vote for her," says Okhabhai Solanki, who hails from Anapur Chota village.

Wheat procurement sufficient for food-security schemes: Govt

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NEW DELHI: The government's procurement of wheat has crossed the minimum threshold quantity required to cater to all welfare schemes despite a delayed start, including distribution of free grains to nearly 800 million beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act, and authorities said they were on course to achieve grain-stocking targets for 2024.

A longer-than-usual spring that delayed harvests, untimely rains in some states and a smaller crop in Madhya Pradesh, the largest wheat grower, led to a sluggish start to procurement, critical for overall food security of world's most populous nation. Procurement refers to purchases of grains by the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the Centre's main grain-handling agency, at federally determined floor prices.



Procurement refers to purchases of grains by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) at federally determined floor prices.

"Wheat procurement is going on smoothly. Our requirement for all welfare schemes, including Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, is about 18.4 million tonnes-18.6 million tonnes. Currently, total procurement has reached 19.6 million tonnes. This is a very favourable level of procurement compared to our operational requirement," FCI chief Ashok KK Meena said. To allow

farmers sufficient time to sell to the government, procurement will be open beyond May, he said. "We are on track to meet the wheat procurement estimate," Meena added.

The FCI chief said the government also had 53 million tonnes of rice (including 21 million tonnes of unmilled paddy), nearly four times the buffer requirement of 13.5 million tonnes as on

April 1. Sufficient procurement is critical this year to help India, also the world's second biggest wheat consumer, replenish depleted stocks, which have hit a 16-year-low.

To be sure, while the government has procured nearly 20 million tonnes and the threshold minimum requirement is 18.6 million tonnes to fulfil obligations under all welfare schemes, the government will still need at least 6-8 million tonnes of stocks to be able to intervene in markets to stabilize prices in case of high cereal inflation, past trends show. In 2022 and 2023, heat waves linked to climate crisis crimped wheat output in the country, prompting it to ban export of wheat, apart from rice and onion. If state-owned stocks are plentiful this year, it will also help to bring down wheat prices, which have been elevated, lifting overall food inflation.

This year's estimate for total

procurement at 31 million tonnes is about 19% higher than the actual procurement of 26.2 million tonnes last year.

Output and quality of grain in such as Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan should exceed last year's levels, according to officials. However, a smaller crop this year in the biggest wheat-producing state, Madhya Pradesh, has been a "cause of concern", a second official said. Rains during early stages of crop in November and December and diversion of acreage towards gram may have led to lower wheat output, the second official said. "Whether the government will be able to meet its procurement estimate of 31 million tonnes will depend on how market dynamics play out. If wheat prices go above minimum support prices, then farmers will prefer selling to private traders," said Abhishek Agrawal, an analyst with Comtrade.

Experts brush off concerns over Covid jab's side effects

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NEW DELHI: Experts stressed that recent disclosure by drugs multinational AstraZeneca in a London court that the Covishield vaccine can cause blood clots in "very rare cases" is not something that was previously unknown, adding that almost everyone who got the shot is in no danger of this extremely rare side effect.

"The association of adenovirus vectored vaccines with TTS (Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome) was identified by WHO (World Health Organization) in April 2021. This is a rare side effect, and occurring within four and 20 days after vaccination. When recognised, there is a clear protocol for treatment," said vaccine scientist Dr Gagandeep Kang. "Since most people were vaccinated years ago, there is no cause for concern at this time."

The AstraZeneca vaccine Vaxzevria, which was administered in India under the brand name Covishield and manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII), was the primary vaccine used in India's immunisation programme to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, accounting for eight out of every 10 shots delivered in the country.

"The furore about Covishield is quite surprising. Nothing new in terms of information and more importantly nothing in that infor-



The AstraZeneca vaccine was administered in India under the brand name Covishield.

mation that should make us fearful of vaccines," Anurag Agrawal, dean of biosciences and health research at Ashoka University, said in a post on X. The Daily Telegraph in the UK reported that in a legal document submitted to the high court in London in February for a class action lawsuit, AstraZeneca admitted its vaccine developed in partnership with the Oxford University to protect against Covid-19 may cause thrombosis with TTS in "very rare cases".

TTS is a rare condition when thrombosis (formation of clots in blood vessels) and thrombocytopenia (low platelet count) occurs. According to the European Medicines Agency on the side effects of the Vaxzevria vaccine, TTS and Guillain-Barré syndrome (a neurological disorder in which the body's immune system damages nerve cells) may affect up to one in 10,000. "A very small number of cases of immune thrombocytopenia (a condition in which the immune system mistakenly tar-

gets blood platelets, reducing their levels and affecting normal blood clotting) and cerebrovascular venous and sinus thrombosis (formation of blood clots in the vessels draining blood from the brain) have also occurred," the European drugs regulator had said. AstraZeneca is fighting a class action lawsuit seeking damages worth nearly 100 million British pounds, according to local media reports. A person named Jamie Scott filed the first case in 2023. Scott was left with a permanent brain injury after developing a blood clot and a bleed on brain since April 2021, when he received the vaccine.

"Vaccine safety is important, and is a primary focus of study for all vaccines. But it is always important to balance benefit and risk, and all licensed vaccines deliver much more benefit and very small risk," Dr Kang said. "Nonetheless, still important to monitor so that the condition is quickly recognised and appropriate management can be made available early."

"Rare side effects of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine have been known since 2021 and were also seen in another recombinant DNA vaccine. These are so rare - less than one in a lakh - that the benefit greatly outweighs the risk for adults. India did not vaccinate extremely low risk populations like children, where this would not have made sense to use," said Dr Agrawal.

AUSTRALIA EXPELS 'INDIAN SPIES' TRYING TO 'STEAL SECRETS': REPORT

NEW DELHI: Australia has expelled an unspecified number of Indian spies who were caught trying to "steal secrets" about sensitive defence projects and airport security, and classified information on trade relationships, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) reported on Tuesday.

A so-called "nest of spies" disrupted by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in 2020 was also accused of closely monitoring Indians living in Australia and developing close relationships with current and former politicians, the national broadcaster reported.

There was no immediate reaction from Indian officials on the report by the ABC. The revelations by ABC were not entirely new as ASIO director-general Mike Burgess had alluded to a spy ring in an annual threat assessment in 2021, though he didn't name the country behind the activity.

"The spies developed targeted relationships with current and former politicians, a foreign embassy and a state police service," Burgess had said in a speech at ASIO's headquarters in Canberra in March 2021.

"They monitored their country's diaspora community. They tried to obtain classified information about Australia's trade relationships," he had said in the speech that was reported by the Australian media.

ABC said "national security and government figures" had confirmed that India's foreign intelligence service was responsible for the "nest of spies" and that "a number" of Indian officials were removed from Australia by the government. **HTC**

'Unsubstantiated': India slams US media report on Pannun murder plot

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NEW DELHI: India on Tuesday said a report by The Washington Post about alleged plots by Indian officials to assassinate pro-Khalistan activists in the US and Canada makes "unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations" on a serious issue.

The Post's report published on Monday focused on an alleged plot to kill Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) leader Gurpatwant Pannun on American soil and the killing of pro-Khalistan activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in the Canadian town of Surrey last year. It also named Vikram Yadav, a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officer seconded to the country's external intelligence agency as the person responsible for overseeing the alleged plot to kill Pannun, declared a terrorist by India.

"The report in question makes unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations on a serious matter," external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement.

Referring to a high-level inquiry committee set up by the Indian side to look into inputs provided by the US regarding the alleged plot against Pannun, Jaiswal said the probe by this body was still underway.

"There is an ongoing investigation of the High Level Committee set up by the Government of India to look into the security concerns shared by the US government on networks of organised criminals, terrorists and others. Speculative and irresponsible comments on it are not helpful," he said.



Gurpatwant Singh Pannun

An indictment filed by US prosecutors in a Manhattan court last November alleged that Indian national Nikhil Gupta, acting on the instructions of an Indian official identified only as "CC-1", was involved in a plot to kill Pannun on American soil. Gupta is currently in jail in the Czech Republic, where the justice minister is examining his challenge to a court ruling that he can be extradited to the US.

Several media outlets, including HT, had earlier reported that the official identified as CC-1 has already been moved out of the external intelligence agency and sent back to the CRPF. Several other mid-ranking officials have also been reshuffled within the intelligence agency, according to people familiar with the matter.

Citing unnamed senior officials, Bloomberg reported that an Indian investigation had concluded that "rogue operatives not authorised by the government had been involved in the plot".

The alleged plot against Pannun has emerged as an irritant in an otherwise robust India-US relationship that now encompasses collaboration on critical emerging technologies, joint development of military hardware and close cooperation on defence and security issues.



Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi with outgoing Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar as he assumes charge, in New Delhi.

Admiral Tripathi takes charge as navy chief

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NEW DELHI: Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi on Tuesday took over as India's 26th chief of naval staff, succeeding Admiral R Hari Kumar who held the top post for two years and five months.

Operational readiness and taking the self-reliance drive forward would be among his top priorities, Tripathi said after taking charge. "Over the years, the navy has evolved into a combat-ready, cohesive, credible and future-proof force. The existing and emerging challenges in the maritime domain mandate the Indian Navy to remain operationally ready to deter potential adversities at sea in peace and to win the war when asked to do so. This will remain my singular focus and endeavour," he said.

Another focus area would be strengthening ongoing efforts of navy towards Atmanirbharta, introducing new technologies "and becoming an important pillar of national development towards our collective quest for Viksit Bharat," he added.

An alumnus of Sainik School, Rewa and National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, Tripathi was commissioned into the navy on July 1, 1985. He was the

vice chief of naval staff before taking charge of the service.

Tripathi takes over the service at a time when the challenges in the distant seas include China's carefully calculated power play for influence, defending the rules-based international order, and the Arabian Sea emerging as a new front with Red Sea tensions escalating and the resurgence of piracy. In the new role, Tripathi will spearhead navy's modernisation with a sharp focus on indigenisation - the navy is working on becoming fully self-reliant by 2047.

More changes in the country's top military leadership will follow as army chief General Manoj Pande retires on May 31. Army vice chief Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi is the frontrunner for the top post.

Tripathi was the Western Naval command chief before he was appointed navy's vice chief in January 2024 and had earlier served as navy's chief of personnel. A communication and electronic warfare specialist, he served on frontline warships as signal communication officer and electronic warfare officer, and later as the executive officer and principal warfare officer of guided missile destroyer INS Mumbai.

EX-PROF GETS 10-YR JAIL FOR PUSHING STUDENTS TO OFFER SEXUAL FAVOURS

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CHENNAI: A Tamil Nadu court on Tuesday sentenced former assistant professor Nirmala Devi to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment six years after an audio clip revealed that she urged students to engage in sexual activities with male professors of Madurai Kamaraj University for higher grades.

The scandal had rocked Tamil Nadu in 2018, and the then governor Banwarilal Purohit was dragged into the controversy. Purohit denied any connection. A woman's court in Virudhunagar district on Monday found her guilty of attempting to traffic four college girls. Judge T T Bagavathi-ammal convicted Devi, who taught in the mathematics department of Devanga Arts and Science College. The judge acquitted two other accused, V Murugan, assistant professor at the Madurai Kamaraj University, and S Karupppasamy, former research scholar at the varsity, for lack of evidence.

The students had appeared through in-camera proceedings to submit to the court how Devi had tried to lure them.

After the students filed a complaint with college administration, Devi was suspended in March 2018. After the audio clip went viral on social media, Arupukotai police arrested her on April 16, 2018. **HTC**

{ FILED UNDER UAPA CASE }

Court takes cognisance of NewsClick charge sheet

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NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Tuesday took cognisance of the charge sheet filed in the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) case against NewsClick and its founder Prabir Purkayastha for allegedly running Chinese propaganda with the intention of undermining India's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Stating that there was sufficient evidence against the accused in the case, additional sessions judge Hardeep Kaur directed the prosecution to supply a copy of the charge sheet to Purkayastha. The judge listed the matter for further proceedings on May 31.

"Investigation has further revealed that during CAA/NRC protests, accused Prabir Purkayastha, in pursuance and furtherance of common conspiracy, was not only involved in malicious disinformation campaign using his PPK NewsClick, but had actually been utilizing his employees/partners for the purpose of disbursing cash to the rioters, some of whom have already been arrested in a separate UAPA case and are pres-



Court directed prosecution to supply a copy of charge sheet to Prabir Purkayastha

ently in judicial custody," the ASJ noted in the order.

On March 30, the Delhi Police Special Cell filed its first charge sheet, running into approximately 8,000 pages including annexures, naming Purkayastha, the founder and editor-in-chief of the news portal and the company PPK NewsClick Studio Pvt. Ltd. which owns the portal, as accused in the case.

Special public prosecutors Akhand Pratap Singh and Suraj Rathi, appearing for the Special Cell, apprised the judge that the charge sheet was filed based on documentary evidence retrieved during the investigation and the statements given by the witnesses and Amit Chakravarty, the accused-turned-approver.

Purkayastha and NewsClick's human resources department

head Chakravarty were arrested by the Delhi Police Special Cell on October 3 last year. In January, Chakravarty turned approver in the case.

The Delhi Police Special Cell registered an FIR against the portal and its founder on August 17, 2023. The case was registered roughly two weeks after an investigation in the *New York Times* alleged that the portal was part of a global network that received money for pushing Chinese propaganda.

The FIR has been registered under sections 13 (unlawful activities), 16 (terrorist act), 17 (raising funds for a terrorist act), 18 (conspiracy) and 22C (offences by companies, societies, and trusts) of UAPA, besides sections 153A (promoting enmity) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code.

It alleged that Purkayastha had conspired with a group, People's Alliance for Democracy and Secularism (PADS), to sabotage the electoral process during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

NewsClick has repeatedly rejected the charges, claiming that proceedings against it were a "blatant attempt" to muzzle the free press.

Another NEET aspirant dies by suicide in Kota, second in 24 hrs: Police

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

JAIPUR: A 20-year-old student, who was preparing for the National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) for admission in undergraduate medical courses, died by suicide in Kota district of Rajasthan on Tuesday, in the second such incident in the coaching hub over the last 24 hours and the ninth this year, police said.

Last year, 27 students, preparing for competitive examinations, died by suicide in the district. According to Jawahar Circle station house officer (SHO) Gopal Lal, the student from Dholpur city in Rajasthan was found dead in his hostel room in Kota on Tuesday.

"The incident took place when the student's brother, who stayed with him, went to the market this morning. The victim did not respond to his several knocks when he returned. Later, he called the landlord and found his body by breaking open the door," the SHO said.

The deceased was studying at a coaching centre in Kota for over a year and was preparing for his third attempt at NEET in May. Police said they have recovered a note from the student's room, where he has apologised to his father for not clearing the examination.

"The body has been sent for an autopsy. An FSL team was also appointed at the spot," said Lal. "We are also probing why the hostel did not install spring-

loaded fans as per the district administration's guidelines," he added.

The SHO said an inquiry will be initiated against the hostel authorities for violation of the guidelines, once the police submit a report to the district collector in this regard.

The incident comes a day after a 20-year-old NEET aspirant from Rohtak district in Haryana died by suicide in Kota, with his family alleging that it could be a case of murder and the hostel authority are trying to hide it. "The deep cut on his neck cannot be sustained due to hanging. We are suspecting it to be a case of murder..." the student's uncle told reporters.

Expressing concern over the deaths, state education minister Madan Dialwar on Tuesday said that coaching centres should not be blamed for students' suicides. "It's wrong to blame the coaching centres and hostels in every case. In many cases, students take the extreme step due to their failed love affairs or due to parental pressure."

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Droupadi Murmu

PREZ MURMU SET TO VISIT RAM TEMPLE TODAY

Press Trust of India

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu will visit Ayodhya on Wednesday to pay obeisance at the Ram temple, the Rashtrapati Bhavan has said.

It will be her first visit to the newly-built temple, the consecration ceremony for which was held on January 22.

The President will visit Ayodhya on May 1, the statement said on Tuesday. "During her stay in Ayodhya, the president will make 'darshan' and 'aarti' at the Shri Hanuman Garhi Temple, Prabhu Shri Ram Temple and Kuber Teela," the Rashtrapati Bhavan said. She will also perform Saryu puja and 'aarti', it added.

Meanwhile, Champat Rai, the general secretary of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, hit out at senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for saying that the President was not invited to the Prana Pratishtha ceremony of the temple because she is a tribal.

"Rahul Gandhi's remarks are completely false, baseless and misleading. I would like to remind him that the President Droupadi Murmu ji and former President Shri Ram Nath Kovind ji, both were invited for the auspicious occasion of Pran Pratishtha," he said

MALEGAON BLAST: APEX COURT STAYS THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST ACCUSED

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the trial court proceedings against one of the accused in the 2008 Malegaon bomb blast case, while hearing his plea that the sanction taken to prosecute him under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act was not proper.

A bench of justice AS Bopanna and justice Sanjay Kumar stayed the trial court proceedings against Sameer Kulkarni and posted the matter for hearing on July 23.

Kulkarni had filed a petition in the apex court to stay proceedings under the UAPA stating that the sanction taken to prosecute him was not proper. The bench had earlier issued notice to the Maharashtra government and sought its response. The plea filed by Kulkarni challenged the competence of the trial court to conduct the trial. Kulkarni, along with six others, including BJP MP Pragna Singh Thakur and Lieutenant Colonel Prasad Purohit, is facing trial for the blast at Malegaon on September 29, 2008. **HTC**

April temp breaks heat records in many parts of India: IMD data

Jayashree Nandi

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NEW DELHI: Temperatures in eastern and peninsular India has smashed records this April, exposing people to extreme heat for weeks together amid polling for the 2024 general elections. The harrowing heat in the month across large parts of the country was brought on in part due to the climate crisis, scientists said.

It was the warmest April in eastern and northeastern India in terms of night temperatures since records began in 1901 and the third warmest in mean temperatures. It was also the second warmest April in the peninsula in terms of maximum, minimum and mean temperatures, according to Met department data. "One of the main reasons for such unusually high temperatures in pockets and certain states is El Nino and climate change," said OP Sreejith, head of climate monitoring and prediction at the weather office.

"Unfortunately, we have no data of heat deaths yet. Heat deaths are not recorded mainly because the person often dies of other complications such as organ failure. All we can say is that temperatures have been extreme."



Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur reported 44.6°C, the highest ever recorded

in May." On Tuesday, almost all stations in Gangetic West Bengal recorded severe heatwaves. Panagarh in West Bengal, for example, recorded 45.6°C, 10°C above normal, and Kalaikunda recorded 47.2°C, 10.4 above normal. In Jharkhand's Baharagora in East Singhbhum district, maximum temperature soared to 47.1°C, 7.7°C above normal above normal.

Andhra Pradesh's Anantapur reported 44.6°C, the highest ever recorded. Arogyavaram reported 41°C, the second highest maximum temperature. Asansol in West Bengal reported 44.2°C. Udagamandalam reported 29.4°C, the highest maximum.

"We witnessed an unusual event over West Bengal, Odisha, Rayalaseema, Kerala, south interior Karnataka and Jharkhand. These areas have recorded extreme heat for more than a week," said Mahesh Palawat, vice-president of climate and meteorology at SkyMet Weather Services, a private forecaster. "Parts of central India also recorded very high temperatures. This was mainly because the winds were blowing from the landward direction instead of the seaward direction. This was because of an anti-cyclone over the Bay of Bengal."

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Apex court seeks to verify the sincerity of Ramdev's apology

Utkarsh Anand
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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed yoga guru Ramdev and Patanjali managing director Balkrishna to submit copies of newspaper pages that show the actual size of their published apologies for misleading previous advertisements and a press conference that went against the court's order, seeking to verify the sincerity and visibility of the unqualified apology issued by the two in a contempt case.

A bench of justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah took on record the statement of the lawyers representing the leaders of the Patanjali Ayurved empire that they would produce copies of newspaper pages that demonstrate the extent of their published apologies, wherein they expressed remorse over their actions that included the promotion of their Patanjali products in ways found misleading by the court.

"Did you file the original copies? Why does the registry have to scan it and put it in files? This is not the compliance of our order. We asked to file as it is... There is too much of a communication gap it seems. We raise our hands now... looks like the counsel want their clients (Ramdev and Balkrishna) to appear more than we want them to," the court remarked, referring to its previous order focusing on the size and visibility of the apology.

On April 23, the bench told Patanjali's legal team that the apology must not be one that needs to be seen by a "microscope", highlighting the possible discrepancy in the scale between Patanjali's widespread misleading advertisements claiming miracle cures and their comparatively inconspicuous apology published in newspapers a day before the last hearing. A fresh apology was published in various publications on April 24.

Senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi and Balbir Singh, appearing for Ramdev and Balkrishna, informed the court that a more prominently displayed apology was published in over 300 publications on April 24, adding all

Court in Haridwar to take up criminal complaint on May 10

HT Correspondent
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DEHRADUN: The court of chief judicial magistrate in Haridwar will hear a criminal complaint filed against yoga guru Ramdev, Patanjali managing director Balkrishna, Divya Pharmacy and Patanjali Ayurved Limited on May 10. The complaint was filed on April 16 by Haridwar district Ayurveda and Unani officer under sections 34 and 7 of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act.

An assistant prosecution officer on condition of anonymity confirmed the development and said, "The court of CJM will hear the complaint filed against Baba Ramdev, Balkrishna, Divya Pharmacy, and Patanjali Ayurved Limited on May 10." Section 3 of the Act prohibits advertisement of certain drugs for treatment of

the newspaper pages would be submitted in the court within two days.

Responding, the bench gave them a "last opportunity" to properly bring on record the published apology while expressing satisfaction that the latest apology has named Ramdev and Balkrishna apart from Patanjali.

"For the first time, names have been taken... We appreciate the language. For the first time, appropriate steps have been taken," observed the bench, as it excused Ramdev and Balkrishna from personally appearing in the court on the next hearing on May 14 following their lawyers' request.

The bench also took note of Rohatgi's complaint against RV Asokan, president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), about an interview given to news agency PTI in the wake of the April 23 order of the top court.

In the interview, Asokan criticised the top court for its approach towards practitioners



Ramdev

certain diseases and disorders, Section 4 prohibits misleading advertisements relating to drugs, and Section 7 talks about penalties.

For violations under DMR (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, there is a provision of imprisonment of maximum six months, fine or both in the case of the first conviction and maximum imprisonment of one year, fine or both in case of subsequent conviction.

Patanjali spokesperson SK Tijariwala said he was not aware of the details of the complaint and could only comment once he went through it.

of modern medicine, asserting that scrutiny does not "behave the Supreme Court to take a broadside against the medical profession of the country".

The bench allowed Ramdev's lawyers to bring this interview on record, potentially adding a new dimension to the ongoing legal proceedings.

"This self-certification does not help. Be prepared for more serious consequences if you have said all this... You haven't covered yourself in glory if what the other side says is true. This is something for you to explain how you decide which way we should we go?" the bench asked the lawyers for IMA.

IMA is the complainant in the case against Patanjali and has demanded contempt action against Ramdev and Balkrishna for violating the court's earlier directives on misleading advertisements and an undertaking given by Patanjali.

During the proceedings, the court also perused the affidavits filed by various authorities in the

Uttarakhand government, including the one filed on Monday apprising the bench of the suspension of manufacturing licences for 14 Patanjali products and seeking the registration of a criminal case against Ramdev and Balkrishna over misleading claims and deceptive advertising.

The bench highlighted the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority's (SLA's) sudden responsiveness after years of negligence, criticising the department for prolonged inaction against Patanjali.

"When you want to move, you move like lightning. And when you don't, you don't... You managed to do in three days what should have been done much earlier. How do you explain six years of your inaction after you received a complaint from the Ayush ministry? What have you done in discharge of your public duty?" it asked the SLA.

Representing the SLA, senior counsel Dhruv Mehta detailed the actions taken and mentioned that the central government's AYUSH ministry had been informed about the suspension of specific Patanjali products. "Now he realises his power. In one day, he realises his power," the bench retorted, commenting on the sudden burst of activity from the authority.

The court concluded that it seemed the authorities only took proper legal action after the court's prompting in its order on April 10 while permitting the filing of additional affidavits by the state government officers by May 14.

In an affidavit submitted on Monday, the Uttarakhand SLA said the licences for 14 Patanjali products were suspended on April 15 for violating provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act (DCA) and related rules.

According to the affidavit, a drug inspector in Haridwar filed a criminal complaint against Ramdev, Balkrishna, Divya Pharmacy, and Patanjali under the Drug and Magic Remedies (DMR) Act. The SLA has also instructed all Ayurvedic and Unani medicine factories in Uttarakhand to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Women's group helps free 11 Meitei militants in Manipur

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NEW DELHI: An army convoy that was ferrying 11 members of Arambai Tengkol — the radical valley-based Meitei outfit — who were caught with a large cache of arms and ammunition, was stopped near Imphal by a large group of women protesters, who managed to free the nabbed men from the army's custody, people familiar with the matter said.

Though Manipur Police confirmed the incident, it did not reveal the identity of the 11 miscreants or those who helped set them free.

The police, however, confirmed that the army's Mahar regiment had caught 11 "armed miscreants dressed in police fatigues" and were returning after the operation when the women protesters freed the 11 men. The army had recovered three AK series rifles, five INSAS, two SLRs, two hand grenades and bullet proof jackets

from the armed men. Officials in the security forces said the Mahar Column had detained the 11 Arambai Tengkol militants along with weapons and had reached Kumbi near Imphal in the morning, when the column was stopped by Meira Paibis (women protesters). When the women protesters also tried to snatch the weapons, the army personnel fired multiple rounds in the air to disperse the protesters.

"The women protesters parked vehicles on the road to block the convoy. Later, they also came on to the road and refused to let the convoy pass through. There were men behind the women. It was a planned blockade in Kumbi. But the army column managed to keep the weapons safe. The weapons could not be snatched," said an official.

Arambai Tengkol is a radical valley-based Meitei outfit that has been accused of orchestrating violence by Kuki groups. The Manipur Police has accused

of committing "many anti-social activities and criminal activities".

Manipur police in a statement on Tuesday night, however, denied reports that the "11 armed miscreants" were behind the killing of the 2 CRPF personnel on April 27.

To be sure, this is not the first time that women protesters from either warring communities — Meiteis and Kukis — disrupted operations and stopped their convoy. In February this year, when a senior police officer was abducted from outside his house, the Arambai Tengkol militants were supported by women protesters.

In June last year, the army had said that women activists in Manipur were deliberately blocking routes and interfering in operations of security forces. The army had also released a 2.12-minute-long video, a collage of different operations, in which women protesters allegedly disrupted the security force's operations.

SC: Trial against Navlakha may go beyond a decade

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday observed that the trial against human rights activist Gautam Navlakha in the Bhima Koregaon violence case may not be over for another 10 years after it was informed that nearly 370 witnesses have been named by the national investigation agency (NIA) in its charge sheet before a local court in Maharashtra.

HC reserves order on resignation of 3 Himachal MLAs
SHIMLA: The Himachal Pradesh high court has reserved orders in the matter of the resignation of three Independent legislators of the HP assembly. The bench of chief justice MS Ramachandra Rao has reserved the orders after the arguments were completed on Tuesday. The hearing was held on a petition directing the speaker to accept the resignations of three MLAs.

'Can't accept extreme view of all pvt property belonging to community'

Abraham Thomas
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NEW DELHI: A nine-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court deciding a crucial issue on whether private property can be distributed for public good by the state said an "unbridled" agenda of socialism that treats all private property of individuals to be belonging to the community cannot be envisaged in today's context of India's economic development as private ownership and business enjoyed protection under the Constitution.

Taking a nuanced approach to decide whether material resources of community, as occurring in Article 39(b), one of the directive principles of state policy under the Constitution, includes private property,



SC is deciding a crucial issue on whether private property can be distributed for public good.

there is no protection of private rights in society at all." The bench was hearing a challenge to a Maharashtra law introduced in 1986 under Chapter VIII of Maharashtra Housing and Area Development (MHAD) Act, which allowed the state to take control over dilapidated buildings in Mumbai by relying on Article 39(b).

The bench further said while certain private resources can be so, an extreme view of all private property belonging to community cannot be accepted.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for Maharashtra government on Tuesday, said: "I would personally and on behalf of the government would not subscribe to the view of justice Krishna Iyer at this stage of country's development."

{ FROM PAGE 1 }

SEX ABUSE ROW

The action came even as the BJP distance itself from the allegations, attacking the Congress for its inaction instead.

Speaking in Guwahati, Union home minister Amit Shah said that the BJP's stance was clear that it stood with "women power".

"I want to ask Congress and Priyanka ji who are demanding action. Who is the government there? The government is a Congress government. Why they have not taken any action till now? We do not have to take action on this as this is a law and order issue of the state," he said.

On Monday, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi said on X, "The leader on whose shoulder the PM puts his hand and gets himself photographed, the leader for whom the PM himself goes to campaign 10 days before the election. He praises him on the stage. Today that leader from Karnataka is absconding from the country. Just hearing about his heinous crimes makes my heart tremble. He has ruined the lives of hundreds of women. Modi ji will you remain silent?"

But Shah defended the BJP and its ally. "We are in favour of a probe, and the JD(S) has also announced that action will be taken... The issue that has been reported in the media is very hurtful and cannot be tolerated in any way. The BJP's stand is very clear; we will not tolerate any insult to 'matri aur nari shakti' (women empowerment)," Shah said.

The controversy is also playing out against the backdrop of fiercely fought Lok Sabha elections in the southern state that sends 28 members to the Lower House. The BJP-JD(S) alliance is taking on the Congress.

On Tuesday, the National Commission of Women wrote to the Karnataka deputy general of police, Alok Mohan, asking for a detailed report within three days.

"The National Commission for Women has come across multiple media reports indicating that several video clips of a sexual nature, allegedly involving Mr Prajwal Revanna sitting MP for Lok Sabha from Hassan constituency sexually abusing hundreds of women, were circulated on social media in recent days," the letter said, seen by HT.

NWC said that such events endangered women's safety but also "foster a culture of disrespect and violence against them".

"We urge prompt and decisive action from the concerned police authority to swiftly apprehend the accused, who has fled the country. A detailed report outlining the measures taken must be submitted to the commission within three days," the letter said.

India will only support an international legally binding agreement on plastic pollution if it is reached via full consensus, not one made through the support of a two-thirds majority. India had sought an assurance from the INC chair, Luis Vayas Valdivieso, that Rule 38.1 of the draft rules of procedure, which allows for a two-thirds majority vote on substantive matters if consensus cannot be reached, will not be invoked during this round of negotiations.

Several countries, including Russia, China, the UAE and Cuba, have opposed the option of voting, independent observers said. Experts pointed out that a consensus-driven system allows one or a few member states to veto certain decisions. Many delegates supported indicating the instrument's objective to end plastic pollution, with some adding "including in the marine environment"; and to protect human health and the environment. Some wanted an approach based on the "full lifecycle of plastic," while others preferred the "lifecycle of plastic waste". Some delegates indicated their preference not to have a time-bound target in the objectives, with one noting that this could be included in the preamble, the International Institute of Sustainable Development's Earth Negotiation Bulletin said on Monday.

A Centre for Science and Environment report flagged that companies have started increasing oil and gas production for polymers in anticipation of a serious response to climate change that could curb the production of fossil fuels, Hindustan Times reported on April 17.

The report highlighted that India, Russia, the United States and China, in certain cases, are not agreeable to reducing primary plastic polymer production, reducing chemicals from polymer production or phasing out single-use plastic.

"We came to Ottawa to advance the text and with the hope that members would agree on the interessional work required to make even greater progress ahead of INC-5. We leave Ottawa having achieved both goals and a clear path to landing an ambitious deal in Busan ahead of us," said Inger Andersen, executive director of the UNEP. "The work, however, is far from over. The plastic pollution crisis continues to engulf the world and we have just a few months left before the end of the year deadline agreed upon in 2022. I urge members to show continued commitment and flexibility to achieve maximum ambition."

PLASTIC POLLUTION

He added that addressing plastic pollution is extremely important but the road map should be realistic.

"While we feel the need to respond to this global environmental challenge, we should not ignore that plastics have played an important role in development of our societies. Plastics are used in varied sectors of economic activity. As such the global response to addressing plastic pollution should be based on the cardinal principle of sustainable development. So the issues addressed here should be thoroughly assessed for their impact on sustainable development goals (SDGs) including food security, economic well-being, water security, etc," he said.

"The instrument (legally binding) should be implemented in a rationally driven manner with due respect to national circumstances and capabilities... the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities under the Rio declaration should be integrated in the instrument. We reiterate the need for consensus-based decision making. We call upon parties to adopt the draft rules of procedure before the beginning of textual negotiations at INC-5," Gangwar said while asking the INC-4 chair to record the statement in their report.

India's approach to a plastic phase-out is different from that of several African group countries and even Peru, which are seeking interventions in the entire life cycle of plastics, including polymers, and not only downstream measures such as waste management.

HT reported on April 27 that

the political furor around the case continued apace on Tuesday, with Kumaraswamy hinting that Congress deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar was aware of the videos, and had orchestrated the attack on the JD(S).

Shivakumar later dismissed the allegations.

"No one in Karnataka believes HD Kumaraswamy, everyday he changes his stand. I don't have any evidence but I was told that senior leaders of the party helped him (Prajwal Revanna) to leave the country. Amit Shah condemned the incident but he said that it is their party issue and they will take action. They have to make it clear whether they want to be aligned with such people or not," he told news agency ANI.

Revanna left the country for Germany on April 27, one day after the elections, with his father HD Revanna telling reporters on Monday that he would return if he was called for investigation.

Meanwhile, as it scrambled to distance itself from the allegations, the JD(S) called a core committee meeting in Hubballi on Tuesday, and within minutes of it being convened, announced that Prajwal was suspended.

"Videos of Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna allegedly harassing women are widely in circulation on social media and media and this has caused huge embarrassment to the party and its leadership," the suspension order said, seen by HT. The order however remains silent on HD Revanna.

The order — signed by party general secretary KR Shivakumar — said that Prajwal was suspended as the state government constituted an SIT, and as per the party's constitution and rules regarding breach of discipline and punishment.

JD(S) core committee chairman GT Devegowda said that the party welcomed the SIT probe. "In the meeting, we decided to support the investigation completely," he said.

Ahead of the party meeting, Kumaraswamy questioned the validity of the videos. "What is the proof? Is Prajwal's face seen in the videos? Still, we will take action on moral grounds," he said in Hubballi. "We are not going to protect him, we will take severe action but the government has greater responsibility."

PACE NEWS | Hindustan Times MEDIA MARKETING INITIATIVE

Inculcate the habit of Self-study article by Dr. Hari Dutt Sharma, Principal, Vidya Bal Bhawan School

"Self-study is the cornerstone of academic excellence and personal growth."

As the Principal of Vidya Bal Bhawan School, Vasundhara, this belief guides our approach to education. To nurture the habit of self-study, we emphasize the importance of student autonomy in their learning journey. We strive to create an environment conducive to independent learning, offering quiet study spaces and ample resources to facilitate exploration and understanding. Moreover, instilling values like self-discipline, time management, and goal-setting is crucial.

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RSJMS celebrates a journey of accomplishments in the realm of education

Raghubir Singh Junior Modern School, Humayun Road celebrated its Founder's Day Function and Valedictory Ceremony for class 5 students at Sir Shankar Lal Hall, Modern School, Barakhamba Road. Nearly 300 students from grade 5, presented 'Varuna - A Musical of Moods and Divinity' showcasing the historical relevance, spirituality and significance of water in today's world through a harmonious amalgamation of a well-researched script in poetic verse, enactment and forceful dialogue delivery. The in-house production was complemented by exemplary rendition of songs, mesmerizing dances and powerful audio visuals. The Chief Guest for the occasion was Honourable Justice Manmohan, Acting Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court. The Headmistress, Nalini Singh Rajput, welcomed the guests and shared some of the major achievements of the students with the audience. In his address, Ajay Verma, Chairperson, RSJMS spoke about the school's contributions and his hope and aspirations for the students. Addressing the students, the Chief Guest inspired them to review their commitment to values of joy, curiosity and lifelong learning, and never to give up their dreams. This enlightening presentation was a befitting tribute to the founder father of Modern Schools, Lala Raghubir Singh Ji, who believed in providing holistic education to students through a gamut of activities beyond the realm of academia. The show was a visual treat and received a standing ovation from the audience.

Mindful Learning: Expanding the vision of Education with Metacognition article by Alka Sahni, Principal, Maharaja Agrasain Public School

"Simple shifts in points of view can open doors to expansions of consciousness...when we urge our learners to facilitate a deeper discourse about their lives using the power of metacognition, we manifest a glorious future of Education."

Reflecting on our thoughts is a big part of our lifelong learning that shapes our experiences. The neuroscientist Steve Fleming highlighted that insight into our own mind - Metacognition can generate higher achievement in every domain. Educational institutions have a colossal role to play in imbibing Metacognitive techniques in the learners. To achieve this, we need to allow thought provoking questions to challenge our mental cocoons. If instead of saying "This subject makes me anxious", the child says "Why does this subject make me anxious and how can I work on this fear?" It's then that the school is embracing Metacognition in a true sense. Teaching-learning should follow the 'Decoding' method wherein the learners not only question everything but are also intrigued to know the essence of everything. Collaborative learning and research based

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OPINION

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OUR TAKE

Lessons from the Revanna episode

Parties should not shy away from acting against politicians accused of moral misdemeanours

The Prajwal Revanna episode is a symptom of the culture of impunity that prevails in Indian politics, especially among politicians who see themselves as local influencers. On Tuesday, the Janata Dal (Secular) suspended sitting MP Prajwal Revanna, grandson of the party patriarch Deve Gowda, from the party after police booked him for alleged sexual assault of multiple women. The police action came after the voting in Hassan, where Prajwal is the JD(S)-BJP candidate. Reports suggest that local leaders had raised apprehensions about repeating Prajwal in the wake of reports about video clips highlighting his behaviour. Yet he landed the nomination and political heavyweights, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, campaigned for him, presumably because he was the sitting MP and endorsing him was essential to keep the Gowda clan, necessary for the transfer of JD(S) votes to the BJP, happy. A similar predicament seems to be holding back the BJP from declaring its candidate from Kaiserganj (UP), where sitting MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, accused by Olympians of sexually harassing women wrestlers, expects to be renominated. Singh, reportedly, has the resources to influence outcomes in multiple Lok Sabha constituencies, and, hence, wants to be appreciated. And the same seems to have played a part in the Congress' nomination of Lal Singh, a former Congressman who moved to the BJP, then hit the headlines for his vocal support of the accused in the heinous Kathua rape and murder of a minor.

That this tendency, which has cross-party resonance, has prevailed despite elections moving away from fractured verdicts to decisive outcomes is truly surprising, and disturbing. Political parties seem to privilege the allegiance of these influencers over the damage to their own image—and political morality. This has bred a culture of impunity among a section of the political class, who invoke their political, caste, or class inheritance to brazen out the consequences of their crimes.

It is heartening that those at the receiving end of the depravations of the influential now seek redress in the criminal justice system rather than stay quiet. However, closure takes time as such cases often become a battle of attrition in the courts.

It is nobody's case that due process should be given the short shrift and the accused denied a hearing. Nor should the circumstances be ignored; the scandal broke when half of Karnataka is yet to vote. That, and, possibly, factionalism may have forced the JD(S) to distance itself from the accused. However, the principle that should guide parties in such situations is that the people in public life need to have high moral standards. That may sound antiquated at a time when winning seems to be the only thing that matters.

Farm resilience is key to managing climate crisis

With climate crisis effects being increasingly felt in agriculture, the Centre has done well to set up two expert panels: One to work on technology solutions to improve extreme weather forecast precision, aiding calibration of tilling and sowing decisions, and the other to find ways to hasten assessment of yield losses for timely disbursal of payouts under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). The farm insurance scheme has suffered delays—last August, the Centre blamed yield data transmission lags and disputes between insurance firms and the states for the ₹ 2,760 crore pending against admissible claims till 2021-22. Disbursal delays have a compounded effect, with farmers often dependent on harvest income/compensation for the next sowing.

That apart, the government must ensure a faster transition from a climate response orientation to a climate resilience one for the farm sector. This will require concerted efforts across the plough-to-plate spectrum. First, sustained gains in shifting away from water-intensive crops need to be demonstrated to farmers. While some states incentivise such diversification, these seem inadequate against the existing price support and assured procurement arrangement that rewards the cultivation of water-guzzlers. Second, greater attention must be paid to changing consumer preferences, to wean them away from grains whose acreage will suffer as the climate crisis worsens. This transition will be much harder to nudge, but as the unfolding millet consumption story promises, the needle can be moved meaningfully. The government and market players will need to redouble their efforts here.

In intelligence, perils of poor judgement

The Pannun plot was an instance of overreach and misjudgment. But its aftermath reflects the strengths and depth of India-US ties

According to *The Washington Post*, Vikram Yadav was the mid-level Indian intelligence official who allegedly directed the alleged plot to assassinate Gurbatwanti Singh Pannun, the terrorist that the United States (US) and Canada have awarded their citizenship. Western intelligence agencies also believe that the then Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) chief Samant Goel approved the plot.

The report excavates more details, from the western perspective, of a storyline that has now been known since the end of last year. The Indian government—either due to its political instinct that incentivises a certain aggression; or due to the spike in Khalistani activity; or due to the constellation of actors from Punjab that dominated R&AW under Goel; or due to a political-security assessment after the 2020-2021 farmers' protests that Khalistanis abroad had gained the ability to shape domestic political events—decided that these extremists posed a direct threat to India's security.

Either because it was frustrated by the unwillingness of western law enforcement to take action, or due to a prior assumption that western law enforcement would not take action, a segment of India's security apparatus

decided to respond to this threat through extra-territorial action without exploring all diplomatic options.

At the very least, Indian agencies were enmeshed in the diaspora networks of extremism and criminal networks, as any smart intelligence agency must be to get political or operational intelligence or even keep a pathway open for future political dialogue. The line between what is official and unofficial, legal and illegal, intelligence collection and intelligence operation is almost always blurred and every intelligence agency, including the Central Intelligence Agency, operates in this grey zone.

But it appears that the Indian agencies weren't just in touch with criminal networks or aware of the world in which the Khalistanis operated outside. The American (and Canadian) allegation is specific. India went a step beyond to directly seek to eliminate what it saw as threats through action that clearly violated the sovereignty of a partner country. Encounter killings within one's country aren't acceptable, but they assume a deeply offensive character when attempted outside one's country.

If these allegations have merit, then it is a story of Indian overreach. No cost-benefit assessment can justify plotting to kill a Khalistani terrorist in New York when weighed against the enormous value of the US-Indian strategic partnership. It is a story of Indian incompetence. Serving and retired intelligence officials, in private conversations, have said that if true, they were stunned by the shoddiness of the operation, both in its conception and execu-

tion. It is a story of Indian hubris. Yes, they admitted, the western world does this too, but hypocrisy is the fundamental feature of the international system, power determines your ability to preach one set of norms and practice another, and India isn't powerful enough to play this game outside its immediate neighbourhood just yet. And it is a story of Indian misjudgment, they reasoned, listing out the damage: Delhi's carefully constructed international reputation as a responsible power externally has taken a blow at the very time its reputation as an internally robust democracy is under strain; it is unfairly getting clubbed together with countries that practice "transnational repression"; and it has given a coalition of actors from Chinese and Pakistani proxies in western capitals to ideological

critics of the Indian government a key issue to campaign around. But having said all this, three elements of the episode stand out. For one, the fact that neither Washington nor Delhi allowed this issue to interrupt bilateral ties is a remarkable testament to the strength of the India-US relationship, the level of trust that exists between the top political leadership, the openness and candour with which discussions happen, and the ability of both governments to remain laser-focused on the big strategic challenge and threat of the times: China.

The striking feature of this story is not that the US is unhappy. The striking feature is that the White House has been aware of the issue since at least last July, yet the American political



Prashant Jha



Sullivan and Doval have continued to maintain a relationship of trust

leadership maturely decided to compartmentalise the issue from the rest of the relationship. It has sought accountability from India and warned, in explicit terms, this must never recur. But Joe Biden and his team have continued to support India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's diplomatic ambitions (think the G20 in September), India's ability to cope with China (military intelligence-sharing continues; high-level diplomatic and security exchanges have only deepened; defence deals are on track). India's wider integration into the western institutional apparatus (think of something as mundane but critical as India participating in the Minerals Security Partnership), and India's quest to be a high-technology power (think of the continued work on the initiative on critical and emerging technologies in general and space and semiconductors in particular).

Two, this also suggests that those who run foreign policy in America are aware of who within the Indian system knew about the operation—and all indications are they don't think National Security Advisor Ajit Doval was among them. Even the *Post* report hedges its bets in the case of attributing responsibility to him; there is no evidence at all to link India's topmost national security leadership to this excess.

Top American officials have indicated to this writer that at the exact

time this operation was being planned in June, they were struck by Doval's remarkable work with his counterpart, Jake Sullivan, in deepening the strategic relationship during Modi's State visit. US officials appear incredulous that Doval would have done anything to undermine bilateral ties given what was at stake, especially with an operation of this quality and nature. Tellingly, Sullivan and Doval have continued to maintain this relationship of trust and engagement and discuss developments in every global theatre with candour. The US system also accepted the legitimacy of a Doval-led committee to investigate the allegations, another marker of trust.

And finally, the story isn't over yet, for the US demand to see legal accountability fixed in this case is colliding with India's willingness to take internal administrative action but probably go no further. More broadly, there will continue to be reputational consequences for India in the wider public sphere in the West even if systems are more closely aligned than ever before. But what is critical is that India learns the right lessons, proceeds with a careful set of intelligence reforms and exercises more discerning judgment to deal with threats outside the borders especially at a time when its actions are under much higher scrutiny.

The views expressed are personal

Celebrating the life and works of Sudhir Kakar

I first met the eminent Indian psychoanalyst, Sudhir Kakar, on July 22, 1999, at the wedding of the American psychoanalyst John Munder Ross. The elegant three-story brownstone in Manhattan was jam-packed with the glitterati of our psychoanalytic world, Broadway stars, and sundry celebrities of the New York Jewish intelligentsia. Our meetings over the subsequent 25 years were no less dramatic. Just envision the two of us, leisurely walking along the Atlantic Ocean in Hyannis, Massachusetts, a short distance from the hallowed Kennedy family compound; crunched, along my brother Javed (poet and lyricist), in the backseat of a Mercedes, en route from St Stephen's College to the Meridian Hotel in Lutyns' New Delhi; seated on a podium with the popular Urdu poet Nida Fazli at the release of one of my books at the India International Centre; celebrating his 70th birthday on the rooftop terrace of his son's apartment in New York City; having a drink in the bar of the majestic Taj Mahal Hotel in Lucknow and chatting over coffee in the sun-filled atrium of The Imperial in New Delhi.

The affectionate and mutually respectful bond between us was as unlikely as it was inevitable. Unlike because we were temperamentally quite different, with I being talkative, brimming with anecdotes, given to spontaneously reciting poetry and him being somewhat shy and unexpectedly taciturn for a charming and ambitious man. Inevitable because we shared, at a deep level, an abiding love of ideas, psychoanalysis, beauty, and creativity. My quiet and meditative self was covert and his flamboyance was veiled. We met infrequently but each encounter was touching and meaningful.

Sudhir Kakar was a seeker in the truest sense of the word. Peripatetic in geography, profession, and passion, Kakar began his life in Nainital (where he was born on July 25, 1938) and then lived in succession in Sargodha (now in Pakistan), Rohtak, New Delhi, Shimla, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Hamburg (Germany), Vienna (Austria), Ahmedabad again, Boston (US), Frankfurt (Germany), New Delhi



Sudhir Kakar died last week but the generative impact of his life will continue to shine through the effort and work of young psychotherapists in India

again, and finally in Goa (where he died on April 21, 2024).

No less dizzying was his passage through careers in mechanical engineering, macroeconomics, psychoanalysis, social anthropology, mysticism, historical fiction, and popular literature. While the novels he wrote during the last two decades of his life—*The Ascetic of Desire* (2002), *The Seeker* (2007), and *The Crimson Throne* (2010)—are widely read, less known is the fact that he had started his career as a short story writer before turning to engineering, economics, and so on.

At the young age of 24, Kakar was already a well-published author. But Kakar's meteoric rise was due to his tutelage with the great Erik Erikson, the psychic cartographer of concepts like "basic trust", "identity crisis", and "generativity". Sponsored by Erikson, Kakar underwent formal training in psychoanalysis in Frankfurt, Germany. Upon returning to India, he noticed the sharp elbows of Eurocentrism in the theory he had absorbed and thus began to fervently produce a body of work that explicated child development, personality functioning, and sexual life in terms

of Indian culture. He thus became a pioneering figure in the shift from the theoretically imperialistic "psychoanalytic anthropology" to a bidirectional and socially nuanced "anthropological psychoanalysis". His seminal books *The Inner World* (1978) and *Intimate Relations* (1990), respectively, opened up new vistas in the understanding of the emotional and erotic life of the people of India.

After the stunning psychoanalytic monograph (*Concept of Repression*, 1921) of Girindrashekar Bose, who maintained a correspondence with Sigmund Freud till the latter's death in 1939, Kakar's books constituted a renewed and more forceful breakthrough in the application of depth psychology to non-western cultures. Kakar soon gained universal recognition. He taught at Harvard and Columbia Universities, collaborated with the masterful (admittedly, maligned by some in India) Indologist Wendy Doniger, and was held in high esteem by Sir Vidya (the doyen of post-colonial, emigre English fiction, VS Naipaul). He received numerous national and international awards, including Germany's Goethe Prize for Literature, which made him the only other psychoanalyst after Freud to have been so honoured for his literary skills.

Sudhir died last week but the generative impact of his life will continue to shine through the effort and work of young psychotherapists and psychoanalysts in India and, in fact, throughout the world. To be sure, we mourn his death but equally, we owe him (and ourselves) a proud celebration of his venturesome, passionate (did I mention that he was a professional-level table tennis player?), and an impressively technicolour and creative life. He has left behind a legacy of generosity, authenticity, and wisdom that shall continue to live in our hearts and minds.

Salman Akhtar is an acclaimed psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and poet based in Philadelphia, US. A 10-volume collection of his Selected Papers was recently released at the Freud House and Museum in London. The views expressed are personal

{ ADMIRAL DINESH KUMAR TRIPATHI } CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF

The emerging challenges in the maritime domain mandate the Indian Navy to remain operationally ready to deter potential adversities at sea in peace and to win the war at sea when asked to do so

India needs to lead agri-tech innovation for Global South

The global food system must be transformed to both mitigate the climate crisis and feed a rapidly growing population. Food insecurity is already a major challenge, with the number of those facing acute hunger has risen for the fifth consecutive year in 2023. By 2050, we need to nourish over 10 billion people while significantly reducing emissions and minimising the use of land and water. This challenge is acute across Africa and Asia, which will face higher population growth and more severe impacts of the climate crisis, including droughts and declining agricultural yields.

In this scenario, India could play a pivotal role in leading a transformation. One major obstacle these countries face is gaining access to advanced technologies that can revolutionise their food systems. Over the last two decades, innovations such as gene-edited seeds, enhancements to the soil microbiome, and fermented proteins have emerged. These technologies have the potential to improve yields, enhance climate resilience, and bolster food security at scale.

However, these innovations are predominantly developed within Western ecosystems and reflect a disparity in innovation that continues to persist. Private investment in agricultural technology (agri-tech) primarily flows into North America and Europe. Consequently, there is a wealth of innovation in climate-resilient corn and soy, for example, but far less in crops like millets or rice, which are crucial for many Global South countries.

Innovation ecosystems in the Global South are generally less developed, with limited access to the funding and industry connections needed to bring new technologies to the market. They also face fragmented markets that are less familiar to start-ups and lack the supportive mechanisms that could attract these companies. The international community has recognised these challenges, yet national commitments and global funding mechanisms for transforming food systems and facilitating technology transfer remain limited. This situation likely means that countries will continuously be in catch-up mode; their own emerging ecosystems may take decades to develop comparable deep scientific capabilities.

Nonetheless, there is a proactive approach that the Global South can adopt, with India at the forefront. This involves pooling capital to create a multi-stage fund aimed at steering innovation addressing Global South-specific problems. For example, grants at the university level for cut-

ting-edge research (akin to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency grants in the US) could guide advanced labs towards developing biotechnological solutions appropriate for these countries. As these innovations progress from labs to start-ups, additional grants could help refine these solutions. Drawing from models like the Gates Foundation's Global Access, intellectual property (IP) provisions in these grants could ensure that the IP developed is accessible to the Global South. As companies mature, targeted early- and mid-stage equity investments—similar to those made by Singapore's EDBI or Abu Dhabi's Mubadala—could attract them to these regions.

Further, enhancing the attractiveness of the Global South to innovative companies is essential. One effective strategy is through demand aggregation, particularly for seeds, fertilisers, and other inputs, which could enhance these countries' bargaining power and reduce the overhead for companies seeking market entry. Here, India could leverage its scale and infrastructure to develop a marketplace that other countries can participate in.

As breakthrough innovations reshape or create new industries, regulatory frameworks often struggle to adapt. Countries like Singapore created new regulatory frameworks to support emerging industries. Yet, navigating multiple regulatory systems can be costly and time-consuming for companies expanding internationally. India could advocate for greater regulatory coordination and common standards, leveraging its regulatory expertise and deep understanding of developing country contexts. This could mean that regulatory approval in India could potentially open doors to several countries simultaneously.

These approaches require collaboration and longer timelines for some. However, in the backdrop of global climate negotiations, the reshaping of multilateral financial institutions, and the flux in global climate finance, there is a valuable opportunity for India to cement its position as a leader of the Global South by helping it take more proactive action towards transforming its food system, both through diplomatic channels as well as by facilitating dialogue through its business and investment communities.

Kabir Nanda has worked in multiple roles scaling innovative climate-friendly technologies globally and currently works at the intersection of food and biotechnology. The views expressed are personal

WORLD

Demonstrators take over Columbia building as US campus protests flare

Demonstrators vowed to remain at the hall until their demands are met, including that Columbia divest all financial holdings linked to Israel

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW YORK: Demonstrators at Columbia University barricaded themselves inside a campus building on Tuesday, escalating a standoff with school officials as pro-Palestinian protests spread across the United States. The school promised they would face expulsion.

Masked individuals smashed windows and blocked doors with metal tables in the early hours of the morning after administrators began suspending protesting students for failing to comply with an order to disperse.

President Joe Biden's White House sharply criticised the seizure of the building, with a spokesman saying it was "absolutely the wrong approach" as police patrolled street entrances to the prestigious New York university. "That is not an example of peaceful protest," the spokesman added.

Demonstrators vowed to remain at the hall until their demands are met, including that Columbia divest all financial holdings linked to Israel. The school has rejected the demand, with university president Minouche Shafiq saying talks with students had collapsed.

Protests have swept through US higher education institutions, with many erecting tent encampments on campus

grounds after around 100 protesters were first arrested at Columbia on April 18.

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, police moved in Tuesday morning to clear one encampment, detaining some protesters.

TV footage showed police at the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond on Monday evening pushing and shoving away protesters, with students saying teargas and pepper spray was deployed.

At the University of Texas at Austin, police also clashed with protesters on Monday, including using pepper spray, and made arrests while dismantling an encampment, adding to hundreds detained nationwide over the weekend.

Yale authorities on Tuesday morning cleared a protesters' encampment after students heeded final warnings to leave, university officials said. Demonstrators said on social media that they were moving their gathering to a sidewalk area. The encampment was set up on Sunday, six days after police arrested nearly 50 people, including 44 students, and took down dozens of tents.

A small group of students at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon broke into the university's library late on Monday, drawing a sharp rebuke from city officials and the district attorney. The downtown campus, where protesters had been demonstrating mostly peacefully, was closed on Tuesday due to the library occupation.

Free speech?

Protests against the Gaza war, with its high Palestinian civilian death toll, have posed a challenge to university administrators trying to balance free speech



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators hold a short rally after marching around the 'Gaza Solidarity Encampment' in the West Lawn of Columbia University in New York while students take over Hamilton Hall (right) at the varsity naming it Hind's Hall, in honour of killed Gaza girl Hind Rajab, on Tuesday. AFP/AP

rights with complaints that the rallies have veered into anti-Semitism and hate.

Footage of police in riot gear summoned at various colleges has been viewed around the world, recalling the protest movement that erupted during the Vietnam War. On Tuesday, access to Columbia was restricted to residential students and essential staff. "After 206 days of genocide and over 34,000 Palestinian martyrs, Columbia community members took back Hamilton Hall just after midnight," a student group said in a statement citing Israel's

war in Gaza. It said the group had renamed the building "Hind's Hall" in honour of a six-year-old Gaza girl Hind Rajab killed by Israel during its ongoing offensive against Hamas.

UN human rights chief Volker Turk voiced concern at the heavy-handed steps taken to disperse the campus protests, saying that "freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly are fundamental to society".

He added that "incitement to violence or hatred on grounds of identity or viewpoints — whether real or assumed — must be strongly repudiated".



Sword-wielding man attacks passersby in London, boy killed

Associated Press
letters@hindustantimes.com

LONDON: A man wielding a sword attacked members of the public and police officers in an east London suburb on Tuesday, killing a 14-year-old boy and injuring four others, British authorities said.

A 36-year-old man was arrested in a residential area near Hainault subway station, police said. The incident is not being treated as terror-related or a "targeted attack".

Police said the 14-year-old died in the hospital from his injuries. Two police officers were in hospital being treated for stab wounds. Two other people were also injured.

Chief Supt. Stuart Bell described the incident as "truly horrific". "I cannot even begin to imagine how those affected must be feeling," he said outside the homes in east London where the crime happened.

The Metropolitan Police said they were called early on Tuesday to reports of a vehicle being driven into a house in a residential street and people being stabbed.

Video on British media showed a man in a yellow hoodie holding a long sword or knife walking near houses in the area. Witnesses say they heard police shouting to the suspect urging him to put down the weapon as they chased after



Forensics officers at the scene of an attack in Hainault, north east London, on Tuesday. AP

him. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Ade Adelekan said police do not believe there is a threat to the wider community.

"We are not looking for more suspects," he said. This incident does not appear to be terror-related.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the incident was "shocking", adding: "Such violence has no place on our streets."

King Charles III said his thoughts and prayers were with the family of the young victim, and he saluted the courage of emergency workers, Buckingham Palace said.

Transport for London said Hainault station was closed due to a police investigation in the area.

{ NEW POLICY }

Canada reduces work hours for students to 24 from 40 per week

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TORONTO: Canada has announced that international students will be able to work off-campus for only up to 24 hours per week, starting this fall semester in September, refusing to extend a temporary policy that allowed students from across the world, including those from India, to work up to 40 hours a week in the North American country.

The new rule that came into effect on Tuesday was announced by Marc Miller, Canadian minister of immigration, refugees and citizenship on Monday. "Students who come to Canada must be here to study. As such, allowing students to work up to 24 hours per week will ensure they focus primarily on their studies, while having the option to work, if necessary," Miller said in a press release. "The temporary policy allowing students to work more than 20 hours per week off campus will come to an end on April 30, 2024, and it will not be extended."

The reduction in off-campus working hours is substantial as compared to the temporary policy that allowed students to work for up to 40 hours a week. The temporary policy was introduced by the Prime Minister Justin Trudeau-led Liberal Party government during the Covid-19 pandemic in a bid to ease labour shortages.

The new rule, however, puts no such cap on international students to work off-campus during scheduled breaks, such as summer vacations.



Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. REUTERS

Canada is among the most sought-after destinations for Indian students, who constitute over a third of the total international students enrolled in various colleges and universities there. Of the total 684,345 study permits issued by Canada in 2023, Indian students accounted for 278,860.

To be sure, most countries set limits on the number of hours international students may work while they study. Australia, which is another popular destination for Indian students, has recently tweaked its policy to allow students to work 48 hours every two weeks.

In a reaction to Miller's announcement, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations said, "The '24-hour limit' will mean fewer international students from lower socio-economic backgrounds will have the ability to receive an education in Canada. Amid rising prices, ensuring all students can afford to earn money from a job during their studies is a key way to improve affordability for them."

Israel to invade Rafah 'with or without' truce deal: PM

Agencies
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JERUSALEM/BEIJING: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed on Tuesday to launch a ground offensive on the Gaza Strip's far-southern city of Rafah "with or without" a truce deal being agreed with Hamas.

The hawkish premier issued the warning despite strong concerns raised by top ally Washington and hours before US secretary of state Antony Blinken was set to arrive in Israel on his latest Middle East crisis tour.

Netanyahu, who has vowed to destroy Hamas over its October 7 attack, promised "total victory" and said stopping the war "before achieving all of its goals is out of the question".

"We will enter Rafah and we will eliminate the Hamas battalions there with or without a deal," he told families of some of the hostages still being held in Gaza, his office said.

Netanyahu's comments came as Hamas was weighing the latest plan for a truce proposed in Cairo talks with US, Egyptian and Qatari mediators that had raised cautious hopes for an end to the fighting after nearly seven months. The Palestinian militant group said it was considering a plan for a 40-day ceasefire and the exchange of scores of hostages for larger numbers of Palestinian prisoners.

Hamas, whose envoys returned from Cairo talks to their base in Qatar, would "discuss the ideas and the proposal", said a Hamas source, adding that "we are keen to respond as



The construction of a floating pier in the Mediterranean Sea off the Gaza Strip, on Tuesday. It's being constructed at a cost of \$320m to bring more aid via the sea route. AP

quickly as possible".

Al-Qahera News, a site linked to Egyptian intelligence services, earlier reported that Hamas negotiators were due to "return with a written response".

An Israeli official told AFP the government "will wait for answers until Wednesday night", and then "make a decision" whether to send envoys to Cairo.

President Joe Biden, facing rising fury on US university campuses, urged the Egyptian and Qatari leaders on Monday "to exert all efforts to secure the release of hostages held by Hamas". The war started after Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,170 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 34,535 people

in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory. Palestinian militants also took some 250 hostages on October 7. Israel estimates 129 remain in Gaza, including 34 believed to be dead.

China hosts Hamas and Fatah groups for talks

Representatives of rival Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah made "encouraging progress" in recent talks in the Chinese capital on promoting reconciliation, China's foreign ministry said on Tuesday. Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian gave few details at a daily briefing, but the meeting in Beijing is China's latest attempt to position itself as a broker in the Middle East as an alternative to the US and its Western allies, most often seen as backing Israel.

Board meet discusses rolling out a Loss and Damage Fund

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NEW DELHI: The first board meeting of the new global Loss and Damage Fund that began in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday is expected to discuss a work plan, select the host country and discuss its operationalisation as a World Bank hosted financial intermediary.

The board will also review the status of resources and start a dialogue with civil society members. The fund has chosen Richard Sherman, climate negotiator from South Africa, and Jean Christophe Donnellier, French representative to the Green Climate Fund, as co-chairs of the board. The Bahamas, Barbados, the Philippines, Antigua and Barbuda are among countries that have offered to be the host country. The fund is yet to have an executive director. The board meeting will conclude on May 2.

The fund was approved at the UN climate summit held in Dubai last year to assist vulnerable developing countries to respond to economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of the climate emergency, including extreme weather events and slow onset events.



A group of people work to recover an abandoned vehicle taken by floodwater caused by heavy rain in Dubai, on April 18. A new report says climate crisis played a role in the floods. AP

"Let's make sure we build on that progress with a fully functioning fund," Sultan Al Jaber, president of last year's climate summit, said on Tuesday in his address to the board. "It took over three decades to establish this fund. Every region of the world is now vulnerable. The impacts of climate change are a clear and present danger to lives and livelihoods everywhere."

A total of \$792 million has been pledged for loss and damage funding arrangements, of which \$662 million has been pledged to the fund, including \$100 million from the United Arab Emirates. It is estimated that by 2050, the economic cost of loss and damage in develop-

ing countries will be around \$1 trillion to \$1.8 trillion, according to experts at the London School of Economics and International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis. They found climate change attributed costs of 185 extreme weather events from 2000 to 2019 to total \$2.86 trillion, averaging \$143 billion every year.

The G20 consensus statement released on September 9 stated that developing countries need \$5.8-5.9 trillion before 2030 to implement their nationally determined contributions to reduce emissions, as well as \$4 trillion per year for clean energy technologies to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

HT

Trump fined \$9K for violating gag order in hush money trial

NEW YORK: Donald Trump's hush money trial resumed on Tuesday with Judge Juan M. Merchan first ruling on prosecutors' prior request to hold the former president in contempt of court over alleged violations of a gag order that bars him from discussing case details. Merchan ruled that Trump violated the gag order nine times and fined him \$9,000. The judge will assess four additional alleged violations in a hearing on Thursday. AP

Chinese coast guard fired water cannon at 2 vessels: Philippines

MANILA: The Philippines said the Chinese coast guard fired water cannon on Tuesday at two of its vessels, causing damage to one of them, near a reef off the Southeast Asian country. The incident transpired near the China-controlled Scarborough Shoal, which has become a potential flashpoint in the disputed South China Sea, during a mission aimed at resupplying Filipino fishermen. AFP

Gunman kills 6 in attack on Afghan mosque: Govt

HERAT: A gunman stormed a mosque in western Afghanistan and killed six people, a government spokesman said on Tuesday, with local residents claiming the minority Shia community had been targeted. Interior ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani said that "an unknown armed person shot at civilian worshippers in a mosque" in Herat province's Guzara district on Monday at around 9pm. AFP

Four law officers killed in N Carolina shootout

CHARLOTTE: A shootout that killed four law enforcement officers and wounded four others in North Carolina began as officers approached a home to serve a warrant for a felon wanted for possessing a firearm, police said.

Some of the officers who rushed to the Charlotte neighbourhood on Monday afternoon to rescue the first wave of downed officers were wounded as a second shooter began firing on them after they killed the wanted man, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Johnny Jennings said.

It was the deadliest day for US law enforcement in one incident since five officers were killed by a sniper during a protest in Dallas in 2016. "Today we lost some heroes who were out simply trying to keep our com-

munity safe," Jennings said.

After a three-hour standoff, the suburban Charlotte home was torn open. Armoured vehicles smashed into it, ripping off windows and entire doorways that were left broken. Several armoured vehicles were parked across yards, some with tree branches dangling off them.

The US Marshals Task Force was fired on by the wanted suspect as they approached the house and the man was killed in the front yard, Jennings said. Police identified him as Terry Clark Hughes Jr, 39. He was wanted for possession of a firearm by a felon and two counts of felony flee to elude in Lincoln County, North Carolina.

A second person then fired on officers from inside the home where a high-powered rifle was found, Jennings added. AP

{ BRITISH ROYALS }

'I'm well': King Charles resumes public duties as he fights cancer

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LONDON: King Charles III on Tuesday reportedly told fellow cancer patients "I'm well", as he carried out his first official public engagement since being diagnosed with the condition.

The British head of state appeared relaxed as he and his wife Queen Camilla met patients and staff at the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre in central London.

He talked to patients receiving chemotherapy at a day unit, including 60-year-old Asha Milen, who has bone marrow cancer. "I said, 'How are you?' and he said, 'I'm well'," she told reporters afterwards. Another patient at the cancer



King Charles (right) and Queen Camilla leave after a visit to a cancer centre in London, on Tuesday. AP

centre, Lesley Woodbridge, 63, said King Charles sympathised with her, and added: "I've gotten to have my treatment this afternoon as well."

Charles, 75, suspended most of his duties in February after cancer was found while he was being treated for an enlarged prostate the previous month.

Stringent govt norms to help boost tax collections

It will use tools such as data analytics and artificial intelligence to boost CIT revenue

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NEW DELHI: The government may focus on stricter compliance to boost corporate income tax (CIT) collections in the current financial year after tax revenues from companies fell short of the budgeted target in 2023-24, two people aware of the matter said.

It will use tools such as data analytics and artificial intelligence to boost CIT revenue to achieve the challenging target for 2024-25, they added requesting anonymity. It will also use Project Insight, an integrated data warehousing and business intelligence platform that allows tax authorities to nudge voluntary compliance and promote judicious tax administration.

Meeting the budget target of collecting ₹10.43 lakh crore CIT in 2024-25 is a challenge as it is about 14.5% more than ₹9.11 lakh



Meeting the budget target of ₹10.43 lakh crore CIT in 2024-25 is a challenge as it is about 14.5% more than 2023-24 collection. **MINT**

crore mopped up in 2023-24, one of them said, citing provisional government data released last week. The budgeted target of CIT for 2023-24 was ₹9.23 lakh crore, which remained the same even at the RE stage.

"However, it is achievable as India continues to be the fastest growing major economy in the world with robust GST collections," a second person said. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on April 5 projected that Indian economy will grow by 7% in FY25. Monthly Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue, a weathervane of business activities,

reached ₹1.78 lakh crore for March, the second highest ever. The finance ministry and the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) did not respond to an email query. CBDT is an arm of the ministry responsible for CIT and personal income tax (PIT) revenues.

Direct taxes comprise both CIT and PIT (including the securities transaction tax). Net CIT collections after refunds in FY24 lagged behind their respective budget estimate (BE) and revised estimate (RE).

However, the collection of net PIT in FY24 (₹10.44 lakh crore)

was robust and surpassed both the BE figure of ₹9 lakh crore and the RE figure of ₹10.22 lakh crore. Thus, India's net direct tax collections (CIT and PIT combined) in 2023-24 exceeded the BE by 7.40% and RE by 0.67% at ₹19.58 lakh crore solely because of robust individual income-tax revenues, according to provisional data released by the finance ministry on April 21.

"The major reason for the increase in personal tax collection could be attributed to the Project Insight and higher yields from all major investment options," Naveen Wadhwa, vice president, research and advisory at consultancy Taxmann said. According to him, lower than expected corporate tax collection was due to global headwinds that impacted profitability of companies.

But experts also pointed to 2019's corporate tax cut, which impacted collections.

The government in 2019 slashed the corporate tax rate for domestic manufacturing companies from 30% to 22% and for new manufacturing firms from 25% to 15% in a measure aimed to attract investments and revive growth.

Full body scanners at major airports soon

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NEW DELHI: In a step towards hassle-free passenger movement at terminals, major airports of the country, including Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, are undertaking trials of full body scanners at the airports.

The full body scanners were expected to be installed at all major airports with an annual passenger traffic of 10 million passengers, but the timelines have been postponed due to delay in import of the equipment. However, Delhi and Bengaluru are expected to be in advanced stages of installing these machines.

The Delhi airport aims to install the full body scanner by the second half of this fiscal year, while the Bengaluru airport is undertaking trials, two people aware of the development told Mint. The installation is likely in 2-3 months, they added.

"The work is in progress, in accordance with the latest guidelines issued by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS). We hope to have the full body scanner installed by the second half of this fiscal," a Delhi airport spokesperson told Mint.

Full body scanners can detect and locate forbidden objects



Delhi airport aims to install the full body scanner by the second half of this fiscal year.

concealed under a person's clothing. In contrast to metal detectors used extensively at passenger airports, these devices can also detect non-metallic objects such as explosives. Several airports across the US, Canada, Australia among others are using this technology to screen passengers at security check-points at terminals.

This is expected to reduce the passenger screening time by 50%. Currently security personnel takes around 30 seconds to frisk a passenger, and officials expect the screening time via a full body scanner to be nearly 15 seconds.

The Mumbai airport, the country's second largest, is also undertaking trials of this tech-

nology. "Procurement process is underway. Full body scanners will be deployed at Mumbai in a phased manner. In the first phase, two full body scanners shall be installed," Mumbai airport spokesperson told Mint.

The implementation of full body scanners at Indian airports has been in the works since 2019. In April 2019, BCAS had issued a circular, directing installation of full body scanners to replace door frame metal detectors at more than 80 hypersensitive and sensitive airports within one year. However, in view of the covid pandemic, BCAS further extended the deadline to March 2022.

In line with this, the Airports Authority of India (AAI), which operates over 130 airports in the country, had invited tenders for 198 body scanners but the tender was withdrawn after public investment board suggested implementation in a phased manner.

As a result, the authority is expected to install full body scanners at its busiest airports in the first phase and these include 13 scanners at Kolkata, 12 at Chennai, eight at Dabolim airport and five at Pune airport.

An AAI spokesperson told Mint that it is planning to install full body scanners at these airports.

IMF REVISES ASIA-PACIFIC GROWTH OUTLOOK FOR 2024 TO 4.5%

Rhik Kundu

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NEW DELHI: The Asia-Pacific region will grow less slowly than previously feared, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Tuesday, reflecting an improved outlook for two of the region's largest economies, China and India.

"The outlook for Asia and the Pacific in (calendar year) 2024 has brightened: we now expect that the region's economy will slow less than we previously projected as inflation pressures continue to dissipate," IMF said in a blog post titled Asia's Growth and Inflation Outlook Improves, but Risks Remain, which was released on Tuesday.

China is the largest economy in the region and India the third-largest, coming in after Japan.

"We have raised our regional growth forecast for this year to 4.5%, up 0.3 percentage points from six months earlier, after a 5% expansion in 2023. The revision reflects upgrades for China, where we expect policy stimulus to provide support, and India, where public investment remains an important driver, making it the world's fastest-growing major economy," the IMF report said.

"In a still subdued external environment, robust private consumption will remain the main growth driver in Asia's other emerging market economies. The Asia growth forecast for 2025 is unchanged at 4.3%," it added.

Anticipating increased economic activity in the ongoing fiscal (FY25), the IMF on 16 April raised India's FY25 GDP growth forecast to 6.8% from its earlier forecast of 6.5%.

The IMF's upward revision of the FY25 GDP growth forecast came after similar revisions were made by several others, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and S&P Global.

In its April edition of the World Economic Outlook, the IMF said it expects India's FY26 (next fiscal) GDP growth at 6.5%. IMF expects India to grow at 7.8% in FY24.

CBI files chargesheet against former BoI CMD in DHFL case

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NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a charge sheet against Alok Kumar Misra, former chairman and managing director (CMD) of Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce, along with 33 other individuals and companies while exonerating 49 other companies originally named as accused in the largest ever bank fraud — worth nearly ₹35,000 crore — allegedly committed by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd (DHFL), run by brothers Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan, people familiar with the development said.

Misra allegedly benefited to the tune of ₹1.5 crore from DHFL in the form of a discounted flat for his son in Mumbai for sanctioning loans in his capacity as head of BOI and OBC (merged with Punjab National Bank in 2020), according to CBI. He headed BOI from 2009 to 2012 and OBC from 2007 to 2009.

The agency has claimed Misra also remained director in DHFL for about eight months in 2019. "Misra got benefit of approximately ₹1.5 crore in lieu of showing favour to DHFL in granting sanction of loans in the capacity of CMD of Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce. He also remained director of DHFL for about eight months in 2019 and got one flat in the name of his son in Santa Cruz, Mumbai for ₹2.26 crore whereas the market value of flat was ₹3.79 crore to ₹4.12 crore and the value as per circle rate was ₹3.25 crore. Thus, DHFL provided him a flat at a lower rate in order to oblige him and he got benefit of ₹1.5 crore," said a senior officer, quoting details from the charge sheet filed earlier this month.

Officials said a probe against Misra was initiated after obtaining sanction under section 17A of the prevention of corruption act (mandatory for investigating a



DHFL Promoters Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan. **HT**

public servant), but that a sanction under section 19 of PC Act (mandatory for prosecuting a public servant) is still pending.

Misra did not respond to a text message and hung up on a call seeking comment.

A Delhi court took cognizance of the charge sheet on April 27. CBI's allegation is that between January 2010 and December 2019, a consortium of 17 banks extended credit facilities worth ₹42,871 crore to DHFL. The Wadhawans siphoned off the funds to shell companies/paper entities, known as 'Bandra Book Entities', and caused a loss of ₹34,926 crore to the consortium.

Others named in the latest charge sheet include those companies and individuals who helped Wadhawan brothers to divert funds. Advocate Vijay Aggarwal, who represents Wadhawans and several other accused in the case, refused to comment on the latest charge sheet.

Currently, Kapil Wadhawan is in Jail and Dheeraj Wadhawan is in hospital. DHFL's ownership has since changed after it was taken over and sold under India's bankruptcy code.

In its investigation, the federal agency found that 49 of 131 companies originally named in the first information report (FIR), filed in June 2022 were "genuine" borrowers without any bad intentions on their part.

Indigo to start taking A350 aircraft delivery from 2027

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NEW DELHI: Indigo, India's largest airline firm, will start taking delivery of Airbus A350 aircraft from 2027, chief executive officer Pieter Elbers said on Tuesday. These aircraft powered by Rolls Royce XWB engines will help make India a global aviation hub, he said.

"Indigo has placed an order for 30 Airbus A350 jets along with Indigo's existing A321XLR range to cater to the untapped international market," Elbers said. "The deliveries of the A350



The latest aircraft order by IndiGo is in line with the government's appeal to airlines to invest in bigger aircraft. **MINT**

aircraft are expected to start in 2027."

Elbers declined to specify the routes on which these planes will ply. "We are analysing the routes, but the planes have the

capabilities to reach the said destinations (Europe and the US) directly," he said.

IndiGo on April 25 announced plans to enter the long-haul market by ordering

30 wide-body aircraft. It has placed order to buy aircraft worth \$9 billion, the airline said.

It currently operates a fleet of Airbus 320 and ATR. It also operates Boeing 777-300ERs, which are on wet lease from Turkish Airlines, to ply between India and Istanbul. A wet lease is when the lessor not only provides an aircraft but also crew, maintenance and insurance, to another airline.

The latest aircraft order by IndiGo is in line with the government's appeal to airlines to invest in bigger aircraft. Civil aviation minister Jyotiraditya

Scindia in December 2022 had said the country's aviation market is poised for a double-digit growth in the next decade and local carriers should have more wide-body planes to capture the long haul segment.

"The Indian market is under-represented and underserved," Elbers said in a conference call on Tuesday. "IndiGo's A350 aircraft will help make India a global aviation hub." IndiGo currently serves 88 domestic destinations. "IndiGo will explore all options and come up with an economically prudent method for financing the A350 aircraft," he added.

In FY24, registrations of services cos' soar

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NEW DELHI: Services sector raced ahead in company registrations in the just-ended financial year, reflecting the rapid formalization of a segment with few entry barriers.

While services accounted for 71% of the 185,300-plus new companies registered in FY24, industry made up less than a fourth, while the farm sector accounted for about 6%.

The latest figures for the services sector registrations are a sharp increase from 63% in FY21 and FY22 and 65% in FY23, corporate affairs ministry data showed. Within the services sector, community, personal and social services clocked the sharpest growth with 49,241 new registrations, nearly double the levels in the preceding year.

Experts said that while the central government has been encouraging large-scale manufacturing under the Atmanirbar Bharat initiative, the services sector still contributes over half of India's economic output.

"This, coupled with the fact that services sector has the lowest barrier to entry compared to

industry or agriculture, we have witnessed an uptick in new company registrations. Another driving factor for increased organic interest in the services sector is the increasing share of digitally delivered services, which has witnessed exponential growth in global exports," said Anjali Malhotra, partner-regulatory at tax and advisory firm Nangia Andersen India.

The increased integration of India in the global services supply chain and a healthy pool of experienced professionals setting up startups, supported by government schemes, have also helped lift company registrations in the services sector, said Malhotra added.

Experts also consider rising compliance in Goods and Service Tax (GST) having an effect on company registrations.

CORE SECTOR GROWTH AT 3-YR LOW OF 7.5%

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NEW DELHI: The Index of Eight Core Industries slowed to 7.5% in 2023-24 from 7.8% in the year ago period, according to provisional data from Ministry of Commerce and Industry released 30 April 2024. The reading was the lowest since 2021-22, when core sector growth had come in at 10.4%. To be sure, the double-digit growth in 2021-22 came on a low base of a 6.4% contraction in the index in 2020-21.

All eight sub-sectors grew at a positive growth rate, with steel sector growth increasing at the fastest pace of 12.3% in 2023-24.

Crude Oil sector recorded the slowest growth of 0.6% in the same year. The core sector index registered a year-on-year 5.2% growth in March 2024 which is a moderation than the February figure of 7.06%.

The eight core sector industries cover only 40% of India's overall industrial output, which is measured by the Index of Industrial Output (IIP). IIP data for March will be released on 10 May 2024.

Small airports see dip in passenger traffic in Jan-Mar

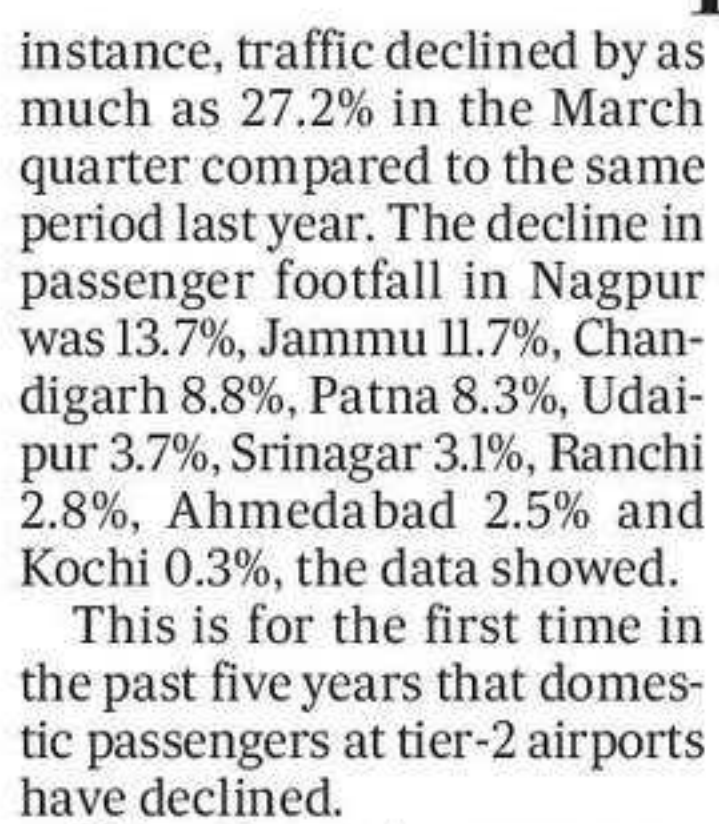
Neha LM Tripathi

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NEW DELHI: India's airlines are moving capacity to high-density routes between metros from flights connecting smaller cities and towns, which has led to higher fares that affected passenger growth in these places in the three months to March, according to data from the Airports Authority of India.

Cities like Ahmedabad, Srinagar, Chandigarh, Patna, Nagpur, Darbhanga, Jammu, Dehradun, Kochi, Ranchi, Raipur and Udaipur have seen a decline in domestic passenger in the first three months of 2024, showed data collated by the state-run airports operator. The metros continued to grow passenger footfall.

In Bihar's Darbhanga, for instance, traffic declined by as much as 27.2% in the March quarter compared to the same period last year. The decline in passenger footfall in Nagpur was 13.7%, Jammu 11.7%, Chandigarh 8.8%, Patna 8.3%, Udaipur 3.7%, Srinagar 3.1%, Ranchi 2.8%, Ahmedabad 2.5% and Kochi 0.3%, the data showed.



The metros continued to grow passenger footfall. **MINT**

to capacity constraints could be the culprit, said Ajay Prakash, owner of Nomad Travels and president of Travel Agents Federation of India, a lobby group. "These numbers are also a perfect example of unequal distribution of wealth in the coun-



The metros continued to grow passenger footfall. **MINT**

try," he added. India's carriers have been struggling with various issues, including grounding of budget airline Go First in May due to engine issues and the grounding of at least 100 planes of market leader IndiGo for similar problems.

The decline is also attributed to capacity rationalisation that has led to airlines shifting flight capacity from smaller cities to larger ones, airline executives said.

"Airlines do not leave the market. They instead reduce their capacities from smaller markets to focus on the premium ones, the ones that give them more revenue," an executive said, requesting anonymity. "The best example is Nagpur. Decrease in domestic passengers at Nagpur is worrying."

"The reason for the decline in passenger footfall at selective tier-2 important city airports is supply chain issues leading to the aircraft crisis," another executive said. "Darbhanga, for instance, could have seen a drop in passenger footfall due to SpiceJet, which had major flights operating out of the city, pulling out most of its flights," she said, declining to be named.

Darbhanga airport started operations in 2020 under the government's UDAN (Udey Desh ka Aam Naagarik) scheme. The decline could also be due to seasonality factors, including meetings around the G-20 summit that India hosted, and reduction in capacity due to closure of Go First, according to Ameya Joshi, founder of Network Thoughts, an aviation consultancy.

{ THE CROSSWORDS }

CRYPTIC CLUES

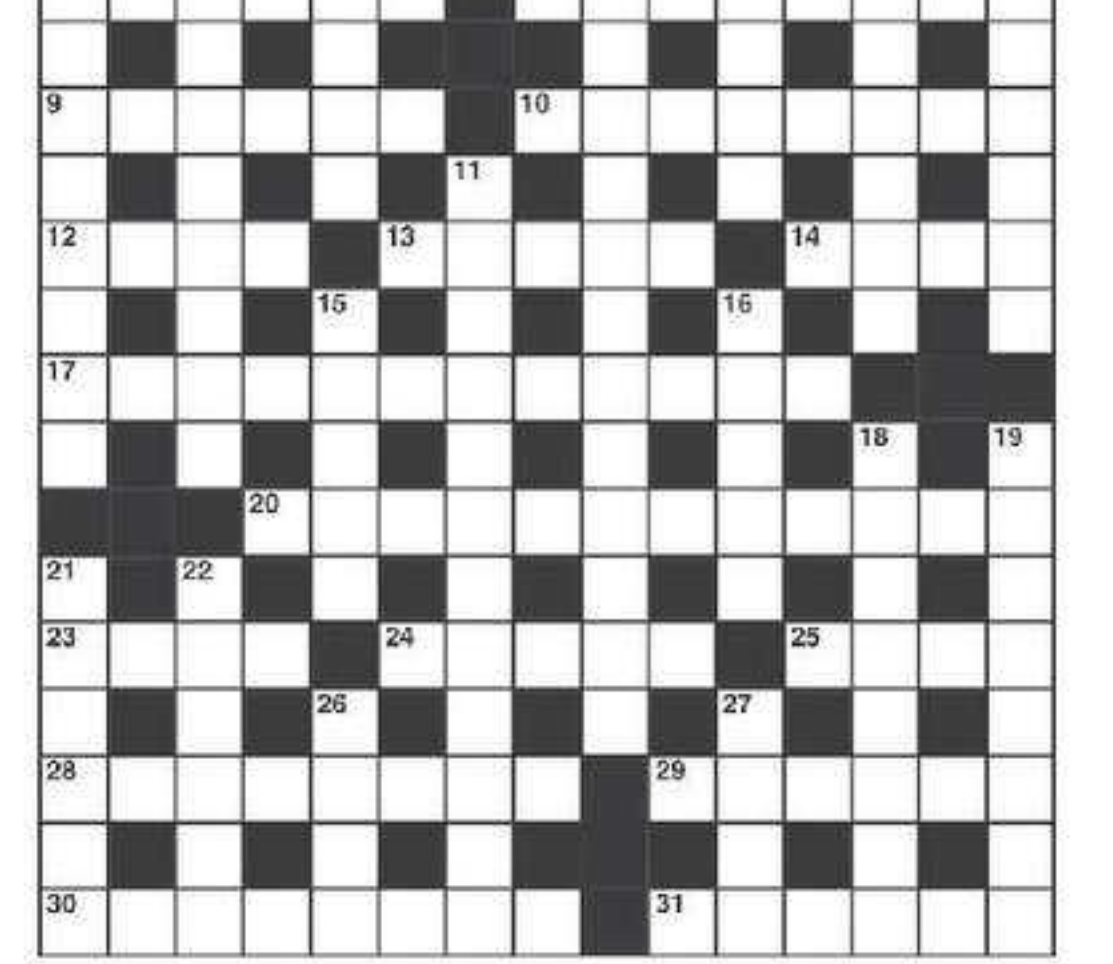
- ACROSS**
- Do some stocktaking with odd result (6)
 - Try hard to get free labour (8)
 - One fated sadly to be unappreciative of music (4-4)
 - Peruvian in Spain cannot be understood (4)
 - To doctors they're grave situations (5)
 - Young bird lacking the knowledge to be fashionable (4)
 - A way to describe a minister or his main quality? (3,9)
 - An unconscious pedestrian (12)
 - Cheat cornered on the board (4)
 - The pen of the poet (5)
 - Spirit used in an experiment (4)
 - He succeeds where all others fail (4,4)
 - Listener following close win (6)
 - Late partygoer is made to provide own light (5,3)
 - Well up in poetry? (6)

DOWN

- He did noted work on the fountains of Rome (8)
- How bookies pay place money? (4,4)
- Growth seen when ship's bottom is turned over (4)
- Its owner won't have a clear conscience (8,4)
- Not allowed to go to waste (4)
- Go over the East with the German writer (6)
- Result of some consequence (6)
- Appear to enter and watch TV? (4,4,4)
- Reveal the style of the French (3,2)
- Do a rough job of cleaning (5)
- Stakes that are added later (4,4)
- It's laid across the line of flight (5,3)
- Is in a porn production; gets jail (6)
- Adulterating gold for example is crooked (6)
- Bird talk (4)
- Keen about being capped (4)

PUZZLE 16848

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QUICK CLUES

- ACROSS**
- Elusive (6)
 - Superlative (8)
 - Approach and address (6)
 - Miscellaneous (8)
 - Hood of monk's habit (4)
 - Cite as example (5)
 - An impulse (4)
 - A class of words (4,2,6)
 - To shelve (3,2,4)
 - Object of adulation (4)
 - Expressionless (5)
 - Retain (4)
 - To cease (4,4)
 - Wave of enthusiasm (6)
 - Supporter of monarchy (8)
 - Alliance (6)
- DOWN**
- Marine painting (8)
 - Slow to progress (8)
 - Final (4)
 - Fail to grasp what matters (4,3,5)
 - Put away (4)
 - One by one (2,4)
 - Small mechanical device (6)
 - Associate closely (3,9)
 - Spurious (5)
 - Group of eight (5)
 - Oblique (8)
 - Elaborately planned display (3,5)
 - Be slow to depart (6)
 - To transport (6)
 - Thwart (4)
 - Silent (4)

MONDAY'S SOLUTIONS (16847)

CRYPTIC

ISSUE SAUNTER
MEXLMIU
MUMTRAPPIST
OARCTT
RANSACK EMPTY
ATTSEON
LATIN UNISON
CENSURE
RISER KITCHEN
LITERARY
LIVENAWAY SEE
JIGSAWSTERR
DRESSERT EENY

QUICK

FALSE ASCETIC
RITIDHOUT
ASKHAVEITOUT
NEOIMT
CLASSIC EMPTY
TSEERO
SCHOOL MARKED
ATTIC HEADFOR
GHOUDA
LUCRATIVE NAB
OURCPALL
WHEEDLE TITILE

{ SUDOKU } DIFFICULTY LEVEL ★★★★★



Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 9x9 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

{ WEATHER }

TEMPERATURE • HIGH • LOW

WEDNESDAY
Strong surface winds during day time
35°C | 21°C

THURSDAY
Mainly clear sky
37°C | 21°C

FRIDAY
Partly cloudy sky
38°C | 22°C

ALMANAC

Today is 1st May 2024
• 21 Shaavai, 1445
• 7.8 Vashakha, Krishna
Paksha, 7.8
• Samat 2081
Sunset: Wednesday at 06:56 p.m.
Sunrise: Thursday at 05:39 a.m.
Moonset: Wednesday at 11:37 a.m.
Moonrise: Thursday at 01:49 a.m.

TEMPERATURE IN FOUR METROS

Delhi
35°C | 21°C

Mumbai
37°C | 25°C

Kolkata
41°C | 30°C

Chennai
38°C | 28°C

SPORT

Stoinis guides Lucknow to win as Mumbai falter again



LSG's Marcus Stoinis on way to a match-winning 62 against MI. **CCI**

The all-rounder top-scored with 62 to help reel in MI's paltry total of 144 and seal a four-wicket victory

Sharad Deep

sharad.deep@htlive.com

LUCKNOW: As if the struggles of Mumbai Indians in IPL 2024 was not enough, their game against Lucknow Super Giants on Tuesday began with the T20 World Cup squad selections still being hotly debated. The three big guns in the MI ranks in India's 15-player squad flopped with the bat in another underwhelming show as LSG pulled off a four-wicket win.

Rohit Sharma fell for four, Suryakumar Yadav for 10 and Hardik Pandya, who will be deputy in the India team to the man he replaced as the IPL team skipper, fell for a first-ball duck.

It turned out to be a big disappointment for fans too hoping for a quality contest as KL Rahul's LSG proved their supremacy in a low-scoring game to climb to third in the points table and be within play-off places. MI, put in to bat, were restricted to 144/7 and LSG, again powered by their Aussie all-rounder Marcus Stoinis (62 - 45b, 7x4, 2x6), reached 145/6 in 19.2 overs.

After a fine display of bowling and fielding, LSG, Stoinis and Rahul (28 off 22 b) guided the innings, achieving a fourth win in six matches on home turf this season. Rahul and Co who made back-to-back playoffs in the first two seasons after making their debut in the T20 league in 2022, will be playing their last home game against Kolkata Knight Riders on May 5. Stoinis and Rahul set up the run chase,



stitching together 58 runs for the second wicket even when the ball was not coming on to the bat.

Disappointment was writ large on a full house at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium as the fans were expecting some fireworks from the India stars. India pace spearhead and purple cap holder Jasprit Bumrah failed to take a wicket, although he bowled economically (4-0-17-0). Hardik did better with the ball, taking 2/26.

MI never had the going easy after being sent to bat first on a slow surface. Though Rohit Sharma scooped Mohsin Khan's quick one on off-stump for a boundary, he got out the next ball, offering a straight catch to Stoinis at cover in the second over. Suryakumar Yadav hit a towering six off Stoinis but then fell in a dramatic manner. The umpire called the Stoinis delivery wide, but Rahul behind the stumps chose to review for a catch and replays showed the ball had brushed SKY's gloves on way to the keeper.

Tilak Verma's run out to a direct throw from Ravi Bishnoi and Hardik's dismissal immediately after that left the five-time champions struggling at 28/4, their second-lowest total in

powerplay this IPL. The combo of red-black soil turf continued to haunt MI batters even then and in the next 24 deliveries they could collect only 29 runs, which included just three fours. The scoreboard read 57/4 at the half-way mark.

Full marks to KL Rahul's frequent bowling changes, which didn't allow MI batters to free their arms as they could strike only 12 boundaries and four sixes in the innings. Ishan Kishan (32) and Nehal Wadhwa kept the scoreboard ticking though on a slow rate, stitching together 73 runs for the fifth wicket, until Kishan offered an easy catch to Mayank Yadav off Ravi Bishnoi. He had three hits to the fence.

A 32-run partnership for the sixth wicket between Wadhwa (46, 41b, 4x4, 2x6) and Tim David (35* - 18b, 3x4, 1x6) further boosted MI's scorecard. David's last over hitting in which he took 17 runs off Mohsin Khan still left MI facing a near-impossible task. LSG tear-away Mayank Yadav was expensive in his comeback game, taking 1/31 in 3.1 overs.

Brief scores: MI 144/7 (I Kishan 32, N Wadhwa 46, T David 35*; M Khan 2/36). LSG 145/6 in 19.2 ovs (M Stoinis 62; H Pandya 2/26). **LSG won by 4 wkts.**

No starting woes for KKR as Salt, Narine run amok

Somshuvra Laha

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KOLKATA: It goes without saying that an element of surprise had already been achieved by Kolkata Knight Riders even before Phil Salt and Sunil Narine opened their batting for the first time this season.

Salt was named as Jason Roy's replacement in March, which meant even though analysts from other franchises had enough time to pull data on him, there was no way they could have predicted how Salt would adjust to Indian pitches. Narine partnering Salt wasn't on the cards as well, largely because he hadn't opened in 2023 and partly because Venkatesh Iyer or Angkrish Raghuvanshi could have done the job as well.

But it has worked and how. Batting with little or no restraint, Salt and Narine have now scored 485 runs in nine innings, the most by any opening pair in this IPL, giving an unlikely head start to a team more known for their bowling experiments. This was no experiment though.

Salt is a bonafide opening batter with a strike rate of 165.97, third best—after Rinku Singh (176.23) and Suryakumar Yadav (171.55) among all full-member nation batters to have faced at least 200 balls in T20Is. A product of the new English approach to the game that takes no prisoners, Salt can also hold one end up without compromising on the scoring rate, as was evident in his unbeaten 89 in a comprehensive eight-wicket win against Lucknow Super Giants earlier this month.

Narine is in a different headspace altogether. Licensed by Gautam Gambhir to go after bowlers with a predictable swinging arc, Narine remains nonplussed whether he hits a six or misses the ball completely. No mental baggage can liberate one's performance like that. Also, a complete disregard for matchups and analysis.

"I have one role and the less I know, the better it is for me," Narine had said earlier this month. All this unconventional but effective form of opening needed was some backing. And it has paid off hand-



somely so far for KKR.

Monday was the fifth time this season Salt and Narine had scored 75 or more in Powerplay, at a scoring rate of 12.43 that is just behind Sunrisers Hyderabad's Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma's tournament-topping aggregate of 14.4. That 60 out of Salt's 68 came in those first six overs highlights the extent to which Salt dominated Delhi Capitals' bowling, sometimes from both ends as Narine played second fiddle.

"It is high-risk at times, but it is also about putting the odds in your favour and not taking the risks you don't want to," Salt told the broadcaster after KKR's seven-wicket win. "That's the sort of balance that every opening batter tries to strike. Sometimes you can miss a few innings in a row, but you got to keep backing yourself and sort of taking those right options."

Narine taking a backseat on Monday is an aberration to an otherwise entertaining chapter of KKR's batting where he has returned higher strike rates than Salt in two of the most engrossing stands so far—138 against PBKS

and 86 against RCB. Not scoring much in one or two innings, hence, doesn't cloud Narine's mind. The understanding between Salt and Narine, as a result, has been almost faultless.

"When I get going, he feeds me the strike, and vice-versa. It's good that we are on the same page like that. We normally do all the talking the day before. Sunil keeps it very simple, but he's a deep thinker of the game. With all his experience, he's really good to lean on," said Salt.

As much as the rest of KKR's batting have Narine and Salt to thank for going in without feeling under the pump, no one should be more chuffed than Shreyas Iyer. In a comeback season fed by an unceasing frenzy over being dropped from the BCCI's annual contracts, proving himself as batting mainstay would have been burdensome when Shreyas was already saddled with captaincy.

But with Narine and Salt consistently providing quick starts, Shreyas has more time to settle in and graft wins like he did on Monday.

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No. :- 214/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 Dated: 30.04.2024

Public Notice

In terms of the provisions of section 45 of Electricity Act, 2003, the consumers and the general public are hereby informed that the tariff and charges of electricity for different categories of consumers have been approved by the Uttarakhand Electricity Regulatory Commission to be effective from 01-04-2024. The summary of the tariff and charges of electricity for different categories of consumers as well as the approved tariff order dated 28-03-2024 of UERC and Rate Schedule are available on the website of UPCL at www.upcl.org Managing Director

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PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Shiv Shankar, S/o Sh. Mahesh Sharma, R/o C-250, JJ Colony, Sec-7, Dwarka Near Rampal Chowk, Delhi, Also at: Shop No. 132-A, Pocket-E, Infront of Hansraj School, Dilshad Garden, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **Ct No. 2579/2017, U/s 138 NI Act, P. S. Vivek Vihar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Shiv Shankar** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Shiv Shankar** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Shiv Shankar** accused of **Ct No. 2579/2017, U/s 138 NI Act, P. S. Vivek Vihar, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **01.06.2024**.

By Order
Sh. Aridaman Singh Cheema
Metropolitan Magistrate-03
Shahdara, Room No. 19
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

DP/5159/SHD/2024

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Advertisement No. NITTTR/Academic Cell/2024/237

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DIRECTOR

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED
SEE SECTION U/S 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Anup S/o Som Dutt R/o B-180, Gokulpuri, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in **FIR No. 715/2017 U/s 33 Delhi Excise Act, P.S. Gokalpuri, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused **Anup** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Anup** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Anup of FIR No. 715/2017 U/s 33 Delhi Excise Act, P.S. Gokalpuri, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **30.05.2024**.

By Order
SUKHJEET SINGH
Metropolitan Magistrate 03
Room No.-22, North-East District
Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

DP/5123/NE/2024

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED
See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Where as complaint has been made before me that one accused **Faizi S/o Qadir, R/o H.No. 128, Gali No.7, Kavi Nagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh** have Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 263/2019 u/s 379/411 IPC** has been registered at **P.S. Kotwali, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Faizi** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Faizi** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Faizi of FIR No. 263/2019 u/s 379/411 IPC** has been registered at **P.S. Kotwali, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **03.06.2024**.

By Order
Ms. Sayesha Chadha
Metropolitan Magistrate -08,
Room No. 272,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

DP/5020/N/2024 (Court Matter)

पेंशन निधि विनियामक और विकास प्राधिकरण
PENSION FUND REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

NOTICE

Intimation of change in address of office of Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) PFRDA has shifted to its new office premises w.e.f. 01.04.2024. The new office address is as below:
Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority E-500, Tower E, 5th Floor, World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi-110 029
Phone No.- 011-40717900

The Authority may be contacted at the abovementioned new address.

This is for information of all the stakeholders in the NPS architecture and general public.

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Please visit our website www.pfrda.org.in for complete information or scan the QR code

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India stick to the tried and tested

T20 WC: Rinku Singh, India's best finisher, loses out for lacking a secondary skill, though top-order picks too can't bowl

Rasesh Mandani
rasesh.mandani@htlive.com

MUMBAI: The decision to trust the big boys to turn around their own T20 template and that of Indian cricket was taken in January itself with the recall of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

After that roll of the dice, it was inevitable that there would be a casualty from the World Cup squad where only 15 can go. Rinku Singh, 26, one of India's brightest T20 batting finds and an ace finisher, became that unlucky name to miss out when the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee finalised India's squad in Ahmedabad on Tuesday for the June tournament in the West Indies and USA.

Other than that, the long wait to feature in a World Cup for Rajasthan Royals' Sanju Samson and Yuzvendra Chahal ended with them being handed a maiden chance in India's provisional squad.

On the face of it, Rinku's position has gone to Axar Patel — one of the four spinners India have picked. It may also appear that Shivam Dube's robust IPL knocks meant he edged out Rinku.

But it's India's multidimensional top order — it's bane in the last two World Cups — that forced the hand of the selectors. None from captain Rohit, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Kohli and Suryakumar Yadav can turn their arm over. This being the case, it was decided to create room for an additional all-rounder as a contingency.

Rinku was a regular in bilateral matches played before IPL and delivered runs at a strike-rate of 215 in the death overs. Carrying an end-over finisher became a luxury they could ill-afford in a set-up with limited all-round resources. For the same reason, Dinesh Karthik's death-overs finishing innings in IPL 2024 (SR 224) were not considered.

"Rinku's IPL form has certainly got nothing to do with it," a source close to the selection committee said. "When you sit to jot down 15, you need more bowling options. It wasn't possible to take another player with single skills in the lower order."

That extra all-rounder is Axar Patel. Like-for-like for Ravindra Jadeja, but someone who can act as a cover and potentially be used as a floater with the bat, for specific matches.

There's also some concern around Hardik Pandya's form, which is where Dube and Axar's secondary skills act as cover. Yet, by naming the Mumbai Indians skipper as vice-captain, the selectors have by and large reposed faith in the all-rounder. Rishabh Pant's endearing comeback story only got better

with the left-handed batting dynamo picked as 'first-choice wicketkeeper', the source confirms. Pant's T20 numbers though are not very exciting (987 runs, SR 126.37) and Samson (374, 133.09) is more than capable, if there is an opening, with his superior spin-hitting prowess.

Only three pacers

The pace-bowling stocks are concerning with only three pacers picked and no one in IPL able to push Mohammed Siraj and Arshdeep Singh enough to warrant a place. Avesh Khan and left-arm seamer Khaled Ahmed have been named as travelling reserves. Siraj has been trusted for his dual ability with the new ball and at the death and chosen for his experience to back-up spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, with Mohammed Shami out injured. Left-arm seamer T Natarajan wasn't picked given his injury-ridden past.

Change of heart on Chahal

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal is a surprise pick as pre-meeting discussions suggested they would go for Ravi Bishnoi's faster leg-breaks and googlies. Chahal is IPL's all-time highest wicket-taker — he is also India's top T20I wicket-taker with 96 scalps — and had staked his claim even for the 2021 and 2022 T20 World Cups. But he was considered 'too slow'.

There appears to be a change of heart, in anticipation of pitches in the Caribbean for the Super 8 phase.

The Indian think-tank expects the pitches to take turn, or at least keep slower bowlers in play. In such conditions, Chahal's bowling style and ability to flight the ball may help reap rewards. "All the matches India play will be day games. With dew not being a factor, spinners will play a role," a BCCI source said.

The catch though is that it leaves only Kuldeep Yadav to challenge the left-handers' outside edge as Chahal, Jadeja and Axar all turn the ball into left-handers.

The decision on what should be India's preferred top order — Rohit-Kohli-Suryakumar or Rohit-Jaiswal-Kohli has been left to the team management. Kohli opening the batting would give an opportunity to play both Hardik and Dube in the eleven. But that would make the top-order right-hand heavy and deny Jaiswal, an out-and-out power-play dasher, which the format demands (SR 161), an opportunity to make a difference.

The selectors have three more weeks before the deadline to make any changes to the squad ends for the World Cup starting June 2.

With the first batch of Indian players — from teams that don't make the IPL playoffs — slated to leave for USA on May 21, it's unlikely that there will be any changes, barring injuries. India begin their league phase campaign on June 5 against Ireland in New York, followed by the mega clash against Pakistan and a match against Canada.

World T20 squad: Talking points

Rishabh Pant has capped an incredible return to the national team after being named in India's squad for the T20 World Cup to be played in the US and the West Indies in June. Here are a few talking points

Pant comeback

It will be Pant's first taste of international cricket after a horror car crash 16 months ago. The 26-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman hasn't put a foot wrong for Delhi Capitals in IPL 2024, impressing with the bat (398 runs from 11 games) and proving his fitness behind the stumps as well.

Pant in this IPL

| | | | |
|---------|----|-----------|--------|
| M | 11 | Runs | 398 |
| SR | | | 158.57 |
| Catches | 11 | Stumpings | 3 |

Pandya's poor form

Pandya the all-rounder is coming back into the T20 team after an ankle injury sustained during last year's ODI World Cup at home forced him to sit out the Afghanistan series in January. He hasn't looked anywhere close to his best in IPL but is probably India's only medium-pace all-round option

Pandya in this IPL

| | | | |
|------|---|------|--------|
| M | 9 | Runs | 197 |
| SR | | | 151.54 |
| M | 9 | Wkts | 4 |
| Econ | | | 11.95 |

Kohli's batting position

Virat Kohli has been scoring runs consistently and leads the list of highest run getters in this IPL. But he is the opener in RCB and has scored in the Powerplay. For India, he could come in at No.3 — Rohit Sharma and Yashasvi Jaiswal are likely to open — and scoring briskly with the field spread out could be an issue.

Virat in this IPL

| | | | |
|----|----|------|--------|
| M | 10 | Runs | 500 |
| SR | | | 147.49 |

Will Dube, Samson get to play?

The squad picked by the selectors has the needed firepower. But will the inform players Shivam Dube and Sanju Samson get to play? The answer is, not likely. Rishabh Pant and Hardik Pandya are likely to be picked ahead of the two and going solely by IPL form, it looks a little unfair to Dube

Samson in this IPL

| | | | |
|----|---|------|--------|
| M | 9 | Runs | 385 |
| SR | | | 161.09 |

Dube in this IPL

| | | | |
|----|---|------|--------|
| M | 9 | Runs | 350 |
| SR | | | 172.41 |

Focus on support pacers

Jasprit Bumrah leads the pace attack but the opposition will surely look to target the second pacer in the line-up. Mohammed Siraj and Arshdeep Singh tend to go for runs and that is a weakness in the squad.

Pacers in this IPL

| Bumrah | Mohammed Siraj | Arshdeep Singh |
|--------|----------------|----------------|
| M | M | M |
| 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Wkts | Wkts | Wkts |
| 14 | 6 | 12 |
| Econ | Econ | Econ |
| 6.64 | 9.50 | 9.64 |

The squad

Rohit Sharma (Captain), Hardik Pandya (Vice Captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (WK), Sanju Samson (WK), Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj.

30.26
Average age of the squad

142
World T20 match experience in the squad

{ T20 WORLD CUP }

FIT AGAIN FAST BOWLER ARCHER RECALLED TO ENGLAND SQUAD

Agencies

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

LONDON: Pacesman Jofra Archer was recalled to England's squad for the defence of their T20 World Cup crown after a year out of action. The 29-year-old, who has endured a string of injuries since his international breakthrough in 2019, has recovered from a right elbow injury. He takes his place in a 15-man squad captained by Jos Buttler. The same group will play take on Pakistan in a four-match T20 series beginning at Headingley on May 22.

All the players who are currently featuring in the IPL will return in time for the Pak series. Archer has managed just 15 T20I appearances but is still considered a game-changer. Another factor in England's favour is that he grew up in Barbados and knows the conditions. Chris Jordan, also born in Barbados, returns to the squad alongside uncapped spinner Tom Hartley.

SQUAD

Jos Buttler (capt, wk), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, Mark Wood

SOUTH AFRICA BACK OFF-COLOUR PACEMAN NORTJE

Agencies

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

JO'BURG: Anrich Nortje's raw pace and proven quality earned him a place in South Africa's squad for the T20 World Cup, head coach Rob Walter said.

Nortje, 30, has not played an international since suffering a back injury during a one-day series against Australia in September and has struggled for form in the current IPL. His seven wickets have cost 42 runs each and he has conceded 13.86 runs an over. But Walter said he backed the quality of the player who was South Africa's leading bowler at the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia.

Nortje, Gerald Coetzee, Kagiso Rabada and Marco Jansen will spearhead South Africa's fast bowling attack but Walter also named three specialist spin bowlers in Keshav Maharaj, Tabraiz Shamsi and Bjorn Fortuin for the World Cup.

SQUAD

Aiden Markram (capt), Ottniel Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock (wkt), Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton (wkt), Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs

Stats updated till April 29

Lakers eliminated from NBA playoffs

LOS ANGELES: LeBron James and the LA Lakers crashed out of the NBA playoffs after defending champs Denver snatched a 108-106 win to complete a 4-1 series triumph. Jamal Murray scored 32 points, including a decisive go-ahead jump shot with four seconds remaining, to send Denver into a Western Conference semi-final against Minnesota.

Chithravel, Manu win Indian GP 1

NEW DELHI: Asiad bronze medallist triple jumper Praveen Chithravel won the Indian GP 1 in Bengaluru. The 22-year-old jumped 17.12m on his fourth attempt. Eldhose Paul jumped 16.29m. In men's javelin, Manu DP's throw of 81.91m remained the best effort. Uttam Patil (76.81m) and Vikas Yadav (75.99m) were second and third. In the women's long jump, Shaali Singh leaped 6.52m.

Alcaraz enters quarters in Madrid

MADRID: Second seed Carlos Alcaraz of Spain defeated Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/4) in the fourth round of the Madrid Open on Tuesday to enter the quarter-finals.

{ CHAMPIONS LEAGUE } SEMI-FINAL FIRST LEG

After Ligue win, Mbappe and PSG have sights set on treble

Agencies

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain are hoping their latest Ligue 1 title, secured on Sunday with three games to spare, will be just the first leg of a historic treble with a Champions League semi-final to come and the French Cup final to look forward to as well.

Borussia Dortmund coach Edin Terzic said semi-final opponents Paris Saint-Germain were "built to win the Champions League", ahead of Wednesday's first leg. Terzic said lifting the European Cup has been the "main objective" of PSG since being taken over by Qatar Sports Investments. "The project in Paris began with the goal of winning the Champions League," Terzic told reporters. "That's been their main objective for a decade."

PSG won their 10th league title in the past 12 seasons. The domestic dominance has however not translated into European silverware. PSG lost the final in 2020 to Bayern Munich.

Dortmund, who won the competition in 1997, are playing in the semi-finals for the fifth time in the club's history and the first time since 2013, when they also lost to Bayern in the final.

Terzic singled out Kylian Mbappe for particular praise, but said PSG posed an attacking threat across the park.

"It's the question you hear the

Dortmund vs PSG

Time: 12:30AM
Venue: VVB Stadion Dortmund

Goals scored (head-to-head)
Dortmund 3 | 6 PSG

most: 'How do you stop Kylian Mbappe? But if you focus only on Kylian Mbappe, then comes Ousmane Dembele (or Goncalo Ramos, or Vitinha, or (Achraf Hakimi, or (Randal) Kolo Muani and all the others,' he said. "They have unbelievable quality. When analysts Deloitte published their list of the top-earning

football clubs in the world for last year, PSG were third with revenue of just over €800 million. The only other French team in the top 20 was Marseille, with €258 million. UEFA's own European Club Finance report, published in February, revealed PSG as having the second highest wage bill on the continent behind only Barcelona,

at over €600 million. Those wage costs will have changed significantly this season, following the departures of Lionel Messi and Neymar, but a recent study by sports daily L'Equipe claimed that the 10 highest-paid players in Ligue 1 just now all play in Paris.

In that context, it is almost impossible for anyone to compete with Luis Enrique's team domestically, but the Spanish coach still deserves credit. "Given our history and our squad, we are the favourites, although not everybody manages to do it, especially with so many games still to play," he said last week. "But I have said since the very first day that we are the favourites, that we have the best squad and the biggest budget. It is almost an obligation."

Although they wobbled in the Champions League group stage, they qualified for the knockout phase and took four points against Borussia Dortmund along the way. They must now be favourites to beat the Germans in the upcoming semi-final.

That would allow them to finish the Mbappe era with a French Cup final against Lyon on May 25 and the Champions League final a week later, with the prospect of a clean sweep of trophies in sight.

"Of course that's something we are talking about. It's a source of motivation for us," Luis Enrique said. "It will be a long, winding road to get there. We will need to stay fully focused until the end of the season."

INDIA BEAT HOSTS BANGLADESH IN RAIN-HIT SECOND WOMEN'S T20I

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CHANDIGARH: Spinner Radha Yadav made her comeback to the India women's T20 team count with a stellar spell (3/19) as India beat Bangladesh by 19 runs (DLS method) in a rain-truncated second T20I tie of the five-match series in Sylhet on Tuesday. The Harmanpreet Kaur-led India led the series 2-0.

Electing to bat first, Bangladesh, who lost the first T20 international by 44 runs, were dismissed for 119. Opener Murshida Khatun hit a patient 46 (49b, 5x4), but the rest of the batters caved in against India's bowlers. Left-arm spinner Radha led with the ball.

removing Bangladesh captain and in-form batter Nigar Sultana for six runs, besides Fahima Khatun (0) and Rabeya Khan (5). Fahima set a dubious record with her ninth duck the most by a Bangladesh batter in T20Is.

India, in reply, were 47/1 in 5.2 overs when rain interrupted and eventually forced the match to be called off. Shafali Verma was sent packing by Marufa Akter for a first-ball duck. It was her seventh T20I duck, the most by an Indian batter. No.3 batter Hemlatha Dayalan (41*, 24b, 5x4, 2x6) had given India an excellent start to ensure victory by the DLS method.

Brief scores: Bangladesh 119 in 20 overs (Murshida Khatun 46, Deepti Sharma 2/14, Shreyanka Patil 2/24, Radha Yadav 3/19); India 47/1 in 5.2 ovs (Hemlatha Dayalan 41*). **India won by 19 runs** (DLS method).

Uber Cup: China blank India 5-0 in final group game

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NEW DELHI: In a clash between teams that had already sealed their quarter-final berths in the Uber Cup, a young Indian women's team was swept aside 0-5 by hosts and 15-time champions China in their last Group A tie in Chengdu on Tuesday.

In the opener, world No.83 Isharani Baruah lost 12-21, 10-21 to reigning Olympic champion Chen Yufei in a first-ever meeting between them. "This was the first time I was playing such a top player. The speed of the match was quite high, but I am not happy with the number of mistakes I made," Isharani said.

Doubles national champions Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra then lost 13-21, 12-21 to world No.1 pair Chen Qing Chen and Jia Yi Fan. Anmol Kharb retired hurt while behind 9-21, 1-4 against world No.7 Han Yue as the hosts went 3-0 up.

India's second doubles combination of Simran Singh and Ritika Thaker was no match for world No.3 Liu Sheng Shu and Tang Ning, losing 9-21, 10-21 before 15-year-old Tanvi Sharma lost 7-21, 16-21 to world No.8 and reigning Asian champion Wang Zhi Yi. The draw for the quarter-finals, to be played on Thursday and Friday, will be done on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, seven Indian shuttlers qualified for the Paris Olym-

pics on Tuesday, the official cut-off date. HS Prannoy and Lakshya Sen in men's singles, two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu in women's singles, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty in men's doubles and Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa in women's doubles have made the cut.

The number is three more than at the 2021 Tokyo Games where the now retired B Sai Praneeth, Shetty/Rankireddy and Sindhu qualified. Sindhu returned with a bronze, her second Olympic medal. Badminton and wrestling are the only sports where India have won medals in the last three Olympics.

Guwahati as host Guwahati was announced as the host city for the BWF World Junior Championships in 2025. Both the team and individual events will be held at the newly built Badminton Association of India's (BAI) National Centre of Excellence. "India's production line of elite badminton talent is booming and it is of great significance for the BWF to bring our world juniors to India for just the second time," the world body president Poul-Erik Hoyer said.

India last hosted the championships at Pune in 2008. The next Thomas and Uber Cup competition will be held in Horsens, Denmark in 2026. Denmark last hosted the event in 2021.