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UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

## Old Rahul video 'proves' Congress supports quota for Muslims, says PM

**NEW DELHI:** PM Modi on Monday doubled down on his "communalism" charge against Congress and its partners by citing a video of Rahul Gandhi purportedly supporting reservations for Muslims. "Today, I came across a 11-12-year-old video of shehzade of Congress declaring support for reservations for Muslims. We had the then PM repeatedly saying that Muslims had the first claim on the country's resources and, on the other, we had the shehzada, who remote-controlled the govt, aggressively asserting that Congress would give reservations to Muslims. This has exposed the real character of Congress," Modi said in Bengal. **Have come with evidence that Cong is opposed to faith-neutral Constitution: PM Modi** This (old video of Rahul allegedly backing Muslim quota) has exposed the real character of Congress that



### Congress and its partners opposed to the faith-neutral Constitution

**Now** I have come to you with evidence which shows that Congress and its partners are rank communalists and opposed to the faith-neutral Constitution, are casteists and nepotist," said an angry PM who also accused the media and the "ecosystem" of saving Congress for long. "I have caught them and have been exposing them on a daily basis with evidence of their communalism, casteism and nepotism and now they cannot escape being punished by people," Modi said as he rallied his audience against the "effort" to rob SCs/STs and OBCs of a share of their quotas. Earlier, in an interview to news agency PTI, the PM said he had never uttered a word against minorities, and BJP had "not just today but never" acted against them.

the party and the ecosystem has kept hidden, Modi said while addressing an election meeting in Jhargram in West Bengal. In the video, Rahul appears to attack Mulayam Singh Yadav, founder of his ally Samajwadi Party, for keeping mum over Muslim quota despite having thrice served as UP CM. "Media asked him 2-3 times about quota only to meet with complete silence. Congress, on the other hand, openly speaks about reservations. Manmohan Singh says, yes we will give reservations to Muslims, we will include them. And then Mulayam Singh gets up and says that

they would have done more (if they had been in office). But you were in power thrice, why did not you do it?" Rahul is seen saying in the video apparently at a public meeting. For Modi, who has been accused of "communalism" for saying that Congress plans to extend quotas to Muslims in violation of the ban on religion-based quotas in the Constitution, the video proved to be an effective weapon for his counter-offensive; his attempt to turn the "communal" charge on its head. "Media kept questioning me on this, saying that their manifesto does not mention Muslim quotas.

## All Bengal, Odisha seats see lower turnout in Phase-5

In a statement, EC too noted the trend: "Parliamentary constituencies in various urban cities like Mumbai, Thane, Nashik and Lucknow continued the trend of urban apathy as noticed in last general election in 2019." With this phase, which saw voting in 49 seats across six states and two Union territories, polling has been completed in 428 seats. According to EC's voter turnout app at 11.45pm, Amethi and Rae Bareilly, from where Union minister Smriti Irani and Congress's Rahul Gandhi are contesting, saw higher polling. The other three seats in Uttar Pradesh - Barabanki, Fatehpur and Kaiserganj - also saw higher voting this time compared to 2019. Similarly, Hajipur from where BJP's Chirag Paswan is trying his electoral luck recorded higher voting than in 2019. Jehanabad in Bihar also recorded a higher turnout this year. Hazaribagh in Jharkhand saw a minor dip in voting at 64.5% compared to 64.9% in the last elec-



### Terror-scarred Baramulla posts 57% turnout, highest since 1984

**NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR:** Baramulla parliamentary constituency in Jammu and Kashmir recorded 57.4% polling at 11.45pm on Monday in the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections, which is the highest since 1984, both in polling percentage and absolute numbers terms. The voting percentage was updated on Tuesday and the final number will be out later this week. The highest-ever polling in LS elections in Baramulla was 61.1% in 1984. The region was in grip of insurgency since 1989 when voting touched an all-time low of 5.5%. North Kashmir was a stronghold. Arambagh in West Bengal reported the highest polling at 79.5%, although it was almost 4 percentage points lower than five years ago. The poll body said, "Polling across all constituencies was held smoothly and peacefully.

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### Am an RSS member, ready to return to fold: HC judge

**KOLKATA:** Justice Chitta Ranjan Dash of Calcutta HC caused a flutter Monday when he declared in his farewell speech before a full bench that he was free to work for RSS again after having distanced himself from it for 37 years for professional reasons even while remaining ideologically moored to the organisation. "To the distaste of some, I must admit here that I was and am a member of RSS. (But) I don't have any bias against anybody," Dash told the audience, just over two months after his controversial former colleague Abhijit Gangopadhyay resigned as a judge to join BJP and become the party's candidate for Tamluk Lok Sabha seat. (As a judge), I have treated everybody on a par: Rich, poor, a Communist, (or someone) with BJP, Cong or Trinamool. All were equal before me.

## Minority areas in Mumbai see brisk polling



**MUMBAI:** Shedding the perceived apathy of previous elections, minority pockets in Mumbai and suburbs saw a queue of voters outside polling booths in Bhendi Bazaar, Kurla, Bandra, Malvani, Chandivali, Mira Road and Mumbra, reported. Community leaders and activists who had appealed for exercising of franchise said they were heartened to see keen participation. Mosque committees had joined hands with citizen groups to create awareness about voting and this, said activists, worked. "I was thrilled to see such excitement among the minorities. They braved the sun and stood in queues to exercise their democratic right. I've never seen such a positive response to voting from the minorities," said former minister and working president of state Congress Arif Naseem Khan. In Mumbai South, Congress MLA Amin Patel sounded confident that Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate Arvind Sawant would win with an "impressive margin" as hardcore Shiv Sainiks had joined "hands with the Muslims."

## ICMR slams BHU's Covaxin study, says it wasn't part of it

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Council of Medical Research on Monday criticised a recently-published study on the long-term safety analysis of Covaxin in adults and adolescents for its poor methodology and design, and also clarified the article "misleadingly and erroneously acknowledges" ICMR. ICMR director general Rajiv Bahi said the study did not include unvaccinated.

## Jagannath a 'Modi bhakt', says BJP's Puri pick, sparks outrage

**BHUBANESHWAR:** BJP's Puri candidate and national spokesperson Sambit Patra was forced to apologise on Monday after a backlash over him declaring the deity Jagannath "a bhakt (devotee) of Modi". Patra's statement, which he later said was "a slip of the tongue", had been aired by a local news channel to whom he was describing the enthusiasm surround-



ing PM Narendra Modi's campaign trip to Puri. "Lakhs of people have come to see Modi. Lord Jagannath is a bhakt of Modi, and we all are members of Modi's family. I am unable to control my emotions at such an unprecedented sight," he said. The opposition latched on to the remark, with Congress among the first to demand that Patra "apologise with folded hands" and Trinamool terming it "blasphemy of the highest order".

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik joined in the outrage. "Mahaprabhu Shree Jagannath is the Lord of the universe. Calling Mahaprabhu a bhakt of another human being is an insult... This has hurt the sentiments and demeaned the faith of crores of Jagannath bhaktas and Odias across the world... I appeal to BJP to keep the Lord above any political discourse," he wrote on X.

**NEW DELHI:** Amid heightened tensions between an aggressive China and the Philippines, three Indian warships have now reached Manila as part of the ongoing long-range deployment to the South China Sea to strengthen maritime partnerships with friendly countries. Guided-missile destroyer INS Delhi, fleet tanker INS Shakti and anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kiltan, under the com-



mand of Eastern Fleet chief Rear Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar, docked at Manila on Sunday after similar goodwill visits to Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam in the region. The visit comes soon after India began deliveries of three anti-ship coastal batteries of the 290-km BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines last month, under the \$375 million contract in Jan 2022.

## Soren involved in land scam, tried to alter records: ED to SC

**NEW DELHI:** A day before Supreme Court hears ex-Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren's plea against his arrest in a money laundering case, Enforcement Directorate on Monday filed an affidavit in the top court with documentary evidence about how he clandestinely acquired 8.8 acres of prime land in Ranchi and used his powers to change the records after ED issued summons to him. The agency also told SC through the affidavit, filed in response to Soren's appeal challenging a Jharkhand HC judgment rejecting his petition, that once the ex-CM was caught for his wrongdoings and documents were



seized during raids, he resorted to filing FIRs against ED officials under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act to deter them from continuing with the probe. Soren had filed the case against ED officials on the day of his arrest on Jan 31. HC had stayed the proceedings under SC/ST Act against ED officials and provided protection to them. Soren's counsel Kapil Sibal had last week informed a bench of Justice Sanjiv

Khanna and Justice Dipankar Datta that the land in question did not belong to the ex-CM and that ED had filed the case under Prevention of Money Laundering Act just to immobilise an opposition politician ahead of elections. Soren is seeking interim bail, placing his case on par with Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal who is booked in a PMLA case relating to the Delhi liquor scam case. In the affidavit, ED attached photo-

### Calcutta HC slams EC for inaction over 'slandering' BJP ads

**KOLKATA:** EC has "grossly failed" to address complaints about violations of the model code of poll conduct, Calcutta HC said Monday while hearing Trinamool Congress's petition against BJP's allegedly offensive poll ads. Restraining BJP from publishing material that violates the model code, Justice Sabyasachi Bhattacharya held a string of ads issued by BJP on May 4, 5, 10 and 12 in sections of the media as "derogatory" and "slandering". The judge said such ads must be barred in the interest of free, fair and untainted elections. "Any resolution adopted by EC after June 4 means nothing," he said, responding to TMC's allegation that EC had been sitting on its complaints. The party moved high court against some ads.

## SC stays big hotel project in forested area of Uttarakhand

**NEW DELHI:** Days after faulting Uttarakhand govt for failing to take preventive steps to curb forest fires, Supreme Court has stayed a big hotel project in the Bhimtal-Mukteshwar region as it would lead to large scale felling of trees in the verdant Jilling Estate area. A bench of Justices A S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan admitted the appeal filed by Birendra Singh, who had challenged the go-ahead given by Uttarakhand HC, and revived a stay on any kind of tree felling and construction activities at the site in Jilling Estate. It asked the project proponent to file its response to the petition within six weeks and posted the matter for further hearing on Aug 12. For the petitioner, advocates P B Suresh

and Vipin Nair argued that HC erred by permitting construction activities at the site based on 'single-window clearance' despite the proponent not getting the mandatory prior environmental clearance under the Environment Impact Assessment Notification of 2006. The counsel said if the thickly forested patch was permitted to be deforested for a hotel project, which intends to carry out construction activities on an area of 20,000 square feet, it would cause irreparable damage to the fragile ecology of the area that could adversely impact the interest of the state to maintain adequate forest cover. SC had recently expressed serious concern over the lackadaisical approach of the state govt in controlling.



## Seminar on Voter Awareness: How to remove voter apathy

A seminar was organized by "Aastha Samiti" under the voter awareness campaign at Rani Revati Devi.

Prayagraj. Under the voter awareness campaign, a seminar titled "How to remove voter apathy" was organized by the city's cultural and social organization "Aastha Samiti" at Rani Revati Devi Saraswati Vidya Niketan Inter College, Rajapur Prayagraj.

Expressing serious concern over the continuously decreasing number of voters in the seminar, along with appealing to more and more voters to come out of their homes to vote in the national interest, the reasons for voters' indifference towards voting were also discussed. Chief guest of the seminar, former government advocate of Allahabad High Court, Shivkumar Pal said that today's voter has become very aware. He has started assessing what the leader for whom he had previously voted had done for the development of the area. In my opinion, this could also be one of the reasons for the decrease in voting percentage. Nevertheless, to form a stable government in the country, I appeal to the voters to become aware but not lazy. Make sure to use your franchise. In the keynote address, Sanjay Purusharthi, President of Global Greece and repre-

senting the Atal Groundwater Scheme of the Government of India in the country, said that the voters stand in the queue for hours in the scorching sun for the sake of national interest and have full faith in the leader

Prayagraj lagging behind in voting? Everyone talks about increasing the voting percentage, being citizens of a democratic country, we are also concerned about the development of our nation and to build a strong

voting percentage can definitely increase.

President of "Aastha Samiti" Brijraj Tiwari said that the continuously decreasing voting percentage is a matter of concern and cooperation of all of us is

young voters. The youth is struggling with their problems and even after the elections they refuse to recognize those whom they voted for. Efforts should be made to change the working style of the leaders.

Senior cultural worker Jamil Ahmed said that decorating the polling booth with colorful balloons and fringes can attract children but cannot persuade conscious voters. It would be better if the district administration organizes awareness programs for all the candidate leaders to resolve the basic problems of the voters. Even before reaching the voter booth, he leaves home after deciding for whom to vote. The voter uses his franchise honestly but the people in whom he puts his trust do not honestly fulfill their promises and duties. Despite all this, I would like to say to my conscious voters that each and every vote of yours is invaluable for the country which can change the direction and condition of the country. Therefore, do use your voting right to build a beautiful nation.

Apart from this, Anoop Gupta (Vice President "Aastha Committee"), Uma Dixit, Ravi Shankar, Jai Kishan etc.



of their area with full honesty. He votes by doing so, but after the elections, it is painful for him to face the problems of electricity and water and there is no hearing on protesting against it. Perhaps this pain prevents him from voting. In the national interest, our effort is to ensure maximum voting and there is a need to pay attention to this also.

School Principal Banke Bihari Pandey, who was presiding over the seminar, said that despite being a city of intellectuals, why is

nation, we want 100% voting in every area of our country. The other aspect of this is also true that voters can only be appealed to and cannot be forced to vote by putting any kind of pressure on them. Rather, the reasons for low voting percentage should be found. There are many reasons. There is a need for intellectuals, politicians, and administration to sit together and brainstorm, the conclusions reached should be seriously worked upon. By doing this, the

also very important in increasing the voting percentage in the national interest. He also added that it is equally important that voting The reason behind people's decreasing inclination towards voting should also be known. Especially why the young voters are not taking interest in using their franchise. General Secretary of the organization Manoj Gupta said that voters are worried about the future of their country but our leaders are not worried about the future of their

## Parents now play multiple roles

PRAYAGRAJ: There was a time when fathers would be looked upon as demigods and children would be scared to look them in the eye. But today, parents play multiple roles of caretakers, help providers and bosom friends who are fun to be around with at shopping malls, games parlours, exhibitions and amusement parks.

Parents are increasingly becoming friendly with their wards and love to spend quality time with their kids during vacation. They are also motivating their kids to pick up a hobby which suits their taste and preference during leisure hours. Majority of the parents are also showing inclination towards outdoor sports and accompany their kids to playground and badminton court in Mayo Hall complex.

In addition, to keep a tab on the activities of their kids at home, working parents are using social networking websites and monitoring their actions on the internet with the help of security software.

"I regularly accompany my kids to morning walk at Company Bagh. Inculcation of healthy habits among kids at an early age will go a long way in ensuring good health," says a physician who is a proud father of two kids, Somyasheel and Shobhit, aged 9 and 12, respectively.

"Our parents would be

strict and didn't give us more freedom than was necessary fearing we might get spoiled. But now, I share a friendly bond with my daughter because I feel she'll be able to confide in me better and the bond will be stronger if I don't keep a distance with her," said housewife Neeta, mother of a 15-year-old daughter, Sakshi.

Sakshi loves the fact that her parents never raise their voice while reprimanding her and that her house is not an extension of her classroom where orders just flow from the top. "Even if I make a mistake, they correct me without shouting," she said.

Anjali, who runs a boutique, felt parents have become more liberal in the enforcement of rules. "Earlier, grandparents and parents would impose a lot of restrictions on us. Even in our early twenties, if we had to go to a friend's house, we would be accompanied by someone."

And why just to a friend's place, parents today even allow their wards to go on vacations unaccompanied by senior members of the family. "They don't worry unnecessarily. Children also have matured ahead of their time and are ready to shoulder responsibility," added Anjali.

There's a saying that if you spare the rod, you spoil the child. But most

new-age parents believe that the rod can be dropped without compromising on the child's disciplining needs. "On the contrary, if we pick up the stick all the time, children would learn to revolt and retort. Youngsters today have exposure to the media and laws and they should be handled differently," felt Nikhil Kumar, a dotting father of a five-year-old daughter.

"I remember once she came back from her play school and used an expletive in the course of a conversation. She wasn't aware of the meaning when I asked her and so I politely explained to her that such words should not be used. Had I shouted at her, it might have had a negative impact. She would not have understood why I was shouting at her," said Praveen Kumar.

A mother of a three-year-old girl, said each time she felt the need to discipline her daughter, she dilated her eyeballs or gestured in such fashion that the little one had to retreat from whatever she was doing. "I am definitely not spoiling her as I feel we should not beat up children unnecessarily," she said.

With most parents working, psychologists feel there is a gap in communication between parents and children and most often, children take advantage of their absence.

## Meja Urja Nigam started Swachhta Pakhwada 2024 by organizing oath taking program

Keeping in view the importance of cleanliness, all department heads should discharge their responsibilities - Kamlesh Soni

Meja: Meja Urja Nigam Chief Executive Officer Kamlesh Soni launched the Swachhta Pakhwada 2024 on Friday. During this, he also administered oath to the officers and employees of the corporation. It is noteworthy that as per the instructions of the Government of India, Meja Urja Nigam will run a cleanliness campaign in the next 15 days in its premises as well as in the surrounding project affected areas. He said that during the Swachhta Pakhwada, activities like Prabhath Pheri, story writing, poetry, debate, Many competitions and activities like Art and Craft will be organized by the Human

Resource Department in the project premises. Along with this, an awareness campaign will also be run in the nearby villages under Corporate Social Responsibility in which programs like street plays will also be organised. In this sequence, Meja Urja Nigam also launched the Clean Meja Urja Nigam campaign in the Haat Sabzi Mandi area of the campus on Friday.

Meja Urja Nigam CEO Kamlesh Soni also requested all the department heads on this occasion and said that every department should also start this campaign at their own level and also submit their report in the fortnight closing cer-

emony. He encouraged everyone and said that we should make an important contribution to the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan of the Government of India and we should start it at the individual level and also in our surrounding areas so that people understand the importance of cleanliness and fulfill their responsibilities. Apart from the employees of Meja Urja Nigam, other staff also participated enthusiastically in the program. On this occasion, senior officers and employees of the corporation along with the CISF team and heads of departments of all the departments were prominently present.

## Farmers still depend on tube wells & monsoon for irrigation

PRAYAGRAJ: Although the central and the state governments declared loan waiver to small farmers, their condition is not likely to improve until focus is shifted on all other agricultural facilities including irrigation. Farmers are still dependent on rains for irrigating their crops as water is often not released in canals and minors by the concerned officials. This often results in destruction of crops and heavy loss to farmers. The condition of irrigation facilities is not too good in Allahabad district especially in trans-Yamuna areas where farmers have to suffer losses due to lack of water for their crops. They mostly depend on monsoon for irrigation despite the presence of canals.

It may be mentioned that canals need to be cleaned every year for

smooth flow of water to the distant areas for irrigation. Due to silt, garbage and growth of vegetation water

cleaned. However, all the works are done only on papers. There are many villages in trans Yamuna and

they irrigated their fields through canals.

In such villages, farmers have to rely on rains or tube



is blocked at several places which needs to be cleared. Irrigation department officials and engineers are responsible to get the canals

Ganga areas where water never reaches in canals. Some of the villagers claim that they even do not remember when the last time

wells for irrigating their crops. While the rains are often scarce, tube wells cannot be afforded by small farmers.

The situation is more deplorable in rocky areas of trans-Yamuna where agriculture has become a risky affair due to lack of water and corruption in irrigation department. Farmers claim that irrigation department employees often demand money for releasing water from the tails.

All works are done on papers and canals remain dry throughout the year. Moreover, musclemen often block the canals for irrigating their own fields.

Husband of village head of Madari Gramsabha in Mauaima, Jamaluddin alleghed water never reached his village in the last 20 years. The engineers never cleaned the canals but payment for the same is made every year to the contractors. Complaint was made in this connection to the senior officials but no action was taken, he adds.

## UNSCHEDULED POWER CUTS AGGRAVATE WATER CRISIS

PRAYAGRAJ: The ongoing power crisis coupled with the water shortage in city has drawn the ire of residents, leading to numerous protests.

"Leaders make tall claims during elections but don't do anything concrete to solve our problems. We will not allow representatives of political parties to enter our area until adequate water supply is provided to us," said a hapless resident of Unchawagarhi.

The problem of water shortage has been an annual affair for the residents of almost every areas. However, long unscheduled power cuts have aggravated their anger.

Citizens are grappling with the problem of low voltage in several areas of the city. The officials of the power department have not taken any step to mitigate the sufferings of the people despite several complaints lodged by denizens regarding low voltage problem.

The low voltage prob-

lem and that too in the searing heat conditions have compounded the woes of the denizens. The voltage is so low that even electric fans are unable to provide any relief in this hot and sultry weather. Rohit Verma, a resident of Unchwa Garhi, speaking about the low voltage problem said, "The fans move at a very slow speed due to low voltage problem which has become a regular feature. The electric bulbs glow like flickering candles during night while tubelights do not illuminate due to low voltage."

Shama Parveen, resident of Kareli said, "Children are unable to sleep during night hours owing to improper functioning of electric fans and coolers. These electric gadgets are not properly operational on account of low voltage". Bulbs glow like candles, tubelights do not function while fans do not give any relief, said Rajesh Trivedi, a resident of Allahpur.

People have also pro-

tested against the erratic power supply and poor voltage problem but their protest have not yielded the desired result. People living in Roshanbagh and Akbarpur protested against erratic power supply and low voltage problem but their protest did not have the desired effect on power officials. Similar protests were held by the people at Kalyani Devi Power. The locals protested against the defective transformer near Lalita Devi mandir which was however replaced after several hours.

People of different areas held demonstration at Kalyani Devi substation. One transformer of the area had gone out of order and the people were without electricity for about eight hours. People raised slogans against the power department and criti-

cized the officers for doing nothing to provide electricity. Resident of the area, especially women and chil-



dren have to face problems due to non-availability of electricity.

A resident of the locality said that due to absence of electricity, water is also not coming to the area and

the people are facing difficulties. "We have to make alternative arrangements to get water through

handpumps installed in our area. Children are unable to concentrate on studies due to absence of electricity," he said.

The residents have urged the power depart-

ment to make arrangements for the urgent change of transformer in the area and ensure availability of elec-

tricity.

Meanwhile, despite promises by higher ups of power department to improve and streamline the power supply of city, the situation continues to re-

main pathetic, even as the department fails to provide uninterrupted power supply to city in Old City areas. Worst affected are areas where work related to shifting of poles has not been completed yet. As a result power supply remains snapped for hours together even as residents wait patiently for resumption of the same.

Residents of Old City areas including Atala, Roshanbagh, Daryabad, Kareli, Attarsuiya, Rasoolpur, Ghaus Nagar and others complained that the power department has failed to provide regular supply to areas despite promises of setting up of new substations and installation of new transformers of enhanced capacity.

A resident, of Kareli, Mohd Shariq said that "Power played truant and the trend is still continuing as the department has failed to initiate measures to keep things in order. This is the reason why local faults

crop up at regular intervals leaving the residents without electricity for hours together."

He added that the issue was raised with the officials concerned but nothing was done to take corrective measures in this regard. Holding similar views a resident of New Katra, Pravin said that "The conditions are full of potholes and the residents have to move out in the midst of this."

He said that women face lots of hardship as the roads become unsafe in the wake of prevailing dark conditions during a power breakdown.

A social worker and resident of Akbarpur in old city area, Shahid Askari said that "The power department should be sensible enough to understand the fact that electricity and water are the two basic requirements for the people and failure to provide the same puts a question mark over will to serve the people.





Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya reached Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public meeting parade ground and inspected the ongoing preparation work. On this occasion, Regional President of Braj region Digvijay Shakya, Mayor Ganesh K Sharmana Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra, Regional Vice President Awadhesh Chandra Gupta Rajesh Kesarwani, Sushil Tripathi, etc. Others were party workers.

## Voters first vote and then have refreshments: BDO Dev Kumar

Prayagraj: A one-day voter awareness program was organized by the Central Communication Bureau of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Prayagraj on the instructions of the Election Commission of India on Monday at Anupam Public School and College, Babuganj in development block Bahria. In which Block Development Officer Bahria Dev Kumar participated as the chief guest. Police station incharge Bahria Ranvijay Singh participated in the program as a special guest. The program was presided over by Traffic Inspector Pawan Kumar Pandey and program in-charge of Central Communication Bureau Ram Murat.

As the chief guest in the program, BDO Bahria Dev Kumar said that on May 25, all the voters should go to their respective booths and vote 100 percent. He said that according to the data released by the Election Commission of India, there was less voting in Phulpur

in the last Lok Sabha elections. With the aim of increasing the voting percentage, voter awareness programs are being organized as per the instructions of the Election Commission of India. The chief guest administered the oath of voting to the people present.

through the slogan "How will you show patriotism, by voting 100 per cent" and "Strengthen democracy by voting 100 per cent".

During this, a beautiful folk song was presented by Krishna Kumar Satyarthi Lokgeet Party to make the voters aware. On this occa-

Head Incharge Sahana Malik, Rajkumar Gupta, Manju Gupta, Geeta Vishwakarma, Surya Prakash, Dharendra Sharma, Ravi Shukla, Rajesh Sharma, Sunil, Aimak, Rahul, KC, RB Maurya, Anilkant Mishra, Javed, Pushpendra, Sanjay, Pratima, Amrita Singh,

Geeta, Sanjeev Kumar, Ankur, Alok, Krishna Mohan, Ajay Vishwakarma, Ashutosh Srivastava, Laxmikant,

Amarnath Singh, Shyam Singh, Mohd. Yunish, OP Pal, Anup Kumar and others were present. Program coordinator senior

journalist Shivdutt Narayan Tripathi expressed gratitude towards the guests.

Along with this, two awareness chariots have been run to make the voters of Prayagraj aware, which was inaugurated today from Police Lines in the presence of Pawan Kumar Pandey, Traffic Inspector, Kuldeep Sengar Inspector, Shivkant Ojha, Manish Yadav, Vinod Yadav, Rekha, Seema Verma etc. Flagged off.



Special guest Police Station Head Bahria Ranvijay Singh said that all the voters should be free from fear and use their votes properly in the interest of the country and elect a good public representative. Traffic Inspector Pawan Kumar Pandey, who was presiding over the program, said that voters can play an important role in nation building by giving just 30 seconds of time. He appealed

program in-charge Ram Murat organized a quiz competition among the people in which the successful people were rewarded by the guests on behalf of the department. In the program, Regional Publicity Assistant Bal Mukund Singh, Trainee Sub Inspector Prakashini Singh, College President Rajendra Kumar Gupta, Director Usha Ratan Gupta, Principal Shabana Shaikh,

## More schools get UP Board recognition in state

PRAYAGRAJ: The government has approved granting of recognition to 587 private schools by Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, across the state. With this, the number of schools, recognised by U.P. Board, has gone upto 28,188, officials said. The recognition was granted to these schools in phases. While 381 schools got recognition on May 10, 206 got it on June 21, 2023. Some schools were given direct recognition from classes 6 to 12, while few others got recognition for additional classes and subjects, board officials said.

Out of these, 168 schools have been granted recognition in different districts falling under board's Prayagraj regional office, 134 under Meerut regional office, 106 of Varanasi regional office, 87 of Gorakhpur regional office while 92 schools under Bareilly regional office, officials added.

On May 10, additional chief secretary Deepak Kumar had issued an order approving recognition of 381 schools, including 89 each under Prayagraj and Meerut regional offices, 66 under Gorakhpur regional office, 67 under Bareilly and 70

under Varanasi regional offices. Later, by a separate order, issued on June 21 by special secretary Rupesh Kumar, 206 more schools, including 79 schools under Prayagraj regional office, 45 under Meerut, 21 under Gorakhpur, 25 under Bareilly and 36 under Varanasi regional offices, were approved. The recognition has been granted under the old norms which were earlier followed by the U.P. board.

The rules have changed from this year and schools applying for recognition till May 31 will be given recognition for three years in the first phase as per the new guidelines. After the completion of first three years, the schools will have to renew the recognition, which will be for five years. With the new schools being given recognition, the total number of schools recognised by U.P. Board in the state, is now 28,188. Before these new recognitions, there were 2355 government schools, 4509 government-aided and 20737 unaided schools recognised by UP Board across the 75 districts of the state.



In view of the VVIP arrival, tour and public meeting program in the district, de-briefing was conducted by the Police Commissioner, Prayagraj in the Reserve Police Line Auditorium and necessary guidelines were given to all concerned.

## Relief likely for 12 Prayagraj villages as revival of two rivers underway

PRAYAGRAJ: Weeks before monsoon hit the state, the district administration took up the revival of two small rivers hoping to provide relief to the parched lands of around two dozen villages in the development blocks of Manda and Koraon in Prayagraj district. After over twenty days of work now, district officials are hopeful that the flow path of Karnavati and Lapri, which are tributaries of the Ganga, has been cleared and water will flow freely throughout the year to

these sun-baked villages that don't have any other water source.

The revival of tributaries and rivulets was taken up in Prayagraj, Pratapgarh, Kaushambi and Fatehpur on the instructions of divisional commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant. The cleaning of the Karanvati, done as part of the MGNREGA works, started on June 5. It is expected that the rivers will satisfy the water needs of around two dozen villages, said Prayagraj chief development officer Gaurav Kumar. Deputy commis-

sioner (wage employment) Kapil Kumar said the work of rejuvenation of Karnavati in Manda was included in the work plan of Rajapur gram panchayat.

Karnavati river originates Murtiyahva Dah located in the Vindhya mountain ranges and it travels about 50 km to merge into the Ganga near Gaipura in Vindhyaachal. Before this, it flows through the village panchayats of Manda development block including Mandakhas, Girdharpur, Bharari, Girdharpu Sikra, Saibsa, Ulda, Mahuvakala,

Dharovanara, Kanvera passes through Bhisranrottam etc.

"Under the gram panchayats rejuvenation work, the revival of the Karnavati is being done in about 21 km across of 13 gram panchayats of Manda," said the official. Prayagraj has 10 rivulets and tributaries such as Sasur Khaderi, Mansaita, Tons, Belan, Gorma, Karnavati, Lapri, Tudiya, Naina and Jwalamukhi. Among these, Mansaita and Jwalamukhi are demanding immediate attention.

## Basic development plan amended for new urban areas

PRAYAGRAJ: As many as 5,000 streetlights will be installed in the newly-added areas of Sangam city. Besides, a total of 25 roads and drains will also be developed in areas falling under 27 municipal wards of Prayagraj Municipal Corporation. These wards have around 50,000 houses, said civic officials. A plan has also been chalked out to install seven big tube wells, they added.

The basic facilities of these new urban areas will be increased by spending around ₹23 crore. Prayagraj municipal commissioner Chandra Mohan Garg has approved the proposal with several amendments, the officials further said. The importance of the plan can be gauged from the fact that it is after four years of delimitation, the roadmap for developing these areas to bring them at par with other city wards is now nearing implementation. As part of the delimitation exercise, Sangam city limits were increased. Also, many rural areas were included in the city.

In the newly added urban areas, a proposal was first prepared to install 1,000 streetlights, develop 40 roads and set up seven tube wells. The municipal commissioner on Monday reviewed the proposed basic development works of these new urban areas under the 'Nagar Srijan Yojna'. In the review held in the new building of the Prayagraj Municipal Corporation, the municipal commissioner directed to install 5,000 streetlights in the new wards. However, with the number of streetlights increased, the proposed roads to be developed were reduced from 40 to 25.

As per plan, now Rs10 crore will be spent on streetlights, Rs 9 crore on construction of roads and drains and ₹4 crore on construction of tube wells. Earlier, the Prayagraj Municipal Corporation had planned to get the proposed development works done in the new areas at a cost of ₹17 crore. This figure has now been hiked to Rs 23 crore.

Meanwhile, the state government has sought a proposal from the Prayagraj Municipal Corporation for development of the new urban areas of Sangam city. After taking oath of office, the new mayor, Ganesh Kesarwani, had also directed civic officials to prepare a development plan for these new areas. Prayagraj Municipal Corporation's chief engineer Satish Kumar said that the proposal will be finalised as per instructed amendments and sent to the state government for the budget soon.

## MP-MADE GUNS FIND THEIR WAY INTO UP THROUGH ALLD

PRAYAGRAJ: Allahabad and Aligarh have emerged as the primary hotspots from where gunrunners sell semi-automatic firearms made in the forests of Madhya Pradesh (MP) to anti-social elements in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh (UP).

Last month's seizure of 50 pistols from five men in two separate cases reported from Bhikhangaon and Balwada in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district has revealed that Aligarh in west UP and Allahabad in southeast-

ern UP are the places from where weapon traders acquire semi-automatic guns made in the forests of Khargone, Barwani, Burhanpur and Dhar districts.

While three men arrested by Bhikhangaon police with 20 brand new guns hailed from Sarai Inayat and Naini areas of Allahabad, two others nabbed with 30 guns by Balwada police hailed from Gonda area of Aligarh district.

In both cases, the guns - sourced anywhere between Rs 8,000 and Rs10,000 - were made by

sikligars, a community that has mastered the art of manufacturing firearms over the years. The weapons were to be sold to buyers in Uttar Pradesh at prices ranging from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000.

In the Khargone incident, two women - one of them identified as Pooja - had come with three men from Allahabad to deal with a sikligar. Though the three were arrested, the women managed to escape.

The Khargone police are now working with the Allahabad police to trace

the two women as well as the ones responsible for sending them.

Investigations revealed that the arrested people were couriers of the Ravi Nat-Suraj Kushwaha gang, which has been sourcing semi-automatic guns from MP and selling it to anti-social elements in UP and Mumbai. As Nat was arrested by the UP STF two months ago, the gunrunner's operations are being handled by his deputy, Kushwaha.

"The trio's arrest and subsequent investigations revealed that

Allahabad is the gateway for the supply of guns made by sikligars to Purvanchal (east UP). They also disclosed that the guns were to be supplied to contacts in Varanasi, Azamgarh, Bhadohi, Ghazipur and Janpur districts,"

Khargone superintendent of police Amit Singh informed Patrika on phone. Sources in the UP special task force's Allahabad unit said Nat and Kushwaha's customers include contract killers working for several gangs in east UP -

extending from Varanasi to Gorakhpur. With many musclemen-turned-politicos likely to get involved in the Uttar Pradesh elections next year, the possibility of firearms manufactured in MP being used to terrorise opponents cannot be ruled out.

The political heavyweights hoping to find a place in the UP assembly next year (either for themselves or their kin) include Prem Prakash alias Munna Bajrangi (Mandiyahu-Janupur), Sushil Singh (Chandauli), Vineet Singh (Chandauli),

Dhananjay Singh (Janpur) and sitting MLA Mukhtar Ansari (Mau).

Besides the Ravi Nat-Suraj Kushwaha gang, a village headman and a gunrunner from Allahabad have also been sourcing guns from sikligars in MP ahead of the UP polls, sources in the MP STF said. The MP STF had arrested a sikligar, Chhattan Singh, along with a wholesale buyer for trading in guns in April this year.

The gun trail Aligarh in west UP and Allahabad in south-

eastern MP are the places from which weapon traders acquire semi-automatic guns made in the forests of Khargone, Barwani, Burhanpur and Dhar districts. The guns - sourced anywhere between Rs 8,000 and Rs 10,000 - were made by sikligars. The weapons were to be sold to buyers in Uttar Pradesh at prices ranging from Rs15,000 to Rs 25,000. The MP STF had arrested a sikligar, Chhattan Singh, along with a wholesale buyer for trading in guns in April this year.



## Editorial

### Xi Jinping's Europe tour: A visit that raises eyebrows

On his first visit to Europe post-pandemic, Xi Jinping met French President Emmanuel Macron. Xi lauded China's ties with France as a "model for the international community amid threats of a trade war over Chinese electric cars and French cognac". Xi Jinping's tour through Europe, analysts point out, highlighted China's audacious strategy to exploit the fissures within Europe amid great power contestation. Among many other developments, the armed forces of China and France announced the setting up of a new inter-theatre cooperation and dialogue mechanism. This collaboration between the two militaries' naval and air forces is aimed at further deepening mutual trust and cooperation and jointly safeguarding regional security and stability. Such a move towards forging closer Sino-French military ties, especially amid Beijing's assertive manoeuvres in the Indo-Pacific and the South China Sea, begs the question: Can Europe, and particularly France, remain a reliable ally, or will it become more accommodating of China's controversial actions in its neighbourhood? Countries like India are watching closely, concerned about France and Europe in the future and potentially succumbing to China's diplomatic and economic enticements. China claims to be "not at the origin of the Russian-Ukraine crisis, nor a party to it, nor a participant", and thus legitimises its silence. Can we anticipate a similar approach by Europe on issues concerning Taiwan and the Philippines? In the past few years, France's relationship with China has been marked by a mixture of scepticism and strategic engagement, reflecting broader geopolitical objectives and national interests. In the recent past, France has been quite critical of China, viewing it as a 'strategic threat'. The 2021 update to France's 2017 Defence and National Security Strategic Review painted China as a 'systemic rival', 'economic competitor', and 'sometimes an important diplomatic partner'. Even as Paris sought engagement with Beijing in 2019, substantial tensions clearly existed. During Xi Jinping's previous European tour, President Macron rallied a united European front to challenge Beijing on critical European issues like unfair trade practices, restricted market access for European companies, opaque financing under the BRI, and human rights abuses in Tibet and Xinjiang. Recent events and official statements have further underscored this stance. A parliamentary report on foreign interference in France, requested by Marine Le Pen's far-right party, highlighted China's "aggressive and increasingly malicious methods". Labelling China as the "second most serious threat to France after Russia", the report echoed sentiments from Bernard Emié, Director of French External Intelligence (DGSE), who described China as an 'aggressive power' with 'unbridled diplomacy'. Furthermore, the issue of France selling arms to Taiwan resurfaced during the pandemic when Taiwan announced plans to buy defence equipment from France to upgrade missile systems on French warships purchased in 1991 and 1992. Beijing expressed 'serious concern' and urged Paris to avoid actions that could strain Sino-French ties. Following Chinese air intrusions into Taiwan's air defence zone, a French delegation led by former defence minister Alain Richard visited Taipei to meet with President Tsai Ing-wen. This visit was seen as a powerful symbol of France's commitment to opposing China's unilateral aggression and supporting peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

# How President Raisi's death will impact Ayatollah's succession in Iran

The rough weather in north-west Iran took the lives of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on Sunday (May 19), along with seven others, in a helicopter crash while returning after inaugurating a dam in East Azerbaijan with his Azerbaijani counterpart, Ilham Heydar oghlu Aliyev. The two Presidents looked happy and comfortable despite some intra-regional competition, especially in the wake of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The death of President Raisi, along with his foreign minister, has indeed caused a vacuum on key developments and initiatives, especially at this time when the region is going through a highly volatile war in Gaza, which threatens to expand beyond. In March and April, Iran and Israel had nearly come to a direct confrontation that could be avoided due to pragmatism and intervention by the US and others in the region. Limited strikes saved the face for both. President Raisi, despite his conservative approaches domestically, tried to be pragmatic even as, under his watch, Iran continued on its path to increase the enrichment of uranium to keep the pressure on the West and pursued the quest to acquire parity with Israel in the nuclear domain. Perhaps the biggest credit



could go to him for the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement, along with working for a regional modus vivendi with the Arab world. His Act East policy also brought about closer relations with India and China while they worked to closely enrich ties with Russia. At the same time, in the wake of Abraham Accords and the further potential normalisation of ties between key Arab countries and Israel, Tehran emerged as a major protagonist of the Palestinian cause, given its hold on Hamas in Gaza. However, the mutually assured destruction (MAD) syndrome between Tehran and Tel Aviv continues apace and could threaten stability in West Asia. Raisi successfully secured the release of \$6 billion in exchange for some US prisoners and even restrained Shia Iraqi militias from attacking US military assets. Although Iran has been able to blunt the

impact of the severest sanctions to a considerable extent, it may have been severely compromised in the area of spare parts and technology. The fact that the President was riding in a 15-year-old helicopter not only questions the choices of the pilot or the leadership in such a weather but also confirms the existence of restrictions on imports of spare parts that may have been imposed due to sanctions. What really caused the crash will only be confirmed by detailed investigations of the wreckage and Black Box. The untimely death of President Raisi has also caused a leadership vacuum, as he was mostly slated to succeed the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, who is 85 and is said to be ailing. But as was witnessed in the wake of the helicopter crash, Khamenei immediately took hold of the situation, assuring the country that there would be no

governance crisis. As such, he decides in the end, and the armed forces, security, and intelligence outfits, as well as the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC), look up to him for instructions. He also did not want to convey to his detractors, both internally and externally, that they could exploit the crisis and the transition. As for the succession issue, although the demise of Raisi has caused a vacuum, the argument for Mojtaba succeeding his father, Ayatollah Khamenei, would become more eloquent and vociferous even though the Supreme Leader personally appears not to be in favour of dynastic rule, as quoted by many insiders, for he would not like to be accused of nepotism. One more name that is being propounded to us is that of white-turbaned Ali Reza Arafai, whom the black-turbaned Supreme Leader called an original intellectual and prudent jurist. One would have to see if the colour of the turbans would matter at all. He is a member of the Assembly and was also appointed to the Guardian Council. His name has been circulating for quite some time.

In any case, the presidium of an assembly of experts will identify the next leader in due course. But the 'Supreme Leader' will also have to be accepted by the

masses since Iran is facing significant domestic discontent as well as huge external challenges, especially from the West and Israel. Of course, losing the President and foreign minister, especially at such a difficult time, is a challenge in itself for any country, but the real power lies with the Supreme Leader, who is au fait with his authority and capacity to guide the Iranians. As per Article 131(1) of the Iranian constitution in the event of the president's demise or incapacitation, the first vice president will take over with the approval of the Supreme Leader (de facto), and fresh elections will have to be conducted within fifty days. It reads, "In case of death, dismissal, resignation, absence, or illness lasting longer than two months of the President, his first deputy shall assume the powers and functions of the President with the approval of the Leader." Accordingly, Vice President Mohammed Mokhber has taken over the reins to conduct day-to-day affairs and organise elections with the head of judiciary and speaker of the Iranian parliament. Whether Mokhber will be de jure promoted remains to be seen.

Whether the next president will be among the known contenders for the highest post in the country is anyone's guess.

### Head-on | The new Great Game: China, US and India

The original "Great Game" was fought in the mid-1800s between the Russian Empire and the combined might of the British, French and Ottoman Empires over control of Central Asia. The British feared an attack by the Imperial Russian Army through Afghanistan on their Indian colony. The Ottomans, though in decline, wanted to guard against Russian incursions into their Balkan possessions. As a report by Kallie Szczepanski (thought.com) described it: "Britain's Lord Ellenborough started 'The Great Game' on January 12, 1830, with an edict establishing a new trade route from India to Bukhara, using Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan as a buffer

vent it from controlling any ports on the Persian Gulf. Meanwhile, Russia wanted to establish a neutral zone in Afghanistan allowing for their use of crucial trade routes." "The Great Game officially ended with the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which divided Persia (Iran) into a Russian-controlled northern zone, a nominally independent central zone, and a British-controlled southern zone. The Convention also specified a borderline between the two empires running from the eastern point of Persia to Afghanistan and declared Afghanistan an official protectorate of Britain." Russia's invasion of Ukraine nearly two centuries later has triggered a new Great

Game but with vastly different actors, motives and possible outcomes. In the mid-1800s the United States did not count. It was convulsed by a Civil War (1861-65) between northern unionist states and southern confederate states over slavery. China had been humiliated by Britain during the Opium Wars (1839-60). It lay in repose. India was a British colony, robbed of its wealth and morale. Today Russia lies weakened, its Soviet-era satellite states absorbed into NATO. They form a Western knife aimed at Moscow's jugular. Ukraine remains a non-NATO buffer state. If it joins NATO in future, Russia would be completely encircled by the US-led West.

### From Xi's China to Macron's France: The emergence of new-era 'Leviathans'

In China, the fear of chaos that can come from within and from without is a central rationale that legitimises Xi Jinping's power grab. Image: REUTERS Thomas Hobbes' seminal work, *Leviathan*, published in 1651, posits the necessity of a powerful, centralised authority to prevent societal chaos and ensure peace and security. Hobbes had a way with words; he famously said that without an all-powerful state, whom he calls the Leviathan, life would be nasty, brutish, and short. Those powerful words have a global resonance today, giving the state across the world a free run. We saw it in Washington when more than \$3 trillion was printed in monetary easing. In Paris, monetary welfare spending is out of hand, and the Leviathan dares not withdraw the free fund, for that itself causes riots and chaos. In China, state capitalism is running wild, and in India, the state subsidises everything from fertiliser and maternity care to free food to the tune of \$10 billion a year. Everywhere, a man who wrote 350 years ago rules. In our turbulent world, Hobbes' premise of avoiding chaos is so powerful that both autocracies and democracies are utilising it to empower the state further. It is not as if he has not been proved right. In fact, rarely in contemporary history has Hobbes gone wrong. In Iraq, Libya, and Egypt, when

the Leviathan was topped, it created chaos beyond imagination, only to be replaced by the iron fist of the state. In China, the fear of chaos that can come from within and from without is a central rationale that legitimises Xi Jinping's power grab. Indeed, it's replacing the promise of prosperity as the basis of the communist party's hold over China. The fact that the Federal Reserve's policy of quantitative easing following the 2008 financial crisis and the purchase of government securities to increase the money supply were unquestioned exemplifies Hobbes' idea of the sovereign exercising control to prevent economic disorder and maintain stability. That, in the bastion of capitalism, it did not raise concerns about the erosion of financial autonomy and the distortion of free markets underlines the astonishing relevance of Hobbes. France's robust welfare state epitomises Hobbes' notion of the sovereign's responsibility to ensure the well-being of its citizens. The French government maintains an extensive social safety net, including comprehensive healthcare, unemployment benefits, and retirement pensions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, France's welfare spending surged as the government implemented measures to protect jobs and support incomes. However, this extensive welfare sys-

tem can be critiqued for fostering dependency and reducing individual responsibility. The welfare-to-GDP ratio in 2023 was an astonishing 36 per cent. This is clearly unsustainable, but every time France has tried to pull back the Leviathan or cut back welfare, there have been dramatic riots. Once you create the Leviathan, clearly, there is no way back. In 2020, the French government introduced the 'Solidarity Fund', providing financial aid to businesses affected by the pandemic, and expanded unemployment benefits to cover those furloughed under the 'partial activity' scheme. These interventions, amounting to over €100 billion in expansive welfare spending, can lead to high taxation, which burdens individuals and businesses, and totally stifles entrepreneurial spirit and innovation. Additionally, the extensive welfare system creates a culture of dependency, reducing the incentive for personal initiative and self-reliance. France and its Leviathan are in a doom loop. China's model of state capitalism illustrates Hobbes' concept of the sovereign's expansive control over economic life. The Chinese government exercises significant influence over the economy through state-owned enterprises (SOEs), which dominate key industries such as energy, telecommunications, and finance.

### As India votes for 5th phase, it's the contest of two economic outlooks

The day Aam Aadmi Party's national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal unveiled his 10 guarantees was also the day when Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced her government's commitment to economic freedom by opposing the very idea of wealth redistribution. It became very clear that day that the INDIA bloc must remain in the Opposition and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) should come back to power. Though Kejriwal did not consult his alliance partners about the 10 guarantees he promised, there is a likelihood of them agreeing with him. For, on their part, they

have also made equally outlandish promises. Kejriwal has pledged, among other things, free 24-hour power supply, free healthcare that is not based on insurance schemes, freedom to the Indian Army to get back the Indian territory occupied by China, abrogation of the Agniveer scheme, legal status for MSP on all crops according to the Swaminathan Commission report, two crore jobs for the youth, and ease of doing business for traders. A few days later, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi said that the INDIA coalition, if victorious in the ongoing general elections, will work for the empowerment of women: "Our sisters

across the country are ready to form the INDIA Alliance government with enthusiasm. From July, Rs 8,500 deposited in women's accounts every month, i.e., Rs 1 lakh annually, will change the financial condition of every family." If wishes were horses, our politicians would bring heaven to earth, but that's not the reality. Sometimes it takes a lifetime for a wish to be realised, sometimes more than that. Just as calamities cannot be wished away, good outcomes cannot be ushered in just by wishing them. If Kejriwal pledges to offer free 24-hour power supply and free healthcare, for

instance, he should also enlighten us where the money would come from to ensure such freebies. After all, it costs a great deal to run power plants, transmit and supply electricity, pay doctors and paramedics, run hospitals, and so on. In the final analysis, it is the public exchequer that will bear the costs. And since it is the taxpayer money that makes the public exchequer, ultimately taxpayers will be burdened with these expenses — that is, the people who pay direct and indirect taxes: in short, all people, as indirect taxes are paid even by the poor. Freebies, after all, are not free.



## 'Character assassination': BJP's 'Cheer Haran' jibe at AAP over Swati Maliwal

**NEW DELHI:** Keeping up the attack on AAP over the Swati Maliwal assault case, the BJP on Saturday accused the Kejriwal led party of subjecting their own party colleague Swati Maliwal to "Charitra Haran" (character assassination).

"AAP is calling their own MP a traitor. Earlier, 'Cheer Haran' happened, and now they are doing Charitra Haran", BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawala said.

Poonawala also further said, "Congress did not even invite the Aam Aadmi Party President to its election rally held in Delhi. This suggests that the incident involving the assault on the Rajya Sabha MP at the Chief Minister's residence has created unease within the Congress. However, Priyanka Gandhi tried to hush up the matter." Amid the raging contro-

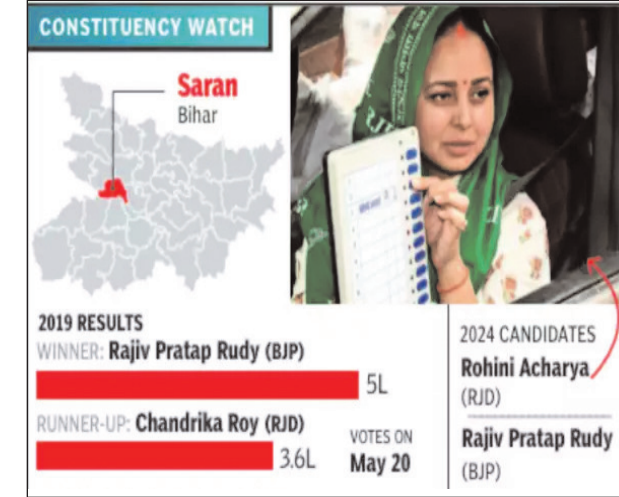


sy, the Delhi Police earlier on Saturday arrested Bibhav Kumar, an aide of Kejriwal. Poonawala taking a swipe, also said that AAP is essentially an "anti-aurat party (anti-women party)" and alleged past incidents of mistreatment of women involving its leaders. AAP is now in Maliwal's character assassination, too, he said. "AAP's corruption and misconduct is followed by disinformation. It has become the party's standard operating procedure," he said, comparing the Maliwal case with Draupadi's disrobing

episode in the Mahabharata. The Delhi BJP chief also joined the attack and accused AAP leaders of circulating "edited" videos to tarnish the image of their own party MP Swati Maliwal, who has accused an aide of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of assaulting her. It is regrettable that "edited" videos are being circulated on social media groups since Friday in an attempt to "defame" Maliwal who is a member of the Aam Aadmi Party, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva claimed.

## Lalu's 'laadli' seeks to ground Rudy's flight

**Delhi:** Despite the scorching glare, all of Khalpura, a Rajput-dominated village, went to the streets to greet Rohini Acharya, daughter of RJD chief and former CM Lalu Prasad and Saran candidate. Many Bihar residents call her the "kidney girl". Rohini, a political newcomer, would likely struggle against BJP's Rajiv Pratap Ry, who is seeking a third term. Six assembly constituencies make up Saran. Chhapra and Amonour have BJP representatives, whereas Marhaura, Garkha, Parsa, and Sonepur have RJD. "If you want to break the backbone of rising inflation, crave a happy and healthy life and want a 'pucca' (concrete) home,



then vote for RJD," Rohini told the women, covering her head with a green scarf, before heading to the next door Rohini's kidney tale has resonated in rural Bihar. She is popular in communities. Lalu's 'laadli' who donat-

ed her kidney to her father is admired by society "Arvind Rai from Chirand village stated, "Jahan bhi jati hai log kehte hain ki Lalu ki laadli aayee hain" (Everywhere she goes, she's called 'Lalu's sweetheart').

## HC upholds death for law student's rape and murder

**Kerala HC** on Monday upheld a trial court's death sentence to Muhammed Ameer-ul-Islam, a migrant labourer from Assam, in the brutal rape and murder of a 30-year-old Dalit law student in Ernakulam's Perumbavoor in 2016. HC upheld the trial court's

observation that the case fell into the category of "rarest of rare" and termed the crime "an egregious violation of human dignity and sanctity of life". The bench, which considered a death sentence review petition, pointed out the crime was cold-blooded murder

without provocation. The LLB student was found murdered at her house in Perumbavoor's Kuruppampady on April 28, 2016. Ameer was arrested from Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu on June 16. Earlier, Ameer was found guilty of murder, rape.

## CAPSULES

### 2 brothers get death sentence for rape, murder of minor

**BHILWARA:** A Rajasthan Pcoo court on Monday handed down death sentences to two brothers for gang raping a 17-year-old and burning her alive in Shahpura district on Aug 2 last year. The case had triggered public outrage and led BJP, then



in opposition, to target the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress govt over crimes against women ahead of assembly polls late last year. The court in Bhilwara had pronounced Kalu Kalbeliya, 25, and Kanha Kalbeliya, 21, guilty on Saturday, while acquitting seven others of conspiracy and destroying evidence.

The girl's mother expressed satisfaction and said justice has been done. Special public prosecutor Mahavir Kishanawat, who appeared for the state, said govt will challenge the seven acquittals in HC. Soon after the death sentences were pronounced, ex-CM Gehlot sought to highlight his govt's role in the outcome, saying action was taken immediately and accused arrested. "ADG Crime was sent. Chargesheet was filed within a month. Today, within 10 months, the culprits have been sentenced," Gehlot wrote on X. CM Bhajanlal Sharma hailed the verdict as an example of "glorious tenure of BJP's double engine govt".

## 'Will observe fast as penance to Lord Jagannath': Sambit Patra apologetic for 'slip of tongue' in Puri

**BHUBANESWAR:** Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Sambit Patra, who was in the soup for his 'controversial' remarks relating to Lord Jagannath, cleared the air around his statement, saying that he was apologetic for his 'slip of the tongue', and that he would offer penance in the name of Lord Jagannath as an apology.

Patra, the BJP candidate from Puri Lok Sabha seat, landed in a row in Odisha on Monday after he told a local news channel that "Lord Jagannath is a devotee (bhakt) of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi." He later described it as a "slip of the tongue." Videos Speaking to about the remark Monday night,

Patra said, "Today one of my statements has become controversial. It was when Prime Minister Narendra Modi's roadshow came to an end in Puri and I

was giving out bytes to several media channels." "I had given out bytes to almost 15-16 channels wherein I was repeating that Prime Minister Modi is an ardent devotee of Maha Prabhru Jagannath Ji. Even as the Chief Minister of Ahmedabad and even before that, PM Modi used to regularly visit and offer prayers at Lord Jagannath temple there in Ahmedabad," Patra said. Adding further, Patra said, "I was repeating the same to every channel when a media person came to me for a byte.

## IMD issues severe heat wave alert for Northwest India plains

**NEW DELHI:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a severe heatwave red alert warning for Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh as temperatures continue to soar across Northwest India.

IMD predicts that the heatwave to severe heatwave conditions will persist over the next five days in the region. In a post on X, IMD stated, "Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions most likely to continue over plains of Northwest India and Heatwave conditions over north Madhya



Pradesh & Gujarat State during next 5 days." The IMD also issued a red alert in Delhi on Sunday, indicating that temperatures can range between 28 to 44

degrees Celsius. The IMD also warned of impending heatwave to severe heatwave conditions over many parts of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and

Rajasthan, as well as heatwave conditions in some places in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat, Saurashtra, and Kutch on May 23.

Senior IMD scientist Naresh Kumar stated that the current situation is expected to prevail for the next week, with temperatures to possible 45 degrees Celsius in the absence of rainfall activity in North India. He said, "Generally, May is considered the hottest month. If there is no rainfall activity in North India.

## 'Kangana go back': Congress workers show black flag



**NEW DELHI:** Congress workers showed black flags and raised slogans "Kangana Ranaut go back" against BJP Mandi candidate Kangana Ranaut during her visit to Kaza in the Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh on Monday. Jairam Thakur, addressing the incident, told ANI, "We went to Kaza, a town in Lahaul Spiti. Kangana Ranaut, the

BJP candidate from Mandi, was with me. It is unfortunate that the Congress workers attacked our convoy, attempted to stop the vehicles, and pelted them with stones. The district administration is responsible for the lapse. I condemn this incident." Thakur added, "They allowed an event next to our public rally venue. Authorities acted under the pressure of

the Congress government. Strict action should be taken against them." Ranaut, along with former chief minister and leader of opposition Jairam Thakur, addressed a public rally in Kaza. During the event, people raised slogans despite police being present to maintain law and order. Ranaut has not yet responded to the incident.

## Indian students on edge as tense situation continues to prevail in Bishkek

**HYDERABAD:** Indian students in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan continue to be on the edge in the aftermath of violent attacks on foreign students there by the locals.

"The locals attempted to enter the campus but were prevented by police who came in. The security was also increased," an Indian student at a university in Bishkek told on Monday. He said in the incident on Sunday, to protect the students, the security had been increased. The student said there have been incidents of Pakistan students being attacked in the city.

Another student told TOI that the situation was tense but the Indian students were safe. A girl student,



however, expressed concern over the situation saying that though there was security, it was obvious the mobs who were still moving around might target anyone they saw outside.

In an incident on Kyrgyz State Medical Academy where there are Indian students also studying, there have been instances of intru-

sion. "The situation is not under control," a student said. However, the Indian embassy in Kyrgyz Republic said the situation in Bishkek was normal and all Indian students were safe and requested the students to follow the guidelines prescribed by the Kyrgyz Republic. It also said the embassy could be contacted by the students if they had

issues.

The Embassy has also clarified about a fake letter which was being circulated as having been written by the Ambassador to rectors. "No such letter has been issued by the Embassy of India," the Embassy clarified. Former minister T Harish Rao has urged Union minister for external affairs S Jaishankar and Telangana chief minister A Revanth Reddy and the Indian Embassy in Bishkek to take immediate action to ensure the safety of Telangana students.

"The severity of the situation demands robust intervention to prevent further harm and to reassure the families of the students about their safety,".

### HC: Pay Rs 6 lakh in damages to wife of convict killed in jail

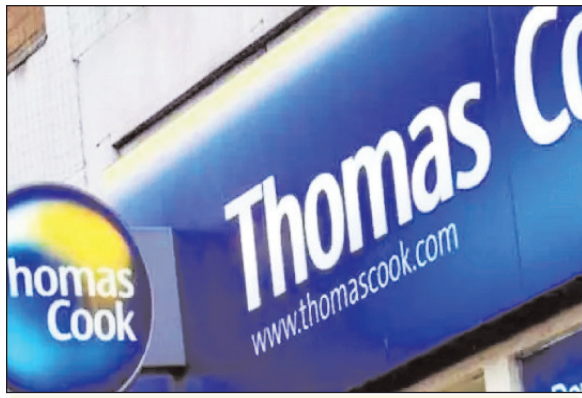
**HYDERABAD:** Making it clear that fundamental rights cannot be denied even to prisoners, Telangana high court has directed state govt to pay over Rs 6 lakh as compensation to the widow of a life convict murdered by a co-prisoner in Hyderabad jail in 2012, reported. Justice CV Bhaskar Reddy brushed aside the state's argument that it was not responsible as Karolla Venkaiah did not die at the hands of jail staff.

The judge stressed that jail officials had failed in their duty to protect his life. "Right to life guaranteed by the Constitution cannot be taken away from a person merely because he happened to be a convict. Deprivation of rights is possible only to the extent permitted by law," Justice Reddy said. Fastening the vicarious liability on the authorities, HC directed the state to pay Rs 6.2 lakh along with 6% interest for 12 years within three months to Venkaiah's widow Jayamma.



## TCPay, a revolutionary approach to international money transfers

Delhi: With the introduction of TCPay, an intuitive digital technology intended to streamline and improve the remittance process, Thomas Cook India has completely transformed international money transfers. Sending money overseas has historically required laborious procedures and irregular business hours. Customers may now easily and efficiently enjoy 24x7 remittances with TCPay. TCPay provides a straightforward and flawless digital interface for all of Thomas Cook's digital platforms, including the call center, portal, and B2C app FXNOW. Customers will have a hassle-free experience thanks to this. The use of Video KYC improves security and speeds up transactions, making it possible to send money from the comfort of your home in a convenient, safe, and timely manner. This creative addition, which is in keeping with Thomas Cook's dedication to digitization and client convenience.



### China overtakes the US as India's largest trading partner with \$118.4 billion

Delhi: China overtook the US as India's largest trading partner after two years, according to Global Trade Research Initiative data. India's bilateral trade with China totaled \$118.4 billion in 2024, with imports up 3.24% to \$101.7 billion and exports climbing 8.7% to \$16.67 billion. India-US trade fell somewhat. Indian exports fell 1.32% to \$77.5 billion and imports fell 20% to \$40.8 billion in FY24, totaling \$118.3 billion. India relies heavily on Chinese imports in

telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, and advanced technology, therefore its economic relations with China are closely watched. According to GTRI, "India purchased \$4.2 billion in telecom and smartphone parts, 44% of overall imports in this category, demonstrating strong reliance on Chinese components. China supplied 77.7% of India's laptop and PC imports at \$3.8 billion." India uses production-linked incentive schemes (PLI), anti-dumping penalties.

## Yellow Day celebrated in Maharishi Dayanand Public



Chandigarh: Yellow Day was organized for Pre Primary Classes at Maharishi Dayanand Public School, MDAV Bhawan, Daria, Chandigarh. Kids came to school in yellow dresses. The children

dressed in yellow were looking very beautiful. They had also brought mangoes with them. They said that mango is the king of fruits. They like mangoes very much. Kids also enjoyed mango.

The main objective of this program was to make children aware about the importance of yellow color and mango. Children learn quickly through such programs.

## Apple's first iPad Pro redesign since 2022 uses an AI-focused M4 processor

Delhi: Apple introduced an artificial intelligence-focused iPad Pro and a bigger iPad Air to revitalize its tablet lineup after two years. The firm launched the first redesigned iPad Pro since 2018 at "Let Loose" online. The new model boasts a smaller

body, a sharper Ultra Retina XDR screen with OLED technology, and a quicker M4 CPU for AI. The new iPad Air looks like the previous model but has a bigger screen and M2 CPU. Apple claims the 13-inch iPad Pro is the thinnest apple device ever at 5.1 mil-

limeters. The larger model is a quarter-pound lighter than its predecessor, while the 11-inch weighs under one. It breaks Apple's longest iPad release gap since co-founder Steve Jobs debuted it in 2010.

## CAPSULES

### OpenAI's Sam Altman denies launching Google search engine rival

Delhi: OpenAI CEO Sam Altman denied allegations that his AI business will develop a Google-like search engine. Altman said on X that OpenAI will continue its AI ambitions to strengthen ChatGPT, it's AI chatbot. We've been working



on some new stuff we think folks would love—not GPT-5 or a search engine! seems magical," he said. OpenAI will webcast ChatGPT and GPT-4 updates. OpenAI is rumored to offer a search product before Google's 'I/O' conference next week. However, the business has stated that it will continue updating ChatGPT and its latest iteration, GPT-4. OpenAI's AI chatbot is now more straightforward and less verbose. Paid ChatGPT subscribers can now use GPT-4 Turbo. Until December 2018, it was trained on public data. "When writing with ChatGPT, responses will be more direct, less verbose and use more conversational language," said OpenAI.

### Microsoft's cloud platform will force Indians to adopt: OLA CEO

Ola's founder and CEO, Bhavish Aggarwal, announced the company's migration from Azure to Krutrim, its private cloud platform. Aggarwal's concerns about Western tech companies' cultural integration and ideological enforcement affected the decision. Ola switched to Krutrim to support Indian technological platforms and independence from Western monopolies.

## Public sector oil firms' 2023-24 earnings rose 25-fold to Rs 86,000 crore

The statement indicates that the three oil marketing organizations' combined earnings for FY 2023-24 was Rs 86,000 crore



Delhi: In 2023-24, state-owned oil marketing companies Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum ensured fuel availability at affordable rates with one of the lowest fuel

price inflation globally in India and rewarded shareholders' trust with an outstanding annual performance, according to a Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas note. The statement

indicates that the three oil marketing organizations' combined earnings for FY 2023-24 was Rs 86,000 crore, 25 times better than the exceptionally challenging previous fiscal year.

HPCL posted a record net profit of Rs 16,014 crore in 2023-24, outperforming a loss of Rs 6,980 crore. Indian Oil Corporation ended the year with record refinery throughput, sales volume, and net profit. BPCL's FY 2023-24 earnings after tax was 26,673 crores, about 13 times greater than the previous year.

According to the statement, the company's anticipated 1.7 lakh crore capital spend over five years under 'Project Aspire' shows its commitment to long-term shareholder value.

## Tata wants Haldiram's control and \$10 billion valuation

Delhi: Tata Group's consumer division is in talks to buy a 51% share in Haldiram's, India's famed snack food company, in a deal that could change the snack food sector. However, sources told Reuters that Tata is struggling with Haldiram's \$10 billion valuation. Haldiram's, a popular Indian brand, is also in talks to sell a 10% share to private equity groups like Bain Capital, sources added. The Indian company will compete with global giants like Pepsi and billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Retail



in the intensely competitive Indian consumer market if the talks succeed. Sources told Reuters that Tata Consumer Products, the conglomerate's branch that owns Tetley and a successful Starbucks deal in India, is actively negotiating to acquire its targeted percentage.

Sources stated Tata indicated interest in acquiring more than a 51% stake but informed Haldiram's that the valuation requirement is high. Haldiram's consumer market share is enormous." This is not the first time a company has shown interest in the family business. In 2019,

US-based Kellogg's expressed interest in buying Haldiram's and expanding beyond cereals. Talks fell through. Private equity fund General Atlantic reportedly wanted to buy a 10% share in the food brand. A small company founded in 1937, Haldiram's is known for its delicious "bhujia" snack, sold at mom-and-pop stores across India for Rs 10. The corporation controls approximately 13% of India's \$6.2 billion savory snack market, according to E u r o m o n i t o r International.

## Why does Musk call Meta Super greedy' for claiming credits?

Delhi: Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk again boldly criticized Mark Zuckerberg-run Meta. Musk has called Meta "super greedy" for taking credit for marketers who execute campaigns on its platform. The Musk follower posted that numerous of his advertisers have found that Meta accounts for almost all conversions while running advertising on both X and Meta, "with X reporting almost no conversions." "Interestingly, turning off X ads significantly reduces total conversions, including Meta. No research is needed to grasp this, the follower said. The X owner said, "We're terrible at credit claims, and



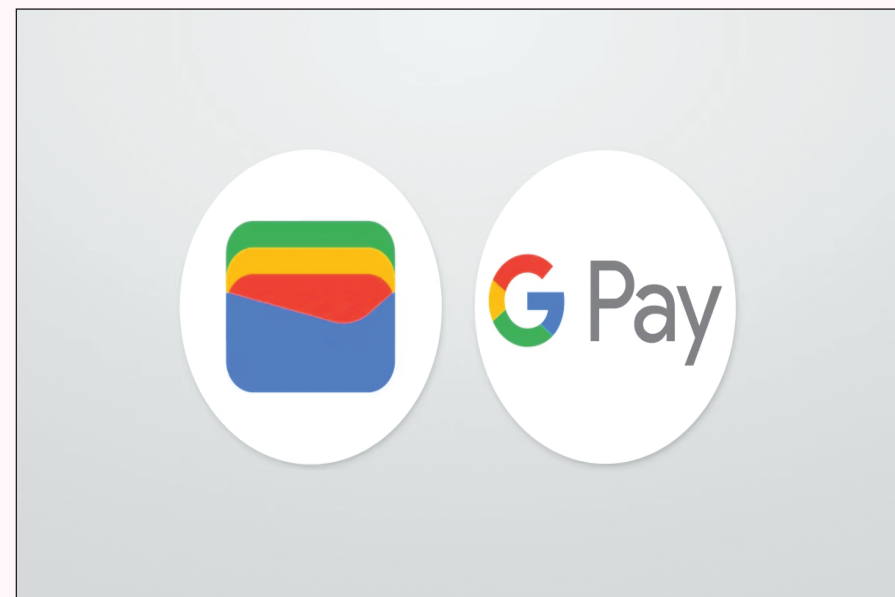
Meta's greedy." Another Musk fan said, "Meta will need to revise their attribution model, revealing the truth to advertisers who are already noticing a decline in results." "For X, refining the attribution model to match reality is easy. This will boost advertiser results, the X user said. Musk and Zuckerberg are recognized rivals. Musk just added long-form articles, monetisation initiatives, full-length films, and more. The

billionaire claimed subscribers may publish movies, TV shows, and podcasts and get money. Musk announced the change in a response to his sister Tosca Musk, who co-founded Passionflix, saying users can now submit full-length movies.

## Knowing the main distinctions between Google Pay and Google Wallet

Unlike the worldwide version of the program, the Google Wallet version that was introduced in India is not able to hold bank cards or be used for digital pay Google Wallet was made available in India. Users can safely save IDs, movie tickets, plane cards, and other confidential papers on the platform.

Google Pay's presence in India will remain unaffected by the debut of Google Wallet, the company announced at launch. The Google Wallet app, which was launched in India, is unable to accept digital payments or hold bank



cards. Unlike the worldwide version of the program, the Google Wallet version that was introduced in India is not able to hold bank cards or be used for digital payments. Conversely, among the most widely used UPI services in

India is Google Pay. Users can transact, view their account balance, and acquire information about their spending patterns with it.

Google Pay will continue to be the payment app for India, and the com-

pany has verified that Google Wallet will work in addition to it.

The company has confirmed that Google Wallet will complement Google Pay, which will continue to serve as the payment app for India.

## Apple plans to make 25% of its iPhones in India by 2028

Delhi: Apple plans to create 25% of its iPhones in India over the next 3-4 years by building a network of local vendors instead of using Chinese suppliers. Mint was informed that the Cupertino-based tech giant has begun building its supply chains, while Foxconn Technology Group and Tata Electronics will scale up their manufacturing capacities to handle most of its production. "India is one of their key markets. They produce 14% of their iPhones in India for local and export sales as of December 2023. They want to raise levels to 24-25% by 2027 or 2028. "One person, who requested anonymity, said the conversations were private. In 2022, JP Morgan analysts predicted that 25% of Apple products would be made outside China by 2025, up from 5%. India produced in iPhones in FY24, 14% of the global total. India makes iPhones 12, 13, 14, and 15.



## Families of active militants, youth root for democracy in J&K



**BARAMULLA:** The match was underway, yet a team of young cricketers decided to step off the field out of a sense of social responsibility and a desire for change - they were among those who exercised their franchise in the Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency that saw record polling on Monday. The election saw several interesting highlights - players stopping a match midway to vote, former hard-line separatists and families of active militants rooting for democracy, and supercentenarians and persons with dis-

abilities overcoming difficulties in reaching polling booths. A group of local players left their cricket match midway and reached a polling station in the Siloo area of Sopore in north Kashmir's Baramulla district which is part of the Baramulla Parliamentary constituency. Once dubbed 'chota Pakistan', Sopore recorded a healthy turnout of 44 per cent after recording single-digit polling percentages in the past couple of decades. "We have come to vote. The youth, the new generation, wants a revolution of

sorts, we want a change from what has been going on," one of the young cricketers said. Another player, Muazzin Manzoor, a first-time voter, said a vote was necessary for development. "For the last 70 years, there has not been much improvement. So, I voted for the first time to bring change," he said. In another interesting highlight, a groom in the Nowshera area of the Uri assembly segment cast his vote before tying the knot. An active Lashkar-e-Taiba militant's brother said the vote was his right.

## Adhir has validated Adani-Ambani remark I made: PM Modi

**NEW DELHI:** PM Narendra Modi on Monday justified his statement accusing Congress of receiving "tempo loads of black money" from the Ambani-Adani duo by saying that he was validated by Congress's functionary in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury who said he would stop criticising the two industrial houses if they gave him money. "My point was instantly validated by none other than Congress's functionary in LS Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who admitted that if Adani-Ambani sent tempo loads of money, he would not speak



against them," Modi told PTI. The PM had created a sensation when, addressing a public meeting on May 8, he said Rahul Gandhi, who consistently attacked Adani-Ambani, had ceased speaking against the two industrialists after the duo

sent Congress tempo loads of black money. Congress denied the charge and challenged govt to send ED and I-T department to the two industrialists until Chowdhury introduced a twist by saying he would stop speaking against them if they paid him.

## 3-time BJD MLA & ex-minister joins Odisha BJP

**BHUBANESHWAR:** Three-time MLA from Nimapara and former Odisha minister Samir Ranjan Dash quit BJD on Sunday and joined BJP after he was denied a ticket for the assembly polls in the state, reported. Two sitting MPs and seven MLAs of BJD resigned



ahead of polls this time and joined BJP. Dash represented

Nimapara in the assembly in 2009, 2014 and 2019. "I switched loyalty to BJP after being neglected by BJD. BJD leadership lost its confidence in me. After losing their trust, it is not proper for me to stay in the party," Dash said.

## At 55.2%, Goyal seat Mumbai North posts highest turnout

**Mumbai North** from where Union minister Piyush Goyal contested, recorded the highest turnout at 55.2%. In Mumbai North-East, where BJP's Mihir Kotecha contested against NCP (SP)'s Sanjay Dina Patil amid a Marathi-Gujarati rift, the turnout was 53.7%. Within assembly segments, Mulund recorded the highest turnout (59.6%) followed by Borivali and Mahim (58%) and Dahisar (57.2%). The lowest turnout was reported from Colaba (36%) - the southern tip of the island city - Mankhurd-Shivaji Nagar (49.3%), Chandivali (49%) and Worli (49%). During polling, there were



several complaints in suburban Mumbai about serpentine queues and delays before citizens could cast their vote. The lack of shade, ventilation and drinking

water at some polling booths added to the difficulties. By afternoon, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief lashed out at Election Commission, accusing it of batting for BJP and claimed

that there were deliberate delays at booths favourable to its party. "PM Narendra Modi sensed his defeat and EC began behaving as his servant. There were long delays especially at booths where we get votes," he alleged. He urged voters to return to booths and vote. "They should note down the names of polling staff and inform us. We are willing to go to court," said Uddhav Thackeray. Deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis hit back, saying Thackeray was complaining because he sensed he was losing. "We were the first to complain to EC regarding the slow pace of voting in Mumbai.

## Tata, Birla & Ambanis lead India Inc march to get inked

**MUMBAI:** Braving a beating down sun in the hope of improved governance and development, a procession of business titans emerged from their abodes to fulfil their democratic duty on Monday. Among them stood Tata Trusts chairman Ratan Tata, Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani, Aditya Birla Group chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla, Mahindra Group boss Anand Mahindra and JSW Group chief Sajjan Jindal, all of whom voted at polling booths in south Mumbai where



they live. Dressed in casual attire, they cast their votes and urged electors to do the same. Tata, 86, who of late has restricted his outdoor activities, stepped out of his residence to cast his vote at a polling booth near Sassoon Dock. After exercising his franchise, Mahindra emphasised the importance of

governance and development in a world fraught with uncertainty. "If you look at the world around us, there is so much uncertainty, terrorism and war. We are in the middle of a stable democracy where we get a chance to vote peacefully and decide what kind of a govt we want.

## 'Thanks to the two people who...': Jaishankar on Chabahar

**NEW DELHI:** External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Monday thanked Iran's president and foreign minister, who lost their lives in a helicopter crash, for the Chabahar Port agreement and said India will get the benefit from this. Speaking on the Chabahar Port, Jaishankar remarked, "We've been trying for almost 20 years now to have an agreement with Iran. We could have a short-term agreement because there were a lot of problems on their side. But in recent months, thanks to the two people who unfortunately died yesterday in the helicopter crash, the president of Iran and the foreign minister of Iran. Because of their interest and initiative, we were able to finalize a long-term agreement. This is very important because one of the big



things in the world connectivity corridor..." He made these remarks at Delhi Tamil Education Association school in New Delhi. Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian died in a helicopter crash, the government confirmed. And seven others were killed after the crash in a remote, mountainous area of Iran's . Highlighting the of this development, Jaishankar emphasised that the Chabahar port agree-

ment transcends its immediate role as a port. It symbolises a broader shift towards enhanced connectivity, with India poised at the heart of this transformative corridor. "India's position will be very much at the centre of this whole thing. It will benefit us. So the Chabahar port agreement is something bigger than a port. It is part of a connectivity change that we are looking at, and that's why we are very keen to go forward.

## It's all cameras & action as stars descend on polling booths, queue up with commons

**MUMBAI:** Election day was a true leveller with Bollywood's rich and famous shaking off their stardom and queueing up with locals for a common goal - to vote for their future. While many slipped in and out quietly with an inked finger - Shah Rukh Khan with his family, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Tabu, Rekha, Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Ranbir Kapoor, Varun with his father David Dhawan, Janhavi Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt with his sister and former MP Priya Dutt, and Dharmendra - others shared their commitment in doing so as responsible citizens. Akshay Kumar, who voted for the first time since receiving Indian citizenship, stressed on his vision for a "developed and stronger"



nation. "I voted keeping that in mind and India should vote for what they deem is right. Voter turnout seems good..." he said. Aamir Khan and ex-wife Kiran Rao voted at a polling booth in Bandra. "I want to appeal to all Indians to come out in numbers and cast their vote and become part of this democracy. I appeal to everyone not to waste their vote," he urged. Amitabh Bachchan and wife Jaya cast their votes at a polling booth in Juhu, as did

their daughter-in-law Aishwarya. Poet and lyricist Gulzar, who came with his daughter Meghna to vote, expressed his civic pride: "Our city is beautiful and I voted for our city to always remain so." While some actors like R Madhavan highlighted the responsibility that comes with voting - "If you don't, you'll feel guilty later," he said in a video message - Paresh Rawal suggested disciplinary measures for those who don't.

## 'Jhansi ki rani': Kejriwal's special pitch for wife Sunita amid election campaign



**NEW DELHI:** In a special praise for wife Sunita, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday described her as "Jhansi ki Rani" and commended her for taking charge of the Lok Sabha election campaign in his absence. This was the first time the Aam Aadmi Party chief, who is out on bail for election campaigning, was accompanied by his wife in an election meeting. "Today I have brought my wife also with me. She took charge of everything in my absence. When I was in jail, she used to come to meet me. I used to inquire about

the well-being of my Delhiites through her and send my messages to you. She is like Jhansi ki Rani," Kejriwal said at a street corner meeting in East Delhi's Gandhi Nagar constituency. Repeating Kejriwal's 'vote for AAP to keep me out of jail', Sunita said, "It is because of your blessings that my husband is here with us today. God helps those who do the right thing. Now if you don't want my husband to go back to jail, vote for AAP on May 25." Kejriwal was arrested by the Directorate on March 21 in a money-laundering case.



## Amid Rohit 'breach of privacy' accusation, broadcaster says 'didn't broadcast private conversation'

**NEW DELHI:** IPL broadcaster Star Sports on Monday denied airing the audio of any personal conversation involving Rohit Sharma after the Indian captain accused the channel of breaching his privacy despite his requests to stop recording.

A video shared by Kolkata Knight Riders on May 11, featuring Rohit and KKR assistant coach Abhishek Nayar, showed Rohit allegedly contemplating his future with the Mumbai Indians. This video went viral but was later deleted by KKR from their social media pages. On May 16, ahead of MI's fixture against Lucknow Super Giants, Rohit was seen chatting with Dhawal Kulkarni and the Indian skipper requested the broadcaster to turn off the audio when he noticed the cameras were again directed towards him. Rohit on Sunday had accused the channel of airing a private



conversation, but Star Sports denied the allegation in a statement. "The clip, taken during a training session on May 16 at Wankhede stadium, for which Star Sports had authorised access, momentarily showed the senior player in conversation with his friends on the sidelines. No audio from this conversation was either recorded or broadcast. "The clip, which only showed the senior player requesting for the audio of his conversation to not be recorded, got featured in Star Sports' live coverage of pre-match preparations and lacked editorial relevance beyond

this," the channel stated. Rohit had called for restraint while recording on-field moments. "The need to get exclusive content and focused only on views and engagement will one day break the trust between the fans, cricketers and cricket. Let better sense prevail," Rohit said on Sunday. The channel said it was committed to protecting players' privacy. "Respect for players' privacy while bringing fans, moments of intense action and preparations, sits at the core of this ethos, which the broadcaster remains committed to," it stated.

## You cannot command or demand respect, it has to be earned: MS

**NEW DELHI:** Legendary wicketkeeper-batter and former India skipper MS Dhoni emphasised that a captain earns respect by how they "walk and talk" in moments of defeat. The 42-year-old Dhoni is one of the most decorated captains in cricket history and the first to win all ICC white-ball trophies: the ICC T20 World Cup (2007), ICC Cricket World Cup (2011), and ICC Champions Trophy (2013). Dhoni has also led Chennai Super Kings to five IPL titles and two Champions League T20 (CLT20) titles.

"You lead by example through ups and downs because when you are

successful it's very easy to say this is what we do but when times are tough is the real-time and you have to walk that talk - in those moments if you are still the same, that time you earn the respect," MS Dhoni said in a video posted by Dubai Eye 103.8 YouTube channel. Throughout the season, Dhoni has amassed 161 runs in 11 innings of 14 matches at a strike rate of 220.54 and an average of 53.67. "The important thing is that you need to earn the respect of the people you are leading. You cannot command or demand respect, it has to be earned. I may have a position in the institu-

tion and it needs to be respected. But I as an individual, sitting on that chair, need to earn that respect. I can't be saying you need to respect me because I'm sitting on this chair," he added. CSK's chances of making the playoffs were dashed on Saturday after their loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the Indian Premier League match. During the game, Dhoni batted for about four overs, amassing 25 runs at a strike rate of 192.31. After CSK endured the heart-breaking loss, all eyes and cameras were focused on Dhoni, eagerly waiting for him to drop a hint about.

## Liverpool confirm Arne Slot as new manager

**NEW DELHI:** Former Feyenoord coach Arne Slot was Monday confirmed as Jurgen Klopp's successor at Liverpool by the Premier League club. The club said in a statement that the Dutchman, 45, had "agreed a deal to become the club's new

head coach" and would take up the position on June 1, subject to a work permit. Slot has been in charge of the Dutch team since 2021, and won the Eredivisie league title in 2022-23 along with the KNVB Cup this season, while Feyenoord also reached the Europa

Conference League final in his first season at the club. Klopp announced in January that he would leave Liverpool at the end of this season and, after much speculation, Slot confirmed on Friday that he would become Liverpool manager.

## CAPSULES

### How Virat Kohli's advice helped Yash Dayal dismiss MS Dhoni

**NEW DELHI:** Left-arm pacer Yash Dayal held his nerves to stop Chennai Super Kings juggernaut, helping Royal Challengers Bengaluru snatch victory from the jaws of defeat and secure a spot in the playoffs of IPL 2024. On Saturday, RCB defeated CSK by 27 runs in front of a roaring and jam-packed M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. CSK needed 17 runs off the final over. Despite being hit for a towering six by Dhoni on the first ball, Dayal managed to hold his nerve and seal the win for RCB. Jadeja and Dhoni hit nine stunning boundaries between them to push CSK past 200, but once Dhoni fell to Dayal in the final over, the match swung in RCB's favour. After being hammered for a maximum over long leg by Dhoni, an angry Virat Kohli ran towards Dayal and instructed him to bowl a slower ball to Dhoni. A video of Virat instructing Dayal, saying "yorker nahi, slower daal," is now going viral on social media.

### 'He could go well past his...': Hayden makes a bold claim regarding Virat Kohli

**NEW DELHI:** Former Australian opener Matthew Hayden has made a bold claim regarding Virat Kohli's batting prowess as the Indian Premier League 2024 playoffs approach. Hayden believes that the Royal Challengers Bengaluru star can eclipse his legendary 2016 season, where he won the Orange Cap by scoring an astonishing 973 runs in 16 games, including four centuries, and led RCB to the final.

## MS Dhoni's gesture brings smile on RCB youngster's face

**NEW DELHI:** Dejection and frustration were clearly evident on Mahendra Singh Dhoni's face as he watched his team Chennai Super Kings get eliminated from IPL 2024 after a 27-run defeat against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Saturday. Defending champions CSK needed to score over 201 to qualify for the playoffs and came pretty close with Dhoni and Ravindra Jadeja launching a fierce assault toward the end. The five-time champions needed 17 runs off



the final over. But RCB pacer Yash Dayal, who had been hit for five consecutive sixes by KKR's Rinku Singh in IPL 2023, managed to hold his nerves

and despite being struck for a towering six by Dhoni on the first ball, Dayal sealed the thrilling win and a place in playoffs for RCB.

After the match, Dhoni, who has guided CSK to five IPL titles, was packing his kit bag when RCB's young spinner Mayank Dagar approached him with a bat, requesting an autograph. Dhoni happily signed the bat. Dagar, coming at No.8, Dhoni scored 25 runs off 13 balls, including three fours and a six, before Dayal sent him back to the pavilion, crushing CSK's hopes of progressing to the playoffs. In the IPL 2024 season, Dhoni scored 161 runs at a strike rate of 220.54.

## It stands for...': SRH's Abhishek reveals the meaning behind his 'L' celebration

**NEW DELHI:** Sunrisers Hyderabad's young batting sensation Abhishek Sharma explained the significance of his unique 'L' celebration, a gesture made using his thumb and index finger, after securing wins and reaching important batting milestones during matches. In a recent video shared on the Indian Premier League (IPL) official X handle, Abhishek revealed the celebration was initiated by him and his opening partner, Travis Head. "It is personal to us. It stands for love, we are spreading love," said



Abhishek. The revelation came after a thrilling match at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Sunday, where Abhishek Sharma and Heinrich Klaasen led SRH to a successful chase of 215 against Punjab Kings with five balls to spare. Speaking about the significance

of his family's presence at the stadium, Abhishek shared, "My whole family, except my father, is here. It is special to me if they are able to come here and see me, and celebrate with me in such moments." Abhishek Sharma made history on Sunday by becoming

the Indian batter with the most sixes in a single edition of the IPL. During the match, he smashed 66 off just 28 balls, hitting five fours and six sixes at an impressive strike rate of 235.71. With this performance, Abhishek has hit 41 sixes this season, surpassing Virat Kohli's record of 38 sixes in the 2016 IPL for Royal Challengers Bengaluru. He also outperformed his teammates Heinrich Klaasen (33 sixes) and Travis Head (31 sixes in 2024), as well as David Warner's 31 sixes in 2016.

## After Sunil Gavaskar, Irfan Pathan slam England players

**NEW DELHI:** Legendary Sunil Gavaskar and all-rounder Irfan Pathan recently came down heavily on England players for leaving the IPL early this season. With the T20 World Cup fast approaching, skipper Jos Buttler and several other English players went back home to prepare for ICC's cricketing extrav-



aganza with a five-game series against Pakistan. While Gavaskar demanded a penalty on the players, Pathan asked them to either be available for a full season or not come at all. Amid the debate, former England skipper Michael Vaughan stepped in and defended the players, pointing out that the country comes first and that players were not wrong in leaving early. "If you are going back to represent your country, which England players have done, I

think that's fair enough. They are playing a series against Pakistan. The England players wouldn't have gone back if it wasn't for the Pakistan series," Vaughan said on Cricbuzz. "The series was on the calendar. With English cricket, the defence of the 50-over World Cup was a poor one by England here in India. So I think, Jos and his team, 5 games against Pakistan, they get together. The actual lead-up to the 50-over World Cup wasn't perfect either.

## Red-hot Royal Challengers 'clear favourites' in IPL Eliminator

**NEW DELHI:** Six wins on the trot and the confidence gained after eliminating defending champions Chennai Super Kings makes Royal Challengers Bengaluru a dangerous side in the upcoming knockouts and for Ambati Rayudu they are the clear favourites in the Eliminator clash against Rajasthan Royals. Amid a remarkable turnaround in the second half, RCB rose from the bottom of the table to qualify for the playoffs while Royals, after starting the season with a bang, have derailed in the business end, losing four matches in a row. Rayudu said that RCB are looking a mature side at the moment and it will be a tough ride for the Royals in the Eliminator.



"I think RCB are clear favourites for me, because of the way they are playing and they've had a clinical game against CSK and for RR I don't know if this gap in play will help, this washout would help them in going into an eliminator against RCB who I feel right now are a matured side and

every player over there knows his role. So I think RCB are the ones who will eventually go into qualifiers 2," Rayudu said on Star Sports Cricket Live. RCB finished fourth in the points table while a washout in their last game denied the Royals a chance to finish in top-two.

The Eliminator between RCB and RR will be played at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. The Qualifier 1 will take place at the same venue on Tuesday between Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad.

## I hope IPL is not a shortcut to play for India: Gautam

**NEW DELHI:** Former India opener and current KKR mentor Gautam Gambhir on Monday appreciated the high standard of cricket in the Indian Premier League but said that the tournament should not serve as the primary route for young players to secure a spot in the national team. Gambhir, who represented India, emphasized on the importance of maintaining a balance between the IPL and other domestic cricket competitions. The 42-year-old argued that while the IPL provides valuable exposure and experience, it should not overshadow the significance of traditional formats and tournaments in the development of aspiring cricketers. Speaking on Ravichandran Ashwin's YouTube show, 'Kutti Stories with Ash', Gambhir said, "The bigger concern that arises is about how many youngsters want to play Test cricket for India. I hope the IPL is not a shortcut to play for India."