

AM FOCUSED ON BRINGING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGE IN JORHAT: GAURAV GOGOI



SRAEL VOWS 'RESPONSE' TO IRAN ATTACK



29 NAXALS KILLED AHEAD

OF POLLS IN CHHATTISGARH

16 NARINE BLAZES HIS WAY TO 49-BALL TON, POWERS KKR TO 223/6 AGAINST RR

IMF raises India growth estimate to 6.8% in 2024

Fastest expansion among developing nations

TDG NETWORK

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its latest outlook raised India's growth projections for 2024 from 6.5 per cent to 6.8 per cent, with the country maintaining the fastest-growing status in emerging markets and developing economies.

For the year 2025, the IMF maintained India's growth rate at 6.5 per cent. It attributed robustness and

After resolving half a dozen

WTO disputes last year, In-

several US products which

have benefitted American

farmers, a top Biden admin-

istration official told lawmakers on Tuesday.

The steps taken by India have given more mar-

ket access for turkey, duck, blueberries, and

cranberries benefiting farmers from several

American states, US Trade Representative

Katherine Tai told members of a House Com-

dia opened up its market for

India opened up



strength in domestic demand and a rising workingage population behind its growth projections.

its market for US, deal with India as

says Biden admin FTA talks resume

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SC on VVPAT plea: Do not try to bring down system

TDG NETWORK

demographic dividend

could help support growth

in the global workforce, in

which nearly two in every

three new entrants over the

medium term will come

from India and sub-Saha-

ran Africa, IMF noted in its

latest World Economic Out-

Economic growth in the

10 emerging markets of the

Group of Twenty (G2O) has

consistently outperformed

that of advanced economies

As their share of world

GDP has more than dou-

bled since 2000, Argen-

over the past two decades.

look report.

UK says working on

The UK government on Tuesday said that

it continues to work towards striking an

"ambitious" trade deal with India as a nego-

tiating team from Delhi resumed talks with

their British counterparts in London this

week. The Department for Business and

Trade (DBT) reiterated its stance of only

signing a free trade agreement (FTA) that

was in the best interests of the British peo-

ple and economy. Last month, DBT officials

had indicated that formal trade negotiations

were being paused for the course of India's

phased general election. DETAILS № P12

The Supreme Court on Tuesday, while hearing pleas seeking cross-verification of the votes cast with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) raised doubts about the petitioners' contentions about the feasibility of the physical counting of votes given the large population of India. The bench was not convinced with the arguments to go back to election via ballot paper instead of EVM

DETAILS P4

Surjewala banned from campaigning

TDG NETWORK

ASHISH SINHA

NEW DELH

The Election Commission on Tuesday banned Congress leader Randeep Surjewala from campaigning for 48-hours over his alleged "derogatory remarks" against BJP MP Hema Malini. ECI bars Randeep Surjewala from holding any rally, public appearances and interview. The ECI issued a showcause notice to Surjewala for allegedly making "vulgar" remarks about Hema Malini.

Kanker district on Tuesday in the biggest encounter ever in the state, police said. This was the highest fatalities suffered by Naxalites in a single encounter in the

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KANKER (CHHATTISGARH)

head of the first

phase of polling in

Chhattisgarh, se-

curity personnel gunned

down 29 Naxalites, includ-

ing some senior cadres, in

history of the state's fight against Left Wing Extremism. Since the start of 2024, as many as 79 Naxalites have been killed in separate gun-battles with security forces in the Bastar region, a Maoist stronghold.

Three security personnel also suffered injuries in the fierce gun-battle and a large quantity of weapons was recovered from the spot, officials said.

Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, who holds the home portfolio, hailed the encounter as a "surgical strike" and a major success, and asserted credit for it goes to brave security per-

The latest gunfight took place at around 2 pm in

Biggest encounter ever in the state Toll in Bastar rises to 79

Security personnel during an encounter with Naxalites, in Kanker district, on Tuesday

Hapatola forest between Binagunda and Koronar villages under Chhotebethiya police station limits, when a joint team of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the state police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P said.

The operation was launched based on inputs about the presence of senior cadres of north Bastar division of the outlawed CPI (Maoist) Shankar, Lalita, Raju and others, he said. During patrolling in the

area, a fierce gun-battle broke out between the two sides, the senior IPS officer said. "Bodies of 29 Maoists

along with a huge cache of weapons, including AK-47, SLR, Insas and .303 rifles, were recovered from the spot," the IG said.

Polling in the Naxalite-hit Bastar Lok Sabha seat will take place on April 19 in the first phase, while the Kanker constituency, part of the Bastar region, will vote in the second round of general elections on April 26.

The search operation was still underway in the area, said Sundarraj. "Three security person-

nel sustained injuries in the gunfight and their condition was stated to be out of danger," he said, adding they were being airlifted to state capital Raipur for treatment.

The slain Naxalites were yet to be identified, but

Six people killed as boat capsizes in Jhelum river

TDG NETWORK

In a tragic incident on Tuesday, six people lost their lives as a boat carrying local residents and school children capsized in the Jhelum river near Gandbal-Batwara area of Srinagar.

Thanks to a swift response from the river police and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF saw five people were rescued from the river.

Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar said, "Six people have died, the boat was ferrying 15 people. Among them, seven were minors and eight were adults. 12 people were rescued, of whom six died and three are still missing. Those rescued are being treated and are stable."

Dr Sameena, ZMO (Zonal



school children capsized in the Jhelum river, at Gandbal in Srinagar on Tuesday. ANI

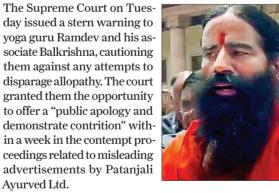
Medical Officer) Batmaloo said, "Our team have been here since morning. SDRF, NDRF plus the forces are here. We're trying to retrieve the bodies. Some of the injured people have been shifted to SMHS."

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party chief Mehbooba

Mufti said she was shocked to know about the loss of lives in the tragic boat capsize incident in Ganderbal. She urged the administration to extend all possible help.

National Conference patron and former CM Farooq Abdullah also expressed his grief on the loss of lives.

Egg fetches Rs 2.26 lakh in



guru apologises in court

However, the court emphasised that it wasn't absolving them of responsibility yet. The apex court is reviewing a plea filed in 2022 by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) regarding a smear campaign against the Covid vaccination drive and modern medical practices.

Ramdev and Balkrishna, present in court, tendered an unconditional apology through their counsel, expressing willingness to issue a public apology to demonstrate remorse. "We're not commenting on the method of apology. However, they're not exempt from accountability at this time," the

Minor fire

breaks out at

'You are not so innocent', Dissent in Congress over SC tells Ramdev as yoga Manish Tiwari nomination

TARUNI GANDHI

The announcement of Manish Tiwari as the Congress candidate for Chandigarh in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections has sparked controversy within the party. Several Congress leaders, who are aligned with former MP Pawan Kumar Bansal have resigned from their positions, calling for the removal of party president Harmohinder Singh Lucky.

Notable resignations include those of Chandigarh INTUC president Naseeb Jakhar, Mahila wing president Deepa Dubey, party vice-president Hafiz Anwar Ul Haq, and Ravi Thakur.

Protesting outside Dubey's Sector 15 residence, the leaders voiced their grievances against Lucky, accusing him of undermin-

Lucknow boy Aditya Srivas-



ing the party's unity and alleging his association with the BJP. The dissenting leaders also expressed their discontent with Lucky's advocacy for a new face over Bansal, urging the party high command to reconsider their decision.

The Congress party has chosen Anandpur Sahib's current MP and lawyer, Manish Tewari, to contest against BJP's Sanjay Tan-

Rupee plunges to lowest level of 83.61 against **US** dollar

TDG NETWORK

The rupee plunged 17 paise to hit its lowest level of 83.61 against the US dollar for the second time in four weeks on Tuesday, tracking negative equity markets and a strong greenback against major crosses overseas amid geopolitical tensions.

Forex traders said a weak appetite for riskier assets and sustained outflow of foreign capital also dragged down the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.51 and finally settled at the lowest level of 83.61, registering a loss of 17 paise from its pre-

vious close. Earlier the rupee had

closed at the same level on

INSIDE

ALL ABOUT RAILWAYS



Since 1853 to present. India has witnessed a miraculous change in the railway sector. On Tuesday, Indian Railways marks 171st anniversary of historic maiden journey from Boribunder to Thane

DETAILS P9

ASHIQ MIR

When the Masjid Committee in Malpora village in Sopore in North Kashmir decided to raise funds for completion of mosque construction, members went door-to-door during the Muslim month of fasting. They were taken aback when old lady donated an egg, among other things. The Committee had no option but to accept. But



little did they know that egg would eventually fetch Rs 2.26 lakh.

The mosque committee

auction in Kashmir village North Block **TDG NETWORK** auctions all the donations it receives in kind. The egg

too put up for auction. The A minor fire broke out on humble donation turned Tuesday on the second floor of the North Block, located out to be a major attraction in the high-security Raisina for villagers. The egg exchanged hands at the auction. Hills. The building houses the Ministries of Home Af-After every auction, the buyer would return it for another fairs and Personnel.

auction to raise more money. The fire brigade received According to the locals, the information at around 9:22 egg was finally purchased by am. Seven fire tenders were a man for Rs 70,000, but rushed to the spot to douse the total amount raised by the blaze

DETAILS **№** P5

Lucknow boy tops Civil Services Exam

TDG NETWORK

tava has secured the first position in the Civil Services Examination, 2023, the results of which were announced by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Tuesday. The written part of the Civil Services Examination, 2023 was held by the UPSC in September 2023 and the interviews for the Personality Test were held in January-April 2024. Animesh Pradhan secured the second rank and Donuru



Aditya Srivastava

Ananya Reddy stood third. Others in top 10 include P K Sidharth Ramkumar (4), Ruhani (5), Srishti Dabas (6) Anmol Rathore (7), Ashish Kumar (8), Nausheen (9) and Aishwaryam Prajapati (10). In recent years, women have demonstrated remarkable achievements in secur-

31 JAMIA MILLIA STUDENTS SELECTED FOR CIVIL SERVICES

As many as 31 students from the Residential Coaching Academy (RCA), Centre for Coaching and Career Planning, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), cleared the Civil Services Main Exam, 2023 A total of 71 students from RCA appeared in the interview, of whom 31 got selected.

ing top positions in the UPSC examinations.

DETAILS № P5

I AM FOCUSED ON BRINGING ABOUT POSITIVE **CHANGE IN JORHAT: GAURAV GOGOI**

TDG NETWORK

aurav Gogoi's journey unfolds against the backdrop of Jorhat's rich history and cultural significance. With its population of 1.5 million and 1.3 million registered voters, Jorhat presents a diverse demographic landscape, encompassing Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities. As the former capital of the Ahom Kingdom, the constituency holds a special place in Assam's heritage. Gogoi, candidate from the Jorhat constituency, following in the footsteps of his late father Tarun Gogoi, a revered figure in Assam's political landscape, carries forward a legacy of service and leadership.

Q: Facing a new constituency after delimitation must be quite

a challenge. How are you finding the transition, and what's been the response from the locals so

A: The transition to the Jorhat constituency has indeed been a challenge, but I've been pleasantly surprised by the overwhelming support from the locals. Ordinary citizens have volunteered and mobilized in ways I hadn't anticipated, which speaks volumes about the grassroots strength of our campaign.

Q: The BJP's aggressive campaigning in Assam has been evident. How do you perceive their efforts, and how are you countering their strategies?

A: The BJP's aggressive tactics, including intimidation and false promises, are expected in any election. However, the genuine support we've



received from the people of Jorhat gives us confidence. We're focused on connecting with voters on the ground and highlighting our vision for the constituency.

Q: Your father Tarun Gogoi left a significant legacy in Assam's political landscape. How do you aim to honour that legacy while carving out your own path?

A: My father's legacy is a source of inspiration for me, and I'm proud to continue his work. While I may miss his guidance, the goodwill he built among the people in Assam and nationally? of Assam still resonates. I

aim to uphold his values

of service and inclusivity

while addressing the

contemporary challenges

Q: You've been criticized for

your inclusive approach,

particularly regarding religion

in politics. How do you respond

A: I firmly believe in

secularism and the

separation of religion from

Accusations of appeasement

are unfounded and only

serve to distract from the

real issues at hand. My

focus remains on serving

all constituents, regardless

of their religious affiliations.

Q: Looking ahead, what are

your expectations for the

Congress party's performance

in the upcoming elections, both

AJIT MAINDOLA

facing our state.

to such criticisms?

politics.

A: My immediate focus is on securing victory in the Jorhat constituency. Beyond that, I'm optimistic about the Congress party's prospects, especially with a renewed organizational strategy and the support of young voters. We're committed to representing the aspirations of the people and bringing about positive change.

Q: What message would you like to convey to the voters of Jorhat? A: To the voters of Jorhat, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your support and encouragement. Together, we can build a brighter future for our constituency and our state. I'm committed to serving you with honesty, integrity, and dedication. Let's embark on this journey together and create a prosperous Assam for all.

BSP replaces its candidate in Mainpuri against Dimple Yadav

TIKAM SHARMA NEW DELHI

The Bahujan Samai Party (BSP) released its fifth candidate list for the Lok Sabha elections, which are scheduled to be held in seven phases starting from April 19 to June 1, 2024. On Tuesday, the BSP declared 11 candidates for Uttar Pradesh and surprised everyone by changing the candidate in the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat. BSP also announced its candidate for Varanasi. Athar Jamal Lari will contest against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in

BSP replaced Gulshan Dev Shakya and fielded Shiv Prasad Yadav in Mainpuri to contest against the incumbent Samajwadi Party (SP) MP Dimple Yadav, who filed her nomination papers today. On the other hand, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has fielded UP tourism minister

LS polls disturb Congress's aftermath, Opposition status on thin ice

BSP replaced Gulshan Dev Shakya and fielded Shiv Prasad Yadav in Mainpuri to contest against the incumbent Samajwadi Party (SP) MP Dimple Yadav, who filed her nomination papers today.

Jaiveer Singh. According to the party officials, Muslim Khan has been fielded from Budaun and Chhotalal Gangwar from Bareilly. Udraj Verma was awarded the ticket from Sultanpur, and Kranti Pandey is the party candidate from Farrukhabad. Mayank Dwivedi will contest from Banda and Khwaja Samsuddin from Dumariyaganj.

Similarly, Lallan Singh Yadav will contest from Ballia and Srikala Reddy from Jaunpur. Umesh Kumar Singh will contest from Ghazipur against SP candidate and MP Afzal Ansari, while Athar Jamal Lari has been fielded against PM Modi from Varanasi seat. sources said to tackle the

sitting MP of Mainpuri, Dimple Yadav, the BSP has replaced its candidate and fielded Shiv Prasad Yadav by cutting the ticket of Gulshan Dev Shakya's. Further, they said the reason behind changing the candidate was just to woo the Yadav voters of Mainpuri. Uttar Pradesh will go on poll in seven phases. Voting on phases one and two will be held on April 19 and April 26. Next, the state will once again poll in phases three and four on May 7 and May 13. The votes will be counted on

Lok Sabha polls: BJP announces second list of candidates for Punjab

TARUNI GANDHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) unveiled its second list of candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Punjab on Tuesday. The list includes three candidates, notably replacing Union Minister Som Parkash with his wife, Anita Som Parkash, for the Hoshiarpur Lok Sabha seat.

Anita Som Parkash expressed gratitude towards the party leadership for the trust placed in her. The BJP has previously secured victories in Hoshiarpur during the 2014 and 2019 elections. While Vijay Sampla won the seat in 2014, Som Parkash defeated Congress nominee Raj Kumar Chabbewal in

Hoshiarpur was one of

by the BJP in alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). However, the BJP is contesting the 2024 Lok Sabha polls independently.

Anita Som Parkash will

be up against AAP nominee Raj Kumar Chabbewal in the upcoming elections. The Congress and SAD are yet to announce their candidates for the Hoshiarpur seat.

In another significant move, the BJP nominated former IAS officer Parampal Kaur Sidhu for the Bathinda parliamentary seat, currently held by SAD MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Sidhu, daughter-inlaw of senior Akali leader Sinkander Singh Maluka, recently joined the BJP along with her husband Gurpreet Singh Maluka.

Before joining the BJP, Sidhu, a 2011-batch IAS officer, had resigned from her position. She will the seat in 2009, 2014, and 2019. She defeated Congress

Amrinder Warring in the last Lok Sabha elections.

candidate

Additionally, the BJP has fielded former MLA Manjit Singh Manna Mianwind from the Khadoor Sahib Lok Sabha seat, which is currently held by Congress MP Jasbir Singh. The AAP has nominated Laljit Singh

be competing against Congress candidate Jeet Mohinder Sidhu and AAP's Gurmeet Singh Khudian for the Bathinda seat. The SAD is yet to announce its candidate. Bathinda has traditionally been a stronghold for the SAD, with Harsimrat winning

PEOPLE'S Singh Raja MANDATE 2024

Bhullar for this seat.

the Lok Sabha elections, then gle seat is lost, Congress will forfeit its status as the Leader

maintained a stronghold with

55 seats in the Lok Sabha.

Presently, the party holds

29 seats in the Rajya Sabha.

However, with Dheeraj Sahu's

tenure from Jharkhand set to

conclude in May, this number

precariously on the brink

of a miracle. As per all the

latest opinion polls, the BJP

appears poised to secure an-

other resounding victory and

form the government with

an overwhelming majority.

Given this bleak outlook,

Congress's challenges are

The party's fate hangs

will diminish to 28.

The political equation of Congress has become quite jarring with Lok Sabha elections just ahead. Internally, Congress is grappling with of the Opposition in the Rajya infinite issues and by fielding Sabha. Similar to its position the formidable players into in the Lok Sabha, Congress's the fray has somehow stirred standing in the Rajya Sabha the waters even further. will mirror this outcome. Two of the Rajya Sabha Since 2014, Congress has

members, Digvijay Singh and KC Venugopal, contesting Lok Sabha elections is creating a situation

of imbalance when it comes to Rajya Sabha. Moreover, now Deependra

Hooda also wants to try his luck in the Lok Sabha. Congress needs at least 25 members for the post of Leader of Opposition in Rajva Sabha. Now if the party gives tickets to three Congress members Venugopal, Deependra Hooda and Digvijay Singh wins

only set to compound postthis number in Rajya Sabha Foremost among these chalwill automatically reduce. It will become 25. If even a sin-

lenges is the task of preserving the governments in the remaining three states, crucial as they are for securing Rajya Sabha seats in 2026. However, under the prevailing circumstances, even the existing Rajya Sabha members may find their positions compromised.

Internally, Congress is grappling with a multitude of issues. The party finds itself embroiled in dilemmas over several key seats, notably Rae Bareli and Amethi, which traditionally fall under the domain of the Gandhi family. Additionally, the high command is struggling with the contentious issue of ticket distribution.

In states like Delhi, despite securing three seats, discontent festers within the party owing to the considerable effort required to maintain these positions. Similarly, in neighboring Haryana, internal strife exacerbates the high command's woes. Despite being competitive on only two seats in Harvana according to most polls, the situation appears grim for Congress. Of these seats, Rohtak and possibly Hisar seem particularly challenging, with Congress candidates seemingly at a disadvantage against the BJP.

The high command finds itself in a crisis, torn between conflicting factions. Recommendations from former Chief Minister Bhupendra Hooda clash with the preferences of the RSK group comprising Randeep Singh Surjewala, Kumari Selja, and Kiran Choudhary. Numerous meetings have been convened to address these conflicts, but resolution remains elusive.

Central to this crisis is the question of whether to field Deependra Hooda from Rohtak. Deependra's bid for the ticket is fueled by the impending end of his Rajya Sabha tenure in two years. Presently, the situation in Rohtak appears favorable for him, despite his father Bhupendra Hooda's reluctance to contest. The uncertain political landscape post-Lok Sabha elections further complicates matters, with no guarantee of a Congress government's return in Haryana or Deependra's chances of securing a Rajya Sabha ticket in the future.

In light of these uncertainties, Deependra is resolute in his decision to contest from Rohtak. A victory would secure him a five-year tenure and strengthen Rahul's team in the Lok Sabha. However, the high command seems to be in a deadlock, grappling with the implications of such a decision as the dynamics of the Lok Sabha seem poised to influence the Rajya Sabha

No problem with helicopter search...: Abhishek Banerjee People from Haryana have been

PURBA MEDINIPUR (WEST BENGAL)

Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee clarified that the **Election Commission or** the Income Tax is free to search his helicopter but the officials cannot stop them by not permitting the chopper for a trial run even after not finding anything after the search. "I do not have any

problem with search or seizure in the helicopter. The Election Commission can do so. My problem is that even after they did not get anything after the search they did not give permission for the trial run. The Income Tax does not have the authority to do so. We will take it up legally," Banerjee said speaking at a press conference at Tamluk



constituency on Monday.

The Trinamool Congress alleged on Sunday that officials of the Income Tax department raided the helicopter of the party's general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, at Behala Flying Club.

"Five days before elections, hordes of cash are recovered from the cars of BJP leaders in Jalpaiguri. What do Income Tax officials do? Raid Abhishek Banerjee's chopper, while ECIremains a mute targeted the Election Commission over the alleged incident and said that the poll body with the BJP decided to deploy 'minions' of the Income Tax department.

TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee also

spectator. The irony is that all this comes on a day when PM Narendra Modiclaims to fight corruption," Trinamool Congress posted on X. TMC leader Abhishek

Banerjee also targeted the **Election Commission over** the alleged incident and said that the poll body with the BJP decided to deploy 'minions' of the Income Tax department. "Instead of removing the NIA DG and SP, ECI, and BJP chose to deploy MINIONS FROM IT to search and raid my chopper and security personnel today, resulting in NO FINDINGS. The ZAMINDARS can exert all there might but Bengal's SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE

will never waver," he said. However, sources denied any search taking place at the TMC leader's helicopter adding that the "media reports in this regard are completely misleading." "No search/raid or survey or any enforcement action was undertaken by the

Income Tax Department in respect of any helicopter/ aircraft of TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee. Media reports in this regard are completely misleading," the sources said. The sources further said that Behala Flying Club does not have any frisking/ security apparatus or scanner working and this was brought to the notice of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of West Bengal on April 4 by the State Nodal Officer of the Income Tax Department.

During one such routine verification on the basis of ATC information at Behala Flying Club/ Airstrip in Kolkata on April 14, the Quick Response Team (QRT) went to collect certain relevant information from the Aerodrome personnel,

requesting me to contest polls: Vadra

TDG NETWORK NEW DELHI

Congress national general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's husband, Robert Vadra, has hinted about a political debut in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Stating that while he has attempted to stay away from politics he has not ruled out entering the electoral fray if the party feels he can bring about a change. If given a chance, he said he would pick Moradabad and

Harvana to contest from. "I have stayed away from politics, but different political parties wanted to pull me into politics and used tactics to trouble me for being connected to the Gandhi family. I have always been treated as a political tool and a soft target or



hard target whenever there is an election." Vadra said. speaking to ANI on Tuesday.

The son-in-law of Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi said he felt he could give such critics a better response politically as an MP.

"People have felt that I should give them an answer. not as a businessman but as an MP inside the Parliament politically," he said.

"The country wants me to be in active politics. If the Congress party feels that I can bring a change, I will

It is not necessary that I will contest from Amethi. People from Moradabad and Haryana are also requesting me to contest from their constituency," Vadra said. The Congress is yet to

come into active politics.

announce its candidates from Amethi and Raebareli. Rahul Gandhi lost the 2019 Lok Sabha elections to union minister Smriti Irani in Amethi. Responding to a question

about the allegations levelled against him, Vadra said. 'Much time has passed. Whatever allegations they levelled against me were baseless. I have answered all questions before the ED...I have submitted 23,000 documents. I have been been going there for the years and used to stay there for 12-15

AAP completes list with announcement of 4 more LS candidates in Punjab

Kumar Tinu for Jalandhar

TARUNI GANDHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has unveiled its list of Lok Sabha candidates for Punjab, covering all 13 seats up for grabs in the upcoming parliamentary elections. The announcement was made on Tuesday via the party's official Twitter handle.

The list features Jagdeep Singh Kaka Brar for Ferozpur, Amansher Singh for Gurdaspur, Pawan

SC, and Ashok Parashar Papi for Ludhiana. Notably, Tinu, a former leader of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), recently switched allegiance to AAP.

Earlier, in March, the party had announced Gurpreet Singh GP, a former Congress member, as its candidate for Fatehgarh Sahib, while Punjabi actor Karamjeet Anmol was nominated for the Faridkot seat.

The AAP is competing in Punjab without forming any alliances, independently contesting under the opposition I.N.D.I.A bloc. The polling for Punjab's 13 parliamentary seats is

the final phase on June 1. This announcement comes amidst AAP national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's detention in Tihar jail due to his alleged involvement in the Delhi excise policy scam. On Monday, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann

visited Kejriwal in jail.

scheduled to take place in

TDG NETWORK CHERAPUNJI (MEGHALAYA)

India's toughest unmotorable polling station, Nongrait, is ready for polling in the first phase of the Lok Sabha election on April 19.

In Meghalaya, there are over 74 non-motorable polling stations. Nongrait Polling station in East Khasi Hills with 140 voters is close to culturally unique, bioengineering wonder and world-famous doubledecker living root bridge that is accessible only on foot.

The ANI team visited Nongrait village to get a sense of how difficult it is to reach this polling station after crossing two mountains and climbing down 3,400 steps to an insurmountable and pathless place.

Nongrait is a village in the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya State. It is perhaps best known for its living root bridge, an impressive double-decker suspension bridge. The polling station can be reached by passing the double-decker root bridge.



Nongrait: Toughest booth ready for polls on Apr. 19

Tomorrow, i.e., April 17, the polling officials from Cherapunji will reach here with the Electric voting machines (EVM)

The last mile motorable place is Tyrna village, which is 60 kilometres far from Shillong. After reaching Tyrna, one has no option

other than to walk. From Tyrna one has to climb two mountains, crossing a twofoot bridge made with steel wire and two root bridges. The last one is the doubledecker root bridge. The polling station is 50 metres away from this root bridge.

Elbinson, aged 44, whose main occupation is farming, said that polling officials reach here two days before the polling date. According to the voter list of Nongrait village, there are 140 voters in this polling station, named 27 Nongrait polling stations. People vote here very enthusiastically.

He said this place is neglected by politicians. Neither a Member of Parliament nor a Member of the Legislative Assembly take this village seriously. Promises are never met by the politicians.

Elbinson said that Ropeway is the long pending demand of this and other villages but still people are waiting.

"On the name of the building, we have a primary school at the class 5 level and a community hall.

MODI JI CONNECTED HEART-TO-HEART WITH PEOPLE OF TAMIL NADU: ANNAMALAI

Q: What is the peculiarity of South India that it has still been a difficulty, a challenge for the BJP to

penetrate? A: I can't speak for other states. but I can speak definitely for Tamil Nadu because BJP came very late to Tamil Nadu. Jana Sangh, the earlier Jana Sangh was not as strong as Jana Sangh of other parts of our country because Dravidian movement was very strong. And in 1980 when BIP formed as a party and even our first MLA Velayudham in 1996, he contested in some other symbol and he became an MLA.

So if you look at the politics of Tamil Nadu per se, BJP came into the state very late. So Vajpayee ji time, first level of growth we saw. And Modi ii's time, the second level of growth we are seeing.

Only two spots. By the time the Dravidian parties, DMK was in power four times, AIADMK was in power three times, by the time they had a



head start. They had very tall leaders, more grassroots ori-

And people are trusting the leaders here more than the ideology. And if you ask me the difference between AIAD-MK and DMK, there is no difference. But for people, for 40 years they gave one chance here, one chance there just because they liked the leadership of both the parties.

One chance for you, one chance for that. So Tamil Nadu in that way is very peculiar because you see both the parties are exactly similar. Nothing much differentiates with respect to ideology.

Both will oppose threelanguage formula, both will oppose Hindi, both will oppose this, both will oppose that, But AIADMK will say, I am anti-DMK. DMK will say, I am anti-DNK.

Q: It's a very peculiar politics for a long time. Now after Modi ji has come, what happened?

A: Two things happened. And generally Tamil Nadu, the fear of an outsider is built for a long time.

Moment somebody is an outsider, the politicians here smartly make them a villain. They make him a villain. Anything they say out of context, they flip it.

They say, look, look, look, this anti-Tamil. They build that sustained pressure for a year. Magazines, stage speeches, grassroots speeches. They make all great leaders of north as villain because they are an outsider. And Modi ji is the first person to successfully break it. First person to suc-

It's very, very tough for a person not born in Tamil Nadu to get accepted in a rural Tamil Nadu. Impossible. Because

PEOPLE'S

for you, the language itself

is a barrier. If Modi ji speaks

Hindi, you get connected to

80 per cent of India straight

away. But ours is a state where

you have a language barrier.

Then leaders are outsiders.

Then the caste angle comes.

This is a hardcore OBC state

where we have the highest

amount of reservation, 69 per

cent. An anti-Brahmin narra-

tive is built from 1970, 1920

Q: So, in that context, any north

Indian leader fits is finished. So,

for the upcoming Lok Sabha

elections. "Today, I am happy

that my party has directed me

to contest elections from the

Rajgarh seat again. Following

the same, today I have filed

my nomination as a Congress

candidate from the Rajgarh

Lok Sabha seat," Singh told

ANI. Notably, Rajgarh has

been the home seat of Digvi-

jaya Singh. He won in 1984

and 1991, and his brother,

Laxman Singh, held from

1994 to 2004. This time he

will contest against sitting

Meanwhile, when asked

about his efforts to get 400

people to file nominations

so that polls would be held

through ballot paper, the

Congress leader said, "I

wanted the elections to be

conducted through bal-

lot paper because I do not

trust EVMs. But when I

Madhya Pradesh Chief

Minister Mohan Yadav on

Tuesday expressed hap-

piness over Union Home

Minister Amit Shah's visit

to the state saying they are

fortunate that the latter is

CM Yadav also showed

confidence in winning the

Chhindwara parliamentary

seat in the upcoming Lok

"We are fortunate that

Union Home Minister Amit

Shah is coming to Chhind-

wara this evening. We are

continuously receiving

good news from Chhind-

wara. In the upcoming Lok

Sabha elections, BJP is go-

ing to win the Chhindwara

seat. BJP workers and lead-

ers are preparing for the

Union Home Minister's

roadshow in Chhindwara.'

Union Minister Shah is

scheduled to visit Chhind-

wara on Tuesday evening

and will hold a roadshow

in support of BJP candidate

Vivek Bunty Sahu. Sahu is

contesting against former

CM Kamal Nath's son Na-

the CM told ANI.

kul Nath.

arriving here.

Sabha elections.

BIP MP Rodmal Nagar.

onwards.

TDG NETWORK

MANDATE

2024

Modi ji broke everything. How? A: Only by connecting to people heart-to-heart. And when people say, oh, Modi ji is doing Kashi Tamil Sangamam just

because he wants votes. No. Modi ji is doing Kashi Tamil Sangamam because he connected heart to heart with Tamil people, Saurashtra Tamil San-

gamam, Sengol in Parliament. Modi ji talking about Tirukkural, Modi ji taking Tamil language to the globe. And Modi ji visits, even in his anashtanam, two days spending in Tamil Nadu. And highlighting Manikibath, normal Tamil. So, it took him that much effort over 10 years, sustained effort, without giving up. Simply not giving up. 10 years consistent effort, it made the Tamil people to say, oh, he's our person.

NDA cares about people, DMK is corrupt party: JP Nadda

TDG NETWORK TENKASI

While holding a roadshow in Tamil Nadu's Tenkasi, BJP national president JP Nadda launched a scathing attack on Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) calling it a "corrupt" party.

"On one side, we have the NDA, which cares about the people, while on the other side, we have the corrupt DMK. DMK stands for D-Dynastic Politics M- Money laundering K- katta Panchayat," he lashed out.

Notably, in Tenkasi, the BJP's ally, John Pandian of Tamizhaga Makkal Munnerra Kazhagam, is contesting under the BJP's Lotus

Hailing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, he said, "The central share for Tamil Nadu has been increased by four times by PM Modi. 12,000 km of roads are being constructed in the rural area...11 medical

colleges have been opened..." Notably, the INDIA bloc in Tamil Nadu is led by the DMK and includes the Congress, Left parties, IUML, VCK, actor-politician Ka-

community-based KMDK. The principal opposition party in the state, AIADMK, which recently severed its tie with the BJP, has put together an alliance of minor parties, including the DMDK, Puthiya Tamilagam (PT) and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI). In the

mal Haasan's MNM, Vaiko's

MDMK, and the Gounder

2019 elections, the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance secured an overwhelming victory, winning 38 out of 39 seats.

All 39 seats in Tamil Nadu will vote in a single phase on April 19 and the counting of votes will be held on June 4. Tamil Nadu ranks fifth in terms of Lok Sabha seats, with 39 seats, including 32 unreserved seats and seven reserved for SC candidates.

The election for 543 Lok Sabha seats in the country will be held in seven phases starting April 19.

As polling for LS elections nears in TN, CM Stalin holds roadshow in North Chennai constituency

TDG NETWORK CHENNAI

As the polling for the 2024 Lok Sabha election nears in Tamil Nadu, the state's Chief Minister and DMK president MK Stalin held a roadshow and door-to-door campaign in Kolathur, Chennai, on Tuesday.

Stalin, along with DMK's candidate from the North Chennai Lok Sabha constituency, Kalanidhi Veeraswamy, were seen distributing the party's pamphlet to people, soliciting votes before they held the road-

Hundreds of DMK workers and supporters turned up for the roadshow, with many holding the party's flags and placards featuring the chief minister's picture. Stalin and Veeraswamy greeted the people, who were standing on either side of the road, from an open vehicle as it passed slowly.

In the North Chennai Lok Sabha constituency, Veeraswamy is pitted against AID-MK's Royapuram Manohar and BJP's Rc Paul Kanagaraj.

The constituency is one of the strongholds of the DMK, with the party winning eleven times between 1957 and



The INDIA bloc in Tamil Nadu is led by the DMK and includes the Congress, Left parties, IUML, VCK, actor-politician Kamal Haasan's MNM, Vaiko's MDMK, and the Gounder community-based KMDK.

elections, DMK candidate Kalanidhi Veeraswamy won Mohan Rai came in second with 129,468 votes, and Makkal Needhi Maiam's AG Mourya came in third with 103,167 votes.

The INDIA bloc in Tamil Nadu is led by the DMK and includes the Congress, Left parties, IUML, VCK, actorpolitician Kamal Haasan's MNM, Vaiko's MDMK, and

Supreme Court: DK Shivakumar

In the 2019 Lok Sabha AIADMK, which recently severed its tie with the BJP, has put together an alliance of this seat, securing 5,90,986 minor parties, including the votes. DMDK candidate R DMDK, Puthiya Tamilagam (PT) and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI).

> The BJP has aligned with a handful of regional parties, including Vanniyar caste leader S Ramadoss's PMK, former AIADMK leader T T V Dhinakaran's AMMK, former Congress leader G K Vasan's Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) (TMC-

from MP's Rajgarh seat came to know that if there are more than 384 people, the Election Commission Former Chief Minister of will set up a control unit Madhya Pradesh and Conand conduct the elections. gress' stalwart Digvijaya So I thought again and said, Singh filed nomination pawe will contest the election with EVMs.' pers from the Rajgarh parliamentary seat on Tuesday

(Concluded)

Congress leader Digvijaya

Singh files nomination

Each EVM can have a maximum of 384 candidates, including NOTA, per constituency. A total of 16 candidates, including NOTA, can appear on one ballot unit and 24 such units can be connected simultaneously to the control unit. Singh also took a dig at

Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his remarks on electoral bonds. "Three-four things have come to light after the electoral bonds were exposed. Firstly, they (BJP) took donations from beef exporting companies. Secondly, the people who were making fake medicines were first arrested and then released after taking money and electoral bonds. Thirdlv. there are about 300 such cases where companies were raided by ED and CBI and freed after taking electoral bond money.

Madhya Pradesh: Jyotiraditya Scindia files nomination for Guna LS seat

TDG NETWORK

Union Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Jyotiraditya Scindia filed his nomination papers for the Guna parliamentary seat on Tuesday for the upcoming Lok Sabha elec-

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, former CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and state BJP chief VD Sharma were also present on the occasion.

Scindia also held a roadshow ahead of filing his nomination for the upcoming LS polls. Earlier in the day, the BJP nominee offered prayers at Hanuman Temple ahead of filing his nomination

After worshipping, Scindia told ANI. "I have just taken the blessings of the 'Tekri sarkar' and now we are moving forward on the path of public service."

The Congress party has fielded Rao Yadavendra Singh against Scindia for the seat.

The Guna Lok Sabha an internal party strugconstituency in Madhya

Pradesh has long been synonymous with the Scindia familys political dominance. It is regarded as their stronghold, second only to Gwalior, and has been represented by prominent Scindia family members over the years. Notably, Vijavaraje Scindia, Madhavrao Scindia,

and Jyotiraditya Scindia have all seen electoral success here. Jyotiraditya Scindia of the Congress emerged victorious in this time, while the rival four elections here before losing to BJP's Krishnapal Singh Yadav in 2019 Lok Sabha polls by 1.25 lakh

Scindia's defeat on his own turf by 1.25 lakh votes set in motion a series of events, including gle, eventually resulting in Scindia's exit from the party in 2020.

He took 22 MLAs with him, causing the collapse of the then Congress government led by Kamal Nath that had come to power in 2018. The BJP brought Scindia into Parliament via the Rajya Sabha and made him a Union minister.

Scindia is contesting again from the same Guna seat on the BJP symbol congress candidate Rao Yadvendra Singh is also a former BJP leader and is contesting against the union minister. Guna will go to the polls in the third phase on May 7, along with eight other parliamentary seats in the state.

BJP is going to win Chhindwara M), Indhiya Jananayaga the Gounder communityseat, says MP CM Mohan Yadav Katchi (IJK), and Puthiya based KMDK. The principal opposition party in the state, Neethi Katchi. We all have to bow to decision of **TDG NETWORK**

TDG NETWORK

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shiyakumar on Tuesday said that the verdict of Supreme Court on the matter of electoral bonds should be respected as "it is the highest body and has to be respected".

The remarks came after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in an interview with ANI, accused the opposition parties of "spreading lies" over the electoral bonds scheme and said "everyone will regret it when there is an honest reflection".

Speaking to ANI, DK Shivakumar said, "The Supreme Court has given the decision. We all have to bow to the decision of the Supreme Court because that is the highest body which we all have to respect. So I hope everyone in this country will respect and accept the decision on the verdict of the Supreme Court.'

The Supreme Court in February this year struck down



said it was unconstitutional.

In its decision, the Supreme Court asked the SBI to stop issuing electoral bonds. In compliance with a directive from the Supreme Court, the Election Commission of India (ECI) uploaded data on electoral bonds on its official website. The data was provided by the State Bank of India (SBI) on the directions of the apex court.

In an interview with ANI, PM Modi said the electoral bonds scheme was aimed at curbing black money in elections and said the opposition wants to run away

He said of the 16 compa-

nies that gave donations when action was taken by probe agencies, only 37 per cent of the amount went to the BJP and 63 per cent to opposition parties opposed to the BIP. "This is the success story

of electoral bonds, there were electoral bonds, so you are getting a trail which company gave, how it gave, and where it gave. Whether what happened in the process was good or bad can be an issue of debate....I never say that there is no shortcoming in decision-making.

Chhindwara is a hot seat in the state and it is considered a stronghold of Congress stalwart Kamal Nath. The former CM's son Nakul Nath is contesting from the seat and it was the only seat that the Congress managed to win in the previous 2019 general elections in the

This time, the BJP is leaving no stone unturned to win the Chhindwara Lok Sabha in the upcoming polls. Chhindwara will go to polls in the first phase on April 19 with five other parliamentary seats in the state.

Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh will be

CM Yadav also showed confidence in winning the Chhindwara parliamentary seat in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

conducted in four phases. 7 and May 13.

Madhya Pradesh has a maining 19 are unreserved.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha

The first phase of polling would be held on April 19, followed by April 26, May

total of 29 Lok Sabha constituencies, making it the sixth-largest state in terms of parliamentary representation. Out of these, 10 seats are reserved for SC and ST candidates, while the re-

Elections, the BJP secured a massive victory in Madhva Pradesh, winning 28 out of the 29 seats. The **Indian National Congress** (INC) managed to win only one seat.

Indo-Nepal border sealed, movement closed till April 19: Uttarakhand Electoral Officer

TDG NETWORK

Ahead of the voting for five Lok Sabha seats in Uttarakhand on April 19, the state's Chief Electoral Officer, BVR Purushottam, gave details on the arrangements and said that the Indo-Nepal border will be sealed from today and cross-border movement of people will be closed till April 19.

Speaking to ANI, BVR Purushottam said, "On April 19, the first round of voting will take place in 21 states. In Uttarakhand also, the election is in the first phase. Indo-Nepal border will be sealed today and cross-border movement of people will be closed till 6:00 pm on April 19."

The election officer further added, "This time, a good thing is that along with UP, seven more bordering districts are witnessing elections together with Uttarakhand... This time, we have got around 60 companies of paramilitary forces for elections. And we believe that we will conduct peaceful elections."

The officer also talked about directing the political parties and candidates to stop their campaigning two days before the voting and assured that there would be no breach of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). "We have directed all candidates to stop campaigning 48 hours before the polling. Static and surveillance teams will be conducting thorough checks. We will ensure that there is no violation of MCC.

Purushottam also informed on the status of election officers leaving for the polling booths and said that the team for 12 polling booths are leaving today. "Election officers for 12 polling booths, 11 in Uttarkashi and one in Pithoragarh, are leaving for their respective booths due to the location of these booths. Tomorrow, 700 teams will go to their respective areas and on the last day before the elections, on April 18, 11,000 election officers will leave for their designated areas." When asked about the recovery of drugs and other alcoholic substances before the elections, the officer admitted that the issue is of concern and informed about the drugs and other narcotic substances seized by the authority. "This time, before three to four days of the election, we have seized drugs and other narcotic substances worth Rs 17 crore."

Not correct to take steps that can overlap legal process: ECI

TDG NETWORK

Amid the Opposition charge of being targeted by central probe agencies in the poll season, the Election Commission on Tuesday said it is committed to protecting level playing field but asserted that it is not correct to take any step that can overlap the legal and judicial process.

Several political parties from the INDIA bloc had approached the poll panel seeking its intervention in the alleged misuse of probe agencies by the government to target their leaders over

Following the arrest of

Kejriwal by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise scam, the opposition parties had mounted renewed attack on the government for its alleged bid to silence their leaders ahead of parliamentary elections.

it was guided by constitutional wisdom when presented with "live situations" involving political persons which have been under active consideration and orders of the courts based on criminal investigations.

In a statement, the EC said

"While the Commission remained unwaveringly committed to protection of level playing field and campaign entitlement of political parties and candidates, it has not found it correct to take any step that could overlap or overrun the legal judicial process," it said.

The poll panel said though it is not obliged to do so, it has put in public domain, for the first time, its enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during first month of its operation, along with details of action taken.

The EC said its move will help address and stop "misgivings and insinuations" coming from certain quarters, "however small or lim-

During the one-month period of the model code, 16 delegations from seven political parties met the com-



mission to lodge their complaints on alleged violations of poll code and related matters. Many delegations met its chief electoral officers at the state level.

The total number of com-Nearly 200 complaints

action has been taken in 38 cases. Similarly, 59 complaints were lodged by the Congress, with action taken in 51 cases. Complaints received from other parties were 90, out of which action has been taken in 80 cases. the EC added. The poll code came into

plaints received from the

BJP were 51, out of which

force on March 16 with the announcement of the Lok Sabha election schedule.

With a month completed since the model code came into effect, the EC said it is "broadly satisfied" with the compliance of the code by political parties. The campaign by various parties and candidates has remained "largely clutter free", it added.

At the same time, the commission said it has decided to keep under strict watch some disturbing trends and to keep special track of certain deviant candidates, leaders, and practices more than ever before.

The EC also underlined that while enforcing the model code, it has been guided by its mandated responsibility, legal premises, institutional wisdom, equality, and transparency in dealings and irrespective of status and influence of persons concerned and irrespective of political affiliations.

The poll panel also asserted that all political parties have been treated at par and time given to all even at short notice and their grievances heard patiently.

It listed out various complaints made by the Congress, BJP and AAP on which it took action, including lodging of FIRs against leaders and issuing censures to them for poll code violations. The EC also highlighted that it took a firm stand on upholding dignity and honour of women by issuing notices to leaders of parties who made derogatory and offensive remarks against women. It held party presidents accountable for leaders and campaigners making disrespectful and derogatory

Do not try to bring down system, says SC on plea for VVPAT

TDG NETWORK

The Supreme Court on Tuesday, while hearing pleas seeking cross-verification of the votes cast with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) raised doubts about the petitioners' contentions about the feasibility of the physical counting of votes given the large population of India. A bench of Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Dipankar Datta was not convinced with advocate Prashant Bhushan's arguments to go back to election via ballot paper instead of **Electronic Voting Machines**

Justice Sanjiv Khanna said, "We are in our 60s. We all know what happened when there were ballot papers; you may have, but we have not forgotten."

The apex court rejected the arguments of Bhushan, appearing for the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), about how most European countries that had opted for voting through EVMs have returned to paper ballots.

As Bhushan cited what's Germany's example, the bench asked about the population of the country, to which advocate replied that it is around five-six crore.

Justice Khanna said that 97 crore is the total number of registered voters in India.

"My home state, West Bengal, has more population than Germany. We need to repose some trust and faith on somebody. Do not try to bring down the system like this," Justice Datta told petitioners' counsels.

The bench also said that human intervention in the polling and counting process could lead to further problems and biases.

It added, "Normally, human interventions lead to problems and human weakness can be there which includes biases as well. Machines, normally without human intervention, will give you accurate results. Yes, the problem

arises when there is human intervention or someone makes unauthorised changes when they are around the software or machine. If you have any suggestions to avert this, then you can give us that.

The apex court now posted the case for hearing on April 18. During the hearing, the top court also posed some questions to the Election Commission of India (ECI) and asked whether CCTV cameras are installed at all polling booths. The official of ECI present through videoconferencing told the bench that CCTV cameras are installed in 50 percent of polling booths.

Surjewala banned from campaigning

TDG NETWORK

pointed out.

have been filed by various

political parties and candi-

dates at the level of EC and

across states. Of these, action

has been taken in 169 cases, it

The Election Commission on Tuesday banned Congress leader Randeep Surjewala from campaigning for 48-hours over his alleged "derogatory remarks" against Bharatiya Janata Party MP Hema Malini.

ECI bars Randeep Surjewala from holding any rally, public appearances and interview

The poll body issued a show-cause notice to Surjewala for allegedly making "vulgar" remarks about Hema Malini.

"Now, therefore, the Commission without prejudice to any Order/Notice issued or to be issued subsequently to him in the matter relating to MCC violations, hereby, strongly condemns the impugned statement made by him during election campaign held in Haryana and reprimands Randeep Singh Surjewala for the above said misconduct," the Election Commission stated.

"The Commission, under Article 324



of the Constitution of India and all other powers enabling in this behalf, bars him from holding any public meetings, public processions, public rallies, road shows and interviews, public utterances in media (electronic, print, social media) etc. in connection with ongoing elections for 48 hours from 06:00 pm on 16th April, 2024 (Tuesday)," it

"Whereas, the Commission had issued a show cause Notice No. 437/6/ COMP/ECI/LET/FUNCT/MCC/2024, dated 9th March, 2024 to Randeep Singh Surjewala for violation of the aforesaid provisions of Model Code of Conduct for making the above-quoted statement," it stated.

"Whereas, a reply dated 11th April, 2024 has been received from Shri Randeep Singh Surjewala in response to the Commission's above said notice wherein he has inter alia, claimed that the video cited by the complainant allegedly containing aforesaid utterances was a doctored video," it said.

The Election Commission further said that the Commission received a complaint dated April 5 wherein it was alleged that Randeep Singh Surjewala had made the following "sexist, vulgar and unethical" public utterances against the dignity of BJP Member of Parliament, Hema Malini while campaigning in Haryana.

repeated auctions was around

Rs 2.2 lakh.

Danish Ahmad is the young man who sealed the deal on

day three of the auction. A twelfth grader, Ahman is a busi-

"We are desperate to complete the construction of this mosque.

passion and emotion towards the sacred space that I did this.

is enough for me". However, Danish said the people must help the village conclude the construction of this mosque.

"My mother hugged me and said you have done great. That

Malpora is located on the road from Sopore to Bandipore,

29 Naxals killed ahead of polls

CONTINUED FROM P1

(EVMs)

prima facie it seems senior cadres of the north Bastar division of the CPI (Maoist) were are among them, Sundarraj added.

Sources in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said three security personnel -- two BSF inspectors and one DRG trooper -- were in-

jured in the gunfight. "The operation was launched on late evening of April 15 based on various inputs of Maoists' movement in Binagunda and adjoining areas. We shared five inputs, including two inputs giving the exact location of the North Bastar division committee of Maoists in Binagunda area, underlining the fact that it acted like a permanent camp of Maoists since April 5," they

Shankar and Lalita, both divisional committee members of the north Bastar division of Maoists, are believed to be amongst the deceased, the sources added.

After the latest encounter, 79 Naxalites have been killed in separate gun-battles with security forces in the Bastar region, comprising seven districts, including Kanker, so far this year.

On April 2, as many as 13 Naxalites were killed, while six Maoists were gunned down on March 27 in encounters with security forc-

Terming the encounter as a "surgical strike" by the Bastar police on Naxalism, deputy CM Sharma said, "It was for the first time on the anti-Naxal front that in a face-to-face fight, security forces were completely dominant over Naxalites and did not give them a chance to recover.

"We want talks (with Naxalites)....whether they do it in a group or through representatives. Bastar needs peace. We are committed to this," he added.

The operation was conducted in an area of Abhuimaad (a Maoist stronghold), which falls in southern part of Kanker district and northern part of neighbouring Narayanpur district wherein 29 Naxalites were gunned down, Sharma said.

"The credit for this successful operation goes to security forces. This has been possible due to the strength and courage of soldiers. We are working under the guidance of Union Home Minister Amit Shah ji and the leadership of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai," Sharma

Tuesday's operation has boosted the morale of security forces, he maintained.

Ever since the 'double engine' government (BJP in power at the Centre and a state) has taken office in Chhattisgarh, positive things have happened on the anti-Naxal front, the state home minister noted.

New security camps have been set up in the den of Naxalites in the Bastar region as part of a strategy to root out the menace, the deputy CM emphasised.

In four months, around 80 Naxalites have been killed in separate encounters with security forces, he added.

Sharma reiterated his government is committed to restore peace in Bastar. The people of Bastar should get clean drinking water, electricity and benefits of devel-

Dissent in Congress

CONTINUED FROM P1

don for the Chandigarh Lok Sabha Constituency.

The decision was announced by the Congress' central election committee following a meeting in Delhi, where Tewari's name unveiled. Tewari, along with former Chandigarh MP Pawan Kumar Bansal and Chandigarh Congress

president Harmohinder Singh Lucky, had been contenders for the party ticket from Chandigarh.

In line with the seat-sharing agreement within the INDIA bloc, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had previously fielded its candidate in the Chandigarh mayoral elections, paving the way for the Congress to nominate Tewari as the joint candidate representing both parties in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

A Chandigarh native, 58-year-old Tewari completed his schooling at St. John's High School in Sector and obtained his Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the Uni-

It has been waiting to have its roof completed but the Jamia is ics from DAV College (Panslightly bigger and requires good money," Danish said, speaking from Warpora, the neighbouring village, where he runs a jab University), Chandigarh, solar appliances shop. "I am not a rich man but it was just the

26, earned a BA in Economversity of Delhi.

Six people killed as boat capsizes

He blamed the government for not being able to complete the construction of the bridge which had been started during the NC government of Omar

Expressing deep sorrow. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha extended condolences to the families of the deceased and assured

bench informed senior ad-

granted them a week and

scheduled the next hearing

During the proceedings,

the bench engaged with

Ramdev and Balkrishna,

questioning their breach of

court orders and undertak-

"Baba Ramdev and Acha-

rya Balkrishna, you both

hold significant stature...

people admire your work.

You've made significant con-

tributions to Yoga," Justice

Kohli remarked to Ramdev.

Ramdev, expressing regret

in Hindi, stated, "I have ten-

dered an unconditional and

CONTINUED FROM P1

resenting the duo.

for April 23.

comprehensive support to those affected. He emphasized the administration's commitment to providing medical care to the injured and aid to the families coping with loss.

Efforts by river police and other agencies managed to rescue several individuals, who were immediately transported to a nearby

unqualified apology for any

mistakes I may have com-

hospital for treatment. As per the latest updates from officials, six fatalities have been confirmed while others are receiving medical attention.

The administration has initiated an investigation into the tragic incident, with a case registered to ascertain the circumstances leading to the boat capsizing.

(With Agency inputs)

barely 4 km away from the main town. "We may be around 250 households in this village. We work hard in orchards and earn but we do not fall in a rich village category." he said. Rupee plunges to

Egg fetches Rs 2.26

lakh in auction

CONTINUED FROM P1

CONTINUED FROM P1

March 22 this year. On Monday, the rupee declined 6 paise to settle at 83.44 against the US dollar.

lowest level

According to Anuj Choudhary Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, the 10-year US bond yields rose to 4.66 per cent, the highest since November 2023. Weak domestic markets and simmering geopolitical tensions too weighed on the rupee.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.02 per cent higher at 106.23.

The US dollar rose to a five-month high, following weak yuan, retail sales and safe-haven demand amid Iran-Israel tensions, Choudharv added.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.40 per cent to USD 89.74 per barrel.

"We expect the rupee to remain weak amid ongoing geopolitical uncertainties which could impact risk

currencies and a surge in the US dollar. Rising global crude oil prices and a surge in US treasury yields amid expectations of a delay in rate cut in the US may also pressurise the rupee. Markets will take cues from Israel's response to the attack by Iran.

"Any further escalation would strengthen the dollar, while any signs of de-escalation would lead to some easing. Traders may take cues from building permits; housing starts and industrial production data from the US. USD/INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.30 to Rs 83.80," Choudhary added.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex declined 456.10 points, or 0.62 per cent, to settle at 72,943.68 points. The Nifty fell 124.60 points, or 0.56 per cent, to close at 22,147.90 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Tuesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 4,468.09 crore, according to exchange data.

IMF raises India growth estimate

CONTINUED FROM P1

tina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Turkiye (henceforth G20 emerging markets) have continued to integrate into the global economy--notably through trade and global value chains.

According to India's official data, it grew at a massive 8.4 per cent during the October-December quarter of the financial year 2023-24 and the country continued to remain the fastest-growing major economy. The Indian economy grew 7.8 per cent and 7.6 per cent during the preceding two quarters - April-June and July-September.

India's economy grew 7.2 per cent in 2022-23 and 8.7 per cent in 2021-22, respec-

Overall, the IMF pegged global growth at 3.2 per cent in 2024 and 2025, respec-

It noted that the global economy remains remarkably resilient, with growth holding steady as inflation returns to target.

"The journey has been eventful, starting with supply-chain disruptions in the aftermath of the pandemic, a Russian-initiated war on Ukraine that triggered a global energy and food crisis, and a considerable surge in inflation, followed by a globally synchronized monetary policy tighten-Despite many gloomy pre-

dictions, the world avoided a recession, the banking system proved largely resilient, and major emerging market economies did not suffer sudden stops, the IMF said. On a year-overyear basis, global growth bottomed out at the end of 2022, at 2.3 percent.

SC on Ramdev's apology

vocate Mukul Rohatgi, repmitted." Addressing Ramdev's Acknowledging Rohatgi's press conference following submission that Ramdev the court's November 21 orand Balkrishna intend to der, Justice Kohli inquired about the disregard for the take unilateral steps to redeem themselves, the bench assurances given by Patan-

> jali's counsel Ramdev clarified that there was no intention to disrespect the court and attributed the actions to enthusiasm for their work.

gised for the oversight. The bench reiterated that disparaging allopathy was unacceptable, emphasizing the importance of respecting all medical systems.

Balkrishna also apolo-

Despite the apology, the bench expressed scepticism, particularly when Balkrishna attempted to distance Ramdev from the firm's daily operations.

Justice Amanullah rebuked Balkrishna for his stance, questioning the sincerity of the apology.

genuine remorse. The bench urged Ramdev and Balkrishna to step forward, emphasizing the im-

the matter. Ramdev clarified that the

Ramdev and Balkrishna had previously tendered

their affidavits and criticized the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority for inaction on the matter.

Rohatgi reiterated their willingness to issue a public apology to demonstrate

portance of their words in

conflict between medical systems wasn't intended to disrespect allopathy.

unconditional apologies for the misleading advertise-However, the bench expressed dissatisfaction with

DISAPPOINTMENT WRIT LARGE AFTER CONG TICKET DISTRIBUTION

AJIT MAINDOLA

The political equation of Congress has become quite jarring with Lok Sabha elections just ahead. Internally, Congress is grappling with infinite issues and by fielding the formidable players into the fray has somehow, stirred the waters even further. Two of the Rajya Sabha members Digvijay Singh and KC Venugopal contesting Lok Sabha elections creating a situation of imbalance when it comes to Rajya Sabha. Moreover, now Deependra Hooda also wants to try his luck in the Lok Sabha. Congress needs at least 25 members for the post of Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha. Now if the party gives tickets to three Congress members Venugopal, Deependra Hooda and Digvijay Singh wins the Lok Sabha elections, then this number in Rajya Sabha will automatically reduce. It will become 25. If even a single seat is lost, Congress will forfeit its status as the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha. Similar to its position in the Lok Sabha, Congress' standing in the Rajya Sabha will mirror this outcome. Since 2014, Congress has



maintained a stronghold with 55 seats in the Lok Sabha. Presently, the party holds 29 seats in the Rajva Sabha However, with Dheeraj Sahu's tenure from Jharkhand set to conclude in May, this number will diminish to 28.

The party's fate hangs precariously on the brink of a miracle. As per all the latest opinion polls, the BJP appears poised to secure another resounding victory and form the government with an overwhelming majority. Given this bleak outlook, Congress' challenges are only set to compound post-June 4.

Foremost among these challenges is the task of preserving the governments in the remaining three states, crucial as they are for securing Rajya Sabha seats in 2026. However, under the prevailing circumstances, even the existing Rajya Sabha members may find their

positions compromised.

Internally, Congress is grappling with a multitude of issues. The party finds itself embroiled in dilemmas over several key seats, notably Rae Bareli and Amethi, which traditionally fall under the domain of the Gandhi family. Additionally, the high command is struggling with the contentious issue of ticket distribution.

In states like Delhi, despite securing three seats, discontent festers within the party owing to the considerable effort required to maintain these positions. Similarly, in neighboring Haryana, internal strife exacerbates the high command's woes. Despite being competitive on only two seats in Harvana according to most polls, the situation appears grim

breaks out at North Block, no casualties for Congress. Of these seats. Rohtak and possibly Hisar **TDG NETWORK** seem particularly challeng-

ing, with Congress candi-

dates seemingly at a disad-

The high command finds

itself in a crisis, torn between

conflicting factions. Recom-

mendations from former

Chief Minister Bhupendra

Hooda clash with the pref-

erences of the RSK group -

comprising Randeep Singh

Surjewala, Kumari Selja,

and Kiran Choudhary. Nu-

merous meetings have been

convened to address these

conflicts, but resolution re-

Central to this crisis is the

question of whether to field

Deependra Hooda from

Rohtak. Deependra's bid

for the ticket is fueled by

the impending end of his

Rajya Sabha tenure in two

years. Presently, the situa-

tion in Rohtak appears fa-

vorable for him, despite his

father Bhupendra Hooda's

reluctance to contest. The

uncertain political land-

scape post-Lok Sabha elec-

tions further complicates

matters, with no guarantee

of a Congress government's

return in Haryana or Deep-

endra's chances of securing

a Rajya Sabha ticket in the

mains elusive.

vantage against the BJP.

A minor fire broke out on Tuesday on the second floor of the North Block, located in the high-security Raisina

Minor fire

The building houses the Ministries of Home Affairs and Personnel.

The fire brigade received information at around 9:22 am. Seven fire tenders were rushed to the spot to douse the blaze. According to the sources, no casualties were reported, and the blaze was brought under control.

"Some furniture has been burned. The exact cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, "the sources said.

Further details are awaited. Fire safety regulations in India are primarily governed by the National Building Code (NBC), which provides guidelines for fire prevention and safety measures in buildings. Additionally, various state governments may have their own regulations and guidelines related to fire safety. National Building Code (NBC): The NBC provides comprehensive guidelines for fire prevention, fire protection, and life safety measures in buildings.

Obtained all requisite sanction in NewsClick case: Police

TDG NETWORK **NEW DELHI**

The Delhi Police on Tuesday informed the Patiala House Court of Delhi that it has obtained all the requisite sanction under section 45 of UAPA and under Section 196 CrPC for the prosecution of the accused in the NewsClick Case.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN REVIEW WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL 2024

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Special Cell, through Special Public Prosecutor Akhand Pratap Singh, submitted that all the sanction orders have been obtained, in total, there are three different sanction orders which are being filed in the form of supplementary chargesheet under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Noted the submissions, the Additional Sessions Judge, Dr Hardeep Kaur, deferred the matter for April 30, 2024, on the point of cognizance of chargesheet filed in the case and said she will have to read the chargesheet to take cognizance.

The chargesheet has been filed by Special Cell of Delhi Police recently in Patiala House Court and contained nearly 8,000 pages with annexures.

Special Public Prosecutors Advocate Akhand Pratap



Singh and Suraj Rathi apprised the court that the chargesheet named Prabir Purkayastha and PPK Newsclick Studio Pvt Ltd as an accused.

According to Delhi Police, a chargesheet has been filed against Newsportal Newsclick and its founder, Prabir Purkavastha, in a case registered under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, following allegations that News Portal received huge money for pro-China propaganda.

In the matter, Newsclick HR Head Amit Chakraborty has been turned approver in the case.

Prabir Purkayastha, founder and editor-in-chief of NewsClick, along with the head of its human resources department, Amit Chakravarty, were arrested in the case on October 3, 2023. Both were arrested under stringent provisions of the UAPA under sections 13, 16, 17, 18, and 22 of the UAPA, along with IPC sections 153A and 120B.

The Delhi Police FIR stated that foreign funds in crores have been infused illegally in India by Indian and foreign entities inimical to India in pursuance of a conspiracy to disrupt the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, to cause disaffection against India and to threaten the unity, integrity, and security of India.

The Delhi Police's Special Cell, in its FIR against news web portal NewsClick's founder and Editor-in-Chief Prabir Purkayastha, stated that People's Dispatch Portal, owned and maintained by M/S PPK Newsclick Studio Pvt. Ltd., has been used for intentionally peddling false narratives through paid news in lieu of crores of Rupees of illegally routed foreign funds as part of con-

Civil Services: Jamia Millia come off with flying colours

TDG NETWORK NEW DELHI

As many as 31 students from the Residential Coaching Academy (RCA), Centre for Coaching and Career Planning, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), cleared the Civil Services Main Exam, 2023.

A total of 71 students from RCA appeared in the interview, of whom 31 got se-

Out of the 31 selected candidates, some are expected to get IAS and IPS, and the remaining candidates are likely to get IRS, Audit and Account Service, IRTS and other allied services of Group-A as per their ranking and choices.

Nausheen, who secured the All India 9th rank, is the best performer from the RCA this year, the institution said.

The RCA is funded by the **University Grants Commis**sion (UGC) to provide free coaching and residential fa-



cilities to students preparing for civil service exams.

the UGC under the aegis of Centre for Coaching and Career Planning (CC&CP), IMI provides free coaching, and residential facilities to students of SC, ST, women, and minorities for civil services and other competitive examinations. Students are selected for comprehensive coaching on the basis of an all-India written test followed by individual interviews.

"This is a matter of great happiness for us. As many as 11 are women and 20

men. Here at the institution, mentoring is done at a very Established in 2010 by good level," Prof Samina Bano, Officiating Director, Academic Counsellor, RCA, Jamia, said.

> Prerna Singh, a student of RCA, Jamia Millia Islamia, who scored rank 271 in the UPSC 2023 exam, expressed her happiness. "This was my fourth attempt. I am happy and grateful. There are stages that are disheartening, but in the end, it's all about why you decided to go for it in the first place. My friends and mother have motivated me a lot for each attempt I have

Court seeks ED's response on Kejriwal's plea for doctor consultation

TDG NETWORK

Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court on Tuesday issued notice to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on a plea filed by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal seeking to consult his regular doctor via video conference.

Kejriwal, in his plea to Special Judge Rakesh Syal, mentioned that his blood sugar levels are fluctuating and expressed his desire to seek advice from his usual physician.

The judge ordered the ED to present its reply by April 18, the date when the court is expected to address the

The ED's counsel, in opposition to his plea, contended that essential facilities for such patients exist in jail and he can undergo examination there. "Why is the ED opposing if I (Kejriwal) am



taking care of my health?" questioned Kejriwal's counsel. The court, on Monday, extended Kejriwal's judicial custody in the money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam until April 23. He remains incarcerated in Tihar jail.

The AAP leader has been accused by the ED of being involved in the "entire conspiracy of Delhi liquor scam, in drafting and implementation of the policy, for favoring and benefiting from the quid pro, receiving kickbacks and eventually using part of proceeds of crime generated out of the scheduled offence in the campaign for Goa Assembly elections."

Two robbers nabbed after encounter in Greater Noida, jewellery recovered

TDG NETWORK
GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR

During police checking on April 15, the service road near Chuharpur underpass in Greater Noida witnessed an encounter between the Beta-2 police team and robbers. Two miscreants,

Guddu, a resident of Nangla Pankhian village in Shahiahanpur, and Babu, a resident of Jabar Park in Delhi, have been arrested. The police also recovered

a bag full of stolen jewellery, two illegal pistols with four live and one spent cartridge of 0.315 bore, as well as items like auto, screwdrivers, pliers, etc. used in the incident from the possession of the miscreants.

According to the police, the miscreants had fired on the police team with the intention of killing. The team retaliated and the miscreant Guddu got injured. The iniured criminal has been sent to the hospital for treatment. Two other accused have fled

the possession of the miscreants. from the spot taking advantage of the darkness and a search is underway.

Ashok Kumar, ADCP of Greater Noida, said, "Beta-2 police station has achieved great success... During the checking, the police team saw a suspicious tempo coming and tried to stop it but it didn't stop and they ran towards IFS colony... The people left the tempo and ran towards the forest and fired on the police team. The police team retaliated by firing on them. In this, one of the accused named Guddu suffered a bullet injury in his leg... The team caught

another accused named

Babu... A combing operation

is underway to catch the other

two accused.'

Police also recovered a bag full of

stolen jewellery, two illegal pistols

with four live and one spent cartridge

etc that are used in the incident from

Both the arrested robbers are vicious criminals who keep illegal weapons like pistols and commit the crime by breaking the lock, latch, gate, etc. of the house at night.

Accused Guddu, along with his arrested co-accused Babu and other associates, had committed the theft incident on March 8 in the villa of the IFS Society, a closed house under the Police Station Beta-2 area. Legal action is being taken against the accused. Guddu is an active member of the Pankhiya gang and was formerly jailed in 2022 in the police station of Beta-2 area in a case of robbery with a Navy officer.

Devotees throng to Jhandewalan Temple on 8th day of Navratri

TDG NETWORK

Marking the eighth day of Navratri, early morning 'aarti' was performed at the Ihandewalan Temple in Delhi on Tuesday.

People were seen standing in the queue, waiting patiently for their chance to offer prayers. Mantras were chanted by priests and holy songs were played on the temple premises.

Chaitra Navratri, or Vasant Navratri, is celebrated during the spring season in India and it is considered to be an important nine-day celebration for the Hindu community.

On the eighth day of Navratri, Maa Mahagauri is worshipped. The goddess, depicted with four hands and carrying a trident and a drum, rides a bull.

Goddess Mahagauri has a white and bright complexion like the moon, wears white clothes and rides a bull,



the names Shwetambardhara and Vrisharudha, respectively. This year, the Navratri festival, spanning nine days, commenced on April 9 and is set to conclude on April 17. Throughout this period, people have been venerating Maa Durga and her nine manifestations, known as the Navadurgas.

The nine-day festival, which is also known as Rama Navratri, ends on Rama Navami, Lord Ram's birthday. During Chaitra Navratri, people fast and worship

goddess Durga. They also perform Ghatasthapana, the invocation of goddess Shakti, which is a significant ritual followed during the period. Navratri also celebrates calmness and peacefulness in the form of Maha Gauri Mata.

Education Foundation dismissed TDG NETWORK

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday dismissed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) that had sought quashing of Ministry of Minority Affairs's decision to dissolve the Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF). The bench of Justice Manmo-

han and Justice Mini Pushkarna stated that this Court finds no merit in the present petition and is not inclined to interfere in the considered decision taken by the respondents. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed, along with the pending applications. The bench observed that it is seen that the decision to dissolve the MAEF is a well-considered decision, duly taken by the General Body of the MAEF in terms of the authority vested in it by way of the Bye Laws of the MAEF and as per the provisions of the Act,

This Court is not impressed by the various submissions advanced on behalf of the pe-



PIL against dissolving Maulana Azad

titioners with respect to dissolution of MAEF not being in conformity with the Act, 1860 or with regard to transfer of its funds. The decision to dissolve the MAEF has been duly taken by the General Body of the MAEF and this Court finds no impropriety or irregularity in the process adopted by the said General Body in arriving at the said decision, according to the order. In any event, this Court, in public interest jurisdiction (unlike civil original jurisdiction) is not supposed to examine and give a finding with respect to each and every procedural or statutory violation.

In public interest jurisdiction, the Court has to look at the "big picture" and ensure that the cause of the minorities, in particular the minority girl students, as canvassed by the Petitioners, is not prejudiced. Consequently, this Court takes notice of the various welfare schemes being carried out by the respondent Ministry to cater to the specific interests of the educational and vocational needs of the minority communities, including girls belonging to the said communities. There-

fore, the contention of the petitioners that the schemes of the respondent Ministry do not have objects similar to that of the MAEF, cannot be accepted, the order stated.

Even otherwise, the scope of judicial review of the policy decisions taken by the government is very limited. Once a policy has been formulated by the government and a decision has been taken thereto, it is not for this Court to interfere in the said policy, only on the ground that a better policy could have been evolved.

The plea moved by Professor Syeda Saiyidain Hameda and others through Senior Advocate Anand Grover and Advicate Fuzail Ahmad Ayyubi stated that during the pendency of the present petition, the respondent ministry placed on record the minutes of the meeting of the General Body of MAEF held on March 7, wherein a unanimous decision to dissolve the MAEF was taken.

GLOBAL ECONOMY REMAINS RESILIENT DESPITE CHALLENGES

TDG NETWORK

espite gloomy predictions, the global economy remains remarkably resilient, with steady growth and inflation slowing almost as quickly as it rose. The journey has been eventful, starting with supplychain disruptions in the aftermath of the pandemic, an energy and food crisis triggered by Russia's war on Ukraine, a considerable surge in inflation, followed by a globally synchronized monetary policy tighten-

Global growth bottomed out at the end of 2022, at 2.3 percent, shortly after median headline inflation peaked at 9.4 percent. According to our latest World Economic Outlook projections, growth this year and next will hold steady at 3.2 percent, with median headline inflation declining from 2.8 percent at the end of 2024 to 2.4 percent at the end of 2025. Most indicators continue to point to a soft landing.

We also project less economic scarring from the crises of the past four years, although estimates vary across countries. The US economy has already surged past its prepandemic trend. But we now estimate that there will be more scarring for lowincome developing countries, many of which are still struggling to turn the page from the pandemic and cost-of-living crises.

Resilient growth and rapid disinflation point toward favorable supply developments, including the fading of energy price shocks, and a striking rebound in labor supply supported by strong immigration in many advanced economies. Monetary policy actions have helped anchor inflation expectations even if its transmission may have been more muted, as fixed-rate mortgages became more prevalent.

Despite these welcome developments, numerous challenges remain, and decisive actions are needed.

INFLATION RISKS REMAIN

Bringing inflation back to target should remain the priority. While inflation trends are encouraging, we are not there yet. Somewhat worryingly, progress toward inflation targets has somewhat stalled since the beginning of the year. This could be a temporary setback, but there are reasons to remain vigilant. Most of the good news on inflation came from the decline in energy prices and in goods inflation. The latter has been helped by easing supply-chain frictions, as well as by the decline in Chinese export prices. But oil prices have been rising recently in part due to geopolitical tensions and services inflation remains stubbornly high. Further trade restrictions on Chinese exports could also push up goods inflation.

ECONOMIC DIVER-GENCES WIDEN

The resilient global economy also masks stark divergence across countries.

The strong recent performance of the United States reflects robust productivity and employment growth, but also strong demand in an economy that remains overheated. This calls for a cautious and gradual approach to easing by the Federal Reserve. The fiscal stance, out of line with long-term fiscal sustainability, is of particular concern. It raises short-term risks to the disinflation process, as well as longer-term fiscal and financial stability risks for the global economy. Something will have to give.

Growth in the euro area will rebound but from very low levels, as past shocks, and tight monetary policy weigh on activity. Continued high wage growth and persistent services inflation could delay the return of inflation to target. However, unlike in the United States, there is little evidence of overheating, and the European Central Bank will need to carefully calibrate the pivot toward monetary easing to avoid an inflation undershoot. While labor markets appear strong, that strength could prove illusory if European firms have been hoarding labor in anticipation of a pickup in activity that does not materialize.

China's economy remains affected by the downturn in its property sector. Credit booms and busts never resolve themselves quickly, and this one is no exception. Domestic demand will remain lackluster unless strong measures address the root cause. With depressed domestic demand, external surpluses could well rise. The risk is that this will further exacerbate trade tensions in an already fraught geopolitical environment.

Many other large emerging market economies are performing strongly, sometimes benefiting from a reconfiguration of global supply chains and rising trade tensions between China and the US. These countries' footprint on the global economy is increas-

POLICY PATH

Going forward, policymakers should prioritize measures that help preserve or even enhance the resilience of the global economy.

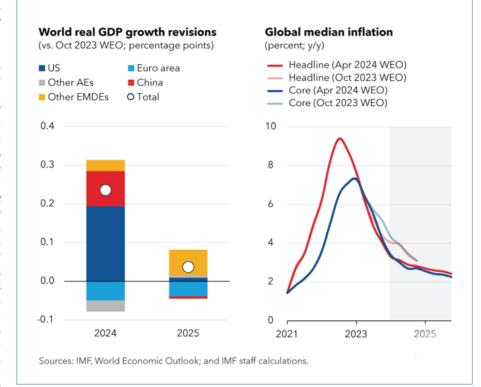
The first such priority is to rebuild fiscal buffers. Even as inflation recedes, real interest rates remain high and sovereign debt dynamics have become less favorable. Credible fiscal consolidations can help lower funding costs, improve fiscal headroom and financial stability. Unfortunately, fiscal plans so far are insufficient and could be derailed further given the record number of elections this year.

Fiscal consolidations are never easy but it is best not to wait until markets dictate their conditions. The right approach is to start now, gradually, and credibly. Once inflation is under control, credible multiyear consolidations will help pave the way for further monetary policy easing. The successful 1993 US fiscal consolidation and monetary accommodation episode comes to mind as an example to emulate.

The second priority is to reverse the decline in medium term growth prospects. Some of that decline comes from increased misallocation of capital and labor within sectors and countries. Facilitating faster and more efficient resource allocation will boost growth. For low-income countries, structural reforms to promote domestic and foreign direct investment, and to strengthen domestic resource mobilization, will help lower borrowing

Growth and inflation

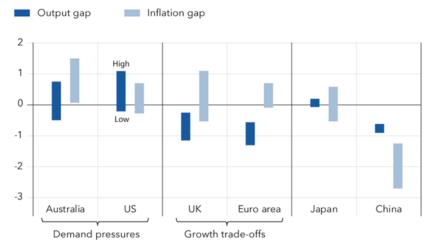
Forecasts for growth have been marked upwards, while inflation has been revised down and is continuing its downward trend.



Monetary calibration

Differences in the economy's cyclical positions – with output in some countries stronger than its potential and inflation above target - highlight the importance of tailored calibration.

Range of estimates for inflation and output gaps in 2024

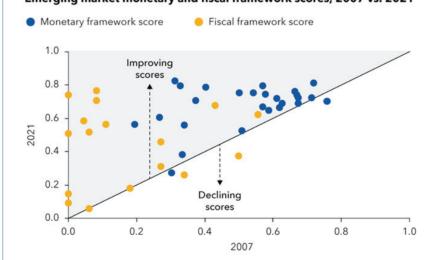


Sources: Haver Analytics; IMF, World Economic Outlook; and IMF staff calculations Note: Range includes estimates from IMF projections, authorities, consensus and OECD. Ceiling of 3 percent used for China's inflation target. Inflation gap is the percentage point deviation in the inflation projection for 2024 from the central bank target. Output gap is the projected deviation in real GDP from its potential in 2024, expressed as percent of potential GDP.

Improvements in policy frameworks

Better monetary and fiscal policy frameworks since the global financial crisis have contributed to current economic resilience.

Emerging market monetary and fiscal framework scores, 2007 vs. 2021



Sources: Davoodi and others (2022); Unsal and others (2022); and IMF staff calculations. Note: Sample of 26 emerging markets. The scores range from zero to one with a highe score indicating an improvement. Fiscal frameworks are defined by the strength of fiscal rules, based on the assessment of five institutional criteria. The score of monetary policy frameworks is based on the IAPOC index, which covers Independence and Accountability, Policy and Operational strategy, and Communications of central banks

costs and reduce funding needs. These countries also must improve the human capital of their large young populations, especially as the rest of the world is aging rapidly. Artificial intelligence also gives hope for boosting productivity.

It may do so, but the potential for serious disruptions in labor and financial markets is high. Harnessing the potential of AI for all will require that countries improve their digital infrastructure, invest in human capital, and coordinate on global rules of the

Medium-term growth prospects are also harmed by rising geoeconomic fragmentation and the surge in trade restrictive

and industrial policy measures. Trade linkages are already changing as a result, with potential losses in efficiency. The net effect could well be to make the global economy less, not more, resilient. But the broader damage is to globtime to reverse course.

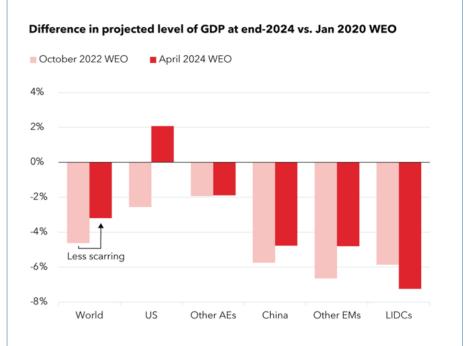
al cooperation. It is still Third, a great achievement of the past few years has been the strengthening of monetary, fiscal and financial policy frameworks especially for emerging market economies. This has helped make the global financial system more resilient and avoid a permanent resurgence of inflation. Going forward, it is essential to preserve these improvements. That includes protecting the hard-

won independence of central banks.

Lastly, the green transition requires major investments. Cutting emissions is compatible with growth and activity has become much less emission-intensive in recent decades. But emissions are still rising. Much more needs to be done and done quickly. Green investment has expanded at a healthy pace in advanced economies and China. The greatest effort must now be made by other emerging market and developing economies, which must massively increase their green investment growth and reduce their fossil fuel investment. This will require technology transfer by other advanced economies

Scarring from the crisis

Estimates of scarring are mostly revised down, with the exception of low-income countries, which continue to be severely affected.

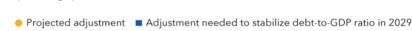


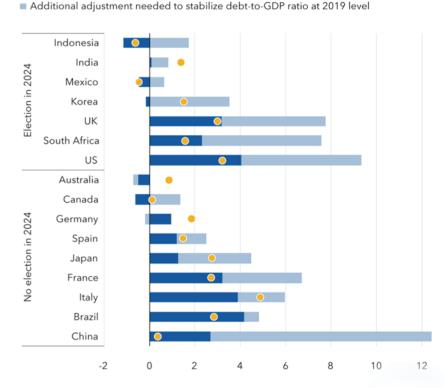
Fiscal adjustment needs

Sources: IMF, World Economic Outlook; and IMF staff calculations

Many countries have large fiscal adjustment needs for debt sustainability and elections can add further pressure.

Cumulative rise in primary-fiscal-balance-to-GDP ratio, 2023-2029 (percentage points)





Source: IMF staff calculations Note: See chapter 1 of the April 2024 World Economic Outlook for further details.

World Economic Outlook Growth Projections

(Real GDP, annual percent change)		PROJECTIONS	
	2023	2024	2025
World Output	3.2	3.2	3.2
Advanced Economies	1.6	1.7	1.8
United States	2.5	2.7	1.9
Euro Area	0.4	0.8	1.5
Germany	-0.3	0.2	1.3
France	0.9	0.7	1.4
Italy	0.9	0.7	0.7
Spain	2.5	1.9	2.1
Japan	1.9	0.9	1.0
United Kingdom	0.1	0.5	1.5
Canada	1.1	1.2	2.3
Other Advanced Economies	1.8	2.0	2.4
Emerging Market and Developing Economies	4.3	4.2	4.2
Emerging and Developing Asia	5.6	5.2	4.9
China	5.2	4.6	4.1
India	7.8	6.8	6.5
Emerging and Developing Europe	3.2	3.1	2.8
Russia	3.6	3.2	1.8
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.3	2.0	2.5
Brazil	2.9	2.2	2.1
Mexico	3.2	2.4	1.4
Middle East and Central Asia	2.0	2.8	4.2
Saudi Arabia	-0.8	2.6	6.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	3.4	3.8	4.0
Nigeria	2.9	3.3	3.0
South Africa	0.6	0.9	1.2
Memorandum			
Emerging Market and Middle-Income Economies	4.4	4.1	4.1
Low-Income Developing Countries	4.0	4.7	5.2

Note: For India, data and forecasts are preser April 2023) shown in the 2023 column. India's in 2025 based on calendar year.

and China, as well as substantial private and public financing.

multilateral frameworks and cooperation remain On these questions, as essential for progress.

well as on so many others, (This blog on IMF website is based on Chapter 1 of the April 2024 World Economic Outlook.)

SALMAN KHAN'S RESIDENCE FIRING: COURT SENDS 2 ACCUSED IN POLICE CUSTODY TILL APR 25

TDG NETWORK

wo suspects linked to the shooting outside Salman Khan's residence in Bandra have been remanded to Mumbai Crime Branch custody until April 25 by Mumbai's Killa Court. Vicky Gupta and Sagar Pal, hailing from Bihar, were found to have ties to gangster Lawrence Bishnoi's syndicate during initial questioning.

Identified as Vicky Gupta (24) and Sagar Pal (21), both from Bihar, the accused were brought before the court following a medical examina-

Following their arrest, Kachchh DSP AR Zankant disclosed that preliminary interrogation revealed the suspects' affiliation with Lawrence Bishnoi's criminal network.

"Mumbai Police had been investigating the shooting incident outside Salman Khan's residence. Upon has also been granted perlearning that the two susmission to carry a personal pects had fled to Kuchchh, firearm and has procured Mumbai Police informed an armored vehicle for en-Kachchh Police, leading to hanced security.

> Earlier, a press release issued by Bhuj police stated, "West Kachchh Police apprehended two members of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang responsible for firing outside Salman Khan's residence on April 14. The apprehended individuals, Vicky Gupta (24) and Sagar Pal (21) from Bihar, were handed over to the Mumbai Crime Branch

for further investigation." The shooting incident, which occurred on Sunday morning, involved two unidentified assailants firing outside Galaxy Apartments, Khan's residence, before flee-

The incident prompted swift action from law enforcement agencies.

Preliminary investigation suggests the assailants arrived on a motorcycle, concealing their identities with helmets, indicating a premeditated attack.

They discharged four rounds during the incident, leaving behind a live cartridge at the scene.

Responding to the incident, Salman Khan's brother, actor Arbaaz Khan, expressed concern, stating that the "disturbing" incident has affected the family.

"The recent incident of firing by two unidentified individuals on a motorcycle at Galaxy apartment, the residence of the Salim Khan family, is deeply disturbing. Our family has been shocked by this alarming incident.

Unfortunately, certain individuals claiming to be associated with our family and posing as spokespeople have made irresponsible statements to the media, suggesting it's a publicity stunt and that the family remains unaffected. This is untrue, and such assertions should not be entertained," the statement read.

He also affirmed that the family is fully cooperating with the Mumbai Police in their investigation.

"No member of the Salim Khan family has made any statement to the media regarding this incident. At this juncture, the family is aiding and collaborating with the police in probing this unfortunate incident. We trust the Mumbai police to take all necessary measures to safeguard our family.'

Subsequent to the incident, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde conversed with the actor over the phone regarding the matter.

Ayodhya Ram Mandir to celebrate Ram Navami with great fervour

TDG NETWORK

Ahead of the last day of Chaitra Navratri and the occasion of Ram Navami, Ayodhya has geared up for the magnificent celebrations at the Ram Janambhoomi Temple. 56 types of Bhog Prasad will also be offered to Ram Lala.

Speaking to ANI, the chief priest of Ram Janmabhoomi temple, Acharya Satyendra Das informed that all the arrangements for the festival are being managed by the trust and the occasion of Ram Navami will be celebrated with great enthusiasm. "...All arrangements are being made by the trust. The trust is also managing the decorations. Ram Navami will be celebrated with great enthusiasm."

The chief priest also hailed the celebrations as special as they are happening for the first time after the 'Pran Pratishtha' cer-



On this occasion, Surya Abhishek of Lord Ram will also be held for five minutes at 12:16 pm. Ram Mandir Nirman Samiti chairman Nripendra Mishra said, "On Ram Navami, the sun rays will fall on Lord Ramlala's forehead for about 5 minutes at 12:16 pm, for which important technical arrangements are being made. Scientists are working to display these moments with full grandeur." Ramnavami, the birth festival of Lord Ram

noon and various types of offerings will be made to the Lord. 56 types of Bhog Prasad have been given by the devotees today which will be offered to the Lord at noon on Wednesday.

Ahead of the celebrations, Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra, the trust constituted to look after the management of Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Mandir, has made special arrangements for the convenience of the devotees visiting during the festival.

Need skills to go far beyond Earth's orbit: ISRO chief Somanath

the apprehension of the sus-

pects. Multiple teams were

deployed for their capture.

After arrest, the suspects

were transferred to Mum-

bai Police custody. Initial

questioning unveiled their

links to Lawrence Bishnoi's

gang," DSP Zankant stated.

It's noteworthy that since

November 2022, Salman

Khan's security has been

heightened to Y-Plus due to

threats from Lawrence Bish-

noi and Goldy Brar. Khan

TDG NETWORK BENGALURU

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief S Somanath said on Tuesday that the world space community needs to develop skills to go far beyond Earth's orbit, like the Earth-moon systems and solar planetary exploration.

"We also need to develop skills, especially when you are looking at future exploration, possibly not within the Earth's orbit, but also far beyond Earth's orbit, especially in the Earth-moon systems as well as in solar planetary exploration. I think all those areas are also becoming crowded. Especially domains like the moon are also becoming crowded. I believe that this group will be looking at that aspect as well in greater detail in the coming days...," Somanath said while speaking at the inaugural meet of the 42nd Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC).

The ISRO chief also issued a declaration saving that India aims to create debris free space missions by 2030.

"Debris free space missions by all Indian actors, govern-



mental and non-governmental by 2030. India also encourages all other space actors to follow this initiative for long term sustainability in the outer space," Somanath said

The ISRO Chief said that India is in the process of creating mechanisms and structures to ensure that debris is not generated.

"We are creating mechanisms and structures within the space systems so that impact generated debris are not propagated substantially in large numbers. A lot of this has been going on in the last many years very well. We need all those activities much stronger in the coming days," Somanath said.

Speaking about re-orbiting the non-functional space objects, the ISRO chief said, "As far as ISRO is concerned

we have a very clear laid out program in space exploration and space utilisation. Currently we have 54 spacecraft's in our orbit, plus there are non-functional objects. We have been taking very careful action wherever it is possible to dispose of or remove the space object from its active role once it is over and re-orbit and bring it to a safe location..."

The ISRO cheif also proposed to ensure that the orbit around 400 kilometers are protected so that more space stations can come up to ensure sustained human presence in space.

"Our long-term space program definitely look at debris and its mitigation as one of the important topics. With the goal of building a space station in the coming days, we look at orbit where there are more space stations coming up at 400 km. I think this area should be protected for sustained human presence in space," Somanath said.

Somanath also stressed on having a relook into all space agreements to ensure less debris generation by all

Money laundering case: Hemant Soren files bail plea in Ranchi court

TDG NETWORK

Former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren on Tuesday filed a bail petition before a special PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) court in Ranchi, claiming that his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was politically motivated and part of a well-orchestrated conspiracy to pres-



The petitioner alleged, "The entirety of the petitioner's prosecution and arrest is politically motivated, driven by extraneous considerations and forms part of a meticulously planned conspiracy by the Central Government to coerce, intimidate, and disgrace prominent opposition figures like the petitioner, aiming to compel their alignment with the Bharatiya Janata Party or inclusion in the National Democratic Alliance.'

The former Chief Minister was apprehended by the central investigating agency on January 31 in connection with a money laundering case associated with an alleged land scam immediately following his resignation as the Chief Minister.

He is presently incarcerated at the Birsa Munda Central

Kanpur Traffic Police will soon get AC helmets to beat summer heat

TDG NETWORK

As mercury shoots up, Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur Traffic Police has introduced for its personnel, special AC helmets, designed to keep cool in temperatures ranging from 40 degrees Celsius to 42 degree Celsius.

DCP Traffic Aarti Singh said that because of the summers, AC helmets have been prepared for the traffic policemen. "At present, the helmets have been given on a trial basis to the

There have been instances where due to the heat, policemen posted at intersections to regulate traffic in the city fainted. Also, with the help of this cap, the effect of sunlight will be reduced significantly.

traffic policemen posted at six major intersections of the city, the results of which have also been quite successful. Soon, this AC helmet will also be given to the traffic policemen posted at other intersections of the city.'



The Traffic DCP further informed that the AC helmet has been manufactured by a company based in Hyderabad and is equipped with many special features. "Putting this helmet on the head provides a lot of coolness... It also has a charging point installed in it, with the help of which it can be charged easily. Once this helmet is charged, it provides cooling for 8 hours," Singh said.

There have been instances where due to the heat, policemen posted at intersections to regulate traffic in the city fainted. Also, with the help of this cap, the effect of sunlight will be reduced significantly.

The helmet also has a cap that can protect the eyes of policemen from sunlight. Traffic police personnel who were given the helmets on trial basis said they could do their work better than before, and the helmet was quite comfortable.

Hit-and-run horror: Biker's body transported 18 km on car roof in Andhra

TDG NETWORK ANANTHAPURAMI

A car driver in Ananthapuramu, Andhra Pradesh, collided with a biker and drove for 18 kilometres with the victim's body on the roof of the vehicle. The driver fled the scene and is still at large, but a murder case has been registered, and efforts are underway to apprehend the driver.

A fatal road accident occurred near Kothapalli in Atmakuru Mandal on Sunday night, resulting in the tragic death of a biker. The collision occurred when a car and a bike collided, causing Erriswamy to be thrown into the air and subsequently onto the car, where he succumbed to his injuries.

The driver of the car continued for approximately 18 kilometres without stopping, eventually coming to a halt at Hanimireddypalli before fleeing the scene. Authorities are currently piecing together the full sequence of events surround-



The driver of the car continued for approximately 18 kilometres without stopping, eventually coming to a halt at Hanimireddypalli before fleeing the scene.

ing the incident.

Sub-Inspector Atmakuru Muneer Ahmed stated that upon receiving reports of the accident involving an Innova vehicle, law enforcement officers promptly responded and commenced an investigation. However, the body of the deceased biker was not initially located at the scene.

The driver, whose iden-

tity remains unknown at this time, abandoned the vehicle after sounding an alarm. Nonetheless, authorities have obtained relevant details, including the vehicle's registration number, and have activated the mobile phone found within the vehicle for further investigation.

More details are awaited.

Assam Rifles vehicle ambushed near Namdhang; one personnel injured

TDG NETWORK

Assam Rifles vehicle ambushed near Namdhang; one personnel injured Shivasagar

At least one Assam Rifles personnel was injured after unidentified gunmen ambushed a vehicle of the security force at Namdang area in Margherita bordering Arunachal Pradesh on

Tuesday, the officials said. According to the officials, the injured personnel have been airlifted for

"A vehicle-mounted patrol of three vehicles of Assam Rifles moving from Changlang towards Margherita was ambushed by unknown personnel near Namdhang at around 8:30 am on April 16," the offi-

The officials further said that the troops retaliated and thwarted the ambush and in the process, one person sustained gunshot wounds

"The individual has been evacuated to Military Hospital Jorhat and his condition is stable," they added. Further details are awaited.



Chhattisgarh Police announces Rs five lakh reward for sharing information on Naxals

TDG NETWORK



Chhattisgarh police announced cash rewards for people for giving information about naxals and their activities.

Speaking to ANI, Kabirdham Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallav said, "Those who will share the information regarding naxals will be rewarded with Rs 5 lakhs. The reward will be given by the government."

He further said, "If one naxal is arrested or killed, up to five people will be provided jobs on constable posts."

The district police officials have also visited homes in the district and shared information about giving a reward of Rs. 5 lakhs to those helping to arrest the Naxalites.

"This information has been circulated to 35,000 individuals in the last 3 days through pamphlets and WhatsApp. We are also forming civil defence groups in the villages to protect the villagers from the Naxalites," he added. He said more than six police camps were opened in the

last three months in the naxal-affected areas.

"Police camps have been opened at a range of 7-8 km in naxal-hit areas of the state. We are also running schools for small children in nine highly sensitive areas. We have arranged various sports activities for the youth. Naxalism will be eliminated from the Kawardha area in the next six months with the help of villagers," SP Abhishek Pallav

ELECTION COMMISSION SHOULD BE BROAD-BASED, ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Old hands in Nirvachan Sadan favour induction of a retired Supreme Court judge in the CEC

OPINION

RASHEED KIDWAI



ven as the first round of voting begins for 18th Lok Sabha, the politically surcharged atmosphere has every flavour of the season. The Central **Election Commission has** huge resources and powers to supervise polls but lacks spine and a will to act as impartial observer. Instead, it acts more like an observer, often reacting to the events and trying to do a balancing act instead the call of a spontaneous call of conscience seeped in propriety.

The Election Commission has a constitutional duty to act as a referee and all powers to exercise. But the three- member commission appears listless, careless, off-the-field third empire who occasionally wakes up from deep slumber or at the prodding of social and mainstream media to make its presence felt.

What is more glaring is the EC's method of punishment. During 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the election

commission had 'penalised' Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath for raising a bogey of "Bajrang Bali versus Hazrat Ali." Next, the election commission saw Adityanath's image beaming across tv news channels chanting Hanuman Chalisa during the supposed ban period. A somewhat triumphant Yogi had told CNN-News 18' then, "I was punished for taking Bajrang Bali's name. I chanted it for

the period I was banned"!! Political leaders, mainly in the opposition ranks, accuse EC of being proactive against them, letting off the prime minister Narendra Modi, BJP and the NDA.

Toxic campaign is not alone where the election commission is seen as a hopeless, helpless, mute spectator. The government of the day has gone about conducting ED, CBI and income tax raids on many opposition leaders individuals considered sympathetic to

EC inaction is in sharp contrast to its assertiveness in 2014 when it had recommended postponing certain policy decisions of the government related to natural gas pricing and notifying ecologically sensitive areas in the Western Ghats. The EC had invoked the Model

Code of Conduct (MCC). It is pertinent to examine what is the Model Code of Conduct? As I had tried explaining in a 2019 article for the Money Control, the MCC, mentioned in the article 324 of the Indian constitution, is a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission to regulate political parties and candidates prior to elections, to ensure free and fair elections. The Constitutional provision gives the Election Commission the power to supervise elections and the MCC becomes operational from the date that the election schedule is announced till the date that results are announced.

The MCC was first introduced in the state assembly elections in Kerala in 1960 as a set of instructions to political parties regarding election meetings, speeches, slogans, etc. In the 1962 general elections to the Lok Sabha, the MCC was circulated to recognised parties, and state governments sought feedback from the parties. The MCC was largely followed by all parties in the 1962 elections and continued to be followed in subsequent general elections. In 1979, the Election Commission added a section to regulate the 'party in power' and prevent it from gaining an unfair advantage at the time of elections. There are eight key provisions of the Model Code of Conduct dealing with general conduct, meetings, processions, polling day, polling booths, observers, party in power, and election manifestos. It includes issues like how one political party should criticise the other. The Criticism should be confined to their policies and programmes, past record and work. Activities such as: (a) using caste and communal



EC inaction is in sharp contrast to its assertiveness in 2014 when it had recommended postponing certain policy decisions of the government related to natural gas pricing and notifying ecologically sensitive areas in the Western Ghats.

feelings to secure votes, (b) criticising candidates on the basis of unverified reports, (c) bribing or intimidation of voters, and (d) organising demonstrations or picketing outside houses of persons to protest against their opinions, are prohibited. Even a cursory look at four phases of electioneering would show that none of these provisions were followed. There was no semblance of any MCC anywhere.. be it NDA partners of UPA allies or regional leaders.

It must be remembered and emphasized that Westminister model of parliamentary democracy has issues of propriety at premium. MCC therefore, is based on assumption that political parties and candi-

dates would accord importance to issue of propriety, ethics and morality. In the absence of these lofty principles, Westminister model is reduced to ashes. Britain, cradle of parliamentary democracy, has no written constitution. political defections are rare and conventions have greater say than rules and laws. The Indian experience is the reverse of it. MCC, without a stringent legal cover, is impractical and toothless.

Indian political parties, courts, media and other sections of society need to ponder over issues of electoral malpractices and revisit the entire issue of functioning of EC, applicability of MCC, electoral reforms and host of other issues. It is a cruel

joke that poll expenses in a parliamentary polls (having over a million voters) has a ceiling of rs 75 lakhs amounting to a candidate spending 70 paisa on every voter! In effect, the system has made every candidate and elected representative corrupt and unlawful.

The Election Commission needs to be made broad-based, accountable and transparent. Members of civil society, prominent citizens, retired members of judiciary should have lateral entry in state and central election bodies instead of a forum of pliable babus. The MCC needs to be overhauled and rewritten so that there is extensive discussion in the public domain before it is implemented. If poll expenses limit is required to be increased to rs five crore and more, so be it. Public funding of polls is another area that requires debate, discussion and possible implementation. But is there a political will that is not guided by political gains? That is the real test for Indian democracy.

Old hands in Nirvachan Sadan also favour induction of a retired Supreme Court judge in the Central Election Commission. There is a merit in it as ECI performs several important functions which are quasi-judicial in nature such as dealing with the crucial issue of the disqualifications of MPs and MLAs, petitions and interpretation of rules in the Representation of Peoples Act etc. the idea of ECI decisions getting overturned regularly is not healthy. Often, the ECI's opinions are binding on the President and Governors, therefore, there is a greater need for legally sound advice.

PERSPECTIVE GEN NEXT LEADERS

BJP'S LEADERSHIP STAKES

Last week saw the launch of my book, The Contenders. Who will Rule India Tomorrow. The book looks at Gen Next leaders cutting across party lines (below the age of 55) and also takes a look at the leadership paradigms in the Modi era. For if there was no Modi dominating our political landscape, it would perhaps have been business as usual, specially for the Congress, with Rahul Gandhi much close to the Prime Minister's chair than he is currently. The one thing that Modi has done is to play the role of a disrupter. He has made dynasty a bad name, pitching the narrative of the kamdar versus the namdar. He has also brought in a decisive strong leadership that leads from the front, instead of leadership by proxy as we saw in the Sonia Gandhi-Manmohan Singh era.

But there is also one danger in such a central one man dominated leadership model. And that is the lack of a strong second rung. While both Advani and Vajpayee had groomed a second rung in the BJP (of which Modi himself is the beneficiary) this model is missing in the Modi-Amit Shah era. No one stands out in the BJPs second rung the way Modi, Arun Jaitely, Pramod Mahajan and Sushma Swaraj had emerged. They were not just powerless number twos, but powerful influencers who had a say in the political discourse of the party and to whom both Advani and Vajpayee looked to for help and even at times used as a sounding board. Short of Amit Shah perhaps, I cannot think of any second rung leader whom the PM would be using as a sounding board.

Yes, the PM and the BJP have tried to strengthen the second rung leadership by making a whole lot of cabinet ministers contest the Lok Sabha. This is to ensure that the governance rung of Modi's next government has a strong people's connect. But even if a majority of them win their seats, they will still not be given enough heft to contradict the Prime Minister in a cabinet meeting, the way the earlier second rung used to do in the Vajpayee government. And though given portfolios of importance it would be interesting to see which of these names gets accommodated in the Big 4 ministries - finance, external affairs, defence and home. Or will these remain with the current incumbents? For two the sitting ministers are not contesting the Lok Sabha but remain Modi favourites.

There is talk of Yogi Adityanath emerging as a strong second rung leaders with massive ground support. Of all the second rung leaders certainly both in terms of governance (being a two term CM) and a crowd-puller, Yogi has the potential to emerge as one of BJP's future leaders. It would be intereting to see the kind of play he gets post elections, keeping the post Modi scenario in mind.

All in all, these elections are going to be interesting, not just for the immediate result but also for the impact they have on the BJps future leadership model.

PRIYA SAHGAL

Innovations in homoeopathic practice: Shaping the future of India's healthcare

OPINION

DR SUBHASH KAUSHIK



Throughout the years, I have taken pride in acknowledging the significant strides made in homoeopathic research and practice, positioning it as the second most utilised system of medicine globally. However, there remains ample opportunity for further validation of the concepts and practices successfully employed by homoeopathic clinicians.

Despite encountering frequent skepticism, the trust instilled in homoeopathy by the public, along with unwavering support and dedicated efforts from stakeholders, has spurred the homoeopathic community to persist in its journey towards

becoming an evidence-based system of medicine. The establishment of the Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) in 1978 marked a pivotal moment, with its autonomy aimed at formulating research aims and patterns in line with scientific principles while also spearheading scientific research in both fundamental and applied aspects of

homoeopathy. Subsequent collaborations with national and international Institutes of Excellence have facilitated invaluable exchanges of information, contributing significantly to the advancement of homoeopathy. The international collaborations include countries like Israel, Brazil, USA, Argentina, Armenia, UK, Mexico, Canada, Australia, Russia, and Germany. The Council's multifaceted activities now encompass a broad spectrum, including clinical research, drug proving, clinical verification, surveying, collection, and cultivation of medicinal plants, drug standardisation, funda-

mental research, as well as public health programmes of national importance and health melas. Efforts to disseminate

research findings through various channels, such as research publications, monographs, seminars, workshops, and social media platforms, ensure that information reaches both professionals and the public. Overall, I am confident that our endeavours are in alignment with the organisation's objectives, representing an ongoing evolution within the system.

Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH), serving as the primary research organisation, has been instrumental in driving research-based activities since its inception. CCRH has been actively involved in creating awareness and conducting numerous field trials and preventive studies aimed at combating diseases such as dengue, chikungunya, Japanese encephalitis, and malaria. In the last 10 years, the council has initiated 41 research studies on various epidemic diseases that have shown promising results. During the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Ayush collaborated with the Council to issue advisories for homoeopathic prophylactic medicine. The nationwide distribution of



this medicine by the Council marked one of the largest drives undertaken during the pandemic. Following this, there was a notable surge in clinical research, with the Council collaborating with various allopathic hospitals and actively conducting 26 studies on COVID-19 and post-COVID treatment and prophylaxis.

Indeed, apprehensions often arise due to the distinctive and unique concepts underlying homoeopathy, necessitating a broader understanding beyond mere materialistic doses. Homoeopathic treatment involves administering minimal dosages of diluted medicines selected based on a patient's disease stage, individual sensitivities, and physical and mental constitution. While homoeopaths were once limited to illustrat-

ing the success of homoeopathic treatment through clinical cases alone, today, a substantial body of research evidence validates the core concepts of homoeopathy and elucidates the healing potential of highly diluted homoeopathic medicines. Researchers have employed advanced scientific methods, including transmission electron microscopy, electron diffraction, and chemical analysis by inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy, among others, to demonstrate the presence of nanostructures in homoeopathic medicines. Additionally, gene expression analysis, proteomic, and metabolic studies have provided insights into the involvement of homoeopathic medicines in various physiological pathways.

The efficacy of homoeopa-

thy has been substantiated by robust double-blinded clinical trials targeting specific diseases, both as standalone therapy and as complementary to conventional treatment. Moreover, the positive impact of homoeopathic remedies has been validated through successful applications in ailing animals and plants, dispelling the misconception that homoeopathic remedies merely trigger a placebo effect.

Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) has been tirelessly working to bridge the gap between homoeopathic practices and modern scientific validation methods. A comprehensive compilation of evidence supporting homoeopathy at clinical, biological, molecular, and even nanomolecular levels is available in the Council's publication,

the Scientific Framework of Homoeopathy, accessible on its website.

Homoeopathic medicines undergo rigorous quality control measures at various stages to ensure their efficacy and safety. In India, these medicines are regulated under the exclusive provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and Rules. Manufacturers adhering to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and pharmacopeial standards receive certification and recommendations. A pharmacovigilance initiative is also in place for Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, and Homoeopathic (ASU&H) drugs to collect, collate, and analyse data, establishing scientific evidence

for their clinical safety. While ultra-diluted homoeopathic medicines are generally considered safe, instances of adverse reactions have been reported when these medicines are used without proper guidance from a qualified homoeopathic practitioner. Hence, it is strongly advised to seek homoeopathic treatment from registered practitioners and obtain medicines from GMP-certified manufactur-

India's rich heritage of traditional medicine and its widespread acceptance present an opportunity for the country to lead by example in integrative healthcare. With healthcare systems worldwide facing diverse challenges, India's approach of integrating homoeopathy with mainstream medicine can alleviate issues related to accessibility and affordability. By offering validated treatment options, including alternative medicine, to patients, India can better address the healthcare needs of its population, especially in a scenario where a large segment struggles to afford quality medical care. In the face of the unique health challenges of the 21st century, homoeopathy, along with other alternative medical systems, emerges as a promising solution. I firmly believe that the future holds promising breakthroughs in homoeopathic research, solidifying its role as a pivotal component of the Indian healthcare system.

On the occasion of World Homoeopathy Day, the 269th birthday of Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homoeopathy, on April 10, 2024, I encourage all healthcare professionals to embrace a spirit of open inquiry. By exploring the potential applications of homoeopathy within a collaborative framework, we can strive to improve the overall well-being of human-

Dr Subhash Kaushik, Director General, Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH), Ministry of Ayush,

ALL ABOUT RAILWAYS

 $Since 1853 to present, India \, has \, witnessed \, a \, miraculous \, change \, in \, the \, railway \, sector. \, On \, Tuesday, \, a \, change \, in \, the \, railway \, sector. \, On \, Tuesday, \, a \, change \, in \, the \, railway \, sector. \, On \, Tuesday, \, a \, change \, in \, the \, railway \, sector. \, On \, Tuesday, \, a \, change \, in \, the \, railway \, sector. \, On \, Tuesday, \, a \, change \, in \, the \, railway \, sector. \, On \, Tuesday, \, a \, change \, in \, the \, railway \, sector. \, On \, Tuesday, \, a \, change \, in \, the \, railway \, sector. \, On \, Tuesday, \, a \, change \, in \, the \, railway \, sector. \, On \, Tuesday, \, a \, change \, change$ Indian Railways marks 171st anniversary of historic maiden journey from Boribunder to Thane.

TDG NETWORK

The history of railways in India is a testament to their crucial role in shaping the country's economic, social, and cultural landscape. From its humble beginnings in colonial times to its status as one of the largest railway networks in the world, the Indian Railways continues to be a lifeline for millions of people every day. Today, we will provide you some insights on the glorious history of railways.

Introduction of Railways: The first railway in India was built under the British colonial rule in the mid-19th century. It was inaugurated on April 16, 1853, covering a stretch of 34 kilometers between Bombay (Mumbai) and Thane. This marked the beginning of the Indian Rail-

The history of Indian Railways goes back to 1832 when the modern plan was proposed. The innovative plan completely transformed the history of transportation of India. Though no action was taken for over a decade, in 1844 Lord Hardinge, the Governor General of India, allowed private entrepreneurs to launch the railway system.

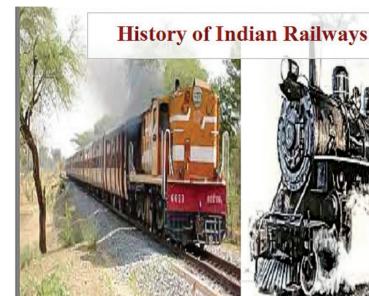
In 1845, the Indian Railway Association was formed, which was later incorporated into the Great India Peninsula Railway (GIPR). Among the 10 directors, there were only two Indians - Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebho and Nana Shankarsheth. The first train that came on track on 22 December, 1851 was used for carrying construction material in Roorkee. It was the first steam locomotive named Thomason with 4'8.5" gauge engine, which was dedicated for transporting earthworks for the construction of the Solani canal near Roorkee. Though it had a very short life, it was still considered a pioneer that replaced horse cart with team locomotion. It was the beginning of the new era in the history of modern transportation.

Simultaneously, the East Indian Railway (EIR) was established in 1845 to introduce railways to eastern and northern India. On 16 April, 1853 the first passenger train service was started between Bombay (Mumbai) and Thane. It was a 14-carriagelong train drawn by three locomotives called Sultan, Sahib and Sindh. The train took about 45 minutes to cover 34 kms (21 miles). Since then, the Indian Railways has never looked back.

From 1857, Robert Maitland Brereton, a British engineer, was given the responsibility of expanding railway network and service. In 1800, the railway service, which was working through the major port cities of Bombay, Madras (Chennai) and Calcutta (Kolkata), mainly covered about 14,500 kms.

Following the success of the Bombay-Thane line, the British colonial government rapidly expanded the railway network across the country. The railways played a crucial role in facilitating trade, commerce, and the movement of goods and people across vast distances, thereby aiding British economic interests.

Post-Independence: After India gained independence in 1947, the Indian Railways underwent significant changes. It became a crucial tool for nation-building, con-



the railway budget and the necting distant regions and first Rajdhani Express was fostering economic develflagged off from New Delhi opment. The government to Howrah in March 1969. invested heavily in modernizing and expanding the net-In 1974, Indian Railways endured a 20-day strike. In Railway network of India 1979, the Main Line Elecwas in a dilapidated state aftrification Project was reter India got independence constituted into the Central in 1947. Newly created Paki-Organisation for Railway

stan got almost 40 per cent

of the railway lines. For

connecting important cit-

ies of India, new lines were

constructed and existing

lines were rerouted through

India. 42 separate railway

systems were combined with

the Indian Railways, out of which 32 lines were owned

by the former princely states.

The first locomotive manu-

facturing unit at Chittaran-

jan was commissioned in

1950. In December 1950, the

Central Advisory Commit-

tee for Railways approved

the plan for re-organising

Indian Railways into six

regional zones with the

Southern (14 April 1951),

Central (5 November 1951),

and Western (5 November

1951) zones being the first

to be created. On 14 April

1952, the Northern Railway,

the Eastern Railway and

the North Eastern Railway

were created. In 1952, fans

and lights were mandated

for all compartments in

passenger trains and sleep-

ing accommodations were

introduced in coaches. The

first diesel locomotive used

in India was fabricated by

North British Locomotive

Company in 1954. On 1 Au-

gust 1955 the South-Eastern

Railway was split from the

Eastern Railway, and, the

following year, divisional

systems of administration

were set up for the various

regional zones. The first rail

coaches were manufactured

in India from 1956 when

the Integral Coach Factory

was established at Madras.

In 1956, the first air-condi-

tioned train plied between

Howrah and New Delhi.

In 1958, the North-Eastern

Railway split to form a new

Northeast Frontier Railway.

In 1957, Indian Railways

adopted 25 kV AC traction

with the first trial runs op-

erating with the WAM-1 lo-

comotives in 1959 and com-

mercial services beginning

in August 1960. In 1969, the

Government of India an-

nounced the introduction

of a new express train ca-

pable of reaching speeds of

130 km/h (81 mph). In 1951, the Indian Railways was formed as one nationalised unit and it became one of the largest networks all over the world.

1980, the WAP-1 electric lo-

comotives reached a speed of

In 1988, the first Shatabdi Express was introduced between New Delhi and Jhansi. Two years later, the first self-printing ticket machine (SPTM) was introduced in Delhi. In 1993, airconditioned three-tier and sleeper were introduced. In 1995, Chennai MRTS be-Electrification (CORE). In came the first operational elevated railway line in India. In 1995, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, a joint venture between Government of India and Government of Delhi was established. Centralized computer reserva-

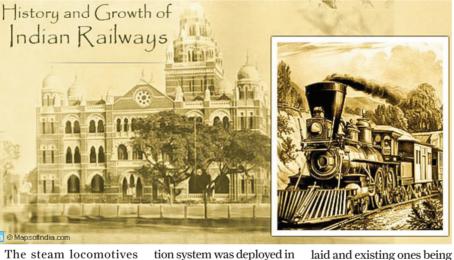
duced by Indian Railways.

New Delhi to Agra.

The central government approved the merger of the Rail and General budgets from 2017. On 31 March 2017, Indian Railways announced a target of electrifying the entire rail network would be electrified by 2023. In March 2020, Indian Railways announced a nationwide shutdown of passenger service to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in India with the freight operations continuing to transport essential goods. The railways resumed passenger services in a phased manner in May 2020. Introduced in 2019, Vande Bharat Express operating on a train-set built by ICF, is the fastest train in India

Starting in the 2010s, various infrastructure modernization projects have been undertaken including highspeed rail, redevelopment of 400 stations, doubling tracks to reduce congestion, refurbishing of coaches, **Global Positioning System** (GPS)-enabled tracking of trains and modernization of locomotives.

Over the decades, the Indian Railways continued to grow, with new lines being



The steam locomotives were phased out completely in 1985. 'The Nilgiri Mountain Railway' and the 'Darjeeling Himalayan Railway' were only spared as no other traction mode was found to be suited these lines

Computerisation of reservation of railway tickets was first introduced in Delhi in 1986, and by 1995 the whole system got computerised. In 1998, Konkan Railways started operating. It covered the most difficult terrain of the Western Ghats

Modernization and Technological Advancements: In the latter half of the 20th century and into the 21st century, there have been significant strides in modernizing the Indian Railways. This includes the introduction of electrification, computerized reservation systems, high-speed trains, and the adoption of modern signaling and communication technologies.

A typical red-colored ICF coach used by the Indian Railways till the late 1990s. The first metro rail was introduced in Calcutta on 24 October 1984 with the line between Esplanade and Bhowanipore. In 1986, computerized ticketing and reservations were intro-

Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai in September 1996, coupon century, the network had validating machines (CVMs) were introduced at Mumbai CSMT in 1998 and the na-

tionwide concierge system began operation on 18 April 1999. In 1999, the South East Central Railway zone was established and on 6 July 2002, the East Coast, South Western, South East Central, North Central, and West Central zones were created. The Indian Railways web-

site went online in February 2000. Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) was incorporated in 1999 and online ticketing was introduced on 3 August 2002 through IRCTC. The first line of the Delhi Metro was inaugurated on 24 December 2002. In 2012, Western Railway switched completely to AC traction with Central Railway following it in 2016. On 1 February 2014, Mumbai Monorail became the first operational monorail system in India. In 2015, the first Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) powered trains were rolled out. On 5 April 2016, Gatimaan Express, then India's fastest train with a maximum speed of 160 km/h (99

upgraded. By the early 20th

Indian subcontinent. Milestones and Achievements: Indian Railways has achieved several milestones over the years. This includes the introduction of luxury trains like the Palace on Wheels and the Maharajas' Express, as well as the completion of ambitious projects such as the Konkan Railway and the Delhi Metro.

Challenges and Opportunities: Despite its successes, Indian Railways faces numerous challenges such as congestion, safety concerns, and the need for further modernization. Efforts are ongoing to address these challenges while also exploring opportunities for expansion and improvement.

HI-SPEED TRAINS

India has been gradually modernizing its railway system, introducing new trains with advanced technology and amenities. Here are some examples of modern trains in India

Vande Bharat Express: Vande Bharat Express is India's first semi-high-speed fully air-conditioned train, introduced in February 2019. It operates between Delhi and Varanasi, offering a comfortable and efficient travel experience with features like onboard Wi-Fi, GPS-based passenger information systems, and automatic doors.

Tejas Express: Tejas Express is a series of modern, high-speed trains introduced by Indian Railways. These trains offer stateof-the-art amenities such as LCD screens, onboard entertainment systems,

The history of Indian Railways goes back to 1832 when the modern plan was proposed. The innovative plan completely transformed the history of transportation of India. Though no action was taken for over a decade, in 1844 Lord Hardinge, the Governor General of India, allowed private entrepreneurs to launch the railway system.

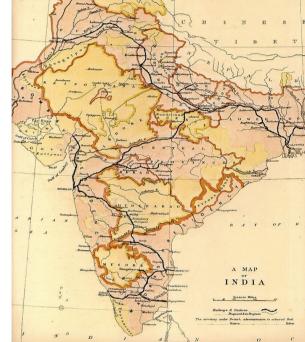


modular bio-toilets, and automatic doors. Tejas Express operates on various routes, including Mumbai-Goa, Chennai-Madurai, and Lucknow-Delhi.

Gatimaan Express: Gatimaan Express is India's fastest train, operating between Delhi and Agra. It boasts a maximum speed of 160 km/h and offers a luxurious travel experience with onboard catering, comfortable seating, and modern facilities.

Maharajas' Express: Maharajas' Express is a luxury tourist train operated by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC). It offers opulent amenities, gourmet dining, and lavish accommodations while traveling to various destinations across India. including Agra, Jaipur, and

Humsafar Express: Humsafar Express is a fully air-conditioned train with



connecting major cities across India.

Duronto Express: Duronto Express is a series of nonstop point-to-point trains between major cities. These modern amenities designed trains offer comfortable seatfor long-distance travel. It ing, onboard catering, and

er coaches to accommodate more passengers while utilizing limited track space. These trains offer modern introduced for faster travel amenities and comfortable seating arrangements for both upper and lower decks. **Antyodaya Express:** Antyodaya Express is a fully unreserved train designed to cater to the needs of common passengers, especially in densely populated regions. It offers comfortable seating, mobile charging points, and enhanced safety features to ensure a pleasant travel experience for all passengers.

trains feature double-deck-

These modern trains reflect India's efforts to enhance passenger comfort, safety, and efficiency in railway transportation while catering to the diverse needs of travelers across the country.

features comfortable berths, LED lights, mobile charging points, and enhanced safety features. Humsafar Express operates on various routes modern amenities while covering long distances in less time.

Double-Decker Express: Double-Decker Express

INTERESTING FACTS

Here are some interesting facts about the Indian Railways

Largest Railway Network: Indian Railways is one of the largest railway networks in the world, covering over 68,000 kilometers of track and serving around 8,000 stations across the

Busiest Railway Station: With over a million passengers passing through it daily, Howrah Junction in Kolkata holds the record for being one of the busiest railway stations in the world.

Longest Railway Platform: Gorakhpur Junction in Uttar Pradesh boasts the longest railway platform in the world, stretching over 1,366 meters.

Mountain Railways: India is home to several picturesque mountain railways, including the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, the Nilgiri Mountain Railway, and the Kalka-Shimla Railway, all of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Luxury Trains: Indian Railways operates several luxury trains, offering travelers a royal experience on board. Examples include the Palace on Wheels, Maharajas' Express, and Deccan Odyssey, which are known for their

opulent amenities and royal treatment. Electric Locomotives: India's electric locomotive, WAG-12, is one of the most powerful in the world, capable of hauling freight

trains with ease. Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC): IRCTC, a subsidiary of Indian Railways, is one of the largest e-commerce websites in India, handling online ticket bookings, catering, and tourism services.

Historical Significance: The first passenger train in India ran from Bombay (Mumbai) to Thane on April 16, 1853, covering a distance of 34 kilometers. This marked the

beginning of the Indian Railways. High-Speed Rail: India is working on introducing high-speed rail corridors, with the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) project, commonly known as the Bullet Train project, being one of the most ambitious endeavors in this regard.

Human Resource: Indian Railways is one of the largest employers in the world, providing jobs to millions of people directly and indirectly, ranging from train drivers and station staff to maintenance crews and administrative personnel. These facts showcase the scale, diversity, and significance of the Indian Railways in the country's transportation infrastructure and cultural heritage.



BABA RAMDEV AND ACHARYA BALKRISHNA PERSONALLY APOLOGISE TO SUPREME COURT, PATANJALI LTD AGREES TO PUBLISH PUBLIC APOLOGY

The Supreme Court in the case Indian Medical Association v. Union Of India observed wherein the Baba Ramdev, co-founder of Patanjali Ayurved Ltd, personally appeared before the court and has expressed unconditional apology for publishing misleading advertisements and making comments against Allopathic medicines in breach of an undertaking given to the Court.

Acharya Balkrishna, the Managing Director of Patanjali, also personally apologised to the Court.

The counsel, Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Patanjali told the Court that they are 'ready to give a public apology to show contrition.

The bench comprising of Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah was hearing the contempt case against Patanjali Ayurvedi Ltd, Acharya Balkrishna and Baba Ramdev in the case over misleading advertisements.

In the hearing on April 16, 2024, the bench personally interacted with Ramdev and Balkrishna and asked why they acted in violation of the undertaking given to the

Adding to it, Baba Ram-

dev said in response to Justice Kohli's queries that. 'Humne jo kiya vo uss samay nai khan chaiye tha... hum aagey yaad rakhengey (What we did at that point of time, it should not have been done. We will remember this won't happen in future)...vo utsah mein aisa ho gya(it happened in an impulse)... aagey se hum nai krenegy

(we won't do so in future)'. Further, Balkrishna also told the bench that, 'Hume nahi krana chahiye tha (We should not have done it)'.

The bench in the case observed and has adjourned the matter for further hearing till April 23 to give an opportunity to them to redeem their acts.

The bench in its order stated that the counsel, Senior Advocate Mr Rohatgi appearing for the proposed contemnors submitted before the court that to redeem themselves and demonstrate...they want to take some steps unilaterally. In request of one week's time to revert on the aforesaid aspect, thus, this court has interacted with the proposed contemnors as well and heard the submissions made by them and at the request of respondents 5-7, list on April 23, 2024.

The court on April O2 had refused to accept the first affidavit of apology filed by Patanjali Managing Director,

MD, after noting that it was not unqualified.

On April 10, the court refused to accept the second affidavit of apology filed by Patanjali MD.

The court in the case also noted that Balkrishna and Ramdev had sworn an affidavit with non-existing flight tickets to evade personal appearance before the

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on April 23,

BRIEF BACKGROUND OF WHAT HAPPENED:

SUPREME COURT REFUSES STATE'S EXPLANATION:

The Supreme Court in the case Indian Medical Association v. Union Of India observed and has rejected the second affidavit of apology filed by Patanjali Ayurved and its Managing Director Acharya Balkrishna in the contempt case initiated over the publication of misleading medical advertisements.

The bench comprising of Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Ahsanudding Amanullah in the case observed and has refused to accept the latest affidavit filed by Patanjali and its Managing Director Acharya Balkrishna wherein it expressed 'unconditional and unqualified apology' for airing the advertisements in breach of an undertaking given to the Court in November last year.

The court in the case refused to accept the apology affidavit filed by Patanjali co-founder Baba Ramdev as well, who is also facing contempt proceedings.

The bench told the counsel, Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi appearing for the Patanjali that the affidavit is merely 'on paper' and warned that the proposed contemnors should be ready to face penal action for violation of the undertaking.

The bench of Justice Kohli stated that, Apology is on paper. Their back is against the wall. We decline to accept this, we consider it a deliberate violation of undertaking. Be ready for something next to rejection of affidavit.

When Rohatgi stated that, people make mistakes, Justice Kohli retorted, 'Then they suffer. We don't want to be so generous in this case.' Further, Justice Kohli stat-

ed that, Why should we not treat your apology with the same disdain as shown to court undertaking? We are not convinced. Now going to turn down this apology.

The counsel, Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi stated that the contemnors are prepared to issue a public apology. But the court did

not grant indulgence.

On the other hand, the counsel, Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta told the Court that he had advised the lawyers to withdraw the first affidavit, as the same was written in conditional terms and for filing an unconditional affidavit.

Further, the Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta stated that he was curious to know what he missed in advising.

The bench in the case observed and has stated that the SG had done all he could, but the affidavit, despite his recommendation, was not convincing and only on pa-

The court in its order observed that, having regard to the entire history of the matter and the past conduct of the respondent 5 to respondent 7, this court have expressed our reservations about accepting the latest affidavit filed by them.

Therefore, Balkrishna, Ramdev tried to evade personal appearance by making false claims about the foreign travel

The court commented that Patanjali Managing Director and Baba Ramdev tried to evade personal appearance before the Court by making false claims of travel abroad. The court in its order stat-

ed that the fact remains the same that the date when the

affidavits were sworn, thus, there was no such ticket in existence. Thus, the assumption is that the respondents were trying to wriggle out of their personal appearance before the Court, which is most unacceptable.

THE COURT RAPS UT-**TARAKHAND AUTHOR-ITIES**

The said court also came down heavily on the State of Uttarakhand for the failure of its licensing authorities to take legal action against Patanjali and its subsidiary Divya Pharmacy.

The bench also asked why it should not think that the authorities were 'hand in glove' with Patanjali or Divya Pharmacy.

The court in its order stated that it was 'appalled' to note that apart from 'pushing the file', the State Licensing Authorities did nothing and were merely trying to 'pass on the buck' to 'somehow delay the matter.'

The court stated that the **State Licensing Authority** is "equally complicit" due to its inaction against Divya Pharmacy despite having information about their advertisements violating the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act.

Further, the court stated that it was refraining from issuing contempt notices to

Further, the court directed that all officers holding the post of Joint Director of the State Licensing Authority, Haridwar between 2018 till date shall also file affidavits explaining inaction on their

BACKGROUND OF THE

The contempt case was initiated wherein the petition is filed by the Indian Medical Association against Patanjali's advertisements attacking allopathy and making claims about curing certain diseases.

On the Supreme Court reprimand, the Patanjali on last November had assured that it would refrain from such advertisements.

The court in the case noted that the misleading advertisements continued, thus, the Court had issued contempt notice to Patanjali and its MD in February.

The court in march considering that reply to the contempt notice was not filed, the personal appearance of the Patanjali MD as well as Baba Ramdev, who featured in the press conferences and advertisements published after the undertaking, was ordered by the said Court.

Therefore, the Patanjali MD filed an affidavit wherein it is stated that the

impugned advertisements were meant to contain only general statements but inadvertently included offending sentences.

Further, the court stated that the advertisements were bona-fide and that Patanjali's media personnel was not 'cognizant' of the November order (wherein the undertaking was given before the Supreme Court).

The affidavit filed also contained an averment that the **Drugs and Magic Remedies** Act was in an "archaic state" as it was enacted at a time when scientific evidence regarding Ayurvedic medicines was lacking.

On the last date of hearing, both Baba Ramdev and MD Balkrishna were physically present in Court.

The court expressed its reservations about MD Balkrishna's affidavit, calling it "perfunctory" and "mere lip service".

The court gave last opportunity to the alleged contemnors for filing a proper affidavit.

The counsel, Senior Advocate PS Patwalia appeared for the Petitioner.

The counsel, Senior Advocates Mukul Rohatgi. Balbir Singh, Vipin Sanghi and Dhruv Mehta; Solicitor General Tushar Mehta; ASG KM Nataraj, AoR Vanshaja Shukla represented the respondent.

What Allahabad High Court Held On Operation Of Industrial Disputes Act, Delegation Of Power By State Govt: Working Journalists Act

TDG NETWORK

The Allahabad High Court in the case The Indian Express Pvt. Ltd. v. Union of India observed and has held that 1955 Act is a special act governing the conditions of work for newspaper employees which includes working journalists and non-working journalists and will have overriding effect over the Industrial Dis-

putes Act, 1947. The bench headed by Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal in the case observed that the Act of 1947 only supplements the cause of working journalists, but in no way it restricts in reaping the benefits provided under the Act 1955, especially as stated under Section 17, which is a scheme of recovering of dues of an employee from its employer.

The bench in the case observed and has held that the power of the State Government to make reference to the Labour Court as stated under Section 17(2) of Working Journalists And Other Newspaper Employees, the Conditions of Service and Misc. Provisions Act, 1955 can be delegated to competent authority.

The court in the case held that the provisions as stated under Section 17 must be construed as a whole.

Therefore, the section 17(1) provides that when an application has been moved by an employee for recovery of amount due to him from the employer, the State Government or authority specified by the State Government shall issue a certificate to the Collector for recovering the amount from the employer where there is no dispute regarding the amount.

The court stated that Sub-section (2) of Section 17 provides that in case of a dispute with regards to the amount due, the State Government shall make a refer-



ence to the Labour Court for adjudication of the disputed amount. Thus, the decision of the Labour Court shall then be forwarded to the State Government for recovery of decided amount.

The court held that the Labour Court gives a 'decision' and does not pass an 'award' as it is mentioned in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

Further, the court held that since it is a decision, there was no such need for publication of such a decision as contemplated in the Industrial Disputes Act,

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE:

The Apex Court in the case ABP (Private Ltd.) vs. Union of India observed wherein the court upheld the Majithia Wage Board Award and had directed that all arrears of payment till March 2014 is to be paid in 4 equal installments and since the payments were not being made, the contempt petitions were filed before the Supreme Court which directed that all complaints regarding non-implementation of the Wage Board be dealt with under Section 17 Recovery of money due

The court stated that since there was a shortfall of payment made to the respondent employees, they filed an application under Section 17(1) before the Assistant Labour Commissioner, Gautam Budh Nagar who is the prescribed authority

from an employer of the

under the impugned noti-

The court directing the Management to pay was challenged before the High Court and was set aside. Prescribed Authority was directed to refer the dispute to the Labour Court.

The Labour Court in the ase directed the petitioner to pay wages to the employees along with 6% interest.

The Petitioner, Indian Express, challenged the notification dated November 12. 2014 issued by State Government while specifying the officers mentioned in Column II to be 'authorities competent' to dispose the application under Section 17 of the 1955 Act. Thus, the subsequent reference made by the Deputy Labour Commissioner as well as the order of the Labour Court rejecting application challenging the jurisdiction have also been challenged before the High Court.

HIGH COURT VERDICT: The Court also observed that in the case Pradhan Prabandhank/Unit Head M/s. Amar Ujala v. State of U.P. and others, wherein the Allahabad High Court held that the power of reference under Section 17(2) is not a quasi-judicial power vested with the State Government,

and hence, can be delegated. Therefore, the court upheld the delegation of power made by the State Government vide notification dated November 12, 2014 describing competent authorities to deal with Section 17 applica-

The court in the case held that by specifying the authority who would dispose of the application, the State Government had conferred the powers of making reference on the competent authority as well. The said decision was followed in Hindustan Media Ventures Ltd. Iagatgani Varanasi v. State of U.P. and others wherein the Allahabad High Court had refused to quash the notification dated November 12, 2014.

Further, the court relied in the case Samarjit Ghosh v. Bennet Coleman and Co. and other, wherein the Supreme Court held that all provisions of Section 17 constitute a single scheme.

The bench of Justice Agarwal held that there is no other form, other than Form-C which provides for application regarding recovery of amount due to the employee. Thus, the court held that Section 17 emphasizes recovery of money due from the employer and its provisions lay down sets to be followed.

The court in the case ABP (Private Ltd.) observed wherein the Supreme Court held that a newspaper industry was class by itself and the amendment in 1974 only brought the non-working journalists within the ambit of the Act of 1955 to extend them the same benefit as the working journalists. Further, the court held that the Act of 1955 is only an enabling provision for improving and regulating the service conditions of newspaper employees which includes both the working journalists and non-journalist newspaper employees. The Court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case held that there is no requirement for publica-

tion of the same. Accordingly, the court dismissed the writ petition.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court in the case Aman Singh v. State of Punjab observed and has noted the allegations that cannabis plants have grown wildly in public places in Chandigarh. The court in the case stated

that it is a matter of 'grave concern' and needs to be ad-The bench headed by Justice Sandeep Moudgil was

plea in a NDPS case. Therefore, the bench was informed by the counsel appearing for the Petitioner that large number of cannabis plants are growing in the open area near the Secretariat round-about and par'many visitors or passersby or may be even the residents of the city are indulged in misusing the wild growth to their undue advantage and illegal use.

Further, the court stated

that the issue raised 'is quite serious and it called upon Senior Standing Counsel for Chandigarh UT to apprise the Court with regards to the said issue.

hearing the anticipatory bail The bench of Moudgil stated that if at all it is happening in Chandigarh, then it is a matter of grave concern wherein 'narcotic drugs are playing havoc in the life of not only the common man but in particular the young generation as a termite, who is future of this ticularly in a public park and

In the present case, the said

Punjab and Haryana High Court Expressed Concern, seeks UT's

Response: Wild Cannabis Plants Openly growing In Chandigarh?

of Aman Singh accused under Section 20 and Section 29 of NDPS Act. The counsel appearing for the petitioner contended before the court that the alleged contraband i.e. 800 grams of Sulpha has been recov-

development came while

hearing an anticipatory bail

quantity. Further, the petitioner submitted that no recovery whatsoever has been effected from the possession of the petitioner.

co-accused Sachin Kumar.

which is non-commercial in

It was also contended before the court that police par-

ty was traveling on a private vehicle but the registration number of the said private vehicle or the details with regards to its ownership have not been mentioned anywhere in the police proceedings, which is contravention of policy framed by

DGP, Punjab. The court while considering the facts and circumered from the possession of stances of the case observed and has issued the notice thus, the court granted interim-bail to the accused.

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on April 26, 2024.

The counsel, Advocate P.S. Sekhon appeared for the Pe-

Delhi High Court: Court Should Refrain From Delving Into Hyper-Technical Aspects Of Arbitration Agreement At Section11(6) Stage | Arbitration Act

The Delhi High Court in the case T.V. Today Network Ltd Vs Home And Soul Pvt. Ltd. observed and has held that court at the Section 11(6) stage should refrain from delving into hyper-technical aspects or intricacies of the arbitration agreement. Thus, the court held that if an agreement visibly contains an arbitration clause and involves a dispute suitable for arbitration, it must be referred to the arbitrator as a matter of course.

The single bench of Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma in the case was hearing the present

FACTS OF THE CASE:

The Petitioner entered into two Barter Agreements for advertisement space.

As per the first agreement, the Respondent agreed to provide property equivalent to the value of the advertising space. The Petitioner published advertisements worth an amount of Rs. 69,93,821/- between July 2012 and March 2013. Therefore, under the second agreement, advertisements worth Rs. 1,51,84,500/- were published between July 2013 and December 2015.

The petitioner in the plea contended that the disputes arose as the Respondent failed to fulfill obligations outlined in the agreements. The Petitioner initiated arbitration through a notice, which the Respondent countered by claiming the Petitioner's demand was timebarred under the agreements' thirty-day limitation period for seeking legal recourse after

On the other hand, the Respondent contested the validity of the Petitioner's arbitrator nominee.

non-compliance.

Further, the respondent argued that the Petitioner's claim was time-barred, with limitations expiring in 2017 and 2018 for the respective agreements.

The Petitioner approached the Delhi High Court, the High Court and filed an application under Section 11(6)(C) of the **Arbitration and Conciliation** Act, 1996, the Arbitration Act, wherein seeking the appointment of a sole arbitrator to resolve disputes between the

In response to it, the Petitioner rebutted the Respondent's time-barred claim by asserting that discussions between the parties persisted beyond the limitation periods and disputes arose only after the Respondent contested the amount claimed.

The Petitioner in the plea argued that the court's role, in referring the matter to arbitration, does not extend to determining issues of limitation.

OBSERVATIONS MADE BY THE HIGH COURT:

The High Court in the case observed and has noted that under Section 11 of the Arbitration Act the courts' role is limited to determining the existence of an arbitration agreement and arbitrable disputes

between the parties. The High Court held that the claims which are patently barred by limitation should not be referred to arbitration, as doing so would be futile and against the parties' interests.

Further, the High Court held that limitation of a claim is a mixed question of fact and law which needs to be decided by the arbitral tribunal.

The High Court also referred to the case Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. & Anr. v. M/S Nortel Networks India Pvt. Ltd., wherein the curt held that there is a distinction between jurisdictional and admissibility issues concerning limitation. Thus, the court held that the issues regarding the existence, scope, and validity of the arbitration agreement are jurisdictional and the matters of limitation primarily concern the admissibility of the claim fall within the arbitral tribunal's purview.

The High Court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed held that the matter should be referred to arbitration and appointed Mr. S. P. Garg, a former judge of the Delhi High Court, as the Sole Arbitrator.

The counsel, Advocates Mr. Sharukh Ejaz, Mr. Nilotpal Bansal, Mr. Farheen Penwale appeared for the Petitioner.

The counsel, Advocates Mr. Alok K. Aggarwal, Ms. Anushka Sharma, Mr. Raj Duggal represented the respondent.

MIDDLE EAST ON EDGE AFTER ISRAEL VOWS 'RESPONSE' TO IRAN ATTACK

Israel and Iran traded threats on Tuesday after Tehran's first ever direct attack on its arch foe sharply heightened regional tensions as the Gaza war ground on with no truce in sight.

AGENCIES

srael and Iran traded threats on Tuesday after Tehran's first ever direct attack on its arch foe sharply heightened regional tensions as the Gaza war ground on with no truce in sight.

Israeli military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said Iran would not get off "scot-free" after Iran and its allies launched a barrage of over 300 missiles, drones and rockets at Israel at the weekend.

"We cannot stand still from this kind of aggression,' Hagari said, a day after Israel's military chief vowed there would "a response" to

Iran said its attack was an act of self-defence following a deadly Israeli air strike on its consulate in Syria, and that it would consider the matter "concluded" unless Israel retaliated.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi warned that "the slightest action against Iran's interests will definitely be met with a severe, extensive and painful response".

US President Joe Biden stressed on Monday that "the United States is committed to Israel's security" and wants to prevent the conflict from spreading.

Washington, Israel's top ally and arms supplier, has made clear it will not join Israel in any attack on their common adversary Iran, a

senior US official said. World leaders have urged

restraint and de-escalation. During a phone call with Iran's Raisi, Russian President Vladimir Putin called on both sides to "prevent a new round of confrontation fraught with catastrophic consequences for the entire region", the Kremlin said.

Israel has meanwhile kept bombing targets in Gaza, the Hamas-ruled coastal territory that has been largely devastated by more than six months of war and a siege on its 2.4 million people.

Israel weighs options Since the Iranian attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has twice convened his war cabinet, set up after Palestinian mili-



Heavy rains lash UAE, authorities issue

tant group Hamas launched the October 7 attack that sparked the bloodiest ever Gaza war.

Israel was weighing its options after the Iranian drone and missile onslaught, which caused little damage as Israeli defences intercepted most projectiles, helped by US, British and French forces as well as regional allies.

Israel might strike and whether it would target Iran directly or attack its interests or allies abroad, including in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Ye-

Iran-backed armed groups across the region have carried out attacks since the Israel-Hamas war broke out. Hezbollah, which has been

trading regular cross-border fire with Israel, claimed an attack with two explosive drones near a northern Israeli town on Tuesday. which the local council said wounded three people.

Also on Tuesday, an Israeli strike killed a local Hezbollah commander in southern Lebanon, a source close the group and the Israeli military said.

The deadly strike was followed by fresh rocket fire at Israel which Hezbollah said was "in response to the Israeli enemy's attacks".

Israel made its first official comment Monday on the strike that levelled a fivestorey Iranian consulate building on April 1, killing seven Iranian Revolutionary Guards including two generals.

"These were people who engaged in terrorism against the State of Israel," Hagari

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz called on 32 countries to impose sanctions on Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and their missile programme, he said on social media. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who will head to Israel on Tuesday, urged the European Union to impose sanctions on Iranian drone technology.

'Without mercy'

Israel's military has vowed the Iran tensions will not distract it from the ongoing war in Gaza, where it aims

to destroy Hamas and bring home the hostages taken during the Hamas attack more than six months ago.

On Tuesday, Netanyahu told new army recruits that Israeli forces were fighting Hamas "without mercy".

"Iran stands behind Hamas, behind Hezbollah and behind others, but we are determined to win," he said. Truce talks involving US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators have so far failed to bring a deal, and Israel has rejected a Hamas demand that it withdraw its forces from Gaza.

The Hamas attack that started the war on October 7 resulted in the deaths of 1,170 people, mostly civilians, according to Israeli

Human Rights Watch criticises Pakistan for forceful eviction of farmers

AGENCIES NEW YORK

Human Rights Watch has condemned Pakistan's eviction of thousands of farmers for a plan to build the 'world's largest riverfront city' near the city of Lahore.

Pakistani authorities are forcibly evicting thousands of farmers claimed to have been developed for the betterment

Human Rights Watch (HRW) in its recent report criticised Pakistan for imposing laws of the 'colonial era', which give the administration the power to acquire land for private as well as public use.

The Human Rights Watch report stated that "the Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project, which started in August 2020 by then-Prime Minister Imran Khan, claimed it would address Lahore's many problems such as pollution, sewage, water, housing, and employment while reviving its "lost glory." As per Pakistan, PKR 5 tril-

The Sri Lankan government

on Tuesday said it failed to

reach an agreement with its

bondholders for restructur-

ing around USD 12 billion

debt, in the latest setback for

the cash-strapped island na-

tion which is aiming to meet

targets for the next tranche

Sri Lanka aims to complete

debt restructuring agree-

ments with private creditors

and sovereign bond-holders

by June, in time for the next

review of the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) bail-

of the IMF bailout.

out programme.

lion, (USD 7 billion) government project, covering more than 100,000 acres along the Ravi River in Punjab province, is among the largest infrastructure projects in Pakistan. Proposed plans would create the "world's largest riverfront city," with a population of 12 million".

However, according to the statement of Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director of HRW, on Thursday, "Punjab provincial authorities have harassed and threatened area farmers to deprive them of their homes and livelihoods. The authorities need to ensure that government projects minimise displacement and loss of income, but also minimise environmental harm and flooding risks."

To advance the Ravi River project, the government has acted on behalf of private developers to acquire the necessary property, 85 per cent of which is agricultural land occupied by nearly one million farmers, labourers, and

for USD 12 billion debt restructuring

'unsettled weather' warning

AGENCIES

Authorities in the United Arab Emirates have urged residents to stay at home after large parts of the region was lashed by torrential rain, hail and thunderstorms on Tuesday. schools have shifted to online classes and government employees have been asked to work from home.

The National Centre of Meteorology (NCM) has asked residents of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah that they should prepare themselves

for unsettled weather conditions over the next 48 hours, with heavy rainfall expected in these areas till Wednesday, Khaleej Times reported today.

"There is not only a likelihood of significant rainfall but also a possibility of hailstorms in places like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, and other emirates," National Centre of Meteorology expert, Ahmed Habib said.

The authority also advised people to park their vehicles at safe and elevated locations away from flood-prone areas. Heavy to moderate rain, thunder and lightning were

seen across the UAE on Monday night and Adverse weather conditions are expected to continue into Wednesday morning, with convective clouds that bring rainfall and lightning forming over coastal areas - particularly in the north and east of the country, the weather

The weather bureau has reported moderate to heavy rain over Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Fujairah, Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah.

department predicted.

A number of roads were flooded due to continued rainfall and flights cancelled

and delayed at Dubai International Airport.

According to Gulf News. Dubai Tram service were disrupted, the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) posted on its social media account. Traffic disruptions were reported as a result of road cave ins due to heavy rains in Ras Al Khaimah, Al Ain, Al Qou among others.

The UAE Football Association confirmed that all matches in "local competitions" scheduled for Tuesday have been called off because of the storms lashing much

Taiwan detects 11 Chinese military aircraft, 8 naval ships in its waters

AGENCIES TAIPEI (TAIWAN)

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) has announced that it has detected 11 Chinese military aircraft and eight naval vessels around Taiwan between 6 am on Monday and 6 am

According to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence, of the 11 People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft, six crossed the Taiwan Strait median line, one entered the southwest sector of the nation's air defence identification zone (ADIZ), and one helicopter was detected in the southeast ADIZ.

In response, Taiwan sent aircraft and naval ships and deployed air defence missile systems to monitor the PLA activity, as per reports.

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence disclosed in an official post on X, stating, "11 PLA aircraft and 8 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 8 of the aircraft crossed the median line of the



Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's SW and eastern ADIZ."

On April 15, the Taiwan Ministry released the information that 18 Chinese military aircraft and 6 naval vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 am.

11 of the aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's southwest sector of the nation's air defence identification zone. So far this month, Taiwan has tracked Chinese military aircraft 136 times and naval vessels 98 times. Since September 2020, China has increased its use of grey zone tactics by incrementally increasing the number of military aircraft and naval ships operating around Taiwan

At least 17 killed in flash floods triggered by heavy rains in Oman

AGENCIES

At least 17 people have been killed in flash floods triggered by heavy downpour across Oman since Sunday, CNN reported, citing the country's National Committee for Emergency Manage-

Sri Lanka fails to strike deal with sovereign bondholders

ment (NCEM) reports.

Amid the ongoing situation, the government of Oman suspended the work of employees and workers in the public and private sectors in five governorates, including Musandam, Al Buraimi, Al Dhahirah, and Al Dakhilivah, due to the

structuring terms," said the

statement issued by RMP

Ratnayake, Deputy Treasury

It said that the government

considered two separate

proposals sent by the bond-

holders in March and early

this month, while the bond-

holders rejected the govern-

ment's proposal for a 28 per

Sri Lanka is "looking for-

ward to continued engage-

ment in good faith as soon

as feasible, with a view to

reaching common ground

in the next few weeks,

ahead of the second re-

view of the IMF-Supported

Programme being consid-

Secretary

cent haircut.

weather conditions.

The government has, however, not allowed employees to work remotely, if possible.

According to a UNOCHA statement made on Monday, authorities in Oman are carrying out "rescue operations," according to CNN.

ered by the IMF Executive

In March, the IMF said

it had reached a staff-level

agreement with Sri Lanka

for the next phase, enabling

it access to USD 337 mil-

lion from the nearly USD 3

billion bailout approved in

Two tranches of USD 330

million each were released in

March and December 2023,

even as the global lender

praised Colombo for its mac-

roeconomic policy reforms,

which it said "are starting to

It's been two years since Sri

Lanka declared its first-ever

default on sovereign debt.

2023 for the island nation.

Board," it said.

closed on Monday Moreover, moderate to

As a result of 'unstable

weather', all schools across

six governorates of Oman.

including Muscat will be

heavy rainfall is predicted in northern and eastern Oman, over the next few

8 Indians charged with abduction, human trafficking in Nepal

AGENCIES

Eight Indian nationals have been charged under various sections of Acts related to human trafficking, organised crime and abduction here two months after they were arrested for duping 11 compatriots on the promise of lucrative jobs abroad, police said on Tuesday.

In mid-February, 11 Indians, mostly students, were held hostage for over two weeks with a promise to facilitate travel to the USA. They were rescued after Nepal police bust a human trafficking racket and arrested eight Indian mafia members

along with their Nepali accomplice. The police have submitted an investigation report to register cases against the eight Indian nationals for the crime at the Kathmandu District Attorney's Office.

The arrested include Abdul Rahim, Charanjit Singh, Nipun Gupta, Ramchandra Sharma, Hindu Singh Yadav, Ashok Kumar, Ravi Mewade and Manish Kumar Malhotra, according to Kathmandu District Police Circle statement.

Named as 'Dunki Operation' as the case turned out to be similar to the situation shown in popular Indian actor Sharukh Khan's 2023 movie Dunki, Nepal police said, the 11 persons were kept as hostages in a rented house for more than a month on the outskirts of Kathmandu.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided a private residence belonging to a Nepali national at Dhobikhola Corridor, Ratopul and rescued those 11 Indians, who were taken as hostage in the pretext of sending them to USA via Mexico.

The agents, including the Indian mafia members, charged the Indian nationals, mostly students, Rs 4.5 million per person with the false promise of sending to USA and additional USD 3,000 were charged as visa fee upon their arrival in Kathmandu.

Scholz urges China to use Russia 'influence' to end Ukraine war

AGENCIES

AGENCIES COLOMBO

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Tuesday he had urged Xi Jinping to press ally Russia to end its "senseless" war in Ukraine and that the Chinese President had agreed to back a peace con-

ference in Switzerland. Following a meeting with Xi at Beijing's Diaoyutai State Guesthouse on Tuesday, Scholz said on X, formerly Twitter, that "China's word carries weight in Russia."

"I have therefore asked President Xi to influence

Russia so that Putin finally calls off his senseless campaign, withdraws his troops and ends this terrible war," he said.

In March, the IMF

said it had reached a

staff-level agreement

with Sri Lanka for

the next phase

He added that Xi had agreed to back a peace conference on the war in Switzerland, While China says it is a neutral party in the Ukraine conflict, it has been criticised for refusing to condemn Moscow for its offensive.

China and Russia have in recent years ramped up economic cooperation and diplomatic contacts, their strategic partnership only

growing closer since the invasion of Ukraine.

The Finance Ministry said

that the government held

restricted discussions over

the past three weeks with

nine members of the Ad Hoc

Group of Bondholders but

"Despite constructive dis-

cussions, the parties did not

come to an agreement on re-

could not strike a deal.

In talks with Xi on Tuesday, Scholz said "the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and Russia's armament have a very significant negative impact on security in Europe", according to a recording provided by the chancellor's office.

"They directly affect our core interests," he told Xi, adding they "damage the entire international order because they violate a principle of the United Nations Charter". No 'fuel to the fire' Chinese state media, in

turn, said Xi had highlighted the importance of ties in the face of "increasing risks and challenges".

"China and Germany are the second and third largest economies in the world.' state broadcaster CCTV quoted Xi as having said.

He also laid out what state media described as "four principles to prevent the Ukraine crisis from spiralling out of control and to restore peace".

ing selfish gains", Xi said.

Nations must focus on "the upholding of peace and stability and refrain from seek-

AGENCIES

bear fruit".

China's economy grew at 5.3 per cent in the first quarter, making a stronger-thanexpected start to the year even as the downturn of its property market continued while the domestic demand remained subdued.

The GDP grew 5.3 per cent year on year to 29.63 trillion yuan (about USD 4.17 trillion) in the first three months of 2024, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed on Tuesday.

The pace accelerated from

However, Tuesday's better-



5.2 per cent overall GDP growth for 2023, appearing on course to meet the target set by the government at around five per cent.

China's GDP grew by 5.3% in 1st quarter of

2024 amid continued crisis in property sector

than-expected data came days after China reported its exports sank 7.5% in March compared to the year before, while imports also weakened. Inflation cooled, reflecting deflationary pressures resulting from slack demand amid a crisis in the property sector. Investment in property de-

velopments fell 9.5% from a year earlier in January-March, compared with a decline of 9% in the previous quarter.

"The investment and sales of real estate in the first quarter are indeed not very

optimistic. The real estate market is still in a process of adjustment," Sheng Laiyun, deputy commissioner of the National Bureau of Statistics, told reporters in Beijing.

Sheng also acknowledged that while growth was stronger than anticipated, it was uneven. Investment in infrastructure such as roads and bridges rose 6.5% yearon-year after a 6% increase in the previous quarter.

Fixed investment, in factories and equipment, grew 4.5% compared to the same period a year earlier, up from 4.2% in the previous quarter.

VOLCANIC SPECTACLE



A drone captures volcanic eruption at Sundhnukagigar in Svartsengi, Iceland's southwest.

Agencies

US military stays in Middle East amid Israel-Iran debate

AGENCIES WASHINGTON. DC (US)

Additional United States military assets that were moved into the Middle East before Iran's attack on Israel will remain in place, CNN reported, citing Pentagon spokesperson Maj. Gen. Pat

"As (Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin) has said, both publicly and privately, we don't want to see escalation. but we obviously will take necessary measures to protect our forces in the region and as was demonstrated over the weekend, we'll take necessary measures to defend Israel," Ryder said.

Ryder's comments come as Israel debates possible retaliation to Iran's attack.

Earlier, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) chief of staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi vowed answer to the Iranian attack and said that Iran's attack on Israel "will be met with a

response."

"Iran wanted to harm the strategic capabilities of the State of Israel, this is something that did not happen in the past," Halevi said while addressing troops at Nevatim airbase, which was hit

"We were prepared in the 'Iron Shield' operation, this preparation brought Iran to also meet air superiority, which you expressed (manifested) very well," he said, CNN reported.

Halevi said that Israel had intelligence of Iran's strike since last Monday, adding that Israel is "very strong and knows how to deal with it on its own."

Meanwhile, amid fears

of Israel response, US Secretary of Defence Llyod Austin spoke with the acting Deputy Prime Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Fahad Youssef Al-Sabah and discussed the unprecedented attack by Iran on Israel, adding that US does not seek escalation, an official

statement said.

"Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III spoke with Kuwaiti Acting Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, His Excellency Sheikh Fahad Youssef Al-Sabah today to discuss the unprecedented attacks launched from Iranian territory and by Iran's proxies in the region into Israel, and U.S. and coalition efforts to defend Israel," Pentagon Press Secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said

US Defence Secretary Austin talks security with Chinese counterpart

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin on Tuesday spoke with his Chinese counterpart for the first time since November 2022, during which they discussed bilateral ties and underlined the importance of maintaining open lines of military-to-military communication, amidst Beijing's aggressive manoeuvres in the Indo-Pacific.

It is also the first time the Defence Secretary has spoken at length with his Chinese counterpart since November 2022, when he met with the then-PRC (People's Republic of China) Minister of National Defence, General Wei Fenghe, at the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus in Cambodia.

to be signed off after the Indian elections and before

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak

confirms the date for the UK

general election, expected in

The India-UK FTA nego-

tiations, which opened in

the second half of the year.

AGENCIES

An Indian-origin school

Katherine Birbalsingh, of Indo-Guyanese heritage, had told the court that Michaela School - a "secular" secondary school for boys and girls in Wembley, north London - did not allow religious prayers in keeping with its ethos of promoting

While half of the pupils at the school are Muslims, it also has large numbers of Sikh, Hindu and Christian

"As the Governing Body

CONGRESSMAN FLAYS INACTION ON HINDU TEMPLE ATTACKS

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, DC (US)

ndian-American Congressman Shri Thanedar Linteracted with members of the Hindu community on Monday and spoke about the issue of rising attacks on Hindu temples across America and the fear among the community, saying that "local law enforcement hasn't taken enough action" to investigate the recent attacks.

This comes as he introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives condemning Hinduphobia, anti-Hindu bigotry, hate, and intolerance on April 10. The resolution has been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

"We've seen a lot of attacks happening on Hindu temples across the United States and we've seen a lot more in more recent times. And it's time for us to seek support. There's a fear. Many Hindu communities are under fear. And what we've seen is that local law enforcement hasn't taken enough action. We have not seen any suspects, any arrests, or any resolution to these issues," he said while citing it as a reason for introducing the resolution in US Congress. "That (attack incident) has

created a lot of fear among the Indian American community, among the Hindu community, and a lot of misinformation has been spread. And so the purpose of this resolution is to bring that to the attention of Congress and to the Biden administration," he added. Congressman Thanedar

also said that he expects bipartisan support in Congress as it reflects American values, adding that he will continue to fight against racism. "Well, I expect bipartisan support because American values--freedom, equality, and racial justice--are all American values. And I expect my congressional colleagues from across the aisle to co-sponsor this resolution and be part of it," he said."I'll continue to stand and fight for justice, just like I fight for justice for my community in Detroit, Michigan, and fighting against racism, fighting against systemic racism that my community in Detroit has experienced for decades," he added.

Another Indian-American, Vijay Sadhawal, who was present at the event, expressed his concern over the 'bias of the American media' towards American Hindus and said that the resolution is just the starting point to raising the voice of the Hindu community.

India world's largest democracy, important strategic partner, says US

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, DC (US)

The US Department of State spokesperson, Matthew Miller, was put on the spot to address recent publications alleging democratic backsliding in India and the US navigating the relationship with the country. Matthew Miller, while responding to a question, reaffirmed America's relations with India and said that the latter country is an important strategic partner of the US.

"So India is the world's largest democracy, it is an important strategic partner of the United States, and I expect that to remain true," Miller said in a daily press briefing on Monday.

Department spokesperson Matthew Miller addressed concerns about inconsistency in commenting on arrests of Indian & Pakistani leaders.

Indian-origin principal wins UK legal challenge over school prayer ban

principal, often referred to as "Britain's strictest headmistress", on Tuesday welcomed a UK High Court ruling that upheld her ban on prayer rituals after a Muslim pupil sought to legally challenge it as discriminatory.

an "inclusive environment".



is aware, the School does not provide a prayer room for use by pupils, for various reasons. These reasons include that a prayer room would foster division amongst pupils, contrary to the School's ethos, lack of available space and available staff to supervise pupils and that pupils would miss important School activities, including during the lunch break if they were to spend time in a prayer room," Birbalsingh told the

"Unacceptable segregation or division, contrary to the whole ethos of the school, was taking place as a result of permitting prayer. An intimidatory atmosphere was developing. Our strict disciplinary policies, on which the ethos and great success of (the) School is based, were at risk of being undermined," she said.

Justice Thomas Linden, in an 80-page judgment following a hearing in January,

ruled in the school's favour. "In my judgment, the starting point is that the School was right to take the view that the issue was whether to permit and facilitate ritual prayer indoors: in effect, to reverse its longstanding

policy of not providing a

prayer room," it reads.

"She (the unnamed pupil) knew that the School is secular, and her own evidence is that her mother wished her to go there because it was known to be strict... Her evidence has focussed on her preferences and what she supposes the position would be elsewhere," it notes.

In a statement following the ruling, Birbalsingh said it was a "victory for all schools" and of the "robust vet respectful secularism" principles on which the school she founded in 2014 is run.

UK criminalises creation of 'deepfake' images without consent

Despicable people who create sexually explicit "deepfakes" will face prosecution under a new law going through its parliamentary journey, the British government said on Tuesday.

Deepfake refers to images and videos made to look hyper-realistic, with the victim usually unaware and unable to give their consent. Under the new offence, those who create such images without consent face a criminal record and an unlimited fine.

"The creation of deepfake sexual images is despicable and completely unacceptable irrespective of whether the image is shared," said Laura Farris, UK Minister for Victims and Safeguarding.

Working towards ambitious deal with India, says UK as FTA talks resume

The UK government on Tuesday said that it continues to work towards striking an "ambitious" trade deal with India as a negotiating team from Delhi resumed talks with their British counterparts in London this

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) reiterated its stance of only signing a free trade agreement (FTA) that was in the best interests of the British people and economy. Last month, DBT officials had indicated that formal trade negotiations were being paused for the course of India's phased general election, though some talks were expected to carry on until the poll results are declared on June 4.



On Tuesday, UK officials said discussions resume in London this week to "continue talks under Round 14" of the negotiations, which opened in January.

"The UK and India continue to work towards an ambitious trade deal that work for both countries," a DBT spokesperson said.

"While we do not comment on the details of negotiations, we are clear that we will only sign a deal that is fair, balanced, and ultimately in the best interests of the British people and the economy," the spokesperson said.

It came as reports from New Delhi suggested a resumption of talks as the Indian team arrived in London to review the "very few" pending issues remaining in the path towards an agreement. Senior Indian officials fa-

miliar with the discussions

have indicated working to-

wards a window for an FTA

January 2022, are aimed at significantly enhancing bilateral trade - currently worth around GBP 38.1 billion a year as per official statistics from earlier this

agreement".

Last month, UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade Kemi Badenoch said "the bigger the country, the more complex the trade

"And also, the more different the economy is, the harder it is to negotiate... India is still very protectionist, where we are very, very liberalised," she said.

India opened up its market for US: Biden

AGENCIES

After resolving half a dozen WTO disputes last year, India opened up its market for several US products which have benefitted American farmers, a top Biden administration official told lawmakers on Tuesday.The steps taken by India have given more market access for turkey, duck, blueberries, and cranberries benefiting farmers from several American states, US Trade Representative Katherine Tai told members of the House Committee on Ways and Means on President Biden's 2024 Trade Policy Agenda.

"Last June, India and the United States terminated six WTO disputes, and India agreed to remove retaliatory tariffs on several US products," Tai said.

"This means improved access for chickpeas, lentils, almonds, walnuts, and cated in Africa and Asia, to apples benefiting farmers develop better testing, suracross the country, including in Michigan, Oregon, and Washington,' she said.

"Additionally, in September, India and the United States resolved our final outstanding WTO dispute, and India agreed to reduce tariffs on several US products. This means more market access for turkey, duck, blueberries, and cranberries benefiting farmers in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin," Tai told lawmakers.

ministration will also help 50 countries identify and respond to infectious diseases, with the goal of preventing pandemics like the COVID-19 outbreak that suddenly halted normal life around the globe in 2020.

Meanwhile, Biden's ad-

US government officials will offer support in the countries, most of them loveillance, communication and preparedness for such outbreaks in those countries. The strategy will help pre-

vent, detect and effectively respond to biological threats wherever they emerge, Biden said in a statement Tuesday.

The Global Health Security Strategy, the president said, aims to protect people worldwide and "will make the United States stronger, safer, and healthier than ever before at this critical moment. The announcement about

the strategy comes as countries have struggled to meet a worldwide accord on responses to future pandemics. Four years after the coronavirus pandemic, the prospects of a pandemic treaty signed by all 194 of the World Health Organisation's members are flailing.

Denmark's old stock exchange engulfed in massive fire, no injuries reported so far

UK lawmakers will vote on smoking phase-out bill

AGENCIES LONDON

British lawmakers will on Tuesday debate and vote on the government's plans to introduce a landmark smoking ban that aims to stop young

people from ever smoking. The bill, a key policy announced by Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak last year, will make it illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born after January 1, 2009. It has the support of the opposition Labour Party and is expected to pass. But Sunak faces rebellion from more libertarian-minded

members of his party, who

criticized the proposals as 'unconservative.'

Authorities say that if passed, the bill will create modern Britain's "first smoke-free generation."

Under the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, children turning 15 this year or younger will never be legally sold tobacco. The legal age of sale that people in England can buy cigarettes will be raised by one year, every year until it is eventually illegal for the whole population.

The bill also includes measures to crack down on youth vaping, such as banning the sale of cheap disposable vapes and limiting their

UK PM RISHI SUNAK FACES RESISTANCE OVER HIS SMOKING BAN PLANS

LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak faces very vocal resistance against his plans to effectively ban smoking for anyone aged 15 and younger as a new bill comes up for a vote in the House of Commons on Tuesday. The British Indian leader proposed the Tobacco and Vapes Bill last year and declared his vision for creating a smokefree generation by making it an offence to sell tobacco products to anyone born after January 1, 2009, which covers children aged 15. Once it clears its parliamentary journey, the new legislation will introduce some of the world's strictest anti-smoking laws in the country. I propose that in future we raise the smoking age by one year, every year. That means a 14-year-old today will never legally be sold a cigarette and that they and their generation can grow up smoke-free. We know this works, Sunak had declared at the Conservative Party conference in October last year.

flavors to prevent children nicotine.

from becoming addicted to It is currently illegal for anyone to sell cigarettes or tobacco products and vapes to people under 18 years old throughout the U.K.

Opponents, such as the smokers' rights lobbying group FOREST, said the move will "treat future generations of adults like kids." Last week former Prime Minister Boris Johnson called the plans "absolutely

"I think that an outright ban risks being counterproductive, I think it actually risks making smoking cooler, it certainly risks creating a black market," Conservative lawmaker Simon Clarke told

OPENHAGEN (DENMARK)

A massive fire ripped through the old stock exchange of Denmark on Tuesday morning, with plumes of smoke billowing through the historic building of the Scandinavian country.

The Borsen building, has notably been at the heart of Danish business since the 17th century.

Moments before the building collapsed and crashed onto the street below, commuters and bystanders, stunned, watched as the raging fire was spotted swirling around the building's iconic 56-meter spire, according to

There have been no casualties recorded as of yet, and Copenhagen police have advised people to stay away from the area.

According to a police spokesperson, people were inside the building when the fire broke out, but they were all evacuated timely.

Situated within a short stroll from Christiansborg Palace, the old stock exchange was established in

It was constructed in the Dutch Renaissance style, at the request of King Christian

Following the horrific fire incident, Denmark's minister of culture, Jakob Engel-Schmidt claimed that 400 years of cultural legacy has been damaged.

"How touching it is to see how the employees at Borsen, good people from the emergency services and passers-by work together to rescue art treasures and iconic images from the burning building," he wrote in a post on X.

GUN SUPERVISOR FOR 'RUST' GETS 18 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR FATAL SHOOTING BY ALEC BALDWIN ON SET



TDG NETWORK

A movie weapons supervisor was sentenced to 18 months in prison in the fatal shooting of a cinematographer by Alec Baldwin on the set of the Western film Rust, at a sentencing hearing Monday in a New Mexico state court.

Movie armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed was convicted in March by a jury on a charge of involuntary manslaughter in the death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and has been held for more than a month at a county jail on the outskirts of Santa Fe.

Baldwin, the lead actor and co-producer for Rust, was pointing a gun at Hutchins when the revolver went off, killing Hutchins and wounding director Joel Souza.

Baldwin has pleaded not guilty to a charge of involuntary manslaughter in the shooting death of Halyna Hutchins. He is scheduled for trial in July at a courthouse in Santa Fe.

The sentence against Gutierrez-Reed was delivered by New Mexico Judge Mary Marlowe Summer who is overseeing proceedings against Baldwin.

Prosecutors blamed Gutierrez-Reed for unwittingly bringing live ammunition onto the set of Rust where it was expressly prohibited and for failing to follow basic gun safety protocols. After a two-week trial, the jury deliberated for about three hours in reaching its verdict.

Gutierrez-Reed teared up Monday as Hutchins' agent, Craig Mizrahi, spoke about the cinematographer's creativity and described her as a rising star in Hollywood. He said it was a chain of events that led to Hutchins' death and that had the armourer been doing her job, that chain would have been broken.

Friends and family, including Souza, told the court they were seeking justice for what had happened to the cinematographer. They said she was a bright beam of light, describing her as courageous, tenacious and compassionate.

Los Angeles-based attorney Gloria Allred read a statement by Hutchins' mother, Olga Solovey, who said her life had been split in two and that time didn't heal, rather it only prolonged her pain and suffering.

'WICKED' FAME JONATHAN **BAILEY IN TALKS TO LEAD NEW** 'JURASSIC WORLD' MOVIE



TDG NETWORK

The 'Wicked' star Jonathan Bailey is in talks to join Universal's new Jurassic World movie, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

Scarlett Johansson has already been cast in the film, which will be directed by Gareth Edwards and written by Jurassic Park's David Koepp.

Johansson played Black Widow in several Marvel Studios films, including the Avengers films, but unlike some of her superhero co-stars, she has found it easy to break into other projects. She has received two Oscar nominations: for Marriage Story and Jojo Rabbit.

Amblin Entertainment is working with Universal on the film, which continues the universe established by author Michael Crichton and was first translated on the big screen by Steven Spielberg in 1993's Jurassic Park. 'The Lost World' (1997) was directed by Spielberg, while Joe Johnston took over for Jurassic Park III (2001).

Colin Trevorrow rebooted the franchise with Jurassic World in 2015, starring Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard and taking place in a dino-

The 'Wicked' star Jonathan Bailey is in talks to join Universal's new **Furassic World** movie, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

saur park that was now accessible to the public. Pratt and Howard appeared in two additional films, Dominion (2022), which reunited stars from Jurassic Park (Sam Neill, Laura Dern, and Jeff Goldblum) and Jurassic World. The fresh approach is intended to

feature new characters. Bailey plays prince Fiyero in 'Wicked' and appeared at CinemaCon last week during Universal's presentation. The actor is also known for the Showtime limited series Fellow Travelers, which earned him a Critics Choice Award. He is repped by CAA, Anonymous Content and Hansen Jacobson, as per The Hollywood Reporter.

PICTURE PERFECT

Mahesh Manirekar during the trailer launch of the upcoming Marathi movie 'Juna Furniture'. (ANI)



AMITABH BACHCHAN SET TO RETURN WITH SEASON 16 OF 'KAUN BANEGA CROREPATI'

TDG NETWORK MUMBAI

egastar Amitabh Bachchan is all set to don the host's hat again for the sixteenth season of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati'.

Taking to the official Instagram handle, Sony Entertainment Television, shared the exciting news with the 'KBC' fans.

The promo started with the emotional speech of Big B that he gave while wrapping up the last season. However, as it ends a voice can be heard, saying, " Har aarambh ka ant taye hai magar apnon ke pyar mein jo anand hai.. to har ant ke baad shubharambh nishchit hai.." Big B later said, "Gunja jo aapke pyar ka shankhnaad, to aana padega fir" (If the sound of



to come again.)

The makers also announced that registration for KBC 16 will start from April 26. The caption reads, "Aisa mila pyar ki laut raha hai fir ek baar, #Kaun-BanegaCrorepati.. shuru ho rahe hai #KBCRegistrations 26 April raat 9 baje..@amitabhbachchan #KBConSonyTV #KBC16 #kbcisback"

After the post, fans shared their excitement. One of them wrote, "thanks your love echoes, I will have for bringing new season of

KBC". Another mentioned, "Yessss.....waiting for Mr. Bachchan sir".

While wrapping up the 15th season, Big B said, "Devi aur sajjano, ab hum jaa rahe aur kal se yeh manch ab nahi sajega. Apno se yeh keh pana ki kal se hum yahan nahi aa payenge, na kehne ki himmat hoti aur na kehne ka mann hota hai (Ladies and gentleman, now it's time to go as the stage won't be the same. It's difficult to let everyone know that we won't

Megastar *Amitabh* to don the host's

be returning here from tomorrow)." The 'Agnipath' star started hosting the quiz show in 2000, and since then he has been a constant part of the show except for one season. In 2006, Shah Rukh Khan replaced Big B as a host for the third sea-

Bachchan is all set hat again for the sixteenth season of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati'.





- MAHESH BABU

(Indian actor)

look good

AAMIR KHAN LODGES FIR OVER ALLEGED DEEPFAKE POLITICAL AD

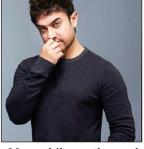
TDG NETWORK

Actor Aamir Khan is the latest among a host of celebrities who have fallen victim to deepfake videos.

Amid the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, a video of the actor purportedly promoting a political party recently went viral, evoking reactions from the audience.

On Tuesday, Aamir's official spokesperson issued a statement, calling the particular clip "fake." The spokesperson also stated that the actor has filed an FIR with the Mumbai Police regarding the same.

"We want to clarify that Mr. Aamir Khan has never endorsed any political party throughout his 35-year career. He has dedicated his efforts to raising public awareness through Election Commission public awareness campaigns for many past elections. We are alarmed by the recent viral video alleging that Aamir Khan is promoting a particular political party. He would like to clarify that this is a fake video and totally untrue. He has reported the matter to various authorities related to this our electoral process," the spokesperson said.



Meanwhile, on the work front, as a producer, Aamir is coming up with 'Lahore 1947', which stars Sunny Deol in the lead role. It is directed by Rajkumar Santoshi. Preity Zinta, Shabana Azmi, Karan Deol and Ali Fazal are also part of the film.

Sunny and Aamir have never worked together before. But the duo have had very iconic box-office clashes as competitors in the past, where both have eventually emerged victorious.

The first iconic clash at the ticket window was witnessed in 1990 when Aamir Khan's Dil and Sunny Deol's Ghayal were released on the same day. Then, in 1996, it was 'Raja Hindustani' vs 'Ghatak' followed by the most epic Box Office clash of Indian cinema in 2001 when 'Lagaan' was released on the same day as 'Gadar'.

Now, for the very first time, the duo has come together and joined hands on a project.'Lahore, 1947' also marks the reunion of Aamir vote and be an active part of Khan and Santoshi after their iconic cult classic, 'Andaz Apna Apna'.

KAPIL SHARMA PAYS

VISIT TO VAISHNO DEVI

TEMPLE IN KATRA

Akshay Kumar is set to make his Telugu film debut issue, including filing an FIR with the Cyber Crime Cell of the Mumbai Police. Mr. Khan would like to urge all Indians to come out and



lywood is now all set to make his debut in Tollywood in actor Vishnu Manchu's large-scale Telugu flick. The official social media page of the film posted the news with pics of Akshay Kumar meeting Vishnu Manchu's father, acting legend Mohan Babu. The film will also feature Prabhas, Mohanlal and Nayanthara, among others.

Based on a true story, this movie is about the journey of Kannappa, an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva. Akshay Kumar is said to be playing the role of Lord Shiva in this film. Confirming the debut, Vishnu Manchu also wrote, "The Kannappa jour-



venture! (heart emoji)"

"We're thrilled to have

Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar onboard for #Kannappa, Vishnu Manchu's magnum opus. With Akshay Kumar joining us, our production promises to reach unprecedented heights of grandeur and excitement. Stay tuned for an unforgettable cinematic experience!" said the official film page on X (formerly Twitter).

Kannappa is directed by Mukesh Kumar Singh and produced by Manchu's banners AVA Entertainment and 24 Frames Factory. It will be released in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi and English.

The audience is

eagerly awaiting

to witness clutter-

breaking content

with the release

of Love Sex Aur

Dhokha 2.

il Sharma visited the Vaishno Devi Temple in Katra earlier today to seek blessings during the holy days of 'Navratri'. In the video, he can be

Comedian-actor Kap-

TDG NETWORK

seen entering the temple wearing a red-printed kurta with cream-coloured pajamas.

Check out the video. Meanwhile, on the work front, Kapil is currently seen in the comedy show, 'The Great Indian Kapil Show' which also stars

Krushna Abhishek, Rajiv Thakur, Kiku Sharda and Archana Puran Singh. The Great Indian Kapil Show's official logline reads, "India's most loved comedian finds a home on Netflix and brings along his crazy but loyal cast of

characters! The Great Indi-

an Kapil Show is a variety

chat show set in the bustling confines of an airport and features prominent celebrity guests every week." The series will expand to global audiences, infusing Kapil Sharma's signature wit with classic Indian humour, as per the show's press release.

After a major fallout, Kapil Sharma and Sunil Grover have reunited once again for a comedy extravaganza. He was also seen in the movie 'Crew', starring Kareena Kapoor, Tabu and Kriti Sanon in lead roles.

'Crew', a story of three women, touted as a laughriot, is set against the backdrop of the struggling airline industry. However, their destinies lead to some unwarranted situations, and they get caught in a web of lies. The heist comedy also stars Diljit Dosanjh, Saswata Chatterjee, Rajesh Sharma and Kulbhushan Kharbanda.

EKTA KAPOOR REMOVES HER NAME FROM 'LSD2': HERE'S WHY

TDG NETWORK

While the makers have set a perfect tone for its arrival with the raw and real trailer that was unapologetic in its approach and fiery in its narrative, the anticipation around the film is indeed rising at a fever pitch. The audience is eagerly awaiting to witness clutter-breaking content with the release of Love Sex Aur Dhokha 2. Now, in an exciting update, the makers, Balaji Telefilms, and producer Shobha Kapoor have removed their names from the film.

For the first time, the names of the makers of Love Sex Aur Dhokha 2, Ba-



laji Telefilms, and producer Shobha Kapoor, won't be attached to the film. This is indeed a shocking re-

veal as the film is just 4 days from its release, and the makers and the producer have withdrawn

their names from the film. Looking at the explicitly raw and real content of the film, which is relevant to today's youth and reality, this decision of the makers seems to be apt.

Celebrating vegetarianism royal style

ANSHU KHANNA

oyalty and nobility across the globe are known to have spent half their life inside jungles or in the battlefield, waging wars. Hence, their cuisine has largely focused on what they could hunt for in the jungles, or fish off the river, or even catch in the air.... Game cuisine, fowls and sea and river food being integral to their cuisine.

When Food for Thought, who were further invited by Ahmadabad Municipal Corporation to host a very large vegetarian food festival, contacted me to curate an all vegetarian, royal pavilion for them, my dilemma was genuine. How could a royal thali be all about pulses and leaves? Nevertheless, me and my forum, Kitchen of the Kings that research on, celebrates and helps conserve and present royal cuisine took up the challenge, inviting five distinct

royal and noble kitchens to rustle up a perfect menu for a silver service dinner that would do the vegetarian story full justice.

The lineup though amaz-

ing, was also daunting. First up were Begum Zeba and Nawab Salauddin of Balasinore, who are known for their Afghan lineage. They themselves worked in creating vegetarian avatar the Balasinor cuisine which was ably tweaked by the begum and the nawab. A blend of recipes from the royal households of Balasinor, Palanpur, Radhanpur and Junagadh, the Balasinore Shahi Dastarkhwan was full of flavours and not extremely rich! They put together a Vegetarian selection of their classics including Hariyali ki Nazakat, Aman Ka Korma, Subz ke Shaami Kebab, Til ke Tukde, Motiya Kheer, Zarda e Jamiat inviting foodies to 'nosh farmaiye'!

The bahu of Chotta Udaipur, Padmini Sinh entered



the kitchen herself recreating the very tasteful pulse and rice rich recipes of her region. Her Sainjane (Moringa) - kadi patta sabzi and

her khajur gur desert being a real winner.

We also invited the Rajmata of Gondal Kumud Kumari ji who added a rich

delighted to announce its

forthcoming summer menu

which will include a full

range of new salads

- suitable for

the season

delicious

meals

viously

range of

summer cool-

ers to sip on dur-

ing the long, hot summer

days and evenings. All this

new menu, of course, com-

plemented with L'Opéra's

delicious, seasonal mango

collection which is pre-

sented in new garb. Other

then this savouries section

also has some additions

like Alfredo Pasta in Fet-

tuccine- Creamy fettuc-

cine pasta tossed in a rich

Alfredo sauce, sprinkled

with Parmesan cheese,

Herbed Risotto with Pesto

Prawns- Creamy herbed

risotto served with succu-

lent pesto-coated prawns,

a harmony of flavours and

textures, Panzanella Salad-

A vibrant tangy salad with

seasonal vegetables, fresh

basil, Parmesan cheese and

crunchy bread croutons

Available at L'opera Multiple

outlets at Green Park, De-

fence colony, Bikaner House,

Civil lines, MG road etc,

Price-Rs 1200 plus taxes for

8800097255

dimension to the pavilion with her thali that presented a carefully curated selection of dishes from her best seller book: Recipes of a Maharani. A culinary genius, she took personal interest in the dinner. A gun salute state known for its car collection, its teapot museum and its rich array of collectibles, Gondal lovingly nurtured by royalty family is affluent not just in wealth but also its culture.

I personally reached out to

Gauri ingle from Kolhapur who belongs to the culinarian family of Ingle and, though, the Marathas were known to be hard core non vegetarians she rustled up a stunning menu including her pickles, amti, bhakarwadi, Amti chi Vadi, Batata Longi and Sol Kadhi belting out the unique flavours of Kolhapur. The Ingle familv are linked to the Chha-

trapati family of Kolhapur

through the wedding of Ka-

mlabai Saheb, the daughter

JAHNAVI

novation.

alliance, the Ingle family of Shendur in the former Kagal Jagir, moved to the erstwhile Kolhapur princely state. Holding the title of Maankari (an esteemed Noblemen) in the Kolhapur princely state Durbar, the Ingles continued to serve the rulers in various capac-The scions of the Ingle

who married H.H. Shrimant

Rajashri Shahaji III Chha-

trapati Maharaj, the Raja of

Kolhapur. After this marital

family, Ruturaj Dhairyasheelrao & Gauri Ingle founded Ekant, one of Kolhapur's most revered culinary and hospitality enterprise with a vision to share the regal lifestyle of their forefathers with their guests. Bring them closer to the legacy of the Maratha rulers who were known for their indulgent art, majestic palaces, refined cuisine and resounding culture.

Last but not the least were

CAKES AND TRENDS:

THE EXPLOSIVE RISE OF

of Sardar Manyajirao Ingle Yuvraaj Amarjyoti and Yuvrani Meenal Kumari of Dhenkanal. Dhenkanal owes its name to a Savara chief named "Dhenka", who ruled the land. Dhenkanal Palace, built in the 1830s, on the slopes of the Paniohala hill is the only fort cum palace in Odisha. Residence of the Raja of Dhenkanal and his family, the palace is situated in a craft-rich region of Odisha that boasts of over 15 thriving regional crafts. Culinary tradition of Odisha is unique and features vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes, rice preparations and sweets. Royal family of Dhenkanal incorporated not only the traditional Odia dishes but also the flavours and recipes from other states to which the daughters-in-law of the family belong. Their mushroom crisply fried in rice batter, their tomato khajur chutney and their broad beans turning out finger licking good.

EXCITING CULINARY DELIGHTS ACROSS DELHI-NCR

New Menu at CAFÉ DEL-HI HEIGHTS- Café Delhi Heights is a place that truly celebrates Saddi Dilli spirit. Just like the city, the café offers big-hearted portions of deliciously cooked dishes. With the New outlet every month, also with changed look of most of the outlets, Café Delhi Heights has launched the New Menu that has many specials for the foodies. Mr Vikrant Batra, Founder of Cafe Delhi Heights say We at CDH offers an array of fabulously innovative and classic preparations that will leave each of the five senses tingling with joy! Chef Ashish Singh at Café Delhi Heights is known to strike his chord with foodies since the brand inception, and the new menu also promises and fruit truffle are sweet to put best on front. The New menu has specials like healthy Italian Chicken Salad, Miso Avocado & Tofu Bowl. One can opt from the choices of between the buns grub like Avocado Olives & Toms, Falafel Avo & Chipotle Salad Wrap, Pesto Chicken & Rocket Wrap in choicest of breads like Panini / Whole wheat / Multigrain / Baguette. Amongst the Mexican dishes one can opt for Fajitas Vegetables / Chicken, Burritos Vegetables / Chicken, Enchiladas Vegetables / Chicken. The concept of

Meal bowls excites foodies as it is perfect portion

balanced with fla vours and varieties. One can choose the gravies like Spicy Thai Basil Sliced Chicken / Fish, Singaporean Chilli Cottage Cheese / Tofu, Spinach, Baby Corn & Mushroom With Hot Basil Sauce, Stir Fried Exotic Vegetable, Stir Fried Lamb With Chilli

Bean, Slice Fish Chilli Oyster, Lemon Tabasco Sauce Prawn / Fish Served with the Choice of Sticky Rice / Red Rice. You have reason to rejoice further as Health concious can opt between Protein bowl and poke bowl too. Red velvet lava

At Café Delhi Heights Multiple outlets Meal for two- Rs 1500 plus

For reservations please contact-8800691812

Instagram page- @cafedel-

SPRING SUMMER NEW MENU FLAVOURS AT

As the summer sun begins to cast its warm glow, Vietnom is thrilled to unveil its new summer menu - "Summer in my Heart". Em-

bracing the vibrant spirit of the season, the menu features a delectable array of salads.

banh mi,

and handcrafted cocktails and mocktails that promise to delight the senses and transport diners on a culinary journey like no other. Renowned for its commitment to authenticity and creativity, Vietnom has curated a menu that celebrates

the bounty of summer produce while infusing traditional Vietnamese flavors with a modern twist. From refreshing salads bursting with crisp, seasonal vegetables to delicate summer rolls filled with succulent meats and vibrant herbs, each dish is a celebration for all of freshness and flavor. Elevating the beloved street food to new heights, our Banh Mi sandwiches offer a symphony of flavors and textures that are sure to captivate guests' palates. Featuring tender proteins, crisp vegetables, and homemade spreads, our Banh Mi sandwiches promise an unforgettable dining expe-

Complementing these culinary delights is Vietnom's exclusive selection of handcrafted cocktails and mocktails, expertly crafted by our talented mixologists using homemade cordials, fresh herbs, and premium spirits. From refreshing fruit-infused mocktails to innovative cocktail creations inspired by the flavors of Vietnam, each sip is a journey of discovery and delight. Vietnom's Summer Menu is now available for diners to experience and savor. Join us at Vietnom and discover the flavors of summer like never before.

At Vietnom Outlets in Cuber hub, Worldmark Gurgaon, Vietnom DLF Saket

New Menu at L'opera-L'Opéra, the authentic French Boulangerie, Pâtisserie and Salon de Thé is

VOLCANO PIZZAS & TEX MEX JOURNEY AT HONEY & DOUGH

Honey & Dough, a place famous as bakery and café is taking serious turn when it comes to the food. We bet you the food none less then any best restaurant of the capital. Recent addition in the menus are Volcano Pizzas. Yes, one may savour the izzas eruption of slices to be dipped in the cheese bowl created in the center to savour it. Along with the inroduction of Volcano Pizzas, Honey & Dough takes you on a flavourful journey, bringing the Mexican

spirit to your table. Mexican meals are incomplete without you for choice,

they offer the Greek Inspired Taco, Crispy Chilli Basil Cottage Cheese Taco, Fiery Asian Grilled Chicken and so much more. Their Mexican bowls come with rice, meat or veggies, guacamole, and other toppings. Next on the menu are the beloved quesadillas served hot and crispy tortillas oozing with cheese. Unwrap the joy of Mexican tortilla wraps at Honey & Dough that envelop a variety of veggies or chicken. The creamy guacamole is an addition to its richness. So, hop in

journey! Outlets: Shivalik, Malviya Nagar | Ambience Mall, Vasant Kunj| Two Horizon, Gurugram | Cyber Park, Gurugram | City Centre Mall, Dwarka Hargobind Enclave, East Delhi Pitampura Janakpuri Mall of India, Noida | Pacific Mall, Tagore Garden.

for an exclusive Tex-Mex

Phone Number: 9911993123, 8527966844

Website: www.honeyanddough.in

shu Chawla, founder and CEO of cake

like pull-me-up cakes, it's clear that the

cake culture is experiencing a renais-

sance of sorts. We spoke to Mr. Himan-

and gifting delivery chain Bakingo, to know more and decode and dissect the cake trends for our readers. Read on!

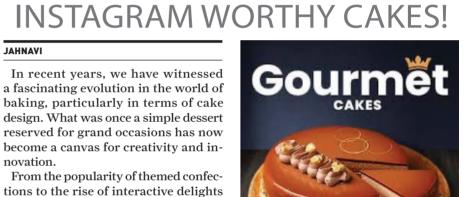
Cake Trends: A Mirror of Societal

Nowadays, people want their cakes to tell a story, to surprise and captivate their guests in ways unimaginable. It's all about making a statement and pushing the boundaries of what's possible with buttercream and fondant. Because of this dynamic scenario, cake trends are



son, influenced by celebrities, social media, and the creative spirit of bakers everywhere. When a megastar like Taylor Swift celebrates with a unique birthday treat or an actress like Urvashi Rautela flaunts a multi-tiered & gold-covered delicacy, it sets the stage for what's hot in the world of cake design. Suddenly, everyone wants a taste of that star-studded glamour, and the world gets buzzing with requests for celebrity-inspired creations.

But is that the only driving force behind these trends? There is so much more at play. The rise of trendy cakes reflects a broader cultural transition towards experiential consumption. Today's consumers crave more than just



a product; they seek experiences that resonate on a deeper level. Whether it's the thrill of watching flames dance atop a burning cake or the joy of uncovering a hidden message within layers of frosting, they want not just good taste but excitement. Beyond their visual appeal, these trends tap into our innate desire for experiences that are both memorable and shareable.

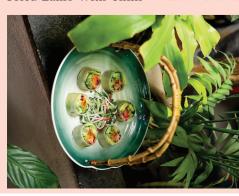
The Power of Virality: The Social Media

In a world where Instagram dominates our daily lives, these cakes offer a moment of escapism and a way to mimic our



favourite stars. From mirror glazes that reflect like glass to intricate floral designs that look almost too pretty to eat, it's all about that perfect shot for the 'gram, where every angle is a masterpiece. Just think about it: when was the last time you went to a party and didn't take a photo of the cake? But it's not just about flashy designs and novelty gimmicks. At the heart of these trends is a desire for authenticity and personalization. Whether it's a photo cake with an edible image or a fusion cake, people want their baked delights to be as unique as they are.

So, as consumers become increasingly discerning in their tastes, bakeries have stepped up to meet these demands. With their finger on the pulse of the latest trends, they've introduced a range of innovative creations that have captured the imaginations of cake enthusiasts everywhere. Bakingo, one of the leading bakeries in India, is the perfect example of that. We have always been ahead of the curve with our offerings, crafting cakes that not only tantalize the taste buds but also stay up-to-date with the latest trends. We are committed to making your celebrations unforgettable & joyful, surpassing your expectations in the process. And embracing the latest trends in our collection is one of the many ways we ensure that!







DEVIL'S PLAN FOR DESTRUCTION

BHAVANI SUNDARAM

he chief devil gathers every possible evil entity within range of his magnetic voice and asks. 'How can we interfere in the world between ours and the Light we despise? What can we do to further deceive human beings, keeping them in the dark, unaware of the Light that seeks to release them from our influence? I want something so evil, so sinister, that no one will discern what happened. Who has a good idea?'

Instantly, the flames of all the little imps gathered in the smoldering dark diminish; they fear their leader, who will punish them for failing. A day later, as planned, they return with a few ideas, though nothing spectacular. Then, out of nowhere, a tiny imp hops on the chief devil's shoulder and whispers something in his ear.

In a flash, flames erupt from every pore of the chief devil as he shouts, 'Ah! I have the plan in hand!' He looks around at his lieutenants, each assigned to certain in-

dividuals on Earth, and gleefully instructs them, 'Go up there and slowly spread among the sleeping masses the idea of "tolerance." Do whatever it takes to succeed. Convince them that this idea is their own, and that they should start teaching that learning to tolerate each other is the same as loving one another. Oh yes! This is my best deception yet! It's a real killer!

Whether we are tolerating the ineptitude of others in understanding our religion or the mistakes of our loved ones in not meeting our expectations, we must cultivate amazing calmness and awareness within ourselves.

The tolerance we must exhibit towards rash drivers and the way our children handle their lives should not be tainted by our subtle egos. We should simply tolerate, thinking 'I'm right, yet out of love or righteousness, I'm tolerating the other.'

Let's learn how to love. If we still feel we are merely tolerating others, perhaps we have succumbed to our satanic mind.'

BIG DATA ANALYTICS: DRIVING INSIGHTS & DECISION-MAKING IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS

SOCIETY & LIVING

incorporating Big

Data Analytics into busi-

ness school curricula extend

far beyond the classroom.

It fosters critical thinking,

problem-solving, and col-

laboration skills, which are

essential in today's dynamic

business environment. Stu-

dents learn how to ask the

right questions, challenge

assumptions, and derive

meaningful conclusions

from data, that empower

them to become data-driven

decision-makers. Graduates

equipped with these skills

are in high demand across

industries, as organizations

are increasingly depending

on data-driven insights to

ANIL SOMANI

In todav's modern business setting, Data analytics has become essential as industries are increasingly influenced by artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies. From finance to healthcare, all industries depend on data-driven insights to guide strategic decisions and gain a competitive edge. As the digital revolution continues to reshape the way we work and interact, the demand for professionals skilled in big data analytics is increasing. India's data analytics industry has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years, supported by the country's growing internet user base. According to projections, by 2025, India will have over 900 million internet users, double the number from 2015. This growth of digital data presents a wealth of opportunities for businesses to leverage big data analytics across various sectors, including education. Big Data analytics in education refers to the collection, processing, and interpretation of large datasets within educational ecosystems, which range from student demographics to academic performance re-

Chairman of FOSTIIMA Business School in Delhi, offers valuable insights into this endeavor by expressing the following, "In this hyper-connected world, big data analytics holds the key to unlocking numerous insights that can transform the way we approach education. Business schools play an important role in preparing the next generation of leaders who can utilize the revolutionary possibilities of the industry while improving operational efficiency. By incorporating data analytics into the curriculum, institutions are equipping students with the necessary skills to analyze vast datasets and derive actionable insights. From predictive modeling to data visualization, students are gaining hands-on experience with cutting-edge analytical tools and techniques that will help them in diverse career opportunities in the data-driven landscape."

Insights from Mr. Somani on how data analytics empowers business schools to connect education with industry for future success:

GIVING THE EXPO-SURE TO REAL WORLD

One of the most significant advantages of integrating big data analytics into management programs is its ability to bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world industry applications. By collaborating with businesses and industry experts, business schools can ensure The benefits of

that their curriculum remains relevant and up-to-date with the latest trends and technologies. This real-world exposure allows students to gain practical experience and insights that are invaluable in today's competitive job market. Additionally, it promotes innovation and creativity within organizations. By encouraging a data-driven mindset, businesses can uncover new opportunities and solutions that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

PREPARING STU-DENTS FOR SUCCESS IN A DATA-DRIVEN WORLD

Whether it is in marketing, finance, operations, or human resources, professionals with expertise in big data analytics are well-po-

tive advantage.

sitioned to drive innovation and business growth.

FUTURE OF DATA ANALYTICS IN THE WORKPLACE

Data analytics in education is rapidly expanding, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15.3%. This exponential growth ladder sets the sector to achieve a spectacular valuation of USD 57.14 billion by 2030. Beyond traditional job roles, the expansion of data-driven technology is resulting in new professional opportunities, such as data visualization specialists, machine learning engineers, and predictive modelers. As businesses increasingly adopt data-driven decision-making, the demand for people

who can translate complex data into valuable information will continue to rise.

Integrating big data analytics into MBA and PGDM programs has the potential to transform learning experiences and prepare students for success in the digital age. Educational institutions must capitalize on this opportunity by using data-driven insights to define the future of learning and empower the next generation of leaders and innovators. By investing in education and training programs that educate students with the required skills in big data analytics, business schools can ensure that talent is always available to meet the industry's changing expectations.

The incorporation of big data analytics into MBA and PGDM programs improves academic learning while also providing students with practical skills and insights needed to grow in today's data-driven corporate world. By embracing this transformative change, educational institutions can help to shape the future of business education and prepare students to be effective leaders and innovators in a quickly changing digital

cords and more.



AR. ANIL BADAN

The hospitality industry is elevating its standards to meet the needs of the discerning traveller, by diving into the world of boutique hotels. Departing away from the traditional cookie-cutter accommodations, boutique hotels are known for personalised services, immersive experiences and an authentic stay. These hotels often include various criteria in rooms, that allow for an intimate guest experience. From unique design and ambience to personalised rooms and concierge services, boutique hotels are embracing various design trends that redefine the world of hospitality to new heights of elegance. In this article, Ar. Anil Badan, Founder and Principal Architect at Studio B Architects explore design trends in hospitality that are making their way into boutique hotels and meeting the evolving needs

of the travellers. Including Authenticity and

Unlike conventional hotel chains, boutique hotels include the local culture in their designs to create a unique identity in their hotel. From architecture and interiors to cuisines and amenities, every space in a boutique hotel is crafted to reflect the local culture of the region. Be it a historic building with locally sourced artworks in interiors or regional cuisine served in the hotel restaurant, guests are immersed in an authentic and immersive experience that celebrates the destination's rich history and traditions.

Curating Unique and Per-

sonalised Experiences Boutique hotels prioritise personalised services for the guests, creating a sense of warmth that sets them apart from traditional hotels. This emphasis on intimacy is reflected in the design of the hotel spaces, which are often characterised by cosy lounges, intimate dining areas, and thoughtfully appointed guest rooms. Boutique hotels eschew the grandiose lobbies and sprawling hallways in favour of more unique and inviting spaces that encour-

boutique hotels are at the forefront of embracing



at home and welcome into a warm and inviting environ-

Embracing Sustainable

The rise of boutique hotels represents a shift in the luxury hospitality industry towards more authentic, intimate, and personalised experiences. With the demand for authentic and experiential travel, boutique hotels are leading the way in shaping the future of luxury hospitality, offering guests unforgettable stays that etch an enduring sig-

of wonder and discovery!

ing sustainable practices,

boutique hotels reduce

their carbon footprint, in-

spire guests to travel more

responsibly, and make

a positive impact on the

need to be as dynamic as our lifestyles. The rise of remote work, multigenerational living, and a focus on sustainability are transforming how we view and use our living spaces. Adaptable and flexible homes, equipped with smart technologies and innovative storage solutions, are becoming essential to meet these diverse needs. By making our spaces more versatile, we can ensure our homes remain comfortable, functional, and in harmony with our evolving life scenarios. This shift towards adaptable living not only

In today's world, our homes

SIMRAN KOHLI

THE EVOLUTION OF LIVING SPACES

as we do.

enhances our daily lives but

also prepares our homes for

future changes, ensuring

they can grow and change

Our living spaces are no longer static environments but dynamic settings that reflect the fluid nature of our lives. Technological advancements, changing family structures, and a heightened awareness of environmental sustainability are reshaping our expectations of home. The move towards remote work, for instance, necessitates dedicated and comfortable workspaces within our homes. Similarly, the trend of multi-generational living calls for spaces that offer both privacy and areas for communal activities. These shifts underscore the importance of designing homes that can adapt to various needs over time.

DESIGNING FOR FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

The core of adaptable home design lies in versatility. This can be seamlessly achieved through multifunctional furniture, such as sofa beds or extendable tables, which allow for the quick transformation of living areas to suit different purposes. For instance, integrating work stations with table lamps and pots alongside such furniture enhances the functionality of a space, making it equally suited for work and leisure. Movable walls and partitions offer a more structural solution, allowing for the easy reconfiguration of spaces according to immediate needs or personal preferences.

ENHANCING HOME ADAPTABILITY THROUGH TECHNOL-OGY AND STORAGE

Leveraging smart technologies and innovative storage solutions is essential in creating adaptable living spaces that meet our evolving needs. Smart home technologies, such as adjustable lighting systems and home automation, enhance space flexibility by allowing the ambiance and environmental controls to be tailored for different activities and times of day, contributing to comfort and energy efficiency. Innovative storage solutions, including office and travel organizers, play a crucial role in this adaptability. Hidden storage and customizable shelving, integrated into furniture and design elements, prevent clutter

and ensure spaces remain adaptable, functional, and aesthetically pleasing. Together, these strategies enable a seamless adaptation of our homes to a multitude of functions, promoting a harmonious and sustainable living environment.

As our lives continue to evolve, the flexibility of our living environments becomes increasingly essential. By embracing principles of adaptable design, integrating smart technologies, and implementing innovative storage solutions, we can create homes that are not just places of refuge but spaces that evolve alongside our changing needs and aspirations. This approach to home design not only enhances the functionality and sustainability of our living spaces but also ensures that our homes remain aligned with our lifestyles, now and in the future.

The author is the Founder of Dusaan, which is a leading online marketplace that aims to revolutionize the home decor space and transform the home shopping experience.







this! From sourcing local and organic ingredients for their restaurants to incorporating energy-efficient design features and local materials into their buildings, boutique hotels are committed to reducing their environmental impact and preserving the natural beauty of their surroundings. Many boutique hotels also partner with local conservation organisations and community initiatives to support environmental stewardship, offering a glimpse of sustainability to the travellers. By embrac-



and Eco-Friendly Practices Sustainability has always been an ongoing trend, and

nature and inspire a sense

NARINE BLAZES HIS WAY TO 49-BALL TON, POWERS KKR TO 223/6 AGAINST RR

tar bowling allrounder Sunil Narine's blazing 109-run knock powered Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to 223/6 against the Rajasthan Royals (RR) in their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 match at the iconic Eden Gardens on Tuesday.

With his ton, Narine became the first cricketer to slam a century and take 100 wickets in the IPL. The Caribbean's blitzkrieg knock helped KKR give a massive 224-run target to Rajasthan.

After winning the toss, the Hyderabad-based franchise sent KKR to bat first at Eden Gardens, However, Saniu Samson's decision did not go in their favour, as they failed to take early wickets in the first inning.

Philip Salt (10 runs from 13 balls) and Sunil Narine (109 runs from 56 balls) opened for Kolkata and made a part-



nership of 21 runs. Salt failed to shine in the game and could smash only one four.

However, the English wicketkeeper-batsman's knock came to an end in the fourth over after Avesh Khan dismissed him.

After the first dismissal, Angkrish Raghuvanshi (30 runs from 18 balls) built up a solid 25-run partnership with Narine, which helped KKR add some crucial runs to the scoreboard.

In the 11th, RR's Kuldeep

crease to replace the KKR skipper. Russell slammed 2 fours at a strike rate of 130.

Meanwhile, Narine's stupendous knock came to an end in the 18th over after Trent Boult picked up the Caribbean's wicket. The 35-year-old hit 13 fours and 6 sixes at a strike rate of 194.64. He also became the first KKR player to hit a century at the Eden Gardens in front of their home crowd.

After the dismissal of Narine, Rinku Singh (20 runs from 9 balls) and Venkatesh Iyer (8 runs from 6 balls) took charge and added crucial runs at the end of the first inning.

However, Venkatesh was dismissed by Kuldeep in the last over of the first inning. He could slam just one four. Brief score: Kolkata Knight Riders 223/6 (Sunil Narine 109, Angkrish Raghuvanshi 30, Rinku Singh 20*; Avesh Khan 2/35) vs Rajasthan

during RCB-SRH run fest TDG NETWORK BENGALURU

Records tumbled as boundaries rained at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium during the Royal Challengers Bengaluru's clash with SunRisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

The exuberant crowd saw a run fest, which produced a total of 81 boundaries and 549 runs in 40 overs. This was the highest aggregate score struck in a T20 match.

Before runs flowed effortlessly from the bat of batters on Monday, the highest aggregate came in a match that took place in the ongoing season, when SRH stood victorious against the five-time champion Mumbai Indi-

During the match, both teams combined to put up an aggregate score of 523

IPL: T20 records tumble

runs at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, Hvderabad.

While chasing the record-breaking total of 288, RCB came close but suffered a 25-run loss.

RCB ended the game included 43 fours and 38 with a score of 262/7 and became the first team to score 250 runs while chasing a target in the history of the IPL.

In the high-scoring clash, fans witnessed the joint-highest number of boundaries in a T20 match. Both teams combined to score a total

of 81 boundaries, which

South Africa's clash against the West Indies in Centurion, 2023, also saw both teams accumulate 81 boundaries, which included 46 fours and 35 sixes.

As the ball sailed into the stands at regular intervals throughout the game, this match has now set the joint-highest record for most sixes in a T20 match with 38 maximums. SRH's clash against MI also saw the ball smacked into the stands 38 times.

Coming to the match, after putting SRH to bat, Travis Head (102) and Heinrich Klaasen's (67) blitz powered the visitors to 287/3.

In reply, Kohli (42) and du Plessis (62) provided the ideal start but wickets falling consistently impeded their chase. Dinesh Karthik starred with the bat vet again with a sensational knock of 83. Yet it wasn't enough to take his team across the finish

stronger: RCB's Andy Flower

TDG NETWORK BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) produced a spirited fight with the bat while chasing a mammoth target of 288 runs in their previous Indian Premier League (IPL) contest at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, and head coach Andy Flower said they will take positives out of the match and they will come back stronger in the upcoming

RCB began the innings on a positive note with captain Faf du Plessis and Virat Kohli making an 80-run stand for the first wicket before Dinesh Karthik produced an astonishing innings late in the game to win the hearts of RCB fans.

"I am really proud of the way we fought with the bat out there in the



We lost the game but I was really proud of the way we fought," said Andy Flower in a video on RCB website.

The head coach also recognized that the team will take a lot of confidence from the match after a strong performance with the bat and every game is a knockout game for the team now in order to qualify for the playoffs of the Indian Premier League.

"It was a really tough night in the field of course as they finished so powerfully that it probably took the wind out of our souls.

We will come back Cummins, Brunt named as Wisden Leading Cricketers in the World

TDG NETWORK

the 13th over.

Australian skipper Pat Cummins and England allrounder Nat Sciver-Brunt have been named as the Wisden Leading Cricketers in the World in the 2024 edition of Wisden Cricketers' Almanck, published on **Tuesday**

moved Raghuvanshi from

the crease. The 18-year-old

batter slammed 5 fours at a

strike rate of 166.67. Skipper

Shreyas Iyer (11 runs from 7

balls) replaced Raghuvan-

shi and slammed 1 four and

six during his time on the

Yuzvendra Chahal picked

up his 199th wicket in the

IPL after dismissing Iyer in

Andre Russell (13 runs

from 10 balls) came onto the

As per ESPN, the Australian pace spearhead and skipper in Tests and ODI formats, led his side to the front as they overcame a tough challenge from India to win their maiden ICC World Test Championship in June and later their sixth ICC Cricket World Cup title in Ahmedabad in November. He also played a crucial role in his side defending the Ashes urn away from home, drawing the series 2-2 in

Cummins is the first Aussie since Michael Clarke (2012) to secure the top honour and he has succeeded Ben Stokes, the Eng-



lish skipper who won the honour three times in 2020. 2021 and 2023. In 11 Tests last year, he took 42 wickets and scored 254 crucial runs at an average of 15.87. Across 24 international games, he took 59 wickets and made 422 runs at an average of 21.10. Within these 422 runs were many small, but impactful batting contributions throughout the Ashes and Cricket World Cup.

Sciver Brunt has been recognised as the top women's cricketer because of her role in the women's Ashes.

She played a crucial role in England's series wins in the white-ball leg of the competition, scoring two back-toback centuries in ODIs.

In six ODIs last year, she made 393 runs at an average of 131.00, with three tons and took three wickets. In two Tests, she made 137 runs in four innings, with the best score of 78 and also took a wicket.

In 10 T2OIs, she scored 364 runs at an average of 45.50, with three half-centuries. She also took five wickets in the shortest format.

After that, she scored a record-breaking 66-ball ton against Sri Lanka, the fastest by an England women's player in ODI history. Her all-round appeal was recognised by the Indian T2O franchise Mumbai Indians (MI), who paid 3,20,000 pounds to get her services in 2023.

She was also a part of MI team, which won the inaugural Women's Premier League (WPL) in India. With 332 runs in 10 games, including three fifties and 10 wickets, she played a crucial role in the Blue and Gold franchise's win.

Three Australian players have been named among the five Wisden Cricketers of the Year, including Mitchell Starc, Usman Khawaja and Ashleigh Gardner.

England stars Harry Brook and Mark Wood also made it to the list. All these players delivered standout performances across the men's and women's Ashes in particular.

Bihar Cricket Association forms Women's Cricket **Development Committee** dent Rakesh Tiwari said in a

TDG NETWORK

The Bihar Cricket Association (BCA) has taken a significant step towards fostering the growth of women's cricket in the state by establishing a Women's Cricket Development Committee. The Committee's primary aim is to encourage and support the participation of young women cricketers in the sport.

Women's Premier League (WPL) has been a big hit in the country. BCA wants to help women's cricket grow in Bihar and remains committed to nurturing women's cricket talent in Bihar.

"The promotion and development of cricket among women in the state have been given special attention by the BCCI.

To further this objective, a Women's Cricket Development Committee has been formed, which is actively working to engage young women in cricket," BCA presistatement. The BCA president also

informed that the cricket governing body is working toward providing better infrastructure and employment opportunities to players of the State. "The Bihar Cricket Association is committed to the development of cricket in Bihar, working towards better infrastructure, employment opportunities, salaries, and more. The results of these efforts will be visible very soon," said Mr. Rakesh Tiwari. Meanwhile, BCA's Randir Verma U-19 Tournament 2023-24 is currently underway. A men's Senior Inter-District One Day

The purpose of the tournaments is to nurture raw talent in the state. "Every year, the Bihar Cricket Association organizes domestic cricket tournaments for its young players across various levels and age groups.

League 2023-24 is also being

played in Bihar.

India aim for historic tally of 15 medals in World Para Athletics

TDG NETWORK

The Indian para athletics team was recently selected after the final trials in Bengaluru in end March. A team of thirty athletes achieved the minimum qualification standard set by the ministry of sports. A mix of established stars were joined by some inspiring newcomers who performed creditably at the final trials in Bengaluru. Leading the charge will be India's sensational javelin



thrower Sumit Antil who will be looking to best his own world record in the F category. The other reigning world record holder Sundar

Singh gurjar was below his best due to an injury but the bright spot in his category was ajeet singh and who finished one two in the event pushing Sundar Singh Gurjar to third place. All three are likely to perform a clean sweep in their category at

High jumpers Praveen Kumar and Nishad continued with their fine form and look set to add to their existing set of medals at kobe. Varun Bhati, an Olympic medalist from 2016, also showed good form in his return from injury. Also continuing in good form was Paralympic silver medal discus thrower Yogesh kathuniya.

He will be aiming for a gold at the Kobe World Champi-

In the women's events simran continued to improve on her existing performance by winning both the 100 and 200 m sprint events. Simran had won 2 silver medals at the Asian Games.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant became the Indian Super League (ISL) Champions and clinched the coveted title by defeating Mumbai City FC by 2-1 at the Vive-

TDG NETWORK

rangan in Kolkata. The Mariners on Monday took the title back from the Islanders courtesy of a goal each by Liston Colaco and Jason Cummings in this

kananda Yuba Bharati Kri-

championship-winning clash in the City of Joy. A late 89th-minute strike by Lallianzuala Chhangte meant that the game went right down the wire, with eight minutes of added time in the second half adding excitement to this dramatic finish of the league stages.

However, the home side held their lead despite playing with 10 men after the sending off of Brendan Hamill in the 91st minute of the game.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant jumped to 48 points from 22 matches as a consequence of this result, thus edging past the now second-placed Mumbai City FC (47) by a solitary point. Antonio Lopez Habas can thus add another feather



ISL: Mohun Bagan Super Giant overwhelm

to his illustrious cap in the ISL, after taking charge of the club at the mid-season point after they had succumbed to three straight defeats in the league in December.

Liston opened the flood-

gates with his thunderous. trademark effort from the left side of the box in the 28th minute of the match. He had been a teasing presence for the Mariners in that final third in the opening half hour of the game. Eight minutes before the goal, he had missed nodding home a cross by Anirudh Thapa by a whisker. The latter received the ball outside the box on the right flank and sneaked in a smart delivery for Liston

on the far post. The attacker

headed the ball, but it failed to hit the target. His efforts bore fruit thanks to a timely assist by Dimitrios Petratos, whose pass was received, held on, and hammered onto the top right corner effortlessly by the winger.

Mumbai City FC emerged as the more dominant of the two sides in the second half though, holding the possession for a reasonable period and knocking on the doors of the Mohun Bagan Super Giant backline. That simultaneously resulted in vacant spaces opening up in their own defensive unit, which was adequately pounced upon by Petratos and Jason Cummings as the match entered its final 20odd minutes.

The attacking duo em-

barked on a lethal counter-attacking move before Petratos supplied the ball to Cummings on the right flank. The striker could have opted to play a onetwo, but he instead trusted his scoring instincts to take on Mumbai City FC goalkeeper Phurba Lachenpa from a slightly challenging angle, before netting the ball to double the lead of the Mariners.

Mumbai City FC were nat-

urally desperate to somehow crawl their way back into the proceedings, and they ended up overcrowding the Mohun Bagan Super Giant box. Chhangte reaped the rich benefits of the same by picking up a short delivery given to him by Apuia near the right post and slotting it into the net in the 89th minute. That infused positivity amongst the visitors, as even a draw would have been sufficient for them to finish atop the league table. Hamill's sending off came as further good news, but some smart tactical play by the Mariners towards the end ensured that they didn't succumb to any more slip-ups and became the ISL 2023-24 League

'Can't accept this kind of behaviour': Chelsea coach Pochettino on players' clash over penalty

TDG NETWORK

Chelsea head coach Mauricio Pochettino sent a strict warning to Nicolas Jackson and Noni Madueke after the duo clashed with Cole Palmer over a penalty during the Premier League clash against Everton.

Chelsea stood victorious with a 6-0 win over Everton at Stamford Bridge, London on Tuesday. During the game, Jackson, Madueke and Palmer got into a heated dispute over Chelsea's penalty. The incident occurred



when Jackson and Madueke rushed to get the ball from Malo Gusto to take the penalty. After the heated exchange

between the two players, Thiago Silva intervened to try to settle the situation.

However, Silva's efforts went in vain as Madueke remained adamant about taking the spot kick. Chelsea skipper Conor Gallagher tried to defuse the situation by asking the forward to hand the ball to Palmer. However, Madueke refused, which led to Gallagher forcibly taking away the ball and handing it to Palmer.

"I can't accept this kind of behaviour. I told them it's the last time I want to see this kind of behaviour. It is impossible to have this type of behaviour after this performance. If we want to be a great team, we need to change and think in a collec-They're all involved in this

situation. Next time they're all out. This is not a joke. The pen-

alty taker is Palmer. It's Palmer who needs to decide if he wants to give the ball to a teammate. It's important to fix. They realise now," Pochettino said as quoted from Goal.com.