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Modi is a king, has nothing to do with Constitution: Rahul Gandhi

LUCKNOW: Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday of attacking the Constitution, saying, "Modi-ji is a king, I am telling the truth. He is not the prime minister, he is a king. He has nothing to do with the cabinet, Parliament or Constitution. He is the king of the 21st century and is the front for two or three financiers who have the real power." "Congress will also have to change its politics in the coming times. This will have to be done. I also want to say that Congress has also made mistakes and I am saying this while being from Congress," he said in his speech at a conclave on the Indian Constitution in Lucknow. Gandhi added that he is "100%" prepared for a debate with PM Modi but knows the PM will not agree. Rahul claimed BJP would be restricted to less than 180 seats in Lok Sabha elections. "I can give



you in writing, if you want, that Modi is not going to be PM again," he said. Reiterating his demand for a caste-based census, Rahul said 90% of the population in India comprises people from SCs/STs, OBCs, Dalits, tribals, minorities, and poor from the general community who are not given equal participation. "If the nation is to be strengthened, it cannot be done without including this 90% population. If you say that the 90% will not come into bureaucracy, sports, media, judiciary, and even beauty pageants, then what superpower will you make? Do you want to make 10% of the popu-

lation a superpower," Rahul said. BJP politicians are openly stating the party will change the Constitution, the Congress MP said, holding a copy of the Indian Constitution. Assuring the gathering that Congress would ensure fair representation of the marginalised community, if it forms govt, Rahul reiterated BSP founder Kanshi Ram's vision of "jiski jitni sankhya bhari uski utni hissedari." At the end of his speech, he also took some questions from the audience. When asked about the Old Pension Scheme not being included in the party manifesto.

Will quit politics if CM doesn't return to power, says Pandian

JHARSUGUDA: BJD leader V K Pandian on Friday said he would quit politics if chief minister Naveen Patnaik doesn't return to power with a three-fourth majority and dared Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan to do the same if BJP loses the elections in Odisha. "I will retire from politics if Naveen Patnaik doesn't become the CM of Odisha again. Pandian asked at a public gathering at Panchgaon Bazar ground in Lakhanpur block of Brajarajnagar assembly constituency. He was campaigning for BJD's Bargarh Lok Sabha candidate Parinita Mishra as well as assembly nominees Dipali Das (Jharsuguda) and Alaka Mohanty. Slamming Dharmendra, Pandian said the Union minister has been disrespecting the CM.

Cong trying to scare India to give POK to Pak: Shah

KHUNTI/NEW DELHI: Home minister Amit Shah on Friday said that the Congress and other India alliance parties are seeking to scare India into making concessions and asserted that every inch of PoK belongs to India and no force can snatch it as he reacted to Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar's remarks that India should "respect" Pakistan because it has an "atom bomb." In a sharp response to Congress leader, former Union minister Mani Shankar Aiyar's comment in an interview that India resume dialogue with Pakistan since the latter has got nuclear weapons, Shah said "Mani Shankar Aiyar is telling us to respect Pakistan as it possesses an atomic bomb. Few days ago, INDIA alliance leader Farooq Abdullah said do not talk about PoK as Pakistan has an atomic bomb. I want to tell the Congress and INDIA alliance that PoK belongs to India and no force can snatch it,"



Trinamool-NCW spat over Sandeshkhali reaches EC

KOLKATA: The Sandeshkhali videos and retraction of rape allegations by two of three "survivors" triggered a fresh row Friday involving Trinamool Congress and National Commission for Women (NCW), culminating in the latter writing to Election

Commission about West Bengal's governing party "compelling women to withdraw cases". The missive to EC came hours after TMC threatened to move the poll panel against NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma for allegedly "forcing and deceiving women from Sandeshkhali. Shah said at an election rally in Jharkhand's Khunti. In the, Aiyar, a confidant of Nehru-Gandhi family, argued that muscle flexing against Pakistan could be counter-productive considering the possibility of "crazy guys over there" deciding to

HC gags TMC MLA on demographics

KOLKATA: Calcutta High Court on Friday prohibited Trinamool MLA Humayun Kabir from making comments based on the population demographic in an area. A division bench of Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam and Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharyya directed the Murshidabad district magistrate to give wide publicity to the court order, ahead of the third phase of Lok Sabha elections, when Behrampore goes to polls. EC issued a show-cause notice to Kabir for his comments after the April 17 Ram Navami clashes in Murshidabad and asked him to respond by noon of May 13. The notice said the poll panel had gone through the contents of the speech and found it to be violative of the model code of conduct.

2024 will be last election 'decided by US citizens': Elon Musk

NEW DELHI: Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX and a prominent tech figure, recently ignited a political debate with his claim that the 2024 US presidential election could be the last to be decided by American citizens alone. This provocative statement, shared on his own social media platform X, reflects his concerns about the influence of illegal immigrants on electoral outcomes—a topic that has long been a point of contention in US politics. Musk's comment was in response to a new bill passed by House Republicans that aims to include a citizenship question in the national census, a move opposed by the White House and unanimously by Democrat legislators.

As per a report in the Independent, the bill, known as the Equal Representation Act, is designed to alter how congressional seats are allocated by excluding non-citizens from the population counts used in electoral apportionment. Speaker of the House Mike Johnson defended the legislation, arguing that it is common sense that "only American citizens should be counted for electoral apportionment." This legislative change, if implemented, would potentially impact states with large immigrant populations—both Democrat and Republican-leaning—by possibly reducing their representation in Congress. Critics of the bill argue that it contravenes the Fourteenth Amendment, which mandates counting the "whole number of persons" in each state for census purposes.

ADR moves SC, seeks authentic voter turnout figures from EC

NEW DELHI: Following complaints by Congress, TMC and CPM to EC alleging unusual delay in release of final voter turnout figures for phase-I and II of ongoing elections, an NGO has moved the SC seeking a direction to EC to publish in its website authenticated constituency-wise voting percentage after each phase of polling.

'Won't vote for you because you're an Indian': US author to Vivek Ramaswamy

KRISHNANAGAR: NEW DELHI: US author and commentator Ann Coulter said that she would not have voted for the Republican candidate Vivek Ramaswamy in the Presidential elections because he was an "Indian". Speaking to the Indian-American, who was running for President, Coulter said on his podcast 'Truth', "I agreed with many, many



things you said.. in fact probably more than most other candidates when you were running for president..but I still would not have voted for you because you're an Indian". Responding to this, Ramaswamy later said on X, "I disagree with her but respect she had the guts to speak her mind. It was a riveting hour." Calling Ramaswamy "bright and articulate", the US author

said, "I guess I can call you articulate since you're not an American black - can't say that about them, it's derogatory". The bit attracted reactions from people with one X user calling Coulter "Indophobic", while the other a "bigot". "It would be interesting to hear her rationale for being a bigot", a user wrote. However, some users came in support of Coulter.

Dushyant has lost trust of his MLAs: JJP's Tohana legislator

CHANDIGARH: Jannayak Janata Party's Tohana MLA and former minister Devender Singh Babli said on Friday that his party chief Dushyant Chautala has lost confidence of his own MLAs and is imposing his own decisions on the legislators. "Today he has lost confidence because he is the leader of the legislative party only till he listens to his MLAs and takes decisions in a democratic manner by taking them into confidence. Secondly, he is leader only when the MLAs consider him their leader... I would say he has completely lost the confidence of his MLAs," said the senior JJP leader. Videos Babli said



that when his own MLAs are not with him, how can Dushyant ask them to support another party in the current political situation in Haryana. He added that Dushyant should speak to all JJP MLAs to take them into confidence instead of threatening them with the party whip. Babli was talking to the media in his home constituency for the first time amid the reports of resentment among JJP MLAs against Dushyant. The devel-

opment is significant at a time when the Nayab Singh Saini govt is in minority after withdrawal of support by three independent MLAs. The Tohana MLA, however, advised Dushyant and his father Ajay Chautala to mend their ways and min their language about their own legislators because this is a "democratic system and not a dictatorship." "The JJP was formed in the footsteps and ideals of former deputy prime minister Devi Lal,

Dilip takes guard in Bardhaman as all-rounder Kirti looks to do a 1983

BURDWAN: The battle of ballots between BJP and Trinamool Congress in West Bengal's Bardhaman-Durgapur Lok Sabha seat is poised to be an exciting one, with both parties fielding candidates with strong personalities to checkmate each other. On March 10, Trinamool shook up the poll scene when it fielded cricketer Kirti Azad, a member of the 1983 World Cup winning team, as its can-



didate here. Three weeks later, BJP came up with an even bigger surprise by naming its outspoken but controversial battle-hardened campaigner, Dilip Ghosh, for the constituency. Ghosh (59), who had won the

Paris shooting: Man shoots two officers in Paris police station

NEW DELHI: A man opened fire and seriously wounded two officers inside a police station in Paris on Thursday. The shooter managed to grab a weapon during a routine arrest procedure, leading to the harrowing incident, according to sources as reported by AFP. The unfortunate turn of events unfolded as officers had just arrested the man and initiated a search. In a swift and unexpected move, the suspect seized one of the officers' firearms and unleashed gunfire within the confines of the police station, causing serious injuries to two officers. The injured police officers were swiftly transported to a nearby hospital for urgent medical attention, as reported by French media outlets.

Govt. has asked telcos to block 28,200 phones

The Department of Telecom (DoT) has directed telecom operators, including Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and others to block 28,200 mobile handsets for their alleged link with cyber crimes. These telecom companies have also been asked to carry out immediate reverification of 20 lakh mobile connections. Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and State Police have joined hands for curbing the misuse of telecom resources in cyber-crime and financial frauds," said an official statement. It also said that this "collaborative effort aims to dismantle networks of fraudsters and protect citizens from digital threats."

According to the statement, analysis carried out by MHA and state police has revealed that 28,200 mobile handsets were misused in cybercrimes. On further analysis, the DoT found that 20 lakh numbers were used with these mobile handsets. "Subsequently, DoT issued directions to telecom service providers for pan India blocking of 28,200 mobile handsets and to carry out immediate reverification of 20 lakh mobile connections linked to these mobile handsets and disconnect failing reverification," the statement said. Telecom department has flagged 10,834 suspected mobile numbers. The DoT launched the Chakshu portal in March to handle telecom fraud-related grievances.

Celebration of Golden Jubilee Year Prog organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, SHUATS

Prayagraj: The Government of India to commemorate the completion of 50 years of Krishi Vigyan Kendra in India, "Lightning the Torch for the Golden Jubilee Celebration (50th) of KVKs" That the first Agricultural Science Centre, Pondicherry Coimbatore was established in 1974 where a grand program was organized by the Government of India and from there the torch started coming to Uttar Pradesh Attari Kanpur Zone-3 and passed through Agricultural Science Center Kaushambi, reached SHUATS Prayagraj, where the Golden Jubilee Celebration (50th) was organized through Krishi Vigyan Kendra, SHUATS Prayagraj, in which Dr. S.D. McCarty, Head of SHUATS Prayagraj, presented the achievements of SHUATS



Prayagraj and the works of farmers. Dr. Ajay Kumar especially appreciated the work of doubling their income. Dr. Ajay Kumar narrated the journey of 50 years since the establishment of Krishi Vigyan Kendra among the farmers. Gave detailed information about the work done by Prayagraj in which he told that by adopting the latest technologies given by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, today we have increased our production and our income in our farming. Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Allahabad honored the farmers by giving them certificates for the work done to double their income. Farmers and women from different villages participated in this program and all the staff of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Shuats Prayagraj were present.

Bhupendra Kr Srivastava "Piyush" hits campaign trail

Prayagraj: Ex-AU student leader and lawyer's brother Bhupendra Kumar Srivastava "Piyush" has hit the campaign trail with a visit to Old Tehsil, District Court, Bindki, Fatehpur district and met all the advocate colleagues in the elections for the upcoming Bar Council of Uttar Pradesh polls. He is seeking election for the Post of member Bar Council of Uttar Pradesh. After campaigning in Allahabad and Kaushambi, he sounded the poll bugle by visiting Old Tehsil, District Court, Binki Tehsil of Fatehpur District and sought their cooperation and blessings and first preference (1) vote in the elections. Bhupendra Kumar Srivastava "Piyush" is a former Student Leader AU, Advocate High Court Allahabad, Minister - Prayag Advocates Association and Candidate - Upcoming Bar Council of Uttar Pradesh.



Its 'Police Pathshala' in dacoit-infested belt; vanishing reminiscent of bullet echo

Prayagraj: In a paradigm shift, the narrative in the dacoit-infested belt of Chitrakoot this Lok Sabha election, has shifted to books from bullets, with none other than the cops conducting 'Patha Ki Police Pathshala' for the unprivileged kids in areas such as Markundi, Manikpur, and Bahilpurwa.

In areas which used to echo with bullets from the 1970s till 2018, these kids are attending schools, singing rhymes and learning tables, courtesy the men-in-khaki, who in their new role are approaching parents and guardians to send their children to schools.

"After the elimination of major bandit gangs, cops are working as Mitra Po lice

to win the trust of villagers and are working to promote education," ADG (Prayagraj zone) said. Insisting that the exercise is a part of community policing, he said, "Initially, cops also turned teachers and took classes under 'Patha ki police pathshala'.

Cops ranking from constable to superintendent of police play different roles while organizing a series of jan chaupals to win the trust of villagers who had maintained a distance from police between 1970 and 2018. The jan chaupals are organized in dacoit-infested belt in Manikpur, Markundi, and Bahilpurwa localities where dacoits (referred to as baaghi) such as Shiv Kumar alias Dadua, Babuli Kol or

Ambika Patel alias Thokia and Gauri Yadav's writ used to run large, till they were eliminated one by one.

After the elimination of bandit gangs, cops faced difficulties in connecting with villagers, who initially maintained distance from police due to various reasons.

"Once the dacoit menace ended in the hilly terrain, the task before us was to help the unprivileged, adivasi, and vanvasi people get into the mainstream of the society. Since it was not easy for cops to connect with people there, we thought of wooing them through the promotion of education," claimed Arun Kumar Singh, superintendent of police, Chitrakoot.

With the idea getting acceptance, regular exercises are being taken up now under 'Padega Chitrakoot - Ba the ga Chitrakoot'. Apart from education of kids, the cops have also taken help from women volunteers in improving the image of police among women under Mission Shakti campaign. "Under it, the women policemen knock at the doors at villages and blocks to apprise women about their rights," said a senior cop.

The scheme 'Chuppi Todo-Khulkar Bolo' has also been launched to solve the grievances of women. To increase voting percentage, cops are also undertaking regular patrolling and awareness initiatives.

BAFTA Breakthrough India Returns for a Fourth Year

Lucknow: BAFTA, the leading UK charity for the screen arts, is back with its Breakthrough programme for a fourth year in India, in partnership with Netflix. BAFTA Breakthrough India identifies and celebrates the next generation of talented professionals in the films, games, and television industries across the country. This year also marks the second time the BAFTA Breakthrough programme opens applications simultaneously in India, the US and UK regions.

BAFTA, through its mentorship and talent programme, has guided several creative individuals in the pursuit of their craft by curating an all-encompassing programme that helps breakthroughs address the barriers in their respective fields of work, sharpening their skills, and assisting them to create international networks that will accelerate their careers.

The recipients will be part of one-to-one meetings with industry stalwarts and group roundtables. They will receive professional coaching to develop their professional and creative skills. They will also get access to all of BAFTA's training, development and networking events for the duration of the programme, i.e., 12 months, along with opportunities to network with industry members across the world through BAFTA membership. Additionally, the breakthroughs will have a PR-backed showcase.

Tim Hunter, BAFTA Executive Director, Learning, Inclusion, Policy & Membership, said: "We're pleased to say that applications for BAFTA Breakthrough India are once again open. Thanks to the generous support of Netflix, this initiative will see us nurture a cohort of outstanding creative talent working in India's film, tele-

vision and games industries, and showcase their talents to our global membership - to be unveiled later this year."

Monika Shergill, Vice President of Content, Netflix India said: "The BAFTA Breakthrough India



programme perfectly aligns with Netflix's vision of empowering upcoming creative voices and bringing them to a global audience. The diversity of talent unearthed in the past four years is a testament to this programme's immense success. We are thrilled to continue our collaboration with BAFTA and discover and nurture the next generation of Indian creative voices." Guneet Monga Kapoor,

Founder & CEO of Sikhya Entertainment, Film Producer and Breakthrough India Ambassador said: "India boasts of abundant creative talent, as evidenced by the past three editions of Breakthrough. I grew up at a time where access to

such opportunities were unheard of. I highly encourage the next generation of creatives across film, television, and games in India to apply for this year's programme. BAFTA Breakthrough offers invaluable resources to young change makers in our industry, and I'm so excited to witness how this year's participants will leverage the opportunities to refine their skills, and elevate the Indian Screen

Industries on an international platform."

As the principal partner for the sixth year on BAFTA Breakthrough, Netflix continues to provide integral support towards its global expansion. Through Breakthrough, BAFTA and Netflix share a joint vision to celebrate and provide opportunities for emerging talent across the world, bringing together international communities across global networks, to develop and support stories and voices from different cultures.

BAFTA Breakthrough 2023 witnessed promising talent, including Abhinav Tyagi, who is an editor and worked on 'An Insignificant Man' in 2016 as editor, post producer, and chief assistant director. Shardul Bhardwaj was another cohort member who is actively working as an actor. He starred in the 2019 critically acclaimed film 'Eeb Allay Ooo!' and also served

as an assistant director and casting director on Netflix's 2018 film 'Sonu'.

BAFTA Breakthrough opened doors across the globe for its previous cohorts, aiding them to share spaces with some of the most distinguished and influential people in their respective industries and learn through their expertise, knowledge, and experiences to further their careers with newer perspectives.

Actress Tanya Maniktala was one of the breakthroughs during the first year of the programme in India. She starred in Mira Nair's Netflix adaptation of Vikram Seth's novel 'A Suitable Boy'. In her testimony, Tanya Maniktala said, "It has been an incredible experience being associated with the BAFTA Breakthrough Programme. Thank you so much for all your guidance and encouragement."

HC reverses acquittal of two accused after 43 years

Prayagraj: The Allahabad High Court (HC) has overturned the acquittal of two murder suspects by a trial court in Gorakhpur, 43 years ago and sentenced both to life term. In response to a government appeal, Justice Rajiv Gupta and Justice Shiv Shanker Prasad reversed the acquittal of Pyare Singh and Chhotku, convicting them under Section 302 (murder) and other relevant sections. The court directed the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Gorakhpur to ensure the arrest of both accused and their transfer to jail to serve their sentences. The case dates back to September 22, 1978, when a person named Ganga was killed, leading to an FIR against seven people in Gorakhpur the following day.

The High Court heard the plea and noted in its verdict, "After considering the facts and circumstances of the case and examining the findings recorded by the trial court in the acquittal of accused Pyare Singh and Chhotku, we are of the view that the trial court has not examined the evidence led by the prosecution in the right perspective. The prosecution has fully established the guilt of the accused on the basis of evidence led at the stage of trial. The acquittal of the accused Pyare Singh and Chhotku is consequently reversed."

Over 45K new voters added to list in past three months

Prayagraj has witnessed an increase in number of voters during the last three months. As per the new voter list issued by the District Election Office, the district has recorded an increase of 45,965 voters. As per the list issued constituency wise, Allahabad West Assembly Constituency shows the highest increase in voters. Number of women voters has increased in Allahabad North and South assembly constituencies while transgender voters have decreased in majority of assembly constituencies as per the recent list.

The District Election Office had issued a list of voters this year on January 23. As per the list Prayagraj then had total number of 46,64,519 voters that included 25,27,676 male voters and 2,136,224 women voters. However, many people have still got left out from being included in the list. The Election Commission this time introduced a new arrangement under which youths who have attained the age of 18 years even 10 days before the last day of nomination process, may apply to become a voter. As per the new rule, the names of new voters were added to the list till April 27 and a new list was issued. As per the new list, Prayagraj at present has 47,10,484 voters. The new list has 25,51,812 men and 21,58,152 women voters who will decide the fate of candidates on May 25.

In Allahabad North, 2,133 males and 2,271 women voters have increased while in Allahabad South 1,988 males and 2,202 women voters have increased. Number of transgender voters have decreased in nine among 12 assembly constituencies in Prayagraj. The list shows that 99 transgender voters have decreased in Prayagraj. In the list issued in January, the list had 619 transgenders, but the new list has only 520 of them. The number has decreased in nine constituencies except Soraon, Meja and Allahabad South assembly constituency. As per the current list of voters, Allahabad South has highest 130 transgender voters. As per new voter list issued constituency wise on May 6: Phaphamau has 369134 voters (199783 male, 169313 females, 38 transgenders). The constituency recorded an increase of 3131 voters.

Soraon has 3,83,461 voters (2,05,550 male, 1,77,875 female, 36 transgenders). The constituency recorded an increase of 3386 voters. Phulpur has 413463 voters (2,26,057 male, 1,87,346 females, 60 transgenders). 3438 voters increased in the constituency. Pratappur has 412802 voters (222688 male, 190077 female, 37 transgenders). Increase in voters- 4088.

Handia has 4,04,909 voters (2,18,761 male, 1,86,099 female, 49 transgenders). Increase in voters-4,098. Meja has 3,34,248 voters (1,83,742 male, 1,50,487 females, 19 transgenders) Increase in voters-3,267. Karachhana has 3,67,372 voters (1,98,787 male, 1,68,534 females, 51 transgenders) Increase in voters-4,357. Allahabad West has 465810 voters (253086 male, 212711 females, 13 transgenders) increase in voters-5,605. Allahabad North has 435175 voters (237544 male, 197582 females, 49 transgenders) Increase in voters-4,375.

Teachers motivated people to vote by playing cricket

Sikrara (Jaunpur): To increase the voting percentage in the Lok Sabha elections, teachers of the council school of the block made people aware by playing cricket in the ground of Azhurai Inter College on Friday and the people present were sworn in under the voter awareness campaign. In the final match, Nyay Panchayat Rethi won the title by defeating Damrua due to Vishwanath Pratap Singh's stormy century.

Chief guest Block Education Officer Anand Prakash Singh cut the ribbon. After getting introduced to the



players under the leadership of District President of Primary Teachers Association Amit Singh, District President of Secondary Teachers Association Sushil Upadhyay, Principal Omprakash Upadhyay, Block President Mrityunjay Singh, President of Primary Teachers Committee Shailesh Singh Dev and teacher Atul Singh Mahajan, the competition was inaugurated. The BEO said in his address that we get a chance after five years to elect a good government. Therefore, all voters should take advantage of this opportunity.

Polycab's Instant Reward, Instant Redemption

Varanasi: Polycab, India's largest Wires and Cables manufacturer and one of the fastest-growing FMEG company, is proud to announce the launch of the new 'Polycab Experts'. A first-of-its-kind platform designed exclusively for the country's electrician community as part of its digital transformation. Polycab Experts aims to uplift and empower electricians across India and help improve its end customer experience. The app will be a single platform that supports both earning and redemption points journey for its customer by providing them with a comprehensive suite of benefits and rewards. The Polycab Expert Program has an existing app with 1.5 lakh electricians and approximately 1 lakh retailers who will be migrated to the

new app. The Polycab Experts App introduces an innovative rewards system that allows electricians and retailers to effortlessly earn points by scanning loyalty codes printed on Polycab products. These accumulated points can be instantly redeemed into their bank accounts, providing a tangible and immediate incentive for their loyalty to Polycab.

Electricians enrolled as part of the new Polycab Experts platform can also get special benefits through a three-tier loyalty program. Each tier unlocks exclusive benefits that the electrician community will find relevant to grow their business. As they progress through the tiers, electricians can unlock exclusive benefits, including medical in-

surance for themselves and their spouses, scholarship opportunities for their children, and welcome rewards to enhance their professional performance and extra points.

Furthermore, the Polycab Experts App goes beyond mere transactions by fostering a thriving community of electricians. Every code scanned, and every point earned contributes to a larger purpose - investing in the growth and development of the electrician community, which in turn benefits the industry. Commenting on the launch, Mr. Ishwinder Singh Khurana, Executive President, Chief Business Officer (Power BU), Polycab India, stated "The electrician community in India ensures that we have a well-equipped electrical infrastructure to live and work comfortably."

Curtains draw over 2-day PNM meeting of Prayagraj Div officers with NC Rly Employees Union

Prayagraj: Under the chairmanship of Shri Himshu Badoni, Divisional Railway Manager, Prayagraj Division, General Secretary of North Central Railway Employees Union (NCRES) of Prayagraj Division officers. A two-day PNM meeting with Shri RP Singh and officials was held on the second day in the Sankalp Auditorium of Prayagraj Divisional Office. In this meeting, Additional Divisional Railway Manager/General of Prayagraj Division, Shri Sanjay Singh; Additional Divisional Railway Manager/

OP, Shri Ajay Kumar Rai; Senior Personnel Officer, Shri MK Khare; Senior Divisional Engineer/Coordination; Shri Sitaram; Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/Coordination; Shri Kuwar Singh Yadav; Senior Divisional Signal and Telecom Engineer, Shri Ujjwal Nigam; Senior Divisional Finance Manager; Mr. Ashutosh Sharma; And branch officers of other departments were present. In this meeting, NCRES General Secretary Shri RP Singh congratulated the division on its progress under the guidance of the Divisional



Railway Manager. On this occasion, he informed the Divisional Railway Manager about the problems of the employees and discussed them. Shri RP Singh

highlighted the issues like ease of appointment on compassionate grounds, maintenance of NCRES offices, shortage of doctors and availability of special-

ist doctors in the Central Hospital, availability and distribution of medicines, removal of abandoned colonies, more than 8 hours duty of employees, engineering He expressed his views on dozens of issues like cycle allowance for employees working in the department, overtime allowance, provision of clean and cold water for all employees, proper maintenance of houses.

Divisional Railway Manager, Shri Himshu Badoni, while appreciating the cooperation of NCRES in the meeting, said that you all have a big contribution

in the excellent performance of Prayagraj Division. Divisional Railway Manager said that all the issues raised by NCRES will be resolved soon with the cooperation of the officials. Construction of houses is being done at a rapid pace in the entire division, adequate number of houses will be available by the end of the year 2024. Immediate instructions were given for availability of clean and cold water in all offices. NCRES officials working in Prayagraj, Kanpur, Shankargarh and Tundla participated in this meeting.

Dilip Sanghani elected Chairman, Balvir Singh Vice Chairman

Prayagraj: In the 15th Representative General Body (RGB) Meet of IFFCO Dilip Sanghani was elected Chairman of IFFCO and Balvir Singh was elected as Vice Chairman of IFFCO. Member cooperatives of IFFCO, elect a Representative General Body (RGB) as per the provisions of IFFCO's bye laws. The RGB is the supreme policy mak-



ing body of IFFCO which is responsible for guiding IFFCO in achieving its objectives. IFFCO Managing Director Dr. Uday Shanker Awasthi congratulated and well wishes Dilip Sanghani on becoming Chairman and Balvir Singh as Vice Chairman. Senior Executive Director (Unit Head) IFFCO Phulpur Sanjay Kudesia, HOD Human Resources Shambhu Shekhar, IFFCO Officers Association President Anurag Tiwari and General Secretary Swamy Prakash, IFFCO Employees Union President Pankaj Pandey and General Secretary Vinay Kumar Yadav expressed happiness on this occasion.

Rajendra Nath Tripathi calls for Brahmin unity on Parshuram b'anniv

Prayagraj: On the eve of the appearance day (Akshay Tritiya) of Lord Shri Parshuram ji, a meeting of senior officials of All India Brahmin Mahasabha (RA) was held in Beniganj Prayagraj. Media in-charge of All India Brahmin Mahasabha, Gopal Ji Malviya said while addressing the senior officials of All India Brahmin Mahasabha (RA) in Prayagraj on the eve of the appearance day (Akshay Tritiya) of Lord Shri Parshuram Ji, All India Brahmin honored with Uttar Pradesh Ratna. A meeting of All India Brahmin Mahasabha was held on the auspicious occasion of the appearance day (Akshay Tritiya) of Lord Parshuram ji under the chairmanship of National President of Mahasabha Rajendra Nath Tripathi. In the meeting, Shri Rajendra Nath Tripathi started the program by offering garland to Lord Parshuram and lighting a lamp. Hearty greetings on the occasion of the appearance of Lord Parshuram, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, symbol of coordination of weapons and scriptures, bearer of truth and congratulated everyone. In his address, he said that Modi ji is the only option for the country. In the meeting, the national interest was discussed, with the idea of supporting the party with Hindutva ideology; the officials put forth their views. An appeal was made for the unity of Wipro. We will have to follow the ideals of Lord Parshuram, how should the



organization be strengthened, how should it expand, the officials should give their views on all these, Rajendra Nath ji said that there is no greater socialist than a Brahmin, Brahmins live together with everyone in the society. But today Brahmins are an oppressed class. Where a single Brahmin is contesting the election, you should unite and win.

Rajendra Nath Tripathi said in his statement, I am your watchman, our organization is powerful, we stand 24 hours, seven days a week for the weak, helpless, suffering Brahmins. Today I have been fighting for the Brahmin clan in which I was born for 24 years to restore respect for the Brahmins. Rajendra Tripathi ji gave this message to the Brahmins. Today in Bharatiya Janata Party, Modi ji is the only option for the country and BJP is running on Sanatan and Rashtra Prahari. If the party which is running on the issue of national interest being supreme, then the Lok Sabha candidate of such party should win. This meeting took place at the residence of Rahul Pandey, the district president of All India Brahmin Mahasabha. Engineer Ajay Kumar Pandey Patron, Engineer Ashok Tiwari Patron Board, Dnyaneshwar Shukla District Patron, Praveen Malviya District President Manoj Mishra District General Secretary etc. all senior officials were present.

Consultative Meeting on Balvatika and Jadui Pitara held

Prayagraj: Consultative meeting on Balvatika and Jadui Pitara was held on May 10, 2024 in MPVM Ganga Gurukulam from 9 am to 1 pm in which 300 Princi-

invitees, Principals and teachers. Students of MPVM Ganga Gurukulam gave a wonderful dance performance which was highly appreciated by the

(experts of NCERT), Maam Shweta and Sh. Sajjan kumar, Under Secretary, CBSE. They explained that playway method should be used for learners of foun-

stration as well.

The resource person Ms Chhama Chaurasia (master trainer NCF- FS) continued with the discussion of ways and means for strengthening of Bal Vatika in schools. She also discussed about learning outcomes, assessment practices as recommended in National Curriculum Framework for Foundational stage.

She also talked about capacity building of teachers at Foundational stage. She explained that Balvatika focuses on developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities. Dr Akhilesh Kumar motivated the teachers to be creative and innovative. He talked about the holistic development of the students. He guided the teachers to take care of the students as a gardener of Balvatika. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to all the speakers, resource person, dignitaries and all the members present for making it a success.



pals and teachers of approximately 50 CBSE schools participated with full zeal and enthusiasm.

The event started with lighting of the lamp along with Saraswati Vandana. Ms Madhuri Srivastava-Principal MPVM Ganga Gurukulam welcomed the gathering of chief guests,

gathering. Dr Akhilesh Kumar (Head Centre of Excellence) from CBSE Regional office Prayagraj), Ma'am Rekha Baid (Member Governing Body) also participated in the meeting.

An online session was conducted by Prof. Suniti Sanwal, Dr Upasana Ray

dation stage. Methods like story telling, joker cards, art integration etc will help the students to understand the concepts in a playful manner. They also talked about Jadui Pitara and e Jadui Pitara and informed how it can be used as a tool for learning at foundational stage and showed its dem-

Mother's Day celebrated with great enthusiasm

Prayagraj: Mother's Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Mahila Seva Sadan Inter College on Friday. Mother's Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Mahila Seva Sadan Inter College Bairahna Prayagraj under the patronage of school principal Mrs. Anjana Singh Sengar and social worker Ms. Purvika Aggarwal. On this occasion, JK

Paper and D a c r o o m launched a special campaign "My Super Mom" The seventh edition of "To My Super Mom" promoted writing ability by making the students write letters to their Super Mom with their heart and feelings. The thoughtfully curated stationery material printed on JK Paper encouraged girl students to unleash their imagination and put their feelings into words that will bring joy to their mothers on Mother's Day and highlight the importance of connecting with their loved ones in a meaningful way. In this campaign, the girl students along with all the teachers of the school participated with great enthusiasm. JK Paper is a leading paper manufacturer committed to sustainable and high quality paper products.



Badminton tournament in memory of Dr Badugu organised at SHUATS

Prayagraj: The Open Badminton Tournament was inaugurated at SHUATS Badminton Court by Dr. C. J Wesley, Joint Registrar and Chairman, Athletics Committee of SHUATS. He dedicated the tournament to late Dr. Devaraj Badugu for his contribution to the sports and games activities in the University. In his address, the Chief guest appealed to the players to maintain and play



with the true sportsman spirit and to maintain mutual harmony. He further emphasized on the benefits and effects of sports and games for the students in their personal, physical and social well-being. The Chief Guest honoured with a pot of plant by Dr. Achint Tarrance.

Inaugural match was played in mens double category by Dr. C. John Wesley and Anil Samuel v/s Sharan and Virendra Kumar. This match was won by Dr. C. John Wesley and Anil Samuel. Badminton Coach Mr. Tanveer Ahmed was the Organizing Secretary of SHUATS Open Badminton tournament. On this occasion Physical Education Staff and Students were also present.

Workers celebrated birthday of Pawan Srivastava with enthusiasm

Prayagraj: On the 58th birthday of Councilor Pawan Srivastava, former district convener of Bajrang Dal, former metropolitan minister of VHP, BJP, former media in-charge of BJP, one vote of Hindus at Royal Hotel, Civil Lines, Bharatiya Janata Party. It was celebrated with the resolve to form a government with full majority of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The occasion was celebrated by cutting cakes, feeding each other sweets, sweetening each other's mouths and lovingly presenting gifts as I do to my leader. Gaurish Ahuja, Anurag Sant, Rajeev Tandon, Councilor Neeraj Gupta, Alok Srivastava, Vinod Sonkar, Kuldeep Srivastava, Shailendra Srivastava, Sandeep Chauhan were encouraged to stay healthy and move ahead in politics with full aggressiveness. Many workers including him were present. Councilor Pawan Srivastava also expressed his heartfelt thanks for accepting the greetings of the highway guests and workers.



Lord Parshuram's b'anniv celebrated

Prayagraj: Lord Parshuram's birth anniversary was celebrated with pomp and Shariat distribution program. They provided relief to the passengers by distributing shariat. Celebrating the birth anniversary of Lord Parshuram with pomp and show in front of Prayagraj



Junction Civil Line Side Royal Hotel complex, Shariat distribution program was organized with a view to provide relief to the passengers from the intense heat. The coming and going passengers enjoyed the sherbet, and the passengers also chanted Lord Parshuram ji. On the said occasion, Gauri Shahuja, Anurag, Saint Alok Malviya, senior leader Chandrasekhar Ojha, Councilor Pawan Srivastava, Akash Harikrishna, Kisan Anand, Kisan Anand Shahid workers. He earned his profit by distributing sherbet.

HC dismisses the bail plea of 'acid attackers'

Prayagraj: The Allahabad high court dismissed the bail plea of four men accused of an acid attack on a woman bank manager, in 2022, in Kaushambi district, on Thursday. The manager had reportedly refused to sanction some loan applications. Justice Saurabh Shyam Shamshey denied the bail application while considering the evidence collected during investigation about the purchase of acid, the actual involvement of some applicants, and the roles of others. The victim, who was working as a bank manager, was waylaid by two bike-borne miscreants while she was heading to office. They threw acid at her. During the investigation of the case, the names of the applicant and other co-

accused came to light. They all acted as brokers in the bank to facilitate the sanctioning of loans, etc.

According to the allegations against the accused, the bank manager was pressured when she rejected the loan applications of the accused. However, when she did not succumb to the pressure, it led to the acid attack.

Seeking bail in the case, the accused moved the HC to submit that they have been languishing in jail since August 2022 and that there is no likelihood of a early trial. The court dismissed the plea, observing, "...considering the nature and manner of occurrence, where the victim being a lady, has suffered an acid attack and is still recovering from the scars of it..."

SRN Hospital launches air condition for convenience of patients in dermatology dept

Prayagraj: In the skin and venereal disease department of Svaroop Rani Hospital, the patients are facing severe inconvenience. A corridor has been built in the department for the children and women suffering from heat and humidity. Chairman of the department, Dr. Amit Shekhar. With the efforts of Dr. Kamal, two air conditioners were installed, which was inaugurated by Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ashu Pandey and former Principal Motilal Nehru Medical College Professor Dr. SP Singh K. Kamal. Let us tell you that during summer days, there is extreme heat and humidity in the patient's waiting area corridor. Due to this, the health of many patients was deteriorating. Children and women were becoming distressed due to the heat.

Seeing this pallor of the patients, the head of the department got this work done with his efforts. Chief Medical Officer Dr. Ashu Pandey appreciated this effort. Dr. SP Singh described this as an example and said that the government Even when help was not available, the doctors kept a humanitarian approach and did good to the patients with their efforts. Hospital Superintendent Dr. Ajay Saxena extended his best wishes. Senior Dermatologist Dr. Arun Kant gave a presentation to the junior



doctors about various skin related procedures and donated two surgical chairs to the department on his behalf. District President of All India Industry Trade Board, Lalu Mittal thanked Dr. Amit Shekhar on behalf of the common people and businessmen of the entire city for his charitable service work. On this occasion, Dr. Manoj Mathur, Dr. Kamlesh Sonkar, Gautam Tripathi, Dr. SK Ojha, many junior doctors and staff were present.

Editorial

**Stuck in an Orwellian world:
Liberal Western media, illiberal global agenda**

Author Umesh Upadhyay in his book, *Western Media: Narratives on India from Gandhi to Modi*, recalls "the summer of 1982", when he was in Canada. In July that year, Giani Zail Singh was elected the seventh President of India. But to his "utter surprise", there was no mention of India having a new president in the Canadian newspapers. This despite the fact that Canada had by then "a sizable Punjabi population, so much so that some signage in certain areas was in Gurmukhi. If you happened to travel by Air Canada, there were announcements in Punjabi". Yet, the appointment of the first Sikh President of India found no mention in Canadian newspapers. Incidentally, one day, Upadhyay found a news report about India in the local Canadian newspapers. It was regarding a bus accident in which some Hindu pilgrims were killed. "A bus accident in India finds a place in the international section of a Canadian newspaper, but the world's largest democracy getting a new President — that too a Sikh — doesn't. Why is that?" This question bothered Upadhyay for long, till he realised that "the Western media's coverage of developing countries like India is that it solely focuses on disasters — man-made or natural. It creates a lopsided image of such countries as crisis-ridden nations". One understands the Western media's mindset from journalist Gerald Priestland's article, 'With Nehru Around India', for the BBC in the 1950s. "There were times when I found myself writing: 'This country (India) is doomed; if it does not starve to death or perish of the plague, it will surely explode in bloody revolution.'" Nothing of the sort happened. India not just evaded such nightmarish scenarios, but also became a power to reckon with, economically as well as geostrategically. To add to it, the country has decided, especially in the past 10 years, to consciously shun its Western colonial hangovers. New India is today far more confident about itself, its cultural/civilisational identity, and of course its space in the world order. This, however, is just half the story. The other half is far more disconcerting. And this second half has two altogether different facets. One, the mainstream media in the West traditionally acts as an extended arm of the government. The Western media coverage of the Ukraine war is a classic example. One can, therefore, see an adverse media reportage or human rights coverage in the American press just before the United States is supposed to seek some economic, commercial or diplomatic concessions from India. The two act in tandem to secure larger American interests. The second development is as disconcerting for India as it is for the United States. It's the growing Qatari-Saudi-Chinese money in the American media, think tanks and academia. Millions of dollars have been poured into American institutions, especially in the past two decades, thus creating a class of people American in blood and colour, but Qatari in taste, Chinese in opinions, and Saudi in intellect. According to a 2022 study, between 2001 and 2021, US higher education institutions received \$13 billion in funding from foreign sources, of which Qatar alone contributed \$4.7 billion to dozens of American academic institutions, including Harvard. Similarly, a US Education Department record shows that Saudi Arabia contributed \$650 million to American universities between 2012 and 2018. Saudi money went to all sorts of American universities: From the elite Harvard and Yale, to public universities like Michigan and Berkeley. As for Chinese money, nearly 200 US colleges and universities held contracts with Chinese businesses, valued at \$2.32 billion, 2012 and 2024, according to a report published in *The Wall Street Journal*.



China racing ahead in critical technologies

India needs to increase its pace considerably to keep up with China on the tech front. Illustration by Shutterstock There are multiple disruptions that are taking place currently. The Cold War did provide some kind of stability, though it witnessed multiple conflicts wherein warring sides were either supported by the US or by the Soviet Union or Russia. With the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US emerged as the sole superpower, and its fragile stability still continued. With China undertaking major strides in all domains, coupled with its new-found ambition of becoming the sole superpower of the world, the interna-

tional narrative of dynamic equilibrium is witnessing a major change. With Chinese incursions having entered their fifth year in eastern Ladakh, the Russia-Ukraine war continuing in the third year, and the Israel-Hamas conflict continuing in the eighth month, with no end in sight for any of these conflicts, global uncertainties continue. As this emerging geopolitical situation becomes more and more fragile with every passing day, new political alignments are emerging. Russia-China has already entered into a 'no limit' friendship, with a new alignment emerging in the form of Russia-China-North Korea-Iran. More

nations could join this alliance, including Pakistan. The balancing act expected from India on the geo-political front is an important challenge, but India has been walking a tight rope efficiently so far. India has also been managing the economic issues, including the challenges of the supply chain, reasonably well in the national interest. The biggest challenge that is most disruptive stems from technological disruption, which is more alarming as compared to geopolitical and geoeconomic disruptions. In fact, technological disruptions shape even geopolitical and geoeconomic disruptions. The Houthi attack in the

Red Sea using drones and missiles resulted in the US and some other NATO countries mobilising their resources to counter this threat. Technology to be effective need not result in high-end, sophisticated weapons, but low-end, cost-effective weapons using simple technology are also potent tools for the strategic impact that happened consequent to this attack by Houthis in the Red Sea. Another technological impact can be gauged from the fact that Ukraine, with a non-existent navy, has caused asymmetric damage to Russian vessels and has become a headache for the Russians in the Black Sea.

Pakistan: No end in sight to Army, Imran Khan confrontation

After December 16, 1971, no date is as traumatic for the Pakistan army as May 9, 2023. On the former day the pride of the men in khaki was humbled on the parade ground in Dhaka when Lt Gen AAK Niazi surrendered to Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Arora. On the latter, the supporters of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Imran Khan rioted against the army in the streets and cantonments of the country. In the process they destroyed monuments dedicated to the army's revered martyrs, pillaged corps commander Lahore's house, which is named after the country's founder, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and also attacked other army installations. By showing such utter disrespect the rioters outraged the army's image of itself as the final protector of the people and the country and its foundational principles. No wonder some army generals cried out in anguish that what the 'external' enemy (obviously, meaning India) had not been able to accomplish had been done by the country's internal foes. The May 9 events set the army chief, Gen Asim Munir, squarely against Imran Khan. That their relations were fractured was one aspect of the issue. The other was the inroads that Khan had succeeded in making in the army by invoking



the 'gairat' (pride) of some officers and other ranks by projecting that he was standing firm against the attempts of foreign countries, especially the United States, at interfering in Pakistan's internal affairs. The fact that some members of the armed forces had given their ear and more to Khan's song was unacceptable to the majority of the force. This is because the ethos of the army demands that all officers and men must be loyal to the army chief and no one else. Munir and his supporting generals and officers simply could not afford to overlook Khan's inroads into the army, for it would have impaired the force's discipline and professionalism. And, they could not allow a political leader, however popular, to create splits in the force. Hence, Munir acted decisively against many in its own ranks, including the corps commander, Lahore. He had

them court martialed and dismissed. He opened a second front against Khan through other political forces (the term 'other political forces' has been deliberately used for the Pakistan army is both a professional and a political force) and like-minded individuals in other institutions, including the judiciary, to ensure that Khan remained incarcerated and that the PTI was weakened. The aim was to get it defeated in the elections to the National Assembly and reduce Imran Khan's challenge to a nullity. Munir succeeded in these objectives but not fully. As Pakistan marked the anniversary of May 9, it became clear that the army and its fellow political travelers have not succeeded in entirely rooting out the Imran Khan challenge. The events of the last few days and Munir's long statement of May 9 demonstrates this fact. On May 7

Director-General of Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Major General Ahmed Sharif addressed an over two-hour long press conference. He vehemently, and again and again condemned those responsible for the mayhem of May 9 last year. This was a clear reference to Imran Khan and the PTI though Sharif carefully avoided naming them. During his fulminations he slipped in the 'message' that a dialogue with the PTI was only possible if they apologised "publicly" to the "nation" for their actions and pledging to abandon their anarchical approaches adopted constructive political positions. It is not surprising that the Pakistani media underlined Sharif's 'message' for Khan and the PTI. Imran Khan's response to this message was clear and direct. When asked by reporters, as he left a case hearing in a court on May 8, if he was willing to apologise for the May 9 events, Khan responded in the negative. According to media reports Khan stressed that he came to know of May 9, 2023 events only when he attended the court proceedings in the Pakistan Supreme Court on that day. He also emphasised that he had already condemned the violent incidents. PTI's Omar Ayub Khan who is the current leader of the opposition in the

Pakistan National Assembly went further to call the events of May 9 as a conspiracy against Khan. On May 8 evening Pakistan president Asif Ali Zardari said "May 9, 2023 will always be remembered as a dark day in Pakistan's history...". Media reports stated that he stressed that the events of that day had "tarnished" Pakistan and had only "served the interests" of the country's enemies. Prime minister Shehbaz Sharif told a special meeting of the cabinet on May 9 morning that the aim of the May 9, 2023 events was to end democracy in Pakistan, bury the constitution and establish an individual's dictatorship. While these reactions of the current political leaders were significant the most noteworthy statement came from army chief Asim Munir. During a visit to the Lahore Garrison on May 9, Munir said that attempts were being made through digital platforms to create divisions between the army and the people. He characterised the riots of May 9, 2023 as "criminally orchestrated violence" and that its plotters were now trying to "twist the narrative". However, he added, "there can be no compromise or deal with the planners and architects of this dark chapter in our history". He then went on to say "the real leaders.

Macron's attempts to woo Xi and Chinese 'long game'

Emmanuel Macron, along with his wife Brigitte Macron, hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan at the Pyrenees mountains, a place where the French President made regular trips to see his grandmother as a child, on Tuesday. A day before this, on Monday, the wife of the Chinese President, on invitation, visited the Orsay Museum with the first lady of France in Paris. The two-day visit of the Chinese President to France was a part of Xi's Europe tour, which includes Serbia and Hungary as well, two countries that have maintained close ties with Russia despite the Ukraine war. Xi's Europe tour will conclude on Friday. Xi's France visit saw the rolling of the red carpet for the Chinese President as he attended

the state dinner organised for him by Macron at the Elysee Palace, as the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party started his first trip to Europe in five years. The streets of Paris, which were the Eden of modern liberal views—remember the French Revolution—were donned with Chinese and French flags, welcoming an 'autocrat' ruling a regime no less 'Robespierrian'. Yet protesters wearing Tibetan flags on their shoulders took part in a demonstration in support of members of the Tibetan and Uighur communities, whose rights the West claims to vehemently advocate. The visit marked 60 years of diplomatic relations between Paris and Beijing, as France was the first Western country to formally recognise the People's Republic of

China on January 27, 1964. To understand the reasons behind this hospitality, Macron's recent interview to the Economist can be referred to, in which the French President called the war in Ukraine an existential threat to Europe. Otherwise as well, the President has been considered among the most 'hawkish' leaders when it comes to the security of the continent. Macron has been advocating a more 'independent' security policy for Europe moving out of the cross-Atlantic approach and favours being less reliant on the US, or NATO in terms of ensuring Europe's security. "If Russia wins in Ukraine there will be no security in Europe... Who can pretend that Russia will stop there?" asked the French President.

Swapna Dasgupta's essay on PM Modi that NYT asked for, but refused to publish

Author and columnist Swapna Dasgupta has revealed that 'The New York Times' approached him in March this year for a "thought-provoking essay on the appeal of the PM's BJP movement". Dasgupta sent his 1,500-word essay to the NYT and was first asked to incorporate "some of the criticisms of Modi", which he was fine with. The essay, which was sympathetic to Modi and had elaborated on the shift in the Indian establishment, was sent on April 22, says Dasgupta. However, after two days, he was told "it looks as though we won't move forward with this. Sorry for that." Dogmatic consistency has been the defining characteristic of the overseas India-watchers' perception of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Ten years ago, on April 10, 2014, in a feeble bid to influence voting in the general election, a clutch of notables including writer Salman Rushdie, Harvard professor Homi Bhabha, artist Anish Kapoor and others, published a joint letter in a British newspaper charging Modi with "failure of moral character and political ethics". "Were he to be elected prime minister," they argued, "it would bode ill for India's future as a country that cherishes the ideals of inclusion and protection for all its peoples and communities." Adding its voice to the panic, *The Economist* suggested "it would be wrong for a man who has thrived on division to become prime minister of a country as fissile as India." The experience of 10 years at the helm and the very real possibility of voters granting him a third term doesn't appear to have tempered the disquiet of the custodians of Indian Enlightenment. With opinion polls suggesting yet

another emphatic mandate for the Bharatiya Janata Party, the critics believe the one-sidedness of the contest is due to Modi "turning democracy into electoral authoritarianism". A Chatham House this month report has drawn attention to charges of "authoritarianism by stealth through controlling key levers of power, including security services, tax authorities and the media". If the June 4 results lead to the BJP decimating the Rahul Gandhi-led Congress yet again, it is likely that Modi's overseas critics will team up with India's Opposition to question the legitimacy of the triumph. Although such a challenge will lack credence if the turnout is good, the larger objective is to sow doubts in the minds of business leaders and political decision-makers about India's success story. Modi is the real target and by barring him with the brush of autocracy, his critics hope to envelop him in yet another murky controversy. Their hope is that the memories of an earlier saga when the United States rescinded his visa can be resurrected to damage his global standing. The twinning of the Western liberal establishment's concerns over India's "democratic backsliding" with the opposition Congress party's fighting the polls on a similar platform is significant. Since Modi assumed charge in 2014, there has been a silent revolution that has resulted in the growing marginalisation and irrelevance of the old elite that inherited the country from the British in 1947.

What is often described as the Congress ecosystem loosely comprised Westernised and cosmopolitan individuals and was influenced by progressive.

Salasar Techno Engineering Ltd. Successfully Concludes the payment for acquisition of EMC Ltd.

CHANDIGARH: Salasar Techno Engineering Ltd. (BSE: 540642, NSE: SALASAR), is a one stop engineering and infrastructure solution provider. The Company is engaged in providing turnkey EPC services for Railway and Power sectors and is also engaged in designing and manufacturing of telecom towers, Monopoles and other Heavy Steel Structures. In continuation to the company's press release dated 16th March, 2024, Salasar has effectively completed the payment of balance amount of Rs. 1,680 Mn for acquisition of EMC Ltd. (Formerly known as Electrical Manufacturing Company Limited). This demonstrates a pivotal moment in Salasar's continuous pursuit of expanding market presence and capabilities. Commenting on the above status, the management team of Salasar said, "We are

thrilled to announce the timely completion of the payment for the acquisition of EMC Ltd., marking a monumental milestone in our journey of strategic expansion. Our ability to swiftly settle the full amount underscores our commitment to executing our plans with precision and agility. This acquisition represents more than just a business transaction; it symbolizes our dedication to inorganically expand into allied areas within the engineering and infrastructure solutions sector. By integrating EMC Ltd.'s capabilities into our operations, we are not only broadening our service offerings but also strengthening our market position and enhancing our ability to cater to the evolving needs of our clients. Our decision to pursue this acquisition aligns seamlessly with our long-term strategic objectives. It reflects

our confidence in the growth potential of the EPC industry and our readiness to seize opportunities that align with our vision for sustainable expansion. The successful completion of the payment for the acquisition of EMC Ltd. is a testament to our unwavering commitment to creating value for our stakeholders. We are confident that this strategic investment will yield significant returns, further solidifying our position as a leader in the field of engineering and infrastructure solutions. As we embark on this new chapter of growth, we remain focused on leveraging our combined strengths to drive innovation, deliver excellence, and achieve sustainable success. We are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and look forward to realizing the full potential of this acquisition in the years to come."

One Point One Solutions Ltd.'s Subsidiary Secures New Client Win in European

CHANDIGARH: ITCube Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (Subsidiary of One Point One Solutions Limited), a prominent player in the technology solutions provider space has announced that it has secured a new client-win in European region a renowned global player specialising in providing solutions against brand threats utilizing advanced AI-driven tools to combat online piracy, counterfeiting, and intellectual property infringement. The company's AI-powered platform allows for automated detection, enforcement, and removal of infringing

content across digital platforms. With a global presence including New York, Barcelona, Beijing & Salt Lake City and providing scalable, cost-effective SaaS solutions, newly acquired client is changing the industry landscape. Under the terms of the agreement with the brand, ITCube has been entrusted to manage detection and enforcement services for copyright and intellectual property rights. Combined with ITCube's expertise and advanced AI platform of new client, the partnership is set to deliver comprehensive protection

against unauthorized use of brands and copyrighted content together. This strategic alliance underscores the commitment of ITCube to provide best-in-class technology driven solutions for its clients and enhance its service offerings in the field of intellectual property protection. Earlier, the company had announced that it has secured a client-win with one of the prominent players in the asset management sector. Concurrently, One Point One has also augmented the seat capacity for the leading Fintech player in the country.

82-yr-old woman lifts 50kg in her maiden deadlifting contest

COIMBATORE: An 82-year-old woman from Pollachi has proved that age is just a number by participating in her maiden deadlifting (powerlifting) contest. Inspired by her grandsons, Kittammal finished fifth by lifting 50kg in the open category for women, at the

'Strong Man of South India' contest held in Kuniyamthur last week. She was among 17 women contestants, all of whom were under 30-years of age. Kittammal lives with her husband Venkatraman, a retired health department staff. Her grandson S Rohith,

16, who lives with her, has been practicing powerlifting at their residence for more than six months. Kittammal's other grandson S Rithik, 23, won a gold medal at the national level powerlifting championship held by the Indian Powerlifting Federation.

Actor, YouTuber, parties take aim at BJP on social media

KOLKATA: Congress and JMM on Thursday joined actor-director Prakash Raj and YouTuber Dhruv Rathee to take aim at BJP on social media on Thursday, asking why it had instigated false complaints in Sandeshkhali. Pawan Khera, chairman of AICC's media and publicity department, posted: "There were hundreds of debates on the direction of the ruling party on Sandeshkhali. Now that the complainant has exposed



the role of the BJP, will this be debated too?" JMM, too, shared a link of a popular news channel that has often been accused by the opposition of being soft on the party in office. "The best

friend has also started counter attacking. The veil of lies has started falling, the media now wants freedom from the dictator," the post read. "What a shame... How low will this Supreme Leader

and his party stoop down to win an Election?... Dirtiest politics," Raj said on X with his popular hashtag #justasking, reposting a video of a national news channel reporting on a woman in Sandeshkhali claiming that BJP had forced her to sign a blank piece of paper and file a false rape complaint. Like Raj, who has been vocal against BJP and PM Modi on several occasions, Rathee also made a post on X criticising BJP.

Pearson PTE conducts successful Chandigarh Partner Meet in presence of Vicky Kaushal

Chandigarh: Pearson (FTSE: PSON.L), the world's leading learning company conducted an exclusive partner meet in Chandigarh and unveiled its growth plans for the Pearson Test of English (PTE) in the state. Attended by 110+ partners and Bollywood actor Vicky Kaushal, the event brought together key partners, stakeholders, and industry leaders to discuss strategic collaborations. The focus was on expanding the partner ecosystem through exceptional customer service, comprehensive

training programs, and raising awareness about market trends and opportunities. This gathering aimed at a significant stride toward empowering partners to achieve greater growth and success. At the event, Pearson announced the launch of Premium Partner Support (PPS), the new customer support service for select partners in India for PTE to demonstrate its commitment to staying at the forefront and delivering value to its partners and customers. PPS will provide the best-in-class

customer experience for PTE's high-volume partners and agents, providing them with a premium level of service tailored to their unique needs, focusing on first-time resolution and delivering quality and efficiency. Pearson Test of English (PTE) is gaining and growing fast as the preferred test of English proficiency in the state. Pearson announced the bookings open for PTE Core, its newest English language proficiency test for Canada Economic Migration. Alongside this, PTE Academic was

accepted from August 2023 by IRCC as an approved English proficiency test for all Canada Student Direct Stream (SDS) visa applications – it is already recognized by more than 97 percent of universities and 95 percent of colleges in Canada. The UK, Australian, and New Zealand governments also accept PTE tests for all visa applications. PTE Academic is also accepted by 100 percent of Australian, New Zealand, and Irish Universities and 99 percent of UK universities.?

Agree to disagree on Muslim quota: TDP chief N Chandrababu

NEW DELHI: TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu said there are differences among alliance partners over reservation to Muslims, but those will be sorted out amicably. He said the Amaravati capital city project will be revived if the NDA forms government in AP. Naidu said his party's alliance with BJP and Jana Sena was formed on moral values and he will stand by it. We are facing this election at a time when all democratic institutions have been destroyed in the state. This election is difficult because we are facing a man with an unpredictable and dictatorial attitude.

But the winds of change are clearly visible among the people. I have never seen such anger against any govt in the past. We are committed and in favour of Muslim reservations. There could be some differences among alliance partners on some issues, but we will sort it out amicably.

There is no wrong in agreeing to disagree. We fought for special status for further growth of the state. But now, the damage done by the YSRCP govt in the last five years is much more than the pain of bifurcation. Andhra Pradesh is reeling under debts of Rs

13 lakh crore. Given the financial situation of the state, we need assistance from the Union govt to revive and rebuild the state. We have formed the alliance in that context. Amaravati was planned with a futuristic vision. I wanted to make it one of the best cities in the world. It was because of my credibility and persuasion that the Prime Minister of Singapore agreed to partner with us in the development of Amaravati. When I talked about the Singapore model while developing Hyderabad, nobody believed me. Today, Hyderabad has grown to an extent.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge could create anarchic situation, claims baseless

NEW DELHI: Coming down heavily on Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Election Commission on Friday dismissed his allegations around voter turnout data as "baseless" and said it could create an "anarchic situation, besides doubts a n d disharmony". "Through innuendos and insinuations, the contents of the post tend to create disharmony in respect of the delicate space of election management, can plant doubts in the mind of voters and political parties..." EC said.

In a strongly worded rebuttal running into 21 pages, the poll panel said Kharge's allegations in a letter to INDIA leaders and posted on social media was part of a



"design in creating a false narrative" during the poll period and pointed out that no Congress candidates ever complained about the electoral roll, votes polled or filed any petition in the last three years based on any discrepancy in data. It said the charges were meant to "create confusion, misdirection and impediments in the conduct of free and fair polls". Refuting allegations of discrepancies point by point, EC detailed the process to argue that

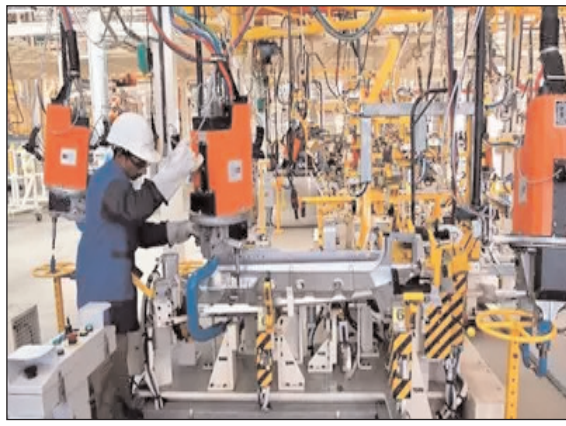
there was no room for interference in the procedure and nothing could go unnoticed by the candidates or their representatives. It said political parties know the number of voters at every stage, with the booth-wise number available to candidates. Besides, it said, there was no scope for any deviation with the number of votes polled, which was recorded in Form 17C, and a signed copy was made available to candidates at the close of voting. Also,

on the day of counting, the votes polled in the EVM were tallied with Form 17C in the presence of the candidates or their agents. It said no instance of deviation from the norms was flagged by any Congress candidate in any of the 283 seats that went to the polls in the first three phases. A trend of irresponsible statements attacking or attempting to degrade the credibility of elections in terms of men and material by a national political party is disconcerting," EC said, while "advising" Kharge to refrain from such comments. Responding to Kharge questioning the increase in turnout by around 5.5 percentage points in the first phase.

Wrinkles Achhe Hain

NEW DELHI: A day after CSIR reposted the visual of a campaign 'Wrinkles Achhe Hain', posted by one of its institutes, it clarified on X Wednesday that it has not issued any order to its labs to refrain from wearing ironed clothes. On May 7, CSIR-NIScPR posted on X that "join C S I R ' s #WAHMondayscampaign and say #WrinklesAccheHain. Wear your non-ironed clothes every Monday. Let's iron out climate change, not our clothes!" CSIR Wednesday said, "With regard to certain news reports, CSIR wishes to clarify that No CIRCULAR or OFFICIAL ORDER has been issued by CSIR HQ to its labs asking staff to refrain from wearing ironed clothes."

Industrial output grows 5.8% in FY24, slows a tad in March



New Delhi: The country's industrial output growth slowed marginally in March but manufacturing and electricity sectors remained robust, offsetting the slowdown in mining, while growth for the full fiscal year remained stable, data showed on Friday.

Numbers released by the National Statistical Office on Friday showed the index of industrial production (IIP) rose an annual 4.9% in March, slightly lower than the downwardly revised 5.6% in Feb but above the 1.9% posted in March last year.

For the 2023-24 fiscal year, industrial output growth rose to 5.8% from 5.2% in the previous year. Industrial output grows 5.8% in FY24, slows a tad in March. The manufacturing sector rose 5.2% in March, higher than the 1.5% posted in March last year, while the electricity sector grew 8.6% compared with a 1.6% contraction in the same month a year earlier.

The mining sector grew 1.2% in March, slower than the 6.8% recorded in March last year. The manufacturing sector expansion was consistent with other data such as the PMI for manufacturing, which had predicted stable expansion for the sector on the back of robust domestic demand. The consumer durables sector grew 9.5% in March compared with a contraction of 8% in the year earlier period, while consumer non-durables grew 4.9% during the month compared with a contraction of 1.9% in the year earlier period. The capital goods sector, which is seen as a gauge for investment

activity, rose 6.1% in March, slower than the 10% recorded in March last year, while the infrastructure/construction goods sector rose 6.9% during the month, slightly slower than the 7.2% in March last year. "On the consumption front, output of consumer durables grew by 9.5% whereas non-durables output growth turned positive, rising by 4.9% following two consecutive months of contraction. However, the sustenance of this trend remains to be monitored in the upcoming months," said Rajani Sinha, chief economist at ratings agency CareEdge.

ED attaches 53cr assets of Navi Mum developer

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached immovable properties worth Rs 53 crore located in Navi Mumbai in the case of Monarch Universal Group. The ED initiated an investigation based on multiple FIRs registered by the police under various sections against Monarch Universal Group, Gopal Amarlal Thakur, Hasmukh Amarlal Thakur, and others for allegedly cheating flat buyers by



collecting money from them for flats and not registering the same in their names. ED investigation showed that Gopal Amarlal Thakur diverted and siphoned off a huge amount of investors' money to various sister entities

and, through a complex web of money trails, parked substantial proceeds of crime with various builders in Navi Mumbai. Gopal Thakur of the group was arrested in July 2021. He is currently in judicial custody.

Rival trying to create social rift: UBT nominee

Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate for Mumbai North East Sanjay Dina Patil has petitioned the chief electoral officer, Maharashtra, and the Mumbai police commissioner demanding action against his rival candidate, BJP's Mihir

Kotecha, and suspension of his BJP social media accounts for allegedly "creating rift between the two communities, destroying social harmony and creating law and order problems." In his complaint letter, a copy of which was provided to media on Friday, Patil

said, "Kotecha had posted a video on his Facebook, in which he says, 'I give an open challenge to Sanjay Patil's topiwale goons (hinting at Muslim citizens) that I will once again openly come to Mankhurd tomorrow on May 1, Maharashtra.

Experts bat for specialised agency to net rising cases of cybercrime

Lucknow: Lucknow cyber police combat rising cybercrime using AI. Criminals exploit online platform vulnerabilities, operate remotely, and use sophisticated tools. Need for dedicated agency, national-level efforts, and private cyber experts emphasized to combat cyber fraud effectively. As incidents of cybercrime surge in Lucknow, the city's cyber police find themselves grappling with the ever-evolving tactics of tech-savvy criminals. Despite efforts to enhance cyber policing, criminals



nals consistently outpace law enforcement agencies, leveraging advanced technologies like artificial intelligence. As per records, nearly 50% rise in cybercrime has been

reported in the city from 2019 to 2023. In 2019, the number of reported cybercrime cases was 852; it increased to 1,273 in 2023. While the cyber police unit in Lucknow

operates with limited resources, consisting of only about a dozen personnel and a handful of computers, cybercriminals employ sophisticated tools and techniques to deceive unsuspecting individuals. Their modus operandi often involves exploiting vulnerabilities in online platforms and using AI algorithms to execute intricate scams. "Adding to the challenge is the fact that cybercriminals frequently operate from remote locations, often outside the jurisdiction of local law enforcement.

Ram idol engraved on gold coins is talk of town this Akshaya Tritiya

BENGALURU: With Akshaya Tritiya falling on Friday, citizens are flocking to jewellery shops for customary purchase of gold as it is said to bring good fortune. Many jewellers are expecting good sales and selling gold coins with Ram Lalla's idol engraved on it as a tribute to Ram Mandir. "We are expecting more sales this year. The sale of jewellery picked up on Wednesday and we expect it to continue till this weekend. We already see pre-booking numbers and advance payments



going up," said Vinod Hayagriv, managing director, C Krishniah Chetty Group. Shridhar, MD, Sree Ram Jewels, Vijayanagar, noted a shift in customers' preferences. "Usually, they shop gold coins during Akshaya Tritiya. But this year, we are seeing them buy gold jewellery.

Ninety percent of our customers are inclined towards it, which adds up to total sale of gold in general." Eye on platinum, diamond Many jewellery shops have noticed that customers are also looking for diamond and platinum jewellery. Urish Chhaged from Nikhaar Jewels,

Richmond Road, said, "The amount of diamond jewellery purchases is same as that of gold jewellery this Akshaya Tritiya." Millennials prefer platinum over gold as it is cheaper. Ramesh Davanam, CEO, Davanam Jewellers, said, "We see novelty in this metal, unlike before. We have received many pre-bookings for Friday already." The consecration of the Ram idol at Ayodhya's Ram mandir earlier this year has resulted in many jewellers selling gold.

Not just veggies, get gold coins home delivered in 10 mins now

HYDERABAD: Its not just potatoes, onions and other veggies & fruits that you can get delivered to the comfort of your home in a jiffy. Now gold and silver coins as well as small ticket silver items too are just a 10-minute delivery away in key Tier-1 markets this Akshaya Tritiya as jewellery and bullion players try to piggyback the power of quick commerce to coax consumers to loosen their purse strings at a time when gold prices are as red hot as the weather. Jewellery Biggies such as Tanishq, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, MMTC-PAMP, Muthoot Exim as well as Augmont have tied up with food and grocery delivery players such as BigBasket, Swiggy Instamart, Zepto and Blinkit, among oth-



ers, to cash in on the Akshaya Tritiya fervour on Friday. The day is considered auspicious to buy precious metals like gold. Gold coins ranging from 0.5gm to 1gm and 5-10 gm silver coins are on the 10-minute delivery list of these apps at a time when traffic snarls are at their peak as netas of all hues fly in to seek your precious vote and cops lurk around jewellery stores to keep a tight check on poll code viola-

tions. Luring consumers to showrooms has been a herculean task for jewellers as the soaring gold prices, which have been reigning at over 7,100/gm (24K, excluding taxes), sweltering heat and restrictions on carrying precious metals and cash (over 50,000), imposed by the Election Commission of India's model code of conduct, have all conspired to play spoilsport.

Swanky Church Street is losing its mojo, thanks to potholes and litter

BENGALURU: The cobblestone-paved Church Street, a popular hangout for youngsters with its upscale eateries, pubs and lifestyle stores, is slowly losing its sheen, as potholes that appeared on the road are gradually evolving into large potholes. Uncleared garbage, overflowing drains, damaged footpaths and reckless motorists are turning the street that was remodelled to be emblematic about all that Bengaluru is known for, into an avoidable stretch. While potholes have been around for over a month on the paved street, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has turned a blind eye on the pretext of focusing on works related to Lok Sabha polls. The street is punctuated by small mounds of uncleared



wet and dry waste for most part of the day. With little action on motorists flouting traffic rules, accidents and road rage incidents are becoming the order of the day. Encroached pavements along the 900-metre-long street have pushed the pedestrians onto the carriageway, exposing them to speeding vehicles. The manager of a lifestyle store said: "When a pothole was highlighted in the media two months ago, officials fixed it. But in less than 15

days, it resurfaced due to shoddy work. The paved stones keep coming off. Whenever we notice, we keep them aside so that no one trips and falls. But during evening and night hours, it is difficult to notice, and accidents are common. We have been telling traffic police to ban heavy vehicles here as they damage the paved surface." Deepak Batavia, president of Church Street Shop Owners' Association, said their weekly association

meetings are flooded with complaints from shop owners and their customers. "Complaints range from traffic violations to encroached footpaths, uncleared garbage and overflowing drains leading to puddles on the street. Customers also often complain about falling and injuring themselves due to potholes. and missing stone blocks," he said. Batavia, while quoting BBMP's road engineers, said the paved surface is meant for only light vehicles. "The stones are unable to bear the load of heavy vehicles and they part away. We have been trying to reach out to BBMP officials for a quick fix to the problem. The immediate intervention should be regulation of traffic and strict enforcement of traffic rules," he added.

40-yr-old stabbed to death in NE Delhi, 3 arrested

New Delhi: A 40-year-old man has been stabbed to death during a bid to rob him of his mobile phone in north-east Delhi's Harsh Vihar. Three suspects have been nabbed in this connection, police said. Police received information about the stabbing incident at Milan Garden in Harsh Vihar area on May 8. Suspects Suraj (20), Rohit (19), and Major (18), all residents of Harsh Vihar, accosted Jagatpal as he returned home from work on Wednesday night, tried to take away his phone at knifepoint, and allegedly stabbed him to death when he resisted, said Joy Tirkey, DCP (northeast). "The snatched mobile phone of the victim and a button-actuated knife used in the commission of the crime were also recovered from their possession," the officer added.

'Ram is the idea of India, Congress can't see as it uses foreign lens': PM Modi

HYDERABAD:

Seeking to frame the Lok Sabha polls as a duel between the two alternative visions of 'idea of India', Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday emphasised that Lord Ram is at the core of 'my idea of India' as "He is an embodiment of inspiration for a whole lot of values associated with the country that give it a unique identity in the world".

Responding to former Indian Overseas Congress chairperson Sam Pitroda's recent attack on him over his visit to Ram Mandir and Ram Navami celebrations, Modi said that Congress is divorced from the "idea of India", which encapsulates civilisational history spanning thousands of years, because the opposition party always saw the country from a foreign lens which is anti-Hindu and saw Ram Navami celebrations and building a Ram



Temple in Ayodhya as antithetical to India as it is understood and subscribed to all these decades. "When a nation is all involved in Ram temple, Ram mandir, diya jalao, that bothers me... When PM is spending time in temples all the time, it bothers me," Pitroda had argued in the interview.

Modi responded to the criticism in detail while addressing a rally at LB Stadium here, emphasising that it was Lord Ram who was at the core of patriotism for the motherland. "Janani janmabhoomishch swargadapi gariyasi - I love my motherland even more than heaven," he quoted Lord

Ram as saying.

In a speech that was reminiscent of his rally at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan after he was made BJP's PM candidate in 2013, Modi said: "Idea of India is 'justice for all, appeasement of none'; 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (world is one family)'; 'Satyameva Jayate'; and 'Ahimsa. Paramo Dharma (non-violence is ideal religion). India means 'Mother of democracy'. Today, idea of India is 'International Yoga Day', 'Shiva Shakti point on Moon'. All this that represents the 'idea of India' is today not limited to mere customs but represents India's identity and its voice in the world."

Without taking Pitroda's name, he said: "The tutor of the shehzada (Rahul) gives him very dangerous ideas. The tutor informed him that construction of a Ram temple.

Why Supreme Court granted interim bail to Delhi CM

NEW DELHI: Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday got a huge relief in the middle of ongoing Lok Sabha elections as Supreme Court granted him bail till June 1 for campaigning. Kejriwal was granted bail despite strong opposition from Enforcement Directorate, which argued against any relief to the AAP leader. The probe agency in an affidavit in the top court had said that right to campaign was neither a political nor a constitutional right. Kejriwal has been lodged in Tihar Jail in an alleged money laundering case in connection with the now-scrapped

Delhi Excise policy.

Here is what the apex court said to counter ED's arguments and grant bail to Kejriwal.

* 21-day interim bail will not make much of a difference

* ED's Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) was registered in August 2022 while the chief minister was arrested on March 21 this year

* He (Kejriwal) was out there for one-and-a-half-years. He could have been arrested earlier or after but nothing such thing happened

* Serious accusations have been made against Arvind Kejriwal but he has not been convicted yet

* Kejriwal does not have any criminal antecedents and he is not a threat to society

* Interim bail is granted on facts of each case and Arvind Kejriwal is not an exception

* While examining question of grant of interim bail/release, the courts always take into consideration the peculiarities associated with the person in question and the surrounding circumstances. In fact, to ignore the same would be iniquitous and wrong

* The factual situation cannot be compared with harvesting of crops or plea to look after business affairs.

'India is open & welcoming': EAM rebuts Biden's 'xenophobic' remark

NEW DELHI: External affairs minister S Jaishankar has rejected recent remarks by US Prez Joe Biden describing India as "xenophobic" and emphasised that the country has been open and welcoming to people from diverse societies. Jaishankar also refuted

the allegation that the Indian economy was faltering. Union minister said that the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) introduced by PM Narendra Modi-led govt showcases India's welcoming approach. On April 2, Biden had said the "xenophobic" nature of India, China,

Japan and Russia is responsible for their economic troubles and argued that America's economy is growing because it welcomes immigrants to its soil. He made the statement while campaigning for his re-election at Washington fundraising event.

India votes in favour of Palestinian resolution

UN

India on Friday voted in favour of a draft UN General Assembly resolution that said Palestine is qualified and should be admitted as full member of the United Nations and recommended that the Security Council "reconsider" the matter "favourably". The 193-member General Assembly met in the morning for an emergency special session where the Arab Group resolution 'Admission of new Members to the United Nations', in support of the State of Palestine's full membership in the UN, was presented by the United Arab Emirates, as Chair of the Arab Group in May. The resolution got 143 votes in favour, including by India, nine against and 25 abstentions. The UNGA hall broke into an



applause after the vote was cast. The resolution determined that "the State of Palestine is qualified for membership in the United Nations" in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations and "should therefore be admitted to membership in the United Nations". It recommended that the Security

Council "reconsider the matter favourably, in the light of this determination". India was the first non-Arab Palestine Liberation Organisation as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in 1974. India was also one of the first countries to recognise the State of Palestine in 1988 and in 1996, Delhi opened its

Representative Office to the Palestine Authority in Gaza, which was later shifted to Ramallah in 2003. Earlier this month, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj had said that while Palestine's application for membership at the UN was not approved by the Security Council because of the veto in the UNSC, "I would like to state here at the very outset that in keeping with India's long-standing position, we hope that this would be reconsidered in due course and that Palestine's endeavour to become a member of the United Nations will get endorsed". Resolution said that the additional rights and privileges of participation of the State of Palestine will be effective as of the 79th session of the General Assembly.

IAF convoy ambush: Brief gunfight in J&K's Poonch, search op enters Day 7

JAMMU: A brief exchange of fire took place in Sinai Top area of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district between security forces and terrorists — suspected to be behind the fatal May 4 ambush on an Indian Air Force convoy that left Corporal Vikky Pahade dead and four of his colleagues wounded — on Friday evening, even as searches for the attackers entered the seventh day, official sources said. Former Pakistani army SSG commando turned Lashkar-e-Taiba operative Illiyas Fauji, along with two other terror-

ists from Pakistan — Abu Hamza and Handoon — were earlier identified as kingpins of the attack. "Illiyas Fauji is the mastermind of the attack. Terrorist Habibullah Malik, alias Sajid Jutt, is also involved, operating from Pakistan," an official source said Thursday. CCTV footage from the area also captured three more Pakistani terrorists, whose identities are being sought by police. Sources disclosed that Pakistan is employing drones to smuggle arms and ammunition to terrorists. "Pakistani UAVs carrying weapons were shot down in Poonch and Rajouri," revealed an official. Following the May 4 ambush near Shahsitar (between Surankote and Mendhar in Poonch) an intensive cordon-and-search operation was jointly launched by the Army, J&K Police and CRPF — equipped with aerial surveillance and sniffer dogs — to plug potential escape routes and track down the terrorists believed to be holed up in the general area of Surankote-Poonch (Shahsitar, Gursai, Sanai, Lasana, and Sheendara top in the Surankote belt.

Three Patnaiks have held CM's post in Odisha for 45 out of 77 years

BHUBANESWAR:

The Patnaiks have been the most dominant force in Odisha's political and economic landscape. Just three individuals from two Patnaik families — Janaki Ballav (JB), Biju and the latter's son Naveen — have governed the state as chief ministers for 45 years of the 77 since Independence. In the last 32 years, however, Odisha has seen 11 CMs. Patnaiks, with variations in spelling, belong to the 'Karan' caste. Another prominent surname from the community is Mohanty. They comprise around 2% of the state's population. Such is their prominence in Odisha's politics that many refer to them as "political caste" by



many. Naveen, seeking a sixth term in office, has been at the helm since March 2000. If elected again, he will become the country's longest serving CM in Aug, going past Sikkim ex-CM Pawan Chamling. His father, Biju, was Odisha CM from 1961 to 1963 and 1990 to 1995. JB governed the state for 14 years, from 1980 to 1989, and again from 1995 to 1999. A bachelor at 77, Naveen, has earlier

said no member of his family would enter politics. It has, however, been a subject of speculation that either his nephew Arun Patnaik or his niece Gayatri, kids of his elder brother Prem, may take over. The chatter has subsided recently with Naveen's aide, V K Pandian, emerging as BJD's second-in-command. Another Karan, Nabakrushna Chaudhary (1950-1952 and 1952 to 1956).

Cops call 3 WB Raj Bhavan staff over CCTV clips

KOLKATA: Hare Street cops have summoned three Raj Bhavan officials for questioning after getting CCTV footage from Raj Bhavan's PWD wing that, officials say, corroborates the sequence of events the molestation complainant narrated to police on May 2. A young Raj Bhavan woman staffer (who has since quit her job) complained to cops on May 2 that she had been molested by governor C V Ananda Bose; she added that it was the second time the governor had molested her. Bose, after banning cops and state finance minister Chandrima Bhattacharya from Raj Bhavan, had issued a gag order to Raj Bhavan staffers and told them to ignore cop summons for any probe. On Thursday he released CCTV footage that showed the com-



plaint leaving the Raj Bhavan premises on May 2 evening after spending some time at the Raj Bhavan police outpost. The woman responded to the CCTV footage, saying it was released without her consent and it was another crime that Bose had committed against her. Minister Bhattacharya and Trinamool said the footage did not establish anything at all. Senior officials on Friday spoke against this backdrop and said they had got the CCTV footage from Raj Bhavan's PWD office. It appeared to corrob-

orate the sequence of events and the time period the woman had mentioned to cops on May 2. The footage shows her coming out of the Raj Bhavan special secretary's office, where she met this official and a doctor (according to her version). She went to the Raj Bhavan police outpost after this and then left for Hare Street police station, escorted by cops. Officials on Friday said they had called the Raj Bhavan special secretary, the doctor and the supervisor (the complainant's immediate senior) for questioning. Another Raj Bhavan employee has also spoken to cops, say officials. The enquiry was to probe "an incident" and not "aimed against any individual", a senior official added. Share all footage, Abhishek dares gov Governor C V Ananda

In major step towards theatre commands, govt notifies tri-service Act

NEW DELHI: The government has finally notified the Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Act, which will also pave the way for creation of the long-pending unified theatre commands in the most radical military reorganization envisaged since Independence. The enforcement with immediate effect of the ISO Act, which received presidential assent on August 15 last year after the bill was passed by Parliament during the monsoon session, comes soon after the BJP manifesto last month promised its government will "establish military theatre commands for more efficient operations" after creating the chief of defence staff (CDS) post in December 2019. Parallely, CDS General Anil Chauhan chaired a "Pariwartan Chintan" here on Thursday-Friday, during which 12 sub-committees made presentations on different domains and aspects towards jointness and integration "in light of the imminent theaterization", officials said. The flurry of activity shows the stage is now being set for the creation of integrated theatre commands (ITCs), which stalled after the first CDS Gen Bipin Rawat's death in a helicopter crash in December 2021, amid festering inter-service turf wars. India certainly needs a cost-effective war-fighting machinery through ITCs instead of the existing 17 single-service commands (Army 7, IAF 7 and Navy 3), which have little synergy in planning, logistics and operations, and often pull in different directions. The ISO Act empowers military commanders of existing tri-service organizations with full administrative and disciplinary powers over the Army, Navy and IAF personnel serving under them.

CAPSULES

Pawar slams PM's call to merge his party with that of nephew

PUNE/CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR: NCP (SCP) chief Sharad Pawar on Friday said PM Narendra Modi should maintain the dignity of his post and not call any political party 'nakli' (duplicate) as political parties solve people's problems and it was wrong to use such words against them. Modi had called Sena (UBT) as 'nakli Shiv Sena' and Pawar's NCP group as 'nakli NCP' on Friday in his rally in Nandurbar. Speaking at a press conference in Pune, Pawar said: "A senior leader from Maharashtra is worried and after the Baramati voting, he made a statement that for survival in politics, smaller parties should merge with Congress after June 4. This means 'nakli' Shiv Sena and 'nakli' NCP have made up their minds to merge with Congress. Instead of going with Congress to perish after June 4, they should join Ajit Dada and Shindeji (Eknath Shinde), and their dreams will be fulfilled." He said, "People like Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren cannot be arrested without the involvement of central govt or its leadership. These actions make it clear that the party (BJP) and the person (Modi) have no belief in parliamentary democracy. This has become obvious to the people. I can never go with them in politics." At another public rally in Ambejogai for party candidate Bajrang Sonawane, Pawar said at a time when nation is facing several challenges, PM Modi is frequenting Maharashtra and other places for poll campaigning despite his responsibilities. Sonawane is contesting from Beed Lok Sabha constituency against BJP's Pankala.

Paytm shares start flat on bourses after declining 3.74% on Thursday

NEW DELHI:

Shares of One97 Communication, owner of brand Paytm, were trading flat on BSE and NSE on Friday. Shares were trading at 391.00, marking an increase of 0.68% or 2.65 points from its previous close at 09:27 am.

Earlier, shares of Paytm dropped by 3.74% to settle at 380.45 on Thursday, after hitting upper-circuit for four consecutive sessions.

The stock prices, on Wednesday rose to Rs 395.25 and Rs 395.05 on the BSE and NSE, respectively, defying broader market trends.

This surge follows Paytm's recovery from a recent slump, with its stock rebounding more than 21% from last Thursday.

Reports indicate that Enforcement Directorate (ED) found no significant violations of foreign exchange rules in its ongoing investigation into Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL). However, it came



across some lapses in the company's KYC processes and reporting of suspicious transactions. The scrutiny on Paytm has intensified as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) tightens oversight on fintech firms globally. Recent actions by the RBI include directing to cease certain operations of PPBL due to non-compliance issues, affecting One97 Communications despite its 49% stake in the banking entity. The RBI's stricter stance comes as concerns over customer due diligence, data privacy, and systemic risks prompt a reevaluation of oversight mechanisms, primarily

focusing on digital customer identification practices. In response, the RBI has increased inspections and meetings with fintech companies, aiming to tighten compliance and ensure the integrity of the financial ecosystem.

The evolving regulatory landscape may lead to higher compliance and capital requirements for fintech firms, potentially resulting in sector consolidation. Industry stakeholders like Ashish Fafadia of Blume Ventures believe this scrutiny will foster compliance and support investment in law-abiding companies.

'Congress party has also made mistakes': Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi acknowledged that his party has committed errors in the past and must adapt its political approach in the future, in a recent event held in Lucknow. "The Congress party will also have to change its politics in the coming times. This will have to be done. I also want to say that the Congress party has also made mistakes and I am saying this while being from the Congress party," he said at the rally. He also criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi, labeling him as a 'monarch' who serves the interests of a few financiers rather than acting as a true prime minister.



Gandhi expressed his willingness to engage in a debate with PM Modi, although he doubted the prime minister would agree to such an encounter. During his speech at the "Samvidhan Sammelan," organized by the Samruddha Bharat Foundation, Gandhi asserted that the BJP would be limited to fewer than 180 seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha

elections. He confidently said, "I can give you in writing, if you want, that Narendra Modi is not going to be the PM again." Gandhi emphasized that while some politicians solely focus on attaining power, he views it as a means to serve the public, having been born into a political family. Gandhi highlighted the issue of unequal representation, pointing out that 90 percent of the Indian population, comprising SC/ST, OBC, Dalits, tribals, minorities, and the poor from the general community, lacks adequate participation in various sectors. He reiterated his demand for a caste-based census to address this disparity.

100% FDI in space sector a game changer: IN-SPACE chairman Pawan

BENGALURU: A day after the union cabinet, in line with the Centre's reforms to open up the space sector, allowed 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) under the automatic route, space regulator and promoter Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre

(IN-SPACE) chairman Pawan Goenka termed it a "game-changing decision that will propel India to new heights in the space sector". Lauding PM Narendra Modi's vision Goenka said the move will boost participation of non-government entities in space research and man-

ufacturing. "By opening doors for massive investment and global collaboration, this move will transform India's space capabilities," he said. Elaborating on the impact, Goenka said that this reform comes at an opportune time when the space sector is witnessing massive growth.

Congress washes hands of Aiyar's Pakistan remark

NEW DELHI: After dissociating itself from the remarks of former Indian Overseas Congress chairman Sam Pitroda roundly condemned as 'racist', Congress on Friday again hastened to distance itself from a statement of Mani Shankar Aiyar, where he said India should give respect to Pakistan as it is a sovereign nation and engage with it as it also possesses an atom bomb. In the video clip which Congress claimed is a few months old, Aiyar



says, "They (Pakistan) are also a sovereign country. They too have some prestige. After keeping their prestige in mind, talk tough to them as much as you want..if some mad man takes over there, what will happen to the country....if you

have the muscles, but they don't (then it would have been different). But like I just explained to you, their muscles are in Kahuta. And if there is a misunderstanding, we will all be in trouble," Aiyar is heard saying in a show called "Chill Pill".

Congress clarified "Aiyar does not speak for the party in any capacity whatsoever" and said the party disagreed totally with the remarks. Reacting to the row, Aiyar, "They (the remarks) have been dredged up now as the BJP's election campaign falters. I refuse to play their game." "Aiyar does not speak for the party in any capacity whatsoever, Congress media department chairperson Pawan Khera said as part of the Congress statement put out on

'Eye on vote bank, Didi didn't arrest Sandeshkhali key accused': Union minister

KOLKATA/ RAMPURHAT: Union home minister Amit Shah on Friday said tormentors of Sandeshkhali will be "straightened out by hanging them upside down" and thrown behind the bars. He, however, steered clear of any mention of the recent controversy over the videos that have gone viral. Addressing a rally at Rampurhat in Birbhum — a stronghold of Trinamool Congress' (TMC) Anubrata Mondal — Shah came down heavily on alleged illegal sand mining and cross-border cattle smuggling,



and said the culture of cuts money and syndicates in Bengal will soon come to an end. "For years, women in Sandeshkhali were tortured. Mamata ji could have arrested him (local strongman Sheikh Shahjahan), but she did-

n't... to protect her vote bank. The court ordered CBI to investigate and when the agency arrested him, she alleged that the cases against Shahjahan are fake," Shah said, claiming that victims were chosen on the basis of their reli-

gious identity. "TMC came with the slogan of 'Maa, Mati and Manush'. Gradually, that transformed into 'Mullah, Madrassa and Mafia'. Mullahs have a free run here while madrassas are being funded by public money. The mafia is torturing the poor. This will not continue anymore," Shah said. On Mondal, Shah said: "Anubrata is in Tihar now. You don't have to be afraid of him anymore. Mamata didi had given him Birbhum as a gift and he had started illegal activities here, including illegal sand mining and cattle smuggling.

Those with 2 wives to get double sops: Cong pick

INDORE/BHOPAL: Congress candidate for Ratlam, Kantilal Bhuria, sparked a controversy on Thursday by saying that men who have two wives would get Rs 2 lakh under Mahalaxmi Scheme. BJP has complained to Election Commission.



"If Congress forms the govt, those who have two wives will be getting Rs 2 lakh," Bhuria said at a rally in Sailana (160k from Indore), before he and the audience burst into laughter. The statement sparked outrage and BJP Mahila Morcha launched a protest. Bhuria claimed on Friday that his words were said in jest, but it did nothing to stop the political storm. BJP Rajya Sabha MP and state party Mahila Morcha president Maya Naroliya said: "We condemn this indecent statement. Matrishakti will

protest against it, just as we did against (PCC chief) Jitu Patwari's remark against Imarti Devi. I urge Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to ask their party leaders not to use such language against women." Bhuria was addressing a public meeting in Ratlam Lok Sabha seat's Sailana assembly segment with Patwari and former CM Digvijaya Singh when he told the gathering that the Congress manifesto promises to give all women Rs 1 lakh in their bank accounts if the party forms govt."

Judge dismissed for 'giving electric shocks' gets back job

AHMEDABAD: The Gujarat high court has ordered taking a lower court judge back into judicial service eight years after he was sacked on various charges, including inflicting electric shocks on court staff "in order to get sadistic pleasure and to physically harass them on the court premises". This case involved civil judge and judicial magistrate first class Kamlesh Alwani, who was inducted into judicial service in 2005. His services were terminated in 2016 after an inquiry and disciplinary proceedings. When he was suspended in 2012, various charges were slapped on him. During the inquiry, the vigilance officer found that the judge had allegedly administered electric shocks to four employ-



ees of the court in Savli. The staffers - peons Deva Bhalani, M H Joshi and P C Joshi and watchman Tanvir Meer - claimed that the judge inflicted electric shocks on them using a tubelight starter. To establish the charge of torture, the statements of the alleged victims were recorded. Alwani was also being probed by the department on 22 other charges, which were not so grave. The inquiry report was submitted to the discipli-

nary authority in 2014 with the finding that he was guilty of torturing the court staffers. As this conduct was unbecoming of a judicial officer, the high court imposed a major penalty on him and his services were terminated in 2016. He challenged the decision of the HC's administrative side through advocate Vaibhav Vyas, who argued that there were many charges that were not substantiated including that of tor-

turing the court staffers. He argued that the inquiry officer relied only on the statements of witnesses and ignored the expert opinion of a deputy engineer of Madhya Gujarat Vij Co Ltd (MGVCL) which said that electric shocks cannot be administered in the way the victims were claiming. The lawyer submitted that the inquiry officer overlooked the expert opinion and wrongly held the judge guilty of such a serious charge. On behalf of the high court's administration, it was argued that the findings of the inquiry report was accepted by the committee of the high court and the committee arrived at the conclusion that the judge had committed an act "which was unbecoming.

Helped Amritpal file nomination for LS election, Punjab tells HC

CHANDIGARH: The Punjab govt on Friday informed the Punjab and Haryana high court that it has facilitated radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh to file his nomination to contest the Lok Sabha elections from the Khadoor Sahib parliamentary constituency in Punjab. With these submissions made by the state, the petition filed by Amritpal seeking directions to grant him seven-day release from Central Jail in Dibrugarh, Assam, so that he could file his nomination papers was rendered infructuous. Amritpal had also sought that he be facilitated in getting photographs clicked and opening a bank account for filing the nomination. In its detailed reply, the state govt informed the high court that two sets of nomination forms and other paperwork were filled and signed by Amritpal on May 9.