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## DELHI CONG CHIEF QUILTS POST IN MIDDLE OF POLLS

Arvinder Singh Lovely's resignation lays bare factional feud

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a setback to the Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, its Delhi unit chief Arvinder Singh Lovely resigned, criticising the party's alliance with AAP and the statements of Congress candidates Kanhaiya Kumar and Udit Raj.

In his letter sent to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday, Lovely also said that he found himself "handicapped" as all unanimous decisions taken by senior Delhi unit leaders have been "unilaterally vetoed" by AICC Delhi in-charge Deepak Babaria.

The Delhi Congress unit was against the alliance with AAP but the party high command went ahead with it, Lovely said as his resignation brought to the fore the party's factional feud.

Addressing a press conference on Sunday, Lovely appeared to reject suggestions that he stepped down as he was not given a ticket and asserted that he was not joining any other political party.

"Some people are spreading misinformation that I was upset over



Many Congress leaders including Sandeep Dikshit met Arvinder Singh Lovely at his residence in New Delhi on Sunday.

**BJP SLAMS  
CONGRESS**

After the Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely resigned from his post, BJP leader RP Singh said on Sunday that "ground-level leaders" are feeling "suffocated" in the party. "Things are not going well in the Congress, he said.

ticket(distribution). It is not like that. You all know that I introduced the candidates by

**LOVELY RULES OUT  
JOINING OTHERS**

Arvinder Singh Lovely on Sunday said he has only resigned as chief of the Congress' Delhi unit and is not joining any other political party. His clarification came amid claims that the BJP would field Lovely from the East Delhi.

holding a press conference three days ago," Lovely said. "I have only resigned as

**“**  
*The Delhi Congress unit was against an alliance with a party which was formed on the sole basis of levelling false, fabricated and mala fide corruption charges against the Congress*

- Arvinder Singh Lovely

**INTERNAL MATTER  
OF CONGRESS: AAP**

AAP senior leader Saurabh Bharadwaj said it was an internal matter of their senior ally Congress. "It won't be appropriate for me to comment on the matter. AAP is fighting on the four seats it is contesting with full strength....

Delhi Congress chief and I am not joining any political

## Sleaze videos rock K'taka politics as poll heat peaks

TDG NETWORK  
HASSAN/BENGALURU

Former PM Deve Gowda's son, grandson booked in sex scandal.

A few days after some explicit video clips allegedly involving Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna started making the rounds in Hassan in recent days, the Karnataka government on Sunday constituted a Special Investigation Team to probe an alleged sex scandal involving Prajwal, who is the grandson of JD(S) supremo and former prime minister H D Deve Gowda.



The move came following a letter by the Chairperson of Women's Commission Dr Nagalakshmi Chowdhary to the government.

Later in the evening, a case of sexual harassment and stalking was registered against the former minister HD Revanna and Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, the son and the grandson of former prime minister H D Deve Gowda.



The case was registered in Holarasipura police station in the district based on a complaint by their cook.

The complainant said she is a relative of Revanna's wife Bhavani.

She alleged that four months after she started working, Revanna used to sexually harass her, and his son Prajwal used to make video calls to her daughter and

Culprits won't be spared: Kumaraswamy

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU

Former Karnataka Chief Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) leader HD Kumaraswamy said that whoever is at fault in connection with the alleged video case "there's no question of forgiving them."

He said that according to the law of the land, the person indulged in wrongdoings will have to face its implications and refused to comment further until the investigation is complete.

"Let all the facts come out through investigation. No matter who is at fault, whoever they are, there is no question of forgiving them for any reason. Therefore, will talk about this after the investigation report is completely out," Kumaraswamy said.

"Whether it is me or HD Deve Gowda, we always respect women and whenever they come with complaints, we have tried to resolve their problems. The CM has already ordered an SIT investigation and the SIT in

## BJP leaders tight-lipped

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

The BJP on Sunday distanced itself from sitting Janata Dal (Secular) MP from Hassan Lok Sabha constituency, Prajwal Revanna, amid the controversy around his purported sleaze tapes.

While the BJP is contesting the ongoing Lok Sabha elections in the state in alliance

with the JD(S), Revanna is seeking a fresh term in the Lower House from Hassan and is pitted against the Congress' Shreyas Patel.

Weighing in on the row over the alleged sleaze tapes, S Prakash, the chief spokesperson of BJP's state unit, said, "We, as a party, have nothing to do with the videos and neither do we have any comments to make on the SIT probe announced by

the state government into the alleged sex scandal involving Prajwal Revanna."

Dr Narendra Rangappa, another spokesperson for the BJP's state unit, simply said, "No comments", when asked for his take on the purported sleaze videos allegedly involving the JD(S) legislator.

According to sources in the BJP, the party has chosen

## RSS seeks to clear the air, says it supports quota

TDG NETWORK  
HYDERABAD

Trashing a video claiming that it was against reservation, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said it has always stood for quotas as are guaranteed and sanctioned under the Constitution.

Addressing an event organised to mark the inauguration of Vidya Bharati Vignana Kendra (VBVK) in Hyderabad on Sunday, the Sangh chief said, "A video is being circulated on social media platforms claiming that the Sangh is against reservation. Behind this patently false and misleading video are people, who preach reservation when outside, among the people, but work against the idea behind the scenes. Such claims are totally baseless." "The Sangh has always stood for reservation, as sanctioned



and guaranteed under the Constitution, from the very beginning. We believe that reservation should continue as long as it is necessary for those who need it, as they are provided for reasons of backwardness and lack of parity in terms of their living or social standing. The quotas should remain in place as long as discriminations aren't eliminated," Bhagwat added.

His statement, clarifying the Sangh's stand on reservations, came in response to a

video that was shared widely across social media platforms, claiming that the BJP's ideological parent was opposed to the idea of reservation.

The Vidya Bharati Vignana Kendra (VBVK) is an international school, which follows the curriculum of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and is run by Sri Saraswathi Vidyapeetham in Nadergul, Telangana.

The inauguration event was attended by several dignitaries, including Padmabhusan Sri Tridandi Chinna Srimannarayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swamiji.

Earlier, Telangana Chief Minister and Congress leader Revanth Reddy claimed that the RSS and its affiliates were opposed to the Mandal Commission, which was put together in 1978 to explore and carry forward the idea of giving reservations to the

## Rahul alleges RSS had opposed reservation

AGENCIES  
DAMAN

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday claimed though the RSS is now saying they are not against reservations, however, they had earlier spoken about opposing quotas. Addressing a campaign rally at Daman in the Union Territory of Daman, Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Gandhi also said the RSS and BJP are trying to destroy the Constitution and various institutions to make their leaders "kings" of the country.

Shah: Rahul spreading canards

AGENCIES  
AHMEDABAD

In a blistering attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his allegation that the BJP wants to take back reservations to backward sections if elected for a third term, Union Home Minister said on Sunday that the former was only trying to mislead people. Shah said had the BJP been working towards taking back reservations to backward sections, it would have done it by this time. Speaking to ANI on Sunday, the Union Home Minister reaffirmed that as long as the BJP-led NDA was in power, there would be no rethink on reservations or quotas to Scheduled Castes.

## Scathing on Rajas, silent on Nawabs: PM on Rahul

TDG NETWORK  
BELAGAVI

Tearing into Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remark that "Rajas and Maharajas used to take away lands", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the Wayanad MP doesn't speak a word on the atrocities committed by the "Nawabs, Nizams, Sultans, and Badshahs", adding that the statement was intended at appeasing a certain 'vote bank'.

Addressing a mega public meeting at Belagavi in Congress-ruled Karnataka on Sunday, PM Modi said, "The Shehzada of the Congress said recently that our Rajas and Maharajas back in the day were ruthless. They snatched or took away the humble assets of the poor at their whim. The Shehzada insulted the re-



vered Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Rani Chenamma, whose good governance and patriotism still fill us with national pride and honour. Does he not have any knowledge of the contribution of the royal family of Mysuru who we all regard very highly and are proud of?"

Claiming that the Congress leader was silent on the excesses and atrocities committed by Muslim emperors on their peasants,

Dalit votes key to Punjab's poll dynamics

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

In Punjab, out of 117 seats, 34 are reserved. Of these, 69 seats come from the Malwa region, with 19 reserved for Scheduled Castes. The Majha region has a total of 25 seats.

DETAILS P2

'Ujjwal should have contested from Jalgaon'

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut expressed confidence in the Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) prospects of victory in the Lok Sabha elections, particularly in the seat where Ujjwal Nikam, the renowned 26/11 prosecutor, has been fielded by the BJP.

DETAILS P3

## Musk visits Beijing as Tesla cars face curbs

AGENCIES  
BEIJING

On a surprise visit to Beijing, billionaire Elon Musk on Sunday met Chinese Premier Li Qiang and other officials to discuss lifting all restrictions on moving and parking of Tesla vehicles in some sensitive areas in the country over fears of breach of sensitive and strategic data, official media reported.

A recent report said that Tesla car drivers in China are reportedly facing entry bans in government-affiliated



buildings as security concerns with the US increase. An increasing number of meeting halls and exhibition centres across the country

are refusing entry to Tesla vehicles, according to a report published by Nikkei Asia.

The report stated that previous restrictions for the vehicles were generally limited just to military bases, but now a growing number of highway operators, local authority agencies, and cultural centres are reportedly enforcing them.

Musk arrived in Beijing on Sunday at the invitation of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Automobile company

as Tesla has been in negotiation with the Chinese authorities about the lifting of all restrictions, the state-run China Daily reported.

The restrictions included moving and parking in some sensitive areas in the country, as Tesla's electric vehicles, or EVs, passed an authoritative national data inspection in China, the daily quoted official sources as saying.

Musk visited to discuss topics including removing restrictions on Tesla EVs in some sensitive areas, such as

### INSIDE

#### HOW QUOTA SYSTEM EVOLVED IN INDIA



The controversy over reservations refuses to die as it has occupied the centre stage of election campaign by different political parties. Here is a historical perspective on this affirmative action.

DETAILS P9



Man and his pet

A man gives a bath to his pet Macaw on a hot summer day, in Kolkata on Sunday. ANI

# SHAH TAKES PARIVARVAD JIBE AT SP CHIEF AKHILESH YADAV

TDG NETWORK  
ETAH (UTTAR PRADESH)

Launching a scathing attack on Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday that if things were under the SP chief's control, he would have fielded his family members on all the seats in Uttar Pradesh.

Addressing a public meeting here today, Shah said that after the completion of two phases of the Lok Sabha elections, the INDIA bloc is not able to mark victory on a single seat.

"Akhilesh himself is fighting from Kannauj, Dimple Yadav is fighting from Mainpuri, Akhilesh's nephew Akshay Yadav is fighting from Firozabad,



*Amit Shah also pointed out that in the Samajwadi Party government, goons used to harass people, but in Yogi's government, the law and order situation has improved.*

Aditya Yadav from Badaun, Dharmendra Yadav in Azamgarh. If things were under his control, he would have made his family fight on all the seats in Uttar Pradesh," he said.

Amit Shah also pointed out that in the Samajwadi Party government, goons used to harass people, but in Yogi's government, the

law and order situation has improved.

"After two phases of election, Modi ji has done the work of winning more than a century of seats. The account of the 'Ghamandiya' alliance has not even been opened," he added.

Further, lashing out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks that the BJP will end the reservation system, the Home Minister said that the latter is spreading lies in the name of backward classes.

"Rahul Baba is spreading lies in the name of backward classes. He says that if BJP wins 400 seats, BJP will remove reservations in the country. He doesn't understand, that we had two full terms with an absolute majority to remove

reservation, but Narendra Modi is a supporter of reservation. Today I will give you a Modi Guarantee that the SC, ST, and OBC reservation will neither be removed by the BJP nor will we let anyone else do that," Amit Shah said.

Shah also recalled that it was Babu ji (Kalyan Singh) who took up the cause of the welfare of the backward classes and the poor but his government collapsed because of Mulayam Singh.

"But when Narendra Modi became PM, he left no stone unturned in the progress of the backward classes and the poor. Congress has always attacked the reservation of SC, ST and OBCs, but Modi ji has always worked for their upliftment," the Home Minister said.

# Setback for opposition as several SP leaders join BJP

TDG NETWORK  
LUCKNOW

In a setback to the opposition amid Lok Sabha polls, several Samajwadi Party leaders joined the Bharatiya Janata Party in Lucknow on Sunday.

Former Samajwadi Party MLA Jai Choubey and several other leaders including Balram Yadav, and Jagat Jaiswal joined the BJP in the presence of Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak.

"Former MLA and several district presidents have joined our party today. Welcome, and congratulations to all of you.

Those working at the block level are also coming along with them, they have a big responsibility in their hands," Pathak said.

"You all have decided to join the BJP... Under PM



Modi's leadership, the BJP has reached to masses. Under PM Modi's guidance, we have taken a resolution of 'Viksit Bharat' and I hope you all will contribute to it," Deputy CM Pathak added.

Uttar Pradesh, which sends the maximum number of MPs, 80, to Parliament, is voting in all seven phases.

other constituencies was concluded on April 26.

A mroha, Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, Aligarh, Mathura, and Bulandshahr voted in the second phase of the Lok Sabha election on April 26.

Next, the state will once again poll in phases three and four on May 7 and May 13 and in phases five, six and seven on May 20, May 23 and June 1 respectively.

The votes will be counted on June 4.

# 'Entire nation worried about law and order in Karnataka': PM Modi

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

Attacking the Siddaramaiah government over the Hubballi murder incident, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that the whole nation is worried about the law and order situation in Karnataka, adding that the Congress party is desperate to destroy the state.

Addressing an election rally in Uttara Kannada, Prime Minister Modi said, "The entire nation is worried about what happened to one of the daughters in the state. They are worried about law and order situation in Karnataka. Parents are worried about their daughters residing in Karnataka. This is due to the sins committed by Congress. How can someone get the guts to murder someone on



a college campus? They who committed crime know that those hungry for vote bank will save them in a few days."

"The Congress government is busy destroying Karnataka. Instead of controlling crime, Congress is promoting an anti-social and anti-national mindset," the Prime Minister said.

Neha (23), the daughter of Congress councillor of Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation, Niranjan Hiremath, was stabbed to death on the

campus of BVB College on April 18.

The accused, Fayaz Khondunai, who fled the scene after the stabbing attack, was subsequently arrested. Neha was a first-year MCA student and the assailant, Fayaz, was her former classmate.

The Prime Minister further slammed the Congress party for rejecting an invitation to the Ayodhya Ram Temple inauguration ceremony earlier in January this year.

"On one side there are those in hunger of vote bank rejected the invitation to the Ram temple and on the other side, there is an Ansari family, Iqbal Ansari whose entire family fought the case against Ram Temple for three generations but when the Supreme Court's verdict came, he accepted it.

# SAD to contest in Gurdaspur independently

TARUNI GANDHI  
CHANDIGARH

In a significant shift from its longstanding alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) is gearing up to contest the Gurdaspur Lok Sabha seat independently, marking the first time since 1996 that the party will field a candidate under its symbol 'takdi' or scales. This move sets the stage for a dramatic showdown with its former ally, which has historically relied on star power to secure victory in the constituency.

The SAD's decision to contest solo follows its withdrawal from the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in 2020, citing opposition to the now-repealed farm laws. The party's senior vice president and veteran leader, Daljit Singh Cheema, has been nominated as its candidate for the Gurdaspur seat, reflecting a strategic shift in its electoral strategy.

Addressing the media, Cheema expressed enthusiasm among



SAD workers for the party's independent candidacy in Gurdaspur and emphasized the emotional attachment associated with the party symbol 'takdi'. He highlighted the SAD's historical presence in the constituency, noting its previous contest in the 1996 general elections.

Responding to BJP's allegations of being an "outsider", Cheema reaffirmed his local roots, citing his birth in Mari Buchian village and his educational background in the region. He dismissed BJP's

*Addressing the media, Cheema expressed enthusiasm among SAD workers for the party's independent candidacy in Gurdaspur and emphasized the emotional attachment associated with the party symbol 'takdi'.*

reliance on Bollywood stars in previous elections, attributing the party's shift towards local candidates to mounting "negativity" among voters.

In contrast to previous elections where the BJP fielded actors like Vinod Khanna and Sunny Deol,

the party has nominated local leader and former MLA Dinesh Singh Babbu as its candidate this time. Cheema seized upon this change, highlighting the BJP's struggle to find suitable local candidates and the SAD's historical role in ensuring their electoral success.

The Gurdaspur Lok Sabha seat, once a Congress stronghold, witnessed a shift with the BJP's introduction of Bollywood star candidates. However, the recent nomination of local leaders by both SAD and BJP indicates a departure from this trend, signaling a renewed focus on grassroots politics and regional issues.

As the electoral battle intensifies, candidates from both parties face challenges on the campaign trail, including farmer protests and public discontent. The outcome of the Gurdaspur constituency will not only shape the political landscape of Punjab but also serve as a barometer of public sentiment towards the ruling government's policies and governance.

# Dalit votes key to Punjab's electoral dynamics during Lok Sabha polls

TARUNI GANDHI  
CHANDIGARH

In Punjab, out of 117 seats, 34 are reserved. Of these, 69 seats come from the Malwa region, with 19 reserved for Scheduled Castes. The Majha region has a total of 25 seats, with 7 reserved for Scheduled Castes. Out of the 23 seats in the Doaba region, 8 are reserved. During the Lok Sabha electoral, these Dalit votes could change the dynamics quite easily.

Due to a larger population of Dalits in Punjab, this is reflected in the state's electoral dynamics. Dalit voters in Punjab are not consistently aligned with one party. This is why their votes swing between the Akali Dal, Congress, and AAP.

*The Doaba region has a significant Dalit population, with votes reaching up to 45% in some areas. Overall, the Dalit population in Punjab significantly influences the outcomes on several seats.*

The Doaba region has a significant Dalit population, with votes reaching up to 45% in some areas.

Overall, the Dalit population in Punjab significantly influences the outcomes on several seats.

In the 2017 Assembly elections, out of the total 34 reserved seats, Congress won 21, while AAP secured 9 seats. Meanwhile, 4 seats went to the Akali-BJP alliance. It's not that Dalits are limited to specific areas;

their presence is significant in both the Majha and Doaba regions. In 13 Assembly constituencies, the minority community's population exceeds 25%. Similarly, the Ravidasia community's population is more than 35% in 15 constituencies. Punjab's politics shows that Dalits' votes don't align with just one party due to various reasons.

Dalit Brotherhood Across 39 Castes: In Punjab, the Dalit

community is divided into 39 castes. Their mutual interests often clash.

The major Dalit castes in Punjab include Ramdasia, Ravidasia, Mazhabi, Valmiki, Bhagat, and Kabirpanthi. In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections, the Shiromani Akali Dal had allied with the BSP. This alliance won 11 out of Punjab's 13 seats. Of these, the Shiromani Akali Dal won eight, while the BSP secured three. In that election, Congress only managed

to win two seats. After 1996, Dalits started shifting towards different parties rapidly, although before that, the majority of their votes went to Congress.

# Congress revives Mandal Commission, promises to increase reservation limit to 50%

AJIT MAINDOLA  
NEW DELHI

In the midst of elections, the genie of reservation has once again emerged from the bottle. The Congress is leaving no stone unturned in cornering the government on the issue of reservation. But the question remains whether the Congress wants to revive the Mandal Commission to advance the politics of caste, as it has clearly stated in its manifesto that if it comes to power, it

will abolish the reservation limit of 50%. In a way, it will increase reservation in the country, which may reduce the rights of dominant castes in government jobs. Along with this, the promise to

conduct a caste census has also been made by the Congress. Rahul Gandhi has already talked about conducting an economic survey, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also made an issue.

In fact, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, before the elections, had raised the slogan of crossing 400 seats this time. The Congress and the entire opposition have linked that slogan with ending reservation. In the midst of this, in the first phase, with low voting, the issue of reservation seems to be working for the Congress. Meanwhile, the media coordinator of the Congress, Jayaram Ramesh, has been issuing statements almost daily that the BJP is anti-reservation. In the same vein, their leader Rahul

Gandhi has even said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is a gang that wants to end reservation, and Narendra Modi is its leader. In a way, the Congress believes that the BJP can be defeated on the issue of reservation alone. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and now RSS Mohan Bhagwat have also said that reservation will never be abolished. Whoever is propagating the idea of ending reservation is wrong. The BJP and the Sangh also feel that the Congress can divide communities on the issue of reservation.

But on the other hand, there is another aspect of reservation and caste census. Due to the politics of reservation and caste, the Congress was wiped out in

states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Due to the politics of caste, regional parties took over from the Congress. Not only that, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi always opposed reservation. Indira Gandhi's slogan was "neither on caste nor on creed, will the stamp be placed, but on the hand." Not only that, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi never allowed the Mandal Commission report to be released while they were prime ministers. When the report of the Mandal Commission was implemented by the non-Congress Prime Minister VP Singh in 1989, the whole country erupted in violence. VP Singh lost his chair. Not only that, due to being stuck in the politics of caste, the upper castes moved away from the Congress.

# ECI orders repolling at 6 booths in Outer Manipur on April 30

TDG NETWORK  
IMPHAL

The Election Commission of India declared the polls conducted at six polling stations in the Outer Manipur Parliamentary Constituency as void and announced fresh elections in these stations on April 30.

"The Election Commission of India has, under Sections 58(2) and 58A(2) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, directed that the poll taken on April

26, 2024 (Friday) in respect of 6 polling stations listed in the table below of 2- Outer Manipur (ST) Parliamentary Constituency to be void and appointed April 30, 2024 (Tuesday) as the date for taking fresh poll at the said polling stations with hours of poll from 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM," an official statement said.

Chief Electoral Officer, Pradeep Kumar Jha further appealed to the voters of these polling stations to come out in large numbers

to exercise their franchise.

Voting for the 2024 Lok Sabha concluded in Manipur as 13 of the Assembly segments in the State's Outer Manipur constituency cast their votes in the second phase of polling on Friday.

Earlier, re-polling was held in 11 polling stations of the Inner Manipur constituency on April 22, after multiple incidents of violence were reported during the first phase of polling on April 19.

The next round of polling will be held on May 7.

# Gandhi family's dilemma persists over Rae Bareilly and Amethi

AJIT MAINDOLA  
NEW DELHI

The Gandhi family faces a persistent dilemma regarding the Rae Bareilly and Amethi seats. While it's confirmed that Rahul Gandhi will contest the elections, uncertainty looms over Priyanka Gandhi's candidacy. The question arises whether Priyanka should also enter the electoral fray. Two viewpoints have emerged: one suggests that both should contest, yet the challenge lies in managing their cam-

*With low voter turnout, the party hopes that the opposition will benefit. In this regard, the party has devised a new strategy of focusing more on Priyanka Gandhi's electoral campaigning.*

paigns simultaneously.

Another consideration is the potential outcome if Priyanka wins Rae Bareilly while Rahul loses Amethi. In such a scenario, there's a notion that Rahul should contest from Rae Bareilly, offering another candidate a

chance in Amethi. However, concerns arise over whether the opposition will exploit this decision. The final call rests with the Gandhi family. Both Rahul and Priyanka will commence election tours on Monday and Tuesday, respectively.

With low voter turnout, the party hopes that the opposition will benefit. In this regard, the party has devised a new strategy of focusing more on Priyanka Gandhi's electoral campaigning. However, the party's internal report suggests that both Rae Bareilly and Amethi seats are easily winnable. If Rahul Gandhi contests from Amethi, it will pose difficulties for Smriti Irani this time. The 2019 election was different. Due to the air strikes and surgical strikes, there was

a wave in favor of Prime Minister Modi. Despite that wave, Smriti Irani emerged victorious.

Analysts suggest that Congress stands a chance to win both Rae Bareilly and Amethi seats due to sympathetic sentiments. Although former Congress president Sonia Gandhi may not actively campaign, her influence remains potent. The decision to field both or just one candidate now lies with the Gandhi family. Clarity on this matter is expected to emerge in the coming days.

# CONG HAS TOPPLED MAXIMUM STATE GOVTS: RAJNATH SINGH

TDG NETWORK  
AHMEDABAD

Congress party "murdered" democracy by imposing emergency and has the highest record of toppling the elected state governments in the country, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday.

Singh was addressing a press conference at BJP state media centre in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

"Congress party has highest record of toppling the elected state governments in the country. So far, the President's rule has been imposed 132 times in the country under Article 356, and out of that 90 times, it was imposed by Congress. Indira Gandhi alone has a record of toppling half a century (50) gov-

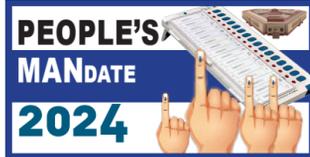


ernments. Can anyone name a single elected government toppled by PM Modi? Not even one," he said. Singh attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his remark that "Rajas and Maharajas used to take away lands" and said the Wayanad MP remains silent on Muslim rulers.

"Rahul has no knowledge of history. After independence, when princely estates were being merged with India, Raja Maharajas agreed to it and got merged. It was only Junagarh, Bhopal, and Hyderabad whose merger into India happened only after intervention of Sardar Valabh

Bhai," he added.

Accusing the party of indulging in "corruption in every sphere", the Defence Minister said that during 10-



year UPA rule, the "Olympics of corruption was being played" and Congress was its organiser.

"It was the Congress party that murdered democracy by imposing emergency. If the fundamental rights of common citizens have been suspended, it was during the rule of Congress," he stated.

# Enough of 'PANN', now time for Congress in Odisha: Rahul Gandhi

TDG NETWORK  
KENDRAPARA

Odisha is being run by 'PANN' (Pandian, Amit Shah, PM Narendra Modi and Naveen Patnaik)," said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday, claiming that Bharatiya Janata Party and Biju Janata Dal have "married" each other in the state.

Last October, former IAS officer and Odisha CM Patnaik's close aide V K Pandian was appointed Chairman ST (Transformational Initiatives) with the rank of cabinet minister.

Wayanad MP said, "You (people) have eaten enough PANN, now it is the time for the Congress government in Odisha."



"BJP-BJD have married each other in Odisha. They have given PANN to everyone. PANN here means (V K) Pandian, Amit Shah, Narendra Modi and Naveen Patnaik. PM Modi runs government for 22-25 people, in a similar manner Naveen Patnaik also runs for a few selected people. All profit goes to these few selected

people. These people have stolen all your wealth, mining scam happened here, and the lands of farmers have been grabbed. We will return all your wealth looted by these parties once we form government in Delhi," Rahul Gandhi said at an election rally in Kendrapara.

Similarly, the BJP had "married" to BRS in Telan-

gana, and the result was, the BRS lost and Congress formed the government.

"In Telangana, BJP and BRS got married. Every day there was some drama. The Congress party showed in Telangana that BJP and BRS are one and if anyone is doing the work of the opposition then it is the Congress party. We gave 5 guarantees which gave money directly to the poor people of Telangana in their bank accounts. The leaders of BRS gave full benefit to the selected people. We went there and said that BRS gave the same amount of money to the rich people of Telangana which the Congress party will give to the poor people of Telangana. The result was BRS lost and Congress won the Assembly elections and formed the government," he said.

# Several leaders, workers of BJD join BJP in Odisha

TDG NETWORK  
ANGUL

Several leaders and workers of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) joined the BJP in the presence of Union Minister and BJP Lok Sabha candidate from Sambalpur, Dharmendra Pradhan.

Pradhan said that the members and leaders of other parties are joining the BJP as the people's faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi is increasing.

"Odisha has moved towards the change and hence the people from the BJD and other parties are joining the BJP as the people's faith in PM Modi in BJP is increasing. Since the local leadership isn't 'local' anymore, a 'babu' from the backdoor is trying to capture the house. People are upset with those who didn't work to develop

*Several leaders and workers of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) joined the BJP in the presence of Union Minister and BJP Lok Sabha candidate from Sambalpur, Dharmendra Pradhan.*

the state but have done corruption," the Union Minister said on Saturday.

Pradhan also visited Palahara assembly constituency during his election campaigning. During this, he also visited a tea stall, had tea and interacted with the locals. It is noteworthy that Dharmendra Pradhan, who is the BJP candidate from Sambalpur Lok Sabha constituency, is contesting elections after a gap of 15 years. Sambalpur goes to the polls on May 25.

Assembly and Lok Sabha

elections will be held simultaneously in Odisha in four phases, starting from Phase One on May 13, Phase Two on May 20, Phase Three on May 25 and the final Phase on June 1.

The results will be announced on June 4. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) got the maximum number of seats, followed by the BJP and the Congress. The BJD won 12 seats, the BJP finished a close second at 8 seats and the Congress bagged just a lone seat.

# 'Ujjwal Nikam should have contested from Jalgaon': Sanjay Raut

TDG NETWORK  
PUNE

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut expressed confidence in the Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) prospects of victory in the Lok Sabha elections, particularly in the seat where Ujjwal Nikam, the renowned 26/11 prosecutor, has been fielded by the BJP.

Raut, while commenting on Nikam's candidature from Mumbai North Central as a BJP candidate, suggested that Nikam should have contested from Jalgaon, his hometown.

"MVA will secure victory in the constituency where Ujjwal has been nominated to contest. We are confident of a 100 per cent win," Raut said. The Shiv Sena leader asserted that a lot of leaders of the Mahayuti declined to contest the Lok Sabha elections from the Mumbai



North Central seat.

"Many leaders of Mahayuti have declined to contest in that seat. No one is prepared to compete from that area of Mumbai. Ujjwal Nikam should have contested from Jalgaon, his hometown, but he chose to contest in Mumbai. There will be a good fight there, I believe," Raut asserted.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), part of the Mahayuti alliance, has fielded Ujjwal Nikam, who was a special

public prosecutor in the Mumbai 26/11 terror attack case, from Mumbai North Central in the Lok Sabha elections. Nikam was special public prosecutor in several high profile cases including the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts and the trial of Ajmal Kasab, the lone terrorist caught after the 26/11 attacks. He is pitted against Congress' Mumbai unit chief and Dharavi MLA Varsha Gaikwad. The BJP decided to drop sitting MP Poonam

Mahajan, the two-time party MP from the Mumbai North Central seat.

In his first response after the BJP announced his candidature, Ujjwal Nikam called it the "second inning in the new temple of democracy". The 26/11 prosecutor also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP national president JP Nadda and party leaders in Maharashtra for vesting in him the 'responsibility' of contesting and winning the Mumbai North Central seat.

"Indeed, it was a very pleasant and surprising moment for me. All my life, I have practised law to bring criminals to justice. Now, God has given me an opportunity to start my second inning in the new temple of democracy--the Parliament," Nikam told reporters following the BJP's announcement on Saturday.



**Union Minister Lekhi dismisses 'anti-incumbency' claim of opposition**

TDG NETWORK  
KANPUR (UTTAR PRADESH)

Dismissing opposition's claims of an "anti-incumbency" wave in India, Union Minister Meenakshi Lekhi on Thursday, said that the nation is rather experiencing a "pro-incumbency" sentiment.

Taking a swipe at the Congress party, Lekhi said, "They are the electoral Hindus who question the existence of Shree Ram and during elections, they remember Shree Ram, it is evident. If their minds had really changed, the country wouldn't have been in a bad state where it was".

On the opposition's claim of an "anti-incumbency" wave in India, and considering the voter turnout in the last two phases of the Lok Sabha elections Lekhi asserted "To date, all the electoral scientists say that the voting percentage remains high in anti-incumbency while it goes down in pro-incumbency as the people are assured about who is forming the govt". Lekhi said, "Their mouthpieces are raising the slogans of anti-incumbency, but today everyone knows that the BJP is going to form the govt at the centre".

"Whether you ask any auto rickshaw driver, or a common man, all of them want to see PM Modi as the next Prime Minister of India. Who do you think stands to become the PM apart from PM Modi?" Lekhi asked.

# SVEEP cell holds cycle rally in Assam to encourage voters' participation

TDG NETWORK  
GUWAHATI

As part of the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP), a cycle rally was organised by Kamrup Metro District Election Department in Assam to create awareness among the voters to exercise their democratic right of voting.

The event aimed to empower citizens with knowledge and the importance of giving votes ahead of the third phase of Lok Sabha polls in Assam.

The cyclists peddled their way throughout different constituencies across Guwahati, in which polls are scheduled to be held in the third and the last phase of the Assam Lok Sabha constituency.



"We have organized a cycle rally in Guwahati under the Voter awareness programme for the Lok Sabha polls that are going to be held on May 7 here. Our plan is to cover three constituencies among the five constituencies. Our first rally will go till Ulubari and the second rally will cover Narengi Tinali," said the organizer.

The third phase of Lok

Sabha polls in four constituencies of Assam, Guwahati, Barpeta, Kokrajhar and Dhubri will be held on May 7.

Forty-seven candidates are in the fray in the third phase of polls and more than 81 lakh voters will exercise their franchise.

Assam recorded 77.35 per cent voter turnout in the second phase of polls, which was held in five parliamenta-

ry constituencies in the state on April 26.

According to the Election Commission, 77.35 per cent of voters in five parliamentary constituencies - Silchar, Karimganj, Diphu, Nagaon and Darrang-Udalguri, came out to exercise their franchise in the second phase of polls.

80.56 per cent voter turnout was recorded in Nagaon parliamentary constituency, while 78.41 per cent voter turnout was recorded in Darrang-Udalguri, 75.97 per cent in Silchar, 75.63 per cent in Karimganj and 73.11 per cent in Diphu seat.

Assam recorded a 78.25 per cent polling percentage in the first phase of polls in five parliamentary constituencies - Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, Kaziranga and Sonitpur on April 19.

# 'Ban TMC and arrest CM': BJP leader Agnimitra Paul after arms recovery in Sandeshkhali

TDG NETWORK  
KHARAGPUR

After the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recovered arms and ammunition from Sandeshkhali, Bharatiya Janata Party candidate from Medinipur, Agnimitra Paul said that the party is demanding to ban TMC and arrest CM Mamata Banerjee. Hitting out at CM Banerjee, the BJP leader said, "What kind of woman and CM she (Mamata Banerjee) is that she is favouring the murderer, rapists and terrorists. They (TMC) are going to Court to save those who have taken bribes for jobs. Today bombs, RDX along with a pistol that belongs to police were recovered from the goon of Sheikh Shajahan."

"Are they conspiring to



blast the places like Sandeshkhali? We are demanding that the TMC be banned and Mamata Banerjee be arrested," Paul added.

During Phase 2 of polling for the Lok Sabha in the state on Friday, the CBI and the NSG bomb squads carried out raids in Sandeshkhali and the North 24 Parganas district, recovering a huge cache of arms and ammunition from the house of Abu Taleb, a relative of local TMC

leader Hafzul Khan, who is alleged to be a close aide of now-expelled ruling party strongman Sheikh Shahjahan. The ruling Trinamool Congress lodged a complaint with the Chief Electoral Officer of the state on Saturday over the raids in Sandeshkhali by a joint team of the CBI and bomb squads of the elite National Security Guard (NSG). In its complaint with the CEO, the TMC alleged that despite repeated representations, the state poll panel chief failed to stop central probe agencies from "throttling the campaign efforts" of various political parties.

The ruling party in the state alleged further that the CBI did not issue 'actionable notice' to the state government or the police administration before carrying out the raids.

# 'There are forces working to break down the nation': Rajyavardhan Rathore

TDG NETWORK  
HYDERABAD

Rajyavardhan Rathore, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Department in Rajasthan, while participating in the Rajasthani Pravasi Sammelan at Hotel Rajdhani Begum Bazar in Hyderabad, Telangana along with Lok Sabha BJP candidate K Madhavi Latha, said that there are forces in the country that are working to break down the nation but on the contrary, the country has become more powerful.

Speaking to ANI, Ra-

jayavardhan Rathore said, "There are forces in the country that are working to break down the nation and they have been trying to break the nation for a very long time. But the country hasn't broken down... It is getting more powerful because patriots live here."

He added further, "Jaag Rha Hai Hindustan, Jaag Rha Hai Matdata" (The country is waking up, and the voters are waking up) and that is why, India is moving forward."

Lauding BJP, Rathore said, "The way schemes and



policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi are reaching door to door, only a BJP candidate is able to do it. PM Modi made sure of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas'. He did the work of freeing half the

Muslim population from Triple Talaq.

Meanwhile, Rajyavardhan Rathore also participated in a roadshow with BJP candidate K Madhavi Latha from Hyderabad parliamentary

*In 2019, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) won nine seats in the state. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured four seats. The Indian National Congress (INC) obtained three seats. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) won one seat.*

constituency.

Taking to his official X handle, Rathore tweeted, "Today, I participated in a road show in support of BJP candidate Madhavi Latha from Hyderabad parliamentary

constituency. On this occasion, the immense love and blessings received from the God-like people have made it clear that Telangana is ready to make the respected Prime Minister Narendra Modi

the Prime Minister once again by making the lotus bloom with a huge number of votes."

Thanking Rajyavardhan Rathore for campaigning in her support, Madhavi Latha on her official X handle tweeted, "Thank you very much on behalf of all the senior BJP leaders and workers from Hyderabad Lok Sabha. You (Rajyavardhan Rathore) said it rightly that the people of Telangana have made up their mind and by giving the maximum number of seats, they will play their part in making Naren-

dra Modi the Prime Minister for the third time."

Polling for 17 parliamentary constituencies in Telangana is scheduled to be held in the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections on May 13. The counting for all seven phases of the Lok Sabha polls will be held on June 4, 2024.

In 2019, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) won nine seats in the state. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured four seats. The Indian National Congress (INC) obtained three seats. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) won one seat.

# Narcotics worth Rs 600 seized from Pak boat

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a well-coordinated sea operation, the Indian Coast Guard carried out an intelligence-based anti-narcotics operation and seized narcotics worth Rs 600 crore from a Pakistani boat named 'Al-Raza' and apprehended 14 crew members who belonged to Balochistan.

The Pakistani boat along with its 14 crew members have been apprehended and is being brought to Portbandar, Gujarat for further investigations, the Indian Coast Guard said in a statement.

The narcotics weighed around 86 kg and amounted to around Rs 600 crore.

Ahmedabad DGP Gujarat Vikas Sahay said that the consignment was not



for India but Sri Lanka and all 14 crew members were residents of Balochistan, Pakistan.

"That consignment was not for India but Sri Lanka.

I am happy and proud that such has been the network of ATS that even the receiver is not an Indian, and only if our waters are being used, we get the exact in-

formation... 14 people were present on the Pakistani fishing boat, Al-Raza, all are resident of Balochistan, Pakistan," the DGP told reporters. "After detaining

them, a search and seizure of the Al-Raza boat were conducted as per the procedure in which we recovered 78 packets weighing around 86 kg and worth Rs 602 crore in the international market," he added.

"The operation was an epitome of inter-agency coordination, wherein the Indian Coast Guard (ICG), Anti-terrorism Squad (ATS) and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) collaborated seamlessly which culminated in the successful operation," the statement read.

"The operation was an epitome of inter-agency coordination, wherein the Indian Coast Guard (ICG), Anti-terrorism Squad (ATS) and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) collaborated seamlessly which culminated in the successful

operation," the statement read.

The ships and aircraft of the Indian Coast Guard were deployed on concurrent missions to effect the operation.

ICG ship Rajratan, which had NCB and ATS officials embarked, positively identified the suspected boat.

The drug-laden boat tried evasive manoeuvring tactics, but it wasn't enough to save it from the swift and strong ICG ship Rajratan. The ship's specialist team embarked on the suspect boat and after thorough checks, confirmed the presence of the sizeable amount of narcotics.

The joint collaboration of Indian Coast Guard and Anti-terrorism Squad, has led to 11 such successful law enforcement operations in the last three years.

# IAF airlifts two critically ill patients from Leh to Chandigarh for treatment

AGENCIES  
CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force on Sunday said it airlifted two critically ill patients, one of them experiencing cardiac issues, from Leh to Chandigarh in an AN-32 aircraft.

Quick planning and execution by the IAF and the local civil administration was instrumental in saving two lives, it said in a post on 'X'.

"Responding to an urgent request for casualty evacuation, an An-32 transport aircraft of the IAF airlifted two critically ill patients from Leh to Chandigarh for treatment.

"Faced with marginal weather, the quick planning and execution by IAF and local civil admin was instrumental in saving two lives, one a victim of road accident and other experiencing cardiac issues," the IAF said.

It also shared photographs of the aircraft during the process of the evacuation.



# Rahul spreading canards against BJP, alleges Amit Shah

AGENCIES  
AHMEDABAD

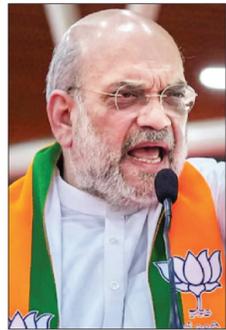
In a blistering attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his allegation that the BJP wants to take back reservations to backward sections if elected for a third term, Union Home Minister said on Sunday that the former was only trying to mislead people.

Shah said had the BJP been working towards taking back reservations to backward sections, it would have done it by this time.

Speaking to ANI on Sun-

day, the Union Home Minister reaffirmed that as long as the BJP-led NDA was in power, there would be no rethink on reservations or quotas to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

"Rahul Gandhi is trying to mislead people by spreading canards against us. The BJP has been at the helm of this country for 10 years now and was elected with absolute majority twice. If we had, indeed, been working with the intention or motivation to put an end to reservations in



the country, it would have happened by now. These are nothing but lies. Narendra Modi-ji has already

assured the Dalits, backward classes, and our tribal brothers and sisters across the country that as long as the BJP is in power, no one can dare take back reservations," Shah told ANI. Accusing the Congress of targeting the quotas allocated for the SCs, STs and OBCs, the Union Home Minister added, "After coming to power in Karnataka, the Congress announced a 4 per cent reservation for Muslims. Don't the people know from whose quota they set aside 4 per cent reservation for the minority community?

# RSS had opposed reservation in the past, alleges Rahul Gandhi

TDG NETWORK  
DAMAN

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday claimed though the RSS is now saying they are not against reservations, however, they had earlier spoken about opposing quotas. Addressing a campaign rally at Daman in the Union Territory of Daman, Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Gandhi also said the RSS and BJP are trying to destroy the Constitution and various institutions to make their leaders "kings" of the country.

"The RSS is today saying

that they are not against reservations, but earlier they had said that they oppose reservations", he said.

Notably, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat earlier in the day said in Hyderabad that the organisation has always supported reservations as per the Constitution.

Gandhi said the fight between the Congress and the RSS-BJP is ideological and sought votes for "protecting" the Constitution.

"The Constitution has served as the foundation, the seed from which these institutions have emerged.



They want to destroy the Constitution, they want to destroy democracy, and different institutions, and

make the RSS-BJP kings (leaders) as the kings of the country," the Congress leader said.

At the foundational level, the ideology of the RSS-BJP is to destroy the Constitution, while that of the Congress is to protect it, he said.

"At the foundational level, the difference (between the two ideologies) is that we are protecting the Constitution and all that it has offered to India. On the other hand, the target of the RSS and the BJP is to destroy the Constitution anyhow," he said.

# Delhi Cong chief quits post

CONTINUED FROM P1

party," he added.

Lovely's clarification came after Congress ex-MLA Asif Mohammad Khan claimed that the BJP would field Lovely from the East Delhi constituency, replacing Harsh Malhotra, while AAP leader Saurabh Bhardwaj also fuelled speculation about the saffron party changing its candidate.

With a section of leaders demanding the removal of Babaria, the AICC Delhi in-charge said it was "unfortunate" that Lovely's resignation came at a time when the general elections in the country were underway, but asserted that it won't affect the Congress, while the Aam Aadmi Party termed it an internal matter of its ally.

Lovely had resigned from the post of Delhi Congress president in 2015 as well. He

joined the BJP in 2017 but returned to the Congress almost nine months later.

A senior Congress leader said a decision on appointing a new Delhi unit chief will be taken soon since the Lok Sabha elections are less than a month away.

In his letter to Kharge, Lovely said he saw no reason to continue as he could no longer "protect the interests of the party workers".

He claimed that the DPCC was not given any intimation about the decision to field Kanhaiya Kumar from the North East Delhi seat and Udit Raj from the North West Delhi seat before the official announcement was made by the party's high command. He also referred to them as "total strangers" to the Delhi Congress and party policies.

Lovely said even though the Delhi Congress unit was

against the alliance with AAP, he publicly backed it and even withdrew his name as a potential candidate.

"The Delhi Congress unit was against an alliance with a party which was formed on the sole basis of levelling false, fabricated and mala fide corruption charges against the Congress party... half of the cabinet ministers (of the party) are presently in jail on corruption charges," he said.

Lovely lashed out at Kanhaiya Kumar for heaping praise on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is behind bars in a money laundering case. The candidate from North East Delhi has also been giving media bytes falsely praising the Delhi CM, in direct contravention of the party line and the local party workers' beliefs.

# RSS seeks to clear the air

CONTINUED FROM P1

and the OBCs in jobs and education.

"Back in the day, the RSS and its affiliate groups opposed the Mandal Commission and the idea of reservation.

The Supreme Court, too, allowed reservations for backward classes, while capping the extent of quotas allocated at 50 cent," the Telangana CM claimed.

"Today, many backward classes and OBC leaders are urging that the 50-per cent cap on reservation (for such classes) be lifted.

Our leader said we would do a nationwide caste survey, if elected, and give reservations accordingly. It is in this context that Rahul-ji

socially deprived sections talked about a wealth X-ray and re-allocation of funds," CM Reddy added.

He also accused the BJP of trying to enforce the RSS' ideology of making India a 'reservation-free' country.

"We are clearly saying that today there is a conspiracy by RSS to make India a reservation-free country and make us a Hindu Rashtra. The BJP is working to enforce the RSS' ideology (of a country sans quota). It has already taken draconian measures like bringing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, revoking Article 370 (from the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir), and ending the practice of Triple Talaq and others," the Telangana CM claimed.

# 'Culprits won't be spared'

CONTINUED FROM P1

SIT team will bring him back from abroad. That's not my concern. According to the law of this land whoever commits wrong will have to face it," the JD(S) leader said while speaking to reporters outside his residence in Bengaluru.

"Whoever eats salt, must drink water, that's the law of the land. If he has gone to another country, the government will bring him back. I have nothing to do with this," he added.

The JD(S) and its ally in the state, BJP have already distanced themselves from the issue after the Karnataka government formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the alleged obscene video case involving Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna.

Welcoming the SIT probe, JD(S) core committee chairman and senior leader GT Devegowda said, "I don't blame the government for announcing the SIT investigation. We will sit and decide what action needs to

be taken over the issue of Prajwal Revanna. For now, I will just say that I welcome the SIT investigation."

"We, as a party, have nothing to do with the videos and neither do we have any comments to make on the SIT probe announced by the state government into the alleged sex scandal involving Prajwal Revanna," S Prakash, the chief spokesperson of BJP's state unit said on Sunday. Revanna is the grandson of former Prime Minister and JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda and is seeking a fresh term in the Lower House from Hassan as a candidate of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and is pitted against Congress' Shreyas Patel.

The three-member SIT formed by the state government will be headed by IPS officer Vijay Kumar Singh. DG CID Suman D Pennekar and IPS officer Seema Latkar will be members of the team.

This case has been registered at Holenarasipur police station under sections 354 A, 354 D, 506, and 509 of the IPC.

# BJP leaders tight-lipped

CONTINUED FROM P1

not to react officially to the alleged sleaze tape case as several of its senior leaders in the state are tight-lipped in the matter.

A BJP leader, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the party has nothing to do with the alleged sex tape and will not react at this time, as it has chosen to keep its distance from a matter that has come as an 'embarrassment' for the sitting NDA MP from Hassan.

Earlier, on Saturday, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah informed that his government has decided to constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to look into the sleaze tapes allegedly involving Revanna.

"The government has decided to form a special investigation team in connection with Prajwal Revanna's obscene video case. Obscene video clips are circulating in Hassan district, where it appears that women have been

sexually assaulted," CM Siddaramaiah posted from his X handle on Saturday.

He added that the decision to conduct an SIT probe was taken in response to a request from the State Women's Commission.

Earlier on April 25, the chairperson of the state women's panel requested CM Siddaramaiah to order an SIT probe into the obscene clips, allegedly involving the JD(S) MP, circulating on social media.

# Scathing on Rajas, silent on Nawabs

CONTINUED FROM P1

he added, "The Shehzada's was carefully calibrated, on purpose, to appease a certain vote bank. He did not utter a single word on the atrocities committed by the Nawabs, Nizams, Sultans, and Badshahs (on their peasants). The Congress seems to have forgotten the grave excesses perpetrated by (Mughal emperor) Aurangzeb, who destroyed thousands of our temples."

Invoking the glorious legacies of the Hindu rulers and emperors, PM Modi said all that Rahul cares about is his 'vote bank'.

"The Benaras Hindu University (BHU) could not have been established without the help of the king, who ruled the city back in the day. Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda had helped Baba Saheb Ambedkar pursue his higher studies abroad. The Congress' Shehzada knows nothing about this and is making public statements that are aimed at

advancing the party's vote bank politics. The Congress is in an alliance with parties that glorify Aurangzeb. They don't talk about kings who destroyed our pilgrimage sites, looted them, killed our people while also slaughtering livestock," PM Modi said.

Earlier, addressing a public meeting in the state, Rahul said, "Many Rajas, Maharajas ruled us back in the day. They did whatever they wished and took away the land of their peasants at will. It was the Congress and its workers who, along with freedom fighters, brought us independence from our oppressors and restored democracy and the rule of law to the country."

Also taking aim at the ruling Congress over the prevailing law and order situation in the state, PM Modi said, "Since the Congress came to power in Karnataka, the law and order situation in the state has been on a free-fall.

# Musk visits Beijing as Tesla cars face curbs

CONTINUED FROM P1

government agencies, as well as launching the vehicles' full self-driving functions in the country, it said.

Musk made the visit mainly because of the data issue and not there for the ongoing Auto China show in Beijing, as has been reported, it said.

In his meeting with Musk, Li said that China's huge market will always be open to foreign-funded enterprises.

China will work hard on expanding market access and improving services to provide foreign-funded enterprises with a better

business environment and stronger support so that companies from all countries can invest in China with peace of mind, he said.

Noting Tesla's development in China can be called a successful example of China-US economic cooperation, Li said facts have proven that equal cooperation and mutual benefit are in the best interests of the two countries.

It is hoped that the US and China will meet more halfway and promote the stable development of bilateral ties under the strategic guidance of the two heads of state, the Chinese premier said.

DELHI DILEMMA

# BJP seizes opportunity to slam Cong

Things are not going well in the Congress and ground-level leaders of the party are fed up, says R P Singh

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

After the Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely resigned from his post, BJP leader RP Singh said on Sunday that "ground-level leaders" are feeling "suffocated" in the party.

"Things are not going well in the Congress. Ground-level leaders of the party are fed up. It seems that till yesterday they (Congress) used to accuse people of corruption, today they are contesting elections by making a compromise with the same people. How is this possible? It is clearly visible that people are feeling suffocated there, that is why they are resigning," RP Singh said.

"The Delhi Congress Unit was against an alliance with a party which was formed on the sole basis of levelling false, fabricated and mala fide corruption charges against the Congress Party. Despite that, the Party made a decision to ally with the AAP in Delhi," Lovely wrote in his resignation letter.

In his letter to the Congress National President, Mallikarjun Kharge, Lovely said that all unanimous decisions taken by the Senior Delhi Congress



leaders have been unilaterally vetoed by the AICC General Secretary (Delhi In-charge).

"Since my appointment as DPCC President, the AICC General Secretary (Delhi In-charge) has not allowed me to make any senior appointments in the DPCC. My request for the appointment of a veteran leader as Media head of DPCC was blatantly rejected. To date, the AICC General Secretary (Delhi In-charge) has not allowed the DPCC to appoint all Block presidents in the city. Resultantly more than 150 blocks in Delhi do not presently have a Block President," he said.

He also highlighted the comments made by the North-East Delhi candidate (Kanhaiya Kumar), for falsely praising the Delhi CM and endorsing the works done by AAP in the Education, Health,

Road and Electricity sector.

Lovely, said that since he cannot protect the interests of the Party Workers, he sees no reason to continue in the said post.

Congress in alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party is contesting on three seats in Delhi. AAP has fielded its candidates for four seats.

Delhi will vote to elect its all seven Lok Sabha representatives on May 25 in the sixth phase of the General elections. Meanwhile, BJP leader Shehzad Poonawalla has criticized the Congress party following the resignation of the Delhi Congress Committee President Arvinder Singh Lovely who has accused the Congress party of lacking mission and vision and "steeped in confusion, division, and contradictions."

"On the one hand, there is an alliance of mission and vision under the leadership of PM Modi that is constantly working for the country and on the other hand the alliance of INDI and Congress party especially has no mission vision, it is only steeped in confusion division and contradictions," said Poonawalla.

BJP leader RP Singh said that "ground-level leaders" are feeling "suffocated" in the party.

# Internal matter of Congress, says Bharadwaj

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

AAP senior leader Saurabh Bharadwaj said it was an internal matter of their senior ally Congress.

"It won't be appropriate for me to comment on the matter. AAP is fighting on the four seats it is contesting with full strength and we are hopeful that people will vote for the INDIA bloc candidates on all the seven seats in Delhi," he said.

Senior BJP leader and former Union Minister Harsh Vardhan said it was inevitable as the grassroots workers had not accepted the AAP-Congress alliance.

"I guarantee that after their defeat on June 4, the leaders of this alliance will start abusing each other again. Arvinder Lovely Ji's departure is just the beginning. The conscience of many



Congress leader Surenra Rajput said Kharge will decide the future course of action after Lovely's resignation.

such grassroots workers will awaken now," he wrote on X in Hindi.

Congress leader Surenra Rajput said Kharge will decide the future course of action after Lovely's resignation.

"I would only say that our alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party happened with his participation and as per his wish. The general elections are going on and one should keep personal expectations and aspirations aside for now," he said.

# Lovely rules out joining any political party

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Arvinder Singh Lovely on Sunday said he has only resigned as chief of the Congress' Delhi unit and is not joining any other political party.

His clarification came after Congress ex-MLA Asif Mohammad Khan claimed that the BJP would field Lovely from the East Delhi constituency, replacing Harsh Malhotra.

"I have only resigned as Delhi Congress chief and I am not joining any political party," he said at a press conference at his residence.

Lovely said his resignation reflected the pain of Congress workers saddened by the fact that the "ideals they had been fighting for during the last seven to eight years" were being compromised.

"We are fighting the elections together but never did the Congress workers say that we are giving a clean chit to them or giving them credit for building schools and hospitals, which is far from the reality," Lovely said, referring to the party's tie-up with the AAP in Delhi for the Lok Sabha polls.

"Those who are saying that I have resigned out of anger over ticket (distribution), it is not like that. You all know that I introduced the candidates by holding a press conference three days ago," Lovely said.

Earlier in the day, AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj



asked in a post in Hindi on X, without naming anyone, if the BJP was changing its candidate for East Delhi.

Questioned about Bharadwaj's post and whether it hinted at him joining the BJP, Lovely said he only resigned as the Delhi Congress chief.

"Thanks for Bharadwaj's wishes. I think he takes decisions on behalf of all other parties. I have just cleared to you that I resigned from the post of Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president," Lovely said.

In a setback to the Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Lovely resigned as the party's Delhi unit chief, citing the alliance with the AAP as one of the reasons.

He said the Congress' Delhi unit was against the alliance but the party high command went ahead with it.

"The Delhi Congress unit was against an alliance with a party which was formed on the sole basis of levelling false, fabricated and mala fide corruption charges against the Congress party... half of the cabinet ministers (of the party) are presently in jail on corruption charges," Lovely said in his resignation letter sent to Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday.

tion letter sent to Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday.

"Despite that, the party (Congress) made a decision to ally with the AAP in Delhi. We respected the party's final decision... I even went to the extent of visiting Mr (Arvind) Kejriwal's residence on the night of his arrest along with Mr Subash Chopra and Mr Sandeep Dikshit, despite the same being against my position on the matter," he said.

The Congress is contesting the Lok Sabha elections in an alliance with AAP in Delhi. As part of its seat-share arrangement, the Congress is contesting from three seats while AAP has fielded candidates from four constituencies in the national capital.

Lovely had resigned as chief of the Congress' Delhi unit in 2015, taking moral responsibility for the party's worst-ever performance in the assembly elections.

The Congress had failed to win a single seat in the 70-member House as AAP swept to victory in 67 constituencies and the BJP won three. Lovely contested the Lok Sabha elections in 2019 from East Delhi against the BJP's Gautam Gambhir and AAP candidate Atishi, securing 24 per cent votes. Gambhir won the seat by 3.93 lakh votes ahead of Lovely in second. Delhi's seven Lok Sabha seats will go to the polls in the sixth phase on May 25.

# AAP holds 'Walk for Kejriwal' roadshow

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday held a walkathon named 'Walk for Kejriwal' in support of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal who is in jail in connection with the Delhi Excise Policy case.

The campaign-cum walkathon was organised in Delhi's CR Park.

AAP supporters were seen carrying flags with Kejriwal's photo with the 'Jail ka jawab vote se' slogan.

Delhi minister and AAP leader Atishi told ANI, "The people of Delhi have come here to support Arvind Kejriwal. BJP thought if they put Arvind Kejriwal in jail, AAP would not be able to conduct the election campaigns. But, the people of Delhi are campaigning for Arvind Kejriwal.

Party leader Saurabh Bharadwaj, who also took part,



said that PM Narendra Modi is very nervous.

"We are running a campaign in Delhi called 'Jail ka jawaab vote se' against the arrest of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. Our youth wing our Lok Sabha candidates from South Delhi and New Delhi have organised a walkathon. PM Narendra Modi is very nervous. The way

he has changed his stance in his election rallies makes it clear that even he believes that the opposition is coming to power," he said.

Taking a dig at the BJP, he said, "We have installed a washing machine here, and if you put any corrupt politician in this machine, he comes out clean." The Delhi Chief Minister has been

lodged in Tihar Jail since April 1, following his arrest in the Delhi excise policy case by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 21.

Earlier on April 25, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court opposing Kejriwal's plea against his arrest and said that he did not cooperate with the central agency despite multiple summons issued to him.

The ED said that the agency has been able to recover key evidence that directly reveals the role of Kejriwal in processes and activities relating to the proceeds of crime. Kejriwal had approached the top court challenging his arrest by ED and his subsequent remand in the excise policy case.

The apex court had earlier asked the Central Agency to file its response to Kejriwal's plea.

# AAP claims EC banned its poll campaign song

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The AAP on Sunday claimed the Election Commission (EC) has imposed a ban on the party's Lok Sabha campaign song, 'Jail ke jawab mein hum vote denge', stating that it shows the ruling BJP and central investigation agencies in a bad light. There was no immediate response from the poll panel to the AAP's claim.

Addressing a press conference, senior AAP leader Atishi said, "It is probably the first time that the EC has imposed a ban on a party's campaign song."

According to the EC, she said, the song shows the ruling party and investigation agencies in a bad light. "The song does not mention the BJP and does not

violate the Model Code of Conduct. It includes factual videos and incidents," she added.

Atishi, who is also a Delhi government minister, accused the EC of not acting on poll code violations committed by the BJP.

"If the BJP does dictatorship, it is right. But if someone talks about it, that is wrong.

This shows that democracy is in danger. I want to urge the EC to act on the (poll code) violations committed by the BJP and not stop campaigns of opposition parties," she said.

The AAP's over two-minute campaign song has been penned and sung by AAP MLA Dilip Pandey. The song was released at the party headquarters here on Thursday.

# I appeal to you to vote against dictatorship: Sunita Kejriwal

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita on Sunday appealed to the public as a "daughter of Mother India" to vote against "dictatorship" and save democracy. As she sought support for AAP candidate Mahabal Mishra in the West Delhi constituency, she called her husband a "lion" whom nobody can break.

Sunita, standing through the sunroof of a vehicle, greeted voters as she was showered with flower petals.

She said Kejriwal was jailed because he built schools, provided free electricity, and opened Mohalla Clinics.

"Your chief minister is a sher. Nobody can break him or make him bow down. He



is the son of Mother India. As a daughter of Mother India, I appeal to you to vote against dictatorship and save democracy. Please understand the value of your vote," she said.

With Kejriwal behind bars in a money laundering case, his wife continues to spearhead the AAP's poll campaign and hold roadshows.

Sunita Kejriwal will also campaign for AAP candidates in South Delhi and New Delhi constituencies as well as in Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab, the party leaders said.

# Man stabs wife to death after fight

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A man has been arrested for allegedly murdering his wife by stabbing in the North West district of Delhi, said officials.

The incident took place on Saturday evening at the Bharat Nagar police station area of North West district, Delhi.

The accused has been identified as Javed (24) and the victim Afsana (24).

According to Delhi Police, Javed and Afsana were married a few years ago but both were living separately for the last two to three months. Yesterday evening when Afsana went to Javed's place, the couple had a fight, after which Javed attacked Afsana with a knife leading to her death.

Police reached the spot and arrested the accused as

soon as the information was received.

During the interrogation, Javed revealed that there was a rift going on between them (Javed and Afsana) for a long time, and last evening when the fight escalated, he lost his temper and attacked Afsana with a knife.

Earlier, three persons were arrested for allegedly stabbing a person to death at a reception party in the National Capital, police said on Friday. One person was also injured during the incident.

The accused was identified as Abdul Sammi alias Kallu (19), a resident of Bhalswa Dairy, age 19 yrs. He is a Swiggy delivery boy. Vikas Age (20) and Arshlan (20) alias Monty, resident of Rajeev Nagar Bhalswa.

The injured was identified as Sameer, a resident of Ra-

jeev Nagar Bhalswa Dairy. He is undergoing treatment at BJRM hospital and was later referred to LNJP hospital for further treatment. Doctors declared him unfit to record his statement, police said.

Police identified the victim as Fardeen (22), a rickshaw driver who died on the spot. A case under sections 302/307/34 IPC has been registered at Bhalswa Dairy police station based on the statement of witness Mubin. According to Delhi Police, a Police Control Room call was received at midnight regarding a stabbing at Bhalswa Dairy Police Station. He stated that there was a Valima (reception) party of his cousin Rizwan in Gali No-2 Rajeev Nagar and apart from their relatives, Fardeen, their neighbour also invited, as per police.

# 149% surge in cases of mobile phone use while driving since Jan

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A major surge of nearly 149 per cent in prosecutions related to mobile phone usage while driving in Delhi since January 1, as compared to the corresponding period last year, the traffic police data revealed. The statistics, shared by the Delhi Traffic Police, indicate a sharp rise in violations of mobile phone usage laws while driving.

From January 1 to April 15, a total of 15,846 motorists were booked for this offence, significantly higher than the 6,369 cases reported in 2023, it said. "In recent months, the traffic police have observed a disturbing surge in use of

mobile phones while driving. This concerning trend has prompted the unit to undertake stringent measures to ensure the safety of all road users," a senior traffic police officer said.

According to the police, a thorough analysis of the top ten traffic circles, including Defence Colony, Punjabi Bagh, Karol Bagh, and Safdarjung Enclave among others, with the most challans issued in 2024 has also been carried out by the Delhi Traffic Police.

Traffic police said that the Delhi Traffic Police is actively engaging in public awareness campaigns to educate motorists about the dangers of using mobile phones while driving.

# 3 injured as speeding Jaguar hits vehicles in Delhi, accused arrested

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The driver of a luxury car, which collided with a cab and two other vehicles injuring three people here, has been arrested, police said on Sunday. The incident took place early morning when a speeding Jaguar hit the cab, two other vehicles and then a divider before coming to a halt near the Dhaura Kaun area of southwest Delhi, the police said.

"We have arrested the driver of Jaguar vehicle, who has been identified as Saurabh Pahwa (23). He is a third-year BBA student at a college in Rohini. His father is a property dealer," DCP Deputy Commissioner of Police (southwest) Rohit Meena said, adding that further investigations into the matter



are underway.

"A PCR call was received at 4.55 am regarding the accident of three vehicles and three injured individuals. A team, which was sent to the spot, found that the injured had been shifted to some unknown hospitals," DCP Meena had said earlier in the day.

Later, at 8.32 am, the police received information from AIIMS Hospital regarding the cab driver, identified as Harjeet Singh, and two other people, who were travelling in the same cab, he had said.

Another senior police officer said that according to an eyewitness, one of the cars was driving on the wrong side.

"An eyewitness told us that they heard a loud sound while they were asleep. They saw that two cars collided and then one of them collided with two other vehicles and a divider before coming to a halt," the police officer said, adding that they are verifying the eyewitness's claim.

According to police sources, a man and a woman were travelling in the Jaguar car and they suffered minor injuries in the accident but fled the scene immediately after the incident.

The police are trying to find out if more people were injured in the accident.

# INHERITANCE TAX DECODED FOR YOU

In 2011, during a Planning Commission meeting, the then Home Minister P Chidambaram had batted for higher taxes on luxury products and re-imposing inheritance tax.

VIJAYANT SHANKAR  
NEW DELHI

## HISTORY OF INHERITANCE TAX

An inheritance tax is a tax imposed by some states on the recipients of inherited assets. In contrast to an estate tax, an inheritance tax is paid by the recipient of a bequest rather than the estate of the deceased.

In 1953, India created a law to tax inheritances, but got rid of it 1985 by the Rajiv Gandhi government.

As per the Act, law that said a tax was owed on things a person owned (like land, houses, or other valuables) when they died and left them to someone else. This tax only applied to adults (people 18 and older) and everything they owned, including farmland.

Even though the assets passed on to legal heirs could be considered gifts since they are received without any consideration, no gift tax is imposed because the Income-tax Act of 1961 excludes assets received through inheritance or a will from the purview of gifts.

Before which a high "estate duty" of up to 85% of the inherited property's value was required to be paid by the executors of the deceased's estate under the Estate Duty Act of 1953.

In 1953, the Estate Duty Act was enacted in India to address economic inequality by introducing an estate duty tax. This tax was designed to be progressive, with rates increasing up to 85 percent for estates valued over Rs 20 lakh. It applied to both immovable and movable properties, regardless of their location, that were inherited by successors upon an individual's death.

In 1985, the then Finance Minister V.P. Singh abolished it as the income generated for the Centre via such taxes was much less than the cost incurred due to the administrative process in executing it.

As of date, there is no tax imposed on property inherited, whether through a will or by intestate succession.

## HOW IS INHERITANCE TAX CALCULATED?

The first step in dealing with a deceased estate is often to determine its total value. This involves assessing the value of all assets owned by the deceased, including real estate, investments, bank accounts, vehicles, and personal belongings, while also considering any outstanding debts or liabilities.

Whether or not inheritance

Inheritance tax country-wise (As per available data 2015)		
S No.	Country	Tax rate
1.	Japan	55%
2.	South Korea	50%
3.	France	45%
4.	United Kingdom	40%
5.	United States	40%
6.	Spain	34%
7.	Ireland	33%
8.	Belgium	30%
9.	Germany	30%
10.	Chile	25%
11.	Greece	20%
12.	Netherlands	20%
13.	Finland	19%
14.	Denmark	15%
15.	Iceland	10%
16.	Turkey	10%
17.	Poland	7%
18.	Switzerland	7%
19.	Italy	4%

tax applies depends on several factors, including the total value of the estate and the laws of the jurisdiction. In some places, certain beneficiaries, such as spouses or children, may be exempt

from paying inheritance tax or may receive a reduced tax rate.

## WERE THERE EFFORTS TO REVIVE INHERITANCE TAX?



*Even though the assets passed on to legal heirs could be considered gifts since they are received without any consideration, no gift tax is imposed because the Income-tax Act of 1961 excludes assets received through inheritance or a will from the purview of gifts.*

In 2011, during a Planning Commission meeting, the then-Home Minister P Chidambaram had batted for higher taxes on luxury products and re-imposing inheritance tax. At a meeting headed by the then-PM Manmohan Singh, he said, "Since non-plan expenditure

is difficult to contain, the tax-GDP ratio must be raised especially by taxing conspicuous consumption and imposing inheritance tax."

Prior to the Union Budget in 2013, Chidambaram had said, "Non-debt revenue should be increased;

therefore, the rich must be prepared to pay more tax." In a 2013 lecture to honor Raja Chelliah, Mr. Chidambaram called for a debate on the need for inheritance tax. He had questioned the accumulation of wealth by a few individuals while the majority languished.

Similarly, in 2017, reports suggested that the then-Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was planning to levy taxes on inherited wealth. The proposed move was to levy tax on any property or cash above Rs 50,000 received or inherited by a person as an 'income from other sources.' Due

to severe backlash from the public, the move was scrapped.

Later in 2018, Jaitley claimed that inheritance tax was the reason for large endowments to hospitals, universities, and other institutions in the West. Contrasting it to India, he stated funding for such institutions were mainly from religious groups and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes. He claimed that endowments from rich individuals were not a norm in India. However, he did not suggest re-imposing the tax.

INDIA NEWS SURVEY	
SURVEY ON WHATSAPP THREATENS	
DATE: 27TH APRIL 2024	
MALE: 93%	FEMALE: 7%
Q-1 WhatsApp has threatened to leave India if asked to break end-to-end encryption, your opinion?	
A- WhatsApp follows the rules	11.00%
B- Government changed the rules	14.00%
C- Privacy of users is important	41.00%
D- Find the middle path	25.00%
E- Can't say	9.00%
Grand Total	100%
Q-2 What is the biggest danger of WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption?	
A- Illegal activity	54.00%
B- Terrorist conspiracy	14.00%
C- Obscene content	5.00%
D- Hate agenda	16.00%
E- Can't say	11.00%
Grand Total	100%
Q-3 Does the government want to spy on politicians and common people by ending end-to-end encryption?	
A- Yes	53.00%
B- No	39.00%
C- Can't say	8.00%
Grand Total	100%
Q-4 Do social media platforms like WhatsApp deal with users' private data?	
A- yes	57.00%
B- no	38.00%
C- Can't say	5.00%
Grand Total	100%
Q-5 How should disputes be resolved with WhatsApp?	
A- According to Indian law	88.00%
B- According to international law	11.00%
C- Can't say	1.00%
Grand Total	100%

INDIA NEWS SURVEY			
SURVEY ON ALKA LAMBA STATEMENT			
DATE: 27TH APRIL 2024			
MALE	95%	FEMALE	5%
Q-1 Alka Lamba compared Prime Minister Modi with Ravana, what will be its impact?			
A- Loss to Congress		38.00%	
B- Benefit to Congress		14.00%	
C- BJP will create issue		43.00%	
D- Can't say		5.00%	
Grand Total		100%	
Q-2 Does Congress do anti-Sanatan politics and insulting?			
A- Yes		65.00%	
B- No		33.00%	
C- Can't say		2.00%	
Grand Total		100%	
Q-3 Who caused the most damage to Congress by using derogatory language for Modi?			
A- Rahul-Sonia		58.00%	
B- Mani Shankar Iyer		8.00%	
C- Digvijay Singh		2.00%	
D- Sam Pitroda		4.00%	
E- Can't say		28.00%	
Grand Total		100%	
Q-4 Does BJP convert the abuse given to Modi into an opportunity?			
A- yes		78.00%	
B- No		21.00%	
C- Can't say		1.00%	
Grand Total		100%	

INDIA NEWS SURVEY			
SURVEY ON ELECTION PHASE-2			
DATE: 28TH APRIL 2024			
MALE	95%	FEMALE	5%
Q-1 What do you consider to be the major reason for low turnout in the two phases?			
A- Voter apathy		19%	
B- Trouble due to heat		43%	
C- Lack of political parties		8%	
D- Failure of the Election Commission		24%	
E- Can't say		6%	
Grand Total		100%	
Q-2 Which party has become more aggressive after low voting in two phases?			
A- BJP		67%	
B- Congress		16%	
C- Regional parties		9%	
D- Can't say		8%	
Grand Total		100%	
Q-3 Which party is trying to divert the election campaign from the basic issues of the people?			
A- BJP		27%	
B- Congress		45%	
C- Regional parties		19%	
D- Can't say		9%	
Grand Total		100%	
Q-4 What do you consider to be the biggest election issue for the remaining 5 phases?			
A- Mangalsutra		4%	
B- Inheritance Tax		5%	
C- Muslim appeasement		62%	
D- Modi's guarantee		23%	
Grand Total		100%	

INDIA NEWS SURVEY			
SURVEY ON DELHI CONGRESS			
DATE: 28TH APRIL 2024			
MALE	82%	FEMALE	18%
Q-1 What does Delhi Congress state president Arvinder Singh consider to be the main reason for Lovely's resignation?			
A- Dissatisfaction with ticket distribution		28%	
B- Alliance with AAP		23%	
C- Internal strife of Congress		39%	
D- Can't say		20%	
Grand Total		100%	
Q-2 What do you consider to be the main reason for the stampede in Congress?			
A- Failure of Mallikarjun Kharge		8%	
B- Difficult to meet Rahal		30%	
C- Complaints are not heard		47%	
D- Can't say		15%	
Grand Total		100%	
Q-3 Which of these Congress candidates do you consider most unfit in the Delhi riots?			
A- Kanhaiya Kumar		33%	
B- Udit Raj		9%	
C- JP Aggarwal		10%	
D- All candidates are correct		34%	
E- Can't say		14%	
Grand Total		100%	
Q-4 Are Congress workers openly supporting Aam Aadmi Party in the fight against Kejriwal?			
A- Yes		48%	
B- No		49%	
C- Can't say		3%	
Grand Total		100%	

## INDIA SENDS HOLY SARAYU WATER TO SRI LANKA FOR SEETHA AMMA TEMPLE

TDG NETWORK  
AYODHYA

India has initiated the process of sending sacred Sarayu river water to Sri Lanka for the consecration ceremony of Seetha Amma Temple, dedicated to Goddess Sita.

The consecration ceremony of Seetha Amma Temple will take place on May 19.

The decision came following a letter from Sri Lanka's representatives to the Uttar Pradesh government, requesting Sarayu river water for religious ceremonies and the consecration of Goddess Sita's idol at the temple.

Under the directive of the UP government, the Tourism Department has been given the responsibility of transporting the holy water.

The Ram Temple Trust hailed the initiative, emphasizing its significance in strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries and fostering cul-



*Under the directive of the UP government, the Tourism Department has been given the responsibility of transporting the holy water.*

tural ties.

"A Seetha Amma Temple is being constructed in Sri Lanka. The representative of the temple has asked for the Sarayu River water from the UP government. We will provide the sacred water in a Kalash. The rituals will be

held on May 19", said Santosh Kumar Sharma CEO of Ayodhya Teerth Vikas Parishad.

The ceremony at the Seetha Amma Temple aims to unite the hearts of both nations, symbolizing the spiritual and cultural bond between

India and Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, Mahant Shashikant Das hailed the efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying that the Seetha Amma Temple in Sri Lanka will be a matter of pride for all the 'Sanatanis'.

"It is a matter of pride for all Sanatanis. Goddess Sita has faced many difficulties in Lanka and today, a grand temple is being constructed in the same Lanka," Shashikant Das Mahant.

## J-K: BRO rescues 35 vehicles stranded in snow at Razdan Top

TDG NETWORK  
BANDIPORA

A total of 35 vehicles stuck in the snow at Razdan Top on the Bandipora-Gurez road in Jammu and Kashmir were rescued by a team of Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

The BRO officials said that the vehicles were stranded due to unfavourable weather conditions, including snowfall and snowstorms.

Upon receiving the information, a BRO team along with the necessary equipment rushed to the spot for the rescue operation, the officials further said.

"The team took immediate action to rescue the trapped people and their vehicles, ensuring their safety by transporting them to secure places," the BRO added.

Also, due to the fresh snowfall on Razdan Top and the slippery conditions of the roads, the authorities have closed 86 kilometres-long Gurez-Bandipora road until



*The BRO officials said that the vehicles were stranded due to unfavourable weather conditions, including snowfall and snowstorms.*

there is an improvement in weather conditions.

On April 27, Pernote village, located approximately six kilometres from Ramban town in Jammu and Kashmir, witnessed heavy damage to roads, houses and power towers due to continuous landslides.

The affected villagers were shifted to Panchayat Ghar and other places. Medical facilities and food had also been provided by the administration to the affected villagers. The administration was on high alert and was monitoring the situation.

## Two doctors, 6 others quarantined amid bird flu outbreak in Ranchi

TDG NETWORK  
RANCHI

Amid a bird flu outbreak in Ranchi, two doctors and six staff members of the Regional Poultry Farm in Hotwar have been quarantined at the JSIA building in Ranchi.

According to officials, the JSIA government building has been turned into a bird flu ward. A team of medical experts from Ranchi have taken the samples of infected people.

Almost all cases of H5N1 infection in people have been associated with close contact with infected live or dead birds or H5N1-contaminated environments.

A series of actions including a total restriction on the sale and purchase of all birds and conducting surveys around the epicentre have been taken under the Ministry of Animal Husbandry following the confirmation of the bird flu outbreak.

## Actor Sahil Khan sent to two-day police custody in Mahadev Betting App case

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

A court in Mumbai sent actor Sahil Khan to two-day police custody starting from April 29 in connection with the Mahadev Betting App case which involves irregularities to tune of Rs 15,000 crore.

In the day, the actor was brought to Mumbai from Chhattisgarh on Sunday after being detained by the Mumbai Crime Branch's Special Investigative Team (SIT) in connection with the same case. He was produced before the Shindewadi-Dadar court today.

"I believe in the judiciary of the country," Khan told reporters as he was escorted by security officials.

Actor Sahil Khan's lawyer Mujahid Ansari told ANI that he has been framed in the matter.

"They wanted a remand to investigate. They had produced their ground in the Session Court and the High Court that there are 2000 SIM cards and 1700 bank accounts..."

"The court has sent him (Sahil Khan) to a two-day police custody, April 29 and 30. He will be produced again on May 1..." he said.

Replying to a query, he said, "No SIM card or bank account is in Sahil Khan's name. We have cooperated and submitted the bank statement... There is nothing. He has been framed in the matter and been accused of promoting the app..."

Mumbai Police has also seized actor Sahil Khan's



*"They wanted a remand to investigate. They had produced their ground in the Session Court and the High Court that there are 2000 SIM cards and 1700 bank accounts..."*

passport as part of ongoing legal proceedings.

Khan was apprehended on Saturday from Chhattisgarh, where he had reportedly been evading authorities for nearly 40 hours. His attempts to secure a pre-arrest bail failed as the Bombay High Court rejected his plea.

Khan fled Mumbai, constantly changing his location to evade authorities.

The actor stands accused of running a betting site and promoting illegal betting activities. His name surfaced during the investigation of the Mahadev betting app case by the Matunga Police in Mumbai.

The Bombay High Court had granted him anticipatory bail on the condition of cooperation with police interrogation, which Khan failed to comply with, leading to this development.

The Mumbai Crime Branch's Special Investigation Team (SIT) tracked

down Sahil Khan in Chhattisgarh, where he was subsequently apprehended.

Officials from the Mumbai Crime Branch revealed that Sahil Khan was not cooperating with the interrogation process. The case, initially registered at Mumbai's Matunga Police Station, involves over 38 individuals, including Khan, embroiled in a betting scandal. The alleged size of the scam is estimated to be around Rs 15,000 crore, as per the first information report (FIR) filed in the case.

Among those implicated in the FIR are names like Mustakim, brother of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, Saurabh Chandrakar, Ravi Upal, Shubham Soni, and several others.

Notably, chief accused, Ravi Uppal, was detained in Dubai last year by local authorities. According to the sources, the arrest was made by Dubai police based on a red corner notice issued by Interpol at the behest of ED.

## Chennai Traffic Police to crack down on unauthorized vehicle stickers from May 2

TDG NETWORK  
AGARTALA

The Greater Chennai Traffic Police has announced plans to take action against motorists with unauthorized stickers or logos on private vehicles starting from May 2.

According to a press release, the exposure of department identities in the form of stickers or any other symbol/mark in a private vehicle or its number plate can have wide-ranging negative impacts on the individual as well as the concerned departments. The police department emphasized that many private vehicles in Chennai City bear stickers or markings that suggest links to government departments which can lead to confusion among the public and law enforcement, ultimately compromising safety and operational efficiency.

"Mostly, the names of the departments/institutions such as PRESS, Secretariat, TNEB, GCC, Defence including Police departments can be seen in private vehicles in Chennai City. These implications are either exposed in the number plate or any other part of the vehicle," the release read.

"Revealing such government affiliation in private vehicles could compromise operating efficiency and safety. Also, it may lead to misuse of the department's reputation and also deviate officers and police personnel during their field duty," it added.



## ASI team reaches Bhojshala complex to continue survey in MP

TDG NETWORK  
DHAR

A team of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on Sunday reached the Bhojshala complex located in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district to continue the survey.

The ASI had to submit the report to the Madhya Pradesh High Court on April 29, but it had submitted an application seeking eight more weeks for the survey.

The ASI began the archaeological survey at the Bhojshala Complex on March 22.

For Hindus, the Bhojshala Complex is a temple dedicated to Goddess Vagdevi (Saraswati), while for Muslims, it is the site of the Kamal Maula mosque.

On April 1, the Supreme Court refused to stay the March 11 Madhya Pradesh High Court order directing the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to conduct within six weeks a survey of the Bhojshala Temple cum Kamal Maula Mosque complex in Dhar district.

## Heat wave in Bihar prompts people to take precautionary measures

TDG NETWORK  
PATNA

With the soaring temperature, people across different states are resorting to various ways to cope and stay safe from the heat.

Similarly in Bihar, where the temperature has crossed 40 degrees Celsius, people in Patna are using numerous ways to keep themselves cool.

Visuals from Patna show people gathering at juice stalls, and shades to tackle the summer waves, while many keeping indoors to dodge the scorching sun.

Meanwhile, locals and commuters on the streets of Patna are resorting to ways like wearing scarves, helmets to cover their heads to avoid the sizzling weather.

Also, it has come to the fore that the sales of cool beverages have gone high due to the heat.

This comes as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported that in Patna, the minimum temperature recorded on April 28 was 28.0 degrees Celsius, while the maximum tem-



*In Bihar the temperature has crossed 40 degrees Celsius, people in Patna are using numerous ways to keep themselves cool.*

perature recorded on April 27 was 42.0 degrees Celsius.

Speaking to ANI, Divesh Kumar, a resident of Patna suggested drinking as much fluid as possible to cope with the heat wave.

"The only solution for the heat we have is to drink as much fluid as possible and try to stay at home. If you can work from home, do that, and avoid eating food from outside. That's how you can manage the heat, in my opinion. I drink juice and in the morning I drink a glass of sattu, which is like

Horlicks for us. So, just take as much fluid as you can and eat simple food as much as possible during this heat, it's better that way," Divesh Kumar said on Sunday.

A resident of Patna, Vaibhavi Arya (a small girl) said, "In the heat, I drink juice and I'm also drinking coconut water. I also want to say that it is very hot right now, so don't go out without any important reason. I try to stay indoors as much as possible."

Vaibhavi Arya, a young resident of Patna, said,

"Maintain a healthy diet, keep eating fruits, and pay attention to your diet. I appeal to everyone to eat fruits and not to go outside unnecessarily."

Aman Raj, another Patna resident, emphasized the importance of a healthy diet during the heatwave.

"Before going anywhere in the morning, drink sattu water or coconut water. Wear cotton clothes, and drink water before going out. Eat plenty of onions and drink sattu. Overall, always keep yourself hydrated," Raj said.

Archana, another local resident, recommended remedies like sattu water and coconut water to combat the heat.

"We don't leave the house unless it's necessary. Before leaving, we drink mango water, and coconut water, or eat watermelon, which helps protect against heat stroke, and we also keep the kids at home as much as possible. If we do have to go out, we wait until 5 or 6 p.m. When you do go outside, cover yourself with a hat or a scarf to avoid direct sunlight," Archana said.

## Punjab: BSF hands over inadvertent border crosser to Pakistan Rangers

TDG NETWORK  
FAZILKA

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Saturday handed over a Pakistani national who had inadvertently crossed the International Boundary (IB) in Punjab's Fazilka, to the Pakistan Rangers, the BSF said in a release.

The BSF said that the Pakistani individual was handed over to Pakistan rangers on humanitarian grounds.

According to the release, on April 27, BSF troops apprehended the individual near the border fence in Punjab's Fazilka district. Upon questioning, it was



revealed by the individual that he was unaware of alignment of the IB and had unintentionally crossed into Indian territory. Nothing objectionable was found from his possession during the search.

A flag meeting was conducted with the Pak Rang-

ers to express the concerns over their failure to restrict the unwarranted movement of Pakistani national.

At about 11:56 am, the individual was handed over to Pakistan Rangers on humanitarian grounds and as a goodwill gesture, the BSF added in its release.

# NEED OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The two specific contents in which we plan to bring home English to our learners is language and literature. At junior level, the language part needs to be stressed most significantly as focus should be laid on language abilities.

## OPINION

DR RITU KAMRA KUMAR



Let me begin with why we need the English language for academic excellence. See, the current world, intensely global, seems to have rendered nationalistic orientations obsolete. Long back Karl Marx had foreseen and talked about this territorial compassion which would lead people to 'Nestle everywhere, settle everywhere and establish connections everywhere'.

Considering the above facts, learning English, the universal language as a second language, becomes inseparable branch as also unavoidable in Indian education system, yet the irony is though English has been

part of our education system for more than a century, yet it is beyond the reach of most of our young people which makes for highly unequal access.

Today, whenever you appear for an interview for a job, be it a corporate section, an educational institution, Health Sector, you are expected to be eloquent with the nuances of English language.

So knowledge of English for academic excellence is a must because that is going to determine our career. Hence English should be taught in such a way in educational institutions so that our youngsters keep themselves in touch with the living stream of ever growing knowledge.

P. Gurrey in his book 'Teaching English as a Foreign Language' writes, "In teaching, it is highly desirable to know exactly what one is hoping to achieve, as it is in all great understandings." For the foreigner English is not a subject but their way of life but the problem is in most

of our schools where the majority of children study it is taught not even as second language but in some cases as third language. So basically the onus falls on the teacher to plan the lessons in such a way with adequate ICT tools, methods and technological pedagogy available that he gets the desired results.

Such aids can make language learning an innovative, interactive and beneficial experience. As an English Teacher my personal experience with students has been tremendously successful. When students make use of these tools, they themselves explore, learn new methods to improve their communication skills. Not only it helps them learn language in a better way, but they do learn how to present their contents, where to use italics, bold, face type letters. Feathers like screen clipping, screen annotation, spot light tools and recorder help make teaching more interactive, innovative, interesting. In our college we have a multimedia language labs which are well resourced with a number of modern equipments like computer systems, headphones, audio, video systems, wireless headsets, microphones, interactive response pads, camcorder, English language learning software etc., where

students regularly have classes to brush up their communication skills. Language laboratories are playing a significant role in acquiring listening, speaking, reading, writing, and eloquence in pronunciation. The only thing is that teachers should be able to shoulder the task of making technology interactive, interesting and learner-friendly.

Now the problem is that in our country where 75% of our students belong to villages, the environment at home is not conducive to English learning. Many parents of such students have hardly been to college or school. So there are a number of obstacles in learning the English language, such as lack of trained English teachers, overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching aptitude among teachers who lack job security, work load on the teachers, financial constraints, administrative compulsions, lack of ICT tools, or other technological pedagogy aids.

Yes, we do face many problems in teaching of this language so we need to have a common programme for English language teaching in pre-school itself.

The two specific contents in which we plan to bring home English to our learners is language and lit-

erature. At junior level the language part needs to be stressed most significantly as focus should be laid on language abilities. Development of semantic (Spoken), phonetic (sound, spellings, pronunciation) graphic (writing) and phonetic cum graphic (reading) should form an important part of English language teaching at junior level itself. English language can be religiously taught at the junior level when a teacher makes the student recognize the English sounds, pronounce with right intonation and stress.

At senior level both language and literature need to be given equal weightage by the teacher. Once he acquires hearing, speaking, writing and reading skills, literary development will become easier.

Renowned teacher trainer Dr. N.S. Prabhu said in All India Seminar on 'Second Language Teacher Education - Issues and Challenges' emphasized the need of developing comprehensive skills. "Teach comprehension, don't teach production. The worst teaching is routinization. One of our problem in this profession is that we are looking for methods that work everywhere. Don't routinize teaching. It is not ideal for every teacher to follow the same method. Only when everyone is groping to see

what works, that is more valuable." I personally believe that the following characteristics need to be adopted to master the English language.

The teacher should try to make students make use of simple and plain words gradually and then slowly upgrade their vocabulary and work on improving their diction. And most importantly every teacher has to find his own method to educate the students of the language depending upon the capabilities and needs of the student. There can never be fixed or definite rules to follow. Mould your teaching as per your requirement and adaptability of the learner.

Academic realm of the English language and its practical base must be united to bridge the gulf between the two to achieve the desired goals and make our students to confidant to face the global challenges in the field of career with self-esteem to quote Ripa K. Gautam, "Teaching materials and methodologies have to be developed with a view to achieving as effectively as possible the transaction from learner interim language to his communicative competence."

Dr Ritu Kamra Kumar, Principal, Mukand Lal National College Yamunanagar, Haryana

# Implications of wealth redistribution: A critical examination in the context of Indian economy

## OPINION

DR. S. SUKANYA IYER



Wealth redistribution, the practice of transferring resources from the affluent to the less privileged through taxation or social welfare programs, has been a topic of debate in economic and political spheres. While proponents argue that it can address income inequality and promote social justice, opponents raise concerns about its potential negative effects on economic growth, efficiency, and overall prosperity. In the context of the Indian economy, it is crucial to critically analyze the drawbacks of extensive wealth redistribution to understand its implications on economic performance.

Instead of relying solely on meritocracy, we will delve into the economic consequences of wealth redistribution. It's crucial to recognize that this approach may lead to discriminatory practices and regressive attitudes within the market. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis is necessary to ensure a balanced and sustainable economic system.

### IMPACT ON INCENTIVES

One of the primary arguments against wealth redistribution in the Indian economy is its impact on incentives for work, investment, and entrepreneurship. High levels of redistribution, achieved through progressive taxation or extensive welfare programs, can create disincentives for individuals to engage in productive activities. When individuals and businesses face higher tax burdens to fund redistribution efforts, they may be less motivated to work hard, innovate, or take risks. This can lead to a slowdown in economic dynamism, reduced entrepreneurial ac-

tivity, and ultimately hinder economic growth and development.

### DISTORTION OF MARKET INCENTIVES

Excessive wealth redistribution can distort market incentives and resource allocation in the economy. By redistributing wealth from the affluent to the less privileged, the government can introduce inefficiencies and distortions in the allocation of capital, labor, and resources. In a free-market system, resources are typically allocated based on market signals such as prices, demand, and supply.

However, heavy government intervention in wealth redistribution can disrupt these market mechanisms, leading to misallocation of resources. This can result in an inefficient allocation of capital and labor, impeding overall economic efficiency and productivity.

### IMPACT ON SAVINGS AND INVESTMENTS

Another concern regarding wealth redistribution in the Indian economy is its potential impact on savings and investment patterns. High levels of redistribution can reduce incentives for individuals to save and invest, as they may anticipate a significant portion of their wealth being redistributed through taxation. This can lead to lower levels of domestic savings and investment,



which are essential for sustained economic growth. Insufficient savings and investment can constrain the economy's ability to finance productive activities, infrastructure development, and technological advancements, thereby hindering long-term prosperity.

### DEPENDENCY AND REDUCED INITIATIVE

Wealth redistribution policies can inadvertently foster dependency and reduce individual initiative and responsibility. When individuals receive government benefits or transfers without a corresponding increase in effort or productivity, it can create a culture of dependency and entitlement. This can discourage self-reliance, innovation, and personal development, as individuals may become reliant on government support rather than pursuing opportunities for self-improvement and advancement. In the long run, this can have negative social

and economic consequences, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and stagnation.

### FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

From a macroeconomic standpoint, excessive wealth redistribution can impact fiscal sustainability and government finances. High levels of redistribution can strain government budgets and lead to increased public debt levels as the cost of financing welfare programs and social expenditures rises.

This can create fiscal challenges, crowding out resources for vital public services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. In India, where fiscal deficits and public debt levels have been area

Now what does Indian National Congress Advocate?? Indian Overseas Congress Chairman Sam Pitroda's advocacy for an inheritance tax, claiming 55% of your wealth will be taken by the

government, sparks controversy.

- Inheritance Tax is levied on money or property inherited from a deceased person. In India, the Estate Duty Act of 1953, which imposed taxes on estates, was repealed in 1985, when estate duty rates reached up to 85%.
- Congress wants to bring the inheritance tax, as said by Sam Pitroda and Rahul Gandhi, a key figure in the Congress party.
- Previously, in 2011 and 2012, Congress mulled the idea of bringing Inheritance tax.
- Congress' proposal for an inheritance tax lacks clarity as it does not specify the types of properties subject to taxation.
- Furthermore, Congress has a history of penalising hardworking individuals such as imposing high tax rates during the Indira Gandhi regime and compulsory acquisition of urban land by common people beyond the ceiling.

## PERSPECTIVE DELHI DILEMMA

# LOVELY QUILTS TO PREEMPT REVOLT IN DELHI CONGRESS, PRECIPITATES A CRISIS

By quitting as the president of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, senior leader Arvinder Singh Lovely has plunged the grand old party into a major crisis in the midst of the election season. Lovely has made it clear that he was not joining any political outfit to end speculation regarding his move to the BJP. However, his resignation has put the High Command on high alert and it is currently engaged in defusing the emerging situation arising amongst other factors, the attitude of Delhi general secretary incharge, Deepak Babaria, and unhappiness over ticket distribution. Lovely was under tremendous pressure from the cadres, who have objected to the tickets being given to Kanhaiya Kumar in North East Delhi and Udit Raj in North West Delhi.

Both are seen as recent entries in the party and their being chosen over and above some of the current leaders, has not gone down too well. It is another matter that Kanhaiya Kumar is viewed as the 'X' factor in these elections and is expected to assist in the resurrection of the Congress in the national capital. The truth of the matter is that none of the present lot of leaders have been able to revive the party in any manner and in the last 10 years, the Congress has failed to secure even a single seat in the Legislative Assembly and Parliament and has performed dismally in the municipal elections. This has been the reason for the High Command to look at new faces, and has resulted in the controversial decision to field Kanhaiya and Udit Raj. Shortly after the names of the nominees were declared, there were protests outside the party office.

The general secretary incharge is understood to have acted in an arbitrary manner and instead of pacifying agitated workers, he is said to have behaved harshly and inappropriately. One senior leader, a former minister, who went to him to lodge his protest against denial of ticket to him was asked to leave. He then made it a prestige issue and asked the DPCC disciplinary committee to act against him. The leader, abruptly resigned from the Congress while stating that he was not joining any other party. Lovely has been a performing minister but under the present regime was not able to get access to the central leadership despite repeated attempts. He was also a possible nominee for the North East seat but while announcing the final selection, he was not even consulted.

At least, this is the impression he has given. His well-wishers are of the opinion that he should have held on to his post till the elections were over and if he indeed had to quit under compelling reasons, he should have not made angry accusations against some central leaders. This step could increasingly make things difficult for him if he stays in the Congress, and he may not have a place in the BJP, since he joined the Saffron Brigade and then did Ghar Wapsi in no time. His rationale that the Delhi unit was against an alliance with the AAP, a party that came into existence by hurling corruption allegations against the Congress, are true. However, the High Command was keen on an alliance and thus reached an agreement with AAP in Delhi while the two parties are pitted against each other in Punjab. From the Central leadership's perspective, majority of Delhi congress leaders were deadwood and had reached their political expiry date. The objection to bring in Kanhaiya Kumar on the plea that he was an outsider does not have any basis since in the past, the Congress had brought in Sheila Dikshit, also an outsider to head the party in Delhi. This despite the fact that she had lost the 1998 Lok Sabha election from East Delhi but because of the backing she received from Mahan Lal Fotedar and Arjun Singh, she was foisted on the workers to spite HKL Bhagat. Incidentally, this time there is not even a single poster of the Congress or AAP in the city which has the face of Sheila Dikshit, the longest serving CM.

It is evident that the workers and the leadership realise that despite being in office for 15 years, her contribution in strengthening the organization was not there. Yes, it is true that there is general unhappiness on two newcomers in the party being given tickets but there are also reports that many aspirants were in touch with the BJP during this period and wanted to be considered on the lotus symbol. Reports emanating from the Congress suggest that the leadership may give additional charge of Delhi party to some senior functionary and also replace the controversial general secretary against whom many complaints have also been received from Haryana, which is also under his watch. The resignation has given avoidable negative publicity to the party and this is a matter of great concern for the high command. While a question mark will be there on Lovely's future, the immediate need is to overcome this crisis and move on. The defusing could also entail changing one of the nominees unless this would be viewed by the High command as an assault on its ego. The political development has certainly pleased the saffron brigade which is also worried about its prospects on some seats.

PANKAJ VOHRA

# HOW QUOTA SYSTEM EVOLVED IN INDIA

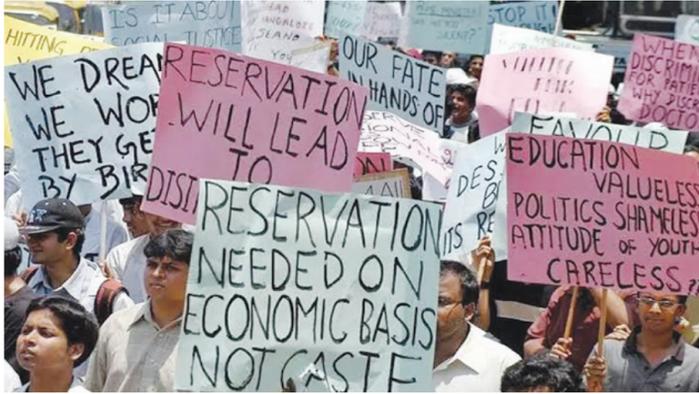
The controversy over reservations refuses to die as it has occupied the centre stage of election campaign by different political parties. Here is a historical perspective on this affirmative action

## TDG NETWORK

Reservation in India is significant as it serves as a tool for rectifying historical injustices, empowering marginalized communities, ensuring representation and diversity, promoting meritocracy and equal opportunity, fulfilling constitutional mandates, and fostering social cohesion and nation-building. While it remains a subject of debate and controversy, reservation continues to play a crucial role in India's journey towards a more just, inclusive, and equitable society.

Reservation in India is very important for several reasons, reflecting the country's commitment to promoting social justice, inclusivity, and equality. Here are some key reasons why reservation holds significance in India:

**Pre-Independence Era:** Reservation in India during the pre-independence era was not as formalized or widespread as it is today, but there were some instances where special provisions were made to address social inequalities and historical injustices. Even before India gained independence in 1947, certain communities, particularly Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), were provided with reservations in government jobs by the British colonial government. These measures were primarily aimed at addressing historical injustices and promoting representation of marginalized groups in the administration. During British colonial rule, there were limited instances where reservations or preferential treatment were provided to certain communities. For example, in some government services, positions were reserved for Europeans or Anglo-Indians, reflecting the colonial hierarchy. The British government introduced legislative measures to address the socio-economic conditions of certain



the Depressed Classes and pushed for measures to address their socio-economic conditions.

**Constitutional Provisions:** The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, included provisions for reservation in jobs for SCs, STs, and socially and educationally backward classes (OBCs). Articles 15(4) and 16(4) empowered the state to make special provisions for the advancement of these groups in public employment.

**First Backward Classes Commission (Kaka Kalelkar Commission):** In 1953, the government constituted the first Backward Classes Commission, chaired by Kaka Kalelkar, to identify socially and educationally backward classes for the purpose of reservation in jobs and educational institutions. However, the recommendations of this commission were not implemented comprehensively. The commission was appointed in 1953 by the Government of India under the chairmanship of Kaka Kalelkar, a prominent Gandhian and social reformer. Its mandate was to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes and make recommendations for their upliftment. The commission was tasked with identifying the criteria for determining backwardness among various communities and recommending measures

for determining backwardness were not comprehensive enough and did not adequately capture the diversity of socio-economic disparities across different communities.

**Mandal Commission:** The Mandal Commission, officially known as the "Second Backward Classes Commission," was a pivotal institution in the history of reservation in India. The Mandal Commission was constituted in India in 1979 by the Janata Party government under Prime Minister Morarji De-



sai. Its chairman was B.P. Mandal, a prominent politician and social justice advocate. The commission was tasked with identifying the socially and educationally backward classes (OBCs) in India and recommending measures for their socio-economic advancement. It aimed to assess the extent of their representation in government jobs and edu-

cares about its potential impact on meritocracy and administrative efficiency. Despite opposition, the government of Prime Minister V.P. Singh accepted the Mandal Commission's recommendations in 1990 and implemented them through the Mandal Commission recommendations. The implementation of reservation for OBCs faced legal challenges, including petitions filed in the Supreme Court of India questioning its constitutionality. In the landmark judgment in the Indra Sawhney

case (1992), the Supreme Court upheld the validity of reservation for OBCs while imposing certain restrictions, such as the concept of a "creamy layer" within the OBC category. The Mandal Commission's recommendations had a profound impact on Indian society and politics. They expanded the scope of reservation beyond Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to include OBCs, thus broadening the reach of affirmative action policies in India. The Mandal Commission also brought issues of social justice and equity to the forefront of public discourse and catalyzed efforts to address the socio-economic needs of marginalized communities. The Mandal Commission played a crucial role in shaping India's reservation policies and advancing the cause of social justice and equality in the country.

**Legal Challenges and Supreme Court Judgments:** The implementation of reservation policies, including those based on the Mandal Commission recommendations, faced legal challenges. However, the Supreme Court of India upheld the validity of reservation for SCs, STs, and OBCs in various landmark judgments, including the Indra Sawhney case (1992) and subsequent cases.

**Expansion of Reservation Policies:** Over the years, there have been discussions and debates regarding the expansion of reservation policies to include other disadvantaged groups, such as economically weaker sections (EWS) and women. The implementation of reservation in the private sector has also been a subject of debate.

**Reservation in Jobs:** Reservation in jobs remains a

contentious issue in India, with ongoing discussions about its effectiveness, implementation, and impact on meritocracy. However, it continues to be an important tool for promoting social justice and inclusivity in the Indian workforce, in line with the constitutional principles of equality and affirmative action. Government and public sector will hire job seekers based on reservation percentage from two different categories 1: reservation category (SC, ST, OBC, EWC and other minorities) 2: Open category (General, SC, ST, OBC, EWC and other minorities). While hiring, major priority is given to reservation category including 33% reservation for Women, priority in hiring is given by Other Minorities women, ST women, SC women, ST Men, SC Men, OBC women, OBC Men, EWS Women, EWS Men and then after Open category Will be considered. Government and public sector hiring based on Merit in open category and one more anomaly here i.e., Priority in hiring will be given by:

Other Minorities women, ST women, SC women, ST Men, SC Men, OBC women, OBC Men, EWC Women, EWC Men and then General if they are equally eligible. The landmark initiative of Special Recruitment for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe in Government jobs was started in Kerala in 1972 by Vella Eacharan. In 1995, the 77th amendment to the Constitution was made to amend Article 16 before the five-year period expired to continue with reservations for SC/STs in promotions. [21] It was further modified through the 85th amendment to give the benefit of consequential seniority to SC/ST candidates promoted by reservation.

The 81st amendment was made to the Constitution to permit the government to treat the backlog of reserved vacancies as a separate and distinct group, to which the ceiling of 50 per cent did not apply. The 82nd amendment inserted a provision in Article 335 to enable states to give concessions to SC/ST candidates in promotion.

The validity of all the above four amendments was challenged in the Supreme Court through various petitions clubbed together in M. Nagaraj & Others Vs. Union of India & Others, mainly on the ground that these altered the Basic Structure of the Constitution. In 2006, the Supreme Court upheld the amendments but stipulated that the concerned state will have to show, in each case, the existence of "compelling reasons" - which include "backwardness", "inequality of representation" and overall "administrative efficiency" - before making provisions for reservation. The court further held that these provisions are merely enabling provisions. If a state

*During British colonial rule, there were limited instances where reservations or preferential treatment were provided to certain communities. In some government services, positions were reserved for Europeans or Anglo-Indians, reflecting the colonial hierarchy. The Britishers introduced legislative measures to address the socio-economic conditions of certain marginalized communities.*

## MANDAL COMMISSION



government wishes to make provisions for reservation to SC/STs in the promotion, the state has to collect quantifiable data showing backwardness of the class and inadequacy of representation of that class.

In 2007, the Government of Uttar Pradesh introduced reservation in job promotions. However, citing the Supreme Court decision, the policy was ruled to be unconstitutional by the Allahabad High Court in 2011. The decision was challenged in the Supreme Court, which upheld it in 2012 by rejecting the government's argument because it failed to furnish sufficient valid data to justify the move to promote employees on a caste basis.

### IN EDUCATION

Universities allot seats based on reservation percentage from two different categories are

1: reservation category (SC, ST, OBC, EWC and other minorities)

2: Open category (General, SC, ST, OBC, EWS and other minorities). In allotment, Major priority given to reservation category including 33% reservation for Women, priority in allotting is given by Other Minorities women, SC women, ST women, SC Men, OBC women, OBC Men, EWC Women, EWC Men and then after Open category Will be considered. Government Universities will allot based on priority by: Other Minorities women, ST women, SC women, ST Men, SC Men, OBC women, OBC Men, EWC Men & then General and reservation percentage under consideration for entrance exams fees, for cut off marks, for allotment of seats and also applicable to other government schemes.

In India student aids are available for—SCs, STs, BCs, OBCs, women, Muslims, and other minorities. Only about 0.7% of student aids in India is based on merit.

States In central-government funded higher education institutions, 22.5% of available seats are reserved for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) students (7.5% for STs, 15% for SCs). This reservation percentage has been raised to 49.5% by including an additional 27% reservation for OBCs. This ratio is followed even in Parliament and all elections where a few constituencies are earmarked for those from certain communities (which will next rotate in 2026 per the Delimitation Commission).

Some states and UTs have reservations for females which varies from 5% to 33.33%



marginalized communities, particularly the Depressed Classes (later designated as Scheduled Castes). The Communal Award of 1932, proposed by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, provided for separate electorates and reserved seats for the Depressed Classes in provincial legislatures. In response to the Communal Award, leaders from different communities, including Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, negotiated the Poona Pact in 1932. This agreement led to the abandonment of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes but ensured reserved seats for them in provincial legislatures, based on joint electorates. The pre-independence era saw significant debate and discourse on issues of social justice, caste discrimination, and the rights of marginalized communities. Leaders like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar advocated for the rights of

for their socio-economic advancement. It conducted extensive surveys and studies across different regions of India to assess the socio-economic conditions of various groups. The Kaka Kalelkar Commission submitted its report in 1955, outlining its findings and recommendations. However, the recommendations of the commission were not implemented comprehensively by the government at that time. While the recommendations of the Kaka Kalelkar Commission did not lead to immediate policy changes, they laid the groundwork for future initiatives aimed at addressing the socio-economic needs of backward classes in India. The commission's report contributed to broader discussions on social justice and equity in post-independence India. The commission faced criticism for its methodology and approach to identifying backward classes. Some critics argued that its cri-

terial institutions and propose policies to address any disparities. The Mandal Commission used various criteria, including social, educational, and economic indicators, to identify backward classes. It conducted extensive surveys and collected data from across India to assess the socio-economic status of different communities. In 1980, the Mandal Commission submitted its report, commonly known as the Mandal Report, which identified 3,743 communities as socially and educationally backward. Based on its findings, the commission recommended the reservation of 27% of government jobs and seats in educational institutions for OBCs. The recommendations of the Mandal Commission sparked intense debate and controversy across India. While proponents argued that it was necessary to address the socio-economic inequalities faced by OBCs, opponents raised



### INTERESTING FACTS

Here are some interesting facts about reservation in India

**Oldest Reservation Policy:** India's reservation policy is one of the oldest affirmative action programs in the world. It was introduced even before India gained independence, with the Government of India Act, 1935, providing for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in legislative bodies.

**Constitutional Provisions:** The Indian Constitution, adopted in 1950, includes several provisions for reservation to promote social justice and equality. Articles 15(4) and 16(4) empower the state to make special provisions for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes, including SCs, STs, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

**Quota Percentage:** The reservation quota in India varies across states and institutions. For example, the reservation quota for SCs and STs in government jobs and educational institutions at the central level is 15% and 7.5%, respectively. Additionally, there's a reservation of up to 27% for OBCs, which can vary depending on state policies.

**Creamy Layer Concept:** The concept of a "creamy layer" was introduced by the Supreme Court of India in the landmark Indra Sawhney case (1992). It refers to the relatively affluent or socially advanced members within reserved categories who are ineligible for reservation benefits. The creamy layer concept aims to ensure that reservation benefits reach those who are genuinely disadvantaged.

**Reservation in Private Sector:** While reservation policies are primarily implemented in government jobs and educational institutions, there have been discussions about extending reservation to the private sector. However, as of now, reservation in the private sector remains a subject of debate and has not been implemented on a large scale.

**Women's Reservation:** In addition to caste-based reservation, there have been calls for providing reservation for women in legislative bodies. The Women's Reservation Bill, which seeks to reserve one-third of seats in the Lok Sabha (lower house of parliament) and state legislative assemblies for women, has been a topic of debate and contention in Indian politics for several years. The Women's Reservation Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 9 March 2010 by a majority vote of 186 members in favor and 1 against. As of March 2013, the Lok Sabha has not voted on the bill. Critics say gender cannot be held as a basis for reservation alone other factors should also be considered e.g. economic, social conditions of woman candidates especially when applying reservation for educated women.

**State-wise Variations:** Each state in India has its own policies regarding reservation, often tailored to address the specific socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the state. For example, some states have introduced reservation for economically weaker sections (EWS) in addition to existing caste-based reservation.

## SC TO CONSIDER RETIRED HIGH COURT JUDGE'S PLEA AGAINST DEDUCTION OF PENSION FROM SALARY DRAWN AS OMBUDSMAN AFTER RETIREMENT

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Justice K.K. Denesan vs. The Senior Accounts Officer observed and has issued notice in the matter concerning the issue of deduction of pension from the salary drawn in a post-retirement position of a former High Court Judge.

The Court in the case was considering the petition of Justice KK Denesan, a former judge of the Kerala High Court, who served as an Ombudsman under the Kerala Panchayat Raj Act from 2017 to 2020.

The bench comprising of CJI Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra agreed to consider the is-

sue.

The court in the case observed that the petitioner submitted that as per Section 271G of Kerala Panchayat Raj Act and Rule 4 of the Ombudsmen, the Former judge of the High Court is entitled to the salary and allowances of a judge of a High Court. There being no such provision to the effect that the Ombudsman would be entitled to the lost out salary minus the pension.

The court in the case observed and has issued notice to the Office of the Accountant General, Kerala and the State of Kerala.

The counsel, Senior Advocate Mr V Giri, appearing on behalf of the petitioner, pointed out that under the salary and service conditions under the Ombudsman Rules, he will be entitled to a sal-

ary equivalent to a High Court Justice and there is no express provision for deduction of pension from such salary drawn.

Further, the counsel, also informed the bench that the loss of salary for 3 years was approximately Rs 16 lacs.

The bench of CJI also remarked that some practice is done in the Armed Force Tribunal, AFT and the National Green Tribunal, NGT where the pension is deducted from salary but based on existing rules governing them.

The Justice KK Denesan was appointed as an Ombudsman for Local Self Government Institutions in December 2017 post his retirement on April 25, 2007. Thus, he had filed a writ petition before the High Court wherein challenging the

deduction of his pension amount which he receives as a retired judge from the salary for his present position as an Ombudsman.

He in the case was aggrieved about the deduction for an amount of Rs 1,34,000/- the pension amount from his salary of Rs. 2,25,000/-month being drawn as an Ombudsman.

While the Single Judge allowed the petition, thus, the Division bench set aside the decision.

The Petition Before The High Court

The single-judge bench of Justice Anu Sivaraman allowed the petition.

The petitioner in the plea relied on Section 271G of Kerala Panchayat Raj Act and Rule 4 of the Ombudsmen for Local Self Government Institutions (Inquiry of Complaints

and Service Conditions) Rules, 1999 to contend that he was entitled to the salary and allowances as are admissible to a High Court judge.

The court in the case observed and has held that neither the statute nor the rules permit any deduction of the pension drawn in the capacity of a High Court Judge from the amount payable to the petitioner.

The court noted that when the Court had earlier in this matter, directed the consideration of the representation that was filed before the Accountant General for fixation of salary, this was not done.

The court in the case observed and has set aside the order of the Senior Accounts Officer, as well as the letter, which was signed by a Special Sec-

retary for the Additional Chief Secretary to Government which had stated that the petitioner would be entitled to salary by reducing the amount of pension he had been receiving for his service as Judge in the High Court of Kerala and Upalokayukta.

Further, the court directed the Government to pass an appropriate order granting the benefit of pay and allowances of a High Court Judge to the petitioner.

It has also been directed by the court that the arrears also ought to be disbursed to the petitioner, without delay, within a period of 3 months.

In the writ appeal filed by the State Government, the Division bench comprising of Justice Amit Rawal and Justice CS Sudha were set aside.

## Supreme Court issued Contempt Notice To Delhi Development Authority Vice Chairman For Felling Trees

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case observed and has issued contempt notice to the vice-chairman of the Delhi Development Authority, DDA or the felling of over 1,000 trees for the construction of an approach road between Chhatrapur Road and SAA-RC University near Maidan Garhi here.

The bench comprising of Justice BR Gavai and Justice Sandeep Mehta in the case observed and has noted that this court find that the action of DDA of felling the trees for constructing the road is in contempt of order passed by this court dated February 8 and March 4, 2024. The court issued notice to the vice-chairman of Delhi Development Authority, DDA calling upon to show cause why an action for committing contempt of order of this

court be not taken against him.

Further, the court directed the issue of notice to the Vice-Chairman, Delhi Development Authority, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi-110002 returnable on May 08, 2024, while calling upon to show cause as to why an action for committing the contempt of the orders passed by the Court dated February 08, 2023 and March 04, 2024 be taken against him.



## Supreme Court Refused To Interfere With Requirement Of 3 Years Law Practice Or 70% Marks In LL.B For MP Civil Judge Post

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Garima Khare vs The High Court Of Madhya Pradesh observed and has declined to interfere with the order of Madhya Pradesh High Court wherein upholding the rule that stipulated eligibility of at least three years of practice or 70 percent marks in law graduation for entry-level judicial service candidates in the State.

The bench comprising of Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra in the case observed and has stated that there was no such reason to interfere with the High Court's view

and, the court dismissed the Special Leave Petition filed against the impugned order.

The court observed that in the year 2023, an amendment in Rule 7 of the Madhya Pradesh Judicial Service, the Recruitment and Conditions of Service Rules, 1994 was made. Through this amendment, an additional eligibility qualification for the post of Civil Judge, Junior Division (Entry Level) was introduced and in terms of amendment, all those who had practised continuously as an advocate for not less than three years on the last date fixed for submission of applications were eligible to apply.

Further, the court observed that in the alternative, an out-

standing Law Graduate with a brilliant academic career, having passed all exams on the first attempt by securing at least 70% marks in the aggregate, was eligible to apply.

The present petitioner in the case sought to set this amendment aside and argued before the court that it was ultra vires to several articles of the Constitution, which includes the Article 14 of the Constitution of India, Right to quality.

The High Court in the case is of the view that the object of the amendment was a 'qualitative dispensation of justice' and 'Excellence should always have precedence over mediocrity.' The court also observed that the amendment does not deny opportunity, and the

options for the candidates are two-fold.

The court stated that all this goes to enhance the quality of the judgments which, in turn, affects the litigants at large and to object of the High Court to achieve these results, in our considered view, does not call for any interference whatsoever. Thus, it cannot be just a dream of a candidate to become a judge. One has to possess the highest of standards to join the judiciary.

Adding to it, the High Court stated that it also weighed the interest of the litigants in such cases. The High Court had marked that the interest of the litigants is far more important than the interest of the individual petitioner.

The High Court in the case observed that accepting the arguments of the petitioners would only maintain the existing subpar standards that have persisted for decades and for decades a minimum qualification was sufficient. There has been no attempt to ensure the enhancement of quality.

Further, the High Court stated that it is for the first time that the High Court has attempted to do so., the High Court added.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has declined to declare the impugned amendment as either unconstitutional or ultra vires the Constitution.

## SC EXPRESSED DISQUALIFICATION AT RAJASTHAN POLICE FOR NOT SUSPENDING OFFICERS ACCUSED OF TORTURING WITNESS

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Ramveer v. The State of Rajasthan was hearing the matter in which a prosecution witness had levied allegations made against police officials of assault, prima facie noted that it is not satisfied with the action taken by the Director General of Police, DGP, Rajasthan in the said regard.

The bench comprising of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing the petitioner-accused's challenge to a Rajasthan High Court order wherein the court declined the bail noting that though the prosecution witness in question leveled serious allegations against state officials, she was not declared hostile.

The court while perusing the deposition(s), was shocked at the allegations leveled by PW-2 against state officials.

The court observed that as per the deposition, the witness, who was around 14 years old, was beaten by policemen and was compelled to confess that she was the one who shot the deceased.

It has been stated that the policemen gave me a pistol and asked me show how it fires. I was scared. After interrogating the police took me to the police station. There they beat me and said tell that you are the one who shot your mother. Then I

served and has distinguished between 'irregular' and 'illegal' appointments underscoring the importance of considering certain appointments even if were not made strictly in accordance with the prescribed Rules and Procedure.

The court observed while referring to the case Umadevi that the appointment cannot be said to have been made illegally if they had followed the procedures of regular appointments such as the conduct of written examinations or interviews as in the present case.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case observed and has directed the regularization of the appellant's services. Accordingly, the court allowed the appeal.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Rahul Dev v. state observed and has granted two weeks parole to a man, who is convicted in a murder case and sentenced to life, for attending his engagement ceremony and marriage.

The bench headed by Justice Amit Sharma in the case observed and has allowed the petition moved by convict Rahul Dev who was convicted in 2014 for the offences as stated under section 302, the punishment for murder and section 201, causing disappearance of evidence or giving false information to screen offender of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.



was sent back home at 7:30 in the night.

The court noted that there was not only serious misconduct but also offence has been committed by police personnel, thus, the DGP was directed to immediately initiate an inquiry and take action.

The counsel appearing for the State informed that an FIR was being registered against those police officers, and departmental proceedings have also been initiated.

The bench of Justice Oka inquired that, those police people continue to be in service? The reply came in the affirmative.

When the counsel appearing stated that the FIR had been registered, the bench of Justice Oka asked that, so there is no power vested in you to suspend?...your own witness says this. After that police took me to the police station, they beat me. Now, still those police officers continue to be in service.'

The court asked the Counsel to hand over the Report and remarked 'We will ask

the DGP to remain present personally. If he has taken so casually, we will ask him remain present personally through VC. How these people can continue to discharge duties as policemen?'

The counsel appearing averred that all possible actions were being taken and added, 'We will suspend them as well.'

When the Counsel appearing stated that we had taken serious note of the Court's order.

The bench of Justice Oka was quick to reply, 'You must take serious note of what is happening in your police stations, not our order.'

The court stated that the learned counsel appearing for State has produced for perusal, the report of the DGP. The said court permit him to file the same in the Court. Prima facie we are not satisfied with the action taken by the DGP. List on May 13, to enable us to peruse the report and pass the order.

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on May 13, 2024.

## SUPREME COURT: EMPLOYEE APPOINTED THROUGH VALID PROCESS CANNOT BE DENIED REGULARIZATION IF PERFORMING PERMANENT ROLE FOR CONSIDERABLE TIME

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Vinod Kumar And Ors. ETC. Versus Union Of India And Ors. observed and has held that procedural formalities cannot be used to deny regularization of service to an employee whose appointment was termed 'temporary' but has performed the same duties as performed by the regular employee over a considerable period which being in the capacity of the regular employee.

The court in the case observed and has set aside the decision of High Court which had declined to regularize the employment of employees who were serving continuously in the capacities of regular employees.

The bench comprising of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice KV Viswanathan in the case observed that since the employees were appointed through a valid selection process akin to the selection process of the regular employee and were serving continuously for the period of 25 years, therefore, 'the failure to recognize the substantive nature of their roles and their continuous service akin to permanent employees runs counter to the principles of equity, fairness, and the intent behind employment regulations.'

The bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath in its order stated that the continuous service of the appellants in the capacities of regular employees, which performs

the duties indistinguishable from those in permanent posts, and the selection of them through a process that mirrors that of regular recruitment, constitute a substantive departure from the temporary and scheme-specific nature of their initial engagement.

It has been submitted by the respondent before the Supreme Court while placing reliance on the Judgment of Secretary, State of Karnataka vs. Umadevi in support of the High Court's decision to reject the regularization of the appellants or employees' service, the respondent contended that the appellant's employment under a temporary scheme could not confer upon them the rights akin to those held by permanent em-

ployees. **UMADEV'S DISTINGUISHED BY SUPREME COURT**

The Court in the case observed and has held that the High Court had incorrectly applied the ratio of Umadevi in the present case. The court in the case Umadevi termed appointments through back door entry as irregular and invalid. While distinguishing the Umadevi's case from the present case, after recording that the appellants have gone through the valid selection process by appearing in the written exams and viva voce, the said court held that service conditions of the appellants warrant a reclassification from temporary to regular status.

The court in the case ob-

## DELHI COURT REJECTED BJP MP BRIJ BHUSHAN SINGH'S PLEA FOR FURTHER PROBE INTO SEXUAL HARASSMENT CASE, ORDER ON FRAMING OF CHARGES ON MAY 07, 2024

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case State Vs. Brij Bhushan Singh And Anr observed and has dismissed an application moved by BJP MP and former Wrestling Federation of India President Brij Bhushan Singh wherein it seeks further investigation in the sexual harassment case filed against him by women wrestlers.

The Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, ACMM Priyanka Rajpoot of Rouse Avenue Courts will now pronounce the order on framing of charges in the case on May

07.

The court in the case observed and has deferred order on framing of charges against Singh after the BJP MP moved the fresh application on April 18, 2024.

In the application filed, Singh sought permission for making further submissions on framing of charges.

Singh also sought a direction on the Delhi Police to investigate with regards to his presence at WFI office on September 7, 2022, the alleged date of incident.

It has also been claimed by Singh that he was not in India on the date in question.

However, the fresh application also sought a direction on the Delhi Police to place on record the CDR.

The counsel, APP Atul Srivastava appearing for Delhi Police had opposed the application and said that it has been filed at a belated stage.

The counsel also stated that, there has to be some stoppage.

Further, he also argued the application amounted to seeking further investigation and will have legal implications which have to be argued.

The counsel appearing for the complainants had submit-

ted before the court that the application was a delaying tactic and that the documents could have been sought at the stage of Section 207 of Code of Criminal Procedure, CrPC.

In the present case, Singh is out on bail in the case, along with co-accused Vinod Tomar, who is the former assistant secretary of the Wrestling Federation of India.

The Delhi Police in the case had filed the chargesheet last month under Section 354, outraging modesty of a woman, Section 354A, sexually coloured remarks, Section 354D, stalking and Section 506(1), the criminal

intimidation of Indian Penal Code, 1860 against them.

However, a cancellation report was filed in the POCSO case registered against Singh by a minor wrestler.

In the matter, the BJP lawmaker has been accused of sexual harassment by women wrestlers.

Therefore, the alleged incidents of sexual harassment are said to have occurred between 2016 and 2019 at the WFI office, at Singh's official residence and also abroad, according to media reports.

Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on May 07, 2024.

# PAK PM APPOINTS FOREIGN MINISTER ISHAQ DAR AS HIS DEPUTY

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has appointed Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar as Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister with immediate effect, Samaa TV reported.

The decision was announced through a notification released by the Cabinet Division. The development marks a strategic move within the government's leadership hierarchy, Samaa TV reported.

The decision was announced while Shehbaz Sharif is on a visit to Saudi Arabia to attend the World Economic Forum.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ishaq Dar is currently serving as Pakistan's Foreign Minister. He has been also included in the Council of



Common Interests (CCI).

Earlier in March, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved the reconstitution of the Council of Common Interests (CCI), replacing the finance minister with the foreign minister, Geo News reported.

The president, acting on the advice of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, established the eight-member CCI in accordance with Article 153 of the Constitution, as stated in

a notification.

The CCI, chaired by Shehbaz Sharif, comprises all four chief ministers alongside other council members. The notification also confirms the inclusion of Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, and Safran Minister Amir Muqam, according to Geo News. The Council of Common Interests holds significant authority as the primary decision-making

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body in the nation. It adjudicates various matters, including the distribution of natural resources, especially in cases where disputes arise between the central government and provincial authorities, according to Geo News report.

## Pakistan judge kidnapped at gunpoint in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

AGENCIES  
KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

The District and Sessions Judge Shakirullah Marwat serving his duties in South Waziristan was kidnapped by armed men near the border area of Tank and Dera Ismail Khan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Geo News reported citing police. DI Khan Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Mohammad Adnan confirmed the incident, which happened in the Bagwal village located between the border area of Tank and DI Khan when the judge was returning from office to DI Khan.

He said that the abductors left the judge's car and driver on the spot. Police said that no one has claimed responsibility for the judge's abduction.

Reacting to the unfortunate incident, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Central Information Secretary Faisal Karim Kundi expressed concern and grief over the matter.

## PTI seeking to return to power with establishment support: Rana Sanaullah

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Rana Sanaullah has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was seeking to return to power with the support of the establishment, Pakistan-based Geo News reported.

His remarks came after PTI leader Shehryar Afridi hinted at holding talks with Pakistan's army chief and the Director General of Inter-Services Intelligence (DG ISI), instead of the "rejected rulers".

While speaking on the Geo News programme Naya Pakistan on Saturday, Sanaullah said, "PTI's ideology is not political." He stated that PTI wanted to be "imposed" on Pakistan with the help of the establishment.

He suggested that all disputes would be addressed if all political parties and institutions worked within their constitutional ambit.

*Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Rana Sanaullah has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was seeking to return to power with the support of the establishment, Pakistan-based Geo News reported.*

He said that nobody would object if the nation achieved political stability through talks.

Slamming Imran Khan-founded party, Sanaullah said that PTI was levelling all kinds of allegations against the PML-N. However, it was publically announcing its willingness to hold talks with the establishment, Geo News reported.

He referred to Afridi's recent statement about holding talks with DG ISI and Pakistan's army chief. However, PTI did not second Afridi's statement.

While speaking at the same programme, PTI Secretary Information Raouf Hasan said they formed a committee more than a year and a half ago to hold talks with the establishment.

Hasan further said, "We are ready to hold talks with the establishment but no contact is made so far." He stated that PTI would not hold talks with the ruling parties, including PML-N, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), as they "stole our mandate".

## Rally against Netanyahu govt in support of hostage deal

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV

Amid the impending hostage deal, thousands of protesters rallied across Israel against the government on Saturday night, following the release of videos by Hamas showing signs of life from several Israeli hostages held captive by them, according to The Times of Israel.

The hostage families and anti-government protesters in Jerusalem came together, organising a strong-march throughout the heart of the city. The protest also had speeches, which were delivered on Ben Yehuda Street there.

Meanwhile, in Tel Aviv, three separate protests converged near Azrieli Mall while dozens of demonstrators led by some hostage relatives attempted to block Ayalon Highway, spelling out the word "halas [enough]" by igniting fires on the road, according to The Times of Israel.

The police officials said that they arrested seven protesters on Saturday evening.

The father of Omri Miran, one of the two hostages seen in the propaganda video released by the Hamas, said that he is worried about his son's condition. He narrated the ordeal of how his son was



People protest against Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government. Photo: Agencies

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taken captive by the Hamas in front of crowd of thousands in Israel. In the edited three-minute video released by Hamas, Miran and fellow inmate Keith Siegel introduce themselves, address their families, and express their hope for a solution that would allow them to return home with the other

captives, according to The Times of Israel.

After protests held by hostages' families and an anti-government rally convened outside Azrieli mall in Tel Aviv, demonstrators began running down Begin Street, bypassing police barriers and skirmishing with law enforcement.

## Houthi rebels claim downing US Reaper drone

AGENCIES  
JERUSALEM

Yemen's Houthi rebels on Saturday claimed shooting down another of the U.S. military's MQ-9 Reaper drones, airing footage of parts that corresponded to known pieces of the unmanned aircraft.

The Houthis said they shot down the Reaper with a surface-to-air missile, part of a renewed series of assaults this week by the rebels after a relative lull in their pressure campaign over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Bryon J. McGarry, a Defense Department spokesperson, acknowledged to The Associated Press on Saturday that "a U.S. Air Force MQ-9 drone crashed in Yemen." He said an investigation was underway, without elaborating.

The Houthis described the downing as happening Thursday over their stronghold in the country's Saada

province. Footage released by the Houthis included what they described as the missile launch targeting the drone, with a man off-camera reciting the Houthi's slogan after it was hit: "God is the greatest; death to America; death to Israel; curse the Jews; victory to Islam."

The footage included several close-ups on parts of the drone that included the logo of General Atomics, which manufactures the drone, and serial numbers corresponding with known parts made by the company.

Since the Houthis seized the country's north and its capital of Sanaa in 2014, the U.S. military has lost at least five drones to the rebels counting Thursday's shoot-down — in 2017, 2019, 2023 and this year.

Reapers, which cost around \$30 million apiece, can fly at altitudes up to 50,000 feet and have an endurance of up to 24 hours before needing to land.



## Japan's ruling party loses all 3 seats in special vote seen over scandal

AGENCIES  
TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's governing party, stung by an extensive slush funds scandal, appeared to have lost all three seats in Sunday's parliamentary by-elections, according to media exit polls and preliminary results.

The Liberal Democratic Party's loss is considered a voter punishment for its links to a yearslong corruption saga that erupted last year and has undermined Kishida's leadership. His party's loss of power is unlikely, however, because of the fractured opposition.

"The results were extremely severe," LDP Secretary General Toshimitsu Motegi told reporters in Tokyo. "We humbly accept the severe results and we will do our utmost to regain the trust from the public as we continue our effort to reform and tackle the challenges."

The liberal-leaning main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ) was certain to win all three seats in Shimane, Nagasaki and Tokyo, according to exit polls by national NHK television, Kyodo News and other media.

CPDJ leader Kenta Izumi said the by-elections were

*Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's governing party, stung by an extensive slush funds scandal, appeared to have lost all three seats in Sunday's parliamentary by-elections, according to media exit polls and preliminary results.*

about political reforms. "There are many voters across the country who also want to show (similar) views," he said, adding that he will seek early national elections if reforms by the governing party are too slow.

The loss in the Shimane prefecture was especially shocking to the governing party and could undermine Kishida's clout, as LDP lawmakers may try to bring him down to put a new face ahead of the next general election. Such a move would dash Kishida's hope for running in the party presidential race in September for another three-year term. He can call the election any time before the current term for the lower house expires in October 2025.

Kishida has fought plummeting support ratings since the corruption scandal erupted last year. He has removed a number of Cabinet ministers and others from party executive posts, con-

ducted internal hearings and drafted reform measures, but support ratings for his government have dwindled to around 20%.

The scandal centers on unreported political funds raised through tickets sold for party events. It led to 10 people — lawmakers and their aides — being indicted in January.

More than 80 governing party lawmakers, most of them belonging to a major party faction previously led by assassinated former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, have acknowledged not reporting funds in a possible violation of the Political Funds Control Law. The money received from the long-term practice is alleged to have gone into unmonitored slush funds.

In today's by-elections, LDP did not field own candidates in the Tokyo and Nagasaki districts because of the apparent low support for the party.

## WFP says it has been giving food, cash to 6 mn people monthly in Afghanistan

AGENCIES  
KABUL

As Afghanistan battles a humanitarian crisis, the World Food Programme said it has been distributing food and cash to six million people every month there, according to press.

Through a press release on Saturday, the UN body said 23.7 million people in Afghanistan will need humanitarian aid this year.

About 15.8 million people in Afghanistan would experience food insecurity crises and emergency levels, according to UN estimates.

Significantly, to meet the basic needs of people in Afghanistan, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has sought a budget of USD 3.6 billion, according to Khaama Press.

Meanwhile, there are reports of forced deportations from nearby countries such as Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey, further exacerbating the



*As Afghanistan battles a humanitarian crisis, the World Food Programme said it has been distributing food and cash to six million people every month there, according to press.*

humanitarian crisis that the country has been grappling with for some time.

There are several obstacles that Afghan refugees face when they return home, including the dearth of basic supplies such as clean water, a place to live, jobs, and medical care.

Due to the extreme weather conditions these refugees

are living in, there is an urgent need for both local and international organisations to provide immediate help and support in light of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan, according to the report.

As Afghanistan continues to battle a poor economy, the World Food Programme in 2023, has said that it still

requires USD 26 million to aid one million returning Afghan migrants from Pakistan

The WFP has said that it was able to provide food and cash aid to approximately 280,000 returnees in November.

According to UN figures, nearly 370,000 Afghan migrants were compelled to abandon their homes and belongings in Pakistan after Pakistan set a one-month deadline for the deportation of unlawful Afghan migrants in 2023.

Furthermore, Pakistani authorities have issued an alarming revelation, stating that they intend to deport over one million Afghan refugees by January 2024.

In reaction, the international community has asked Pakistani officials to reconsider their decision, especially given the difficult winter conditions that these refugees would experience in the country, Khaama Press reported.

## Nepal a suitable destination for investment, says PM Prachanda

AGENCIES  
KATHMANDU

Nepal is a suitable destination for investment and there are immense opportunities in the country, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' said on Sunday as he inaugurated a key investment summit here that will see the participation of around 1,800 people from various countries, including 140 from India.

Inaugurating the third edition of the Nepal Investment Summit 2024 with the theme 'Emerging Nepal', Prachanda also said that Nepal is a potential country for investment from legal, geographical and strategic perspectives. "Nepal is a suitable destination for foreign investment," the Prime Minister said as he urged investors from across the globe to seize the opportunity and benefit from it.



Prachanda, who is leading a government dominated by left parties, said that Nepal is fully committed to a liberal economic policy, providing full protection to investors. He said that an investment-friendly environment has been created in the country.

Foreign Minister Barshaman Pun welcomed foreign investment as a catalyst for industrial development, infrastructure development, job creation, export promotion and the transfer of knowledge, skills, and tech-

nology. He expressed confidence that the summit will lead to agreements and collaboration between investors and stakeholders as Nepal's economic indicators are stabilising and showing positive trends.

Speaking on the occasion, India's Ambassador to Nepal Navin Srivastava said that the Government of India, in future, will continue to encourage Indian investors further in Nepal.

"It is a matter of great satisfaction that India is today

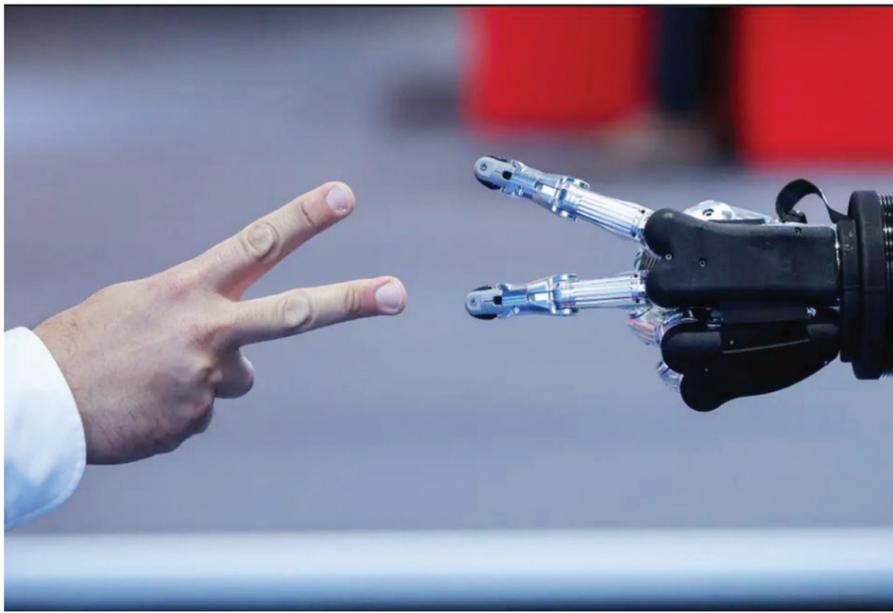
the biggest cumulative investor in Nepal with more than 33 per cent of Nepal's FDI stock currently amounting to nearly Nepali rupees 89 billion," the diplomat said. In a video message, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said that Nepal and India not only share border but also a deep-rooted friendship and a vision for a prosperous future.

"India has always been a trusted partner in Nepal's development journey," he added.

The two-day summit will witness the signing of MoUs between Nepal and its development partners and foreign investors.

Nepal is showcasing around 146 projects for potential investors during the summit, which has attracted investors from around three dozen countries, including India, China, Japan, the UK, the US, the UAE and Germany.

GAMES THEY PLAY



A visitor plays paper, scissors, stone with an SVH servo-electric 5 finger gripping hand at a technology fair in Hanover, Germany. Photo: Agencies

# 'PSYCHOTIC' BREAK LED MAN TO DRIVE TESLA OFF CLIFF

Dharmesh Patel, 43, was experiencing hallucinations and believed his children had been sex trafficked

AGENCIES  
LOS ANGELES

An Indian-origin radiologist who drove his Tesla off a cliff in the US with his wife and children inside allegedly suffered from major depressive disorder and was experiencing a psychotic break at the time of the incident, according to media reports.

Dharmesh Patel from Pasadena, California was charged in January last year with three counts of attempted murder after he drove the family's Tesla off the cliff at Devil's Slide on Highway 1 near Half Moon Bay, according to prosecutors.



Dharmesh Patel, a radiologist, drove his Tesla off the 250-foot Devil Slide's cliff in California with wife and two children, in January 2023. (Photo: X)

Patel, his wife, Neha, and their children — a 7-year-old girl and a 4-year-old boy — miraculously survived. Patel, 43, was experienc-

ing hallucinations, hearing footsteps and believed his children had been sex trafficked, two doctors testified at a hearing on Wednesday in Redwood City.

Wednesday's hearing was a response to an earlier request from Patel who is seeking a mental health diversion in his case, the New York Post newspaper reported.

If a judge grants the doctors' request, Patel would be placed on a two-year treatment plan instead of receiving jail time.

Patel's charges would be dropped if he doesn't commit any crimes during the proposed treatment plan.

## Sunak declines to rule out July election amid MP defection

AGENCIES  
LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Sunday refused to categorically rule out a July general election amid a damaging defection by one of his Conservative Party MPs to the Opposition Labour Party, just days before local and mayoral elections in the country on May 2.

Dan Poulter, a doctor and Central Suffolk and North Ipswich member of Parliament said he will switch his allegiance to the Opposition benches before standing down as a parliamentarian at the next election because he can no longer defend the Tory government's track record on the National Health Service (NHS).

Against the backdrop of this latest embarrassment, Sunak was asked during a



'Sky News' interview that his repeated assertion of a general election in the "second half of this year" could also mean July.

"When it comes to a general election, I've been very clear about that multiple times, and again, I'm not going to say anything more than I've already said, I've been very clear about that," said Sunak, who was then pressed five times to rule out an election during what would be a peak summer month for the UK.

## Forbes journalist under house arrest in Russia on 'fake news' charges

AGENCIES  
MOSCOW

A journalist working for the Russian edition of the US magazine Forbes has been placed under house arrest after being detained for allegedly spreading "fake news" about the armed forces, reported, citing Russian state-run RIA news agency on Saturday.

The journalist, identified as Sergey Mingazov, was ordered into house arrest for two months as he awaits trial after being detained on Friday. Mingazov's lawyer, Konstantin Bubon, said on Friday that the journalist had been detained for "reposting a publication about the events in Bucha (Ukraine)" on Telegram, as reported

## Journalist held in Moscow over videos on Navalny

AGENCIES  
MOSCOW

Another Russian journalist has been detained in Russia for "extremism", accused of making videos for the team of late dissident Alexei Navalny, the Associated Press international news agency said on Sunday.

Sergei Karelin, who has worked for the AP, is the second journalist arrested over such allegations after Konstantin Gorbov, who occasionally worked for Reuters news agency and was detained on Saturday.

"The Associated Press is very concerned by the detention of Russian video journalist Sergei Karelin," the agency told AFP. "We are seeking additional information."

## Border Force staff at Heathrow to go on strike from today

AGENCIES  
LONDON

Border Force staff at Britain's busiest airport, Heathrow, will go on strike for four days from Monday, in protest over changes to their working conditions.

The Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union said more than 300 members of staff would stop working early on Monday in terminals 2, 3, 4 and 5.

A separate union, Unite, has said its workers will go on strike at Heathrow from May 7 to May 13 over plans to

outsource hundreds of roles. Surging inflation and a tough cost of living crisis has led to repeated bouts of strike action in Britain in recent years, with teachers, nurses, train workers and airport staff walking out to protest against low pay and conditions.

Heathrow has previously said it has contingency plans in place for any strike action, and can avoid any impact to passenger journeys.

But why is it happening? The union says around 250 Border Force staff are set to lose their jobs at passport

## Italians give fascist salute on Mussolini execution anniversary

AGENCIES  
ROME

Dozens of people raised their arms in the fascist salute and shouted a fascist chant during ceremonies Sunday to honor Italian dictator Benito Mussolini on the 79th anniversary of his execution.

Dressed in black, the neo-fascist supporters marched through northern Italian towns where Mussolini was arrested and executed at the end of World War II, and also in Predappio, Mussolini's birthplace and final resting place.

Mussolini was stopped by anti-fascist partisans in Dongo, on the shores of Lake Como, on April 27, 1945, as he tried to escape with his lover, Clara Petacci, following the Allied liberation of Italy.

## Protesters drape Palestinian flag at White House

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

Amid the disquiet in Israel over the rising tide of anti-Semitic protests in the US, especially across Ivy League campuses, at a time when support has been pouring in for the people of Gaza in the face of the relentless armed offensive against Hamas; a White House Correspondents' Dinner on Saturday came into focus after a huge Palestinian flag was spotted at the venue, The New York Post reported.

A group of protesters, calling for an end to civilian casualties in Gaza, draped a huge Palestinian flag over the side of the venue, even as they directed slogans at the dinner guests and the motorcade of US President Joe Biden as he arrived at the venue, according to The New York Post.

## Russian drones set hotel ablaze in Ukrainian Black Sea city

AGENCIES  
KYIV

Russian drones early Sunday struck the Black Sea city of Mykolaiv, setting a hotel ablaze and damaging energy infrastructure, the local Ukrainian governor reported, while ammunition shortages continued to hobble Kyiv's troops in the more than 2-year-old war.

Vitaliy Kim, the governor of Ukraine's southern Mykolaiv province, said that Russian drones "seriously damaged" a hotel in its namesake capital, sparking a fire that was later extinguished. Kim also reported that the strike damaged heat-generating infrastructure in the city, but gave no details. He added that there were no casualties.

Russian state agency RIA carried claims that the strike on Mykolaiv targeted a ship-

## Russia threatens West with response if its assets are touched

AGENCIES  
MOSCOW

Russian officials threatened the West on Sunday with a "severe" response in the event that frozen Russian assets are confiscated, promising "endless" legal challenges and tit-for-tat measures.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Russia would never cede territories seized from Ukraine in exchange for the return of frozen assets.

## German police arrests a man for fatal stabbings of 2 Ukrainians

AGENCIES  
BERLIN

Two Ukrainian men were stabbed to death in southern Germany, police said Sunday, and a Russian man was arrested by authorities as a possible suspect in the killings.

The two Ukrainians, who were 23 and 36 years old and lived in the southern German county of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, were killed on the premises of a shopping center in the village of Murnau in Upper Bavaria. Shortly after the slayings on Saturday evening, the police arrested a 57-year-old Russian on suspicion of murder, German news agency dpa reported. The names of the victims and the suspect weren't released in line with German privacy rules. The possible motive for the killings wasn't yet known, authorities said. It also wasn't clear if the three men knew each other. More than 1 million Ukrainian refugees came to Germany since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Germany is also home to a significant Russian immigrant community and 2.5 million Russians of German ancestry who mostly moved to the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

## 'I am a grown man running against a six-year-old': Biden pokes fun at Trump age

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden roasted his predecessor and political rival, Donald Trump and poked fun at his age at the annual dinner for Washington's political and media elites, saying "I am a grown man running against a six-year-old".

The White House Correspondents' Association (WHCA) dinner on Saturday night provided the platform for Biden, 81, to continue his criticism of Trump, 77, with cutting humour.

The high-profile event came against the back-



drop of growing protests over Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war. "Of course, the 2024 election's in full swing and, yes, age is an issue: I'm a grown man running against a 6-year-old," Biden said in a roughly 10-minute speech, referring to former President Trump, whom he called "Sleepy Don."



Speaking to an audience of nearly 3,000 journalists, celebrities and politicians, Biden added, "Age is the only thing we have in common. My vice president actually endorses me." "Donald has had a few tough days lately. You might call it 'stormy' weather," Biden said, an oblique reference to Stormy Daniels, a porn actress who

claims she had an affair and received a hush-money payment in the days before the 2016 election, a deal at the centre of his New York trial.

The president went on to draw a contrast between his reelection campaign, which has ramped up since his State of the Union address last month, and that of Trump. Biden and Trump have both secured the delegates they need to win their respective party nominations in the November 5 presidential race, setting a rematch of their 2020 election showdown.

After a slew of jokes targeting Trump, Biden then took

a more sombre tone to talk about his 2024 rival to the room of journalists, lawmakers and celebrities.

"The defeated former president has made no secret of his attack on our democracy. He said he wants to be a dictator on day one, and so much more. He tells supporters he is their revenge and retribution. When in God's name [have] you ever heard another president say something like that?" Biden asked, referring to Trump's recent remarks. "We have to take this seriously. Eight years ago, you could've written off [that] it was just Trump talk, but no longer."

## ZENDAYA TALKS ABOUT REVIVING HER MUSIC CAREER, SAYS, '... MAYBE ONE DAY'

TGG NETWORK  
WASHINGTON

Actor and singer Zendaya has not ruled out the possibility of reviving her music career eventually. The 'Challengers' star recently appeared on The Jennifer Hudson Show and was asked about her previous music releases, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

"I love music, and it's something that's been special to me," said Zendaya. "I think being in the music industry, maybe it didn't kill the joy of music, but it's when you put music and business together. Sometimes it cannot feel so good."

Zendaya released her debut self-titled album in 2013, which included the breakthrough track 'Replay'. And, while she has prioritised her acting career above music in recent years, she hinted that if the "right timing" comes, she may release something again.



on tunes with other musicians, notably Labrinth, who scored the smash HBO drama 'Euphoria'.

In addition to her conversation with Hudson, Zendaya discussed her surprise presence during Labrinth's set at Coachella last year to sing renditions of "I'm Tired" and "All For Us."

The 'Dune: Part Two' star called the musician "so talented" and a "wonderful person," but revealed that she initially turned down his offer to perform at the music festival. "He asked me if I wanted to come out and

*"I have bad memories of performing live when I was a kid," she explained, but added that she eventually convinced herself to do it, saying she "can't run from this forever."*

"You know, I think if the right timing and it came, because I like creating it for myself, but if there was a moment, maybe I would, you know, put out a little something," the Euphoria actress said before reminding fans: "Don't get crazy! We'll see, but maybe one day."

Though she hasn't recorded any new music in several years, she has collaborated

perform and immediately I was like 'Oh, absolutely not.' I was like, 'I can't do that,'" Zendaya recalled, noting that she had too much "stage fright."

"I have bad memories of performing live when I was a kid," she explained, but added that she eventually convinced herself to do it, saying she "can't run from this forever."

## WE ARE THRILLED TO CELEBRATE SUCCESS OF CREW'S MUSIC: KUMAR TAURANI

TGG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a journey spanning over decades Tips Industries Limited has produced many iconic songs which continue to reverberate across generations and every section of the society. Tips Cassettes and Records limited was founded in 1988 by Kumar S Taurani and Ramesh S Taurani. Tips has now emerged as a leading international film and music company.

After the success of music of the film 'Crew', MD of Tips Industries Limited Kumar Taurani said, "We are thrilled to celebrate the success of the Crew's music album, which has contributed to the film's blockbuster opening and sustained success. Congratulations to Balaji Telefilms, Anil Kapoor Films, Rhea Kapoor, Ekta Kapoor, Shobha Kapoor, and the entire 'Crew' team for their hard work and dedi-



He further said that good music always works.

"Even now we listen to old songs. Earlier music was B2C, we used to sell directly to customers. And now we are reaching to customers through partners. Now profitability is more. My music is exclusive and there is no competition with anyone. Our only competition is to

*In a journey spanning over decades Tips Industries Limited has produced many iconic songs which continue to reverberate across generations and every section of the society.*

acquisition. Their efforts, combined with our Tips's best seller songs, have created this milestone and set new benchmarks in the Indian entertainment landscape."

In a candid conversation Kumar Taurani said, "Tips was started by me and my brother Ramesh Taurani in 1988. There has been many ups and down but overall I am very happy. We have collaborated with artists like Anu Malik, Jatin Lalit, AR Rahman, Pritam, Kumar Sanu, Alka Yagnik and so on."

acquire the rights," he further said.

He further said that in January Tips released 'Merry Christmas' and recently 'Crew' was launched.

"We have two companies. I handle music business. I occasionally make films. We give opportunities to new talents. We are currently producing three to four films and work is going on. There is upcoming movie 'Ishq Vishk Rebound'. Music of the film is by Rochak Kohli. We are working on script of Race 4," he added.

## PICTURE PERFECT

Models walk the ramp to showcase the collection designed by final year students of four-year B. Sc. (Hons). course in Textiles & Fashion Technology during the fashion show organised by J. D. Birla Institute in association with British Council India, in Kolkata. (ANI)



## 'I WAS GIVEN POOJA BHATT REJECTS,' REVEALS SONALI BENDRE

TGG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Recalling her glory days in Bollywood, actress Sonali Bendre revealed some interesting anecdotes on a Humans Of Bombay podcast.

In her hit song in Naraaz, she revealed all her costumes were hand-me-downs of the main lead Pooja Bhatt. Sonali stated, "When I signed Naraaz with Bhatt sahib, the clothes for the second heroine were the rejects of Pooja Bhatt. That's what came to me. But the advantage of that was her rejects were clothes only I could pull off. Suddenly that one song from Naaraz made me."

Sonali Bendre spoke about the importance of looks in Bollywood. The 49-year-old actress said, "Film is a visual medium, that's the business.



There is no need to shy away from it. If you do not look a certain way, you cannot be on screen. You need to have a certain kind of symmetry, and it is only because of that symmetry I got into this

business."

On being an outsider in the Hindu film industry, the actress said, "I remember most of my career, I was not enjoying what I was doing. When I was shoot-

ing Naraaz, I did not even know '5,6,7,8' was the cue. Everyone started to dance while I was still waiting for the director to call 'action.' I was so embarrassed. I felt like an imposter."

## Bipasha Basu shares heartfelt wedding anniversary wish for Karan Singh Grover

TGG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Actor Bipasha Basu melted hearts on social media as she extended warm wishes to her husband, actor Karan Singh Grover, on the occasion of their 8th wedding anniversary.

In a touching Instagram post, Bipasha shared adorable pictures of them, accompanied by a heartfelt caption that read, "My Everything. 8 years from the day we officially became husband and wife. Time has flown by so fast. Thank you for loving me more each day :) The shared photos capture moments of love and affection between Bipasha and Karan, radiating joy and contentment. As soon as the post was shared, fans and friends inundated the comment section with love-filled messages and emoticons,



expressing their adoration for the couple.

Among the well-wishers, 'Bigg Boss' contestant Arti Singh couldn't contain her emotions and left heart emoticons in the comment section, echoing the sentiments of many others who congratulated the couple on their milestone.

Bipasha and Karan's journey of love began on

the set of Bhushan Patel's film 'Alone' in 2015, where they first met and later tied the knot in April 2016, after a year of dating. The couple welcomed their daughter, Devi Basu Singh Grover, on November 12, 2022.

Announcing the arrival of their bundle of joy, Bipasha took to Instagram to share the joyous news

along with the name of their daughter, signifying her as the physical manifestation of their love and blessings.

Meanwhile, Karan Singh Grover, on the professional front, was last seen in Sidharth Anand's upcoming aerial action thriller film 'Fighter', starring alongside Hrithik Roshan and Deepika Padukone.

## SONY RESCHEDULES RELEASE DATES FOR 'KRAVEN THE HUNTER', 'KARATE KID'

TGG NETWORK  
WASHINGTON

Sony Pictures Entertainment has made some last-minute adjustments to its film release calendar, reshuffling the premieres of highly anticipated titles 'Kraven the Hunter' and 'Karate Kid.'

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Sony announced that the villain-centric film 'Kraven the Hunter,' featuring Aaron Taylor-Johnson in the titular role, has been pushed back to December 13, 2024.

This shift from its previously scheduled August 30, 2024, slot comes as the studio seeks out a more advantageous release window. The



vacancy left by 'Kraven' was promptly filled by 'The Karate Kid,' which now moves to May 30, 2025.

The decision to delay 'Kraven the Hunter' follows a series of setbacks, originally slated for release in October 2023. However, the film's production was disrupted by the actors' strike,

compelling Sony to postpone its premiere until the cast could actively participate in promotional activities.

The ensemble cast of 'Kraven' includes Ariana DeBose, Alessandro Nivola, Christopher Abbott, Fred Hechinger, Levi Miller, Mu-

rat Seven, and Russell Crowe, under the direction of J C Chandor. Based on the Marvel antagonist to Spider-Man, the film boasts a screenplay by Richard Wenk, Art Marcum, and Matt Holloway. Despite its new December slot, 'Kraven the Hunter' faces stiff competition from Warner Bros' and New Line's animated feature 'The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Rohirrim,' also set to debut on the same day, as per The Hollywood Reporter.

Meanwhile, 'Karate Kid' takes audiences on a journey with a teenage protagonist from China, played by Ben Wang, who seeks guidance from a seasoned mentor upon moving to the East Coast.

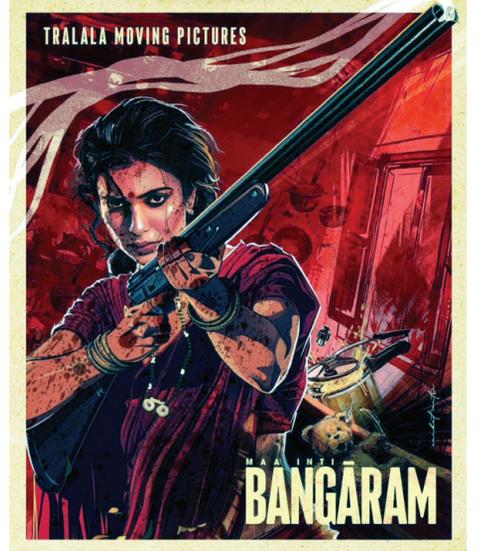
## BRAIN PICKING

"I think there is a lot of space for people to love who they love, and a lot of space for actors to carve a niche for themselves."



- RANI MUKERJI  
(Indian actress)

## SAMANTHA DROPS NEW FILM UPDATE ON HER BIRTHDAY



TGG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

On the occasion of her birthday on Sunday, pan Indian star Samantha Ruth Prabhu announces her maiden fea-

Samantha's feature film debut as a producer. She will also be seen essaying the lead protagonist. The film is expected to have a multilingual release.

*On the occasion of her birthday on Sunday, pan Indian star Samantha Ruth Prabhu announces her maiden feature film venture under her banner Tralala Moving Pictures. She released the motion and static poster.*

ture film venture under her banner Tralala Moving Pictures. She released the motion and static poster.

Tentatively titled Bangaram, this Telugu film marks

Whilst there aren't any further details revealed, Bangaram certainly looks like an earthy, gritty tale that will go on floor soon and is expected to hit theaters in 2025.

## NICOLE KIDMAN RECEIVES AFI LIFE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



TGG NETWORK  
WASHINGTON

Hollywood luminaries gathered in a dazzling spectacle on Saturday night to pay homage to actor Nicole Kidman, as she was bestowed with the esteemed AFI Life Achievement Award.

As per Variety, the ceremony unfolded at the iconic Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, with Kidman's esteemed colleagues and friends, including Meryl Streep, Morgan Freeman, Reese Witherspoon, and Naomi Watts, joining in to celebrate her unparalleled contributions to the world of cinema.

Draped in a resplendent gold sequin gown, Kidman was greeted with a thunderous standing ovation as she made her entrance, accompanied by the timeless melody of 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend.'

The evening kicked off with a lighthearted video featuring Morgan Freeman, playfully spoofing Kidman's recent AMC Theatres ad campaign, emphasizing her ability to infuse even the most sombre moments with a sense of joy, as per Variety.

Freeman, a recipient of the same honour in 2011, took to the stage to extend his heartfelt congratulations to Kidman, reminiscing about his admiration for her work, particularly her role in the beloved musical 'Moulin Rouge'.

He serenaded Kidman with a poignant rendition of Elton John's 'Your Song', encapsulating the sentiment of the evening.

Naomi Watts, Kidman's longtime friend and fellow Australian, fondly recalled their enduring bond, describing Kidman as "the sister I never had."

# DIABETES DEFENCE: MAKHANA AS A BLOOD SUGAR-FRIENDLY SNACK FOR MANAGING DIABETES AND PREVENTING COMPLICATIONS



SATYAJIT HANGE

ing its health benefits remain intact.

## UNDERSTANDING MAKHANA'S ROLE IN DIABETES MANAGEMENT

Diabetes is a complex health condition requiring active management of blood glucose levels through diet, exercise, and medication. Since makhana is celebrated for its low-calorie and minimal fat content, it is deemed an excellent snack for those diagnosed with diabetes. The popular snack is also rich in protein, fiber, magnesium, potassium, and phosphorus, which help maintain overall health and aid in diabetes management. Makhana's high fiber and protein content are particularly beneficial for those with diabetes as these macronutrients help slow down the process of digestion, thereby preventing sudden spikes in blood sugar levels. This slow absorption helps control blood sugar levels and ensures a steady

In the quest to find diabetic-friendly snacks that not only nourish but also delight our palate, makhana, also known as fox nuts, emerges as a superb candidate. Known for its versatility and health benefits, makhana is a cherished snack derived from the seeds of lotus flowers, making it ideal for those looking to manage diabetes. This naturally gluten-free snack offers a combination of low calories and high nutrients, which is known to help maintain blood sugar levels. In addition, its adaptability in various cuisines enhances its appeal, allowing for creative culinary uses while ensur-



energy release throughout the day.

Dietary fiber is also crucial for diabetics as it helps slow the absorption of sugar, allowing for more stable blood sugar levels throughout the day. Makhana provides a good source of fiber, assisting not only in glycemic control but also in digestive health. The protein in makhana further promotes a feeling of fullness, keeping one satiated for a long time, which is vital in both weight and diabetes management. Meanwhile, makhana's low glycemic in-



dex makes it an ideal snack for diabetes patients as it



property of makhana makes it a safe and beneficial snack option for those looking to manage their blood sugar levels effectively.

## INCORPORATING MAKHANA INTO A REGULAR DIET

For optimal health benefits, makhana can be integrated into a diverse diet that includes a variety of nutritious foods. For instance, one can easily consume it as a roasted snack or incorporate it into various preparations, such as chaat, curries, pudding,

Dietary fiber is also crucial for diabetics as it helps slow the absorption of sugar, allowing for more stable blood sugar levels throughout the day. Makhana provides a good source of fiber, assisting not only in glycemic control but also in digestive health.

and even laddus, to enhance their nutritional value and flavor. This versatility and accompanying health benefits make makhana a better alternative to commercially available snacks high in sugars and unhealthy fats.

Regular consumption of makhana can play a role in helping prevent complications associated with diabetes, such as cardiovascular disease and neuropathy, due to its low fat and cholesterol content and high antioxidant levels. By promoting stable blood sugar levels and offer-

ing a nutrient-rich profile, this snack can support the overall well-being of those with diabetes and others seeking healthier snacking alternatives. This is why individuals should consider incorporating makhana into their diet to enjoy a delicious and nutritious way to help manage diabetes and related complications while satiating their hunger cravings without guilt.

*The author is the Cofounder Farmer of Two Brothers Organic Farms.*

## AFLATOON BY SOCIAL: ELEVATING THE HOME DINING EXPERIENCE



### JAHNAVI

Aflatoon by Social stands out as a beacon of excellence, bringing the rich flavours of North Indian cuisine straight to your doorstep. Recently, we had the pleasure of in-

flavours one would savour at a roadside dhaba. Creamy, rich, and infused with the earthy goodness of lentils, this dish transported us to the heart of Punjab with every spoonful. For chicken lovers was the Creamy AF But-



dulging in their gastronomic delights, and here's a breakdown of all the dishes we feasted on in the comfort of our home!

We started with the Pickled Paneer Tikka which was a symphony of flavors that danced on the palate. The succulent paneer, marinated to perfection with tangy pickled spices, charred just right to achieve that smoky essence, left us craving for more with every bite. It was a delightful balance of tanginess and spice that tantalized our taste buds. The Lotus Stem Shammi Kebab was a revelation in itself. Each bite offered a crunchy exterior giving way to a melt-in-your-mouth interior filled with aromatic spices and the subtle earthiness of lotus stem. It was a unique twist to the traditional kebab, showcasing the chef's creativity and mastery of flavours.

No North Indian feast is complete without a hearty serving of Dal Makhni, and Aflatoon by Social did not disappoint! We started our main course with their Dhaba Style Dal Makhni, which was a soul-warming dish, reminiscent of the

ter Chicken. True to its name, the Creamy AF Butter Chicken was an indulgent delight that left us speechless. The tender chicken pieces bathed in luscious, creamy gravy, infused with the perfect balance of spices, created a burst of flavours that lingered long after the last bite. It was comfort food at its finest, exuding warmth and nostalgia with every mouthful.

To conclude our at-home culinary experience, we savoured the Beetal Leaf Rasmalai, a traditional dessert that left us enchanted. The delicate sweetness of the remain, paired with the refreshing aroma of beetal leaf, was a delightful finale to our meal. Each bite was a celebration of authenticity and craftsmanship, leaving us with a lingering sense of satisfaction.

From the impeccable presentation to the tantalizing flavours, every dish showcased the culinary prowess and dedication of the chefs behind the scenes. If you're craving an unforgettable North Indian dining experience from the comfort of your home, look no further than Aflatoon by Social.

## NUTRITIOUS & DELICIOUS LUNCH IDEAS FOR KIDS

### TDG NETWORK

Lunchtime for kids is not just about satisfying hunger; it's an opportunity to provide them with the nutrition they need to thrive physically and mentally. With busy schedules and picky eaters to contend with, coming up with lunch ideas that are both nutritious and appealing can sometimes feel like a daunting task. However, by incorporating a variety of wholesome ingredients and getting creative with presentation, packing a lunchbox that kids will love is entirely achievable. Here are some ideas to help you create balanced and flavorful lunches that will fuel your child's body and mind throughout the day.

**Balanced Bento Boxes:** Bento boxes are not only visually appealing but also offer a convenient way to pack a balanced meal. Include compartments for protein, grains, fruits, vegetables, and a healthy treat to ensure your child gets a variety of nutrients. Fill one section with slices of grilled chicken or tofu, another with whole grain rice or pasta salad, and the remaining compartments with colorful fruits and vegetables like carrot sticks, grape tomatoes, and berries. Add a

fillings like tuna salad, grilled vegetables, or bean spreads for variety.

**Creative Sandwiches:** Transform the classic sandwich into a culinary masterpiece by thinking outside the breadbox. Swap traditional sliced bread for whole grain pitas, bagels, or English muffins to add texture and flavor. Get creative with fillings by incorporating ingredients like lean proteins (e.g., grilled chicken, turkey, or hard-boiled eggs), creamy spreads (e.g., Greek yogurt-based dressings or avocado), and crunchy vegetables (e.g., lettuce, cucumber, and shredded carrots). Cut sandwiches into fun shapes using cookie cutters or make mini sliders for bite-sized appeal.

**Homemade Lunchables:** Take inspiration from store-bought lunchables and create your own healthier version at home. Fill a divided container with a variety of nutritious components such as whole grain crackers, sliced cheese, lean deli meats, sliced hard-boiled eggs, and fresh fruits or vegetables. This allows your child to mix and match their favorite ingredients while still ensuring a well-rounded meal. You can also include dips like hummus or yogurt for added flavor and nutrients.

## BENTOS FOR KIDS!



small treat like a piece of dark chocolate or a homemade granola bar to round out the meal.

**Wrap It Up:** Kids love hand-held foods, making wraps an excellent option for lunchtime. Use whole grain tortillas or wraps as the base and fill them with a combination of protein, veggies, and spreads. For example, spread hummus or mashed avocado on a tortilla, layer on sliced turkey or cheese, and add shredded lettuce, cucumber, and bell pepper strips. Roll it up tightly and slice into bite-sized pinwheels for a fun twist. You can also experiment with different

Providing nutritious and delicious lunches for kids doesn't have to be a challenge. By incorporating a variety of wholesome ingredients and thinking creatively about presentation, you can pack lunchboxes that will fuel your child's body and mind. Whether you opt for balanced bento boxes, creative sandwiches, or homemade lunchables, the key is to include a mix of protein, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables to keep your child energized and focused throughout the day. With these ideas, you'll be able to make lunchtime both nutritious and enjoyable for your little ones.



# REDEFINING SOLO TRAVEL: SHIMLA'S MINIMALIST HOTELS OFFER SANCTUARY AND CONNECTION

## TDG NETWORK

In the tranquil slopes above Shimla, a revolution in solo travel is underway, offering a fresh perspective on what it means to explore alone. Far from the standard offerings of bustling tourist hubs, a new breed of Minimalist Hotels, caters specifically to lone adventurers seeking solitude and simplicity. This novel concept isn't just a place to stay—it's a transformative experience designed to foster personal reflection and a deep, meaningful engagement with the natural world.

### EMBRACING MINIMALISM: THE CORE

At the heart of this emerging trend is the minimalist design ethos of these unique hotels. Everything, from the architecture to the guest experience, is stripped down to the essentials while maintaining the warmth that the hospitality industry prom-



ises. This approach isn't about skimping on comfort but about enhancing the quality of the stay by removing the unnecessary clutter that often accompanies more traditional accommodations.

### STREAMLINED SIMPLICITY

The design principle is simple: create a seamless experience that complements the independent spirit of solo travellers. The check-in process is straightforward, rooms are equipped with essen-

tials, and the overall aesthetic promotes a sense of calm and order. This simplicity allows guests to focus on what truly matters—immersing themselves in the peace and beauty of their surroundings.

### SANCTUARIES OF SOLITUDE

Each room serves as a private retreat, offering quiet and comfort, perfect for reflection and rejuvenation.

The locations of these hotels are intentionally



chosen to be slightly removed from the usual tourist trails, ensuring a peaceful environment. Here, the chaotic noise of crowded markets and tourist spots gives way to the soothing sounds of nature.

### CONNECTION WITH

## NATURE AND COMMUNITY

One of the standout features of these minimalist hotels is their integration into the natural and cultural landscape of the Shimla region. Positioned to maximize both privacy and scenic vistas, these accommodations encourage

guests to step outside and engage directly with their environment.

### ECO-CONSCIOUS LIVING

Sustainability is a key focus, with features like solar heating and water-saving fixtures standard. The hotels' operations are designed to have minimal environmental impact, resonating with travellers who are increasingly conscious of their ecological footprint.

### CULTURAL IMMERSION

Beyond environmental sustainability, there is a strong emphasis on cultural integration. Activi-



ties such as local farming experiences and artisan workshops not only help guests connect with the local community but also promote a sustainable tourism economy.

These experiences provide insights into the local way of life, enriching the travel experience by fostering genuine connections and understanding.



Gautam Munjal

## SRI LANKA'S LUXURY DMC SERENDIPITY TARGETS SUPER NICHE SEGMENT IN INDIAN TOURISM MARKET

### TDG NETWORK

Serendipity, Sri Lanka's luxury Destination Management Company (DMC) specializing in hosting best-in-class tailored experiences throughout the island destination, has announced its strategic focus on targeting the super niche segment of the Indian tourism market. With a focus on the growing Indian outbound travel market, Serendipity aims to tap into the growing demand for high-end, personalized travel experiences among Indian travellers.

India has consistently ranked among the top five leading primary markets for Sri Lanka's inbound tourism, making it an attractive prospect for tourism-related businesses. In 2023 alone, India contributed to over 300,000 tourist arrivals, marking a noteworthy uptick in the overall growth of the tourism sector. Recent statistics further underscore this trend, with approximately 30,000 Indian travellers visiting Sri Lanka in March alone. Notably, the first quarter of 2024 witnessed an influx of around 96,000 Indian tourists to Sri Lanka, indicative of a steady rise in Indian outbound travel.

The proximity of Sri Lanka to India, coupled with short flight durations and hassle-free visa services, positions the island nation as an appealing destination for Indian travellers seeking short-haul luxury vacations. Serendipity recognizes this unique advantage and is



poised to capitalize on it by offering curated experiences tailored to meet the diverse preferences of luxury-seeking Indian travellers.

Commenting on the strategy, Shaleen Shanthikumar, Director, Serendipity Ex-



Shaleen

perience said, "India represents a lucrative market for luxury travel experiences, and we are excited to announce our targeted approach towards catering to the super niche segment of Indian travellers. By focusing on delivering unmatched

luxury, exclusivity, and tailored services, we aim to redefine the travel experiences of Indian tourists visiting Sri Lanka."

Serendipity is poised to elevate travel experiences beyond conventional offer-

ings, with an emphasis on crafting long-lasting memorable journeys. With the recent trends indicating steady growth in tourist arrival from India to Sri Lanka, Serendipity has an optimistic outlook on the potential for revenue growth and market

expansion.

Serendipity is popular for its expertise in hosting memorable travel trails throughout Sri Lanka while offering luxury and personalization at every touchpoint.

With a well-planned itinerary that explores secluded beaches to provide travellers with immersive cultural encounters, the Serendipity Experiences is a suite of bespoke adventures tailored to the unique preferences of each traveller.

With the Serendipity Collections, guests are spoiled with luxurious services and offerings in handpicked luxury villas designed by acclaimed architects and hosted by individuals dedicated to providing exceptional hospitality.

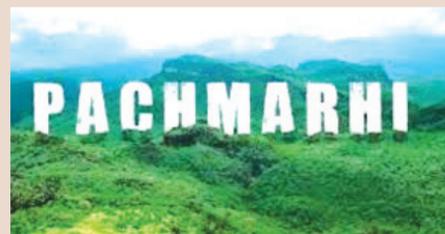
Sail Lanka - Serendipity's Luxury Cruise service offers an incomparable luxury cruising experience, showcasing extravagant luxury vessels, flawless service, and treasured coastal views.

## Exploring the enchanting waterfalls of Pachmarhi

### TDG NETWORK

Nestled amidst the lush forests of Madhya Pradesh, Pachmarhi is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered. Known as the "Queen of Satpura," this picturesque hill station is blessed with natural beauty in abundance, including its mesmerizing waterfalls. In this article, we embark on a journey to explore the enchanting waterfalls of Pachmarhi, each a testament to the region's breathtaking landscape and rich biodiversity.

One of the most iconic waterfalls in Pachmarhi is Bee Falls, also known as Jamuna



Prapat. Cascading from a height of approximately 35 meters, Bee Falls is a sight to behold, especially during the monsoon season when it is in full flow. The waterfall derives its name from the bee-like sound it makes as the water plunges into the pool below. Visitors can trek through the dense forest to reach the base of the falls, where they can take a refreshing dip in the cool, crystal-clear waters.

Another must-visit waterfall in Pachmarhi is Apsara Falls, named after the celestial nymphs of Hindu mythology. Tucked away in a secluded corner of the forest, Apsara Falls exudes an otherworldly charm, with its gentle cascades and verdant surroundings. The trek to Apsara Falls is a memorable experience in itself, as visitors traverse narrow pathways and rocky terrain, surrounded by towering trees and the soothing sounds of nature. Upon reaching the falls, one is greeted by a serene pool of water, perfect for



swimming or simply basking in the tranquility of the surroundings.

For those seeking adventure, Rajat Prapat, also

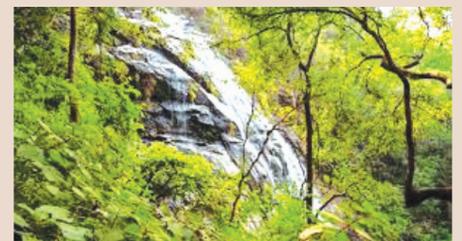
is greeted by a pristine pool of water, perfect for a refreshing swim or a leisurely picnic amidst nature's splendor.

Last but not least, Silver Falls, also known as Rajat Prapat, offers a mesmerizing sight with its silvery cascades and tranquil surroundings. Located in the heart of the forest, Silver Falls is a popular spot for nature lovers and photography enthusiasts alike. The trek to Silver Falls takes visitors through winding pathways and dense foliage, providing ample opportunities to immerse oneself in the beauty of the natural surroundings. Upon reaching the falls, one

is greeted by the sight of water glistening in the sunlight, casting a magical spell on all who behold it.

In conclusion, the waterfalls of Pachmarhi are a true testament to the region's natural beauty and rich biodiversity.

From the thundering cascades of Bee Falls to the serene pools of Apsara Falls, each waterfall offers a unique experience that is sure to leave a lasting impression on visitors. So, the next time you find yourself in Pachmarhi, be sure to explore these enchanting waterfalls and immerse yourself in the beauty of nature's wonders.



## JACKS' CENTURY, KOHLI'S 70 LEAD RCB TO COMFORTABLE WIN OVER TITANS

TDG NETWORK  
AHMEDABAD

A fiery 41-ball century by Will Jacks and Virat Kohli's unbeaten 70 runs helped Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to a 9-wicket victory over Gujarat Titans (GT) with four overs to spare in the 45th encounter of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Sunday.

The RCB openers Faf Du Plessis and Virat Kohli started off the chase magnificently. Both batters put on a partnership of 40 runs in just 22 balls. On the next ball, Du Plessis was dismissed after scoring 24 runs off 12 balls with the help of three sixes and a four.

After the Bengaluru-based franchise skipper's dismissal, Will Jacks came out to bat along with Kohli.

The visitors brought up their fifty in the sixth over as Kohli slammed a maximum on the third ball of the over



bowled by Sai Kishore.

On the last ball of the 10th over, Kohli smashed a four on the bowling of Rashid Khan. In the 11th over, the Bangalore side brought up their 100 runs as Kohli took a single on the bowling of Mohit Sharma.

Jacks completed his fifty on the second ball of the 15th over as he smashed a boundary on the bowling of Mohit.

In the same over, the team brought up their 150 too.

Jacks completed his century on the last ball of the 16th over, which was bowled by Rashid. This hit brought up RCB's third victory in the ongoing 17th edition of the IPL.

Jacks and Kohli built an unbeaten partnership of 166 runs in just 74 balls. While Jacks played an unbeaten knock of 100 runs off 41 balls

(ten sixes and five boundaries), Kohli scored an unbeaten 70 runs from 44 balls (six fours and three maximums).

For the hosts, only Sai Kishore was a successful bowler in the match. He picked up one wicket and conceded 30 runs in his spell of three overs. Earlier, after winning the toss, Du Plessis sent the Titans to bat in the first inning. Wriddhiman Saha (5 runs from 4 balls) and Shubman Gill (16 runs from 19 balls) opened for the hosts but could only manage a 6-run partnership. Saha failed to stand still against Swapnil Singh, who dismissed the GT wicketkeeper in the sixth ball of the first over.

**Brief score:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru 206/1 (Will Jacks 100\*, Virat Kohli 70\*, Sai Kishore 1-30) vs Gujarat Titans 200/3 (Sai Sudharshan 84\*, Shahrulkh Khan 58, David Miller 26\*, Swapnil Singh 1/23).

## PCB appoints Kirsten, Gillespie as men's head coaches

TDG NETWORK  
LAHORE

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has appointed Gary Kirsten as the white-ball head coach and Jason Gillespie as the red-ball head coach of the Pakistan men's cricket team.

Azhar Mahmood has also been appointed as an assistant coach across all formats.

These appointments have been made for a two-year period following a rigorous recruitment process, and an announcement in this regard was made by the PCB on Sunday.

Kirsten will assume his role immediately after completing his assignment in the Indian Premier League. During his tenure, in addition to the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 and other bilateral white-ball series,



Kirsten will lead the team for next year's ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan, ACC T20 Asia Cup 2025, and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 in India and Sri Lanka.

Gillespie will take charge for the ICC World Test Championship fixtures against Bangladesh (at home in August), followed by Tests against England (at home in October) and South Africa (away in December) in the 2024-25 season.

PCB chairman Mohsin

feelings after being appointed the head coach of the Pakistan Test team. "I am grateful to the PCB for their faith in my abilities and giving me the honour of coaching one of the most highly-regarded and talented cricket teams in the traditional format of the sport. Leading the Pakistan cricket team is a big achievement for any coach, given its rich legacy and passionate fan base," Gillespie said.

Kirsten also shared his sentiments, saying, "It's a tremendous honour to be entrusted with the responsibility of coaching the Pakistan men's national team in white-ball cricket and to rejoin the international cricket arena after some time."

"I eagerly anticipate this opportunity and aim to contribute positively to the Pakistan men's national team in limited-overs cricket," he added.

## Athletic Bilbao's Nico Williams abused at Atletico Madrid

TDG NETWORK  
MADRID

Athletic Bilbao forward Nico Williams said he was racially abused by "stupid people" during his team's 3-1 defeat at Atletico Madrid on Saturday in La Liga. Williams spoke with the referee after hearing the alleged abuse when he was preparing to take a corner in the first half, and play was held momentarily as supporters were warned. The Spain winger scored shortly afterwards and celebrated by tapping his arm, indicating the colour of his skin. "I went to take the corner and I heard monkey noises," Williams told DAZN.

"There weren't many of them. There are stupid people everywhere... I hope this changes bit by bit."

Williams said his celebration was a response to those who insulted him. "It was with a bit of anger, it's not



normal to be insulted for the colour of your skin," he added.

Atletico Madrid midfielder Koke offered Williams "support and strength" after the game. "In our society there is no place for people who insult like that," said Koke.

"Atletico Madrid and all our fans are in favour of Nico and against these situations, which should not happen in a football stadium or in society. "It can't happen in the year we're in or the society we're in." Spanish football has suffered a spate of racist incidents in recent years, many of which have been aimed at Real Madrid forward Vinicius Junior.

## Indian archers shine at World Cup

TDG NETWORK  
SHANGHAI

The Indian men's recurve team of Tarundeep Rai, Pravin Jadhav, and Dhiraj Bommadevara secured a gold at the ongoing Archery World Cup 2024 in Shanghai on Sunday. Meanwhile, Indian shooter Deepika Kumari won silver in the women's individual recurve event.

In the mixed team recurve event, India's Ankita Bhakat and Dhiraj Bommadevara claimed a bronze. India concluded the Archery World Cup 2024 with a total of eight medals: five gold, two silvers, and one bronze. On Saturday, Indian archers delivered a stunning performance as the compound archers clinched five medals, including four golds.

The Indian men's recurve team, comprising Tarundeep Rai, Pravin Jadhav, and Dhiraj Bommadevara, faced off against Republic of Korea's Kim Woojin and Kim Je Deok, Lee Woo Seok, securing a remarkable 5-1 victory. This win marked



### Men's recurve team secures gold, Deepika Kumari wins silver

India's first World Cup gold medal in men's recurve team archery in 14 years.

"HISTORY REPEATED! The #TOPS Athlete trio of Tarundeep Rai, Dhiraj Bommadevara and Pravin Jadhav become part of history as the Indian Recurve team defeats Korean Recurve Team after 14 years. The South Koreans are formidable in this event, having won 6 out of a possible 9 Olympic Recurve Team Gold medals. Let's give it up

for this magnificent team," SAI Media wrote on X.

In the mixed team recurve event, the Indian pair of Ankita and Dhiraj clinched a bronze medal by defeating Mexico 6-0.

Star Indian shooter Deepika Kumari earned a silver medal in the women's individual recurve event by defeating South Korea's Nam Suhyeon 6-0 in the semifinals. However, she fell short against South Korea's Lim Sihyeon in the gold medal

match.

"RETURNING IN STYLE! Ace archer and former World no 1 @ImDeepikaK bags Silver medal on her return to #Archery World Cup after losing the final to South Korea's Lim Si-Hyeon. India end the #ArcheryWorldCup Stage 1 in Shanghai with a total of 8 medals, creating history for highest number of Gold medals and the highest Medal tally at a single World Cup stage. A historic outing for team India," SAI Media wrote on X.

This was Deepika's second consecutive medal upon her return to the international tournament after taking a break.

## Youth National Games kick off in Delhi

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Society for Transformation, Inclusion, and Recognition through Sports (STAIRS) Foundation launched the Youth National Games on Saturday at Delhi's Indira Gandhi Stadium, launching an exciting three-day sports extravaganza featuring over 5,000 gold medalists from 15 states and union territories.

Amit Sath, a Bollywood actor and STAIRS brand ambassador, also attended the event.

Over the next three days, the athletes will compete in

*Amit Sath, a Bollywood actor and STAIRS brand ambassador, also attended the event.*

a variety of sports, including basketball, karate, taekwondo, badminton, volleyball, Kabaddi, table tennis, kho kho, football athletics, skating, and cricket, at venues such as Indira Gandhi Stadium in Delhi, ensuring a thrilling and diverse competitive environment.



## Bayer Leverkusen keep unbeaten streak alive, Harry Kane eyes Bundesliga goal record

TDG NETWORK  
MUNICH

Robert Andrich scored with the last kick of the match to extend Bayer Leverkusen's unbeaten run to a 46th game this season with a 2-2 home draw against Stuttgart on Saturday as Harry Kane closed in a Bundesliga goals record. With champions Leverkusen facing their first loss of the season in any competition trailing 2-1 late in stoppage time, Andrich hammered in a loose ball to equalise in the sixth min-



ute of stoppage time. The strike keeps Leverkusen's remarkable streak of late goals alive, with Xabi Alonso's side doing the same at

Borussia Dortmund in the seventh minute of injury time for a 1-1 draw last week.

Two goals in the space of nine minutes to start the

second half from Chris Fuehrich and Deniz Undav put Stuttgart on course, with Amine Adli pulling one back after 61 minutes.

Leverkusen built pressure but could not break through, putting their hopes of becoming the first team to go a full Bundesliga season without defeat in doubt.

But they then won a free kick and Florian Wirtz curled the ball into the box, Andrich snapping up a rebound to score.

## Nadal shines in Madrid win, says needs time to find full power

TDG NETWORK  
MADRID

Rafael Nadal avenged his defeat to Alex de Minaur from Barcelona with a 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 victory over the Australian on Saturday to extend his stay in Madrid on his final appearance at his home tournament but admitted he still "needs time" to return to his competitive peak. Nadal's farewell tour has pitted him against De Minaur twice in as many weeks but this time the result was reversed as the 22-time Grand Slam champion advanced to a third-round meeting with Argentina's Pedro Cachin.

In front of a capacity crowd that included the King of Spain, Felipe VI, French football icon Zinedine Zidane, and Real Madrid winger Vinicius Junior, Nadal dug deep to dismiss the world number 11, despite admitting ahead of the tournament he was still struggling with numerous physical issues.

It was an impressive performance from the 37-year-old but he immediately dismissed the idea it was anywhere near his vintage form.



*Stefanos Tsitsipas suffered a surprise second round exit at the hands of world number 118 Thiago Monteiro.*

"No, not yet. It needs time," said Nadal on court. "To play over two hours means a lot to me and the atmosphere here is just a joke. "Just step by step and let's see how I recover."

Five-time Madrid champion Nadal said he will not make a decision on playing at the French Open until af-

ter Rome which starts next week, and explained the key factor that would determine his participation.

"It's not a thing about losing or winning. It's about going on court there with the feeling that I can fight and I can be competitive," said the record 14-time French Open champion.

"So if I am not able to go on court and dream, for me it doesn't make sense to go. I prefer to stay with all the amazing memories that I have."

Stefanos Tsitsipas suffered a surprise second round exit at the hands of world number 118 Thiago Monteiro. Tsitsipas, who arrived in the Spanish capital with only one defeat in 11 matches on clay this term, lost 6-4, 6-4 to the Brazilian qualifier in just over 90 minutes.

## Indian teams make positive start in Thomas and Uber Cup

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Indian shuttlers had a good in office on the opening day of the Thomas and Uber Cup badminton tournament with both the teams registering 4-1 wins over their respective rivals in their opening ties on Saturday. Ashmita Chaliha produced an inspired show to stun higher-ranked Michelle Li as the Indian women's team notched up a clinical win over Canada and then their male counterparts, defend-

ing champions, too dished out the same result against Thailand in their Thomas Cup Group C encounter. The left-handed Chaliha, ranked 53rd, showed great mental resolve and tenacity as she outwitted world No. 25 Li, a gold and silver medalist at the 2014 and 2022 Commonwealth Games, 26-24 24-22 in a 42-minute opening singles clash.

Chaliha, who was part of India's maiden Asia Team Championships win in February, took over the lead-

ership role in the absence of the top guns including P V Sindhu and delivered against Li, who is on a comeback trail after undergoing surgery for a meniscus tear on her right knee last August.

Young women's doubles pair of Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra, who had claimed the senior national championships title last December, then beat Catherine Choi and Jeslyn Chow 21-12 21-10 to put India 2-0 ahead. Isharani Baruah defeated

Wen Yu Zhang 21-13 21-12 to help India take an unassailable 3-0 lead.

In the second women's doubles, Simran Singh and Ritika Thaker went down 19-21 15-21 to Jackie Dent and Crystal before national champion Anmol Kharb beat Eliana Zhang 21-15 21-11 in the fifth and final match to complete the comfortable win. Bigger clashes lie ahead for the young Indian side as it will face Singapore and China on Sunday and Tuesday respectively in Group A.