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MARKET

SENSEX	NIFTY
73466.39	22302.50
-45.46	0.00
GOLD	SILVER
71,200.00	83,104.00
52.00	226.00

WEATHER

Sunrise	5:34 AM
Sunset	7:02 PM
Moonrise	6:08 AM
Moonset	8:39 PM

Today's Prediction	
Maximum	40°C
Minimum	27°C
Tomorrow's Prediction	
Maximum	40°C
Minimum	28°C

Sam Pitroda quits as Cong's overseas chief after row

Pitroda, stoked a major controversy with his remarks during a podcast where he cited ethnic and racial identities like Chinese, Africans, Arabs and Whites to describe the physical appearance of Indians from different parts of the country.

New Delhi

Congress leader Sam Pitroda on Wednesday resigned as the chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress after his controversial remarks spurred the BJP to label the party "racist".

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on X that party chief Mallikarjun Kharge has accepted Pitroda's decision.

"Mr Sam Pitroda has decided to step down as Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress of his own accord. The Congress President has accepted his decision," Ramesh said in his post.

Pitroda, who held the post of chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, stoked a major controversy with his remarks during a podcast where he cited ethnic and racial identities like Chinese, Africans, Arabs and Whites to describe the physical appearance of Indians from different parts of the country.

The veteran leader



was an advisor to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and has been closely associated with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, accompanying him during his foreign visits.

As the BJP made Pitroda's remarks a poll issue, the Congress acted swiftly and distanced itself from his words, calling them "most un-

fortunate and unacceptable".

With campaigning in full swing ahead of the fourth phase of polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the BJP's all-out attack on the Congress on Pitroda's analogy and slammed his comments as "racist". He asserted that people will not tolerate the attempt to insult them on

as an "African" because of her dark skin.

In the podcast, Pitroda said, "We have survived 75 years in a very happy environment where people could live together, leaving aside a few flights here and there."

"We could hold a country as diverse as India together. Where people in the east look like the Chinese, people in the west look like the Arabs, people in the north look like, maybe, white and people in the south look like Africans." "It does not matter. All of us are brothers and sisters. We respect different languages, different customs, different religions, different customs, different food," he said.

Earlier during the campaign, his reference to inheritance tax in the United States while discussing the Congress's Lok Sabha poll manifesto to give the ruling BJP a potent handle to accuse the opposition party of eyeing citizens' assets as part of its "redistribution of wealth" policy.

CONTD ON PAGE-2

Chaos at airports as Air India Express cancels flights



New Delhi

Air India Express has cancelled more than 80 flights since Tuesday night with a section of senior cabin crew reporting sick to protest against alleged mismanagement at the Tata Group-owned airline, leaving hundreds of passengers stranded at various airports in the country.

Scores of Air India Express passengers, mostly scheduled to travel to the Gulf nations, protested at airports in Kerala against last-minute flight cancellations.

Some of them claimed that they were informed about the cancellations after the completion of security checks.

On Wednesday, sources said that more than 200 cabin crew are believed to have reported sick to protest against the alleged mismanage-

ment at the airline.

The cabin crew shortage has resulted in the cancellation of at least more than 80 flights since Tuesday night and scores of flights were delayed.

Flight disruptions are happening at various airports, including Kochi, Calicut, Delhi and Bengaluru, they added.

An Air India Express spokesperson said the airline is engaging with the cabin crew members to understand the reasons for reporting sick and also apologised for the flight disruptions.

Discontent has been brewing among a section of the cabin crew at the low-cost carrier for some time now, especially after the start of the process to merge AIX Connect, formerly AirAsia India, with itself.

CONTD ON PAGE-2

Karnataka Police summons JP Nadda over BJP's video post targeting Muslims



Bengaluru

In an effort to address controversial messaging during the election period, the Karnataka Police have summoned Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief JP Nadda and IT cell head Amit Malviya regarding a post circulated on the microblogging platform X by the party's state unit.

The move follows the registration of a First Information Report (FIR) related to the post at the High Grounds Police station in Bengaluru, naming the two leaders. The investigating officer has issued summonses

HIGHLIGHT

■ BJP national president JP Nadda was summoned by Karnataka Police on Wednesday in connection with a controversial post targeting the Muslim community.

to Nadda and Malviya, granting them a week to comply and appear for questioning.

The contentious post revolves around a video shared on X, purportedly showing the Congress party favouring Muslims for reservation at the expense of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). This accusation echoes sentiments expressed by various senior BJP figures, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, over recent days. Agency

PM asks Rahul Gandhi about 'deal with Ambani-Adani', Cong retorts

New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday demanded to know why the Congress, and its "shehzada" — his preferred moniker to describe Congress leader Rahul Gandhi — had stopped raising the "Ambani-Adani" issue, which they had been harping on about for five years. Had they "struck a deal," he wondered.

The Congress responded by claiming the PM's comments betrayed his nervousness that he was losing the election. Gandhi, the party said, had mentioned (Gautam) Adani 103 times and (Mukesh) Ambani more than 30 times in his speeches since April 3, 2024. It pointed out that even on Tuesday, at a campaign rally in Jharkhand, Gandhi



said the media's attention was focused on Ambani, Adani and Modi, but not the poor.

After the PM's comments, made at a rally in Telangana, Gandhi dared Modi to order a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or

Enforcement Directorate (ED) probe into whether the two businessmen — Adani and Ambani — had sent his party "money in a tempo".

The PM's comments and Gandhi's reaction on the issue were rem-

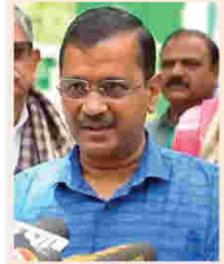
HIGHLIGHT

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incent of the political discourse of the 1970s and 80s, when the Opposition accused the ruling Congress of favouring industrial houses like the Tatas and Birlas, and the Congress in turn alleged a "foreign hand" supported the Opposition parties. Of late, the PM, too, has spoken of foreign powers supporting the Opposition parties.

Agency

SC to pass order on interim bail to Kejriwal on May 10



New Delhi

The Supreme Court will deliver its order on granting interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam on May 10.

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, on Wednesday, said this in the open court to Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S V Raju, while hearing a different case. The same bench, led by Justice Khanna and Justice Dipankar Datta had heard the arguments from the ED and Kejriwal.

"We may pass an order on Friday," Justice Khanna said.

The AAP leader had moved the apex court challenging the Delhi HC's rejection of his plea challenging his arrest and remand by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who also appeared for the probe agency, had staunchly opposed showing any leniency to Kejriwal on account of the Lok Sabha polls and said granting interim bail to the AAP national convener would amount to creating a separate class for politicians.

Agency

AstraZeneca withdraws COVID vaccine globally: Report

New Delhi

UK-based pharmaceutical major AstraZeneca has started global withdrawal of its COVID-19 vaccine, which was provided in India as 'Covishield' in partnership with Serum Institute of India, days after it admitted to rare side effects of blood clotting and low platelet counts.

The withdrawal has been initiated due to a surplus of available updated vaccines since the pandemic, the company said in a statement.

AstraZeneca had partnered with Oxford University to develop the COVID-19 vaccine,



which was sold in India as Covishield and as Vaxzevria in Europe.

"As multiple, variant COVID-19 vaccines

have since been developed there is a surplus of available updated vaccines. This has led to a decline in demand

for Vaxzevria, which is no longer being manufactured or supplied," it said.

The company further said, "We will now work with regulators and our partners to align on a clear path forward to conclude this chapter and significant contribution to the COVID-19 pandemic." Earlier, according to global media reports, AstraZeneca had admitted that its COVID-19 vaccine could in very rare cases have the potential to cause a rare side effect called — Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS).

Agency

Karnataka govt rejects CBI probe in cases against Revanna

Bengaluru

Karnataka Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara on Wednesday ruled out a CBI probe into the sexual abuse case against the JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, who is the NDA candidate from Hassan.

Parameshwara said that three people including JD(S) MLA H D Revanna and his aide Satish Babanna have been arrested in the case of abduction of a woman. However, the minister declined to reveal the name of the third accused, stating that it would affect the investigation.

This comes even as JD(S) second-in-com-



mand H D Kumaraswamy mounted an attack on the government expressing doubts over the manner in which the investigation was carried out. Alliance partners JD(S) and BJP demanded that the case, which is being investigated by the state gov-

ernment-constituted SIT, be handed over to the CBI. Kumaraswamy intensified his attack on the government even as his elder brother and Holenarasipura MLA H D Revanna, who is facing charges of kidnapping a woman, was remanded to judicial custody till May 14 by a Magisterial court here on Wednesday.

Revanna, son of former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, was produced before the court after the completion of four days' police custody.

Also, his bail petition before a sessions court has been posted for Thursday.

Agency

Sam Pitroda quits as Cong's overseas chief after row

CONTD FROM PG-1
As the row erupted on Wednesday, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on X: "The analogies drawn by Mr Sam Pitroda in a podcast to illustrate India's diversity are most unfortunate and unacceptable. The Indian National Congress completely dissociates itself from these analogies." Ramesh later announced Pitroda's decision to resign and that the Congress president has accepted it.
The BJP dismissed the Congress's disassociation with the controversial comments as it noted at a press conference that Pitroda has a history of making "insulting and demeaning" comments, including on terrorism and the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.
His "hua to hua" (so what) reaction to a question on the 1984 communal violence and "it happens all the time" reference to the Pulwama terror attack, both in 2019 as the country was gearing up for the general election, had also triggered massive rows. Agency

Chaos at airports as Air India Express cancels flights

CONTD FROM PG-1
The sources also said there was chaos at some airports due to the sudden cancellation of flights, including to overseas destinations.
The airline is to operate 360 daily flights during the summer schedule that started in the last week of March.
"A section of our cabin crew has reported sick at the last minute, starting last night, resulting in flight delays and cancellations."
"While we are engaging with the crew to understand the reasons behind these occurrences, our teams are actively addressing this issue to minimise any inconvenience caused to our guests as a result," the Air India Express spokesperson said in a statement.
Apologising to the customers for the "unexpected disruption", the spokesperson said those impacted by the cancellations will be offered a full refund or complimentary rescheduling to another date.
Agency

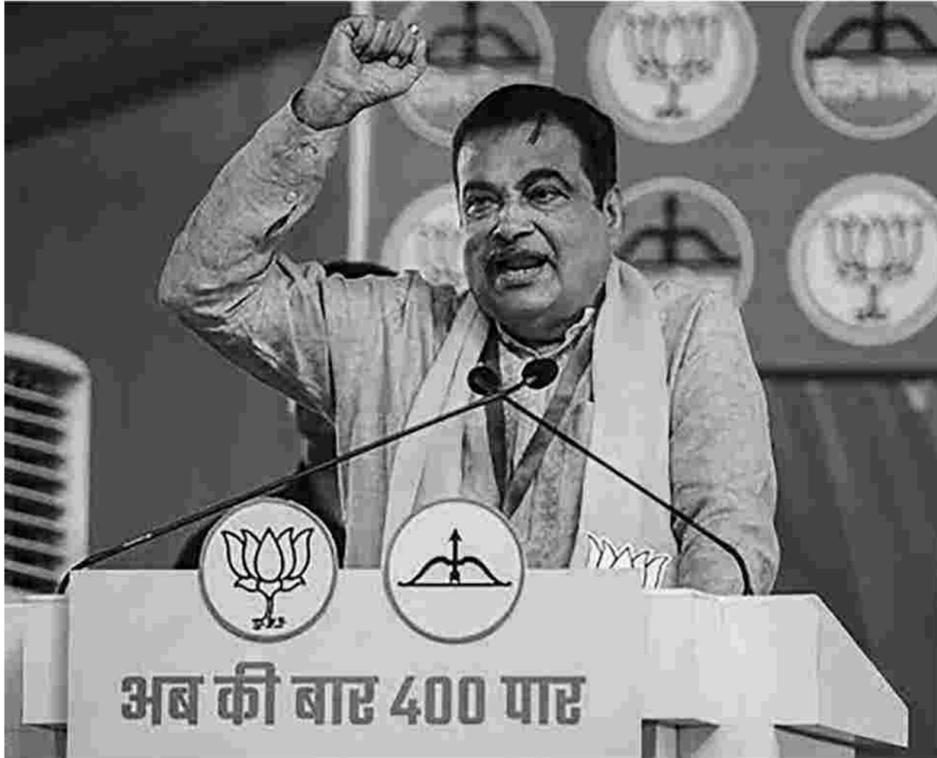
Gadkari's Vision: Delhi to Join the Ranks of Top 5 Global Cities Under BJP Leadership

New Delhi:
Union Minister and senior BJP leader Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said that Delhi will become one of top five cities in the world if people vote for the BJP and NDA to make Narendra Modi Prime Minister once again.

Gadkari was addressing a public meeting at Chandni Chowk in support of BJP candidate Praveen Khandelwal. Citing various projects undertaken by the Centre in Delhi, Gadkari said his ministry alone provided funds of Rs 1.10 lakh for various infrastructure projects in Delhi, including for construction of highways and flyovers to improve the national capital's connectivity with other cities like Jaipur, Dehradun and Haridwar.

He also cited proposed projects like electric cable bus between Delhi and Jaipur and amphibious plane service from Yamuna waters.

"A scheme has been prepared and amphibious planes will arrive in Delhi that will take off from the Yamuna front to go to any other destination in the country," Gadkari said.



"We have undertaken a plan for starting an electric cable bus from Delhi to Jaipur. Work on the project is underway for three inter-connected buses running at a speed of 120 km

per hour that will cover Delhi-Jaipur distance in 2.15 hours," said the Union minister of road transport and highways.

The electric cable buses will be air-conditioned with business class facilities like aeroplanes and the tickets of these buses will cost 30 per cent less than those of the diesel buses, he said.

Gadkari further said that before December, the travel time between Delhi and Dehradun will be reduced to two hours and that between Delhi and Haridwar will become just 1.5 hours, due to the highways being developed by the Centre.

He also cited various projects and funds from the Centre to clean the Yamuna river and improve water supply in the city, apart from infrastructure development.

"The credit for all these work goes to Delhi's people who gave the BJP seven Lok Sabha seats in 2019, and because of which Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister, and I could become a minister," he said.

Gadkari said that when he was the water resources minister, the Delhi government was allotted Rs 6,000 crore for setting up sewage treatment plants to clean the Yamuna river. "I promise that if you give the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi to help the BJP and NDA to gain majority and make Modi ji Prime Minister again, we will work to ensure that Delhi becomes one of the top five cities of the world," he said.

By paving the way for completion of multipurpose dam projects in four states, the BJP government at the Centre has ensured availability of water to fulfil the needs of Delhi till 2070, Gadkari further said.

HC dismisses pleas against Maharashtra govt's decision to rename Aurangabad and Osmanabad

Mumbai:
"What's in a name", the Bombay High Court on Wednesday said dismissing a bunch of petitions challenging the Maharashtra government's decision to rename Aurangabad district as Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and Osmanabad as Dharashiv.

A division bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Arif Doctor said the petitions were bereft of merits and the notification issued by the state government (for renaming) does not warrant any interference.

"We have no hesitation to hold that the notification issued by the state government renaming Aurangabad and Osmanabad does not suffer from any illegality or any legal vice," the bench said.

Quoting William Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet, the bench in its judgement said, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." The bench said Shakespeare made a profound observation on the nature of names, and that a name does not change anything and calling a rose something different would not change the essence of the flower.

The bench in its judgement said the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code permits the state government to abolish any revenue area and to name/rename and alter the name of the area.

The court said it has no hesitation to conclude that the government followed the statutory provisions before taking the decision to rename the two districts and cities.

The HC said it was of the opinion that the issue of alteration of name of a revenue area or even a city or town is not justiciable as courts lack the requisite tool to adjudicate such an issue.

"As to by what name a particular object or place is to be known cannot be judicially reviewed unless the name so proposed is atrocious," the high court said.

In 2022, the Maharashtra cabinet headed by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde approved the name of Aurangabad as Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and Osmanabad as Dharashiv.

On July 16, 2022, a Government Resolution was passed by the two-member cabinet for changing names and then forwarded to the central government.

In February 2023, the Union Home Ministry gave a no objection letter for changing the names of the cities and districts and thereafter, a gazette notification was issued by the state government changing the names of Aurangabad and Osmanabad.

Several petitions were then filed by Aurangabad residents challenging the government's decision to rename the place as Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

Another PIL was filed by 17 residents of Osmanabad against the government's decision to rename it as Dharashiv. Both the petitions termed the government's decision as "politically motivated".

The Maharashtra government had opposed the pleas, claiming the two places were renamed due to their history and not for any political reasons.

ED raids Jharkhand Rural Development Department premises, seizes documents

Ranchi:
The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday raided the premises of the Jharkhand rural development department in Ranchi as part of a money laundering investigation in which it recently seized huge cash, the official sources said.

The raids are being undertaken on the inputs gathered from the questioning of Jharkhand minister Alamgir Alam's personal secretary Sanjeev Lal and the latter's domestic help Jehangir Alam.

Both were arrested by the central agency on Monday. It has claimed to have seized more than Rs 30 crore cash from the premises of Jahangir Alam apart from some other cash during searches conducted on May 6.

Lal, 52, collect-

ed "commission" on behalf of some influential people, the ED had claimed before a court here on Tuesday, adding that the government officials from "top to bottom" of the rural development department are involved in the alleged illegal cash payments nexus.

The ED claimed the names of "senior bureaucrats and politicians" have emerged in the case and this is being investigated.
The money laundering case of September, 2020 is based on an anti-corruption branch (Jamshedpur) case of Jharkhand Police and a March 2023 FIR filed by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police against former chief engineer of the state rural works department Veerendra Kumar Ram and some others.

British PM Rishi Sunak volunteers with Go Dharmic

London:
The British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, joined charity Go Dharmic in lending a hand to prepare meals in the kitchen with volunteers in London.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak actively participated in preparing Vegan Kichari - a nutritious, cost-effective, environmentally friendly meal that is distributed in various parts of the world as part of Go Dharmic's "Feed Everyone" initiative.

In addition to cutting vegetables and stirring the hot meal in the kitchen, the Prime Minister spoke at length with dedicated Go Dharmic volunteers to assemble food parcels, gaining first-hand insight into the organisation's vision of compassion in action from Go Dharmic's founder,



Hanuman Dass. The first British Hindu Prime Minister, spoke about the idea of Dharma when first taking office, and now serving with Go Dharmic volunteers has shown how important it is to him. In November 2023, he awarded Go Dharmic founders Hanuman Dass and Sheena Randerwala the Points of Light award, during the auspicious occasion of Di-

wali. In today's interconnected world, Universal Hindu principles like Dharma, Seva and Ahimsa hold profound significance, transcending cultural and geographical boundaries. Ahimsa, or non-violence, is a guiding force in addressing pressing issues such as climate change, food insecurity and peace advocacy.
At the event, several Go Dharmic trustees

and lead volunteers from across the UK, including Central London, Wembley, Luton, Harrow, Northampton, Leicester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, highlighted the organisation's significant social impact, collectively serving over 50,000 meals a month to vulnerable individuals in their communities.

Reflecting on the visit, Hanuman Dass expressed gratitude, stating, "We are deeply moved by the Prime Minister's service with Go Dharmic and his willingness to join hands with our volunteers. He has a genuine interest in Dharma and our mission of compassion in action. This profound act of kindness by the leader of the nation will inspire more seva and more volunteers for many years to come."

BJP Plans to Divide BJD After Elections: Pandian

Bhubaneswar:
BJD leader and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's close aide V K Pandian on Wednesday alleged that the BJP is fighting elections in the state not to win but to increase its seats with an intention to break the Biju Janata Dal after the polls. The bureaucrat-turned-politician said this while meeting a group of journalists at Gopalpur in Ganjam district on Wednesday. "They (BJP) had a slogan of securing 120 assembly seats in 2014 but failed. I do not know their target for 2019. But, for 2024, they have been fighting elections to win 50/60 seats and aim to break BJD after the elections," Pandian said.
After Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, the saffron party wants to follow this strategy in Odisha, he claimed.
Asserting that the BJP's plan will not succeed, Pandian said many people from the national level are coming to campaign in the state,



but the people of Odisha have no trust in them. "Naveen Babu (CM Naveen Patnaik) is the trust of the people," he said. Responding to his allegation, senior BJP leader Samir Mohanty said that the saffron party does not need to break the BJD.

"BJP need not break the BJD. It will break on its own. There are several Eknath Sindh in BJD who are in constant touch with us," he said.

The BJP is contesting the polls to form government in Odisha, Mohanty said.

Earlier, asked whether he was confident of

Patnaik becoming the sixth consecutive time, Pandian asserted that the BJD will win the elections with flying colours. "Had I not such conviction, I would not have said that Naveen babu will be sworn in as CM on June 9 with blessings of Maha Prabu Jagannath," he said. Pandian claimed that BJP has no candidate in 60 of the 147 assembly segments in Odisha. "They waited for the release of BJD's candidate list so that they could pick up candidates from among the leaders dropped or rejected by us," he

said. Pandian also came down heavily on Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi and accused them of attempting to stop the Shree Mandir Parikrama Project (Jagannath temple heritage corridor project). "They tried to stall the project through ASI, National Monuments Authority (NMA) and by filing petitions in High Court and Supreme Court. They also hired an expensive lawyer to ensure the project does not take off," Pandian claimed. Targeting Pradhan, Pandian claimed that he was rejected by the people of his own district, Dhenkanal. "His party lost in panchayat and urban polls. So, he ran away and filed the nomination paper from nearby Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat. He has done nothing for his own district. Had he done something good for Odisha, our CM would have been liberal not to put any candidate against him.

DU Conducts 'Viksit Bharat Run' Despite Teacher Objections

New Delhi:
The Delhi University on Wednesday held a "Run for Viksit Bharat" with its vice chancellor Yogesh Singh appealing to the students to vote in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls.

The event was held amid many teachers' bodies, including those affiliated with the Congress and the AAP, and the two parties objecting to it, claiming it violated the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) as the "Run for Viksit Bharat" bats for the ruling BJP at the Centre.

The Viksit Bharat programme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make India a developed nation by 2047.

"To strengthen democracy, all students must vote and motivate 10 more people to cast their vote. We all want Bharat to move forward and become better. Therefore, we must contribute our bit in achieving that," Singh said



during the event. "This work of yours will strengthen democracy and many good things will happen in the country in the next 25 years. Only when you people do good, it will be good for the country," he added.

Singh said, "This country belongs to us. It is up to us to make it better and contribute our bit. The students should find their role in making Bharat Viksit by 2047. The country needs you all very much." Over 5,000 students from various colleges and departments of the Delhi University participated

in the run, which was attended by influential figures like badminton player Saina Nehwal and film actor Rajkumar Rao as special guests.

The Congress' Delhi unit on Tuesday filed a complaint with the Election Commission (EC) against the event, saying it breached the poll code and rules.

The MCC came into force with the EC announcing the schedule of the polls on March 16. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Saurabh Bharadwaj had also objected to the event and had asked the EC to take action.

AAP to Intensify 'Jail Ka Jawab Vote Se' Campaign on May 13

■ The AAP will go among the public in the fourth phase of the campaign, targeting four different sections of the society, Rai added.

New Delhi
The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will launch the next phase of its "Jail Ka Jawab Vote Se" Lok Sabha poll campaign on May 13 with multiple events, such as "Mahila Samvad" and "Trade Town Hall", in the four Delhi constituencies from where it has fielded candidates, party leader Gopal Rai said on Wednesday.

Addressing a press conference here, Rai, who is also the AAP's Delhi state convener, said the party has so far organised a door-to-door campaign, multiple "Sankalp Sabha" events and roadshows featuring jailed Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife, Sunita Kejriwal.

"Under the campaign, we went from door to door against the arrest of Arvind Kejriwal. Now, we will enter the next phase of the campaign that will be run from May 13 to May 23," he said.

The AAP will go among the public in the fourth



phase of the campaign, targeting four different sections of the society, Rai added.

"In the fourth phase, programmes like Trade Town Hall, Gramin Panchayat, Mahila Samvad and Purvanchal Samagam will be organised in all the Lok Sabha constituencies between May 13 and May 23.

"The Trade Town Hall will start from East Delhi, Gramin Panchayat from West Delhi, Mahila Samvad from New Delhi and Purvanchal Samagam from South Delhi. These different

social segments within Delhi play an important role in the city's political situation," he said.

Rai said they will focus on the work that Kejriwal has done to empower different sections of the society.

"We had also said by May 23, we will prepare around one lakh people by making them take a pledge. These one lakh people will motivate others to vote on May 25.

"From the kind of response we are getting from people, we are confident that the BJP is badly going

to lose from all the seven seats in Delhi. The INDIA bloc is going to win all the seven seats," he asserted.

Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money-laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi liquor scam.

The arrests of Kejriwal and former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren have clearly "become a trailer of the BJP's dictatorship", Rai said.

"People all over the country are asking that if elected chief ministers, who won (elections) with a huge majority, can be put in jail without any evidence, then what will happen to the voices of the common people? Who will have the courage to raise the voice of the common man in the next government?" he asked.

Rai alleged that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre thought that after Kejriwal's arrest, it will finish the AAP, poach its MLAs and topple its government in Delhi.

"However, the way the people of Delhi, the volunteers of the AAP, along with all the supporters, have come together to fight against their dictatorship, the AAP has only become stronger. This arrest has given more strength to the AAP and more courage to us to fight.

"The question that many people had about this was how will the AAP run its election campaign if Kejriwal goes to jail? Even though he is in jail, we are happy to say that if any party's election campaign is going on with maximum strength in Delhi, then it is the AAP's campaign," he asserted. Under a seat-sharing arrangement between the Congress and the AAP, the former has fielded candidates from three Lok Sabha seats in Delhi while the latter is contesting from the remaining four.

Delhi will go to polls in the sixth phase of the seven-phase election on May 25 and the counting of votes will be taken up on June 4.

10 members of Lawrence Bishnoi-Goldy Brar Crime Syndicate held by Spl cell

Staff Reporter
New Delhi

In a pan-India operation by its Special Cell, the Delhi Police has arrested nine criminals and apprehended one juvenile who were wanted in cases like shootouts, extortions, killings and arms supply to Lawrence Bishnoi-Goldy Brar gang, the officials said.

The police said they have recovered seven pistols, 31 live cartridges and 11 mobile phones from those arrested from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

With their arrest, the police claimed to have averted some contract killings and other heinous crimes in Delhi, an officer said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pratiksha Godara said a team led by inspectors Shiv Kumar and Satish Rana supervised by ACPs Lalit Mohan Negi and Hridya Bhushan has arrested nine operatives of the Bishnoi and Brar syndicate, including one juvenile, from seven states in the country.

Of them, two each have been arrested from Delhi, UP and Punjab, and one each from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Bihar, Godara said.

Bishnoi is presently lodged in Gujarat's Sabarmati jail, while Brar, whose original name is Satinderjeet Singh, is believed to be hiding in Canada. Brar, who is said to be running a gang from abroad, is wanted by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

The Bishnoi-Brar gang has been involved in the murders of Punjabi singer Sindhu Moosewala in May 2022 and Karni Sena chief Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi in December 2023. It is also stated to be involved in giving threats to Bollywood actor Salman Khan



The police said they have recovered seven pistols, 31 live cartridges and 11 mobile phones from those arrested from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

and the firing outside his house.

The officer said some of the arrested gang members remain connected with each other through Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and other encrypted chat platforms.

Another police officer said the accused identified as Manjeet Singh alias Guri, 22, was previously involved in three criminal cases, including an attack on the police personnel and assault on his co-prisoner, while lodged in jail.

Guri was in touch with Brar through one Ajay Rana. On the instructions of Brar in November, 2023, he, along with accused Gurlpal, went to murder a property dealer in Punjab's Zirakpur who had refused to give the extortion money to the gang.

While Guri and Gurlpal were on the way, they were intercepted by Delhi police in Zirakpur. On seeing the police, the duo opened fire at them. In retaliation, Guri sustained

bullet injuries and was arrested while Gurlpal managed to flee. Gurlpal, 26, was arrested later, the officer said.

Police said the other arrested accused Jaspreet Singh alias Rahul, 25, has been previously involved in two criminal cases, one is of NDPS and the other is of Arms Act in Amritsar.

Sahin Kumar alias Rahul, 26, has done IIT diploma in electrical stream. He was previously involved in criminal case of robbery in UP's Bareilly in 2014. He used to supply weapon to the members of the Bishnoi gang.

Santosh alias Sultan Baba, 20, a worker in a transport company, was a follower of slain gangster Durlabh Kashyap from MP.

Manjeet, 24, was inspired by the Bishnoi gang and was supplying weapons to its members.

Abhay Soni alias Kabir, 22, had created a group in the name of 'Rajasthan Shooters' on Facebook and come in contact with other accused persons for committing robbery and other crimes.

Dharmendra alias Kartik, 21, a worker in a cold storage, was also a follower of dreaded gangster Durlabh Kashyap, and joined various groups on Facebook and involved himself in criminal activities.

Santosh Kumar, 27, used to supply weapons to other members of the Bishnoi-Brar gang.

Lovely to Quit Politics Rather Than Leaving BJP Again

New Delhi
Arvinder Singh Lovely, who recently resigned from the Delhi Congress president's post, on Wednesday said he will rather quit politics instead of leaving the BJP that he has now joined.

Lovely along with other senior Delhi Congress leaders, including former minister Raj Kumar Chauhan, Naseeb Singh and Amit Malik, joined the BJP last week. Previously, he had quit the Congress and joined the BJP along with Malik in April 2017. However, within a few months he switched back to the Congress in 2018.

Since then he was in the Congress that he left over differences with the party leadership over choice of candidates for the Lok Sabha polls in Delhi. "Last time I had taken the decision to quit the Congress due to anger. This time, however, we have taken the decision with a cool head and much thought. Now, we will do politics here (in BJP) only or quit politics instead of leaving the party," Lovely told reporters at Delhi BJP office.

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva, who accompanied Lovely, said that he and other leaders will be free to decide their role in the party. Lovely said that in any party, the role of a worker is most important and he will assume that role and campaign for the party where ever he was asked to go. Lovely is one of the 40 star campaigners of the BJP for polls in Delhi.

He hinted that many other leaders in Delhi Congress may join the BJP in coming days.

"Raj Kumar Chauhan is a big leader in North West Delhi but his influence is not limited to that constituency only. Similarly, myself and Naseeb Singh are based in trans Yamuna area where there are two seats. This is just the beginning, if the party allows our other friends too will come," he said. Chauhan, a former minister in Sheila Dikshit government, had incidentally joined the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha polls after he was denied ticket from North West seat.

Off-leash dog bites minor inside Noida society lift

Noida
A minor girl was bitten by a dog inside a lift of a posh group housing society in Noida, with city residents seeking penalties on owners for allowing off-leash canines in common areas of societies.

The incident took place at the Lotus 300 society in Sector 107 on May 3 and a purported video of the episode surfaced on social media on Wednesday.

In the video, the around 10-year-old girl is seen inside a lift alone. When the doors open, an off-leash pet dog enters and bites



her on her right arm. Soon, the dog's owner follows and takes the canine away.

The petrified girl, visibly in pain, is seen shaking her hand vigorously as she frantically presses the lift button

to close its doors. Moments later, the dog returns but fails to enter as the elevator doors shut just in time.

There were sharp reactions to the video, with people expressing anguish

over the incident.

Rajiva Singh, president of the Noida Federation of Apartment Owners Association (NOFAA), said, "Strict enforcement needed. Heavy penalties on dog owners if they can't keep the pet on a leash in common areas of the society." Another X user Ishan Joshi wrote, "Oh dear, just look at her! Without face cap/mask and leash, dogs should not be strictly allowed in public places or such common areas." Some social media users even called for jailing the dog's owner.

Human Trafficker Nabbed in Delhi; Two Women Rescued

New Delhi
The Delhi Police has rescued two women from trafficking and arrested a man from southwest Delhi, officials said on Wednesday.

The police arrested a 25-year-old man on Tuesday while another man, identified as Sonu, is currently at large, they said.

"We got information about trafficking in the area. A PCR call was received at Sagarpur police station. A team was sent to the spot immediately and the team rescued two women from there on Tuesday," police said. "We



have rescued women from a flat in the Dashrathpuri area. Both are residents of Uttar Pradesh," a senior police officer said.

A case was registered under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act and further investigation is underway, the officer said.

4 foreign companies to visit India to invest YEIDA 1st first medical device park

■ YEIDA planned to develop UP's 1st medical device park in Sector 28 of Yamuna Authority area on a land of 300 acres.

Amar Saini
Greater Noida

Four foreign companies, who have expressed interest to invest in the Medical Device Park project in Sector 28 of Yamuna Authority, will visit the Yamuna Authority area in the coming months to promote investment.

In view of the shortage of medicines due to the pandemic spread during Covid-19, a plan was prepared by YEIDA to manufacture medical devices in the Yamuna Authority area.

Recently, Yamuna Au-

thority Chairman Anil Sagar and CEO Arunveer Singh had attended the Mid Tech Conference in Tokyo, Japan to promote investment in the Medical Device Park. This conference was held in Tokyo between 17 and 19 April.

To expedite the above project, 25 meetings were held with various companies. These companies were invited to promote investment in India. After this, four companies have shown interest in investment and have agreed to visit India in the coming month. The

above companies will sign a MoU with the authority for investment here.

Yamuna Authority CEO Dr. Arunveer Singh said that the International Mission Midtech and Farm Exhibition was organized in Tokyo, Japan where Yamuna Authority had set up its counter. During this period, meetings were held with 25 companies for investment in India. Of these, four companies gave in-principle consent to invest in the Medical Device Park of Yamuna Authority area. Under this, the com-

panies will visit the Medical Device Park between June 12 and June 21.

Uttar Pradesh's first medical device park is being built in Sector 28 of Yamuna Authority area. 300 acres of land has been identified for the medical device park. A common center is also being developed in this medical device park.

All the facilities are also being provided to the companies coming here. This is promoting investment. At the same time, employment opportunities are also increasing.

Delhi's first Heat Stroke Unit prepared at RML Hospital

New Delhi
Amidst the rising heatwave conditions in the national capital, Delhi's first heat stroke unit has been prepared to treat patients in the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. The heat stroke unit was inaugurated by the Additional Secretary of the Union Health Ministry, Roli Singh on Wednesday.

Speaking about the same, Roli Singh, Additional Secretary, MOHFW, said, "It is a good initiative RML has taken this initiative to start a heat stroke management unit. I am glad to see that state-of-the-art equipment here." "The idea is to inform more and more people regarding this unit and encourage them to make use of these facilities. I would like to

congratulate the RML team for this," she said.

The ministry has also issued an advisory regarding heat stroke management. This advisory has been given to every state by the ministry. Roli Singh further informed that the advisory on heat stroke management has been sent to every hospital where information is provided on ways to manage heat stroke patients, the requirements, and what things need to be taken care of.

"The Union Health Ministry has given instructions to make arrangements for ice packs, glucose, and ORS among others in hospitals to prevent heat stroke," she added. As temperatures rise, so does the importance of safeguarding public health

against heat-related emergencies.

The Heat Stroke Unit represents a significant step forward in our commitment to ensuring the well-being of our citizens, particularly during the sweltering summer months. Dr Professor Ajay Shukla spoke on the newly inaugurated unit and said, "Equipped with cutting-edge medical technology and staffed by a team of highly trained professionals, the Heat Stroke Unit stands ready to provide immediate and specialized care to those affected by heat-related illnesses."

"From rapid cooling treatments to expert medical supervision, our facility is fully prepared to address the diverse needs of patients suf-

fering from heat exhaustion, heat stroke and any other heat-related illnesses," said Dr Shukla. Dr Seema Wasnik, Incharge of this unit and HOD, of Emergency Medicine, said, "Rapid and early cooling is the only urgent step to bring down the mortality and morbidity in heat stroke patients. Heat stroke can have mortality as high as 80 per cent if not treated in time and rapidly."

She further said that a special room has been prepared under the heat stroke unit in which all the necessary things have been kept for the treatment of patients suffering from heat stroke. "A special type of tub has been kept to normalize the body temperature of the patient suffering from heat stroke, in

Property dealer arrested for mowing down Congress leader in Delhi's Rohini

New Delhi:

The Delhi Police on Wednesday arrested a 24-year-old property dealer for allegedly mowing down a Congress leader with his mini SUV in Rohini's Prashant Vihar area, police said. Harikishan Jindal, 62, a former district Congress Committee president, died after being hit by a car while he was on a morning walk Tuesday near his house in Rohini's Prashant Vihar area. According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) GS Sidhu, the car driver, Chirag Chaudhary, was arrested from his house in Sector 14, Rohini. "On sustained ques-

tioning, Chaudhary revealed that he was going to drop some of his friends in Rohini, when he suddenly lost his control on a turn and hit Jindal," Sidhu said. Chaudhary, who runs a property business, fled after the incident.

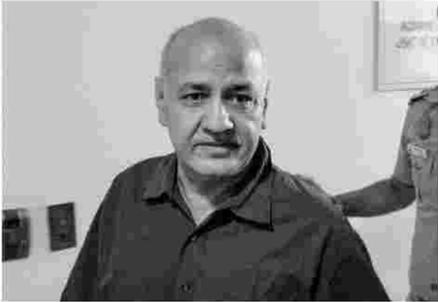
NAME CHANGE
I MEHEDKAUR MOTHER OF NUMBER 18003119K RANK NK SOHANVEER SINGH PRESENTLY RESIDENCE AT VILLAGE AND POST SIKANDARPUR KAKAUDI TAHSIL AND DISTRICT HAPUR UP - 245101 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM MAHA TAKUR TO MEHEDKAUR FOR ALL FUTURE Purpose

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Mohd. Qutbuddin Ansari, S/o Abdul M. Ansari, R/o M-46, M. Block, Sham Nagar, New Delhi-18 have debarred / disowned my daughter Shahina from my all movable and immovable properties and other assets and have severed all relation with her any person if deal with her the same at their own risk and responsibility.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Public is hereby informed that my client/ clientless Sh. Mahender Kumar S/o Late Sh. Girdhari Lal and Smt. Bimla W/o Sh. Mahender Kumar both R/o RZ 75, Sudan Garden, Roshan Pura, South West, Najafgarh, New Delhi 110043 have disowned and disinherited their son Sh. Deveder Juneja and daughter-in-law Smt. Jyoti W/o Sh. Deveder Juneja, residing separately from my client/clientless and severed all their relations and disowned them from all their movable and immovable properties due to their disobedient, disgraceful and out of control behavior. Anybody dealing with them shall be doing at their own risk and responsibility. My client shall not be responsible for any act or conduct done by them in any manner whatsoever.
NAMARTA SHARMA
(Advocate)
Ch. No. B-25. B.G.S. BLOCK, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi -54

Delhi HC Adjourns Sisodia's Bail Hearing, Grants Time to ED, CBI for Response

New Delhi
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday granted more time to the ED and the CBI to file their replies to former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia's pleas seeking bail in the corruption and money-laundering cases lodged by the agencies in relation to the alleged excise policy scam.



Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma, who had on May 3 issued notices to the two agencies asking them to file their replies to the pleas and listed the matter for hearing on Wednesday, was informed by the counsel for the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that they need some more time to respond.

The request made by the agencies' lawyers was opposed by Sisodia's counsel who said he has been incar-

cerated and the ED and CBI had assured the Supreme Court that the trial will be completed in six months.

The high court dictated its order saying, "Respondents seek more time to file a reply. It is stated that the ED is in the process of filing another prosecution complaint in relation to a co-accused in the case".

"Irrespective of that, the accused is in custody, and

four more days are granted to the respondents to file their replies. The reply be placed on court record by Monday and an advance copy is also supplied to the other side by Monday," the court further said and listed the matter for hearing on May 14.

At the outset, the ED's counsel submitted that he had filed an application seeking one week to file its reply to the petition.

The trial court dismissed Sisodia's bail pleas in the corruption and money-laundering cases lodged by the CBI and ED respectively in connection with alleged irregularities in the formulation and execution of the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy for 2021-22.

The beneficiaries diverted "illegal" gains to the accused officials and made false entries in their books of account to evade detection, the probe agencies have alleged.

According to the CBI and ED, which are probing the cases against Sisodia, irregularities were committed while modifying the excise policy and undue favours extended to the licence holders. In the April 30 order, the special judge denied the relief, saying the stage was not right for granting bail to Sisodia.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader was arrested by the CBI on February 26,

2023, for his alleged role in the "scam". The ED arrested the former deputy chief minister in a money-laundering case stemming from the CBI FIR on March 9, 2023.

Sisodia resigned from the Delhi cabinet on February 28, 2023.

The high court had dismissed Sisodia's bail pleas in the CBI and the ED cases on May 30 and July 3 last year.

On October 30, 2023, the Supreme Court refused to interfere with the high court's order, saying the allegation levelled by the probe agencies that "windfall gains" of Rs 338 crore were made by a few wholesale liquor distributors was "tentatively supported" by material and evidence.

The Delhi government implemented the policy on November 17, 2021, but scrapped it at the end of September 2022 amid allegations of corruption.

Gurugram multiplexes to give discounts to voters to enhance voting percentage



Gurugram
To increase the voting percentage in the Gurugram parliamentary constituency, the District Administration, the District Administration in collaboration with different multiplexes chains. In the Gurugram district, after voting on May 25, if any voter shows his inked finger in multiplexes, he will get a discount on offline tickets available from the counter or on food and drinks available inside the cinema hall.

Not only this, the voter will also get complimentary refreshments in some multiplexes. On the initiative of District Election Officer and DC Nishant Kumar Yadav, the multiplex chain has given full assurance to the district administration to cooperate in voter awareness. Regarding this purpose, a meeting of representatives of multiplex chains was held under the chairmanship of Hitesh Kumar Meena, the nodal officer of the SVEEP programme and ADC, at Vikas Sadan located in the Mini Secretariat complex on Wednesday evening.

The ADC informed the representatives of the multiplex chains about the SVEEP programme on behalf of the district administration. He said that all the multiplexes will telecast the message of the District Election Officer and DC Nishant Kumar Yadav and short films related to voter awareness on their respective screens. All the representatives have agreed.

upon this. Representatives of 10 multiplex chains who attended the meeting with the ADC welcomed this initiative of the district administration. 90 screens are operated in the Gurugram district through these chains.

All the major multiplex chains of Gurugram city also assured their cooperation in voter awareness on May 25. ADC also asked all the representatives to install selfie points and standees related to voter awareness in their respective premises.

Haryana CSR Trust's Additional CEO Gaurav Singh, District Information and Public Relations Officer Bijendra Kumar and representatives of multiplex chains like PVR, Inox, Cinepolis, Wave, Mirage, Cinelive etc. attended the meeting.

Notably, in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in the state, the BJP swept the state, capturing all 10 seats and the Karnal Lok Sabha seat witnessed 68.31 per cent votes. The BJP's nominee, Sanjay Bhatia, won by a whopping margin of over 6 lakh votes in the last Lok Sabha election. In the 2014 elections, the BJP won 7 seats, while the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) won 2 seats and the Congress secured only one seat. From the same Karnal Lok Sabha seat, the BJP's Ashwini Kumar had won in 2014, too. The Lok Sabha elections for the 10 parliamentary constituencies of Haryana are going to be held in a single phase on May 25.

Notorious Murder Suspect Apprehended in Gurugram

Gurugram
A "wanted criminal" was arrested from the Gurugram-Tauru road following an encounter with police on Wednesday. Officials said. Saurabh alias "Sandu", 24, a resident of Kheri Bura village in Haryana's Charkhi Dadri district, was wanted in six cases by the state police, including murder and robbery, they said. He opened fire on a police team near Bar Gurjari village. In retaliatory fire, he suffered a bullet injury to his leg, the officials said. They said a motorcycle, a pistol and five cartridges were seized from him.

On receiving information about his movement,

a barricade was set up on the road, and, when the police team tried to stop him, he opened fire on it, according to ACP (Crime) Varun Dahiya.

The officials added that the encounter took place around 5:40 am. They said that on June 16 last year, the accused along with his associates had shot dead two people and injured another at a liquor shop near the Panchgaon Chowk here.

He was also wanted in a murder case in Haryana's Rohtak district, the officials said. The cases against Saurabh are registered at police stations in Dadri, Jhajjar, Gurugram and Rohtak districts.

YEIDA simplify process of building map approval, Implements Building Plan Management System

Amar Saini Noida
Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority on Wednesday implemented online process for BPMS building map of single residential plots. Now building maps of allottees of planned single residential plots would be available online through BPMS (Building Plan Management System).

According to the information received from Yamuna Authority, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority is planning to simplify the process of building map approval for the allottees of single residential plots under the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority area to make applications



received for building map approval of the allottees quick, transparent, accountable, efficient and effective.

For the purpose of providing convenience, BPMS (Building Plan Management System) has been prepared by the authority for approval of building map and made available on the web portal of the authority, which was inaugurated by Arun Veer Singh, Chief Executive Officer, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority on 07 May.

The Authority has already prepared the data of Property Management System for all its allottees in which User ID has been provided to all the allottees. Using the said User ID, allottees can apply by logging into the BPMS (Building Plan Management System) link on the authority's website, bpms.yamunaexpresswayauthority.com.

In the application, the allottees will have to prepare the map with the help of an architect and submit the building map approval fee online. Thus, the offline system of map approval for residential plots has been abolished by the authority.

After May 08, all applications will be accepted online only. At present, this system has been started for single residential plots by the Authority, which will be implemented for all other allottees. With the implementation of this system, allottees will not need to come to the authority and allottees can apply from home and can also track the action being taken by the authority regarding the application.

Dr. Lal Hospital Celebrates One Year of Compassionate Care and Service

New Delhi
In a heartwarming celebration of its first anniversary, Dr. Lal Hospital, in the Harsh Vihar, invoked blessings from the divine as it commemorated a year of dedicated service to the community. Since its inception on 6th May 2023, Dr. Lal Hospital has been steadfast in its mission to provide quality healthcare at affordable rates, marking a milestone worth celebrating.

The anniversary festivities commenced with a reverent tale of Satyanarayan, resonating with the spiritual ethos of the occasion. Amidst the fragrant incense and sacred chants, a traditional Havan ceremony infused the hospital corridors with positivity and blessings for the journey ahead.

Leading the jubilant proceedings was Dr. Brah-



manand Lal, the esteemed Medical Director and senior pediatric surgeon and pediatric Urologist of the hospital, accompanied by his son Manas. Together, they ceremoniously cut the anniversary cake, symbolizing a year of unwavering dedication and commitment to healing.

However, the celebration was not confined to the hos-

pital walls. It extended to include the entire Dr. Lal Hospital family, comprising dedicated staff members and cherished patients. Cultural programs adorned the day, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie amongst all present.

Expressing gratitude for the remarkable journey thus far, Dr. Brahmanand Lal extended special thanks to Dr.

Rakhee Sharma for her invaluable support and cooperation. He attributed the hospital's success to the unwavering support of his family, enabling them to provide top-notch medical care at minimal costs, thereby ensuring that quality healthcare remains accessible to all.

At Dr. Lal Hospital, the commitment to excellence and compassion continues to shine brightly, illuminating the path towards a healthier and happier community. As it embarks on the journey ahead, the hospital remains dedicated to its noble mission of serving with care, empathy, and affordability.

In the spirit of gratitude and optimism, Dr. Lal Hospital looks forward to many more years of healing, hope, and humanity.

Gurugram Police Officer held, Colleague Suspended in Rs 4 Lakh Extortion Case

Gurugram
The Gurugram Police has arrested a head constable and suspended a station house officer for allegedly extorting Rs 4 lakh from a Delhi man who was arrested in a case of theft, an officer said on Wednesday.

The two were deployed at the Civil Lines Police Station.

According to police, Head Constable Kulwinder was accused of extorting Rs 4 lakh by a Delhi resident on May 3.

In his complaint filed with DCP West Karan Goel, the victim, who deals in scrap, alleged that on April 24 HC Kulwinder had arrested him in a case of theft and subsequently produced him in a court.

He alleged that after the appearance, Kulwinder demanded Rs 4 lakh from him for not taking him



on remand or framing him in another case.

On April 26, his nephew gave Rs 4 lakh to Kulwinder, said police.

Based on the complaint, an investigation was conducted by ACP City Mukesh Kumar, who found the allegations to be true.

Kulwinder was booked under section 384 (extortion) of the IPC and Prevention of Corruption Act

at Civil Line Police Station and arrested.

"Corruption is not tolerated under any circumstances. We have not only arrested the accused head constable but also suspended the SHO of the Civil Line Police Station along with the accused head constable. This action of Gurugram Police against corruption will continue," said ACP Crime Varun Dahiya.

HC rejects plea seeking VIP treatment for Kejriwal in jail

New Delhi
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday dismissed with Rs 1 lakh costs a public interest litigation by a lawyer seeking appropriate arrangements for Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to run the government from jail.

The petitioner also sought to restrain Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva from exerting any "undue pressure" for resignation of Kejriwal.

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan observed that since the AAP leader has already approached the Supreme Court against his arrest, "no orders were called for" with regard to providing him any facilities while in judicial custody.

The bench, also comprising Justice Manmeet PS Arora, further said the court cannot impose censorship on the media or stop political rivals from making statements.

"Do we impose emergency? We impose censorship? We impose martial law? How do we gag the press? The political rivals?" the court said.

"Keep bank draft of Rs 1 lakh ready," the court told the petitioner.

The petitioner argued that although it was "practically impossible" to run the government from jail, the same could be made possible with the use of technology.

In the PIL, he prayed for arrangements for video conferencing to Kejriwal in jail.

Businessman in Gurugram falls prey to extortion attempt; man apprehended

Gurugram
A man was arrested for allegedly attempting to extort Rs 50 lakh from a businessman here by threatening to kill him, police said on Wednesday. The police identified the accused as Sabir alias Sabirul, a native of north Dinajpur in West Bengal.

According to police, on May 3, the businessman received a text message from an unknown number demanding Rs 50 lakh and threatened to kill him, if he did not pay. Following this, the victim filed a police complaint on Tuesday. An in-



vestigation was launched and Sabir was arrested the same night from Gurugram, police said. "During police interrogation, the accused revealed that he is addicted to gambling. He took the mobile number of the businessman and messaged him and demanded extortion of Rs 50 lakh," a police

spokesperson said. A case was registered against Sabir under sections 506 (criminal intimidation) and 384 (extortion) of the Indian Penal Code. Further investigation is underway, they said.

CBI uncovers bribery scheme at RML Hospital, leading to arrests of nine individuals

New Delhi
A cardiologist's hurry to collect bribes from middlemen and medical suppliers before going on a trip to Europe gave the CBI a whiff of a bribery racket at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, leading to the arrest of nine people, including two doctors, on Wednesday. The CBI arrested nine people, including cardiology Professor Ajay Raj and Assistant Professor Parvatagouda Channappagouda, clerks Bhuval Jaiswal and Sanjay Kumar, the hospital's Cath Lab in charge Rajnish Kumar, middleman Vikas Ku-



mar, and medical equipment suppliers Naresh Nagpal of Nagpal Technologies, Bharat Singh Dalal of Bharti Medical Technologies, and Abrar Ahmed of Scienmed, officials said. All of them were

produced before a special court which sent them to CBI custody till May 14 for further interrogation. More medical suppliers and hospital staff are under scanner and may be arrested soon,

they said.

The CBI FIR into the alleged bribery racket operational at multiple levels in the prestigious hospital flags multiple instances of corruption. It claimed that clerks and nurses threatened to throw out a pregnant woman if Rs 20,000 was not paid to Raj and Channappagouda, who were allegedly taking lakhs from medical equipment suppliers.

The agency has named 11 individuals and four firms in the FIR, including six hospital employees, a middleman, and four medical equipment suppliers.

Wasoora Villagers Emerge from Shadow of Fear, Participate in PDP Poll Rally

Pulwama: There was a gathering and a procession in Wasoora village here on Wednesday as people came out in large numbers to participate in a poll rally, unseen till a few years ago due to the threat of terrorism.

They were attending PDP's Srinagar Lok Sabha seat candidate Waheed Para's campaigning in the village, around 50 kilometres from Srinagar.

Villagers embarked on the procession from Tahab to Chandgam, around 4 kilometres apart and an area previously heavily monitored by security forces to counter local and foreign terrorist threats.

Addressing the crowd from a tipper truck, Para urged the people to exercise their voting rights in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections scheduled for May 13 and emphasized the importance of civic participation.

"I am not here to criticise any political party, be it the National Conference, Congress or the BJP. Vote for me if you believe in my work, or choose a candidate who aligns with your values."

"The key message remains the same — exercise your right to vote," Para, who faces legal challenges linked to alleged terror activities, said during his address.

Ever since Para has been nominated by the PDP, he has been holding roadshows and Wednesday's event was a spontaneous one without any preparations.

Farooq Abdullah accuses Modi of divisive tactics for electoral gains

Srinagar: National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah Wednesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of trying to create divisions between Hindus and Muslims for the sake of votes and urged the public to send him out of power.

Addressing a public meeting in the Eidgah locality here in support of party candidate Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, Abdullah said, "They are spreading hatred among Muslims and Hindus. It does not behove the prime minister of India to do such things. When he goes outside the country, he is the prime minister of all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Buddhists. But, when he seeks votes here, he tries to divide us." He said the BJP talks about Lord Ram as if Ram did not exist before and cited a scholar from Pakistan who wrote and Ram and Buddha both.

"A renowned religious scholar from Lahore, Dr Israr Ahmad, has written about Ram and Gautam Buddha, that both of them have been sent by God to show God's way to the people. They have forgotten Buddha now and claim they have brought Ram," Abdullah said.

The former Union minister also blamed the Central government for the 2019 Pulwama attack in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed.

"The then Governor, Satya Pal Malik, himself said that (explosive-ridden) car was roaming around for three weeks and when it reached the spot, innocent people were martyred.

IAS-turned-Politician Parampal Kaur vows to contest elections regardless of govt's Actions

Chandigarh: Her VRS application turned down, IAS officer Parampal Kaur Sidhu on Wednesday threw a challenge to the AAP-led Punjab government to take whatever action it can and asserted she will contest the Lok Sabha elections. A 2011-batch IAS officer, Sidhu, who is contesting the Bathinda parliamentary constituency on a BJP ticket, had put in her papers last month seeking voluntary retirement, also requesting that the condition of a three-month notice period be waived. Later, she joined the BJP in Delhi.

The state government rejected her request for voluntary retirement for allegedly "falsifying" her grounds and asked her to resume her duties immediately or face action.

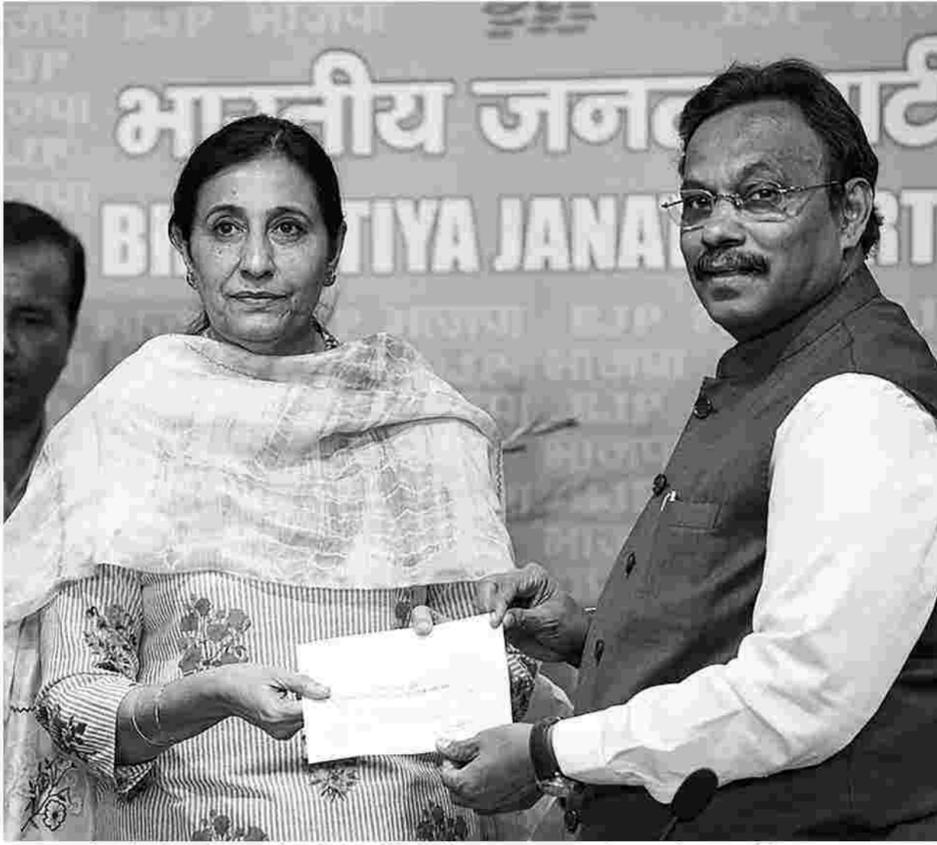
The Centre's Department of Personnel and Training had earlier relieved her of duties after accepting her resignation.

Reacting to the state government's communication, Sidhu on Wednesday said she has already been relieved by the Centre.

She said she will submit her reply to the state government after the June 1 Lok Sabha elections in Punjab.

"They (AAP government) just want to waste my time as they are rattled," she said while talking to reporters in Bathinda.

"I can do whatever I



want to do after my retirement. I have entered politics now to serve the people and my only goal is to work for Bathinda development," she said.

The Punjab government can take whatever action it wants to take, but I will not resume duties again, she asserted.

"The central government has accepted my

resignation and I will contest the election from Bathinda and file my nominations soon," she added.

Accusing the AAP government of hypocrisy, she said it talks about the shortage of IAS officers whereas many officers have been sitting idle without any department or work.

To a question on the state government's alleged charge of falsifying the grounds for resignation, she said she had written that she wanted to be with her aged mother in Bathinda and also about pursuing other plans in life.

Sidhu is the daughter-in-law of Akali Dal leader Sikandar Singh

Maluka.

After she joined the BJP on April 11, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said that the state government had not accepted her resignation as an IAS officer.

At the latest, Sidhu was posted as the managing director of the Punjab State Industrial Development Corporation.

Political parties, candidates to strictly follow 'Dos' & 'Don'ts' of Election: Hry CEO

Komal Ramola Chandigarh: The Election Commission of India (ECI) has drawn up a list of 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' to be followed by political parties and contesting candidates till the completion of the process of General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 in Haryana.

Giving more information, Chief Electoral Officer, Haryana, Anurag Agarwal said that political parties and candidates are advised to follow the guidelines and cooperate in conducting the elections in a free, fair and peaceful manner in the State.

While referring to the Dos to be followed by political parties and contesting candidates, he said that with a view to ensure a level playing field, public places like maidans and helipads must be available impartially to all parties and contesting candidates. He said that during elections, criticism of other political parties and candidates should be restricted only to their policies, programs, past records, and works.

With this, the right of every individual for peaceful and undisturbed home life should be fully safeguarded. He further said that the local police authorities should be fully informed and necessary permission is taken well in time, of the venue and time

of the proposed meetings, he added.

Anurag Agarwal said that the restrictive or prohibitory orders in force, if any, in the place of the proposed meeting should be fully respected. He said that the permission must be obtained for use of loudspeakers or any other such facilities for the proposed meetings and police assistance should be taken from the police authorities, in case of any disturbance and untoward incident caused by any person.

He said that the time and place of the starting and termination of any procession and the route to be followed should be finalized in advance and prior permissions obtained from the police authorities. The passage of the procession must be without hindrance to traffic.

The Chief Electoral Officer said that cooperation should be extended to all election officials to ensure peaceful and orderly voting. He said that all political workers engaged in elections have to show their badges or identity cards given to them by their parties. The informal identity slip issued to the voters should be on plain (white) paper and on which there should be no mention of any name, party symbol or the name of the candidate on it.

Cong candidate Sukhpal Khaira declares assets worth over Rs 50 cr

Chandigarh: Congress candidate from Sangrur Lok Sabha seat in Punjab Sukhpal Singh Khaira has declared his total assets as worth Rs 50.02 crore, according to his poll affidavit.

Khaira, 59, filed his nomination papers from the Sangrur seat on Wednesday.

According to his affidavit, Khaira has declared his moveable and immovable assets, including those of his wife, to be Rs 1.12 crore and Rs 48.9 crore respectively.

Khaira, who is the MLA from Bholath assembly seat, has declared that he has Rs 50,000 in cash.

The Congress candidate has declared gold ornaments worth Rs 7 lakh while his spouse owns gold jewellery worth Rs 28 lakh, as per his poll affidavit.

Khaira has declared that he has not been convicted in any criminal case.

Among his immovable properties, Khaira owns



17 acres of agriculture land in Rangarh and a house in Chandigarh. He liabilities amount to Rs 2.80 crore.

He has shown his occupation to be agriculture.

Meanwhile, Congress candidate Dharamvira Gandhi who filed his nomination papers from the Patiala seat, has declared his total assets amounting to Rs 8.51 crore, according to his affidavit.

Gandhi, 73, has shown his moveable and im-

movable assets, including those of his wife, to be Rs 4.25 crore and Rs 4.26 crore respectively.

He has declared that he has Rs 70,000 in cash and owns two cars worth Rs 25 lakh, as per his affidavit.

He has declared agricultural land in Anandpur Sahib and residential buildings in Patiala and Anandpur Sahib.

Gandhi completed his doctor of medicine (M.D.) from Government Medical College, Patiala in 1989.

Modi got 50 cr women to open Jan Dhan accounts with zero balance: Nayab Saini

Narwana: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini fiercely targeted the Congress government and called for making Narendra Modi the Prime Minister for the third time for the welfare of the country.

Many leaders including Sirsa Lok Sabha candidate Ashok Tanwar, Rajya Sabha member Subhash Barala, former MP Sunita Duggal, State General Secretary Surendra Poonia were present with him in the rally.

During this, JJP's Narwana MLA Ramniwas Surjakheda announced to join BJP. Chief Minister Saini and all the party leaders welcomed Surjakheda warmly and assured him of full respect. Addressing the crowd gathered at the rally, the Chief Minister said that the government started Ayushman, Chirayu scheme for the poor. Now the poor no longer need to reach out to anyone for treatment. The poor can get themselves treated with dig-



nity. Earlier one had to stand in line for 3 days to get a gas cylinder, now the government is delivering gas at the doorstep. Women are being given free cylinders under the Ujjwala scheme. Be it winter, summer or rainy season, people do not have to stand in queues for cylinders.

Saini said that during the Congress rule, bank accounts of the poor were not opened, they had to suffer humiliation, in the last ten years, Prime Minister Naren-

dra Modi got 50 crore women to open bank accounts with zero balance. He said that the government is working with full dedication for the welfare of all sections while Rahul Gandhi sits in Delhi and ridicules.

The Chief Minister said that in 2024, Congress is not contesting elections on 272 seats and talks about forming the government. Gradually Congress will end completely. The Chief Minister said that Congress is neither concerned about the poor

nor the farmers, it has formed Indi alliance to save its family and save the corrupt. The people who till yesterday were talking about getting Sonia Gandhi investigated are now embracing each other and contesting the elections under the banner of Indi alliance.

To save the country from these people, we will have to support Modi. Modi's guarantee is to give a new direction to the country and keep it continuously moving on the path of development and progress. He said that a resolution of more than 400 has been taken in the entire country.

Saini told the attendees that last time he had made the BJP candidate win in Narwana constituency with a margin of 55 thousand votes, how much margin should he win this time? The crowd present on this resolved to make BJP candidate Ashok Tanwar win by more votes than before.

Bhagwant Mann appealed to people in a huge rally to make AAP win by 13-0

Komal Ramola Patiala/Chandigarh: Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann campaigned for AAP candidate Dr Balbir Singh in Patiala on Wednesday. Here he addressed a huge public rally and appealed to the people to help the Aam Aadmi Party win by 13-0.

During his speech, Chief Minister Mann tore into Captain Amarinder Singh. He said that during the Mughal Empire his family was with them. Then during British rule they were with the Britishers. Then he was with Akali Dal and the Congress according to who was ruling Punjab. Now he is with the BJP.

He alleged that the Patiala state was created by Ahmed Shah Abdali because Captain's ances-



tor Ala Singh had told on the Khalsa group that looted Abdali's convoy. He said that some Khalsa group's people used to loot Ahmed Shah Abdali's convoy and distribute his looted things among the poor. Cap-

tain's ancestor Ala Singh had told Abdali the names of those people and Abdali killed them. As a reward Abdali gave the Patiala state to Ala Singh's son.

Mann also attacked Akali leader Bikram

Majithia and Congress leader Pratap Singh Bajwa. He said that on the evening of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, General Dyer had dinner at Bikram Majithia's house. How can we expect loyalty to Punjab from such people! At the same time, Pratap Singh Bajwa is very restless to become the Chief Minister, but the Congress broke his dream of becoming the Chief Minister.

Attacking Sukhbir Badal, he said that Sukh Vilas Hotel is built with the blood and sweat of the people of Punjab. There is a pool next to each room of that hotel. He said that we will take Sukh Vilas under the control of the Punjab government and convert it into a school. It will

be the first school with pools in every classroom. Mann also lambasted Prime Minister Modi and BJP. He said that there are about 6 lakh words in the Hindi dictionary, but PM Modi only speaks eight to ten words like Hindu-Muslim, temple-mosque, Pakistan and graveyard. He never speaks on problems like inflation, unemployment, poverty and hunger.

He said that it is very shameful that after being the Prime Minister for ten years, he is asking for votes in the name of Mangalsutra. He said that the BJP does the politics of hatred. It wants to take votes from people by scaring them in the name of caste and religion. It is also trying to divide Punjab, but the

people of Punjab never tolerate the politics of hatred. Punjab is known for communal harmony. People here celebrate Gurburabs, Eid, Holi, Diwali and Navami together. BJP's politics of hatred can never succeed here.

Mann said that we do the politics of work. In the last two years, I have given government jobs to 43000 youth, opened 830 Mohalla clinics, in which about 1.5 crore people have been treated so far. I told the Health Minister that there should not be any hospital in Punjab which does not have an X-ray machine, testing lab and medicines. No patient should have to go out of the hospital for testing and medicines. We have given the respon-

sibility of this to the Chief Medical Officer of all the hospitals, so that there is no laxity.

For the progress of the farmers of Punjab, we have provided canal water to 59 percent of the farming land of Punjab. When I became the Chief Minister in March 2022, only 21 percent of the fields were getting canal water.

By October, we will provide canal water to 70 percent of the farms, after which about 6 lakh tube wells in Punjab will become useless. Then the government will save about 5000 to 6000 crore rupees. With that money, we will give Rs 1000 every month to our mothers and sisters. We will fulfill all our guarantees.



By Dr Satyavan Saurabh

People are losing their lives due to the lack of organ donation in India

Three lakh patients are waiting for organ donation in the country and the increase in the number of donors in the country is not keeping pace with the demand; Experts say the country urgently needs to increase deceased donation rates, and there should be more awareness among ICU doctors and families about how a deceased donor can save many lives. With a waiting list of over three lakh patients and at least 20 people dying every day while waiting for an organ, the shortage of organ donation in India, especially deceased donation, is taking a huge toll. The rate of deceased organ donation in India has been less than one donor per million population for the last decade.



es. Due to identification and authentication. In terms of organ donation, the country's annual average is still less than one donor per million people.

According to road transport statistics, every year in India, around 150,000 people die on the roads. This means that on average, more than 1000 accidents occur on the roads every day and more than 400 people die. In organ donation, the organs of a deceased donor - such as the heart, liver, kidneys, intestines, eyes, lungs, and pancreas - are removed and transplanted into the body of another person, which is required to survive. They are needed. A deceased donor, also called a cadaver, can thus save up to nine lives. However, health professionals usually feel uncomfortable talking to relatives of the deceased about the topic of organ donation. Doctors shy away

from asking about donating the organs of the deceased. There is no encouragement in this regard and there is also a fear of retaliation.

The public is reluctant and distrustful because they do not fully understand the idea of brain death, organ donation, or its benefits. Cultural customs regarding the body after death may hinder consent, and some religious beliefs prohibit organ donation. India has adequate transplant centers, and medical professionals with the necessary training or resources for the retrieval, preservation, and transportation of organs. There are no resources. It is often necessary to obtain family consent for organ donation. This can be a long and emotionally difficult process, which may delay or even prevent donation. Even in cases where organs are available, access for many patients is further limited.

due to the high cost of transplant surgery and post-operative care.

Many patients with organ failure die while waiting for a transplant as a result of acute organ shortage. The overwhelming need for organs leads to illegal organ trade networks, which expose vulnerable people to ethical and health issues as well as exploitation. Puts you in danger. Health disparities are exacerbated by the limited supply of organs, making them more likely for those with money. Receive a life-saving transplant. Dialysis and other supportive care are among the many resources that are heavily taxed by the task of managing patients with end-stage organ failure.

All things considered, India's healthcare system suffers greatly from low organ donation rates, resulting in avoidable deaths, unethical

practices, and unequal access to life-saving care. To ensure that everyone has fair access to organ transplantation, addressing these issues requires a multifaceted strategy that includes ethical considerations, legal reform, infrastructure development, and public education. One deceased organ donor can save the lives of eight people. Two donated kidneys can free two patients from dialysis treatment.

A donated liver can be divided between two patients on the waiting list. Two donated lungs mean two more patients have been given a second chance, and a donated pancreas and donated heart mean two more patients have received the gift of life. A tissue donor - someone who can donate bone, tendons, cartilage, connective tissue, skin, cornea, sclera, and heart valves and vessels. Can affect the lives of 75 people. In India, there is a need to convert the pledge of organ donation into actual donation and for this, there is a need to educate the medical staff. They must be able to recognize, recognize, inform, and counsel families about brain death and the importance of organ donation.

About the Author

Dr. Satyavan Saurabh, Poet, freelance journalist and columnist

One deceased organ donor can save the lives of eight people. Two donated kidneys can free two patients from dialysis treatment. A donated liver can be divided between two patients on the waiting list.

Saudi Arabia Has Its Pivotal Moment

In the vibrant heart of Riyadh, amidst its soaring skyline and lively thoroughfares, a momentous gathering of global leaders, policymakers, and influential business figures recently unfolded. The occasion? The World Economic Forum's Special Meeting in the Kingdom-an event of profound significance, highlighting Saudi Arabia's escalating prominence on the international platform and marking a pivotal juncture in the region's course. As delegates from every corner of the globe converged, the conversations transcended mere economic discourse, delving deeply into the intricate realms of geopolitics, ideological currents, and the very future trajectory of the Middle East.



At the heart of these discussions lies Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030-a holistic strategy for economic diversification, social transformation, and national revitalization. After eight years of implementation, the Kingdom's visionary agenda is yielding tangible results, ushering in a period of advancement, creativity, and societal integration.

Just as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of communism in Eastern Europe marked the onset of a transformative era, the developments transpiring in Riyadh signify a monumental shift in the Middle Eastern landscape. The era of entrenched authoritarian rule and ideological steadfastness is waning, making way for a fresh ethos characterized by pragmatism, collaboration, and forward-thinking

strategies. It's a time where the region is embracing a new dawn of possibilities and progress.

The recent statements by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken emphasized the significant decision confronting the region: the choice between a trajectory marked by discord and turmoil or one defined by unity, security, and peace. As a crucial player in the region, the United States has unequivocally stated its position-a dedication to nurturing enhanced collaboration and stability that transcends historical rifts and ideological differences. This commitment signals a pivotal step towards fostering a more harmonious and secure future for all involved.

Central to this equation is the evolving relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia-a relationship marked by a conver-

gence of interests and a shared vision for the future. Despite initial skepticism and geopolitical complexities, recent overtures signal a renewed sense of partnership and collaboration, extending beyond conventional security concerns to encompass a broad spectrum of mutual interests, from economic cooperation to technological innovation.

However, despite these diplomatic manoeuvres and tactical adjustments, formidable obstacles persist. Foremost among them is the persistent Israeli-Palestinian conflict-a perennial source of tension that remains resistant to resolution. Saudi Arabia's willingness to endorse Israel's inclusion in the Arab and Muslim spheres is contingent upon a genuine dedication to pursuing a viable two-state resolution-a proposition entangled with intri-

cate complexities and deep-rooted historical grievances. Addressing this issue remains a critical challenge in the pursuit of regional stability and harmony.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stands at a crucial juncture, torn between the demands of peace and the complexities of domestic politics. His decision not only shapes Israel's trajectory but also resonates throughout the region, holding significant implications for lasting peace and stability.

Similarly, Hamas, entangled in a deadly conflict with Israel, faces the harsh realities of war juxtaposed with the necessity for peace. The pressing nature of the situation, compounded by humanitarian crises and regional dynamics, accentuates the need for prompt and resolute action. Both Netanyahu's choices and Hamas's responses are pivotal in determining the course of events, with far-reaching consequences for the prospects of peace and stability in the region.

Meanwhile, the spectre of Iran looms large, casting a shadow over regional dynamics and geopolitical calculations. The Saudi-Iranian détente of March 2023 marked a significant milestone-a testament to the potential for rapprochement and cooperation in a region long characterized by animosity and mistrust. However, underlying tensions persist, underscoring the fragility of the regional equilibrium and the complexities of navigating geopolitical fault lines.

At the heart of these discussions lies Saudi Arabia's ambitious Vision 2030-a holistic strategy for economic diversification, social transformation, and national revitalization. After eight years of implementation, the Kingdom's visionary agenda is yielding tangible results, ushering in a period of advancement, creativity, and societal integration.

Breaking Time Sudoku

What to do

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digit 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only correct solution.

	1	4						2
	2		6					
3					2			
	4	9	7					8
2	6		9	5		1	3	
5				4	9	7		
			4					1
				7		2		
8						5	3	

Solution, Sudoku

6	2	1	8	5	7	4	9	3
3	5	9	2	6	4	8	1	7
4	8	7	3	9	1	5	6	2
7	6	3	5	1	2	9	4	8
2	4	5	6	8	9	3	7	1
9	1	8	4	7	3	2	5	6
1	7	4	9	3	8	6	2	5
5	3	2	7	4	6	1	8	9
8	9	6	1	2	5	7	3	4

THE WISDOM TREE

BY SUVEEN KUMAR

KNOW WHAT SERVES YOU

Pick what serves you to become better however, not at the cost of others. You don't have to agree with everything I say, but if you do, then you better be ready to contradict yourself, because my words can change with the change. I would never ask you to follow my foot step because you were not made uniquely to copy someone completely. Pick what good is in me and leave my bad with me until I cleanse them to good, for good. You don't have to feel sorry for my problems but you can celebrate with my success and it is not called being selfish it is called being sensible.

Even if you meet the best people in the world yet you may not pick the best thing from them, even if you go to the best place in the world yet you may not have the best time of your life, even if you get the best thing in the world yet you may not know the best use of it, even if you get the best

chance to serve yet you may not serve the best way you could. It is not the people, place, chance and thing that matter if you don't matter to yourself, it is not wealth, health and status that matter if you don't matter to yourself. Don't die to meet big people, live a life that big people would come to meet you before they die. If you don't know your worth, ask from people. People know you more than you think they do. We think we are mysterious, we all think we are dark horses, we all think no one has no idea about us, no one can even imagine who we are, what we do and what we can. But you have know idea that someone out there has more idea about you than you know, they can better imagine you than you can dream of and they are better aware of your strengths than you ever felt.

Moral: Do follow people completely if they are complete.



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Modi leads BJP's charge as Pitroda's racial analogy for Indians sparks row

New Delhi/Hyderabad
Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the BJP's all-out attack on the Congress on Wednesday over Sam Pitroda's analogy to depict India's diversity as he slammed his comments as "racist" and asserted that people will not tolerate the attempt to insult them on the basis of their skin colour.



Pitroda's comments at a podcast landed his party in yet another soup, soon after his reference to inheritance tax in the United States as an "interesting law" while discussing the Congress's Lok Sabha poll manifesto gave the ruling BJP a potent handle to accuse the opposition party of eyeing citizens' assets as part of its "redistribution of wealth" policy.

As Pitroda's remarks went viral and triggered a political firestorm, the Congress, like the last time, swiftly distanced itself from its overseas wing chairperson's remarks and even criticised those as "most unfortunate and unacceptable".

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) dismissed the Congress's stand as meaningless as it cited Pitroda's close association with the Gandhi family and launched a blistering attack.

At his rallies in Telangana, Modi said he is livid with the racial profiling of Indians by the US-based "philosopher and uncle of shehzada (Rahul Gandhi)", and linked the Congress's opposition to Droupadi Murmu's presidential bid to its mindset, which saw her as an "African" because of the colour of her skin.

Pitroda, an advisor to former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, said, "We have survived 75 years in a very happy environment where people could live together, leaving aside a few fights here and there. We could hold the country as diverse as India together. Where people in the east look like the Chinese, people in the west look like the Arabs, people in the

north look like, maybe, white and people in the south look like Africans." "It does not matter. All of us are brothers and sisters. We respect different languages, different religions, different customs, different food," he said in the interview that was widely circulated on social media.

Campaigning for the BJP in Telangana, Modi pounced on Pitroda's comments to hit out at the Congress. "I am very angry today. I do not get angry if someone abuses me. Today, the philosopher of 'shehzada' (prince) has inflicted such a big abuse that I am full of anger. Will people's abilities in our country be decided by the colour of their skin? Who has allowed the shehzada to play this game of skin?" he said.

As a row erupted, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on X: "The analogies drawn by Mr Sam Pitroda in a podcast to illustrate India's diversity are most unfortunate and unacceptable. The Indian National Congress completely dissociates itself from these analogies."

The BJP dismissed the Congress's disassociation with the controversial comments as it noted at a press conference that Pitroda has a history of making "insulting and demeaning" comments, including on terrorism and the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

His "hua to hua" (so what) reaction to a question on the 1984 communal violence and "it happens all the time" reference to the Pulwama terror attack, both in 2019 as the country was gearing up for the general election, had also created massive rows, while his party had sought to distance itself from those.

At a press conference, Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar cited Pitroda's long association with the Gandhi family and said he is explaining Sonia Gandhi's and Rahul Gandhi's idea of India. When a senior Congress leader speaks such

language, it reveals the mindset of the party's leadership, which is grounded in divisiveness, racism and ignorance, Chandrasekhar said. It is shameless, he said, and sought an apology from the Congress. He also asked the chief ministers of four southern states ruled by either the Congress or other opposition parties whether they agree with Pitroda's description of south Indians as Africans.

The Congress's stand is nothing but hypocrisy and they should sack him as the head of the Indian Overseas Congress, the minister said, alleging that Rahul Gandhi only echoes and amplifies Pitroda's views when he "runs down" Indian institutions and democracy during his travels abroad.

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said the Congress is getting more and more unmasked as the seven-phase Lok Sabha polls progress and the central issue is no longer election but India's existence. He said the polls have now become a battle between those under the influence of a foreign mindset in their definition of India

Oppn bloc leaders to meet EC Thursday over voter turnout, EVM concerns

New Delhi
Leaders of the opposition INDIA bloc will meet the Election Commission on Thursday over their demand to promptly release the absolute voter turnout figures in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls after each phase, sources said.

They will also raise the issue of alleged "use of religious symbols" by the BJP in their campaign, they said. The sources said leaders from the INDIA bloc will meet the full bench of the Election Commission of India on Thursday afternoon, submit a memorandum and

also discuss the issues with the poll panel. INDIA bloc parties, including the Congress, Trinamool Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist), have written to the poll panel separately so far, expressing concern over the alleged "delay" in the release of the voter turnout data in the first two phases.

Amid the opposition's allegations, the poll body had asserted that booth-wise data of the "actual number of votes polled" is available with the candidates soon after the voting ends.

In a statement issued last week, the EC also said it attaches "due importance" to the timely release of voter turnout figures after each phase of the poll, and said not just constituency, but booth-wise data of actual number of votes polled is available with the candidates, which is a statutory requirement.

On Tuesday, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had written to leaders of various opposition parties on the issue of alleged "discrepancies" in the voting data released by the Election Commission (EC). In his letter, Kharge urged

the INDIA bloc leaders to "collectively, unitedly and unequivocally" raise their voice on the issue. The EC officially shared the turnout figure for the first two phases of Lok Sabha polls on April 30. According to EC figures, a voter turnout of 66.14 per cent was recorded in phase one and 66.71 per cent in phase two of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls.

For the third phase of voting that took place on Tuesday, the EC's voter turnout app on Wednesday showed that 65.55 per cent voting had occurred.

the INDIA alliance. In fact, the Constitution is in danger because of them. "It is PM Modi's resolution and guarantee that the Constitution will be saved at all cost. The Congress wants to change the Constitution and they were the ones who changed it during Emergency," he added. A crowd of BJP supporters, including women of all ages, had gathered here with cutouts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi carrying "Mai hun Modi ka parivar (I am Modi's family)" message written over them. Saffron flags with the party's lotus symbol were waved as people raised pro-Modi slogans.

Asked about his campaign for BJP's East Delhi candidate, Rathore said, "The work done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the last 10 years is self-reflective. The scale on which development has taken place in the entire country is nothing like what we have seen so far." He added, "On one hand, it is being discussed to give reservation to Muslims, on the other hand PM Modi is trying to save the reservation as per the Constitution of the country." The Congress' focus is on the development of "one family", while the BJP focuses on "country-first," he said. "The BJP has the blessings and love of the public. When we have such a strong leader like PM Modi then we can easily expect to get votes from all segments," Rathore said responding to a question regarding the party's target to secure more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha elections.

He further accused the Congress-led UPA government of harbouring black money during its tenure and giving rise to corruption. Rathore claimed that after the BJP government came to power in 2014, politics was made free of corruption through electoral bonds. "After 2014, electoral bonds came which means that black money ended. Today, people can know which party takes how much money from where, it is because of Narendra Modi ji. The black money-related corruption got out of politics. During the earlier government, the UPA-led Congress used black money. They are the same people who are against electoral bonds, they are the same people who want to change reservation. They want to give reservation to Muslims. They have already done this in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka," he said.

Rathore said, "Today, if reservation for STs, SCs, OBCs is in danger, it is because of the Congress and

with "Ambani and Adani", and asked if the party has received "tempo loads of black money" from the two businessmen for its leader Rahul Gandhi to stop "abusing" them. "Since his Rafale issue got grounded, he started chanting about 'five industrialists'. Then he started saying Ambani-Adani. But ever since elections have been announced, these people (Congress) have stopped abusing Ambani-Adani. "I want to ask from Telangana soil, let the Shehzada announce, how much has been lifted from Ambani-Adani. Has tempo loads of money reached the Congress? What deal has been arrived at that abusing Ambani-Adani has stopped overnight?" he said while addressing an election rally at Vemulawada in Telangana.

Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday accused the Congress of having a "deal"

Parties Misusing Caste Reservations to Appease Minorities: Rathore



New Delhi
BJP leader and Rajasthan Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore on Wednesday accused the INDIA bloc and the Congress of trying to "snatch" the reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs and giving it to Muslims. Rathore alleged that the country's Constitution is in "danger" because of them and also accused them of corruption. Rathore made the remark during the roadshow here in east Delhi's Kalyanpuri area where he had come to support Harsh Malhotra, the BJP candidate for the Lok Sabha elections.

He further accused the Congress-led UPA government of harbouring black money during its tenure and giving rise to corruption. Rathore claimed that after the BJP government came to power in 2014, politics was made free of corruption through electoral bonds. "After 2014, electoral bonds came which means that black money ended. Today, people can know which party takes how much money from where, it is because of Narendra Modi ji. The black money-related corruption got out of politics. During the earlier government, the UPA-led Congress used black money. They are the same people who are against electoral bonds, they are the same people who want to change reservation. They want to give reservation to Muslims. They have already done this in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka," he said.

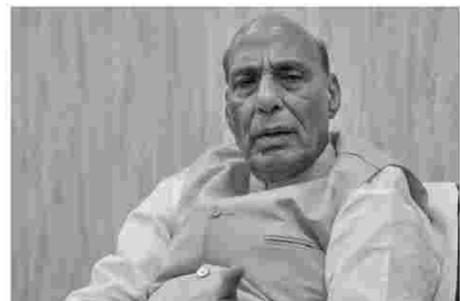
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Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday accused the Congress of having a "deal"

the INDIA alliance. In fact, the Constitution is in danger because of them. "It is PM Modi's resolution and guarantee that the Constitution will be saved at all cost. The Congress wants to change the Constitution and they were the ones who changed it during Emergency," he added. A crowd of BJP supporters, including women of all ages, had gathered here with cutouts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi carrying "Mai hun Modi ka parivar (I am Modi's family)" message written over them. Saffron flags with the party's lotus symbol were waved as people raised pro-Modi slogans.

India to Achieve Poverty Eradication Within 10-15 Years, says Rajnath Singh



Bhawanipatna
Asserting that the BJP will win all the 21 Lok Sabha seats in Odisha, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday claimed that poverty would be completely eradicated from India in the next 10-15 years and this is "Modi's guarantee".

Singh addressed two election rallies in Bhawanipatna, the district headquarters of Kalahandi, and Rayagada. "Though all Congress leaders from Jawaharlal Nehru to Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Manmohan Singh promised to end poverty, they failed. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has started the process to end poverty," he claimed.

Noting that about 25 crore people have been lifted from below the poverty line under the Modi regime, the defence minister said that this is not the BJP's claim but as per the Niti Aayog's data. No previous government had done what PM Modi did during his rule, he claimed.

"No family in India will be without a pucca house, piped drinking water and LPG connection in the next five years," he asserted. Singh said that earlier, articles were written on "poverty tourism" in Kalahandi as the district was known for hunger, starvation deaths and poverty but things have undergone a massive change under the Modi government.

Quoting former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi on

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expenditure of public money, Singh said, "If the Centre sent Rs 1, only 15 paise reached the poor. However, direct bank transfers under the Modi regime ended corruption and people get full amount sent by the Union government." Appealing to people to install a BJP government in Odisha, he said that Ayushman Bharat health scheme would be implemented in the state if the party was voted to power.

The defence minister claimed that terrorism has almost come to an end under the BJP government due to stern action against terrorists and sporadic cases will "completely vanish from Indian soil" under the leadership of PM Modi.

Singh attacked the Congress for "utterly failing" to curb corruption despite remaining in power for decades. Referring to Congress's allegation that the BJP would change the Constitution of India, Singh said, "They (Congress) have changed the Constitution 80 times... they had even changed the Preamble during the Emergency." On alleged misuse of CBI and ED against opposition leaders, Singh said everybody is free to challenge the work of investigating agencies in the court of law if there is any violation.

Kapil Sibal to Contest for SC Bar Association President's Post

New Delhi
Senior advocate Kapil Sibal has announced his candidature for the post of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president, elections to which are slated to be held on May 16.

A Harvard Law School graduate, Sibal was the additional solicitor general of India during 1989-90. He was designated as senior advocate in 1983. Between 1995 and 2002, the former Union minister served three times as the SCBA president.

SCBA Honorary Secretary Rohit Pandey said the veteran lawyer is contesting for the post of the president.

Senior advocate Adish Aggarwala is currently the president of the SCBA. The top court had earlier directed that some posts in the executive committee of the SCBA be reserved for women members.

A bench of justices Surya Kant and K V Vishwanathan had said it is of the view that the SCBA is a premier institution and is an integral part of the highest judicial forum of the country. It had directed that there shall be reservation for women members of the Bar.

Rahul Gandhi Demands CBI, ED Probe into Adani, Ambani Businesses

New Delhi
Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday dared Prime Minister Narendra Modi to hold a probe by the CBI or ED into whether businessmen Adani and Ambani sent his party "money in a tempo".

Rahul Gandhi's retort to PM Modi came after the latter attacked him at an election rally saying why he has "stopped" naming Adani and Ambani in his attacks and whether he has received money from them in return.

Taking a swipe at the Prime Minister, Gandhi in a video message asked whether Modi was speaking from his "personal experience" about money being sent by businessmen. "The money that PM Modi has given to the two businessmen, the Congress party will give the same

Shah Targets Pakistan, Vows Retaliation if Modi Re-Elected

Jalna
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said making Narendra Modi prime minister for the third time would mean responding to every bullet fired from Pakistan with a cannon shell, and accused the Congress of promoting the agenda of the neighbouring country.

Shah was speaking at a campaign rally in Jalna Sabha constituency in central Maharashtra for Union minister and BJP candidate Raosaheb Danve. "Making Narendra Modi PM for the third time means responding to every bullet from Pakistan with a cannon shell," he said. In the BJP-led NDA, it is decided who would be the prime minister after the elections, but in the opposition's INDIA bloc, decision

was yet to be taken on the issue, the senior BJP leader said. "Their leaders say they will become PM one by one. But such a huge country can not be run like a partnership company. They don't have any vision. But Modi has worked for ten years and has an agenda of 25 years," Shah said. He also alleged that if there was anyone who takes forward Pakistan's agenda, it was Rahul Gandhi's Congress.



amount of money to the people of India through the various schemes that the party has promised," Gandhi said. "The country knows who is the driver and helper of the BJP's tempo of corruption," he said in a post in Hindi on X. "Modi ji, are you a little scared? Normally you talk about Adani and Ambani in closed doors, but for the first time you have talked

about Adani and Ambani in public," Gandhi said in the video message. "You also know that they give money in a tempo. Is it your personal experience?" Gandhi said. "Do one thing - send the CBI, ED to them and carry out a thorough investigation and don't be scared," he said. Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday accused the Congress of having a "deal"

the Ram temple inauguration so that their vote bank would not be disgruntled," the Union minister further said. Coming down heavily on the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, the BJP's former ally, Shah claimed that Thackeray has now allied with a party (Congress) that wants to bring back triple talaq and run the country as per the Sharia law.

Shah also accused opposition parties of standing in the way of the construction of the Ram temple, and declining the invitation for its inauguration when Modi got the temple built. "...they refused to attend

the Ram temple inauguration so that their vote bank would not be disgruntled," the Union minister further said. Coming down heavily on the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena, the BJP's former ally, Shah claimed that Thackeray has now allied with a party (Congress) that wants to bring back triple talaq and run the country as per the Sharia law.

PM Modi Using 'Imagination' in Speeches, Not Facts: Priyanka Gandhi

Raebareli:

Asserting that people of the country want change and are fed up of being "lied" to, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been "using his imagination a lot" in his speeches of late and not speaking on the basis of facts.

Her remarks came a day after Prime Minister Modi claimed the Congress will reverse the Supreme Court verdict on the Ram temple if voted to power just like its landmark 1985 ruling in the Shah Bano case was overturned by the Rajiv Gandhi government as part of the party's appeasement politics.

In an exclusive interview with PTI while on the campaign trail in Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareilly from where her brother Rahul Gandhi is contesting the Lok Sabha polls, the Congress general secretary challenged the prime minister to speak on issues of unemployment, price rise and farmers' plight.

Asked about her assessment of the ground situation after three rounds of the seven-phase polls, Priyanka Gandhi said, "My assessment is that people are wanting change. Everywhere I go I get the sense that people are fed up now of being lied to, they are fed up with the level of discussion that is taking place in the media and on political stages." "They want their problems to be discussed, they want solutions, they want to know what has the government done for unemployment, what has it done to reduce prices which are so high, what is it doing to actually help the farmer, help the labourer, help the people with their problems," she said.

Priyanka Gandhi also said she gets the impression that winds of change are blowing in the country.

On the BJP's claim of "400 paar" for the NDA and 370 for the BJP, she claimed their estimations are going down.

She started here on Wednesday, the Congress leader said she thinks in the upcoming phases, their claims will go down further.

BJP will win all 80 seats in UP: Brajesh Pathak

Lucknow:

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak on Wednesday said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would win all the Lok Sabha seats in the state. "BJP is winning one-sidedly in all the seats of the first, second and third phase and the party will win all 80 seats in the state. PM Modi, Union HM Amit Shah and our national president JP Nadda are doing election rallies and the result will be in BJP's favour...", Pathak told reporters.

Notably, the Lok Sabha election 2024 in Uttar Pradesh has been scheduled in seven phases. The counting of votes for the Lok Sabha polls will be held on June 4. In the 2019 elections, turning the arithmetic of the SP-BSP 'Mahagatbandhan' in Uttar Pradesh upside down, the BJP and its ally Apna Dal (S) won 64 of the 80 Lok Sabha seats. The partners in the alliance, Akhilesh Yadav's SP and Mayawati's BSP could only muster 15 seats.

Congress Manifesto Echoes Muslim League: Adityanath

Gorakhpur:

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said the Congress manifesto appeared to represent a "new version of the Muslim League".

"This is not a 'Nyay Patra', but 'Anyay Patra' towards the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Castes and Sanatana Dharma," Adityanath told reporters at the Gorakhnath temple.

"A new version of the Muslim League has come. Nothing can be more shameful than the manifesto of the country's oldest political party, Congress, representing the Muslim League," he said, according to a statement issued in Lucknow.

When asked about Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's accusation that the BJP promotes hatred politics, the chief minister said that instead of telling white lies, she should at least develop a habit of speaking the truth.

These people won't be able to deceive the public anymore during the elections because the entire nation has come



together in the vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, he added.

Escalating his attack on the Congress, Adityanath said everyone knows that the grand old party has "inherited the policy of divide and rule".

"In 1947, the Congress allowed the cunning tactics of the British to succeed and divided

the country. After independence, the Congress fuelled class struggles within the country based on caste, region and language due to political selfishness," Adityanath said.

"Terrorism, Naxalism and separatism, all of these are contributions of the Congress," he added.

"Who doesn't know what Sonia Gandhi did as the chairperson of the UPA from 2004 to

2014?" Adityanath said and added that Justice Ranganath Mishra Committee was formed to undermine OBC reservation.

The chief minister said the committee even suggested allocating six per cent of the OBC reservation to the Muslims. The BJP and NDA opposed it at that time, and the Congress' plans could not materialize, he added.

Adityanath further

said the Congress and its allies also attempted to encroach upon the rights of SC-ST communities.

During the Congress government, there were attempts, as mentioned in the Sachar Committee report, to include some Muslim communities in the Scheduled Caste category. However, due to opposition from the NDA and BJP, the Congress' plans couldn't be fulfilled, he added.

The chief minister accused the Congress of implementing Section 370 in Kashmir and undermining OBC reservation in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

"The people of India will never allow the intention of the Congress to be fulfilled because divisive politics is not in anyone's interest," he added.

Adityanath emphasized the Congress' manifesto is of divisive nature, warning that it could lead India towards class conflicts and encroach upon the rights of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes.

He, however, expressed confidence the people of the nation will resist these plans of the Congress.

Congress' divisive politics of colour and region draws Smriti Irani's ire

Amethi:

Union minister and BJP candidate Smriti Irani Wednesday attacked the Congress on its leader Sam Pitroda's alleged racist remarks and alleged that it (Congress) tries to divide the countrymen on the basis of who is of which colour and who belongs to which region.

Pitroda, who is the chairperson of the Indian Overseas Congress, is reported to have said the "people of the east look like the Chinese and those of the south look like Africans".

Another disgusting truth has come to light today that this party (Congress) tries to divide the countrymen on the basis of who is of which colour and who belongs to which region and dares to insult them, Irani said while talking to reporters here.

She also accused the Congress of always dividing the country in the name of religion and caste.

The remarks made by the Congress leader today are not only condemnable but also reflect the thinking of Rahul Gandhi and his family towards our nation, she said while

reacting to Pitroda's alleged remarks which have kicked up a row.

In a podcast, Pitroda said, "We have survived 75 years in a very happy environment where people could live together, leaving aside a few fights here and there... We could hold the country as diverse as India together. Where people in the east look like the Chinese, people in the west look like the Arabs, people in the north look like, maybe, white and people in the south look like Africans."

"It does not matter. All of us are brothers and sisters. We respect different languages, different religions, different customs, different food," Pitroda said in the interview that was widely circulated on social media.

The BJP has fielded Irani from Amethi for the third consecutive time. She lost to Rahul Gandhi in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections but defeated him in 2019.

Congress has fielded Kishori Lal Sharma, a close aide of the Nehru-Gandhi family, against Irani from Amethi.

Polling in Amethi is scheduled for May 20.

SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav passes away at 82: Akhilesh

Shahjahanpur:

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday said this is an election of constitutional churning in which on one side there are "rakshak" (protectors) of the Constitution and on the other side there are its "bhakshak" (ravagers).

Addressing an election rally here, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said the public has strongly supported the Samajwadi Party and the INDIA bloc in the three phases of the Lok Sabha elections held so far.

"The wind that was blowing against the BJP since the first phase has continued and worked to eliminate the one who is 'emperor of lies' by voting against him," Yadav said.

"The current Lok Sabha polls is an election of constitutional churning in which on one side there are 'rakshak' of the Con-



stitution and on the other side there are its 'bhakshak'. It is to save the country's Constitution, democracy and reservation for the poor and the deprived," he added.

The Samajwadi Party chief said that now the time has come for the public to settle scores with the BJP.

"If we look at the accounts of the last 10

put nails on the roads to stop them.

"Although the government later withdrew those laws, the fight for the Minimum Support Price (MSP) is incomplete. The farmers are still not getting the price for their produce," he added.

Targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Yadav said, "We want to tell those who want to become Vishwa Guru that unless the income of our farmers increases, they will not get the MSP, neither will our farmers be happy nor will our country become developed." The Samajwadi Party chief alleged that the BJP government waived off loans worth Rs 16 lakh crore of big industrialists in the last 10 years but has not waived off loans of the farmers.

Yadav promises that the loans of the farmers will be waived off if the INDIA bloc forms the government in Delhi.

years, whatever the BJP said was false. Be it doubling the farmers' income, providing two crore jobs every year or reducing inflation," he said.

Yadav said the BJP government got three black laws related to agriculture passed in the Lok Sabha and when the farmers agitated against them, they built walls and

Congress is 'anti-Ram, anti-Sanatana': JP Nadda

Bilaspur:

BJP national president JP Nadda on Wednesday alleged the Congress is "anti-Ram" and "anti-Sanatana", and accused the party of joining hands with anti-national powers.

"When Sonia Gandhi was the chairperson of UPA, she had raised questions of existence of Ram and given an affidavit in the court terming him as fiction (imaginary) and Congress leader Kapil Sibal made all out efforts to delay, divert and stall the matter," Nadda said while addressing the conference of 'Panna Pramukh' of his home district Bilaspur.

Accusing the Congress of adopting policy of appeasement towards the minority communities, Nadda called upon the party cadres to go from door-to-door to expose the party's real face and claimed that it would be wiped out after the Lok Sabha polls.

Recalling that Ta-



mil Nadu minister Udhayanidhi Stalin had denigrated Sanatana Dharma as dengue, malaria and HIV, Nadda said that no Congress leader condemned his statement.

The BJP national president claimed that all other political parties compromised with their ideology but the BJP remained firm and constructed the grand Ram Temple at Ayodhya, performed 'Pran Pratistha', scrapped Article 370 and rid the Muslim women from the evil of triple

talaaq. Nadda, who made his first visit to the state after declaration of the Lok Sabha polls, said the BJP has 8.60 lakh booth presidents, 303 Lok Sabha members, 97 Rajya members, 1500 MLAs and 180 mayors besides hundreds of district presidents.

He said the BJP government has worked for welfare and development of all sections of the society by following the motto of "Sabha Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas".

Congress attempts to incite divisions based on color and region: Smriti Irani

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The remarks made by the Congress leader today are not only condemnable but also reflect the thinking of Rahul Gandhi and his family towards our nation, she said while reacting to Pitroda's alleged remarks which have kicked up a row.

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Akhilesh Takes Jibe at BSP over Akash Anand's Removal

Lucknow:

BSP president Mayawati's decision to divest her nephew Akash Anand of his responsibilities as party national coordinator and her successor has led to a war of words with the Samajwadi Party.

The SP described the BSP chief's announcement as an indication that her party is not winning a single seat as its traditional voters are also voting for the INDI Alliance to save the Constitution and reservation.

In a quick retort, Mayawati asked the SP not to worry about the happenings in her party and instead concentrate on the Yadav candidates fielded by them, "whose condi-



tion is very bad".

In a post on X, SP president Akhilesh Yadav remarked that the real reason behind Mayawati's "big decisions" is that the "BSP is not seen winning even a single seat because most of the traditional supporters

of the BSP are also voting for the INDI Alliance this time to save the Constitution and reservation".

On Tuesday, Mayawati removed her nephew Anand from his responsibilities as the BSP's national coordinator and

her successor, stressing that she has taken this decision in the interest of the party and the movement and till the time Anand gains "full maturity".

Reacting to the development, the SP president said, "Whatever step the BSP has taken to bring about a big change in its organisation is an internal matter of the party. Actually, the real reason behind this is that BSP is not seen winning even a single seat because most of the traditional supporters of BSP are also voting for INDI Alliance this time to save the Constitution and reservation." He said the BSP is taking this as a failure of its organisation. That is

why its top leadership is making such a big change in the organisation but now the game has gone out of the party's hands, he added.

"The truth is that when BSP has not won even a single seat in the last three phases, despite being in its area of influence, then there is no possibility left in the remaining four phases. In such a situation, we appeal to all the voters that you should not waste your vote and vote for those candidates of INDI Alliance who are fighting to save the Constitution of Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar and save reservation along with the Constitution," he said.

Indian Foreign Secretary Kwatra in Dhaka

Dhaka:

Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra arrived in Dhaka today (8 May) as part of "high-level exchanges" between the two countries.

The Indian foreign secretary arrived by a special flight in the evening for a short trip.

He will meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud and hold meeting with Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen on Thursday.

There are discussions regarding forthcoming visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India within next couple of months.

The preparatory issues may also come up for discussion during Indian FS's engagements in Dhaka, said a diplomatic source.

His planned visit to Bangladesh last month was postponed.

"Look, elections are underway there (in India). It (visit) was postponed because of various internal (India's) reasons," Foreign Minister Hasan told reporters when asked about the postponement of the visit at that time.

Though there was no official announcement from Dhaka and New Delhi regarding the visit, the Indian FS was scheduled to be in Dhaka on a brief visit on 20 April.

Diplomatic sources indicate that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India is planned for early July, after the conclusion of the neighbouring country's election.

BUSINESS

India's automobile retail sales surge 27% in April: FADA

New Delhi:

Total vehicle retail sales in India rose 27 per cent year-on-year to 22,06,070 units in April as all segments, including passenger vehicles and two-wheelers, witnessed growth, industry body FADA said on Wednesday.

The overall vehicle registrations stood at 17,40,649 units in April 2023.

Passenger vehicle retail sales rose 16 per cent to 335,123 units last month as compared to 289,056 units in the same month last year.

Similarly, two-wheeler registrations increased 33 per cent to 16,43,510 units in April against 12,33,763 units in the same month last year.

Commercial vehicle retail witnessed a 2 per cent year-on-year jump to 90,707 units in April.

Three-wheeler sales rose 9 per cent year-on-year to 80,105 units while tractors witnessed growth of 1 per cent at 56,625 units in April.

"While some attribute this growth to the shift in Navratri to April instead of March

UK PM Rishi Sunak suffers defection of MP amid charge of 'incompetence'

London:

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday suffered a humiliating defection from his party benches as a Conservative member of Parliament walked across the floor of the House of Commons to join the Opposition Labour ranks.

Natalie Elphicke, MP for Dover, said the Tories under Sunak "have become a byword for incompetence and division" in a resignation statement just moments before the weekly Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs).

The 43-year-old British Indian leader went on to face off with Labour Leader Keir Starmer, who made the most of the shock move which marks the second defection from the Tories to Labour in two weeks and comes on the back of bruising local election results for the governing party.

"When I was elected in 2019, the Conservative Party occupied the



centre ground of British politics. The party was about building the future and making the most of the opportunities that lay ahead for our country," Elphicke, a staunch critic of the Labour Party until only a few days ago, said in her resignation letter.

"Since then, many things have changed. The elected prime minister was ousted in a coup led by the unelected Rishi Sunak. Under Rishi Sunak, the Con-

servatives have become a byword for incompetence and division. The centre ground has been abandoned and key pledges of the 2019 manifesto have been ditched," she said.

She added that the Labour Party under Starmer has "changed out of all recognition" and its policies "can be trusted".

"We need to move on from the broken promises of Rishi Sunak's tired and chaotic gov-

ernment," she declared.

The dramatic moment of her crossing the floor of the House was followed by Starmer asking Sunak: "What is the point of this failed government staggering on" when the Tory MP on the front line of the small boats migration crisis on the coastline of Dover has openly attacked Sunak's handling of a priority issue like illegal migration.

"If he thinks his own MPs joining the Labour

Party are wrong if he thinks anyone believes any of the nonsense that he spouts, why doesn't he put it to the test and call a general election," questioned Starmer, in a series of stinging attacks during PMQs.

Sunak chose to ignore the question, instead accusing his opponent of having "out of touch values" with the British people.

"He snipes from the sidelines, the Conservatives are building a better future," said Sunak.

At the end of April, Dan Poulter, a doctor and Central Suffolk and North Ipswich member of Parliament for the Tories, had announced he was switching his allegiance to Labour before standing down as a parliamentarian at the next general election because he can no longer defend the Tory government's track record on the National Health Service (NHS).

Police & lawyers clash in Pakistan's Punjab province; more than 25 injured

Lahore:

Violent clashes left more than 25 injured outside a court in Punjab province on Wednesday, following which police arrested over 50 lawyers even as the bar council gave a call for a country-wide strike on Thursday against police brutality.

The clashes between the lawyers and the police took place outside the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Mall Road here over the issue of registering terrorism cases against the lawyers associated with jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party and shifting of lower courts to a different location.

The Mall Road became a battleground between riot police and lawyers after the latter tried to enter the LHC. The riot police baton-charged the protesting lawyers, also fired tear gas and used water cannons to disperse them.

Punjab police claimed they have arrested over 50 lawyers, soon after

which the Pakistan Bar Council gave a country-wide strike call on Thursday against alleged Punjab police brutality.

During the clashes over two-dozen lawyers and policemen sustained injuries. "At least 14 policemen, including two senior officers, are among the injured who have been shifted to hospital," Lahore senior police officer Kamran Faisal said.

Faisal claimed that it was the lawyers who first pelted stones at police that reacted and fired tear gas and used water cannons to disperse them.

As the clashes continued between them, Punjab's first woman chief minister Maryam Nawaz directed Inspector General Police Dr Usman Anwar to refrain from using force against the lawyers.

"Lawyers must also resolve their matters with LHC amicably. For the safety of the citizens of Lahore, confrontation should be avoided," Nawaz said on X.

Protest anthem 'Glory to Hong Kong' banned following appeals court ruling

Hong Kong:

An appeals court Wednesday granted the Hong Kong government's request to ban a popular protest song, overturning an earlier ruling and deepening concerns over the erosion of freedoms in the once-free-wheeling global financial hub.

"Glory to Hong Kong" was often sung by demonstrators during the huge anti-government protests in 2019. The



song was later mistakenly played as the city's anthem at international

sporting events, instead of China's "March of the Volunteers", in mix-ups

that upset city officials.

Critics have said prohibiting broadcast or distribution of the song further reduces freedom of expression since Beijing launched a crackdown in Hong Kong following the 2019 protests.

They have also warned the ban might disrupt the operation of tech giants and hurt the city's appeal as a business centre.

Judge Jeremy Poon wrote that the compos-

er intended for the song to be a "weapon" and so it had become, pointing to its power in arousing emotions among some residents of the city.

"We accept the assessment of the executive that prosecutions alone are clearly not adequate to tackle the acute criminal problems and that there is a compelling need for an injunction," he said.

He added the injunction was necessary to

persuade internet platform operators to remove "the problematic videos in connection with the song" from their platforms.

The ban would target anyone who broadcast or distributed the song to advocate for the separation of Hong Kong from China. It would also prohibit any actions using the song to misrepresent it as the national anthem with the intent to insult the

anthem. But it would exempt lawful journalistic and academic activities.

Report Ad
As of mid-afternoon on Wednesday, "Glory to Hong Kong", whose artist is credited as "Thomas and the Hong Kong people", was still available on Spotify and Apple Music in both English and Cantonese. A search on YouTube for the song also displayed multiple videos and renditions.

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Three-wheeler sales rose 9 per cent year-on-year to 80,105 units while tractors witnessed growth of 1 per cent at 56,625 units in April.

"While some attribute this growth to the shift in Navratri to April instead of March

last year, the overall increase was significant," the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) president Manish Raj Singhania said.

The passenger vehicle category experienced double-digit YoY growth, supported by enhanced model availability and favourable market sentiments, particularly around festive events like Navratri and Gudi Padwa, he noted.

"Despite strong bookings and customer flow, high competition, excess supply and discounting presented challenges for sustained growth.

"Additionally, the lack of new models in some portfolios impacted market traction," Singhania said.

The two-wheeler segment saw notable growth due to improved supply and the increasing demand for 125cc models, he said.

Positive market sentiments, bolstered by stable fuel prices, a favourable monsoon outlook, festive demand and the marriage season, contributed to the increase in sales, Singhania said.

CEA Optimistic, Forecasts 8% GDP Growth in FY24

New Delhi:

Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran on Wednesday said there was a high possibility of GDP growth touching 8 per cent in FY24 on the back of robust growth registered during the three quarters of the financial year ended March 2024.

India's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 8.4 per cent in the third quarter ended December 2023. In the second quarter, the GDP growth was 7.6 per cent while 7.8 per cent in the first quarter.

"The IMF has projected a growth rate of 7.8 per cent for FY24. But if you look at the trajectory of growth in the first three quarters, obviously, the possibility that the growth rate touches 8 per cent is quite high," he said at an event organised by NCAER here.

This is higher than RBI's India growth estimate of 7.5 per cent for 2023-24.

For the ongoing fi-



nancial year, he said the International Monetary Fund has an estimate of 6.8 per cent but the Reserve Bank of India expects a 7 per cent GDP growth for FY25.

"If that materialises, of course, it will be the fourth consecutive year after COVID starting from FY22 that the economy will have grown at 7 per cent or more. The RBI forecast of 7 per cent for FY25 turns out to be either correct or even underestimate, then it would be the fourth consecutive year of 7 or higher growth rate," he said.

However, he said,

a lot would depend on how the monsoon shapes up. Although the expectations are that there will be an above-normal monsoon, spatial and temporal distribution will matter.

On the growth beyond FY25, he said, there is a possibility of India growing between 6.5-7 per cent because the key difference this decade compared to the last is the one of balance sheet strength in the financial sector and the non-financial sector in the corporate sector as well.

The investment made in supply-side augmen-

tation of both physical and digital infrastructure has placed the economy to pursue non-inflationary growth, he said, adding that this also helps absorb the challenge of overheating.

He also expressed hope that there would be no nasty upside to inflation at the moment and it may moderate further to median range of 4 per cent in the coming months.

"There can always be scenarios in geopolitics that can cause inflation to be more than we expect, but at this point the baseline scenario is that inflation gradually converges to the mid-point of the target range." The government mandates the monetary policy committee to keep inflation within a target range of 2 per cent to 6 per cent.

He also said that the household sector's net financial savings flows were lower in 2022-23 at 5.1 per cent due to the bulk of savings shifting to real sectors.

Asked about the RBI's

recent circular on under-construction infra project financing, he said these are draft guidelines and would not like to comment.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) last week proposed to lenders that they set aside higher provisions for under-construction infrastructure projects and asked them to ensure strict monitoring of any emerging stress.

As per the draft norms, the RBI proposed that lenders set aside a provision of 5 per cent of the loan amount. This will be reduced to 2.5 per cent once a project is operational.

Currently, lenders are required to have a provision of 0.4 per cent on project loans that are not overdue or stressed.

Speaking during the event, NCAER Director General Poonam Gupta said, the IMF has projected acceleration in global growth and world trade volumes, decline in inflation rates, and oil prices to remain around the current levels.

India's Steel Demand Set for Double-Digit Growth: Steel Secy



New Delhi:

The domestic steel demand is expected to grow at a rate of 10 per cent over the next few years, supported by the government's focus on infrastructure, Steel Secretary Nagendra Nath Sinha said on Wednesday.

The official made the remarks addressing a 'CII Conference on Future Ready and Green Manufacturing' conference in the national capital.

"With the government's focus on infrastructure, the domestic steel demand will grow in double-digits, he said.

"The demand has grown by 13-14 per cent year-on-year in the financial year 2023-24. It will continue to grow by 10 per cent in the future," Sinha said.

As per official data, crude steel production was around 145 million tonnes (MnT) in 2023-24 financial year, up from 127 MnT in the last fiscal. Consumption stood at 136 MnT in the financial year 2023-24, as against 120 MnT in 2022-23.

Advt Contact:
9818-799941

Revolt RV 400 & RV 400 BZR e-motorcycle prices revised, starts from Rs 1.43 lakh

New Delhi:

Revolt Motors, India's leading electric motorcycle manufacturer, is thrilled to reveal a newly optimized pricing structure for its popular RV400 and RV400 BRZ models, now making them more accessible than ever.

The RV400 now starts at an attractive ex-showroom price of Rs. 1,49,950, offering exceptional value to those seeking innovative



and sustainable mobility. Similarly, the RV400

BRZ is now priced at Rs. 1,42,950, delivering remarkable style and performance at an unbeatable price point.

To further enhance the appeal, Revolt Motors is also introducing exclusive offers, including a flat Rs. 10,000 discount on both models. Additionally, customers can take advantage of a special exchange program, offering an extra Rs. 5,000 off when they trade in their old bikes

for a brand-new Revolt electric bike.

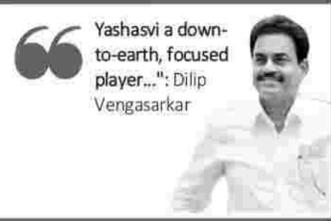
These enhancements reflect Revolt Motors ongoing commitment to providing superior value through cost efficiencies that directly benefit customers. By optimizing production costs for spare parts and batteries, Revolt Motors ensures its electric bikes remain highly attractive in terms of price and value.

Mrs. Anjali Rattan,

Co-Chairperson of RatanIndia Enterprises Limited, the parent company of Revolt Motors, expressed her excitement, saying, "We are delighted to unveil this new pricing and exclusive offers to ensure our electric bikes deliver the best value possible. Customer satisfaction remains our utmost priority, and we are committed to making high-quality, environmentally friendly

mobility accessible to all."

The RV400 and RV400 BRZ are celebrated for their advanced technology, long-range capabilities, and innovative features such as the MyRevolt app. By optimizing prices and offering exclusive deals, Revolt Motors continues to lead the way in promoting electric mobility, empowering more people to embrace a sustainable future.



India women eye T20I series clean-sweep against Bangladesh

Sylhet (Bangladesh)
The Indian women's cricket team would look to complete a 5-0 series whitewash when it faces a vanquished Bangladesh in the fifth and final T20 International of a weather-hit series here on Thursday.

The Indian bowlers have outperformed the batters, though two matches out of the four have been curtailed due to inclement weather. In the second match, India were to chase just 29 runs from 5.2 overs, and the batters got less overs to score.

Across four matches, India have only one fifty to show, by Shafali Verma (51) in the first match. Smriti Mandhana has a highest of 47 and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur has managed a best knock of 39 so far.

The performance does not reflect well on the team's batting core, considering that Bangladesh will host the women's T20 World Cup in October.

Mandhana and Kaur would be looking to grab the opportunity on Thursday and score big.

Kaur, especially, would be looking to



carry the momentum after her 39 off 26 in the last match on Monday, which was a 14-over-a-side affair. India won the match by 56 runs under Duck-

worth-Lewis method. Shafali has been inconsistent, though she is the highest scorer for India with 84 runs in this series, which is one

more than Mandhana (83). Kaur has 75 runs from the four matches.

On Thursday, the Indian batters will have the last chance to take as

many lessons as possible from this tour, regarding conditions and pitches.

Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana's form has declined after a half century in the first match. She totals 86 runs from four matches.

Sultana will once again be the key for Bangladesh's fortunes though she has not been among too many runs after making 51 in the first match on April 28.

The Indian bowlers have, however, done well on the slow pitches on offer here, with left-arm spinner Radha Yadav leading the chart with seven wickets.

She has found able support from pacers Pooja Vastrakar (5 wickets) and Renuka Singh (4), and off-spinner Shreyanka Patil (4).

Veteran Deepti Sharma has also taken five wickets after her fine 2/13 performance in the fourth match on Monday.

Bangladesh's Rabeya Khan is currently second in the bowling chart with six wickets from four matches. The 19-year-old pacer Marufa Akter

has also impressed with five wickets from four matches.

On the batting front, Bangladesh will bank on Sultana to counter the experienced Indian attack. But she will need support from the likes of Dilara Akter and Murshida Khatun if Bangladesh are to snatch a consolation win.

Bangladesh's last T20I win over India came in 2023 at Mirpur, and Sultana was a part of that match.

The Teams (from): India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Dayalan Hemalatha, Deepti Sharma, S Sajana, Shafali Verma, Shreyanka Patil, Amanjot Kaur, Pooja Vastrakar, Asha Sobhana, Yastika Bhatia (wk), Richa Ghosh, Radha Yadav, Renuka Singh Thakur, Titas Sadhu, Saika Ishaque.

Bangladesh: Nigar Sultana (c&wk), Murshida Khatun, Rubya Haider, Sobhana Mostary, Shorna Akter, Shorifa Khatun, Dilara Akter, Nahida Akter, Sultana Khatun, Ritu Moni, Rabeya Khan, Fahima Khatun, Marufa Akter, Fariba Trisna, Habiba Islam.

Match starts at 3.30 PM IST

We should have seen game home: DC head coach Sangakkara



New Delhi

Skipper Sanju Samson's departure left Rajasthan Royals in a tight spot but the team still should have won the IPL match against Delhi Capitals here, says their head coach Kumar Sangakkara. In a chase of 222, Samson got out after making 86 off 46 balls. His dismissal left the Royals with a task of getting 60 runs from 27 balls and eventually they fell short by 20 runs Tuesday night.

A win would have ensured a play-off spot for the Royals and exit for the Capitals but the result meant that the hosts stayed alive in the tournament.

"Irrespective of that dismissal, we still should have probably seen that game home," Sangakkara said at the post-match press conference.

"Losses happen. We had a great run at the start of the season. We bowled brilliantly in this game, especially Ashwin but once you make too many casual mistakes, it becomes very hard. At the end of the day it's about execution." Samson was not a happy man when he left the field because there were doubts if Shai Hope, who caught him at the boundary ropes, had touched the fence.

The decision was referred to the TV umpire who ruled Samson out but the Royals skipper chose to argue with on-field umpire before walking back.

Sangakkara said it is difficult sometimes even for the third umpire to make a call.

"It depends on replays and angles, and sometimes you think the foot's touched. But it is a difficult one for the third umpire to judge. The game was at a crucial stage, so that happens in

cricket.

"We have different perspectives on it. At the end of the day, you have to stand by that decision in terms of what the umpires did. If we have any other kind of opinion on it, we will share it with the umpire and sort it out." The coach was happy with Samson's batting approach.

"Sanju Samson has a lot of clarity about the way he should bat. There are certain stages where he seems to lose his concentration a little bit and we worked on that in the off season. It is really important for him, not just as a captain but as a batter. He is exceptionally talented," he said, adding that he takes very good care of the group.

The catch by Hope, who stumbled before regaining his balance, was hailed by Capitals' assistant coach Pravin Amre.

"In IPL some moments are very crucial, and it was a deciding moment in the game," Amre said.

"Sanju was batting so well. We have to give credit to the way Hope judged that catch. Umpires are there, and there is so much technology.

"We also thought from the dugout that he has (touched the boundary) but it (happens) in the game, and the umpire's decision is the final decision. It wasn't an easy catch, it was really travelling. After the game also I spoke to him and he said the ball came very, very fast." Delhi Capitals moved up a place to fifth in the points table after Tuesday's win.

They now have 12 points and can get a maximum of 16 while there are teams that have a chance of getting to 18 points and qualify for the play-offs.

Big cricket league unveils cricketing excellence in Grand launch

Noida

The Big Cricket League (BCL) made its electrifying debut on Wednesday at the Lexicon Hall, Radisson Blu MBD Hotel in Noida.

The official launch event and press conference unveiled a league that promises to revolutionize cricket in India, offering aspiring local players a once-in-a-lifetime chance to play alongside their cricketing heroes.

The BCL's vision is the brainchild of Founder and President, Mr. Rudra Pratap Singh, himself a former India international cricketer.

"We saw so many talented cricketers whose dreams remained just out of reach," Singh explained, "The BCL gives these local aspiring cricketers a platform to showcase their talent and experience the cricket like never before rubbing shoulders with their heroes."

Legendary cricket figures Mr. Dilip Vengasarkar, League Commissioner, and Mr. Courtney Walsh, Vice President, echoed Mr. Singh's enthusiasm during the press conference.

"This isn't just about another com-



petition," said the Former India Captain Vengasarkar, "It's about providing a stage to the people who have missed the opportunity for many reasons and showcasing the incredible depth of cricket talent in India. The blending of former international stars and local talent is what sets BCL apart. It's a celebration of cricket in its purest form."

Joining him was the Vice President of BCL, Former West Indies Captain

and Legendary Fast Bowler Mr. Courtney Walsh, who added, "We're going to see some stunning matches, unexpected heroes rise, and inspire a whole new generation of players around the world."

Mr. Rudra Pratap Singh, the Founder & President of BCL, echoed these sentiments, stating, "BCL is more than just cricket; it's an initiative, one of its kind in Indian cricket. We in-

vide everyone to be a part of this journey."

Mr. Anirudh Chauhan, the Co-Founder & CEO of BCL expressed that "We have seen some really incredible talent across the country during our selection phase of Big Cricket League Season-1. We are confident that the quality of talent will keep getting better with every season in the coming years because of more awareness about the concept."

The inaugural season promises riveting cricketing action with six dynamic franchises: Awadh Lions, Mumbai Marines, Rajasthan Kings, Southern Spartans, Bengal Rhinos, and North-east Challengers.

With 18 live T20 matches featuring 30 former international icons, 18 former first-class cricketers and 60 aspiring local Indian cricketers, BCL guarantees an unforgettable spectacle for cricket aficionados worldwide.

The league will be broadcasted on TV and OTT platforms across India and in over 30 countries, ensuring widespread coverage and engagement.

Hayden lauds Samson's IPL show, says he is handling both spin and pace with finesse

New Delhi

Former Australian opener Mathew Hayden is mighty impressed with the IPL performance of Sanju Samson and has lauded the T20 World Cup-bound power-hitter for "handling both spin and pace with finesse".

Samson was in his elements on Tuesday when he nearly guided Rajasthan Royals to a win over Delhi Capitals with his 86-run knock here. The visitors eventually fell short by 20 runs. He is currently third on the top-scorers chart with 471 runs in 11 matches so far.

"Sanju Samson was batting like a dream, scoring 86 off 46 balls. He's proven his worth time and again...Throughout the tournament, he's been a master blaster, handling both spin and pace with finesse," Hayden told Star Sports' 'Cricket Live'.

"He times his innings well. He's got the power. And the power is a big thing in T20 cricket. Yet, what stands out is his commitment to his team. He



just needed a bit of luck, especially towards the end of the match," he added.

Samson, who is the captain of Rajasthan Royals, has taken the second wicketkeeper's slot in the Indian team for the T20 World Cup starting June 1 in the Americas.

Former India cricketer Varun Aaron also praised his performance.

"I think Sanju Samson has been batting really well. Bowlers are keen on dis-

missing him, evident from their reluctance to bowl bouncers despite being allowed two per over in this IPL.

"Interestingly, the over he got out, Khaleel Ahmed bowled the first bouncer to him in the match.

This seemed to disrupt his footwork, as the subsequent wide slow ball, which he typically dispatches for six over covers, resulted in his dismissal," he said.

Jaiswal Poised to Break Lara's Records, According to Former West Indies Legend

New Delhi

Yashasvi Jaiswal's Test career is just nine games old but the great Brian Lara feels if there is anyone who can get close to his lofty feats, including the record 400 not out, it is the 22-year-old south-paw from India.

Lara's high praise for Jaiswal doesn't come out of the blue. The left-handers share a special bond, having spent a lot of time over the past year following their "4 am conversation" during the IPL when the West Indian was coaching Sunrisers Hyderabad and the young opener was in the Rajasthan Royals' camp.

A lot has changed since IPL 2023 with Jaiswal now becoming an integral part of India's Test and T20 team. His exploits in the longest format stand out as he averages close to 70 with three



hundreds including two double tons in the recent home series against England. What has impressed Lara is Jaiswal's ability to change gears as per the situ-

ation of the game.

"If I feel my records are threatened, Jaiswal has got a very good chance to do so. He has got capabilities, couple of double hundreds already. He is that good," Lara told PTI editors at its headquarters in an interaction arranged by Star Sports where he is a commentator and expert for the ongoing IPL.

Lara, who recently turned 55, is one of the all-time greats of the game having amassed close to 12,000 runs in Tests and over 10,000 runs in ODIs. His record of the highest individual total, 400 not out against England in 2004, still stands tall.

Lara fondly looked back at his first meeting with Jaiswal when asked about a light moment they shared on the sidelines of the Rajasthan Royals and SRH clash in the ongoing season.

Stirling to Spearhead Ireland's T20 World Cup Charge

Dublin

Veteran opening batter Paul Stirling was on Wednesday named Ireland skipper in their 15-member squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup in West Indies and USA.

Besides Stirling, the experienced faces in their squad are Andrew Balbirnie and George Dockrell as Ireland begin their campaign against India in their Group A fixture in New York on June 5.

Pakistan, Canada and hosts USA are the three other teams of the group. Ireland's batting lineup features Harry Tector, Lorean Tucker, Ross Adair, and Curtis Campher.

Left-arm seamer Josh Little and Mark Adair will lead the pace attack, which also has the options of Graham Hume, Campher, Barry McCarthy and Craig Young.



Leg-spinner duo of Ben White and all-rounder Gareth Delany will be the two spin options in the side.

It will be Ireland's eighth successive appearance in the competition, having qualified by finishing second in the regional final of the Europe Qualifier, next to Scotland.

They had qualified for the Super 8 stage in their debut in 2009.

ICC urged to prioritize Test cricket preservation amid T20's ascendancy: Lara

New Delhi

Admitting that T20 leagues have devoured a lot of Test cricket's space, West Indian legend Brian Lara has appealed to the ICC to step in to give a structure to the unrelenting invasion of the franchise-based tournaments. In the latest instance that fuelled questions over the relevance of Tests, South Africa recently sent an under-strength squad to New Zealand as their first-choice players were involved in the SA20 at home. "I think ICC (should) put their head together and find a way where franchise cricket takes over, but in a much more structured way and not in terms of the free fall that is going on at the moment," Lara said in an interaction with PTI editors at its headquarters which was facilitated by Star Sports where he is a commentator and expert for the ongoing IPL.

"I hope the astute thinkers could find a way to make sure that it (Test) remains relevant. I like the Test Championship and I think it is important to make sure that the game remains relevant." So, is cricket now taking the football route where leagues take precedence over international assignments? While Lara agreed in principle to the point, he found differences too in the two models. "Well, yes (cricket following the football way). Let's just look at football. For instance, other than the big cups - European cups, World Cup, South American cups - they may have a few friendlies. So, Barcelona, Manchester United, Manchester City, they have their footballers generally for 11 months of the year. "That seems to be working for football. It's taken off the burden as well for each country to be finding ways of making money by having football matches," Lara began. But Lara said the wealth being accumulated among three big nations - India, Australia and England - presented a rather different scenario in cricket. "The West Indies now is in a situation where our gate receipts can't make us survive."



Olympic Flame Arrives in Marseille with Grand Ceremony and Tight Security

Marseille
Excitement is building in the southern French city of Marseille, where a majestic three-masted ship carrying the Olympic torch arrived from Greece ahead of a welcoming ceremony at sunset Wednesday.

Paris Games organizers have promised "fantastic" celebrations in the city, where the Old Port has been placed under high security.

The torch was lit in Greece last month before it was officially handed to France. It left Athens aboard a ship named Belem, which was first used in 1896, and spent twelve days at sea.

More than a thousand boats will accompany the Belem's parade around the Bay of Marseille. The ship will dock on a pontoon that looks like an athletics track in the Old Port.

The welcoming ceremony at dusk on Wednesday will include a demonstration by the jets of the Patrouille de France, the acrobatic team of the French air force.

"The return of the Games to our country will be a fantastic celebration," said Paris 2024 Olympics Organizing Committee President Tony Estanguet.

"As a former athlete, I know how important the start of a competition is. That is why we chose Marseille, because it's definitely one of the cities most in love with sports," added Estanguet, a former Olympic canoeing star with gold medals from the 2000, 2004 and 2012 Games. Safety of visitors and residents has been a top priority for authorities in Marseille, France's second largest city with nearly a million inhabitants. About 8,000 police officers have been de-



ployed around in the harbour where tens of thousands of spectators are expected to gather for the ceremony. Thousands of firefighters and bomb disposal squads have been positioned around the city along with maritime police and anti-drone teams patrolling the city's waters and its airspace. "It's a monumental day and we have been working hard for visitors and residents of Marseille to enjoy this historical moment," said Yannick Ohanessian, the city's deputy mayor. The torch relay will start on Thursday in Marseille, before heading to Paris through iconic places across the country, from the world-famous Mont Saint-Michel to D-Day landing beaches in Normandy and the Versailles Palace. Many people and families were strolling along the boardwalk on the Mediterranean, beaming with excitement and curiosity. A band of musicians, wearing T-shirts with the slogan "Marseille, proud to welcome the Olympics Flame," entertained tourists and residents as well as workers who were set-

ting up the Olympic stage and the ponton bridge over which the Olympic flame is expected to be carried from the boat to France's mainland. "I wanted to see how things are going and maybe come back later with the kids, if it's not too crowded, to see the flame arrive," said Paul Vuarambon, a Marseille resident, on a walk along the Old Port with his son. Despite high security and the overhaul of the entire city for Wednesday's ceremony, Vuarambon said, "People here are pretty happy with the Olympics." France's Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera stressed the symbolic and practical importance of the event after years of preparations for the Paris Games. "We really want to make sure that the beginning of the torch relay here will drive enthusiasm and a sense of pride for French people. That will give us a big moment of celebration and joy," Oudea-Castera said in an interview with The Associated Press. "Sport can bring up these type of emotions and Olympism is much more

than sport," she added. "It conveys a message to the world and the torch relay is a symbol of peace." Olympic swimmer Florent Manaudou has been chosen to be the first carrier of the flame in France. Manaudou, who won four Olympic medals, is the brother of swimmer Laure Manaudou, who won three Olympic medals at Athens in 2004.

"We are extremely proud," Marseille mayor Benoit Payan said. "This is where it all begins." The show will "dazzle the world," said Payan, adding that up to 150,000 spectators are expected in the Old Port.

Marseille people "have a sense of celebration, a sense of the game, sport and Olympism in their guts," he said, recalling that the city was founded by Greek colonists some 2,600 years ago.

Heavy police and military presence was seen patrolling Marseille's city center Tuesday, as a military helicopter flew over the Old Port, where a range of barriers have been set up.

French Interior Ministry spokesperson Camille Chaize said officials were prepared for security threats including terrorism.

"We're employing various measures, notably the elite National Gendarmerie Intervention Group unit, which will be present in the torch relay from beginning to end," she said.

The Olympic cauldron will be lit after the Games' opening ceremony that will take place on the River Seine on July 26.

The cauldron will be lit at a location in Paris that is being kept top-secret until the day itself. Among reported options are such iconic spots as the Eiffel Tower and the Tuileries Gardens outside the Louvre Museum.

AIFF panel approves Prevention of Sexual Harassment policy

New Delhi
Rocked by allegations of physical assault against its executive member Deepak Sharma, the All India Football Federation on Wednesday approved and implemented the AIFF Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) Policy with immediate effect.

The decision was arrived at by the AIFF executive committee, following thorough deliberations and careful consideration, the federation said in a statement.

The AIFF PoSH Policy, which is based on the PoSH Act 2013, is aimed at ensuring a safe and inclusive environment within the football community. It has been crafted and vetted by the AIFF legal team.

The decision comes weeks after allegations of physical abuse against Sharma. The executive committee member who is also the owner of Himachal Pradesh-based football club Khad FC was accused by two women footballers of physically assaulting them on the night of March 28 in a drunken state.

Following the incident, Sharma was arrested by Goa Police and was later released on bail.

In another case, a woman employee at the AIFF headquarters here had lodged a "verbal" complaint of "harassment" against a male colleague. The woman, however, did not press a formal charge.

Before that there was also the Alex Ambrose sexual harassment case that created crisis in Indian football less than two years ago. The incident came to fore in July 2022 when the assistant head coach of the Indian U-17 women's football



team, Ambrose, was sacked for sexual misconduct by the Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) which was handling the day-to-day affairs of AIFF back then.

On the implementation of the policy, AIFF acting secretary general M Satyanarayan said, "The need for a PoSH policy exclusively for the AIFF staff was much needed. We have drafted this by taking policies as per the PoSH Act of 2013 and the policies in a few other organisations as well and incorporated them into our policy."

"Our PoSH policy has been designed in a way that it can be altered and adapted as we go forward. Along with this, we have also planned to have an expert on the PoSH policy to address our staff at least three times a year to keep reminding them of it." "It is essential, especially for our junior and women's teams. We feel it is necessary for all stakeholders in various positions to be fully aware of the PoSH policy," he said.

Malaysian Soccer Star and Two Others Targeted in Series of Acid Attacks

Kuala Lumpur
A Malaysian international footballer has been splashed by acid and two other top players were attacked within a week by unknown assailants, in a rare outbreak of violence targeting athletes in the country. Police criminal investigation chief Mohamad Shuhaily Mohamad Zain said Wednesday that there were similarities in the three attacks and that the victims appeared to have been targeted. But investigators have not determined whether the cases were linked.

Faisal Halim, who plays as a winger for the national team and Malaysian club Selangor, was hospitalized with fourth-degree burns following an acid attack by two assailants at a shopping mall on Sunday. He was reported to be in critical but stable condition, with limited movement and speech. Just three days earlier, another

prominent national team player, Akhyar Rashid, was assaulted in a robbery outside his house in eastern Terengganu state after his return from training. He was hit with an iron rod, leaving him head and leg injuries. His attackers fled after taking money from him. Late Tuesday, former national team captain Safiq Rahim was tailed by two assailants on a motorbike after a training session in southern Johor state. They later threatened him with a hammer and smashed his car's rear window but he was not physically hurt.

"Our investigations also showed that the players involved were tailed prior to the attacks. The perpetrators also worked in pairs in all the attacks," Shuhaily, the investigation chief, was quoted as saying by English-language daily The Star. Two people were initially detained over Faisal's attack, but one was later released.

Aman Sehrawat eyes Olympic berth at final qualifying event in Istanbul

Istanbul
The immensely-talented Aman Sehrawat and the experienced Deepak Punia will be followed keenly when they take to the mat to lock the men's freestyle quotas for Paris Olympics at the World Qualifiers beginning here on Thursday.

It is the last event to secure spot for the Paris Games.

There were high hopes that U23 world champion Aman would qualify for the Games either at the World Championships or the Asian Qualifiers in Bishkek but both the chances were lost. While Aman (57kg) bumped into a strong opponent in Gulomjon Abdullaev in the quota-deciding bout in Bishkek, both World Championships silver medallist Deepak (86kg) and Sujeet Kalkal (65kg) could not reach Bishkek on time after being stuck in Dubai due to storm.

Now it's a do-or-die situation for all Indian wrestlers at Istanbul where the two finalists in each category will be awarded the quotas. A third quota will be given to the wrestlers who emerges winner in the bout between the two bronze medallists.

Asia needs Asia's best players to shine on home soil: ATF President Yuriy Poltskiy

New Delhi
Determined to change the face of Asian tennis in his tenure, Yuriy Poltskiy, the youngest ATF President, has exhorted the best players from the region to compete in Asian events before travelling abroad and has set his sights on developing the game in smaller tennis-playing nations such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Syria.

The 36-year-old Poltskiy had won the Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) presidential elections in December last year on the back of reforms in his home country Kazakhstan and wants to use his trouble-shooting experience to help nations struggling to popularise the game.

Poltskiy is clear that Asia's strong players need to compete in their own events which should help upcoming players with exposure and learning, and a robust Asian tour and programme for U14 players with considerable financial support is the need of the hour.

He is also clear that ATF would work in tandem with ATP rather than competing with them and create a viable Asian tour with lots of tournaments in close vicinity that will reduce the travel expenses of players from the region.

Asia has only six players in the

Neeraj Chopra Returns to India for First Competition in Three Years at Federation Cup

New Delhi
Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will compete at home for the first time in three years after confirming participation in the National Federation Cup to be held in Bhubaneswar from May 12 to 15.

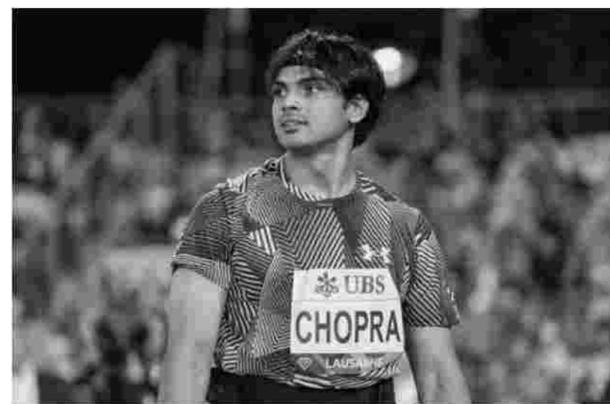
The 26-year-old superstar is expected to travel to India from Doha after opening his season in the first leg of the prestigious Diamond League series on May 10.

"As per entries @Neeraj_chopra and Kishore Kumar Jena will compete in domestic competition starting May 12 in Bhubaneswar," the Athletics Federation of India tweeted.

Chopra's coach Klaus Bartonietz also confirmed that his ward is taking part in the Bhubaneswar event.

As per the schedule that came out on Wednesday, the men's javelin qualifying round will be held on May 14 and the final will take place on May 15.

The 28-year-old Kishore Jena, who won a silver in the Hangzhou Asian



Games where Chopra won gold, will also be competing in the Doha Diamond League on May 10.

Chopra last took part in a domestic competition at the same event on March 17, 2021, when he won a gold with a throw of 87.80m.

Since then, Chopra has won a historic gold in the Tokyo Olympics,

became Diamond League champion in 2022, world champion in 2023 and defended Asian Games gold in China.

He also won three individual legs of Diamond League and claimed a silver in the 2022 World Championships.

He is, however, yet to touch the 90m mark. His personal best and national record is 89.94m.

Aarav Bhatia Dominates Round 2, Secures Maiden Victory in Meritus Cup Karting



Bengaluru
Gurugram's Aarav Dewan of Leapfrog Racing won Round 2 of the junior class while Bengaluru's Ishaan Madesh of Peregrine Racing took the honours in the senior class in round 2 of the FM-SCI Mecro Meritus Cup here on Wednesday. Chennai's Rivaan Dev Preetham, the reigning Rotax champion, won both the races in the Micro class.

For the 14-year Aarav, a Class 8 student of Heritage Experiential School, this is his first career win at the national-level. He won the final race and came third in the super heat. He emerged as the championship leader with a total of 61 points. Arafath, who led the table with 32 points after round

1, was second with 58 points. In the Micro class, 11-year Preetham of M Sport topped the table after two rounds with 67 points. The Class 5 student of Alphabet International School won both the rounds. Rehan Khan, who bagged 29 points in each of the two rounds was in second place.

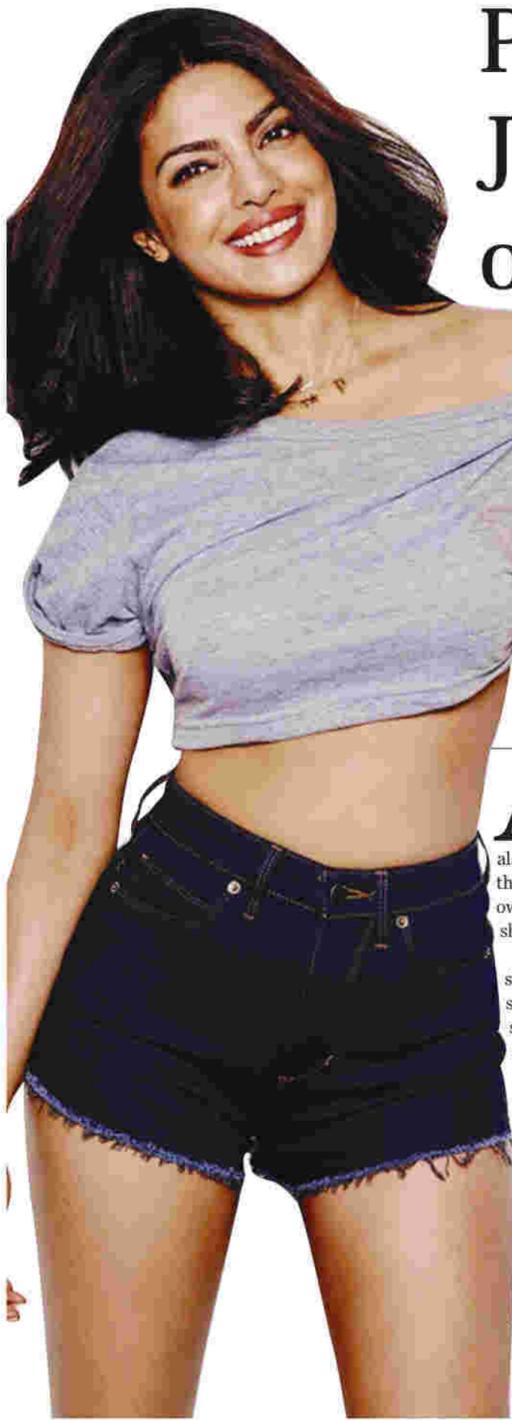
Yug Jain of Peregrine Racing is third in the standings after two rounds. Multiple National champion Ishaan won round 2 in senior class with a third in the sprint and a victory in the feature race. But it is Siddharth Rooso of Kartkrew Motorsports, who is leading the senior table with 64 points and his teammate Ethan Joy on 51 in third. Ishaan did not take part in round 1.



world's top-100 and it worries Poltskiy.

"Asian tennis needs the participation of the best Asian players in Asian tournaments, because, quite often, they go to Europe, they go to North America, South America and it means that the local Asian players don't have a chance to compete with the best," Poltskiy said in an interview.

"And to go to Europe, it's very costly. So the ones who are good, they spend a lot of money, which can be redistributed, you know, in order to increase the base, like you will send not only the best



Priyanka Chopra Jonas finishes shooting of 'Heads of State'

Los Angeles

Actress Priyanka Chopra had a busy schedule, and she was also not able to attend the Met Gala this year owing to her back-to-back shoots.

The actress has now shared an update that she has wrapped up the shoot of her upcoming show 'Heads of State',

which will stream on Amazon Prime soon.

The actress shared a lovely video that features her star attraction, Malti Marie Chopra Jonas. In the video, one can see Priyanka on the sets for the shoot, and she is accompanied by Malti while getting her make-up done. Also, her daughter is being entertained by the crew while PC gets done with her work.

Priyanka is also seen playing with Malti and holding her on her shoulders as she exercises for the day. Over all, it is a fun video to watch as she wraps up the shoot of the show.

While sharing the video, Priyanka praised the entire team and crew. She wrote, "And it's a wrap. It's been a year. Well, a lot happened, but here we are. Tonight I wrapped up in a set that was always so full of laughter and professionalism. That

rare combination doesn't always happen. This movie was a breeze because the cast and crew came prepared with their A game every day. It's been an honor to work with some legends in our business on this one. I hope y'all have as much fun watching it as we did making it. Heads of state will be on primevideo.. when you ask me? Above my pay grade, lol. Gratitude." Priyanka was in India recently with her daughter Malti and husband Nick Jonas. Her brother Siddharth also got roka recently. During her India visit, she also offered prayers at the newly constructed Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The actress is currently doing promotions for her upcoming production 'WOMB'. During one such interaction, she spoke about pay parity in an interview with India Today. Priyanka said she was

herself 'surprised' when her agents made the call around pay parity. She said, "When my agents told me that we were going to ask for pay parity, even I was surprised. I was like, 'What? No, that doesn't happen in our industry.' And they were like, 'Let's just ask the question.' So, I didn't even know that I had that power. I did not know I could aspire for more because I was desensitized. I was told this is normal."

She had earlier also spoken about not getting paid on par with her male co-actors in Bollywood. Priyanka had said that she 'was paid 10 percent of the salary of my male co-actor.'

Heads of State also have Idris Elba, John Cena, and Jack Quaid in pivotal roles. The series is directed by Ilya Naishuller. She will be next seen in 'The Bluff', which will be directed by Frank E. Flowers.

Huma Qureshi returning as Pushpa Pandey for 'Jolly LLB 3'

Mumbai
Actor Huma Qureshi is set to reprise her role of Pushpa Pandey in the third installment of the courtroom comedy franchise "Jolly LLB".

Actors Akshay Kumar and Arshad Warsi recently started filming for the project, titled "Jolly LLB 3". Warsi played the role of Jagdish Tyagi aka Jolly in 2013's "Jolly LLB" and Kumar starred in the 2017 sequel, titled "Jolly LLB 2", as Jagdishwar Mishra.

Qureshi had featured as Pandey, the wife of Kumar's Jagdishwar Mishra, in "Jolly LLB 2".

"Pushpa Pandey is backkkk and looking pretty in Pink #JollyLLB3. Clicked by the one and only @akshaykumar #pushpa #pink #onset @kangratalkies #nofilter needed when ur happy #blessed," the 37-year-old actor posted on Instagram on Tuesday evening.

Besides Warsi and Kumar, seasoned actor Saurabh Shukla, who es-



sayed the role of Justice Sunderlal Tripathi in the earlier two movies, is also coming back for the third part, "Jolly LLB 3" is directed by Subhash Kapoor, and produced by Star Studios and Kangra Talkies.

Qureshi was most recently seen in "Tarla" as well as the third season of her hit series "Maharani". Her upcoming movie is "Pooja Meri Jaan", co-starring Mrunal Thakur.

Janhvi Kapoor, RajKummar give glimpse of their 'imperfectly perfect partnership' in 'Mr and Mrs Mahi'

Mumbai

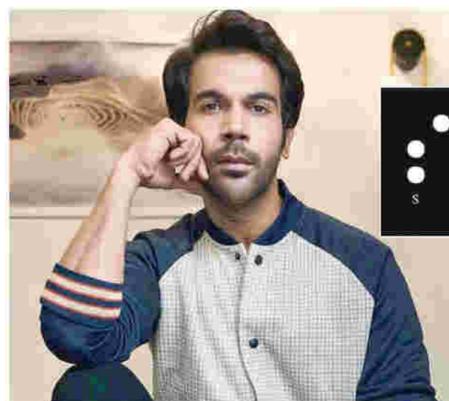
Excitement is brewing as the makers of the highly anticipated film 'Mr and Mrs Mahi' starring Janhvi Kapoor and RajKummar Rao unveiled new posters. Janhvi took to Instagram and treated fans with a new glimpse of her and RajKummar's characters.

The first poster captures Janhvi and Rajkummar wearing their Indian jerseys and standing close to each other. Beaming in joy, the Indian flag could be seen painted on their faces. In the second poster, Janhvi and RajKummar are seen screaming with joy and cheering in the stands of the cricket stadium.

The next poster shows the actors expressing their happiness amidst the crowd gathered to watch the game.

Sharing the posters, Janhvi wrote, "Miliye Mr aur Mrs Mahi se, inke liye life is cricket se badh ke, Mr Mahi only loves his dear wife #MrAndMrsMahi in cinema on 31st May, 2024."

As soon as the posters were shared, fans and industry members chimed in the comment section.



One of the users wrote, "We got another Dhoni movie before Gta 6."

Another user commented, "Can't Wait."

Producer Karan Johar also posted on his Instagram "Love, ALL OUT! Witness a glimpse of an imperfectly perfect partnership that goes beyond the boundaries."

Directed by Sharan Sharma, known for his directorial debut 'Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl,' 'Mr and Mrs Mahi' marks the second collaboration between Janhvi Kapoor and RajKummar Rao after their successful stint in 'Roohi.'

The film promises to be a captivating sports drama, offering audiences a com-

tails with fans.

While fans eagerly anticipate 'Mr and Mrs Mahi,' Janhvi Kapoor has an exciting lineup of projects in the pipeline.

Apart from her role in 'Devvara' alongside Jr NTR and Saif Ali Khan, she is set to star in 'Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari' alongside Varun Dhawan and 'RC16' alongside Ram Charan.

On the other hand, RajKummar Rao is gearing up for the release of the biopic 'Srikanth,' which chronicles the inspiring journey of industrialist Srikanth Bholala, set to hit theatres on May 10, 2024.

Additionally, Rao has an exciting lineup of projects, including the highly anticipated 'Stree 2' opposite Shraddha Kapoor and the family drama 'Vicky Vidya Ka Wo Wala Video' opposite Triptii Dimri.



"Team work Mets the dream work": Alia Bhatt shares Met Gala BTS moment

Mumbai

Alia Bhatt made a resplendent appearance at the Met Gala 2024 held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York on May 6 (early morning of May 7 in India).

Dressed in a breathtaking saree designed by the maestro, Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Alia turned heads and garnered widespread admiration.

Shortly after her radiant presence on the red carpet, Alia Bhatt took to Instagram to share a candid moment with her dream team, comprising designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee, stylist Anaita Shroff, and other talented individuals.

Flashing her brightest smile, Alia posed alongside her team, captioning the image with the words, "Team-work Mets the dream work." The theme for this year's Met Gala, 'Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion,' and the dress code, 'The Garden of Time,' set the stage for an enchanting display of creativity.

Alia Bhatt's choice of attire, a Sabyasachi saree, perfectly aligned with the theme, encapsulating the essence of timelessness and elegance.

In a series of Instagram posts, Alia shared glimpses of her Met Gala experience, including a behind-the-scenes look at the creation of her exquisite ensemble.

Revealing the staggering amount of effort invested, Alia disclosed that it took 1965 man hours to craft the



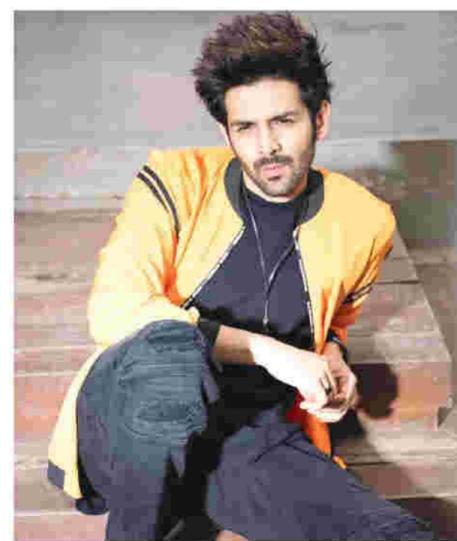
masterpiece. She expressed gratitude towards the 163 dedicated individuals involved in the process, including master craftspeople, embroiderers, artists, and dyers.

Reflecting on the intricate details of her attire, Alia shared, "We embraced a delicate nostalgia for hair and makeup - an elevated coiffure embellished with intricately woven braids and soft freckles - a homage to time's gentle caress."

The social media sphere buzzed with admiration as fellow celebrities and fans alike showered praise on Alia's stunning appearance.

Janhvi Kapoor exclaimed, "Insane insane insane," while Sophie Choudry described Alia's look as "ethereal."

Meanwhile, on the work front, Alia will be seen in Vasan Bala's 'Jigra', which is co-produced by Karan Johar and Alia herself. The film is all set to hit theatres on September 27, this year.



Kartik Aaryan shares new glimpse from 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3' set

Mumbai

Actor Kartik Aaryan, who is gearing up for his upcoming film 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3', on Tuesday, shared a new glimpse from the sets.

Taking to Instagram stories, Kartik treated fans with a new picture but hid his face with the help of a cool emoji wearing sunglasses.

Sharing the photo, he wrote, "Shoot 1. #Bhool Bhulaiyaa3."

Helmed by Anees Bazmee,

the third part of the hit franchise also stars Vidya Balan and Triptii Dimri in the lead roles and is all set to hit the theatres on the occasion of Diwali 2024.

Vidya Balan essayed the role of Manjulika in the 2007 psychological horror-comedy film 'Bhool Bhulaiyaa'.

"Welcoming Vidya on board, Kartik on Instagram wrote, "And its happening. Og Manjulika is coming back to the world of Bhool Bhulaiyaa. Super thrilled to wel-

come @balanvidya. This Diwali is going to be cracking #BhoolBhulaiyaa3 @aneesbazmee @series.official #BhushanKumar," he wrote. Bazmee also directed the second part. The first part was helmed by Priyadarshan and featured Akshay Kumar alongside Vidya.

In the second part, Kartik shared screen space with Tabu and Kiara Advani.

Apart from this, Kartik is all set to come up with 'Chandu Champion'.

Helmed by Kabir Khan, 'Chandu Champion' is based on the extraordinary real-life story of a sportsman and his spirit of never giving up. Kartik will portray the character of Chandu. 'Chandu Champion' marks Kartik's first collaboration with director Kabir Khan.

Apart from that, Kartik will also be seen in director Hansal Mehta's upcoming film 'Captain India' and director Anurag Basu's next 'Aashiqui 3'.