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# MODI REDEFINES NDA

## NEW INDIA, DEVELOPED INDIA, ASPIRATIONAL INDIA

# NDA members dig trenches to fortify Govt



Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives to attend the NDA Parliamentary Party meeting at Samvidhan Sadan, in New Delhi, on Friday

PTI

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday appointed NDA Parliamentary Party leader Narendra Modi as Prime Minister-designate paving the way for his swearing-in as the Prime Minister for a historic third consecutive term after Jawaharlal Nehru. This is the first time an incumbent Government is entering a third term in India since 1962. Murmu handed over the letter of appointment to Modi, who called on her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here on Friday evening. Earlier,

leaders of the BJP-led NDA had called on Murmu and handed over letters of support for Modi, who was elected as the leader of the NDA Parliamentary Party. "The President having satisfied herself on the basis of the various letters of support received that the BJP-led NDA alliance, which is also the largest pre-election alliance, is in a position to command majority support of the newly constituted 18th Lok Sabha and to form a stable Government, appointed Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister of India

exercising powers vested in her under Article 75(1) of the Constitution of India," the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a communiqué. Addressing the media in the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Modi said he has been appointed as Prime Minister-designate by the President. "The President has asked me to work as the PM-designate and she has informed me about the oath ceremony," Modi said and added that he has informed the President that they will be comfortable if the event is held at 7.15 pm

of June 9. He said the Rashtrapati Bhavan will work out the details of the oath taking ceremony on Sunday by when he would hand over the list of the Council of Ministers to the President. "This 18th Lok Sabha is an important milestone towards fulfilling those dreams when the country will celebrate the 100 years of independence in 2047," Modi said. This 18th Lok Sabha is a House of new energy, youthful energy, and people have given the NDA Government one more chance, Modi said.

Earlier, at a meeting of the NDA parliamentary party in the central hall of the old Parliament House, Modi was unanimously elected by the MPs and coalition partners as the leader of the alliance. BJP leader Rajnath Singh proposed Modi's name as the leader of the NDA Parliamentary Party and the proposal was seconded by his party colleagues Amit Shah and Nitin Gadkari as well as top NDA leaders. HD Kumaraswamy, Chandrababu Naidu, Nitish Kumar, Chirag Paswan, Jayant Choudhary

(RLD), Ajit Pawar (NCP), Anupriya Patel (Apna Dal-S), Pawan Kalyan (Jana Sena) supported the proposal. Before moving to Rashtrapati Bhavan Modi sought blessings of veterans LK Advani and MM Joshi who were pillars of the NDA alliance when it was first formed. Modi went to meet former president Ram Nath Kovind at his residence. Modi, while addressing the NDA's parliamentary meeting, spelled out his vision for the "next 10 years" of the NDA Government. **Continued on Page 2**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Top leaders of the NDA- BJP, TDP, JD(U), LJP amongst others engaged themselves during the day to consolidate the process of Government formation as well as held deliberations of the shape of Council of Ministers to be led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After the National Democratic Alliance parliamentary meeting, the top BJP leaders Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh met party president JP Nadda at his residence and discussed on the demands of the NDA partners. TDP's N Chandrababu Naidu, JD(United) Nitish Kumar, Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena and Chirag Paswan of Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas have emerged as key parties after the BJP failed to cross the halfway mark needed to form a Government in its own right. Sources said Naidu, Nitish and Shinde met Nadda separately to discuss their demands and possible Cabinet formation. Naidu was the first to meet Nadda. After that Kumar and Shinde met Nadda. Before meeting with key NDA partners, Nadda held a deliberations with Shah and Rajnath Singh, soon after the NDA parliamentary meeting is ended. The TDP wants five posts in the Cabinet, including parliamentary speaker. Kumar's JD(U) is also keen on

getting two major portfolios - railways and rural development, sources said. Sources said talks are going on and the outcome is not known to others as discussions were held between top brass of the two parties. As of now, nothing has been finalised. Sources said Naidu and Kumar, both coalition-era veterans, conducted discussions with their party leaders ahead of the NDA meeting today. The BJP, however, is not keen on accommodating allies in four key Ministries that come under the Cabinet Committee on Security - defence, finance, home affairs, and external affairs. The BJP will also not want to let go of portfolios that are critical to its infrastructure push, such as road transport and highways, or its welfare agenda, sources said. The four allies whose support is critical for the BJP to reach the majority are N Chandrababu Naidu's TDP, which has won 16 seats, Nitish Kumar's JD(U) (12), Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena (7) and Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas (5). Naidu and Kumar - on Friday endorsed Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the leader of the National Democratic Alliance with a message to balance regional aspirations and national interests. **Continued on Page 2**

# New Government in a New-look Parliament

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Parliament premises, now comprising New Building christened as Sansad Bhawan and the Old Parliament rechristened as Samvidhan Sadan, will sport a new look when the 18th Lok Sabha convenes for its maiden session shortly. After the beginning of New Parliament in September 2023, work was underway to integrate the entire complex, comprising four different buildings when the country witnessed the process of just concluded three months spanning Lok Sabha polls.



Several measures have been taken to welcome the members and ensure their seamless registration as the Lok Sabha Secretariat got ready to welcome MPs of the new Lok Sabha. Secretary General, Lok Sabha, Utpal Kumar Singh, conducted an inspection of the preparations and is monitoring the arrangements on a day to day basis. With a view to reducing the paperwork and making the registration formalities of members seamless, the registration process of the newly elected members shall be done through an online integrated software application. Members would not be required to sign multiple physical forms with various branches. While welcoming the members, the Secretariat will provide each member with a set of publications relating to the Constitution of India, rules, directions and some other useful publications in hard copies. Besides, a few other publications will be provided to members in a soft version. As part of the redevelopment of

external areas, the statues of national icons, including those of Mahatma Gandhi, Chhatrapati Shivaji and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, have been moved to a lawn near gate number 5 of the old Parliament building, which has been named as Samvidhan Sadan. This has paved the way for the creation of a vast lawn in front of the Gaja Dwar, which is used by the President and the Prime Minister to enter into the new Parliament building. The lawn can now also be used for official ceremonies such as the President's address to the joint sitting of Parliament, usually during the Budget Session. The Parliament complex comprises four buildings - Parliament Building, Samvidhan Sadan, Parliament Library and the Parliament Annex - with each structure having its own distinct surroundings and security set-ups. Earlier, the movement of vehicles within the complex was difficult, particularly during Parliament

sessions, leading to blockades within the complex. The Parliament Library building and the Annex are separated by a road that has a reception office and a row of barracks, housing security offices along a compound wall. The statue of Babasaheb Ambedkar is located inside the Parliament complex and thousands of visitors throng the premises to pay tributes to him on his birth and death anniversaries. The Red Cross Road outside the Parliament premises will also become a part of the complex as there are plans to develop offices for Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members on the land which currently houses the International Red Cross Society. The row of barracks has been vacated and plans are also being made to demolish the compound wall separating the Parliament buildings from the Annex. These offices have been shifted to the North Utility Block of the new Parliament building.



INDIA Bloc leaders in New Delhi

File photo: Ranjan Dimri / The Pioneer

# INDIA bloc Oppn won't be LoPsided

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

As the Congress-led Opposition still hobbles for options to lead a Government at the Centre, the party is likely to take call on the nomination of 'Leader of Opposition' in the new Lok Sabha, the official status of LoP restored after a decade, at a meeting of the party's apex CWC meeting on Saturday. Sources said logically the LoP status will fall into the kitty of Congress which is the largest amongst the Opposition but it may consider a 'vocal leader from either of parties from the INDIA Bloc. "Lets see who becomes the LoP. It's the Congress or from INDIA as a united representation has to be made to face the BJP led NDA again," quipped a senior party leader. Batting for Rahul Gandhi to take on the mantle of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, several party leaders and newly elected MPs, including senior party leader Shashi Tharoor said the former Congress president deserves more than anyone. "I think we have a strong number now to stand up to the government and it (Leader of Opposition) should be a leader who is undoubtedly the most popular in the party," Tharoor said. Sources in the Congress said however Rahul may refuse to don the mantle of LoP in Lok Sabha as he will 'have to keep a tab on many other things for the INDIA Bloc'. "A decision in this regard is to be taken in the

Congress Working Committee (CWC) on Saturday. This will be first meeting after the great gains in just concluded LS polls and all of us looking forward to meet and greet and the leaders including high command who worked hard," said the Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary who led the Congress in the outgoing Lok Sabha however lost the elections from his home turf in West Bengal this time. Sources said there may also be a discussion on which of the two seats Rahul should retain for political reasons. He had won from two constituencies, Wayanad in Kerala and Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh. Top Congress leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, besides other leaders would participate in the deliberations. The party will also host a dinner for all its newly elected MPs on Saturday evening. The biggest Opposition party with 10 per cent of seats has Leader of Opposition post in the Lok Sabha. Congress, after being reduced to just 44 seats in 2014, and then 52 seats in the 2019 general elections fell short twice to get the post officially it led as Leader of the (largest) Party which was represented first by Mallikarjun Kharge and in the outgoing LS Adhir Ranjan Chowdhary who has lost this elections. Congress almost doubled its tally in the 2024 Lok Sabha election with 99 plus one (100) MPs to bear the torch of grand old party in LS. **Continued on Page 2**

# Taiwan protests China 'outrage' over India bonhomie



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taiwan on Friday said China's "outrage" over a "cordial" exchange between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te is utterly unjustified as threats and intimidation never foster friendship. The comments by the Taiwanese Foreign Ministry came a day after China protested an exchange of messages between Modi and Ching-te, saying it opposes all official interactions between Taiwan and countries having diplomatic relations with Beijing. "#China's outrage at a cordial exchange between the leaders of 2 democracies is utterly unjustified. Threats & intimidation never foster friendships," the Taiwanese Foreign Ministry said on a social media post. "#Taiwan remains dedicated to building partnerships with #India underpinned by mutual benefit & shared values," it said. On Wednesday, Lai greeted Modi on the National Democratic Alliance's victory in the Lok Sabha polls and said Taiwan was looking forward to enhancing the "fast-growing" ties between the two sides. **Continued on Page 2**

# BJP 'Bengal leadership to blame' for poor showing

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The RSS faction and the faction that came to the BJP from the Trinamool Congress have their daggers drawn out against each other putting the Bengal saffron outfit in deep trouble. Barely a week into the party's disappointing show in the just completed electoral battle the group led by former State party president Dilip Ghosh has held the ruling faction in the State outfit - led by Sukanta Majumdar and Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari - for the party's humiliating defeat at the hands of the TMC. The BJP got 12 seats - down from 18 in 2019 - while the TMC got 29 seats in the

general elections. One seat was won by the Congress. Slamming the leadership for the party's poor show and raising his own issue Ghosh who too lost the polls from Burdwan-Durgapur seat said, "People fight elections to win the lost seats and not to lose the seats already won... we have done so in Bengal," Ghosh a former national vice president of the party said, adding how he was shifted out of Midnapore to Durgapur against his wishes. "I had dedicated my four years working for the people of Midnapore from where I had won last time... I told them (the leaders) that I want to contest from my own constituency where I had



invested my time and money... but I was sent to Durgapur and the result was that we lost both the seats," Ghosh, a former MP from Midnapore said. He also said he was not called in any meetings or party programmes of the party for the past several years. "I was never called in meetings or party programmes... but I used to maintain my own contact with the people," Ghosh, a former national vice

president of the party said. Taking up the issue of another former MP from Raiganj Debashree Chowdhury who was sent to Kolkata South reportedly against her wishes, Ghosh said, "I had told Debashree that she had done a great job in Raiganj and would definitely win that seat ... but she was sent to Kolkata South where she was a stranger... whereas in Raiganj where she had all these five years Kartik Paul an insignificant BJP candidate who was a simple ward commissioner of a town won... just because of the good work done by Debashree ... this is the way the leadership has worked this time round. "Ghosh was immediately supported by another party

MP Soumitra Khan from Bishnupur who said, "the poor result of our party was because of some kind of setting between the leadership and the TMC which must be found out. "A party MLA from Bankura Niladri Shekhar Dana too slammed the BJP leadership for the poor show complaining how, "Dilip Ghosh has created the BJP in Bengal he took the party from 2 seats to 18 seats in 2019... but all that was lost this time round due to the bad politics of some leaders... you cannot compare anyone with Dilip Ghosh who is like a miniature Himalayas ... and see how he and many other leaders were victimised." **Continued on Page 2**

# Sensex bounces back to record high

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty climbed over 2 per cent to settle at record high levels on Friday after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revised upwards the GDP growth projection to 7.2 per cent for 2024-25 from 7 per cent earlier. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,720.8 points, or 2.29 per cent, to hit a new record peak of 76,795.31 in day trade. The benchmark ended at a record high of 76,693.36, up 1,618.85 points, or 2.16 per cent. The NSE Nifty climbed 498.8 points, or 2.18 per cent, to



23,320.20 during the day and is just 18.5 points from the record intraday high. The index settled with a jump of 468.75 points, or 2.05 per cent, at all-time closing high of 23,290.15. IT and interest rate-sensitive bank, realty, and auto stocks ended with sharp gains. **Detailed report on Page 10**

# Travellers grappling with 'signage issues' at airport

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A passenger walks into the Arrival area of the CCS International Airport in Lucknow bearing that 'I am lost' expression on his face as he dabs the slight sweat on his forehead. He finally reaches out for help, enquiring about the 'Departure' area of the airport. No, he is not a first-time traveler and has travelled by air before.

"It was easier earlier, now everything is new," he says looking around with a baffled expression.

A young lady walks out of the 'Arrival' area of the same airport and turns for help to find the 'private cab' pick-up point which is a furlong away from the point at which she is standing. "This is the first time that I have arrived at the Lucknow airport and am looking for a private cab pick-up point," she says.

The above passengers clearly did not find relevant signages and had to take the help of the

customer care executives at the airport.

Passengers at the Lucknow airport had been signing in and signing out with ease till the time the new terminal, T3, was inaugurated recently. With the 'Arrival' and the 'Departure' at separate levels in the new T3 terminal, passengers who land up at the 'Arrival' for a departure often tweet on the X that there are no signages at the Lucknow airport to guide them properly. Officials on their part reveal that there are sufficient signages and the passengers need to follow them.

Sources at the airport admit, "We have been facing this problem of a passenger for departure reaching the arrival area."

Explaining further he said that a passenger coming to the Amausi airport from the Shaheed Path side who wants to depart from the airport should take the ramp or the flyover opposite the DGCA office to reach the second

floor of the terminal and city denizens who want to pick up the arrivals should move straight on the road ahead without taking the flyover towards the ground floor of the terminal. He said that directions regarding this had been clearly mentioned in the huge billboard that had been placed adjacent to the roundabout having the Laxman statue at the airport premises.

"Here the general passenger misses out on the signboard and carries on the straight road ahead with the old perception of the 'Arrival' and the 'Departure' being at the same levels at the airport," he said.

Sources further point out the successive signages on the road leading to T3 that clearly mention the positioning of the T2, T3 and T1 terminals, the parking of private, parking of commercial vehicles, exit points for the city and the private cab pick-up points. "There are signages for everything but unfortunately the passenger overlooks them,"

he added.

Sources further reveal that the passenger who reaches the 'Arrival' area instead of reaching the 'Departure' can take the help of four lifts to reach the 'Departure' area and that signages have also been put up for the same.

He further said that the private cabs had also been instructed to bring the passenger on the ramp for departure but that they had their own interests. "In a study which we carried out we found private cabs want to pick up customers from the 'Arrival' hence bring the passengers to this area of the airport instead of the 'Departure' area," he added.

He points out that for the private cab, pick-up points also have signages placed right outside the 'Arrival' area but that passengers fail to read them. "We also have our customer care executives to help the passengers," he added.

Sources also admitted that they faced problems while shifting operations from T2 to

T3. "In cases where the passengers had got their tickets booked by the travel agents, the messages that were sent by the airlines to the passengers that the operations would take place on T3 were not passed by the travel agents to the passengers. Nevertheless, we posted our customer care executives at Terminal 2 to send the passengers to Terminal 3," he said.

When contacted, Lucknow airport spokesperson said that they had ample signages. "The airport has placed a substantial number of signages at various strategic and decision making points to enable passengers and vehicles to navigate smoothly to and from Terminal 3. The passengers departing from T3 will have to take the flyover (up-ramp) to reach departure level. While people coming to pick the arriving passengers will have to continue on the ground-level, take the road next to the flyover and reach 'Arrivals' and the parking area," he said

# Youth tries to assault schoolgirl at gunpoint in Jhansi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

In a glaring example of deteriorating law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh, an attempt was made to sexually assault a 20-year-old girl after taking her at gunpoint.

When she resisted, the accused opened fire to kill her. Luckily, the accused missed the target and the victim received a minor injury.

Sources said that the CCTV footage showed the girl trying to snatch the pistol from the accused, Rohit, before she was attacked on Thursday.

Reports said that the accused had been harassing the girl, a second-year BA student at Mahila Degree College, for the last five to six months and was madly in love with her. He had been pressuring the victim to talk to him, to which she repeatedly refused.

When the girl was returning home from her college after giving an exam, the accused confronted her again and tried to talk to her. When she again refused to talk, Rohit took out a pistol and pointed it at her.

In the CCTV, the victim is seen attempting to snatch the pistol from the accused before he overpowers her and opens fire but he misses the target.

She is presently out of danger. Before the incident, Rohit and his friends had created chaos in the street and brandished arms and swords outside her house. A video of the same went viral on social media.

The victim's mother said Rohit

used to follow her daughter and look at her with bad intentions. She said she had complained to his family members, and he had agreed not to follow and harass her daughter. However, after some time, Rohit started stalking her daughter, the mother added.

Superintendent of Police Gyanendra Kumar said the police took note of the matter and had launched a search to find and arrest the accused.

"A case was registered based on the complaint of the victim. We will take strict action against the accused," the SP added.

In another case of sexual assault, police have booked a school principal for allegedly raping a minor girl student and have formed teams to arrest him. The FIR was lodged on Thursday, after a purported video of the incident went viral on social media platforms.

"We have booked DK Mishra (40), who is the principal of a private school, for raping a 15-year-old girl student of the school," Circle Officer of Sirathu Avadesh Kumar Vishwakarma said.

On the basis of the complaint, the police have booked the accused under Section 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code along with relevant sections of the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act at Kokhraj police station of the district.

The alleged incident took place in April, according to police.

"The girl was allegedly threatened by the accused to not tell anyone about the incident. The family members, however, came to know about it when the video of the incident was posted online," the officer said.

"Teams have been formed to arrest the accused, who is currently absconding," the CO added.

Meanwhile, in Bahraich district, a man coming out of the mosque after prayers was brutally hacked to death in broad daylight on Friday.

The members of the community later staged a demonstration, demanding stern action against the accused.

Reports said that Wasim Khan (55) of Sondrai village in Matera, went to offer namaz in a mosque located a short distance from his house on Friday morning. According to the villagers, as soon as he came out of the mosque after offering namaz, the accused, who was standing just outside the mosque, suddenly attacked Khan with a knife. He brutally stabbed Khan several times and fled after the victim fell in a pool of blood. The locals tried to shift the victim to hospital but he succumbed to his injuries on the spot. The police reached the spot and started the investigation with the help of the forensic team. Police station in-charge Parmanand Tiwari said that the reason for the incident had not been ascertained yet. The body was sent for post-mortem examination.

# Inform power consumers about shut down: Sharma

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh's Energy Minister AK Sharma, on Friday, instructed officials to ensure that information about planned shutdown was given to the consumers at least two days in advance.

"The work to be done in the planned shutdown and the benefit arising from it should also

be informed to the consumers. Maintenance works should be done with quality. Photographs of the works should also be uploaded in the social media group and media should also be regularly briefed about the works being done by the Energy department," he said.

The minister stressed that insulators must be installed in the stay wires and junction boxes

should not remain open in the underground system and electrical accidents should be reduced to zero.

The minister directed that every executive engineer should talk to the MPs and MLAs of his area over the phone and discuss the problems and suggestions of their area.

"The information collected from the distribution corpora-

tion level should be sent to the director (distribution) by Saturday afternoon. Consumers should be treated appropriately. Junior engineers and sub-divisional officers should pick up the phone and inform the consumers about power disruption and restoration time. Works of RDS, business plan and nagar nigam etc. schemes should be completed on time.

There should be minimum power disruption in the works," he added.

He also told the officials that recovery from big defaulters should be ensured.

The minister said that officers and employees not discharging their responsibilities in the interest of the corporation should be identified and action should be taken against them.

# MODI REDEFINES...

**From Page 1**

Termining NDA as the most successful alliance, Modi said that the aim of the alliance is to reach unanimity across all the key decisions. Stating that the last ten years of his tenure was just a trailer, PM Modi said that the NDA will deliver on good governance in next 10 years. "We will work much harder and faster for the

development of our country. People know that we will deliver. In the next 10 years, NDA will deliver on good governance, development, improving the quality of life," he said.

He also congratulated the victorious NDA leaders and thanked people for giving him the opportunity to serve them again.

"This is the most successful alliance in the history of our country. It has completed three successful terms and is now entering its fourth. The NDA is not a grouping of parties that have come together to get power, it is committed to the principle of 'nation first'," he added. Modi

said that people expect the party to deliver more than before and added that NDA stands for "new, developed and aspirational India."

The BJP leader stated that NDA will prioritise poor as well as the middle class and also continue to ensure welfare of people and deliver quality life to all.

In a scathing attack on Congress and INDIA bloc, Modi said "INDI alliance" parties have already started saying they came together only for the Lok Sabha polls. Such an approach showed their character, hunger for power, he said. "For me the NDA stands for New India, Developed India, Aspirational India," he said.

The prime minister said he had been missing parliamentary debates and hoped that the Opposition MPs also contribute to nation-building

when they come to parliament.

Modi said that the Opposition's efforts to paint the NDA's Lok Sabha election victory as a loss has gone in vain. Taking a dig at the Congress's performance, the PM said, "Congress couldn't touch the 100-mark even after 10 years. Their total seats in the last three Lok Sabha polls are fewer than our tally in this election alone."

Addressing the MPs, Modi said that he would strive to ensure unanimity in all decisions of his next government and asserted that the NDA is an organic alliance committed to the principle of 'nation first'.

"The NDA is not a grouping of parties that have come together to get power, it is committed to the principle of 'nation first'," he stated. He also said that the NDA reflects the spirit of India and

asserted that the alliance was "committed to principle of 'sarv pantha sambhava' (all sects are equal)."

"People want us to deliver more than before, public wants us to break our own records. To fulfil this dream and resolve is our commitment and we have a roadmap for that," he added.

Speaking about the NDAs dominance in the Lok Sabha polls, he said: "We were neither defeated nor are we defeated. You can ask any child whose government was in power before the Lok Sabha Elections? He will say NDA. Then ask him who formed the government after 2024, and he will say NDA...It was an NDA government in the past, still is and will be." Modi went on to bring up allegations of EVM interference doing the rounds ahead of results and said, "I

strongly feel people of INDI alliance belong to previous century when they question tech advancements like EVMs, Aadhaar...I've been missing Parliamentary debates, I hope Opposition MPs will also contribute to nation-building when they come to Parliament.

Modi, amid felicitations by the NDA lawmakers, showed his high regards for the Constitution by touching the sacred book to his forehead and then bowing down before it. His touching gesture at the Central Hall of Parliament has brought back memories of 2014 and 2019, when he knelt down before entering the Temple of Democracy, while making his debut as a Parliamentarian.

The BJP-led NDA won 293 seats in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections and enjoys majority in the 543-member House.

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name from Dinesh Kumar Gadaria to Dinesh Kumar for all future purpose, Dinesh Kumar S/O Kailash Lal Pal R/O Gram Nagra Post Sarsaul, Kanpur

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**NOTICE**

सुचित हो अख्तर रियाज पुत्र र्च. रिखाजुल हसन, मेरा ग्रीनवुड अपार्टमेंट, ब्लॉक-B, फ्लैट नंबर-703, का एलोटमेंट लेटर खो गया है। जिसका FIR number-20240000167925 दिनांक 19/02/2024, मो- 9918226052

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I Mumtaj Ahmad Quraishi S/o Gulam Dastagir R/o 81/193, Coolie Bazar Coparganj Kanpur. Have changed my name to Mumtaj Ahmad S/O Haji Gulam Dastgeer for all future purpose,

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I have changed my name from Mirza Najeeb Beg to Mohammed Najeeb Beg for all future purpose. Mohammed Najeeb Beg S/o Mirza Humam Kabeer Beg, R/o Abdullah Khan ka phatak, Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh-229001.

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**NOTICE**

I hereby declare publicly that I have passed my tenth exam, roll number 23233452, in the year 2021. In the Marksheets my mother's name is written as Mithlesh Singh Mudhit. I want to change my mother's name. Therefore, through this change, in the future, I want to be known as Yashveer Singh and my mother as Mithlesh Singh. Confirmation of such changes are possible through my government identification card.

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Original deed of the registry executed in June 1962 between Kanpur Nagar Mahapalika and Amarnath Chaddha son of Dewan Chandra Chaddha of Plot Number 278, Block H, Plan Number 1, Scheme Kakadev, Building Number 117/H2/8, Pandu Nagar and Freehold Deed between Kanpur Development Authority and Jugul Kishore Chaddha, Nand Kishore Chaddha, both sons of Amarnath Chaddha, executed on 29/12/2007, the original documents have fallen somewhere on the way, i.e. they have actually been lost. The use of the said documents would be illegal.

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I DIVYA VALECHA alias HARSHA NAVLANI D/O JAWAHAR LAL NAVLANI W/O NAVEEN VALECHA R/O-57 Shivpuri-Colony Balkeshwar Agra Uttar Pradesh-282004, have changed my name to DEEVYA VALECHA.

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**NOTICE**

I Mumtaj Ahmad Quraishi S/o Gulam Dastagir R/o 81/193, Coolie Bazar Coparganj Kanpur. Have changed my name to Mumtaj Ahmad S/O Haji Gulam Dastgeer for all future purpose,

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I, Baby Poonam Kumari w/o Shivesh Shukla R/o 709/G H, Madhu Vihar Colony, Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh- 229001, have changed my name to Poonam Shukla for all future references and purposes

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name from Mirza Najeeb Beg to Mohammed Najeeb Beg for all future purpose. Mohammed Najeeb Beg S/o Mirza Humam Kabeer Beg, R/o Abdullah Khan ka phatak, Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh-229001.

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**NOTICE**

I hereby declare publicly that I have passed my tenth exam, roll number 23233452, in the year 2021. In the Marksheets my mother's name is written as Mithlesh Singh Mudhit. I want to change my mother's name. Therefore, through this change, in the future, I want to be known as Yashveer Singh and my mother as Mithlesh Singh. Confirmation of such changes are possible through my government identification card.

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name from Mohd Moimuddin to Moim uddin for all future purpose. Moim uddin S/O Iqram uddin R/O - 227 B-Block Shyam Nagar Kanpur

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**NOTICE**

Original deed of the registry executed in June 1962 between Kanpur Nagar Mahapalika and Amarnath Chaddha son of Dewan Chandra Chaddha of Plot Number 278, Block H, Plan Number 1, Scheme Kakadev, Building Number 117/H2/8, Pandu Nagar and Freehold Deed between Kanpur Development Authority and Jugul Kishore Chaddha, Nand Kishore Chaddha, both sons of Amarnath Chaddha, executed on 29/12/2007, the original documents have fallen somewhere on the way, i.e. they have actually been lost. The use of the said documents would be illegal.

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I DIVYA VALECHA alias HARSHA NAVLANI D/O JAWAHAR LAL NAVLANI W/O NAVEEN VALECHA R/O-57 Shivpuri-Colony Balkeshwar Agra Uttar Pradesh-282004, have changed my name to DEEVYA VALECHA.

# BJP 'Bengal leadership to blame' for poor showing

**From Page 1**

There has been a foment inside the party against the style of functioning of the present State leadership led by Suvendu Adhikari and Sukanta Majumdar who had allegedly sidelined the older leaders who had come from the RSS.

Incidentally both Adhikari and Majumdar bear TMC origins. Another defeated MP Locket Chatterjee too said that a time had come when things had to be sorted out.

"There are things which should not be spoken outside but yes there is a need to go back to the drawing table," she said.

Similarly, another BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul who contested and lost to TMC's June Maliya from

Midnapore parliamentary seat said "We will introspect on reasons behind loss... perhaps we could not reach out to the people the way we should have... we could not perhaps tell them about the central schemes which is why they were carried away by the TMC's propaganda."

"Reacting to the criticism from the senior leaders, Bengal State president Sukanta Majumdar said that instead of the projected poor show the BJP had done comparatively better taking a lead in about 100 Assembly seats.

"We won 77 seats in the 2021 Assembly elections but have taken a lead in about 100 Assembly segments this time round... this is a good show... I don't know why some leaders are settling their own scores now."

# NDA members dig trenches to fortify...

**From Page 1**

The NDA won 293 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha. The BJP, which enjoyed a handsome majority in the previous two terms, secured only 240 seats, way behind the 272 mark needed to form a Government.

It is learnt that BJP is considering giving the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development ministries to JD (U) while Civil Aviation, Steel & Deputy Speaker Post could go TDP. NDA allies can be appointed as Ministers of State in important ministries like Finance and Defence, Tourism, MSME, skill development, science and technology, earth sciences, and social justice and empowerment may also be given to allies.

# INDIA bloc Oppn won't be...

**From Page 1**

Congress got 99 seats and then increased its tally by one-touching the 100 mark - after Independent Lok Sabha member from Maharashtra Vishal Patil extended support to the party.

"Leader of the Opposition", in relation to either House of Parliament, means that member of the Council of States or the House of the People, as the case may be, who is, for the time being, the Leader in that House of the party in opposition to the Government having the greatest numerical strength and recognised as such by the Chairman of the Council of States or the Speaker of the House of the People, as the case may be," as per the definition stated by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in the Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977.

# Taiwan protests China...

**From Page 1**

"My sincere congratulations to Prime Minister @narendramodi on his election victory. We look forward to enhancing the fast-growing #Taiwan-India partnership, expanding our collaboration on trade, technology & other sectors to contribute to peace & prosperity in the #IndoPacific," he said on social media.

In his response to the congratulatory message, Modi said, "Thank you @ChingteLai for your warm message. I look forward to closer ties as we work towards mutually beneficial economic and technological partnership."

At a media briefing in Beijing on Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning, when asked about the exchange of messages between Modi and Lai, said China has protested to India on this matter.

"The one-China principle is a universally recognised norm in international relations and a prevailing consensus in the international community," Mao said.

"India has made serious political commitments on this and is supposed to recognise, be alarmed about and resist the Taiwan authorities' political calculations. China has protested to India about this," she said.

authorities and countries having diplomatic relations with China. There is but one China in the world. Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic of China," she said.

"The one-China principle is a universally recognised norm in international relations and a prevailing consensus in the international community," Mao said.

"India has made serious political commitments on this and is supposed to recognise, be alarmed about and resist the Taiwan authorities' political calculations. China has protested to India about this," she said.

**PPGCL**

Regd Office: Shatabdi Bhawan, B12 & 13, Sector 4, Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301  
Plant Address: PO- Lohgara, Tehsil-Bara, Prayagraj (Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh-212107  
Phone: +91-120-612000/6102009 CIN: U40101UP2007PLC032835

**NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited invites expression of interest (EOI) from eligible vendors for Procurement of "ERW PIPE FOR FLY ASH LINE" - JUNE-'24" of 3x60 MW Thermal Power Plant at Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited, Bara, Dist. Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India. Details of pre-qualification requirements, bid security, purchasing of tender document etc. may be downloaded using the URL-<https://www.ppgcl.co.in/tenders.php> Eligible vendors willing to participate may submit their expression of interest along with the tender fee for issue of bid document latest by 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

**Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar**

Tender Notice Reference No.44/ DR

The Department of Director of Research invites online bids for the following:

Sr. No.	Item	Quantity
1	Fluorescence Spectrophotometer	1 No.
2	UV- V Spectrophotometer	1 No.
3	HPLC - high Pe rformance Liquid Chromatography	1 No.

Closing date & Time: 22/06/2024 at 4:00 PM  
For details log onto: [www.eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in)  
Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above website only

Director of Research  
Guru Nanak Dev University,  
Amritsar-143005 (Punjab) India

NA/12/23208/2023/34233 Dated CHD - 6/7/2024

**Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar**

Advertisement No. 02/2024

**Walk-in-Interview**

Online applications are invited from eligible candidates for the Posts of Assistant Professors in various teaching Departments of Guru Nanak Dev University, Main Campus Amritsar, and its Regional Campuses (on contractual basis) for the session 2024-25. Online registration process will start on 10-06-2024 and close on 24-06-2024. For interview schedule and further details visit [www.gndu.ac.in](http://www.gndu.ac.in)

07-06-2024  
Amritsar

Registrar

NA/12/23252/2023/34300 Dated CHD - 6/7/2024

**HDFC BANK**

Legal Cell: HDFC Bank Limited  
Upper Ground, 1st And 2nd Floor, 4B-115,  
Gomti Nagar Extension, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh - 226 010.

**POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV, RULE 8(1)**

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the HDFC Bank Ltd. under the Secularization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 15.02.2024 calling upon the borrower(s) 1. Mr. Himanshu Srivastava S/o Mr. Pradeep Kumar Srivastava (Borrower) 2. Mrs. Pramila Srivastava W/o Mr. Pradeep Kumar Srivastava (Co-borrower & Mortgagee) to pay the amount mentioned in the notice Rs.23,60,344.00/- (Rupees Twenty-Three Lakhs Sixty Thousand Three Hundred And Forty-Four Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of this notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the said Act on the read with rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules, on this 06-06-2024. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of HDFC Bank Ltd. for an amount of notice Rs.23,60,344.00/- (Rupees Twenty-Three Lakhs Sixty Thousand Three Hundred And Forty-Four Only) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc. less amount paid, if any.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

Land Measuring 518 Sq. Ft With Constructed Portion, Bearing House No. C 7/36-ka, Situated In Mohalla Sempura, Ward-chetgani, City And District Varanasi, (property Owned By Smt. Pramila Srivastava), Bounded As Under: - East: Gali, North: Part Of House No. C.7/83 Of Vendor, West: Part Of House Of Vendor, South: House Of Shyam Babu

DATE: - 06-06-2024, AUTHORIZED OFFICER,  
PLACE: VARANASI, HDFC Bank Ltd.

**बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा Bank of Baroda**

Regional Office, Kanpur Metro Region: 118-133, 1st Floor, Guntli No. 5, Kaushalpur, Kanpur/20

**DEMAND NOTICE** Branch : SSI Sarvodaya Nagar, Kanpur

Here by this is to inform that under named borrower has not repaid principal and interest thereon of the loan. Therefore the loan become NPA on below Dated . A notice under section 13(2) of the Secularization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 was issued at last known address, which was returned undelivered. Therefore we again inform to under named borrower/ Guarantor by this public notice to repay the loan amount due including interest and other expenses as mentioned in this notice within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice otherwise bank will take action u/section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act 2002.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets, that after publication of public auction/inviting quotation/tender/private treaty your right to redeem the secured assets will not be available.

**Name and Address of Borrower / Guarantor and Security agreement with brief description of securities/N.P.A. Date & Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice**

**Borrower : M/s Classic Garments, Proprietor : Shri Kishan Chand Sharma S/o Shri Prabhu Dayal Sharma, Address : 117/522, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur Nagar and aslo at 220/230, Fazalganj, Sant Nagar Chauraha, Near Prakash Vidhyalaya, Kanpur Nagar, Guarantor : Shri Nirmla Kumar Bajpai S/o Late Devi Dayal Bajpai, R/o : 127/W-1/1186, Saket Nagar, Kanpur and Smt. Ranjana Sharma W/o Shri Kishan Chand Sharma, R/o : 117/H-1/522, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur Nagar**

**N.P.A. Date : 24-02-2016 | Demand Notice Date : 29-05-2024**

**Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 11,84,064.46 + Intt. +Others Charges**

**Property : Land & Building Situated at House No. 127/W-1/1186, Block W-1, Scheme-111, Juhi Kalaan, Saket Nagar, Kanpur in the name of Shri Nirmla Kumar Bajpai S/o Late Devi Dayal Bajpai, Area : 198 Sq. Mtr. Bounded-North : 40 Ft. Road, South : Plot No. 1187, East : 40 Ft. Road, West : Plot No. 1185**

**Date : 08-06-2024 Place : Kanpur Nagar Authorised Officer**

# Akhilesh hoping for bigger role in national politics

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Hoping for a big role for himself in national politics, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav is likely to resign from the membership of Uttar Pradesh assembly.

With his resignation, Akhilesh will also give up the post of leader of opposition in the Uttar Pradesh assembly. Akhilesh Yadav was elected to UP assembly from Karhal constituency in Manipuri district in the 2022 UP assembly polls. A decision on who will replace Akhilesh Yadav as the leader of opposition in the UP assembly has not been taken yet. It is expected that Akhilesh may pick his uncle Shival Singh Yadav for the role of leader of opposition in the assembly as he is one of the senior leaders in the party.

Akhilesh reclaimed the Yadav family bastion of Kannauj by winning the Lok Sabha constituency by polling 6,42,292 votes, defeating sitting Bharatiya Janata Party MP Subrat Pathak by more than one lakh votes. Samajwadi Party had earlier announced to field Tej Pratap Yadav, nephew of Akhilesh Yadav, from Kannauj Lok Sabha constituency. However,



Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav speaks during a party meeting held after the Lok Sabha elections at the party office in Lucknow on Friday.

the decision was later changed due to dissatisfaction among the party workers who wanted Akhilesh Yadav to contest from the seat. Akhilesh Yadav had made debut in politics in 2000 by contesting the by-election to Kannauj Lok Sabha seat. He later contested from Kannauj in 2004 and 2009 Lok Sabha elections. In 2019, Akhilesh Yadav had contested the Lok Sabha election from Azamgarh Lok Sabha constituency. In 2022, he con-

tested the UP assembly election from Karhal and resigned the Azamgarh Lok Sabha seat. Meanwhile, Akhilesh Yadav was accorded a warm welcome in the state office of the party here on Friday on his arrival there after the party won 37 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh. Addressing the party cadre, the SP chief expressed his gratitude towards the electorate and the party cadre for the success of the party candidates in Lok Sabha elections. He said the Lok Sabha elections

results were as per the expectations of the people. He said many more candidates would have been elected but the district administration in several constituencies sabotaged their election prospects. Akhilesh Yadav said the Lok Sabha election results were the victory of the ideology and the Constitution of India. He said the people had rejected the agenda of hate pursued by the Bharatiya Janata Party and had voted for inclusive and positive politics.

## Missing girl's body found

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The body of an 18-year-old girl, missing for three days, was found in a guest house in the Chinhata area of Lucknow late Thursday night. Guest house owner Rakesh Yadav called the police after noticing a foul odour emanating from one of the rooms.

DCP (East) Prabal Pratap Singh stated that a team, along with forensic experts, reached the scene and broke open the door and found the decomposed body of a young woman lying in the room. The deceased was later identified as an 18-year-old resident of Barabanki. The body was sent for post-mortem. Preliminary investigations revealed that the girl had checked into the guest house on June 3 along with a male friend identified as Tribhuvan Singh (26), also from Barabanki. However, on June 4, Tribhuvan locked the room and left, while the girl did not leave the premises since her arrival on June 3. "We have been informed by the Barabanki police that on June 4, the decapitated body of Tribhuvan was found near the railway tracks in Barabanki," DCP Singh said. He further noted that both the girl and Tribhuvan hailed from the same village in Barabanki and a missing complaint was filed by the girl's father on June 3 in Barabanki.

# Yogi congratulates Modi for third term as PM



BJP workers celebrate after senior party leader Narendra Modi was elected as the leader of the NDA Parliamentary Party, at the party office in Lucknow on Friday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Narendra Modi was confirmed for a third consecutive term as prime minister on Friday. The Bharatiya Janata Party Parliamentary Party and the National Democratic Alliance Parliamentary Party elected Narendra Modi as the leader of the Lok Sabha in the Central Hall of Parliament. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath congratulated PM Modi and envisions a future of swift progress towards an Atmanirbhar and Viksit Bharat under his leadership. CM Yogi wrote on his X hand-

dle, "Heartily congratulations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, the architect of 'Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat', the charioteer of Amrit Kaal, on being unanimously elected as the leader of the BJP Parliamentary Party, NDA Parliamentary Party and Lok Sabha for the third consecutive term. Under the successful leadership of Prime Minister Modi, the NDA family is fully committed to building an 'Atmanirbhar and Viksit Bharat' and serving 140 crore family members. Bharat Mata ki Jai." CM Yogi Adityanath was also present at the event in the

Central Hall. When PM Modi was elected as the leader of the NDA Parliamentary Party, everyone in attendance greeted him with bouquets. During this moment, as CM Yogi presented his bouquet to PM Modi, the prime minister responded by patting him on the back. This marked their first meeting since the Lok Sabha results. PM Modi's gesture of encouragement towards CM Yogi sent a clear message that he is not overly concerned about the results in Uttar Pradesh and has complete confidence in CM Yogi's leadership and abilities.

# BSP expels Majid Ali for indiscipline

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

After accusing Muslims of not supporting her party even after she gave them maximum representation during district tribulation in the just concluded parliamentary elections, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati, on Friday, started a crackdown against the community by expelling Majid Ali, who was a candidate from Saharanpur, from the party. Majid came in third place with 1.80 lakh votes.

The party also expelled Majid Ali's elder brother and Bollywood actor Kamal Rashid Khan (KRRK) from the BSP. Party's district president Janeshwar Prasad confirmed Majid Ali's expulsion from the BSP. In the expulsion letter issued by BSP district president Janeshwar Prasad, it has been

said that Majid Ali and his elder brother KRRK, a resident of Mumbai, have been expelled from the Bahujan Samaj Party for being involved in anti-party activities and indiscipline. The letter states that Majid Ali had been warned several times, but despite this, there was no improvement in his working style and due to this, he was being expelled from the party in the interest of the party and the bahujan samaj movement. In the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections, Majid Ali was made the BSP candidate from Saharanpur but the result was not as expected. Majid Ali stood third by getting 1,80,353 votes. Sources said that indecent comments made on social platform 'X' against BSP supremo Mayawati by Majid Ali's elder brother Kamal Rashid Khan, who contested the election on

BSP ticket, was also being discussed, and the demand for his arrest has started rising on social media. Kamal Rashid Khan lives in Mumbai. From people associated with BSP to social and political activists, Kamal Rashid Khan's act was described as very cheap and they demanded action against him. Meanwhile, Majid Ali, while reacting to his expulsion, stated that Behenji is his leader and whatever decision she takes is acceptable. He said that Behenji made him contest the elections of local body chairmanship, state assembly and Lok Sabha and her decision is acceptable to us. Regarding brother KRRK's comment, Majid Ali said that he had nothing to do with his brother. "If he has made any comment on Behenji, then action should be taken against him," he added.

Meanwhile, another BSP leader, Mohammad Gufran Noor, left the party to join Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) along with his supporters. Gufran took membership of ASP-KR in the presence of party's state president Sunil Kumar Chittor, and Chaudhary Mahendra Singh at Agra headquarters. Gufran Noor has been the district president of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM). The BSP had given a ticket to Gufran Noor from the Aligarh Lok Sabha seat but after his health deteriorated, the party replaced him with Hitendra Upadhyay Bunty. Gufran Noor has left BSP and joined ASP-KR. Along with him Izhar Ahmed, Jamaluddin Malik, Salim Khan, Junaid, Zainuddin Abbasi, Aslam Abbasi, Abid Chaudhary, Imran Alvi and others also joined the party.

# Cong demands Yogi's resignation over law and order issue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Congress on Friday again raised the issue of deteriorating law and order situation in the state and demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Addressing a meeting of party leaders here on Friday evening, Congress national general secretary in-charge of Uttar Pradesh Avinash Pandey said that due to the deteriorating law and order in UP, criminals

had become unbridled and were fearlessly committing crimes openly. He said the claim of women's safety in Bharatiya Janata Party's government was nothing but a big lie. "Due to breakdown of law and order, jungle raj has been established in the state. We demand immediate resignation of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath," Pandey claimed. Pandey said that earlier, the Congress government was providing free transformers, wires and poles to farmers for elec-

tricity connections but the present government had ended this scheme and made it compulsory for farmers to pay for each transformer, pole and wire, due to which farmers were unable to get new agricultural connections. "The Congress demands implementation of this scheme again in the interest of farmers," he added. "Agneepath Yojana is the biggest fraud with the youth in independent India. We demand that this scheme be

withdrawn with immediate effect," he added. Pandey dedicated Congress victory in the Lok Sabha elections to the people of UP and all the hardworking and combative workers of INDIA bloc parties. Pandey said that considering this victory as the first step, the party would continue to strengthen the organisation up to the booth level. Sources said that the party would appoint agents at the booth level much before the assembly elections in 2027.

# BJP paid for misplaced faith in candidates

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Bharatiya Janata Party faced a significant setback in the recent Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, marking one of its poorest performances in two decades. Over 55 per cent of its sitting MPs lost the polls, reflecting a strong anti-incumbency sentiment that the party failed to gauge. Post-election analysis shows that 27 of the 49 sitting MPs fielded by the BJP were voted out. "It clearly shows that people were not happy with their work, yet the BJP leadership showed misplaced faith in them," said Nomita P Kumar of the Giri Institute of Development Studies. Even newly inducted MPs, such as Ritesh Pandey in Amedkar Nagar, who had switched to the BJP before the elections, faced losses. Overall, 31 sitting MPs from the BJP lost their seats. Conversely, of

the 21 new candidates, including several first-timers, 10 won, indicating a relatively better performance compared with many sitting MPs. The BJP's initial list of 51 candidates included 46 incumbents. "There was arrogance in the BJP leadership, believing that the election was being contested on Modi and Yogi's appeal, thinking anyone could win," commented a senior BJP leader. The leadership overlooked public dissatisfaction with some candidates, granting tickets to some for the third time. Critics within the party noted that some candidates were perceived as arrogant and unapproachable. For instance, Lalu Singh, BJP MP from Faizabad, reportedly told people seeking favours that they need not vote for him if they wished, yet he would not help them. This arrogance stemmed from his belief that people would vote for him because of

Ram Mandir and Narendra Modi. Similarly, in Mohanlalganj MP Kaushal Kishore faced backlash for neglecting party workers. Of the 54 repeated candidates, 35 were contesting for the third time or more. However, 21 of these, including high-profile figures like Union ministers Smriti Irani (Ameti), Ajay Mishra Teni (Kheri), and Mahendra Nath Pandey (Chandauli), were defeated. Other notable losses included eight-term MP Maneka Gandhi (Sultanpur) and Rajveer Singh (Etah), the son of former chief minister Kalyan Singh. In Moradabad, Sarvesh Singh lost to Samajwadi Party's Ruchi Veera by over 1.05 lakh votes. Among the 19 candidates contesting their second consecutive Lok Sabha polls, 10, including seven sitting MPs like Pradeep Kumar (Kairana) and Ram Shankar Katheria (Etawah), faced defeats. In Sambhal, BJP's Parmeshwar Lal

Saini lost to SP's Zia-ur-Rahman. Data indicates that only 14 BJP MPs contesting for the third or more time managed to win. Among the winners were PM Narendra Modi (Varanasi) and Rajnath Singh (Lucknow). Likewise, only seven MPs contesting for the second time, including Ravi Kishan (Gorakhpur), were successful. Out of 21 new candidates, 10 managed to win, the prominent winners being Jitin Prasada (Pilibhit), Ramesh Awasthi (Kanpur), and Atul Garg (Ghaziabad). However, first-time BJP candidates such as Saket Mishra (Shravasti), Neeraj Tandon (Allahabad), Neeraj Shekhar (Ballia) and Jaiveer Singh (Mainpuri) were defeated. Additionally, UP minister Dinesh Pratap Singh lost to Rahul Gandhi in Rae Bareilly, and Dinesh Lal 'Nirahua' faced his second defeat in Azamgarh, having previously lost to SP chief Akhilesh Yadav in 2019.

## Eight aspirational dists do well in financial schemes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the central government's financial schemes have significantly outperformed targets in eight aspirational districts of Uttar Pradesh.

As per the quarterly report of the State Level Bankers Committee, recently presented to Chief Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra, schemes like Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) have collectively exceeded their target by 332 per cent. Notably, the State Level Bankers Committee is a forum that acts as a bridge between various banks, other financial institutions, and the Central and state governments. This forum reviews the progress of various development programmes through quarterly meetings and prepares strategies to meet set targets. In Uttar Pradesh, the forum is coordinated by the Bank of Baroda. The state has eight aspirational districts where Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath personally monitors development schemes. These districts are Bahraich, Balrampur, Chandauli, Chitrakoot, Fatehpur, Shravasti, Siddharthnagar and Sonbhadra. To implement development schemes effectively and transparently, the state government and the State Level Bankers Committee provide several financial services in these districts. These districts have performed excellently in schemes like PMJJY, PMSBY and APY. Notably, Fatehpur exceeded the national benchmark for APY (2,886 beneficiaries per lakh population) by achieving 9,578 beneficiaries, which is 332 per cent more than the target. In Atal Pension Yojana (APY), against the target of 2,886 beneficiaries per lakh population, Bahraich achieved 4,399 beneficiaries (152 per cent), Balrampur 4,559 (158 per cent), Chandauli 5,013 (174 per cent), Chitrakoot 6,717 (233 per cent), Fatehpur 9,578 (332 per cent), Shravasti 3,182 (110 per cent), Siddharthnagar 4,563 (158 per cent) and Sonbhadra 4,251 (147 per cent).

# RLD failed to deliver for NDA

PRABHA SHANKER ■ LUCKNOW

The Rashtriya Lok Dal leaders claim that the Bharatiya Janata Party has benefited by their alliance in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, but the ground reality does not validate their claims. On the contrary, it is the RLD which has benefited by joining the National Democratic Alliance. The west UP has a dominance of Jats, Muslims, Dalits and Other Backward Classes. There are 27 Lok Sabha seats in this region and the RLD has a good sway over voters in these constituencies. The BJP had won 19 out of 27 seats in the 2019 parliamentary election, while eight went in the kitty of Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party-Rashtriya Lok Dal grand alliance. Out of these eight Lok Sabha seats, the SP and BSP bagged four seats each while the RLD drew a blank. In that election, Jyant

Chaudhary lost the battle in Baghpat, while his father, Ajit Singh tasted defeat in Muzaffarnagar. In the 2019 general elections, the RLD and its alliance partners had several issues to attack the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance like the farmers' agitation but none worked to stop the BJP juggernaut. The RLD could not secure a win in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections either. The RLD, however, improved its scorecard by winning nine assembly seats from west UP in alliance with the SP. The BJP think tank cobbled up an alliance with the RLD in view of the latter's stronghold in Jatland and good command over Jat voters. Though the RLD won from Baghpat and Bijinor, the BJP suffered losses in Saharanpur, Kairana, Muzaffarnagar, Nagina, Firozabad, Moradabad, and a few other seats. It is being said that while the BJP was able to

transfer its votes to the RLD which ensured the win of RLD contestants, the RLD voters did not go to the BJP as the saffron camp's poll strategists had expected. The BJP had astutely played the card to woo the voters of Jatland by conferring Bharat Ratna on the late prime minister Chaudhary Charan Singh and later inducting his grandson Jyant Chaudhary and the RLD into the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), hoping to score better than it did in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Jyant Chaudhary had, in an overwhelming response, said 'dil jeet liya' (won the heart) after Bharat Ratna was conferred on late Chaudhary Charan Singh, and the BJP stalwarts thought this would thaw the animosity among Jats following the farmers' agitation and the backfire of Agneepath scheme for short-term enrollment of Agniveers in the army, but in vain.

## LDA seals portion of housing tower

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow Development Authority on Friday sealed a large portion of the housing towers being constructed unauthorised by a prominent developer in the Sushant Golf City. Besides, a portion of an apartment being constructed by another developer was demolished at Friends Colony in Hariharpur area. It is said that both the developers were confident that the LDA authorities would not take action against them due to their influence despite notices regarding the sealing and demolition being served on them. The LDA vice-chairman decided to take action after their wrongdoing was confirmed.

<b>बैंक ऑफ इंडिया BOI</b> Zonal Office : "Star House" Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010, Ph.: 0522-2721512		<b>DEMAND NOTICE</b>	
<b>NOTICE U/S 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT - 2002</b> In exercise of the power conferred upon under section 13 (2) for SARFAESI ACT, 2002 being the authorized officer of Bank of India issued Demand Notice to the following borrowers/guarantors and the demand notice were sent through regd. Post in the respective residential address. Again by virtue of this publication following borrowers/guarantors of are informed to pay all their debts mention below within 60 days of this notice. Further the borrowers/guarantors in particular and public in general are cautioned not to deal with Sale-purchase of the following properties which are kept us as security.			
Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers & Guarantors	Description of Immovable property mortgaged/ Owner of the property	Amount o/s (as mentioned in the Notice u/s 13(2) Date of Demand Notice
<b>BRANCH : Viraj Khand</b>			
1.	<b>Borrower: Mrs. Shilpi Sajwani</b> W/o Mr. Karan Kumar Kewlani House No. 15, (Municipal No. 634/15), Basant Enclave, Amrai Gaon, Lucknow, Pin-226016	Equitable Mortgage of Residential Property Situated at H. No 15, (Municipal No 634/15), Part of Khasra No 592, Basant Enclave, Amrai Gaon, Tehsil & District Lucknow, <b>Admeasuring Area</b> 52.973 Sq. Mt. in the name of Mrs Shilpi Sajwani W/o Mr. Karan Kumar Kewlani. <b>Boundaries: North- House No. 14, South - House No. 16 East - 25.00 ft. wide road, West - House No. 22</b>	<b>26,96,587.55</b> + interest and other charges compounded with monthly rests from <b>29.05.2024</b> <b>30.05.2024</b>
Further with reasons, we believe that you are avoiding the service of said Demand Notice issued under the Act, as stated above hence, we are now constrained to make this publication of Demand Notice, as required U/S 13(2) of said Act and Rule 3 of the Security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. You are hereby called upon to pay us, Bank of India, within a period of 60 days from the date of publication of this Demand Notice with the aforesaid amount along with the further interest, cost, incidental expenses, charges etc. failing which, we Bank of India will take necessary action under the provisions of Sec. 13(4) of the said Act against all or any one or more of the secured Assets including taking possession of this secured assets of the borrowers and sale thereof. Further you are prohibited U/S 13(13) of the said Act from transferring either by way of sale/lease etc., and encumber in any other way, the aforesaid secured assets. Please note that no further Demand Notice will be issued.			
<b>Date: 08.06.2024, Place: Lucknow</b>		<b>Authorised Officer, Bank of India</b>	

<b>यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India</b> A Government of India Undertaking		Regional Office : 117/H-1/240, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur Head Office : 239, Vidhan Bhawan Marg, Nariman Point Mumbai
<b>POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Properties)</b> [Rule-8(1)]		
Whereas The undersigned being the authorized officer of Union Bank of India, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice calling upon borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors of account to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being of dues with contractual rate of interest within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.		
The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount in full, notice is hereby given to the borrower/guarantor and public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him u/s. 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules. The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with property and any dealing with the property will subject to the charge of Union Bank of India, for an Amount and Interest thereon. We also wish to draw kind attention of all concerned towards section 13(8) of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.		
Sl. No.	Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property and O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand & Possession Notice Date	
1.	<b>Borrower : Shri Ravi Dwivedi S/o Shri Ram Shiromani Dwivedi, R/o : 128/K-83, Yashoda Nagar, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur Nagar. Guarantor : Shri Ram Shiromani Dwivedi S/o Late Hari Ram Dwivedi, R/o : 128/K-83, Yashoda Nagar, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur Nagar. Branch : Moolganj Crossing, Demand Notice Date: 02-08-2023 • Date of Constructive Possession: 05.06.2024</b> <b>Property :</b> Land and Building at House No. 128/K/83, Yashoda Nagar, Constructed over Plot No. 83, Arazi No. 760, (Part) Mauza-Boodhpur Machhariya, Distt, Kanpur Nagar. <b>Owner of Property :</b> Shri Ram Shiromani Dwivedi S/o Late Hari Ram Dwivedi. <b>Area :</b> 267.50 Sq. Mtr., <b>Bounded - North :</b> Plot No. 84, <b>South :</b> Plot No. 82, <b>East :</b> Plot No. 86 & 87, <b>West :</b> 60 Ft. Wide Road. <b>O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 16,23,546.00 + Intt. + Others Charges</b>	
2.	<b>Borrower : Shri Vivek Kumar Dohre S/o Late Ram Kumar Dohre, R/o : House No. 968/1550, EWS, Ratanpur Colony Panki, Kanpur. Guarantor : Shri Mintu Kumar Dohre S/o Late Ram Kumar Dohre, R/o : House No. 968/1550, EWS, Ratanpur Colony Panki, Kanpur and also at House No. E-RATMP 113E-164, Block EWS, Scheme Mirzapur (Ratanpur Part-1), Kanpur. Demand Notice Date: 02-02-2023 • Date of Constructive Possession: 06.06.2024</b> <b>Property :</b> House No. E-RATMP 113E-164, Block EWS, Scheme Mirzapur (Ratanpur Part-1), Kanpur. <b>Owner of Property :</b> Shri Mintu Kumar Dohre S/o Late Ram Kumar Dohre, <b>Area :</b> 47.25 Sq. Mtr., <b>Bounded -North :</b> Plot No. E-165 & Part of Plot No. E-166, <b>South :</b> 6 Mtr. Wide Road, <b>East :</b> Plot No. E-163, <b>West :</b> 9 Mtr. Wide Road. <b>Branch : Sarvodaya Nagar, Kanpur O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 14,64,106.29 + Intt. + Others Charges</b>	
<b>Date : 07-06-2024</b>		<b>Place : Kanpur</b>
<b>Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India</b>		

# Ropeway likely to start in Kashi from Dev Deepawali

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

After La Paz (Bolivia) and Mexico, the world's third and country's first urban transport ropeway is likely to start in Kashi from the festival of Dev Deepawali falling on November 1 this year. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of National Highway Logistics Private Limited (NHLML) Prakash Gaur said as the tourists from all over the world come to Varanasi on Dev Deepawali so the NHLML is trying to start the ropeway operation by Dev Deepawali. According to him, after the completion of the project, the tourists visiting Kashi can get a good pollution-free transport facility. In the first section, the residents will be able to travel smoothly from Varanasi Junction (Cantt) railway station to Rathyatra in less time and the operation of city ropeway will provide relief from traffic problems in Varanasi.



The ongoing work on ropeway project in Varanasi.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is rapidly implementing this ambitious project of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's which will provide great relief from traffic problems in Varanasi. The work of installing stations and towers for the operation of the ropeway is going on at a fast pace. The ropeway trial run will happen soon. After that tourists will be able to travel. Gondola will be available to passengers at an interval of every one and a half to two minutes. As many as 3,000 people will be able to travel in one

direction in an hour, i.e. 6,000 passengers will travel in an hour in both directions. It will take about 16 minutes to reach the Cantt railway station from Godowlia. About 150 trolley cars will run from an estimated height of 45 to 50 metres. As many as 10 passengers can travel in one trolley. The ropeway will operate for 16 hours. The installation of equipment from Switzerland for the construction of the ropeway has begun. Ropeway is being constructed in

Varanasi at a cost of ₹807 crore. This work is being done by Switzerland-based company Berthollet. When tourists come to Varanasi during Dev Deepawali, they will be able to travel by ropeway. According to the company officials, the anchor bolt has been installed at the Vidyapeeth station. Apart from this, many acceleration and deceleration conveyors have also been installed. Now the work of installing ropes will start soon. A total of two towers have been installed from Varanasi Junction railway station to Rathyatra and the work is going on at a fast pace on 16 towers. **LECTURE:** Prof Ashish Kumar Upadhyay of Department of Mathematics, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has been invited to deliver the 35th V. Ramaswamy Aiyer Memorial Award Lecture of the Indian Mathematical Society. The Memorial Award Lecture carries a citation and honorarium.

# Initiative to provide nutrition packets to TB patients praised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The initiative of providing 'Poshan Potli' (packet of nutritional products) to the tuberculosis (TB) patients of the district through self-help groups (SHGs) under the Pradhan Mantri TB-Mukt Bharat Abhiyan was praised. Recently Assistant Director General and Public Health Specialist of Central TB Division Dr Raghuram S Rao sent a letter to District Tuberculosis Officer (DTO) Dr Piyush Rai and praised and encouraged this initiative saying in his letter, "the nutritional assistance being provided to needy TB patients is playing a better role in TB eradication". He also appreciated the efforts of DTO and his team in distributing about 2,000 nutrition packets through SHGs under the TB-free campaign. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary also

praised the DTO and SHGs for this achievement. DTO Dr Piyush Rai said with the help of National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), 'poshan potlis' are being purchased by Muskan self-help group of Kashi Vidyapeeth block. "Since April 2023, more than 2,000 'poshan potlis' have been purchased and provided to TB patients. One kg each of peanuts, roasted gram, jaggery, sattu, sesame or gajak has been included in the 'poshan potli'. Protein and other micronutrients have been included in the TB patients from the 'poshan potli', which are helping them in treatment", he said, adding that apart from this ₹500 is also being sent directly to the patient's bank account every month during treatment under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana. He said that TB patients should take medicine regularly this will cure them completely.

# Prof Satyakam takes charge as UPRTOU V-C

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Pro Vice-Chancellor of PIGNOU, New Delhi, Professor Satyakam took over as the Vice-Chancellor of Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon Open University (UPRTOU) on Friday. Newly-appointed V-C Prof Satyakam said the open university will work rapidly towards taking the gross enrolment ratio in higher education in UP to 100 per cent by the year 2047. He said teachers are the backbone of the university. He said that the open university will emphasise on creating its branding. The students enrolled here will get the benefit of information technology available in the university. Outgoing acting V-C Professor Akhilesh Kumar Singh welcomed the newly-appointed V-C Professor Satyakam and said that this open university will benefit from the experience of



working for so many years in the field of distance education. The team of the open university will fully support him in taking the university forward. Prof Singh praised the tenure of former V-C Professor Seema Singh. Earlier, Professor Satyakam and Professor AK Singh were welcomed by the Registrar Colonel Vinay Kumar. On the occasion the directors, officers, teachers and employees of the university congratulated the new V-C. Prof Satyakam reviewed the programmes to be organised in the university on International Yoga Day and inspected the Centre for Online Education.

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THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.  
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66  
Notice Inviting e Tender  
www.verka.coop  
e-tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following item :-

Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
For Verka Head Office, Chandigarh	
180 ml Glass Bottle for Verka Patiala Dairy.	Annual/ 85,00,000 No's
Di-Calcium Phosphate for Cattle Feed Plant Khanna & GKB.	Annual/1100 MT

NOTE:  
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.  
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

NA/12/23240/2023/34281 Dated CHD :- 6/7/2024 Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

# PCCM inspects ZRTI Ghazipur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Principal Chief Commercial Manager (PCCM) of North Eastern Railway (NER) Manoj Kumar Sinha inspected the Zonal Railway Training Institute (ZRTI), Ghazipur, on Friday. During the inspection, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Sheikh Rehman, Principal of ZRTI Ghazipur Sanjay Kumar Rai, Assistant Commercial Manager (Headquarters) AN Tripathi, Chief Instructor Brajesh Shukla, Senior Instructor Arun Kumar Pal, Warden Abhay Nath Singh Yadav and all other instructors and employees of the institute were present. During his inspection, Sinha conducted a thorough inspection of the ZRTI of NER, in which first of all he observed the Operations and Commerce Model Room and directed to upgrade it from virtual to more functional form for the training of trainees and make it operative. The PCCM directed the institute officials concerned to make the symbolic equipment installed in the model room functional and give practical training. He also took cognizance of the teaching method by taking information from the trainees about the topics and syllabus being taught by the instructors while sitting in the classroom. He instructed the institute officials to install air coolers and air-conditioners as per the requirement to reduce the temperature in the class rooms and said that it is very important to install coolers or AC to continue the training comfortably in extreme heat. After this, Sinha went to the hostel rooms of the trainees and inspected them closely. He also inspected the bedroll, mosquito net, gymnasium and toilets and took cognizance of the facilities available in the hostel. Along with this, the PCCM did a thorough inspection of the arrangements for cooking in the mess and the



food of the trainees and tasted the food of the mess to check the quality of the food. Then he participated in an educational programme organised in the auditorium room of the administrative building, in which he addressed the trainees and instructed them to be aware of the latest rules related to the commercial management of the railways and to be curious about the changes in the rules and to get information about new rules daily. He said that the employees of the Commercial department are directly connected with the earning of railway revenue, hence it is their responsibility to have accurate information about the rules and accordingly contribute to increasing the railway revenue. During this, he instructed the instructors to take commercial trainees to stations and give them practical training of UTS, PRS, HHT and TMS and also explained the working of hand head terminal (HHT). A total of 78 trainees participated in the educational seminar and cleared the misconceptions on passenger reservation system, unreserved ticket system, use of hand-head terminal, correct procedure of cash receipt and dispatch etc and rules to be adopted in adverse circumstances. The seminar was conducted by senior instructor Sunil Singh and the vote of thanks was proposed by Principal of ZRTI Sanjay Kumar Rai. Later, the PCCM planted saplings in the premises of the training centre.

# KDA seals unauthorised constructions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) sealed as many as 15 illegal/unauthorised premises/constructions on Friday. Led by the OSD/SDM (Zone-1) Dr Ravi Pratap Singh the team that carried out the drive comprised assistant engineers Shailendra Singh, JN Pandey, junior engineers Pravin Sharma, CB Pandey, all supervisors of the zone and security force. The premises sealed belonged to Keshav Prasad Chaurasia in Azad Marg, Shuklaganj, Unnao, Danish, Kabir Job Centre in Wazidpur, Jajmau, Mohd Asif, Mohd Eaz in Chhanganj, Shobhit Kapoor in P Road, Amit Kohli, Ruchi Kohli in Chhunniganj, Misrilal Jaiswal in Singhpur Kachhar, RK Gupta in Bairi Akbarpur, Kalyanpur, Lala Singh and Gyan Singh in Singhpur



Kachhar, Babu Bhaiya in New Highway City, GT Road, Naramau Kachhar, Somit Gupta and SK Gautam in Naramau Kachhar, House No 60 Block-B, New Highway City, Naramau Kachhar, Brijesh Trivedi in Naramau Kachhar and Shiv Kumar Dubey in Naramau Kachhar. The process of handing over all these sealed premises to the police was on. The six illegal constructions/plotting sealed in Naramau Kachhar area belong-

ing to Babu Bhaiya, Somit Gupta, SK Gautam, Brijesh Trivedi and Shiv Kumar Dubey were carried out by getting the layout approved from the Zila Palanchayat against the prescribed norms despite their falling under the KDA's area limit. The developers/promoters also managed to sell plots by beguiling the innocent people. The KDA has cautioned such people to buy plots in these areas only after seeing the layout approved by KDA and carryout further

construction only after getting the layout approved by KDA, said the release of OSD (Enforcement, zone-1) Dr Ravi Pratap Singh issued on Friday. Meanwhile, under the directives of KDA Vice-Chairman Madan Singh Garbaly, a team comprising OSD (Land Bank, zone-1)/SDM Dr Ravi Pratap Singh, teshildar Ramnath, amins Santosh Kumar and Ramlal held talks with farmers/land owners of Singhpur Kachhar, Gangpur Chakbada, Hindupur and Sambharpur villages on Friday and convinced them to sell their land to KDA for the launch of New Kanpur City Project. Besides, against the purchase of 1.2745 hectares of land 11 farmers on Tuesday, the KDA on Friday handed over demand drafts worth ₹9.02 crore towards four time value of the present circle rate of their property.

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THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.  
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66  
Notice Inviting Tender  
www.verka.coop  
Tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Mohali Dairy Renovation/Upgradation of Electrical Sub-station.	Job Work
2.	For Verka Chandigarh Dairy • Loading/Unloading of Verka milk 8mlk products corrugated boxes, sugar bags. • Vehicles i.e. 2.5 MT, 4.5 MT, 9 MT, 15 MT, 20 MT, 27MT and 32 MT for the transportation of UHT Milk, Milk Products, Beverages, Juice and other Verka Ambient products etc., from Verka Chandigarh Dairy to other Verka Dairy Units, Milked Branches & Depots (In the state of Punjab & Uncountry Level) and Defence Units.	Annual (from the date of issue of work order)
3.	For Verka Sangur Dairy • Fresh Cut Firewood • Hiring of Pick-up or equivalent vehicle for transportation of Cattle feed and other products. • Husk feeding in boiler and transportation of its Ash.	500MT 01 for two years Annual
4.	For Verka Ferozepur Dairy Unserviceable material and plant Machinery Scrap	
5.	For Verka Amritsar Dairy a) Sealed tenders for Demolition of- • Building near coal yard. • Over head water tank near main store. b) Sealed tender for open auction of approx.420 no. of trees (Safeda, drek etc.). c) E tender for Hiring of vehicles for supply of fresh milk and milk products.	Complete Job Complete Job 01 No.
6.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy a) Viscometer. b) Tintometer. c) Single Lever Auto clamp. d) Water double distillation unit, incubator, BOD incubator. e) Weighing balance up to 4 decimal places having max weighing capacity of 220 gm. f) Digital halogen moisture analyzer for milk powder testing.	011No. 011No. 011No. 011No. 02No's 011No.
7.	For Verka Mega Dairy Bassi Pathana • Transport Vehicles for 1.5 MT, 2.5 MT, 4.5 MT, 9 MT, 15 MT, 20 MT, 27 MT & 32 MT for supply of UHT Milk & Milk Products to Army stations. • Design, supply, installation and commissioning of 375 KW grid connected rooftop solar power plant.	Annual 01 Complete Setup

NOTE:  
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.  
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

NA/12/23246/2023/34289 Dated CHD :- 6/7/2024 Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**  
ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT  
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE No.  
AD/OE/GE-73/2023/1134 Dtd.03.06.2024  
Name of the work:- "Supply of Ex-Servicemen for Port Security and Related work of PPA". Estimated cost put to tender ₹2,51,27,385.00 (excluding service charges @ 10%). The last date & time of submission of bid is 20.06.2024 upto 17:00 Hrs. For details please refer our website:  
www.paradipport.gov.in/  
https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.  
Sd/- Asst. Secretary (Admn.),  
Paradip Port Authority  
PPA/PR/10/2024-2025 dtd.07.06.2024

# C3iHub launches cyber security programme in collaboration with CSJMU & CSJMIF

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

C3iHub, IIT Kanpur launched the Cyber Security Vocational Programme in collaboration with Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU) Kanpur, and Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj Innovation Foundation (CSJMIF), by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at IIT Kanpur. The MoU signing and exchange ceremony, held on Thursday was attended by dignitaries, including Prof Manindra Agrawal, Director, IIT Kanpur and Prof Vinay Pathak, Vice-Chancellor, CSJMU along with other dignitaries, including principals from 20 affiliated colleges. Dr Tanima Hajra, Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Interim CEO of C3iHub, along with Anil Kumar Yadav, Registrar of CSJMU, and Vivek Mishra, Chief Executive Officer of CSJMIF, signed the MoU. This six-month programme aims to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in the ever-growing field of cyber security. This course covers system security, malware analysis, network security, cryptography and IoT security.

This is a completely online course providing students with both fundamental knowledge and hands-on experience. An integral part of the training is customised labs at every student's desk through the cyber

dents, making it a significant step towards fostering cybersecurity expertise in India. Director of IIT Kanpur, Prof Manindra Agrawal, said, "The Cyber Security Vocational Programme will help students

equip them with the knowledge and expertise to tackle upcoming challenges in this critical domain." Dr. Tanima Hajra, COO and Interim CEO of C3iHub, said, "We are excited to announce our partnership with CSJMU and CSJMIF to offer a crucial cyber security course. This programme aims to provide general awareness to students and also empower them with the necessary skills to navigate the digital landscape safely and securely."



range. It is designed to provide students with hands-on experience and industry-relevant knowledge, preparing them for successful careers in the cyber-security domain. C3iHub will provide virtual lab for course practical, technical help desk support for students, certification of participation/ completion of the course and final assessment results for all students. The CSJMU is responsible to facilitate the smooth execution of the programme and CSJMIF will provide a platform to run the programme. The initiative has an ambitious target of enrolling up to 50,000 stu-

develop a comprehensive understanding of cybersecurity, expanding their knowledge to an advanced level of cybersecurity, which will make them future-ready. We hope to provide a strong platform for students to learn practical knowledge and skills that are essential in today's digital age by combining C3iHub's experience and the resources of CSJMU and CSJMIF". Vice-Chancellor, CSJMU, Prof Vinay Pathak, said, "This MoU signifies CSJMU's commitment to providing our students with industry-relevant education. The cyber security programme will

WEBINAR: IIT Kanpur's Computer Science Engineering Department is making significant investments in quality education and industry collaborations to ensure that its students are well-equipped to meet the demands of the rapidly growing trends in the job market. Prof Ashutosh Modi from the CSE Department of IIT Kanpur hosted a webinar answering the trending and highly pertinent question, "Will Artificial Intelligence Really Take Over Our Jobs in the Future?" The webinar was aimed at 12th grade students, current students and aspiring professionals, signifying the department's proactive engagement with current technological issues.

# Efforts to spread message of environmental protection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Metro is playing an important role in reducing the level of carbon emissions by offering green mobility solutions to the city residents. Plans are underway to establish a green belt in the median beneath the approximately five km long Baradevi-Naubasta elevated section, similar to the Priority Corridor (IIT-Motijheel) initiative. Cultivating greenery across an area of approximately 1,200 square metres below this elevated section will not only enhance the road's aesthetic appeal but also aid in mitigating air pollution. UPMRC will ensure regular maintenance of the plantation. Along with this, all necessary arrangements are also being made for rain water conservation. On every second

span of the viaduct, arrangements have been made to collect water to the pit below in the median. On Thursday Kanpur Metro in collaboration with IIT Bilhaur also organised rangoli and poster exhibition at Motijheel station to spread the crucial message of environmental protection to the commuters. Environmental conservation plays a pivotal role in the advancement of metro projects. Unlike other modes of public transportation, the metro stands out as a staunch ally of the environment, operating with zero carbon emissions. Kanpur Metro employs various measures to mitigate dust emissions at construction sites, including continuous water spraying from tankers and anti-smog guns. To combat pollution, additional efforts such as mechanical sweeping

on traffic lanes, wheel washing at RMC plants, and systematic barricading at construction sites are implemented. Periodically, photos showcasing these initiatives are shared with the media. On Thursday Kanpur Metro in collaboration with IIT Bilhaur and the 'Bookflix' organisation, hosted a rangoli and poster exhibition at Motijheel metro station. Young participants showcased their creative talents by conveying messages of environmental protection. Through vibrant colours in artistic rangolis and posters, the commitment to pollution control and a clean, green city was vividly portrayed. Following the exhibition, students enjoyed a metro ride from Motijheel to IIT, where they learned about Kanpur Metro's operations, world-class facilities, and envi-

ronmental conservation efforts. **WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY:** Vice-Chancellor Chandrashekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Dr Anand Kumar Singh in a message issued on the World Food Safety Day said this year the theme is "Food Safety: Prepare for the unexpected." He said food is an important element in the formation of human body. It is important to take clean food for energy and proper nutrition in the body. Dr. Anand said there are about 200 diseases, including diarrhoea and cancer which are caused by eating unsafe food. Dr Singh, while giving a message to all people on World Food Safety Day, said safe food is the right of all people. Therefore, consuming nutritious and safe food is important for health.

**यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया**  
Regional Office : 117/H-1/240, Pandu Nagar, Kanpur  
Head Office : 239, Vidhan Bhawan Marg, Nariman Point Mumbai

**SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY | Date of e-Auction : 26-06-2024**

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable assets under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the authorized officer of **Union Bank of India** (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is What is," "As is What is," and "Whatever there is" on the date mentioned below, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price & the Earnest Money Deposit or also mentioned hereunder.

Branch Name : Ranipur, Distt. Jhansi • Address : Near Bus Stand, Devari Singhpura, Ranipur, Jhansi, Branch Head : Shri Avani Singh • Mob. : 9935189301

**Borrower :** Shri Manoj Kumar S/o Late Anandi Lal, R/o : Mohalla Ladganj, Near Sitanath Mandir, Ranipur, Distt. Jhansi, **Guarantor :** Smt. Sanjana Devi W/o Shri Manoj Kumar, R/o : Mohalla Ladganj, Ranipur, Distt. Jhansi.

**Property :** Residential House situated at Mohalla Ladganj, Ward No. 1, Ranipur, Distt. Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Smt. Sanjana Devi W/o Shri Manoj Kumar, **Area :** 209.98 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded-North :** Land of Suresh Bidli Wale, **South :** House of Ram Prakash Baroniya, **East :** 2.40 Mtr. Wide Rasta, **West :** House of Bhajji Rajpuriya. **O/S Amount as per Demand Notice :** Rs. 14,16,079.84 + Intt. + Other Charges

**Date & Time of E-Auction :** 26-06-2024 at 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

**Reserve Price :** Rs. 23.79 Lac, **Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 2.38 Lac.** For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TenderViewAllAuction.aspx

For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit https://www.msstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/lbapi/index.jsp

**Date : 07-06-2024** **Place : Jhansi** **Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India**

# Modi elected leader of NDA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners including Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief N Chandrababu Naidu, Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal (United) supremo Nitish Kumar, Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde — on Friday endorsed BJP leader Narendra Modi as the leader of the NDA with a message to balance regional aspirations and national interests.

Speaking at the NDA Parliamentary Party meeting here, BJP allies JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy, Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde, NCP chief Ajit Pawar, HAM(S) chief Jitan Ram Manjhi among others supported the proposal moved by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to elect Modi as the leader of the NDA.

Hailing and supporting Narendra Modi's name as NDA leader, TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu said, "...Narendra Modi has a vision and a zeal, his execution is very perfect. He is executing all his policies with a true spirit... Today, India is having the right leader - that is Narendra Modi. This is a very good opportunity for India, if you miss now, we will miss forever..." "Balancing regional aspirations and national interests must run parallelly while ensuring holistic development for all strata of society," Naidu said. Naidu said Modi's rallies in Andhra Pradesh helped the TDP win 16 seats in the Lok Sabha elections.



Kumar expressed confidence that Modi will develop India in a big way and also pay attention to Bihar. "We are confident that Modi will develop India and we will wholeheartedly support him every passing day," Kumar said. "All the pending works of Bihar will be done. It is a very good thing that all of us have come together and we will all work together with you... We will all work under your leadership," he said. The Bihar chief minister slammed the opposition and expressed confidence that they will be defeated in the next Lok Sabha elections. "I have noticed that a few people have won (Lok Sabha elections) here and there by saying useless things. They haven't done any work, never served the country. Next time when you win, they all will be defeated," Kumar said. During the occasion, in a humble gesture, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi made way for Kumar to pass in front of him when he got up to express his support for Modi's name as the leader of the alliance. Reciprocating the gesture, Kumar after expressing his support to PM Modi's name tried to touch his feet, however, the former resisted him and shook hands with the Bihar Chief Minister. The Shiv Sena chief Shinde used a line from a popular advertisement and said, "Yeh Fevicol ka jod hai, tootega nahin (this is a Fevicol bond, it's not going to break)". Shinde said in Hindi, "Today is a historic and golden day. (Senior BJP leader) Rajnath Singh has proposed making Prime Minister Narendra Modi the head of the NDA parliamentary party and, as a party that follows (Shiv Sena founder) Bal Thackeray's ideals, we support this fully."

"In the past 10 years, PM Modi has contributed to the development of this country and ensured that India's stature has risen globally. The economy has also been strengthened. No matter how many rumours or false narratives the opposition spreads, they have been rejected by the people and PM Modi has been accepted... What I will say about the Shiv Sena is that the party and the BJP share a common ideology and the alliance, which was formed by Bal Thackeray, is a Fevicol bond and will not break," he added. Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) (Ram Vilas) Chief Chirag Paswan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared a candid moment at the NDA parliamentary party meeting. After expressing his support for PM Modi, Paswan approached him, shook his hand, and hugged him, to which the Prime Minister responded with a pat on Paswan's head.

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## Will work on further boosting research, innovation in third term: Modi



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the qualitative changes in India's education sector are reflected in the QS World University Ranking and his Government will work on further boosting research and innovation in the third term. "Over the last decade, we have focused on qualitative changes in the education sector. This is reflected in the QS World University Rankings. Compliments to the students, faculty and institutions for their hard work and dedication. In this term, we want to do even more to boost research and innovation," the Prime Minister said in a social media message. The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) Bombay and Delhi are among the top 150 universities in the world, while the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) retained the top rank globally for the 13th time, according to

the QS World University Ranking-2025 announced on Wednesday. While IIT Bombay climbed from 149 last year to 118, up by 31 ranks, IIT Delhi improved its rank by 47 points to bag the 150th position globally. According to the coveted ranking published by the London-based higher education analyst, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), the University of Delhi stood out for the employability of its graduates and has been ranked 44th globally in the category of "employment outcomes". Boasting 46 universities in this edition of the rankings, the Indian Higher Education system is the seventh most represented globally and the third in Asia, trailing only Japan (49 universities) and China (Mainland) (71 universities). From 46 institutions compared to 11 in 2015, India has increased its representation by 318 per cent in the last decade, registering the highest growth among G20 nations, QS officials said.

## Modi's third term unprecedented in last six decades: Dhankhar



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday here acknowledged the historical significance of the Government's third term, unprecedented in last six decades. Emphasising the rarity of such an accomplishment, he stated "It is for the first time since 1962 that a Prime Minister has got a third term". Addressing the participants of the Rajya Sabha Internship Programme at Vice President's enclave, Dhankhar urged the interns to harness the power of social media to express their views and remain vigilant against pernicious tendencies in democracy. Emphasising the role of constructive debate, dialogue and discussion in the Parliament for positive growth, Dhankhar urged the interns to mobilize public opinion if they see any deviation from these principles.

He further exhorted that Bharat is not a sleeping giant, instead we are a country on move that is rising every day and every moment. Emphasizing the significance of consulting the Indian Constitution for clarity, the Vice President advised the interns to text of Indian Constitution whenever in doubt about. Describing the internship programme as a "Parliamentary Startup" that would provide a new direction and urge to engage with the country's democratic processes, Dhankhar highlighted how citizens can indirectly participate and raise public issues through petitions, without being a member of Parliament. Dr Sudesh Dhankhar, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha Harivansh, Secretary General, Rajya Sabha P.C. Mody, Secretary to Vice President, Sunil Kumar Gupta, Secretary Rajya Sabha, Rajit Punhani and other senior officials were present.

# Four Indian medical students drown in Russian river, says MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Four Indian students, who were studying at a university in Russia's Veliky Novgorod region, drowned in the Volkhov river, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday. A fifth Indian student was saved from drowning and is currently receiving medical attention, it said, adding two students are missing and search for them continues. Local emergency services have so far recovered two bodies from the Volkhov river. "Four Indian students who were studying at the Yaroslav-

the-Wise Novgorod State University located in Veliky Novgorod, Russia, drowned in an unfortunate incident in the Volkhov river," the MEA said. The four students were identified as Harshal Anantrao Desale, Jishan Ashpak Pinjari, Jia Firoj Pinjari and Malik Gulamgous Mohammad Yakub from Maharashtra. The name of the student rescued is Nisha Bhupesh Sonawane. The MEA said the Indian consulate in St Petersburg remained in contact with the university and local authorities and is providing all possible assistance. "Local emergency services have so far recovered two dead bod-

ies from the Volkhov river. We offer our condolences to the families," the MEA said in a statement. It said the search for the remaining two missing students continues. "The five students involved in the accident belong to the Jalgaon district of Maharashtra. Our Consulate in St Petersburg is coordinating with local authorities for the repatriation of the mortal remains," the MEA said. It said the Indian consulate continues to be in contact with the families and the district administration in Jalgaon, Maharashtra. The Indian consulate in St Petersburg said it is working



together with the local authorities of Veliky Novgorod to send the mortal remains to the relatives as soon as possible. "The bereaved families have

been contacted and assured of all the possible help," it said on X. It said proper medical care including psychological treat-

ment is being provided to the girl student who was saved. "These students were pursuing medical education in Veliky Novgorod State University. Sincere condolences to the bereaved families," it said. According to a report by PTI from Jalgaon, Jishan Ashpak Pinjari, one of the four Indian students who drowned in the Volkhov river in Russia, was on a video call with parents when he and the three others drowned in the river, a family member said on Friday. The four, Harshal Anantrao Desale, Jishan Ashpak Pinjari, Jia Firoj Pinjari and Malik Gulamgous Mohammad Yakub, students of the Yaroslav-

the-Wise Novgorod State University, were taking a walk along the Volkhov river, when they entered the waters, an official said. Another student, Nisha Bhupesh Sonawane, survived. Now she is under the care of local medical staff, the official said. Jalgaon district collector Ayush Prasad said arrangements are being made to bring the bodies to India. Jishan and jia were siblings and hailed from Amalner in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra. Harshal Desale belonged to Bhadgaon, also in Jalgaon district. "When they entered the Volkhov river, Jishan made a video call to his family. His

father and other family members were pleading with Jishan and others to come out of the river waters when a strong wave swept them away," a family member told local media. In a message to the Indian envoy to Russia, the administration of Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University has expressed condolences over the tragedy. "The students were taking a walk near the city's beach along the Volkhov river, in the evening, during their study-free time. The tragedy was accidental and unexpected. Nisha Bhupesh Sonawane survived. Now she is under the care of medical staff," a university official said.

## Priyanka slams Modi Government for irregularities in NEET entrance exam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday slammed the Modi Government over alleged irregularities in the NEET medical entrance exam and called for resolution of students' "legitimate complaints" through an investigation. Several aspirants of the NEET entrance exam NEET have alleged inflation of marks which led to a record 67 candidates bagging the top rank, including six from the same exam centre. The National Testing Agency (NTA), however, denied any irregularities and said the changes made in the NCERT textbooks and grace marks for losing time at the examination centres are some of the reasons behind the students scoring higher marks. In a post in Hindi on X, Priyanka said, "First the NEET exam paper was leaked



and now the students allege that there has been a scam in its results as well. Serious questions are being raised on 6 students of the same centre getting 720 out of 720 marks and many kinds of irregularities are coming to the fore." There are reports of many children committing suicide across the country after the results were announced, Gandhi said and added that

this is very sad and shocking. "Why is the government ignoring the voice of lakhs of students? Students want answers to legitimate questions related to the rigging in the NEET exam results," the Congress general secretary said. Is it not the government's responsibility to resolve these "legitimate complaints" by conducting an investigation, she asked.

## 151 paintings portraying Shivaji's life displayed at NGMA

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Timed with the 350th coronation anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, a captivating collection of 115 larger than life oil paintings, portraying a journey through the life and legacy of one of India's most iconic historical figures and the great Maratha ruler has been opened for public at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) in the national capital till June 21. The Maratha warrior king was crowned on June 6, 1674, at the fort from where he had laid the foundation of "Hindavi-Swaraj" or self-rule of Hindu people. The inauguration day was timed with the 350th anniversary of Shivaji's coronation. The Union Culture Ministry plans to take this exhibition, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj: Celebration of the 350th Anniversary of the Great Coronation on a nationwide



tour to raise awareness about the iconic leader, said Union Culture Secretary Govind Mohan after inaugurating the exhibition on Friday. Painted by Marathi father-son artist duo, Shrikant Chougule and Gautam Chougule, each painting vividly portrays key moments from Shivaji's life—from his early days receiving the saffron flag from his father Shahaji to his strategic military triumphs and the establishment of the Maratha kingdom. Through their skillful artistry, the Chougules bring to life the courage,

determination, and resilience of Shivaji, inviting viewers to reflect on the great Maratha leader's profound legacy. Shivaji is also known for his maritime skills, having launched Maratha Navy at Durgadi Fort Kalyan Year OCT 1657. Mohan, said that Deepak Gore who collected the paintings has 'agreed to gift' the 'treasure' to the Union Culture Ministry, and there is a plan to give it a permanent space at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Art (IGNCA) in Delhi.

## Third gender voter turnout in 2024 LS poll higher than 2019

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reflecting their growing awareness and interest in exercising their democratic rights, third gender voters are increasingly making their presence felt as has been revealed by the data released by the Election Commission (EC) which said, the voter turnout in 2024 from this marginalised community stood at 25 per cent, a notable increase from the 14.58 per cent recorded in the previous Lok Sabha polls. The EC's phase-wise data shows that while the first phase saw a turnout of 31.32 per cent, subsequent phases also witnessed considerable participation, ranging from 18.67 per cent to 34.23 per cent. This indicates a consistent engagement of the third-gender community throughout the electoral process, reflecting their growing awareness and interest in exercising their democratic rights. "The increased voter turnout underscores the importance of

addressing the needs and concerns of our community within the electoral framework. The trend also highlights the need for continued efforts to enhance accessibility, eliminate discrimination, and promote inclusivity in the electoral process," said Rajan Singh, who identifies as a transwoman and was the national capital's first transgender candidate. With the slogan, Sauchalya se, Sansad tak', Singh contested from the South Delhi constituency and received 325 votes, according to the EC data. Though Singh's electoral journey may not have resulted in victory, he said, his candidacy signifies a voice in the democratic process, advocating for meaningful change and representing the aspirations of their constituency. Narela-resident Pooja, also a transgender, who was in the fray from North-West Delhi and got 509 votes said "the participation was an experience for me."

# Statues shifted from Parliament premises to ensure Opposition cannot hold protests: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday alleged that statues of Mahatma Gandhi, B R Ambedkar and Chhatrapati Shivaji among others have been relocated within Parliament premises to ensure that Opposition parties cannot hold democratic protests, and said such "stunts" cannot save Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "unstable government" from falling. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh termed the Lok Sabha secretariat's explanation for relocating the statues as "wholly bogus", and said there has been no discussion with any political party on the matter. In a statement, the Lok Sabha Secretariat said Thursday that

due to their location at different places in the Parliament premises, visitors were not able to see these statues conveniently. "For this reason, all these statues are being respectfully installed in a grand 'Prerna Sthal' in Parliament House premises. This 'Prerna Sthal' is being developed in such a way that the visitors coming to visit the Parliament complex view the statues of these great persons conveniently and get inspired by their life experiences," the statement said. The Lok Sabha Secretariat had asserted that the Parliament House complex comes under the jurisdiction of the Lok Sabha Speaker and earlier also, statues were shifted inside the complex with the permission of the Speaker. lamming the shift of statues,

Ramesh said, "Yesterday at 2:30 PM, I had highlighted how the Modi regime was shifting the statues of Chhatrapati Maharaj, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dr. Ambedkar away from prominent places they now occupy in front of Parliament House." "Rattled by photographs of these shifts that were also put out, late last night, well after 8PM, the Lok Sabha Secretariat was forced to issue a wholly bogus and clearly manufactured explanation for the shift. There has been NO discussion with any political party on these shifts," he said in a post on X. The real reason for the shifts can now be revealed, Ramesh said, adding that these statues were placed where for the past 10 years Opposition parties - including the TDP and JDU - would stage peace-



ful and democratic protests against the Modi Government. "Clearly the incoming one-third PM wants no place next to where Parliament meets where protests, even in a Constitutional manner, against him and his government can take place. Such stunts can no longer save him and his unsta-

ble Government from falling," Ramesh said. In its statement, the Lok Sabha secretariat said the arrangements are also being made to provide visitors with detailed information about the life and contribution of these great persons and freedom fighters through modern technology at

official ceremonies such as the President's address to the joint sitting of Parliament, usually during the Budget Session. CPI general secretary D Raja has called the move to remove the statues from their original place a contempt of the ideals of freedom, liberty and equality. "The arbitrary and unilateral decision to shift the statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar and Chhatrapati Shivaji in the Parliament House premise is condemnable. All statues in the Parliament House are erected in the honour of individuals who significantly contributed to our national life," Raja said in a post on X. Trinamool Congress MP Jawhar Sircar has said the government must explain why

this was done. "Who dared to remove statues of Mahatma Gandhi (our traditional protest site) and Babasaheb Ambedkar - from their hallowed sites in our Parliament compound? Has the statue of Shivaji also been removed? Are statues of (Nathuram) Godse & (Narendra) Modi coming up? The Government must explain," he said in a post on X on Thursday. Working president of NCP-SCP Supriya Sule said this is very "infuriating". She also said "All these statues were erected by Indian citizens out of love for national heroes in the Parliament building area. The government has insulted all the countrymen by removing these statues. What is special is that today is the 350th anniversary of the coronation day of Shivaji."



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Balancing act

Regional allies driving a hard bargain will test Modi's skills in running a coalition Govt like never before

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has emerged as the most potent coalition to form the next Government under the leadership of Narendra Modi. Central to its strength is the support of regional parties for maintaining a parliamentary majority. Nevertheless, the hard bargaining by these allies, though politically essential for them, affects the Government's policy formulation exercise and the nation's progress. The NDA's regional allies, such as the Chandrababu Naidu-led TDP, Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) and others, are engaging in intense negotiations to secure their interests. The JD(U) has already demanded a special status for Bihar while Naidu has a long list of demands. Coalition Governments, by their very nature, are unstable and we have had a long history of coalitions that failed to complete their term. Regional parties serve as the voice of their respective States, advocating for localised interests that might otherwise be overlooked in the Union Government's broader agenda. This ensures a more inclusive approach to governance, reflecting the diverse needs and aspirations of different parts of the country. However, this hard bargaining can have several negative implications for policy making. The need to accommodate the diverse, and sometimes conflicting, demands of various regional partners can lead to fragmented policies. Instead of a coherent national strategy, policies may become a patchwork of compromises, weakening their overall impact. Prolonged negotiations and the need to achieve consensus among coalition partners can slow down the decision-making process.



Government's broader agenda. This ensures a more inclusive approach to governance, reflecting the diverse needs and aspirations of different parts of the country. However, this hard bargaining can have several negative implications for policy making. The need to accommodate the diverse, and sometimes conflicting, demands of various regional partners can lead to fragmented policies. Instead of a coherent national strategy, policies may become a patchwork of compromises, weakening their overall impact. Prolonged negotiations and the need to achieve consensus among coalition partners can slow down the decision-making process.

No doubt coalition Governments have played a significant role in governance, especially in the 1990s. One of the most notable coalition Governments was led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who not only faced numerous challenges but also set a precedent for future coalition politics in India. Vajpayee's Government was an alliance of more than 20 parties, each with its agenda and demands. Managing such a diverse coalition required significant diplomatic skill and often led to compromises on policy decisions. Following the nuclear tests, India faced international sanctions, which posed a significant challenge to the economy. The Government had to navigate these sanctions while continuing to pursue economic growth and development. The Kargil conflict with Pakistan in 1999 was another major challenge for the Vajpayee Government. The conflict tested the Government's ability to manage national security issues while maintaining internal political stability. The Government's response to the 2002 riots was seen as inadequate by many, raising concerns about the coalition's ability to address communal harmony and human rights issues. It was only Vajpayee's leadership and statesmanship that pulled off a near-impossible feat and completed full term. It remains to be seen if Modi can do the same.

### PICTALK



A parachutist lands ahead of the Canadian ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of the World War II D-Day PTI

## Overcoming child sexual abuse stigma

The profound and lasting impacts of child sexual abuse necessitate dismantling systemic barriers and fostering supportive environments

According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, 64,469 victims were reported in 2022 under the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act. Despite the alarming prevalence of reported cases of Child Sexual Abuse, it remains hidden behind layers of denial, silence, stigma and shame as the issue is deeply rooted in societal structures, such as patriarchy and gender bias, which often prioritize family honour and silence over confronting abuse. Research suggests that 90 per cent of the perpetrators are known to the child, such as family members, trusted neighbours, or teachers. These individuals often hold positions of trust and responsibility, making it even more challenging to address the issue. Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a serious issue that affects many individuals. Research highlights the profound and lasting impacts of CSA, including detrimental effects on mental health, emotional stability and social functioning, which can persist into



adulthood if not properly addressed. Addressing child sexual abuse requires dismantling these systemic barriers and promoting an open, supportive environment that prioritizes the well-being and rights of children. **Recognizing the Signs of Sexual Abuse:** Understanding the signs that a child may have been subjected to sexual abuse is the first step in addressing this grave issue. Sudden changes in behaviour can be indicative of underlying abuse. Children may exhibit a range of physical and emotional behavioural changes like: \*Unexplained injuries or bruises in the genital or anal area. \*Sudden changes in behaviour such as withdrawal, unusually quietness, aggression, or depression. \*Nightmares or bedwetting. \*Displaying knowledge or interest in sexual acts beyond

their age. \*Avoidance of specific people or places. \*Sudden decline in academic performance. These signs may vary depending on the child's age, personality and the nature of the abuse. It's essential to be alert to these changes and maintain open communication with a child, create a safe environment for disclosure and take any disclosure seriously. **Preventing The Abuse:** Preventing child sexual abuse (CSA) demands a collective effort where the responsibility doesn't solely fall on children. There are steps parents, caregivers and trusted adults can take to minimize the risk and empower their children in navigating this complex world. The stigma and shame attached to sex and sexuality often translate into not having open conversations with children and giving them the appropriate vocabulary to express such concerns. On one hand, it makes it difficult for them to articulate if they've experienced abuse and on the other it hinders prevention. It is important to start conver-

sations about body autonomy, boundaries and consent from an early age. Teaching children the proper names for their body parts and emphasizing the power of saying "no" to any touch that feels uncomfortable or unwanted is important. However, the onus of preventing CSA cannot and should not solely rest on the child. Building a foundation of open communication is equally essential from the parents' side. This is possible only when adults create a safe and nurturing environment where a child feels comfortable expressing any concerns or discomfort they may have. Adults must take responsibility for creating safe spaces and intervening when they suspect abuse may be occurring. Child sexual abuse shatters a child's sense of safety and trust. It can leave them feeling confused, ashamed and isolated. As a caregiver, the first step is to acknowledge the gravity of the situation. Recognising the abuse and validating their experience is crucial. (The writer is executive director, Sakshi - a rights-based NGO; views are personal)



SMITA BHARTI

# Punjab quietly yields surprising results



SUKHDEV SINGH

Punjab's voters remained uncharacteristically silent, leaving political parties hopeful yet uncertain about the election outcome, which ultimately did not favour any single party



The general parliamentary Lok Sabha elections 2024 have been held smoothly in Punjab without any noticeable wave or enthusiasm in favour of any political party. There has been a mysterious silence among the people raising unpredictability and allowing every party to have high hopes on the one side but hold fear in their hearts. Most political parties except the CPI-CPIM had fielded their candidates in every constituency claiming for their victory on all the thirteen seats. The voting has been lower than in the previous elections and the current national voting percentage. There could not be alliances between the political parties because of their illusory hopes for their victory independently which pushed them into the game of engineering party-switch of the leaders. The long-time allies Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) fell apart and fielded independent candidates with the BJP importing its candidates from the state Congress top brass and Aam Admi Party (AAP) and Indian National Congress (INC), who are in alliance at the national level, could not agree on seat sharing and fielded their candidates in each constituency. Other political parties such as Bahujan Samaj

Party (BSP) and Akali Dal (Maan), CPI-CPIM had also fielded their candidates. But the voters surprised most of them by electing seven congresses, three AAP, one SAD and two independent raw candidates. The ruling party in the state, the AAP, has won only three seats with a vote share of 26.02%, reduced from 42% in 2022 against its claim for all the thirteen in the state; it has managed to lead only in 32 assembly segments against its victory in 92 assembly constituencies in 2022 state assembly elections. Some of its candidates holding state government ministerial portfolios have trailed behind opponents in their assembly segments. All this is a matter of serious concern for the AAP to introspect. The ruling party in the Centre, the BJP, has not been able to win any seats though it was quite hopeful for their victory with a team of the top brass of the state Congress 'taken over' by it on its side. Of course, to its satisfaction, it has succeeded in raising its vote bank share to 18.56% and leading in 23 assembly segments. The Congress has won 7 seats and has gained the lead in 38 assembly segments against its victory only in 18 assembly



THE VOTERS OF PUNJAB HAVE SPELT OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THEY MAINTAIN THEIR IDENTITIES, THEIR POLITICAL AND INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOUR IS PREDOMINANTLY SECULAR AND PREJUDICE-FREE

constituencies in 2022. It has succeeded in managing the vote share of 26.3%, winning seven out of 13 seats in this election despite the unexpected defection by almost all its senior leaders to the BJP and other parties. The two independent candidates who were neither very big leaders nor supported by any political party, have won by defeating the established leaders of established political parties by sizable margins. The voters of Punjab have spelt out that although they maintain their identities, their political and interpersonal behaviour is predominantly secular and prejudice-free. Although it is a fact that Punjab's population is majority Sikh and rural, its other population being 40% Hindu, one-third Dalit and other horizontal and social categories, it has distributed its representation neither based on religion, nor region and social hierarchies, but based on local issues of development. Secondly, in the absence of sound trust in the political class, its choice reflects a rejection of the other 'not chosen', who is or has been in power, rather than the choice itself. The voters in Punjab have painted their character and power by maintaining

silence before voting but exercising their power independently and wisely on the day of voting. They have rejected the dominant discourses of religion, caste and urban/rural polarization, the discourse of victimization justifying non-performance. They have voted for Congress on its promise of MSP for agricultural produce, a promise to pull agriculture out of distress since it is agriculture that is the spleen of Punjab's economy so far. Whether a Hindu or a Sikh, whether an urban or a rural person, whether an upper caste or a Dalit - everybody, as a part of their collective consciousness, understands the relevance of agriculture in the state. It has chosen independent candidates exercising their rejection of all others and expressing their sympathy for their 'condition' against the state power. Thus, their victory can be attributed to local sentiments and political dynamics rather than any other radical ideology influencing voter preferences. In fact, for them, it would be a difficult choice between the Congress and the BJP. (The writer is a retired Professor from Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### MORE VOTERS BUT LOWER ENGAGEMENT

Madam — Apropos the news story "More voters but lower turnout in 2024, confirms EC," published on June 7, this is my response. As a daily newspaper reader, it's heartening to see the Election Commission lifting the model code of conduct following the announcement of election results and the beginning of government formation. The overall voter turnout in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections was 65.79 per cent, which, although slightly lower than 2019's 67.40 per cent, still indicates robust democratic engagement. Notably, the data reveal a significant surge in women voter participation, with a turnout of 64.72 per cent compared to men's 63.11 per cent. This trend is particularly pronounced in states like Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Odisha, where women's turnout surpassed men's by notable margins. This increase in female voter engagement is a positive sign of growing political awareness and empowerment among women, which can lead to more inclusive governance. The turnout of the third gender, although low at 22.33 per cent, suggests there is still work to be done to ensure their full participation in the democratic process. Overall, these elections highlight the evolving dynamics of voter engagement in India, reflecting a more diverse and representative electorate. Ananya Sharma | Nashik

### Taiwan greets Modi, China fumes



Regarding the news story "China lodges protest with India over PM Modi's response to Taiwan President Lai's greetings on his poll victory," published on June 7, here are my thoughts. As a regular newspaper reader, the recent diplomatic spat between China and India over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's social media interaction with Taiwan President Lai Ching-te is quite intriguing. Modi's expression of enthusiasm for strengthening ties with Taiwan, following Lai's congratulatory message, has irked China, which sees Taiwan as a breakaway province. China's swift protest underscores its sensitivity to any international recognition of Taiwan's sovereignty. The geopolitical chessboard in the Indo-Pacific region is complex and Modi's statement hints at India's potential shift towards deeper engagement with Taiwan, especially in trade and technology. This could be a strategic move to counterbalance China's growing influence. However, it also risks straining India-China relations, which have already been tense. China's insistence on the One China policy and its warning against Taiwan's "political calculations" highlight the delicate nature of this issue. As an observer, I see this as a significant moment that could reshape regional alliances and economic partnerships in the coming years. Kabir Patel | Rajkot

ment. Social work, however, carries an added responsibility - to serve people and communities, striving to uplift them. It involves working with people and their surroundings, considering external and internal factors simultaneously. Social work is not just about empathising with others' circumstances but also about reflecting on potential solutions and alternatives. In today's India, social work as a profession is emerging as one of the crucial sectors. Over the last decade, this profession has expanded its horizon and established itself across the country. It is encouraging to see a growing number of young professionals choosing this career path. India needs more such young minds and professionals who can work on the ground and formulate policies to address critical societal issues. However, it is essential to question whether we are truly fulfilling this need. Ishita Verma | Bhopal

### EMBRACING SOCIAL WORK

Madam — Regarding the news story "Rejuvenating Indian social work, culturally," published on June 7, here are my thoughts. Every profession is unique and essential for societal growth and develop-

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## COALITION GOVERNMENT AND DIPLOMACY

Recalibration of diplomatic priorities due to coalition compulsions is on the cards



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

India has voted and the verdict is out. It has brought back the era of coalition governments, the pressures of alliance partners weighing in on key policy matters, back to India's polity after a decade. The era of robust, single-source decisions is most likely over and may not return for a decade. The voter's verdict will have long-reaching impact on India's foreign policy and diplomatic trajectory for a long time to come.

The relations with the US which were nurtured by the Modi Government in the past decade and which have reached a certain stable platform, are unlikely to be disturbed. The technology partnership added to the existing trade partnership, has bipartisan support in Washington. This means in the eventuality of Trump returning to in the US, towards the year's end, it won't be a spoiler in India US bilateral relationship. India and the US have in the past, shown enough maturity in discussing sensitive issues, such as the alleged hit plan on India-designated terrorist G S Pannun, behind closed doors.

Most US businesses operating in India may be relieved, with a coalition verdict, as it could, take away many concerns (expressed by their US-based colleagues behind closed doors) regarding the overreach by a PM, with a brute majority. They may be relieved to find several pockets of influence, with more alliance partners coming in the Government, weighing on crucial policy decisions. The US and global capital would feel safe in India as a market, as long as it is business as usual, no surprise protectionist regulations and there is a growth market. In a coalition government, with several checks and balances, the scope for unilateral decisions, is less likely. Also, as many experts mentioned to this author, the US would be happy to have a peaceful democratic ally in Asia, to counter



an aggressive China in the Indo-Pacific. Joint exercises, with Indian defence forces, sharing of crucial intelligence of strategic importance (even though India is not part of the five eyes network), sharing and empowering India on semiconductors, close co-creation of standards and regulations on critical and emerging technologies such as AI are not likely to be impacted. India and the US on plurilateral platforms such as QUAD, the I2U2 and on wider UN etc would not be impacted. However, pompous, state visits and hosting each other's leaders on a grand scale (reference Trump in 2019 and Indian PM state visit to the US in 2023) could move to more sober, away from the camera, diplomatic conversations. Despite an occasional criticism of India, by mainly US think tanks and policy experts, primarily on human rights, polarising speeches, freedom of speech and religion in India etc, there is bipartisan support for India and deep relations between the two nations and it is not likely to change.

If the India-US civil nuclear deal proved to be the cause of a weak coalition government (due to the withdrawal of support by a crucial ally from the UPA government 1.0), there exist no such threats to the bilateral relationship currently. Even with a coalition Indian government at the centre. Washington and New Delhi have successfully managed to educate their senior lawmakers/politicians/think tanks/experts on either side of the aisle, regarding the strategic importance of the relationship. President Biden, even though faces occasional criticism from his party colleagues or pressure groups, regarding being a bit too lenient approach towards India on several issues, he understands the relevance of this relationship in the current context. There is likely to be a new Indian ambassador to the US (the former ambassador post-retirement unsuccessfully contested elections in 2024) in the next few months. The Indian ambassador to the US does most of the heavy lifting on building consensus across the aisle on several mutual bilateral issues. The choice of the next ambassador would be a space to watch out for.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

## Indian electorate ushers in a new political era



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

By rejecting divisive politics and reducing the BJP's dominance, voters have endorsed a new era of coalition politics favouring regional and smaller parties

The outcomes of the recently concluded Indian Lok Sabha elections signal promise for the region, prompting nations to reconsider and reassess their democratic political frameworks. In a resounding declaration of democracy's resilience, the once seemingly invincible fortress of the Modi-Ka Parivar lies shattered. The echoes of this strong message from the public reverberate louder than the emotional sensationalism, resonating with the collective voice of a nation that has spoken unequivocally for the power of balance. Despite the relentless onslaught of propaganda and fervent efforts to manufacture public opinion, the Indian electorate has delivered a decisive blow, reclaiming their power and rejecting the facade of religious fervour masquerading as governance. Narendra Modi, the erstwhile political juggernaut, now stands at the precipice of his last tenure, his aspirations of perpetual rule dashed against the rocks of reality. His grandiose ambitions of global dominion and spiritual leadership lie in tatters, mere relics of a bygone era marked by hubris and delusion.

The BJP's significant loss, laid bare in the aftermath of the election, paints a stark portrait of defeat. With 92 seats lost out of their previous 303, including once impregnable strongholds in rural heartlands and urban bastions like Mumbai, the party finds itself relegated to the sidelines of political discourse. The myth of invincibility shattered, the BJP stands exposed, its veneer of infallibility stripped away to reveal the inherent flaws and fallacies of its governance model. The result also exposes the impact of heavy spending on AI-driven social media manipulation. Government agencies outspent political parties on Google ads leading up to India's national elections, with the BJP ranking second. This stark contrast in spending highlights the influence of advertising in shaping democratic norms, serving as a stark reminder of democracy's vulnerability to manipulation.

Yet amidst the debris of defeat lies the triumph of democracy. The people have spoken, their voices resonating with clarity and conviction, reaffirming their allegiance not to religious ideologies or cults of personality, but to the principles of democracy and secular governance. This electoral upheaval serves as a clarion call for change, a witness to the indomitable spirit of a nation that refuses to be swayed by divisive verbiage or empty promises.

As the dust settles on the frontline of Indian politics, the narrative of triumph and victory spun by the BJP and its leader Narendra Modi stands starkly contrasted against the reality of their electoral performance. Despite Modi's impassioned spiel and grandiose claims of India's newfound global prominence, the truth remains irrefutable: the BJP's grip on power has weakened, its once impregnable fortress breached by the resolute will of the Indian electorate.

The BJP's electoral arithmetic, touted as proof of its enduring popularity, belies a deeper truth of diminishing returns and waning support. While the party managed to retain a significant portion of its 2019 tally, the loss of 92 seats, coupled with the failure to secure the predicted landslide victory, exposes the chinks in its armour and the vulnerabilities lurking beneath the



THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN, THEIR VOICES RESONATING WITH CLARITY AND CONVICTION, REAFFIRMING THEIR ALLEGIANCE NOT TO RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGIES OR CULTS OF PERSONALITY, BUT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY AND SECULAR GOVERNANCE

surface of its facade.

Modi's campaign discourse has taken a sharp turn towards foreign affairs and diplomacy, perhaps as a tactic to deflect attention from his administration's domestic shortcomings. By emphasizing India's global ascendancy and economic strength, Modi aims to eclipse the harsh realities of mounting unemployment, economic disparity and social turmoil within the nation. Amidst his grandiose assertions of India's international accomplishments, including hosting global summits and economic growth, Modi's narrative conveniently obscures governance failures and policy deficiencies. Despite his proclamations of India's elevated global standing, the everyday struggles of citizens remain overshadowed by political oratory, highlighting a growing disparity between political narratives and lived experiences.

Facing electoral setbacks and a reduced mandate, Modi and the BJP confront a populace increasingly demanding accountability and change. The rejection of empty promises signals a call for transparent, people-centric governance, underscoring the need for a political shift away from complacency towards accountability.

Modi's foreign policy rhetoric aligns with his domestic agenda, framing a narrative of "us-vs.-them" and emphasizing resolve against perceived threats like Pakistan and China, particularly in combating terrorism. Despite clashes with Pakistan and the 2020 China confrontation showcased as symbols of national strength, critics challenge Modi's response to Chinese aggression, while BJP members rally behind his assertive stance. Yet, beneath this facade, lie intricate geopolitical complexities and diplomatic hurdles. India's navigation among

global powers demands a nuanced approach, prioritizing national interests amidst turbulent international dynamics.

Accusations against the BJP for prioritising foreign affairs over domestic concerns challenge Modi's nationalist narrative, despite his claims of India's global ascendancy. Opposition voices condemn the party's erosion of democratic norms, yet Modi's firm stance resonates with many voters, reflecting a desire for a stronger international presence. However, mounting criticism of the BJP's handling of issues like inflation and unemployment casts doubt on its commitment to democracy. Recent electoral setbacks, notably in Uttar Pradesh, reveal deep-seated discontent, with opposition framing the BJP's governance as a threat to constitutional rights, leading to disillusionment among both critics and former supporters.

The symbolism of Ayodhya, from the demolition of the Babri mosque in 1992 to the consecration of the Ram temple in 2021, epitomizes the BJP's journey to power and its subsequent challenges. While Modi's imprint on Varanasi is undeniable, with infrastructure development projects transforming the city's landscape, the cost of progress has been the erosion of its unique identity, lamented by many locals.

The electoral panorama in Uttar Pradesh unveils a complex interplay of shifting loyalties and deep-rooted grievances, particularly within marginalized communities such as the Dalits. Despite Modi's enduring popularity, evidenced by his victory in Varanasi albeit with a notably reduced margin, the BJP's electoral fortunes have been tempered by various concerns, notably regarding constitutional rights and social equi-

ty. The BJP's ambitious electoral slogan, promising an overwhelming triumph, stirred apprehensions among the Dalit populace, raising fears of potential amendments to the constitution.

This apprehension, as the media reports asserted, stemming from the fear of diluting protections advocated by Bhimrao Ambedkar, prompted numerous Dalit voters to align with the opposition INDIA alliance, which adeptly mobilised a coalition of marginalised groups. Modi's language targeting Muslims as "infiltrators" further galvanised opposition to the BJP, particularly among Dalit and Muslim communities, despite the party's efforts to allay Dalit fears and disavow any intentions of rescinding their constitutional privileges. The electoral terrain in Uttar Pradesh reflects a shifting paradigm, with marginalized communities asserting their voices and demanding accountability from political incumbents.

The narrative of disillusionment and disenchantment highlights the intricate nature of Indian politics and the hurdles confronting the BJP as it navigates the evolving currents of public opinion. Despite facing electoral setbacks, the BJP remains a potent political force, positioned to forge the next government alongside its allies. However, the undercurrents of discontent and unmet assurances could potentially influence the trajectory of Indian politics in the years ahead. The resounding voice of the nation echoes: it's now up to the government, poised to lead for the next five years, to heed the lessons of tolerance spoken by the populace of the world's most populous country.

(The writer is a Sri Lankan journalist and author; Views are personal)

## Soaring milk prices may hit affordability, health

Growth in the dairy industry necessitates ethical, accessible and safe milk production; without these, milk could become inaccessible to the general public

For ages, milk has been universally acknowledged as an excellent source of nutrition, especially for children. A good sign that milk & dairy production in our country is increasing fast. However, if the trend of consistently rising milk prices is not held up, it may be hard for the common man to afford it, thus impinging on the health of their family. Whole milk price of popular brands is presently hovering around Rs. 66 a litre. Nutritionists recommend routine intake of milk and its derivatives to maintain a balanced diet. So ironic that the legendary repository of milk, a country with rivers overflowing with milk is now concerned with feeding safe milk to its people!



HARISH BARTHWAL

India has been consistently atop in milk production since 1997 and contributes about 25% to the global milk output. In 2023, India produced 231 million metric tonnes of milk with a decadal compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6%. More important than NITI Ayog's prediction of achieving the 300 million metric tonnes mark by 2030 is the need to ensure that this staple nutrition is accessible to

the countrymen at large. The fault lines must be identified and addressed in time.

Beyond just a fluid secreted by the mammary glands of female mammals for nourishing their young ones, cow milk and cows are special to India, sacred and pure since the Vedic era. Along with its other holy derivatives like curd and ghee, it is a routine offering to Gods at religious observances particularly during Shivaratri and Nag Panchami festivals. To Hindus, the cow is sacrosanct, at par with Gods. As against other milch animals, buffalo, sheep, goats and camel, the cow is also a symbol of motherhood, fertility, prosperity, health and strength. It has had sanctity in other faiths as well. Egyptians

accorded cow the status of goddess of milk, 'lat' due to its association with nurturing attributes. Among early Christians, milk was figuratively used for abundance, blessings, spiritual food and purity. Prophet Muhammad said, "The milk of the bovine (cow) contains healing, its fat is a medicine and its meat a cause for sickness." This is despite most milk in India being derived from buffalo, which is valued for its higher fat content and its use as a draught animal.

In our country, 60% of the milk is produced by the unorganised sector, remaining 40% is from the organised sector, mostly dairy cooperatives and private players. However, the scenario is set to reverse and in a few years the milkman of

the unorganised sector may have to shift the profession for numerous reasons. For one, the city folks prefer value-added or packaged milk & dairy wrapped in pouches or packets made of LDPE, LLDPE, HDPE or EVA; cans and tetra packs. Admittedly, the products from the organised sector are superior; pasteurised (i.e. heating for a while up to 70°C to minimise infection, then cooling) and sticking to certain quality specifications yet it has its pitfalls partly the deliberate ones. I recall the description of the Vijaya brand milk tetra pack of an Andhra Pradesh dairy in the early 80s while I was in Bhopal. It guaranteed freshness without refrigeration for up to six months in any ambient temperature - decades

after, we witnessed Amul, Britannia and other popular brands taking the cue. Mind that the milk in the pouch procured from the booth degenerates when heated just in 10 to 15 minutes, it is so delicate. There is more to tetra packs than tetrahedron texture to keep its non-degradability intact for long. It is toxic preservatives like formaldehyde and other additives in play to extend the shelf life of milk and its derivatives. Studies have already shown serious health consequences like food poisoning, gastrointestinal and cardiac issues, hepatic and renal failure and even cancer.

It is like lethal insecticides being spread 400 times more than the permitted doses on maturing crops to avert food-

grain loss and ensure enhanced shelf life. Also, witness many popular desi ghee brands selling at Rs. 450 a litre while in villages it costs between Rs. 1200 to Rs. 2400 although dairy people confide that per kg cost of desi ghee is Rs. 500 to Rs. 600.

Indian dairy business is incessantly growing at 4.5% annually. The organised milk sector is elated at the growing international and domestic demand and business prospects. Yet it must be monitored that the ethical aspects are not compromised and the domestic consumers are not taken for a ride. Fodder availability for large milch cattle, education & training and technology improvement are the other formidable issues in dairy to

be addressed. Our young ones also must be made to learn that saying no to milk is saying no to nutrition and that almond milk, soy milk, rice milk and coconut milk are poor substitutes.

Amul Federation, the undisputed leader has planned expansion activity abroad and is targeting one Rs one lakh crore business now. Dairy supports the livelihoods of one billion people worldwide. As we celebrate Milk Day, an FAO initiative, to recognise the importance of milk as a global food let us not overlook that the common people are not deprived of this staple nutrition.

(The writer is a blogger and writes on health, social and other issues, views are personal)

# Power play: Andhra Pradesh BJP unit eyes Cabinet berth

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

Boyed by the outcome of the recent Assembly and Lok Sabha polls, the Andhra Pradesh BJP unit is seeking at least one cabinet berth at the Centre, amid reports that there will be "ample" representation from the state.

BJP sources said the state unit has already sent a message to the top brass through Shiv Prakash, national joint general secretary of the saffron party, requesting a cabinet berth for at least one Lok Sabha member of the party from the state if possible.

This is an opportune time to expand the party in Andhra Pradesh and send a message to the masses that BJP is serious about the state. A request has been sent to the senior leadership of the party," the BJP sources told PTI. The first choice would be State BJP President D Purandeswari who won from Rajamahendravaram Lok Sabha constituency by a margin of nearly 2.40 lakh votes, defeating her nearest rival G Srinivas of YSR Congress, they said. The saffron party has performed impressively in the state by improving its vote share to 11.28 per cent in the recent polls,



winning three Lok Sabha and eight assembly seats, from a minuscule less-than-one per cent in 2019.

As part of a seat-sharing deal among NDA partners, the TDP contested 144 assembly and 17 Lok Sabha constituencies while BJP put up candidates in six Lok Sabha and 10 assembly seats in Andhra Pradesh. Janasena contested two Lok Sabha and 21 assembly seats. The TDP won 135 seats in the assembly polls. Its allies BJP and Janasena got 8 seats and 21 seats respectively. In the LS polls, the TDP won 16 seats, BJP three and Janasena two seats. The BJP had two Lok Sabha members between 2014 and 2019 — Kambhampati Hari Babu

(Visakhapatnam) and Gokaraju Ganga Raju (Narsapuram) — and none during 2019-24.

The party also hopes that some leaders from the YSR Congress party, which was routed in the assembly polls, may opt to join the saffron party as they could not align with TDP.

During the recently concluded assembly and Lok Sabha polls, the party fielded several leaders who switched over to it, causing heartburn among old timers. According to political observers, by giving party tickets to new entrants, the BJP was trying to send a message or signal to disgruntled leaders of other parties that it would generously offer seats to contest polls to turncoats.

# 68% of candidates in JK polled fewer than NOTA votes

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Sixty-eight per cent of the total 100 candidates in the fray on Jammu and Kashmir's five Lok Sabha seats polled fewer than None Of The Above (NOTA) votes, according to Election Commission data. Cumulatively, 34,788 voters pressed the NOTA button in the five seats, showing their rejection of the candidates fielded by parties. The maximum 12,938 NOTA votes were polled in the Udhampur constituency of Jammu region, a seat retained by BJP candidate Jitendra Singh.

There were 11 other candidates in the fray from Udhampur, and NOTA polled more votes than nine of them. In the neighbouring Jammu seat, 4,645 voters pressed the NOTA button, which is more than votes individually garnered by 18 candidates. There were 22 candidates in the fray from the seat which has been retained by the BJP's Jugal Kishore. In the Srinagar seat, the number of NOTA votes was 5,998. There were 24 candidates in the fray from the constituency and most of them — 18 — got fewer votes than NOTA. In the Anantnag-Rajouri constituency, 6,223 voters



favoured NOTA. There were 20 candidates were in the fray from the seat, and nine of them secured fewer than

the fray and 14 of them polled fewer votes. Thus, out of the total 100, 68 candidates have secured fewer votes than NOTA, an analysis of the EC data shows. Meanwhile, in the Ladakh Union territory, which was part of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir until the Centre divided J-K into two Union territories and abrogated Article 370 in August 2019, NOTA was favoured only by 912 voters. Ladakh is the sole Parliamentary constituency in the UT. There were only three candidates in the fray and all of them got more votes than NOTA.

# NPP to support to Khandu Government in Arunachal

PTI ■ ITANAGAR

The National People's Party (NPP) will extend support to the Pema Khandu government in Arunachal Pradesh, a senior party leader said here on Friday. NPP Arunachal Pradesh unit president Thangwang Wangham said the party has accepted the people's mandate in the recently held state Assembly elections. The NPP, led by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, which is an ally of the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), will extend support to the Khandu government, Wangham said. "We accept the mandate given

by the people," he said while assuring his party's commitment to keep the aspirations of the people alive in the State. Wangham, who won the Longding-Pumao assembly seat, said the party has a clear vision for the state, region and the country. "We have national aspirations with a national outlook and will always work for the welfare of the people and development of the state," he said. The NPP which contested in 20 seats in the April 19 state assembly elections won five seats. Wangham outlined the party's focus on development, youth employment, healthcare, education, and combating the drug menace.

He emphasised the goal of creating a drug-free society by raising awareness among addicts about the consequences of narcotics. "We will work for a drug-free society and will reach the addicts to make them aware of the ill effects of narcotics. Addicts should be given a second chance to lead a normal life," he said. The ruling BJP had won 46 seats in the 60-member assembly, while the NPP bagged 5, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) won three, the People's Party of Arunachal (PPA) won in two seats, Congress one seat and independent candidates won in three seats.

# CPI(M) shocked by BJP opening account in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI



While Sitaram Yechury, the CPI(M) general secretary and Pinarayi Vijayan, the chief Minister, are upset over the victory of Suresh Gopi, the BJP candidate from Thrissur Lok Sabha constituency, the duo is silent about the mammoth wins registered by Muslim League from the constituencies of Malappuram and Ponnani. Suresh Gopi won by 75,000 votes relegating the Congress candidate K Muraliedharan to the third position. Reacting to Suresh Gopi's victory, the first by a BJP candidate from Kerala in the State's electoral history, Yechury said it was an unfortunate development. Vijayan said in a statement that the BJP opening account in Kerala should be viewed seriously which means the coming months will see a rise in political murders in the State.

E T Mohammed Basheer, the Muslim League candidate who contested from Malappuram polled 6.44 lakh votes defeating his CPI(M) rival by more than 3,00,000 votes. Abdusamad Samadani, the Muslim League candidate at Ponnani won by a margin of 2,35, 760 votes. Interestingly, no candidates other than Muslims have won from these two constituencies.

Both the constituencies (known in local parlance as Kerala's Pakistan) have emerged as the monopoly of Muslim League despite the fact that there is no development of any kind in the region. "Wherever the Muslim community constitutes more than 10 per cent of the population, there is Muslim consolidation but the secular and liberal brigade are silent about this phenomenon," said a veteran political commentator. Samadani hogged national limelight for the conversion of famous author Kamala Das from Sanatana Dharma to Islam. The Muslim League leader had promised to marry her if she got converted to Islam. The easily gullible Kamala Das believed him and got converted to Islam, changing her name to Kamala Surayya and started wearing burqa. After a month long honeymoon, Samadani cried off from the deal leaving Kamala Surayya high and dry. This was the first ever high

profile Love Jihad in the State. Kamala, shocked and shattered, left Kerala to stay with her youngest son at Pune and did not come back to the State while she was alive. Though she had told her close friend Leela Menon, a nationally acclaimed journalist, that she was cheated by the lover and expressed her desire to get reconverted to Sanatana Dharma, that remained unfulfilled. There are thousands of Samadanis who have played the role of Romeos to trap Hindu girls by promising them heaven after marriage only to dump them as sex slaves in ISIS territories. Mohammed Basheer, whose son was caught cheating a nationalised Bank in Kozhikode by not paying back loan worth hundreds of crores availed during the UPA regime (2004-2014) is another Islamic extremist. No persons other than Islamic Jihadis could win from these two constituencies and the 14 assembly constituencies that constitute them.

# Amaravati capital city project comes to fore in Andhra Pradesh

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

Following the stellar triumph of the TDP in Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections, the Amaravati capital city project, which was shelved by the outgoing YSRCP government, is now expected to be revived.

As the first chief minister of the bifurcated state between 2014 and 2019, TDP supreme N Chandrababu Naidu had floated Amaravati as the capital city.

The greenfield capital city was envisioned to be an environmentally sustainable one, located between Vijayawada and Guntur cities, covering up to 29 villages. Naidu had acquired up to 30,000 acres of land from farmers for Amaravati capital city construction through land pooling.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had taken part in its foundation-laying ceremony on October 22, 2015, and former Telangana CM K Chandrasekhar Rao had also attended it.

However, this brainchild of Naidu suffered a setback in 2019 when the TDP lost power and Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP won a landslide victory. Naidu's successor poured cold water on the Amaravati capital city plans and propounded a new theory of three capitals, which could now become a dead concept now that he has suffered a humiliating defeat in the 2024 polls, whereas Naidu is expected to take over as the CM soon. The massive victory of the



NDA alliance of TDP, BJP and Janasena has injected new life into Amaravati, which is poised to see brisk activity.

While releasing the election manifesto on April 30 at his Andhra Pradesh residence in Undavalli, Naidu vowed that Amaravati will be developed as the capital city of the state. Talking to reporters, TDP General Secretary Nara Lokesh, who won from the Mangalagiri assembly segment, said on June 4 that the incoming government was committed to developing Amaravati as the single capital of the state. TDP Spokesperson Jyothsna Tirunagari said that building Amaravati would be the first priority of the new government.

"Amaravati reconstruction is our first priority, there is no doubt about that. We have done a lot of development during our regime (2014-2019). After Jagan Mohan Reddy took over, in fact he destroyed everything and demolished most of the things," Tirunagari told PTI.

# MNS candidate withdraws from fray for Maharashtra council elections

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) candidate Abhijeet Panse has withdrawn from the fray for the upcoming state legislative council election from the Konkan Graduates' constituency, a party leader said on Friday. The party had last month announced filmmaker Panse's candidature for the legislative council elections slated to be held on June 26. "Panse will not be in the fray from the Konkan Graduates' constituency," said party spokesperson Sandeep Deshpande.

The development comes after Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis met MNS chief Raj Thackeray last week. BJP MLC Niranjan Davkhare currently represents the constituency, and the party has renominated him. The biennial elections to four legislative council seats — Mumbai Graduates, Konkan Graduates, Mumbai Teachers and Nashik Teachers — became necessary as the terms of sitting members are expiring in July. The last date for filing the nominations is June 7. Voting will be held on June 26, and results will be declared on July 1.

The Maharashtra legislative council is a 78-member house. The Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena has named MLC Anil Parab and party functionary J M Abhyankar as candidates for the Mumbai Graduates' and Mumbai Teachers' constituencies, respectively, and the Congress has announced the candidature of Ramesh Keer from the Konkan Graduates' constituency. The Shiv Sena has fielded Deepak Sawant from the Mumbai Graduates' constituency, while the BJP has fielded Kiran Shelar. The BJP is backing Shivnath Darade, the candidate of Maharashtra Rajya Shikshak

Parishad, for the Mumbai Teachers' constituency. The Mumbai Teachers, Mumbai Graduates and Nashik Teachers constituencies are currently represented by Kapil Patil of the JD(U), Vilas Potnis of the Shiv Sena (UBT) and independent MLC Kishore Darade, respectively. Out of 78 seats in the legislative council, the Shiv Sena (undivided) has 11 members, NCP (undivided) 9, Congress 8, and BJP 22. The JD (U), Peasants and Workers Party, and Rashtriya Samaj Paksha have one member each, while four are Independents, and 21 seats are vacant.

# Water situation grim in Marathwada

PTI ■ CHHATRAPATI SAMBAHAJINAGAR

There is no water left in five out of 11 major reservoirs in Maharashtra's Marathwada region, while the Jaykwadi dam, the biggest of them, currently holds only four per cent of its total storage capacity, officials said on Friday.

The Marathwada region comprises Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Jalna, Beed, Parbhani, Hingoli, Dharashiv, Latur and Nanded districts. Eleven major projects in this region are facing no availability of water due to scanty rainfall last year.

The water stock in four of these reservoirs has gone down to zero per cent. The Jaykwadi dam, the biggest reservoir in the Marathwada region, is currently holding only three TMC (thousand million cubic feet) water, which is only 4 per



cent of its total storage capacity, the divisional commissioner office said in its report. The five reservoirs where the water level has dipped to zero per cent are Siddheshwar (Hingoli), Majalgaon and Manjara (both Beed), Nimna Terna and Sina Kolegaon (both Dharashiv). Other water level in seven other projects is as follows: Jaykwadi (Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar)

4.04 per cent, Nimn Dudhna (Parbhani) 6.23, Vishnupuri (Nanded) 15.58, Manar (Nanded) 22.63, Yeldari (Parbhani) 26.66 and Penganga (Nanded) 29.23 per cent, the report said.

The current aggregate water stock in these projects is 11.28 per cent as on Friday, which was 38.64 per cent on the same day last year, it said. In the Jaykwadi dam the water stock on the same day last year was 34.94 per cent, it said. Despite the water stock level of Manjara dam hitting rock bottom, the civic authorities said no water cut will be implemented in the city. "At present, we are supplying water every four days in Latur. Though we are going into dead storage, we have no issue for the next 3-4 months. So there will be no water cut in Latur city," a senior municipal official said.

# 73 per cent of newly elected MLAs in Odisha are crorepatis

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Seventy-three per cent of the newly elected MLAs in Odisha are 'crorepaties' with BJP's Sanatan Mahakud the richest legislator having total assets worth Rs 227.67 crore, a report said. The Odisha Assembly has 147 members. Odisha Election Watch and Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of all 147 elected MLA candidates and found that 73 per cent of the newly elected MLAs in 2024 are 'crorepaties' while 95 (65 per cent) 'crorepati' MLAs were elected in 2019 polls.

# Kangana Ranaut airport incident: Farmer outfits throw their weight behind CISF woman constable

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Some farmer outfits on Friday threw their weight behind the CISF woman constable who allegedly slapped actor and BJP MP-elect Kangana Ranaut, saying the entire sequence leading to the incident needs to be properly investigated.

Ranaut, in a video message, had on Thursday said she was hit in the face and abused by the constable during security check at the Chandigarh airport, the ugly fracas breaking out two days after she was elected to the Lok Sabha from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh. The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan

Mazdoor Morcha were among the prominent outfits which said they stand in support of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) woman constable.

The constable, who appeared to be upset with Ranaut over her stance on the farmers' protests, has been suspended and an investigation has been launched. The CISF, tasked with providing security at airports, had also ordered a court of inquiry into the incident.

SKM (Non-Political) leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal and Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee general secretary Sarwan Singh Pandher said they will meet Punjab's Director General of Police



(DGP) Gaurav Yadav for a proper investigation into the matter. "We will demand a proper investigation and we will tell him that there should be no

injustice with the woman constable," Dallewal said addressing a press conference here with Pandher and some other farmer leaders. On June 9 in Mohali, an

"Insaaf march" to Mohali the senior superintendent of police's office will be taken out "to demand that no injustice be done in this case with the constable", he said.

In a video statement titled "Shocking rise in terror and violence in Punjab" posted on X after she landed in Delhi after the incident on Thursday, Ranaut said she was safe and fine. The constable, Ranaut had said, came towards her from the side. "She hit me in the face and started abusing me. I asked her why she did it and she said she supports the farmer protests." "I am safe but my concern is that terrorism and extremism are increasing in Punjab...

How do we handle that?", Ranaut had said.

Another video doing the rounds of social media had shown the agitated constable talking to people presumably after the incident. "Kangana made a statement (earlier) that farmers were protesting in Delhi because they were paid Rs 100 or Rs 200. At the time, my mother was one of the protesters," she said in the purported video. The brother of the constable on Thursday said they learnt about the incident through the media. The constable's brother, who is based in Kapurthala, had said his sister has been in service for the past 15 years and had served at many places

including Kerala, Chennai and Amritsar. Dallewal and Pandher said the constable's brother was active in farmer movements and was part of their organisation. Farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher alleged that Ranaut had hurt sentiments with her comments against farmers, elderly women and Punjabis in the past. Both Dallewal and Pandher lashed out at the actor for stating that terrorism was increasing in Punjab. Dallewal said from various reports what they have come to know is that there was some argument from Ranaut's side during security check when her purse and mobile-phone was being put for checking,

If this is so, then the constable is not to be blamed, she was doing her duty, he said. "And everyone knows the previous track record of Ranaut and the kind of language she has used towards farmers. There must have been an argument and the result of which must have led to the incident. All these things need proper investigation," he said. Taking on Ranaut over her "terrorism" and "extremism" remark, Dallewal said, "In Punjab, communities of all faiths are peacefully co-existing. We demand that a case should be filed and courts should take suo motu cognisance of the wordings used by the BJP MP."



# 'Houthi rebels detain 9 UN staff in sudden crackdown'

AP ■ DUBAI



At least nine Yemeni employees of United Nations agencies have been detained by Yemen's Houthi rebels under unclear circumstances, authorities said Friday, as the rebels face increasing financial pressure and airstrikes from a US-led coalition. Others working for aid groups also likely have been taken.

The detentions come as the Houthis, who seized Yemen's capital nearly a decade ago and have been fighting a Saudi-led coalition since shortly after, have been targeting shipping throughout the Red Sea corridor over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. But while gaining more attention internationally, the secretive group has cracked down at dissent at home, including

recently sentencing 44 people to death.

Regional officials, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to brief journalists, confirmed the UN detentions. Those held include

staff from the United Nations human rights agency, its development program, the World Food Program and one working for the office of its special envoy, the officials said. The wife of one of those held is also detained.

The UN declined to immediately comment.

The Mayyun Organisation for Human Rights, which similarly identified the UN staffers held, named other aid groups whose employees were detained by the Houthis across four provinces the Houthis hold — Amran, Hodeida, Saada and Saana. Those groups did not immediately acknowledge the detentions.

"We condemn in the strongest terms this dangerous escalation, which constitutes a violation of the privileges and immunities of United Nations employees granted to them under international law, and we consider it to be oppressive, totalitarian, blackmailing practices to obtain political and economic gains," the organisation said in a statement. Activists, lawyers and others

also began an open online letter, calling on the Houthis to immediately release those detained, because if they don't, it "helps isolate the country from the world."

Yemen's Houthi rebels and their affiliated media organisations did not immediately acknowledge the detentions. However, the Iranian-backed rebels planned for weekly mass demonstrations after noon prayers Friday, when Houthi officials typically speak on their actions.

It's unclear what exactly sparked the detentions. However, it comes as the Houthis have faced issues with having enough currency to support the economy in areas they hold — something signalled by their move to introduce a new coin into the Yemeni currency, the riyal. Yemen's exiled government in Aden and other nations

criticised the move as the Houthis turning to counterfeiting. Aden authorities also have demanded all banks move their headquarters there.

"Internal tensions and conflicts could spiral out of control and lead Yemen into complete economic collapse," warned Yemeni journalist Mohammed Ali Thamer in an analysis published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Bloomberg separately reported Thursday that the US planned to further increase economic pressure on the Houthis by blocking their revenue sources, including a planned USD 1.5 billion Saudi payment to cover salaries for government employees in rebel-held territory. The war in Yemen has killed more than 150,000 people, including fighters and civil-

ians, and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters, killing tens of thousands more. The Houthis' attacks on shipping have helped deflect attention from their problems at home and the stalemated war. But they've faced increasing casualties and damage from US-led airstrikes targeting the group for months now.

Thousands have been imprisoned by the Houthis during the war. An AP investigation found some detainees were scorched with acid, forced to hang from their wrists for weeks at a time or were beaten with batons. Meanwhile, the Houthis have employed child soldiers and indiscriminately laid mines in the conflict. The Houthis are members of Islam's minority Shiite Zaydi sect, which ruled northern Yemen for 1,000 years until 1962.

## Sunak apologises for skipping

### D-Day ceremony

London (AP): British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak apologised on Friday for leaving D-Day commemorations in France early to return to the election campaign trail — a decision slammed as disgraceful by his political rivals. Sunak, who is fighting to keep his job in Britain's July 4 election, said that, "on reflection" the decision was a mistake.

Sunak was not alongside leaders including US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy for the major memorial event at Omaha Beach in Normandy on Thursday. Former Prime Minister David Cameron, who is now foreign minister, represented the UK. Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, the current favorite to win the election, attended and was pictured meeting Zelenskyy and other leaders. Sunak had earlier attended a ceremony at the British memorial in Portsmouth, England, the day before. Sunak wrote on X, formerly Twitter, that the 80th anniversary of the Allied invasion that helped free Europe from the Nazis "should be about those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. The last thing I want is for the commemorations to be overshadowed by politics."

He added: "On reflection, it was a mistake not to stay in France longer — and I apologise," he wrote.

The prime minister recorded an interview with broadcaster ITV on Thursday after returning from France, though he said that was not the reason he cut short his trip.

Sunak insisted he "stuck to the itinerary" that had been laid out for him for D-Day weeks before he called the election. "On reflection it was a mistake not to stay longer and I've apologised for that, but I also don't think it's right to be political in the midst of D-Day commemorations," he said. "The focus should rightly be on the veterans and their service and sacrifice for our country."

A clip released from the inter-

## 'Actions against Philippines in SCS threaten global security'

AP ■ MANILA

Sweden's defense chief has expressed alarm over Beijing's repeated dangerous maneuvers against Philippine vessels in the South China Sea, saying such actions threaten security, undermine stability and underscore the need to invest "for our security and freedom." Defense Minister Pål Jonson spoke Thursday night in a diplomatic reception in Manila for Sweden's national day after meeting his Philippine counterpart, Gilberto Teodoro Jr., on expanding defense relations. Sweden is one of the possible sources of supersonic fighter jets that the Philippines plans to acquire as its military shifts focus from decades of fighting communist and Muslim insurgencies to territorial defense. "Let me express my deep concern on the repeated dangerous maneuvers against Philippines vessels that have been taking place in the West Philippine Sea and the South China Sea, Jonson said. He did not mention China in his speech but drew applause from an audience that included top Philippine military

and security officials and Western and Asian diplomats. Jonson used the name the Philippines has adopted for the stretch of waters called the exclusive economic zone extending from its western coast to the South China Sea, which Beijing claims virtually in its entirety and guarded closely with its coast guard, navy and other ships.

Confrontations between Chinese and Philippine government ships over two disputed shoals have flared alarmingly since last year, causing collisions. China's use of powerful water cannons had damaged Philippine vessels, injured several Filipino navy personnel, and strained diplomatic relations. Manila has filed diplomatic protests and publicized Chinese actions against the Philippine coast guard and navy vessels in an effort to gain international support.

"These acts put human lives at risk, they undermine regional stability and international law and they threaten the security in the region and beyond," Jonson said. "These are not only threats to your national security but threats to our common global

security." The Philippines coast guard belatedly reported Friday that one of its high-speed boats was blocked and surrounded by Chinese coast guard vessels as it approached a Philippine territorial outpost in the Second Thomas Shoal on May 19 to get a sick Filipino military sailor from a navy boat deployed near the shoal outpost.

"Despite informing the Chinese coast guard via radio and public address system about the humanitarian nature of our mission for medical evacuation, they still engaged in dangerous maneuvers and even intentionally rammed the Philippine navy boat while transporting the sick personnel, the Philippine coast guard said.

Despite the dangerous blockings, the Philippine coast guard said the medical evacuation was carried out successfully. Chinese officials had no immediate comment on Jonson's remarks and the Philippine coast guard report, but in the past they have accused the Philippines of instigating the hostilities by repeatedly straying into what they say are Chinese territories.

## 'Fewer women, children died in Israeli strike on school than reported earlier'

AP ■ DEIR-AL-BALAH

The hospital where bodies were brought after an Israeli strike on a school-turned-shelter in the Gaza Strip has amended its records to show that fewer women and children were among those killed. The Israeli military says it carried out a precise strike early Thursday on three classrooms in the U.N.-run school where it says around 30 Palestinian militants were planning and orchestrating attacks. It said it has confirmed killing nine militants.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital initially reported that nine women and 14 children were among 33 people killed in the strike on the school.

The hospital morgue later amended those records to show that the dead included three women, nine children and 21 men. It was not immediately clear what caused the discrepancy.

An Israeli strike early Thursday on a school sheltering displaced Palestinians in central Gaza killed more than 30 people, including 23 women and children, according to local health

officials. The Israeli military said that Hamas militants were operating from within the school.

It was the latest instance of mass casualties among Palestinians trying to find refuge as Israel expands its offensive. A day earlier, the military announced a new ground and air assault in central Gaza, pursuing Hamas militants it says have regrouped there. Troops repeatedly have swept back into parts of the Gaza Strip they have previously invaded, underscoring the resilience of the militant group despite Israel's nearly eight-month onslaught.

Witnesses and hospital officials said the predawn strike hit the al-Sardi School, run by the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees known by the acronym UNRWA. The school was filled with Palestinians who had fled Israeli operations and bombardment in northern Gaza, they said.

Ayman Rashed, a man displaced from Gaza City who was sheltering at the school, said the missiles hit classrooms on the second and third floor where families were sheltering. He said he helped carry out five dead,

including an old man and two children, one with his head shattered open. "It was dark, with no electricity, and we struggled to get out the victims," Rashed said.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the spokesman for the Israeli military, said it carried out a "precise strike" based on concrete intelligence that militants were planning and conducting attacks from inside three classrooms. He said only those rooms were attacked.

"We conducted the strike once our intelligence and surveillance indicated that there were no women or children inside the Hamas compound, inside those classrooms," he said.

Hagari said there were around 30 suspected militants in the three rooms. He said the military had confirmed killing nine of them, and displayed a slide showing their names and photos. He provided no other evidence to substantiate the military's claims. Casualties from the strike arrived at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in nearby Deir al-Balah, which had already been overwhelmed by a stream of constant ambulances since the central Gaza

invasion began 24 hours earlier, said Omar al-Derawi, a photographer working for the hospital.

Videos circulating online appeared to show several wounded people being treated on the floor of the hospital, a common scene in Gaza's overwhelmed medical wards. Electricity in much of the hospital is out because staff are rationing fuel supplies for the generator.

"You can't walk in the hospital — there's so many people. Women from the victims' families are massed in the hallways, crying," he said.

Hospital records and an Associated Press reporter at the hospital recorded at least 33 dead from the strike, including 14 children and nine women. Another strike on a house overnight killed six people, according to the records. Both strikes occurred in Nuseirat, one of several built-up refugee camps in Gaza dating to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were driven from their homes in what became the new state.

## S African opp parties holding crunch talks on ANC's unity plan

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

South African opposition parties were meeting Friday and will continue crunch talks into next week to consider the ruling African National Congress' offer to become part of a government of national unity.

ANC failed to secure a majority in last week's highly contested election, but some opposition parties are already rejecting the party's offer because of deep-seated divisions.

Senior officials of the main opposition Democratic Alliance, or DA, will meet on Monday to discuss the centrist party's approach to the negotiations. The top leadership of the the leftist Economic Freedom Fighters, or EFF, party were holding talks on Friday.

Parties are under pressure to conclude negotiations and reach an agreement by June 16, because South Africa's constitution requires them to do so

within 14 days after the declaration of the election results.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who is ANC leader, announced on Thursday that the party had decided to form a government of national unity and had invited all parties to join, a process that is expected to be complex considering vast divisions among the opposition parties themselves. Most of the opposition parties don't differ only with the ANC on various socioeconomic policies, but are also at extreme odds with each other on economic policies like land redistribution and affirmative action.

Opposition party ActionSA has already declared it won't be part of the negotiations, saying that it refuses to work with the ANC.

In what looks likely to be a government of national unity reminiscent of a path taken by the Nelson Mandela-led ANC after the country's first democratic

election in 1994, the party has decided to invite a myriad of opposition parties to be part of the government.

While Mandela insisted on a unity government despite the ANC having won by an overwhelming majority with nearly 63 per cent of the national vote, the ANC has been forced into the current situation by its worst electoral performance ever, dropping from the 57.5 per cent it got in the 2019 election to 40 per cent this year, a decline of 17.5 per cent.

Shortly after Ramaphosa's announcement, the EFF's leader took to X to reject Ramaphosa's proposal of a government of national unity and accused the ANC of arrogance despite failing to win a majority.

The EFF is among the top five parties after the election with just over 9 per cent of the national vote, having declined from the 11 per cent it garnered in 2019 but is expected to

form a crucial part of the eventual outcome of the negotiations.

"The arrogance continues even after the South African voters issued warning signs. You can't dictate the way forward as if you have won elections," EFF leader Julius Malema said. "We are not desperate for anything, ours is a generational mission. We can't share power with the enemy," Malema said.

In 2023, DA declared the Economic Freedom Fighters as its No. 1 enemy.

DA, which got just over 21 per cent of the national vote to remain the second-biggest party, said its highest decision-making body, the Federal Council, would meet on Monday to consider its options. "I can't say now what the position of the DA is, we have a whole negotiation team and we are meeting as the federal council on Monday. We will have a framework for negotiations that we will release this

weekend," Democratic Alliance federal chairperson Helen Zille said Friday.

The fifth-biggest party with nearly 4 per cent of the national vote, the Inkatha Freedom Party, on Friday expressed willingness to be part of the government of national unity, but was also set to discuss the matter with its party structures over the next few days.

"In principle, the IFP is not averse to a GNU (government of national unity). However, the devil is in the details, which will become clearer in the coming days ... enabling the IFP to make a well-considered decision," IFP spokesman Mkhuleko Hlangwa said.

The uMkhonto weSizwe Party led by former President Jacob Zuma, who left the ANC, was the latest to enter the negotiations, with the party confirming on Thursday that it had begun talks with the ANC after initially failing to respond to the party's invitation.



SNP leader John Swinney, centre, and parliamentary candidate Chris Stephens, right, are shown the kitchens during their visit to the Glasgow Gurdwara, while on the General Election campaign trail, in Glasgow, Scotland, Friday. AP/PTI

## Boeing's astronaut capsule arrives at space station after thruster trouble

AP ■ CAPE CANAVERA

Boeing's new capsule arrived at the International Space Station on Thursday, delayed by last-minute thruster trouble that almost derailed the docking for this first test flight with astronauts. The 260-mile-high (420-kilometer-high) linkup over the Indian Ocean culminated more than a day of continuing drama for Boeing's astronaut flight debut carrying NASA test pilots Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams.

Boeing plans to keep Starliner at the space station for at least eight days before guiding it to a landing in the western US. "Nice to be attached to the big city in the sky," Wilmore said once the hooks between the two spacecraft were tight.

Williams entered the space station first, dancing on the way in to music. Wilmore followed, snapping his fingers. They embraced the seven space station residents.

"It was such a great welcome,



a little dance party," said Williams. "That's the way to get things going."

The Starliner capsule already had one small helium leak when it rocketed into orbit with two NASA astronauts Wednesday. Boeing and NASA managers were confident they could manage the propulsion system despite the problem and that more leaks were unlikely. But just hours into the flight, two more leaks cropped up and another was discovered after docking.

Later, five of the capsule's 28 thrusters went down. The

astronauts managed to restart four of them, providing enough safety margin to proceed. By then, Starliner had passed up the first docking opportunity and circled the world for an extra hour alongside the station before moving in.

The thrusters problems were unrelated to the helium leaks, NASA's commercial crew program manager Steve Stich said after the docking. Going forward in the flight, "we have some tools in our tool kit to manage this," Stich said. Earlier in the day, before the thrusters malfunctioned, offi-

cialists stressed that the helium leaks posed no safety issues for the astronauts or the mission.

Helium is used to pressurize the fuel lines of Starliner's thrusters, which are essential for maneuvering. Before liftoff, engineers devised a plan to work around any additional leaks in the system. A faulty rubber seal, no bigger than a shirt button, is believed responsible for the original leak.

Boeing program manager Mark Nappi said there should be plenty of helium in reserve for the trip home.

After the space shuttles retired, NASA hired Boeing and SpaceX to ferry astronauts to and from the space station. SpaceX's taxi service began in 2020. Boeing was supposed to start around the same time, but was held up for years by safety concerns and other troubles. Stich said none of the problems so far would require a repeat of an astronaut test flight before certifying the capsule for regular use.

## US to send new USD 225 m military aid package to Ukraine, officials say

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The U.S. will send about USD 225 million in military aid to Ukraine, U.S. officials said Thursday, in a new package that includes ammunition Kyiv's forces could use to strike threats inside Russia to defend the city of Kharkiv from a heavy Russian assault.

The officials said the aid includes munitions for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, as well as mortar systems and an array of artillery rounds. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss aid not yet publicly announced.

Under a new U.S. directive, Ukraine can use such weapons to strike across the border into Russia if forces there are attacking or preparing to attack. That change, however, does not alter U.S. policy that directs Ukraine not to use American-provided ATACMS or long-range missiles and other munitions to

### BIDEN APOLOGISES TO UKRAINE PREZ

Paris (AP): President Joe Biden on Friday for the first time publicly apologised to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for a months-long holdup in American military assistance that let Russia make gains on the battlefield.

Speaking in Paris, where they both attended ceremonies marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, Biden told Zelenskyy that, he apologised to the Ukrainian people for the weeks of not knowing if more assistance would come while Congress waited six months before sending Biden a USD 61 billion military aid package for Ukraine.

Still, Biden insisted that the American people were standing by Ukraine for the long-haul. "We're still in. Completely. Thoroughly," he said.

strike offensively inside Russia, according to U.S. officials.

The new aid package comes as President Joe Biden used his speech Thursday at the American cemetery in Normandy on the 80th anniversary of D-Day to vow that the U.S. "will not walk away" from the defence of Ukraine and allow Russia to threaten more of Europe. To do so, he said, would mean the U.S. has forgot-

ten "what happened here on these hallowed beaches." Biden is expected to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Paris on Friday.

On Wednesday, a Western official and a U.S. senator said Ukraine has used U.S. weapons to strike inside Russia. And a June 3 report from the Institute for the Study of War suggests that Ukrainian forces used a

HIMARS system to strike a Russian S-300/400 air defense battery in the Belgorod region in recent days. The new aid package is being provided through presidential drawdown authority, which pulls systems and munitions from existing U.S. stockpiles so they can go quickly to the war front.

Officials said the aid package also includes missiles for the HAWK air defense system, Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, Javelin and AT-4 anti-armour systems, 155mm Howitzers, armoured vehicles, trailers, patrol boats, demolition materials and a wide range of other spare parts and equipment. Ukrainian officials have pressed the U.S. to allow Kyiv's forces to defend themselves against attacks originating from Russian territory. Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, sits just 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the Russian border and has come under intensified Russian attack.

# RBI keeps interest rates unchanged; policy committee more divided

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) left its key interest rates unchanged on Friday as expected, keeping the focus on inflation amid robust economic growth that is likely to provide the new Modi government headroom for manoeuvring reforms.

The Monetary Policy Committee, consisting of three RBI and an equal number of external members, kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent for an eighth straight policy meeting and stuck to its relatively hawkish stance of "withdrawal of accommodation", Governor Shaktikanta Das said in his statement. However, there were signs of a more divided policy committee, with one additional member voting for a softening in stance as well as policy direction. Two external members, Ashima Goyal and Jayanth Varma, voted for a

cut, compared to one in the previous meeting. The decision comes just days ahead of Narendra Modi assuming the office of the Prime Minister of India for the third straight time but with a smaller-than-expected election victory that forced his party BJP to share power in a coalition government.

The slim majority, according to global rating agencies, may delay more far-reaching elements of economic and fiscal reforms like land and labour, and impede progress on fiscal consolidation.

With the Indian economy, Asia's third-largest, growing faster than expected in the previous year, the RBI raised its GDP growth projection for the current fiscal through March 2025 to 7.2 per cent from 7 per cent while maintaining its inflation forecast at 4.5 per cent. India's real GDP grew by 8.2 per cent in the 2023-24 (April



2023 to March 2024) fiscal year, while inflation was 4.83 per cent in April, above the RBI's target. The FY24 growth was helped by a faster-than-expected pace of 7.8 per cent in the March quarter. Das said while the MPC took note of the disinflation achieved so far without hurting growth, it remains vigilant to any upside risks to

inflation, particularly from food inflation, which could possibly derail the path of disinflation. "Monetary policy must continue to remain disinflationary and be resolute in its commitment to aligning inflation to the target of 4.0 per cent on a durable basis," he said. "Sustained price stability would set strong foundations for a period of high growth." The RBI, he said, will continue to be nimble and flexible in its liquidity management through fine-tuning operations in repo and reverse repo. "We will deploy an appropriate mix of instruments to modulate both frictional and durable liquidity so as to ensure that money market interest rates evolve in an orderly manner, which preserves financial stability."

The governor hinted that the RBI may be willing to move before the US Federal Reserve pivots a rate cut, saying the central bank's monetary policy actions are determined by domestic growth and inflation conditions. "I'd like to unambiguously state while we do keep a watch on whether clouds are building up or clearing out in the distance horizons, we play the game according to the

local weather pitch conditions," he said. Commenting on the MPC decisions, Radhika Rao, Executive Director and Senior Economist, DBS Bank, said there were signs of a more divided policy committee, with one additional member voting for a softening in stance. "The majority retained their cautious stance to guide inflation towards the 4 per cent target on a durable basis, despite recent signs of disinflation." The MPC also signalled that they will not react to the upcoming base-effect-driven correction in inflation in 2Q FY25, lowering the probability of a shift in 2H 24. In all, the mix of strong growth and above-target inflation does not make a case for a shift to a less restrictive policy setting yet, validating our view that rate easing is not on the cards this year. Political developments are not expected to sway the

monetary policy direction or outlook," she said. Suman Chowdhury, Chief-Economist and Head-Research, Acuite Ratings & Research said there were no surprises in the RBI decision. "The RBI has continued to reaffirm its commitment to sustainable disinflation and price stability without providing any indication on the monetary policy pivot. The central bank would continue to watch out for any upward risks in food inflation in the near term, despite the forecast of an 'above normal' monsoon. Further, it may also monitor the revised upcoming Union Budget to track the possible increases in welfare spend and its potential impact on inflation, although the high RBI dividend of Rs 2.1 trillion will mitigate the potential risks for now."

On liquidity, Chowdhury said the high dividend of Rs 2.1 lakh crore by the RBI to the

government has been positive for short-term interest rates. "But we expect the RBI to calibrate system liquidity appropriately and facilitate better monetary transmission through absorption of any excessive liquidity portion that may arise after the restart of government spending and the expected inflows from debt FPIs amidst India's inclusion in the JPM bond indices." Given the tone of the MPC statement and the expectation of stronger domestic growth, there is a low likelihood of any rate cut by the RBI in the current calendar year, he added.

Among other decisions, the RBI raised the bulk deposit limit to Rs 3 crore from Rs 2 crore currently and allowed the inclusion of payments like replenishment of balances in Fastag in e-mandates for recurring payments as well as automatically replenishing UPI Lite wallets.

## RBI raises GDP growth projection to 7.2 per cent for FY25

PTI ■ MUMBAI

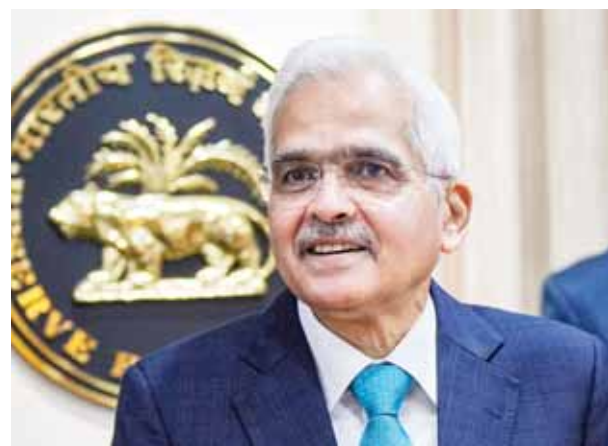
The Reserve Bank of India on Friday revised upwards the GDP growth projection for the current fiscal to 7.2 per cent from 7 per cent on rising private consumption and revival of demand in rural areas. Unveiling the bi-monthly monetary policy, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said estimates released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) placed India's real gross domestic product (GDP) growth at 8.2 per cent in 2023-24.

"During 2024-25 so far, domestic economic activity has maintained resilience," he said, adding that manufacturing activity continues to gain ground on the back of strengthening domestic demand.

Also, the services sector maintained buoyancy, as evident in available high-frequency indicators. Governor Das said private consumption, the mainstay of aggregate demand, is recovering with steady discretionary spending in urban areas.

The revival in rural demand is getting a fillip from improving farm sector activity and investment activity continues to gain traction on the back of ongoing expansion in non-food bank credit.

He also said the forecast of above normal south-west monsoon by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) is expected to boost kharif production and replenish the reservoir levels. "Taking all these factors into consideration, real GDP



growth for 2024-25 is projected at 7.2 per cent with Q1 at 7.3 per cent, Q2 at 7.2 per cent, Q3 at 7.3 per cent, and Q4 at 7.2 per cent. The risks are evenly balanced," Das said.

He also emphasised that the healthy balance sheets of banks and corporates, the government's continued thrust on capex, high capacity utilisation, and business optimism augur well for investment activity. External demand should get a fillip from improving prospects of global trade, the governor said. The developments relating to growth and inflation are unfolding as per "our expectations," he noted.

When the projected GDP growth of 7.2 per cent for 2024-25 materialises, it will be the fourth consecutive year with growth at or above 7 per cent. On global economic growth, Das said the growth is sustaining its momentum in 2024 and is likely to remain resilient, supported by a rebound in global trade.

Also, global inflation is easing, but the final leg of this disinflation journey may be tough. Central banks remain steadfast and data-dependent in their fight against inflation. Market expectations regarding the timing and pace of interest rate cuts are also changing with incoming data and central bank communication, the governor said. "There is a view that in matters of monetary policy, the Reserve Bank is guided by the principle of 'follow the Fed'."

"I would like to unambiguously state that while we do keep a watch on whether clouds are building up or clearing out in the distant horizon, we play the game according to the local weather and pitch conditions," Das said.

In other words, he said, "While we do consider the impact of monetary policy in advanced economies on Indian markets, our actions are primarily determined by domestic growth-inflation conditions and the outlook."

## Sensex, Nifty hit all time closing high levels

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensdex and Nifty climbed over 2 per cent to settle at record closing high levels on Friday after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revised upwards the GDP growth projection to 7.2 per cent for 2024-25 from 7 per cent earlier.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,720.8 points, or 2.29 per cent, to hit a new record peak of 76,795.31 in day trade. The benchmark ended at 76,693.36, up 1,618.85 points, or 2.16 per cent.

The NSE Nifty climbed 498.8 points, or 2.18 per cent, to 23,320.20 during the day and is just 18.5 points from hitting its record high level. It settled with a jump of 468.75 points, or 2.05 per cent, at 23,290.15.

IT and interest rate-sensitive bank, realty, and auto stocks ended with sharp gains. The RBI left its key interest rates unchanged on Friday as expected, keeping the focus on inflation amid robust economic growth that is likely to provide the new Modi government headroom for manoeuvring reforms.

The Monetary Policy Committee, consisting of three RBI and an equal number of external members, kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent for an eighth straight policy meeting and stuck to its relatively hawkish stance of "withdrawal of accommodation", Governor Shaktikanta Das said in his statement.

With the Indian economy, Asia's third-largest, growing faster than expected in the previous year, the RBI raised



its GDP growth projection for the current fiscal through March 2025 to 7.2 per cent from 7 per cent while maintaining its inflation forecast at 4.5 per cent. "The anticipation of stability within the coalition government at the centre, coupled with the RBI's upward revision of its growth forecast for FY25 to 7.2 per

cent, fuelled a broad-based rally in the domestic market. The Indian market surpassed its previous record high set on exit-poll day and reached a fresh peak," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

All the 30 Sensex companies ended in the positive territory, with Mahindra & Mahindra, Wipro, Tech

Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, Infosys and Tata Steel emerging as the biggest gainers. In Asian markets, Seoul, and Shanghai settled with gains while Tokyo and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading lower. US markets ended on a mixed note on Thursday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.04 per cent to USD 79.95 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 6,867.72 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. Regaining the 75,000 level, the BSE benchmark jumped 692.27 points, or 0.93 per cent, to settle at 75,074.51 on Thursday. The Nifty climbed 201.05 points, or 0.89 per cent, to 22,821.40.

## RBI brings 100 metric gold reserve from UK to India; nothing more should be read into it: Das

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India has brought 100 metric tonnes of gold reserve from the UK to India as there is enough domestic storage capacity, and nothing more should be read into it, Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday.

The RBI moved 100 metric tonnes of its gold stored in the UK to domestic vaults in FY24. This is one of the biggest movements of gold undertaken by the country since 1991, when pledging a substantial part of the gold holding to tide over a foreign exchange crisis resulted in its movement out of vaults.

The quantum of gold stored outside was static for a long time, Reserve Bank of India Governor Das said here.

"In recent years, the data shows that the Reserve Bank is buying gold as a part of its reserves, and the quantum was going up. We have domestic (storage) capacity," he said.

Therefore, it was decided to move part of the reserve outside India to be stored within the country, he said, adding, "That's it. Nothing more should be read into it." The country's overall gold holding increased by 27.46



metric tonnes in FY24, and it stands at 822 metric tonnes, as per official data.

A substantial part of the precious commodity is stored abroad, the sources said, adding that India also had its holding with the Bank of England like other countries.

The movement of 100 metric tonnes into India has taken the overall quantity stored locally to over 408 metric tonnes of gold, which means the local and foreign holding is now split almost evenly.

As per the annual report of the central bank for FY24 released last month, over 308 metric tonnes of gold is held in India as backing for notes issued, while another 100.28 tonnes is held locally as an asset of the banking department.

Of the overall gold reserves, 413.79 metric tonnes are held abroad, the annual report said.

## Sebi recognised for innovative regulatory practices

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Sebi has been given 'Best SConduct of Business Regulator' award in Asia Pacific by The Asian Banker for its role in enhancing the regulatory framework for securities markets in India.

The award was received by Sebi's Whole Time Member Kamlesh Chandra Varshney in a ceremony held in Hong Kong.

"This authority (Sebi) has been actively working towards instantaneous settlement. In 2021, T+1 settlement was introduced in a phased manner, which was fully implemented from January 2023. This move has provided investors with faster access to their funds following trade execution and settlement, enhancing market efficiency and liquidity," The Asian Banker said in a statement.

Through rigorous enforcement and innovative regulatory practices, Sebi has significantly improved the conduct of business in the country's financial markets, it added.

## India's strong growth leading to trend of reverse flipping for startups

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's strong growth is leading to a trend of 'reverse flipping' as domestic startups that once used to move abroad for capital access and tax benefits are now returning home, a top government official has said.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal also said that the digital economy along with emerging technologies like AI and the rise of data centres were key to future Indian growth. He was speaking at an event in Singapore organised by the commerce ministry to showcase various investment opportunities in India.

It was organised on the sidelines of the inaugural Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Clean Economy Investor Forum in Singapore. Barthwal stressed how India's growth rate is nearly double that of other emerging market economies.

"He remarked on how this strong growth is also leading to a trend of 'reverse flipping,' where Indian startups that



once moved abroad for capital access and tax benefits are now returning home," the ministry said in a statement on Friday.

India's economy grew by 8.2 per cent in the fiscal year that ended in March 2024, cementing the country's position as the fastest-growing major economy in the world. The country has over one lakh government-recognised startups.

The meeting attracted more than 60 participants, including global investors from the US, Singapore, Japan, Australia, Korea, and other countries, as well as India's private sector and government officials.

The event brought together

## Saudia Group keen to offer MRO services for Indian airlines

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Saudia Group is keen to increase the number of flights connecting Saudi Arabia and India as well as provide MRO services to Indian carriers. Saudia Airlines, part of the group, currently operates 54 weekly flights connecting seven destinations in India, including Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad.

An executive of the group said on Thursday it has also set up a Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility in Saudi Arabia and is keen to provide MRO services for the aircraft of Indian carriers.

The facility will be fully operational next year. Around 1.5 million tourists from India visited Saudi Arabia last year and expectations are that the count will rise to 7.5 million by 2030, Saudia Group Director General Ibrahim Alomari said.

Speaking at the CAPA India Aviation Summit 2024, he said the group will increase the frequencies of flights between Saudi Arabia and India and want Indian airlines to increase their flights. "We need to work together," he said while mentioning about Indian and Saudi carriers. Meanwhile, Riyadh Air is set to be launched next year with its hub in Riyadh. The group had discussions with Air India about the MRO village, which can accommodate 48 aircraft at a time.

The MRO village can do the work for A320 and B787 planes as well as for LEAP engines. It will also have the assembly lines for Brazil's plane maker Embraer and Italy's helicopter manufacturer Leonardo, according to Saudia Group's GM Corporate Communication and Media Affairs Abdullah M Alshahrani.

The 10 nations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations remained the largest destination for Chinese products, with exports to ASEAN growing 9.7 per cent in May year-on-year to USD 50.83 billion.

Exports to the US grew just 0.2 per cent in May compared with the same time last year, while shipments to the European Union declined, slipping 3.9 per cent year-on-year.

Steel, automobiles, home appliances and ships were the fastest growing categories of Chinese exports. Automobiles climbed at the fastest rate, with China exporting 569,000 cars at a growth rate of 26.8 per cent compared with the same time last year.

## Navigate financial market dynamics with HDFC Multi Asset Fund

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Investors often fall prey to frequency bias, a tendency to favour asset classes that have recently performed well. This inclination can lead to chasing momentum and making investment decisions at inopportune times. Given the unpredictable nature, of market and the varying performance of asset classes across economic cycles, attempting to time the market becomes challenging.

Hence, a prudent strategy involves diversification across negatively correlated or less correlated asset classes. HDFC Multi-Asset Fund emerges as a dynamic choice, offering investors a pathway that aims towards balanced growth and stability. Crafted for those seeking long-term capital appreciation and

income generation, HDFC Multi-Asset Fund presents an avenue for investment across diverse asset classes. The Multi-Asset Allocation Funds are particularly well-suited for investors aiming to diversify their portfolios and manage risk effectively, they not only help in mitigating portfolio volatility but also reduce reliance on any single asset class for generating returns. With a strategic allocation to equity, debt, and gold-related instruments, the fund aligns with the goal of achieving better returns while mitigating volatility. By seamlessly blending growth opportunities with risk management, HDFC Multi-Asset Fund positions itself as a good option for investors navigating the financial landscape with prudence and foresight.

## China's exports grow 7.6 per cent in May

AP ■ HONG KONG

China's exports in May grew at their fastest pace in more than a year despite trade tensions, though imports fell short of analyst expectations, according to customs data released on Friday. Exports jumped 7.6 per cent in May from the same month last year to USD 302.35 billion, rising at the fastest pace since April 2023. Imports rose by 1.8 per cent to USD 219.73 billion, missing estimates of about 4 per cent growth.

The uptick in exports is also partly due to a lower base in the same period last year, when exports declined 7.5 per cent. In comparison, exports grew by 1.5 per cent in April compared with the same period last year, while April imports rose by 8.4 per cent. The strong exports caused

China's trade surplus to widen to USD 82.62 billion, up from April's USD 72.35 billion. The growth in exports comes as China faces escalated trade tensions with the US and Europe. The US is ramping up tariffs on Chinese-made electric cars while Europe is considering levying similar tariffs.

"Foreign tariffs are unlikely to immediately threaten exports; if anything, they may boost exports at the margin as firms speed up shipments to front-run the duties," said Zichun Huang of Capital Economics in a note. Huang also said that exports would be supported by a weaker real effective exchange rate.

"Import volumes were little changed last month, but they will probably rise soon, with increased government spending supporting the

import-intensive construction sector," she said.

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# DON'T HAVE TIME TO FEEL SORRY FOR OURSELVES, WE'RE STILL ALIVE: STIMAC

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Defiant India football coach Igor Stimac said his team has no time "to feel sorry" for itself after the disappointing goalless draw against Kuwait in a crucial World Cup qualifying match here as it is "still alive" in the race to enter the third round.

India were thoroughly disappointing in the game that marked the end of talismanic skipper Sunil Chhetri's international career after a glorious run of 19 years in which he scored 94 goals in 151 games.

"We don't have time to feel sorry for ourselves as we are still alive. I need to do everything in the next five days to make the boys believe, make them create the environment of belief, which can take us into a challenge against Qatar who are a very different team," Stimac asserted in the post-match press conference.

"It's a small hope, but it's till there and we need to believe and trust in ourselves and give our best shot to win the game." India will next face Asian heavyweights Qatar in an away fixture on June 11 and will also keep a close watch on Kuwait's home match against Afghanistan on the same day. India need to avoid a defeat to have any chance of progressing to the next round, which would be a historic first for the side.

Stimac was critical of Sahal Abdul Samad and Anirudh Thapa who failed to impress. "When you don't win the game and aren't happy with the result, how can you say that some players impressed you. You could see that we couldn't start dominating the game in the middle even if we started with Sahal and Thapa. I expected much more from them in the first half. "Sahal didn't play in the final stages. He was covering lots of ground, his defensive work was fantastic and he looked nice with Sunil. But I needed Sahal to be playmaker to dictate the game, create chances and also put in defensive work." Speaking about Thapa, Stimac said his performance was underwhelming considering that he is an experienced player.

"Thapa has got enough experience to adapt to situations. I expect more from them as they have enough experience to do so," he added. The coach further gave his thumbs up to the fans for turning up in huge numbers to make Chhetri's last match extra special.

"Huge appreciation for the fans, for their support." Chhetri stirred up emotions in his final outing but the Indian football team failed to convert the chances.

"We are obviously disappointed with the result. The game was tough, as we



expected. The draw is realistic tonight, they opened the game much better and with more confidence — in terms of passing, speed of passing and moving," Stimac said.

"It took us some time to gear up and start passing the ball into the danger zones. "The general passing speed was our biggest problem tonight — it wasn't good

enough. Even in certain moments, when we put pressure on them, there was no quality in the delivery to help the forwards.

Stimac was, however, happy with goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu's performance. "That's not the reason we didn't win, we weren't clinical in front of the goal and our best player tonight was Gurpreet, which isn't a good sign. It's fantastic to have such a goalkeeper here, who we never doubted."

The draw meant the long-serving Indian skipper had a tearful farewell, failing to add to his record tally of 94 goals. "I feel really sad for Sunil, really sad that he didn't go with a win. In regards to everything, he was not thinking of his last minutes, not a single player or staff member," he said.

**NEED TO COPE WITHOUT SUNIL: GURPREET:** Sandhu said Chhetri's absence would be felt against Qatar but they need to cope and move forward.

"Like any other team we prepare for, obviously this time around we won't have Sunil bhai with us, which is sad but as a nation we need to cope up with that and move forward. "The world doesn't wait for anyone and we need to prepare ourselves in the best manner possible. Any game is not a loss before the 90 minutes and we'll go out there against Qatar to win game and give our best shot to win it," he added.



# Mbappé leads France in Euro 2024 group against teams he loves scoring against

AP ■ MUNICH

France and the Netherlands renew their recent rivalry at the European Championship with fresh memories of their hard luck exits at the World Cup 18 months ago.

Both were beaten in Qatar in penalty shootouts against Argentina - France in the epic final, the Dutch in the quarterfinals - after rallying late from two goals down.

The first post-World Cup game for each was the opener of their Euro 2024 qualifying group in March last year. France raced to an early three-goal lead and won 4-0 in Paris. France goes for three straight wins against the Netherlands when they meet in the late game on the longest summer day, June 21, in Leipzig.

That will be the second round of games in Group D that includes Austria and Poland, which also played Argentina at the World Cup. The Poles also trailed 2-0 to the eventual champion and it stayed that way.

**Here's a look at Group D:** **FRANCE:** France reached the final in three of its past four major tournaments, winning the 2018 World Cup, with just Euro 2020 counting as a failure. Kylian Mbappé's penalty was saved and France lost the shootout to Switzerland after a 3-3 draw in the round of 16. Mbappé arrives for his first tournament game since that 2022 World Cup final hat trick in a losing cause against Argentina, as captain of the most talented squad at Euro 2024.

He also might be feeling liberated after a testy final few months at Paris Saint-Germain ahead of his long-expected move to Real Madrid. Mbappé's appetite for goals against these group rivals is such that he scored twice against the Netherlands

in each of their qualifying group games, twice against Poland at the World Cup, and once in each game against Austria in 2022 in the Nations League.

The 25-year-old superstar has 48 goals in 79 games for France, chasing down teammate Olivier Giroud's record of 57 for Les Bleus. Giroud's stellar international career ends after Euro 2024 when, at age 37, he will join Los Angeles FC.

**NETHERLANDS:** Ronald Koeman has coached the Netherlands through qualifying for back-to-back European Championships. This time he sees the job through to the finals tournament. After Euro 2021 was postponed for one year in the COVID-19 pandemic, Koeman left to take the coveted job at his former club Barcelona, still then with Lionel Messi.

The Dutch went to the last Euro coached by Frank de Boer and lost in the round of 16 to the Czech Republic. Koeman was fired by Barcelona after 14 months and one Spanish cup title, then re-hired by the Dutch federation to succeed Louis van Gaal after the 2022 World Cup.

In qualifying, Koeman's team was efficient in winning all six games against teams not named France and conceding just one goal, from a penalty by Ireland. Now he seems ready to unleash a reshaped formation with dynamic wing backs Denzel Dumfries and Jeremie Frimpong.

**AUSTRIA:** Predicting a "dark horse" contender to be European champion has recently been a fool's errand. Austria in 2016 and Turkey three years ago both went home winless after the group stage. Still, Austria has been in the conversation again. Coach Ralf Rangnick has

rebuilt his reputation after a few dysfunctional months at Manchester United ended in 2022 and created some expectation for this Austria team. At least until the knee injuries hit. Captain David Alaba's season was ended in December playing for Real Madrid.

Since an impressive international break in March - beating Euro 2024 teams Slovakia and Turkey (a 6-1 rout in Vienna) - goalkeeper Alex Schlager and midfielder Xaver Schlager also got injured. The midfield is still a strength with high-end talent in the Bundesliga: Bayern Munich's Konrad Laimer, Borussia Dortmund's Marcel Sabitzer and Leipzig's Christoph Baumgartner, whose goal after six seconds in Slovakia was the fastest ever in a men's national team game.

**POLAND:** Poland was beaten easily by France at the World Cup, 3-1 in the round of 16 in Qatar. That tournament seemed to give little joy to the Polish players under cautious coach Czeslaw Michniewicz, who left soon after. It did not improve with Fernando Santos, the Euro 2016-winning coach for Portugal, who was fired last September. Poland eventually qualified via the playoffs under coach Michal Probiez after having zero shots on target in a 0-0 draw at Wales until the penalty shootout. Veteran goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny made the key save in Cardiff as captain Robert Lewandowski turned away unable to watch. They remain the core of the team and this could be their international farewell, as the 35-year-old Lewandowski looks to add to his national records of 148 games and 82 goals. Poland's last group game is against France in Dortmund, where he was a feted star from 2010-14.

# Praggnanandhaa loses to Caruana, Carlsen beats Firouzja Alireza

PTI ■ STAVANGER (NORWAY)

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa went down fighting against Fabiano Caruana of United States while world number one Magnus Carlsen inflicted an Armageddon defeat on France's Firouzja Alireza in the penultimate round of Norway Chess tournament here.

With 16 points in his bag, Carlsen stretched his lead to 1.5 points over nearest rival Hikaru Nakamura, who was in for a shock as World Champion Ding Liren, for once, did not blow his position away.

Praggnanandhaa, despite the loss against Caruana in Armageddon, is still third on 13 points, a full point ahead of Alireza. Caruana on 10.5 comes in next in standings ahead of Liren (6), who spoiled Nakamura's party.

In the women's section, R Vaishali succumbed to another



loss at the hands of Tingjie Lei of China and was relegated to fourth spot while Koneru Humpy went down to tournament leader Wenju Ju of China.

Wenju Ju of China strengthen her claim for the title by moving to 16 points. Tingjie Lei and Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine follow her 1.5 points behind while Vaishali on 11.5 is a distant

fourth ahead of Humpy who is on nine points. Veteran Swede Pia Cramling is last spot with 6.5 points in her kitty. Vaishali was the only one to go down in the Classical game itself while all the other matches saw an Armageddon battle following a draw in normal games.

The English opening does not sound like a menacing choice but Tingjie took advantage

with the slightly favourable colour early in the opening as Vaishali's pawn structure became a bit dented. Picking out a pawn on the queen side, the Chinese capitalised on her better placed rook to invade the seventh rank and it was soon curtains for the Indian in just 28 moves.

Humpy had her last chance but could not make most of it as white against Wenju Ju. The Chinese equalised at ease in the early middle game as black in the Ragozine defense and drew comfortably in the ensuing rook and pawns endgame.

Humpy decided to go all-in in the Armageddon but the plan boomeranged as Wenju Ju found a tactical skirmish to win a rook in the middle game. The game lasted 41 moves. In the men's section, Carlsen was not overjoyed that the Classical game ended in a draw but kept his nerves intact

to win the Armageddon while Liren finally had something to smile about as he defeated Nakamura in fine fashion.

Praggnanandhaa did not have to sweat hard to hold Caruana under Classical but in the Armageddon the American was a transformed player as he took advantage of his white pieces.

The Indian has white pieces in the last round game against Nakamura and will hope to make the most of it.

**Results round 9 men:** Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 10.5) beat R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 13) 1.5-1; Firouzja Alireza (Fra, 12) lost to Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 16) 1-1.5; Hikaru Nakamura (Usa, 14.5) lost to Ding Liren (Chn, 6.5) 1-1.5.

**Women:** Koneru Humpy (Ind, 9) lost to Wenju Ju (Chn, 16) 1.5-1; Tingjie Lei (Chn, 14.5) beat R Vaishali (11.5) 3-0; Pia Cramling (Swe, 6.5) lost to Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 14.5) 1-1.5.

# Kush Maini completes first F1 test with Alpine

AP ■ SPIELBERG (AUSTRIA)

India racer Kush Maini completed his first Formula 1 test with BWT Alpine F1 Team here earlier this week.

The 23-year-old, competing in his second season of Formula 2, drove the A522 F1 car as part of Alpine's young driver test programme on Wednesday.

The test in Austria marked Kush's first time in a modern-spec F1 car and second time testing with BWT Alpine F1 Team. Maini previously drove the A521 at Bahrain International Circuit in 2023 after joining the Alpine Academy programme in October last year.

"My first full day in a Formula 1 car is complete in Spielberg. It was a dream come true and it was better than I could have ever imagined it to be. I am so grateful to BWT Alpine F1 Team for believing in me and giving me this opportunity," Maini said. "The Race Support Team did an incredible job to get me up to speed quickly and have the test



run as smoothly as possible, their hard work and effort does not go unnoticed, so a big thank you to them," he added. The event makes up part of the young driver testing programme, which both

drivers will participate in throughout the year as members of the Alpine Academy. Maini was signed by Alpine Academy last year and is a part of the team's driver development programme.

# UP Kabaddi team to plant 100 saplings for every successful raid

SAMAR PANDEY ■ NOIDA

To contribute towards nature and environmental conservation, a team in the Uttar Pradesh Kabaddi League, Yamuna Yodhas has announced a unique environmental initiative by planting 100 trees on every successful win in the upcoming season.

This initiative introduced by team owner Rahul Sharma aims to combine sports with environmental conservation.

Also the CEO of the Vrinda Foundation, which organised the G20 International Yoga Festival and Yamuna cleaning programmes, Rahul emphasised the importance of this initiative. "We are playing for more than victory; we are playing for a greener, healthier future," he said.

The Yamuna Yodhas plan to plant trees near the Yamuna River to help retain rainwater and ensure a consistent flow throughout the year. They have

partnered with environmental NGOs and local groups to maintain the trees, ensuring a high survival rate.

This tree-planting commitment could result in thousands of new trees over the season, reflecting the team's strong performance. They will also conduct awareness campaigns and workshops in schools and communities to educate people on environmental conservation. "Nothing that each raid will now

contribute to both the team's score and environmental well-being. The initiative has already received widespread support on social media," said Ravi Kumar, a player of the team. The UP Kabaddi League season starting on July 11, at the Noida Indoor Stadium. Eight teams, including the Yamuna Yodhas, will compete for the championship title, with 120 participants from across Uttar Pradesh and India.

# McLaren's Lando gives nod to Ferrari as favourites at Canadian Grand Prix

AP ■ MONTREAL

Lando Norris is putting the pressure on Ferrari.

The McLaren Formula 1 driver said the Canadian Grand Prix could be anyone's race Sunday, but he's giving the edge to the Italian team after Charles Leclerc's victory two weeks ago in Monaco.

"I think they're favorites," Norris said Thursday. "It's impossible for me to say if it's going to be us, Ferrari or Red Bull on top. That's why it's exciting, because none of us really know."

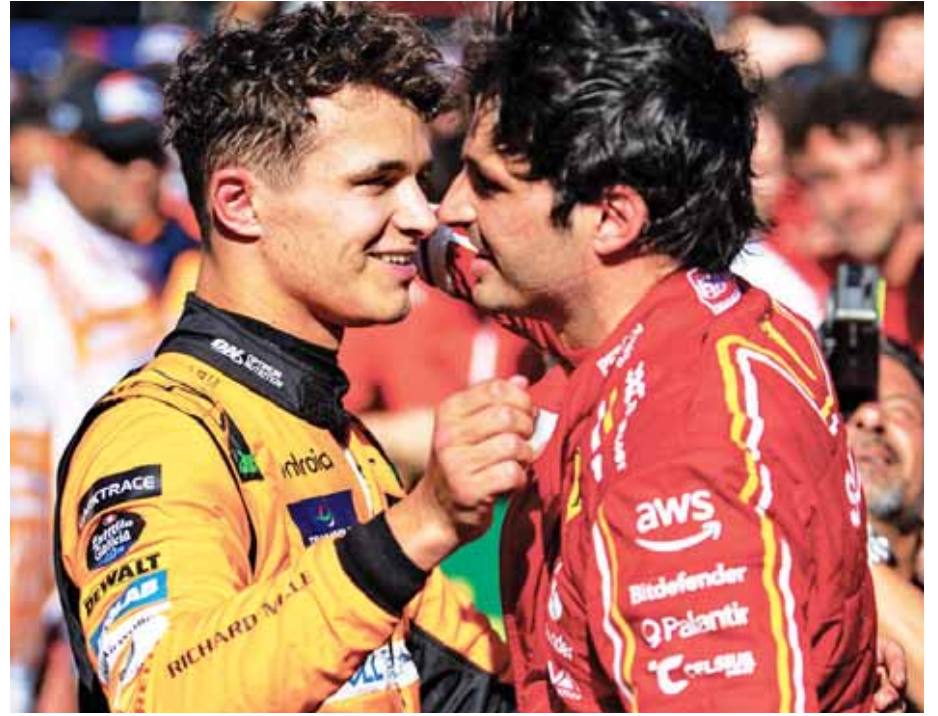
Led by three-time defending season champion Max Verstappen, Red Bull won 21 of 22 races last year. Verstappen had a record 19 victories.

Red Bull tops the constructors' championship this season, but Leclerc's victory helped Ferrari move within 24 points.

Norris thinks Ferrari could have the upper hand again this weekend, partially because curbing-riding is such a factor at recently resurfaced Circuit Gilles Villeneuve. Leclerc downplayed the favorite talk. "Everybody doesn't want to be going into a weekend hearing that they are favorites," Leclerc said.

"You're never going to hear me (say) we are 100% the favorite this weekend and the same for them, so you've got to throw the ball to your closest opponents.

"It might not be the true



picture once we hit the track, the reality is we are so closely matched between those three teams."

Verstappen has a 31-point lead over Leclerc in the drivers' championship. Norris trails Leclerc by 25 points, equal to one race win.

But three drivers from three teams - Norris, Leclerc and Verstappen - have won the last three races for the first time since 2021.

Last season, Verstappen won his second consecutive

Canadian Grand Prix amid a run of a record 10 straight victories.

"I'm not focused on what the others are doing because that's just a waste of time and energy," the 26-year-old Dutchman said.

"We know that from our side, there are things that we can do better and that's what we'll focus on."

While Ferrari appears to thrive on courses where curbing-riding is a big factor, the opposite has been true for Red Bull.

Verstappen called Monaco, where he finished sixth and Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez did not finish, a reminder of that.

"This is something that we know, and we haven't been able to fix it yet. I do think that after Monaco, it gave us another wake-up call," Verstappen said.

"With everyone catching up, naturally, you can't rely on your advantage anymore even though your curbing-riding is bad.

# ENGLAND EYE IMPROVED BOWLING EFFORT TO HALT FORMIDABLE AUSSIES

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS)

Defending champions England will look to restitch their T20 World Cup campaign through an improved bowling effort when they face 'old' rival Australia in a Group B match here on Saturday. England's opening game against Scotland was rained off after the latter made 90 for no loss in 10 overs, forcing the teams to take home a point each. But even those 60 balls showed the need for England to buckle up in the bowling department, to begin with. Scottish openers George Munsey and Michael Jones scored freely against all England bowlers, and Australia carry far more lethal guns in their line-up. David Warner and Marcus Stoinis showed the extent of damage they can do while outclassing Oman in their tournament opener. Once again, there will be a lot of focus on Jofra Archer, who gave away 12 runs in two overs against Scotland, as the pacer continues his comeback trail into top-flight cricket. But bowling is just one part, as the English batters under

skipper Jos Buttler, who had a good run in the IPL 2024, will have to fire in unison against the Aussie attack. The Australian bowlers were potent against Oman even without Pat Cummins, who had a reasonable outing for Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL. Nathan Ellis played ahead of Cummins in that game, but Australia might bring back the premier pacer against a much more formidable opponent. While Australia's batting looks settled, the misfiring Glenn Maxwell remains a missing link. After enduring a shipwreck of an IPL campaign with Royal Challengers Bengaluru recently, the 'Big Show' got out for a first-ball duck against Oman. The 2021 champions will be eager to see Maxwell return to his best at the earliest, and a match against England offers him a perfect occasion. **TEAMS (FROM):** Australia: Mitchell Marsh (c), Ashton Agar, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis,



Matthew Wade, David Warner, Adam Zampa. Travelling Reserves: Jake Fraser-McGurk, Matt Short. England: Jos Buttler (c), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonathan Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, Mark Wood. **Match starts at 10.30 PM IST.**

**SA FACE COURAGEOUS DUTCH:** South Africa might have trotted past Sri Lanka in their first match, but they have a tricky opponent in Netherlands in their second group D match in New York on Saturday. The scars from their 38-run loss against the Dutch in last year's 50-over World Cup might still be fresh in the minds of the Proteas. The Aiden Markram-led side

would certainly want a reversal this time around. The most encouraging signal from their win over Sri Lanka was the form of Anrich Nortje. The pacer, who was a shadow of his intimidating self in the IPL, seemed to have regained his rhythm on a spicy New York pitch while grabbing four wickets against the Islanders. Along with Kagiso Rabada,

Nortje forms a strong combination upfront, and SA will require them in full flight against Netherlands, who started with a six-wicket win over Nepal. They also ticked a few boxes in that match as frontline batter Max O'Dowd made a fifty while leading pacers Tim Pringle and Logan van Beek took three wickets apiece. The Dutch side will be

hoping for another clinical outing from their top players to bruise their fancied opponent once more. **TEAMS (FROM):** South Africa: Aiden Markram (c), Ott Niel Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Bjorn Fortuin, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Anrich Nortje,

Kagiso Rabada, Ryan Rickelton, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs. Netherlands: Scott Edwards (c), Aryan Dutt, Bas de Leede, Kyle Klein, Logan van Beek, Max O'Dowd, Michael Levitt, Paul van Meekeren, Ryan Klein, Saqib Zulfiqar, Sybrand Engelbrecht, Teja Nidamanuru, Tim Pringle, Vikram Singh, Viv Kingma, Wesley Barresi. Travelling reserve: Ryan Klein.

## SA FACE NETHERLANDS



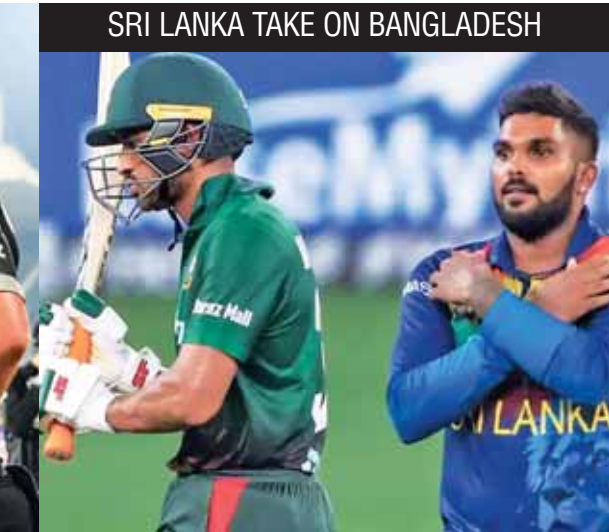
# New Zealand face Afghanistan test



PTI ■ PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)

New Zealand will have no room for complacency when they begin the T20 World Cup campaign against a gutsy Afghanistan side full of IPL stars in a Group C fixture here on Saturday. New Zealand find themselves in a difficult group with two-time champions West Indies and Afghanistan also vying for the top two spots. With rain restricting their training sessions, New Zealand's preparation for the marquee event has been less than ideal. Additionally, they take on Afghanistan and West Indies in their opening two games. Come Saturday, Kane Williamson and Co. Will have to get the better of a side that is not only warmed up but has also registered a morale-boosting win and know the conditions here well. However, New Zealand's strength in ICC events has been their adaptability, they always manage to turn up, reaching the latter stages. And with a wealth of experience as well as an exuberance of youth in the likes of Finn Allen and Rachin Ravindra in the side, they will be expected to get past the Afghans.

On paper, New Zealand have all bases covered, they have depth in batting and variety in bowling. Trent Boult will look dominate with the new ball, with Lockie Ferguson and Tim Southee complementing him. Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner has a phenomenal record in the Caribbean, averaging under 17 with the ball at an economy of 5.5 and he will be look to outsmart the Afghans. Meanwhile, Afghanistan secured a thumping victory over Uganda in their opener. If the opening duo of Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran provided the team a great start with the bat, pacers Fazalhaq Farooqi, Naveen-ul-Haq, and skipper Rashid Khan exhibited exceptional prowess with the ball. But apart from Gurbaz and Zadran none of the other batters manage to stick around and against a formidable Kiwi side, they will need to do better. **TEAMS (FROM):** New Zealand: Kane Williamson (c), Finn Allen, Trent Boult, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Jimmy Neesham, Glenn Phillips, Rachin



Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee. Afghanistan: Rashid Khan (c), Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Ibrahim Zadran, Azmatullah Omarzai, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Ishaq, Mohammad Nabi, Gulbadin Naib, Karim Janat, Nangyal Kharoti, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Noor Ahmad, Naveen-ul-Haq, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Fareed Ahmad Malik. Reserves: Sediq Atal, Hazratullah Zazai, Saleem Safi. **Match starts 5am IST**

defending 77 against South Africa and the Islanders would fancy their chances against an out of form Bangladesh side. Bangladesh have struggled in the shortest format this year. The have had series losses against Sri Lanka and USA. They were handed a comprehensive defeat by India in their warm up game as well. **TEAMS (FROM):** Sri Lanka: Wanindu Hasaranga (c), Charith Asalanka, Kusal Mendis, Pathum Nissanka, Kamindu Mendis, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Angelo Mathews, Dasun Shanaka, Dhananjaya De Silva, Maheesh Theekshana, Dunith Wellalage, Dushmantha Chameera, Nuwan Thushara, Matheesha Pathirana, Dilshan Madushanka. Travelling Reserves: Asitha Fernando, Vijayakanth Vijaykanth, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Janith Liyanage.

**SRI LANKA-BANGLADESH RENEW RIVALRY:** In Dallas, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh will renew their rivalry in a bid to improve their chances to reach the Super Eights. Group D or the 'Group of Death' features three full members — South Africa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh — the Netherlands, who are capable of pulling of upset wins and Nepal. And wins and margin of victories could play a vital role towards the end of the group stage. Sri Lanka will have to bounce back from their crushing defeat to South Africa in their opener. Their batters will be expected to show better shot selection and greater match awareness. The bowlers did well while

# NEWCOMERS USA RECORD HISTORIC WIN OVER PAKISTAN

PTI ■ DALLAS (USA)

Newcomers USA on Thursday shocked former champions Pakistan via the Super Over to record their biggest win in a T20 World Cup match that reflected the shambolic state of affairs in the Asian giants' cricket. The result was reminiscent of Pakistan's three-wicket loss to Ireland in the 2007 ODI World Cup in the West Indies, which knocked them out of that tournament. USA thus jumped to the top of Group A with two wins from as many games ahead of the clash against India. USA had defeated Canada by seven wickets in their opener. Opting to field, left-arm spinner Nosthush Kenjige scalped three wickets for 30 runs as Pakistan found it difficult to press the accelerator and were restricted to 159 for seven. While chasing, USA ended on the same score, reaching 159 for 3 with skipper Monank Patel (50 off 38), Aaron Jones (36 not out of 26) and Andries Gous (35 off 26) leading from the front. In the Super Over bowled by



Mohammad Amir, USA piled up 18 runs, eight of which came from extras. Saurabh Netravalkar then kept his cool and bowled brilliantly to give away just 13 runs for a famous win. In another embarrassment for Pakistan, they took longer time than usual to come out to bat in the Super Over, keeping the USA fielders waiting and getting the on-field umpires involved. Earlier, USA's decision to bowl first worked as Mohammad Rizwan was dismissed in the second over, caught by Steven Taylor off Netravalkar (2/18). USA started their chase on a bright note, scoring 44 runs in the powerplay. Patel led from the front as he played his shots to pick up consecutive

boundaries off Shaheen Shah Afridi in the fourth over. Naseem Shah gave Pakistan the first breakthrough when Taylor nicked one to Mohammad Rizwan behind the stumps. Bur new man Andries Gous meant business as he picked up two fours in the same over. Gous was particularly elegant square of the wicket as he just opened his bat a bit to pick up another four off Haris Rauf. USA's body language was positive with Patel and Gous leading the charge. Patel showed his prowess through the off-side, picking up two consecutive boundaries off Iftikhar Ahmed through the cover region. Patel was at his destructive best as he first hit Afridi over mid-

off for a boundary and then clobbered the bowler over his head for a six to bring up his 50 off 34 balls. A 68-run second wicket stand was finally broken by Rauf, who got the better of Gous with a quick delivery. Wickets were the need of the hour for Pakistan and they picked up the important scalp of Patel, who edged one to Rizwan off Mohammad Amir. Aaron Jones (36 not out off 26), who played a blinder against Canada in their last match, lived up to the expectations again and in the company Nitish Kumar (14 not out off 14) took the match into the Super Over. With 12 needed off three balls, Jones smashed a full toss of Rauf over square leg for a six and then got a single to bring down the target to five off last ball. Earlier, Pakistan lost Usman Khan as he mistimed a Kenjige delivery. Fakhar Zaman tried to force his way with his aggressive instincts but fell short when he paddle-swept a simple catch to Taylor off Ali Khan in the fifth over, as Pakistan slumped to 26 for 3.

# Pandya braces for extra-special Pakistan match in T20 WC

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Hardik Pandya does not want to treat the upcoming T20 World Cup match against Pakistan as a "fight" but the India all-rounder is quite excited to face a rival against whom he has had considerable success. Rohit Sharma-led India will take on Pakistan on Sunday and Pandya will be eager to repeat his past success against the cross-border opponents. "Standing in big games is very exciting for me. I find it extra special and Pakistan has been one team where I have been very



fortunate, I have been able to do well in a lot of games," Pandya told 'Star Sports'. Pandya has played six T20Is against Pakistan so far. While his outings with the bat largely remained moderate, having

scored just 84 runs with a highest of 40, the Baroda man has fared better with the ball in hand. The pace-bowling all-rounder has taken 11 wickets from six matches at a very good economy of 7.5 with 3/8 being his best analysis. "It all comes down to the vibe. Hold your breath, this is a request. This is not a fight, this is going to be history," said Pandya. India began the ICC marquee event with a facile eight-wicket win over Ireland, but Pakistan were stunned by the USA via super over here on Thursday. While underlining the riches in India's bowling unit, Pandya said they needed to remain disciplined against Pakistan. "India-Pakistan has always been very exciting, lot of cheer and buzz, a lot of emotion and a lot of excitement but at the same time, I hope we will be disciplined in that game, one goal as a group is we go and kind of hunt.

PTI ■ DALLAS

After scripting a win for the ages against Pakistan, USA captain Monank Patel said his team did not feel any pressure during the nerve-racking Super Over as the crowd was mostly behind Babar Azam's men, which ended up backfiring on the visiting side in their T20 World Cup clash here. Patel made a composed 50 as co-hosts USA shocked 2009 champions Pakistan via Super Over here on Thursday. "I thought we should have finished the game (in regular time) and we should have never gone to Super Over. I mean the way we kept our nerves...and in the Super Over particularly, scoring 18 runs gave us a big upper hand to defend the target," Patel said in the post-match press conference.

# Pressure was on Pakistan, knew crowd support will backfire on them: USA skipper Patel

So, what was the talk inside the team huddle at that crucial juncture? Were there any queasy stomachs? "In the huddle we talked about - there's no pressure for us. All the pressure is in front of Pakistan. We knew that we didn't have enough support from the crowd. Pakistan had more support from the crowd. "I thought it will backfire on them, and if we play good cricket, they'll be more under pressure," said Patel. Patel, who was born in Anand, Gujarat, said his side bowled brilliantly in the Power Play

segment and kept Pakistan batters on a tight leash. "The way we bowled in the first six overs, I felt we didn't give them enough opportunity to score runs and we kept them under more pressure and it helped us," he said. Patel said USA were always in the game once they restricted Pakistan to 159. "The plan was to win the toss and bowl first. We knew the initial first half an hour would help pace bowlers and the way we kept them quiet and took the crucial wickets in the power play, it helped really well. "And yeah, 160 on this wicket with

one side short boundary, I felt we were always in the game," he explained. The home side threw a surprise by handing the responsibility of bowling the Super Over to Saurabh Netravalkar instead of the more pedigreed Ali Khan. But the left-arm pacer successfully defended 18 runs to guide his side to a memorable victory. "The plan was we wanted to make sure that we utilise the condition. The condition was left-arm bowler bowling cutters and wide yorkers from left-arm over. "Ali Khan usually hits the stump and we wanted to make sure that



we make them play outside the off-stump. And as a left-hander, the angle helps it. Saurabh had a good day, and I backed Saurabh, and yeah, that was the decision," he explained. The USA also made a rather surprising decision to hold back a natural range-hitter like Corey Anderson and promoted Nitish Kumar up the order in the regulation time. Patel said they wanted to keep Anderson for the last three overs. "As a player he (Nitish) always thinks about the team first and I felt when I got out, I think it was 14th over or something. Nitish, the way he's batting, we wanted to back him. "We wanted to make sure that even if the wicket goes, obviously, Corey was going next. We wanted to keep Corey in the last three overs. That was the plan," said Patel.

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