

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | THURSDAY | 9 MAY 2024



## WEATHER

Max: 36°C  
Min: 28°C  
Rainfall: nil

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sobakrithu:** Chithirai 26  
**Tithi:** Pradhama  
**Star:** Karthigai  
**Rahukalam:** 1.30 pm to 3 pm  
**Yamagandam:** 6 am to 7.30 am  
**PRAYERS**  
**Fajar:** 5.00 am  
**Zuher:** 1.00 am  
**Asar:** 4.00 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.31 pm  
**Isha:** 8.00 pm

## INDIA bloc leaders to meet EC today

New Delhi: Leaders of the opposition INDIA bloc will meet the Election Commission on Thursday over their demand to promptly release the absolute voter turnout figures in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls after each phase, sources said. They will also raise the issue of alleged "use of religious symbols" by the BJP in their campaign, they said. The sources said leaders from the INDIA bloc will meet the full bench of the Election Commission of India on Thursday afternoon, submit a memorandum and also discuss the issues with the poll panel.

## IIT-M raises record ₹513 cr in 2023-24

Chennai: Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) has raised a record Rs 513 crore in funding from its alumni, industry and individual donors during the financial year (FY) 2023-24. V. Kamakoti, director, IIT-M told reporters here on Wednesday that the Institute has also attracted total new pledges of Rs 717 crore from alumni and corporate partners during the FY 2023-24.

## Video journalist trampled to death by wild elephant

Thiruvananthapuram: A video journalist from a Malayalam news channel was trampled to death by a wild elephant while he was working on an assignment in Palakkad district. The incident occurred on Wednesday morning when video journalist A.V. Mukesh, 34, of Mathrubhumi News was on an assignment to cover the wild elephants that had strayed into a residential area in Malampuzha. As he was taking the visuals a wild elephant unexpectedly charged at the crew. While the reporter and driver managed to run to safety, the wild elephant trampled Mukesh. The video journalist who sustained serious injuries in the attack was rushed to the district hospital in Palakkad, but he could not be saved.

## COUNTER POINT



I came to know that you are attending my rival party candidate's rallies!

## FINANCIAL CHRONICLE | 10

CEA: India's FY24 GDP growth may touch 8%



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# Modi: Rahul took tempo loads of money from Ambani-Adani

## Send CBI or ED to probe money trail, Rahul dares PM

N. VAMSI SRINIVAS | DC HYDERABAD, MAY 8

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday alleged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi received "tempo loads" of ill-gotten money from the country's two top industrialists Adani and Ambani after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections were announced and, as a result, he stopped criticising them. Speaking at a public meeting in the temple town of Vemulawada in Telangana, the Prime Minister demanded that the Congress explain to the nation on whether "Shehzada" (Rahul Gandhi), who for the past five years chanted "Ambani-Adani", stuck a "sauda" (deal) with them and stopped abusing them. "Zaroor daal me kuch kaala hai. Paanch saal tak Ambani, Adani ko gaali dee, aur raaton raat gaaliya band ho gayi. Matlab koi na koi chori kaa maal tempo bhar bhar ke aap ne paaya hai (definitely, something is amiss. For five years, you criticised Ambani and Adani, but overnight you stopped abusing them. It means you have received some or the other ill-gotten money loaded in tempos)," he said. ■ P7



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with women BJP leaders during a public meeting for Lok Sabha polls in Warangal in Telangana on Wednesday. — PTI

# Pitroda makes racist comments on Indians, resigns as IOC chief

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 8

Amid the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, Congress leader Sam Pitroda sparked another controversy when he compared Indians to people of different origins, embarrassing his party and handing over to the BJP another issue to attack the Opposition with. Sure

enough, Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the BJP's all-out attack on the Congress over Mr Pitroda's racial analogy, forcing the grand old party on the back foot and its overseas chief to resign on Wednesday. Speaking to a news outlet, Mr Pitroda described India as a "... diverse country... where people in the east look like Chinese,

people in the west look like Arabs, people in the north look like maybe whites, and people in the south look like Africans". Campaigning in Telangana, Mr Modi was quick to pounce on Mr Pitroda's remark, claiming that the Congress sought to defeat President Droupadi Murmu in the presidential poll as her "skin colour is dark". ■ P7

## SC ORDER ON KEJRIWAL'S BAIL PLEA TOMORROW

RAKESH K. SINGH | DC NEW DELHI, MAY 8

The Supreme Court will deliver its order on granting interim bail to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a money laundering case linked to the excise policy "scam" on Friday. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who headed the bench that heard Mr Kejriwal's petition against his arrest in the case by the Enforcement Directorate, said, "We will pronounce the interim order (on interim bail) on Friday. The main matter related to the challenge to arrest will also be taken on the same day."

Justice Khanna, who was sitting in a different combination with Justices M.M. Sundresh and Bela M. Trivedi, made the remark after additional solicitor general S.V. Raju. Full report ■ P5

# All govt schools to get net connection

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, MAY 8

All government schools, starting from the primary to higher secondary level, would be provided with 100 Mbps internet connections with the help of the public sector BSNL in the coming academic year, starting in June, with a view to providing a better learning experience to students and also equipping them to face the future in the hi-tech world. An official release on Wednesday said the modern facility had already been set up in 5,907 of the total 6023 higher secondary and high schools, 3,267 of the total 6,992 middle schools and 8,711 of the 24,338 primary schools in the state and the rest of the 19,668 schools would be equipped with 100 Mbps internet connection by May-end.

## Getting Connected

100 Mbps connectivity in all government schools from this academic year.

19,668

schools to benefit

Schools to get hi-tech labs, too

₹1,000 monthly assistance to be extended to boys who join higher education courses



The state government that was keen on expanding technology to schools has already set up 8,180 hi-tech labs at a cost of Rs 519.73 crore and 22,931 smart classrooms, costing Rs 455.32 crore benefitting 46,12,742 students, the release said, adding that those schools were getting 5 to 6 Mbps internet connection. ■ P7

# DISMISS HARYANA MINISTRY: CONGRESS

Chandigarh, May 8: The Congress on Wednesday sought the imposition of President's rule followed by fresh polls in Haryana after three Independent MLAs withdrew support to the BJP dispensation, reducing the Nayab Singh Saini government to a

minority in the state assembly. The party said it would write to Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya to demand that the BJP government be dismissed. It also asked the JJP, the INLD and Independent MLA Balraj

Kundu to write similar letters to the governor to give credence to their claim of opposing the BJP. Talking to reporters in Sirsa on Wednesday, Mr Saini asserted that his government was not in trouble and was working strongly.

# Canada repeats charge of Indian hand in Nijjar killing

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 8

Bilateral tensions between India and Canada showed no signs of abating, as Canada once again accused India of involvement in the killing of Canadian citizen and pro-Khalistan extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on its soil in June last year. The accusation comes just a day after New Delhi again criticised Canada for "providing criminal and secessionist elements with a safe haven and

political space". "Our job is to protect Canadians and we stand by the allegations that a Canadian was killed on Canadian soil by Indian agents," Canada's minister of foreign affairs Melanie Joly said in Ottawa on Wednesday. Ms Joly added that a probe by the Canadian police was underway and neither she nor other officials from her government would further comment on the issue. "What I am telling though on the question of

relationship with India, I think it is always better when diplomacy remains private. The nation will continue to stand by protecting Canadians, making sure that we protect our sovereignty and in the end also protect our rule of law," the Canadian minister said. After a pro-Khalistan rally on Sunday at Malton in Canada showed provocative images, including one purportedly showing the Indian Prime Minister behind bars.

# Crew protest: A-I Ex cancels flights

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, MAY 8

Hundreds of passengers were stranded at several airports after more than 80 flights of Air India Express got cancelled Tuesday night after over 200 senior cabin crew reported sick to protest against alleged mismanagement at the Tata Group-owned airline. Apart from going on mass sick leave, the staff has also switched off their mobiles. This turbulence in the Tata group comes nearly a month after another carrier Vistara witnessed pilot woes, forcing it to cancel more than 100 flights.

An Air India Express spokesperson said the airline is engaging with the cabin crew members to understand the reasons for reporting sick and apologised for the flight disruptions. Meanwhile, the civil aviation ministry has sought a report from Air India Express. "A section of our cabin crew has reported sick at the last minute, starting last night, resulting in flight delays and cancellations. While we are engaging with the crew to understand the reasons behind these occurrences, our teams are actively addressing this issue to minimise any inconvenience caused to our guests as a result." Full report ■ P5

# VELAYUTHAN, BJP'S FIRST MLA IN TN, IS DEAD

Chennai, May 8: C. Velayuthan, who was the BJP's first MLA in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, died on Wednesday in his home district of Kanniyakumari, the party said. He was 73. Velayuthan was elected from Padmanabhapuram Assembly constituency in Kanniyakumari district, where the party has several pockets of influence and cadre strength. In 1996, Velayuthan defeated his nearest rival Bala Janathipathy of the DMK and won by a margin of 4,540 votes. He was associated with Sevabharathi, an RSS affiliated social service organisation and took part in the anti-Emergency movement from 1975 to 1977. Full report ■ P3

# 'Live-in is imported, stigma in India'

## Chhattisgarh HC says live-in relationship a "stigma" in Indian culture

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC RAIPUR, MAY 8

The Chhattisgarh high court has held that a live-in relationship is an "imported" philosophy and considered a "stigma" in Indian culture. While dismissing a petition seeking custody of a child born from a live-in

relationship, a division bench of the high court, comprising Justices Gautam Bhaduri and Sanjay S. Agrawal, observed that the concept of live-in relationship is an "imported philosophy contrary to the general expectations of Indian tenets and still considered a stigma in Indian culture". The court has held that such a relationship is pre-

ferred over marriage because it gives a "convenient escape when things fail to work between partners". "The security, social acceptance, progress, and stability which the institution of marriage provides to a person is never provided by live-in relationship," the division bench observed. In its verdict in the case deliv-

ered recently, the high court observed, "The close inspection of society shows that the institution of marriage no longer controls the people as it did in the past due to the cultural influence of the western countries and this significant shift and apathy towards matrimonial duties has probably given rise to the concept of live-in relationship." ■ P7

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## SHORT TAKES

## Finally, Kovilpatti West police book its two women cops

M. ARULOLI | DC  
THOOTHUKUDI, MAY 8

After a protracted struggle, a woman sub-inspector and a woman constable of the Kovilpatti West police station were booked under SC/ST (prevention) of atrocities Act.

Sub-inspector Arockiya Jency and constable Saranya allegedly verbally abused a Dalit advocate Muthusamy and his client Ponselvan at the Kovilpatti West police station on December 19, 2023. The advocate lodged a complaint with Kingsley Dev Anand, the inspector of the same station, seeking action against the duo under the SC/ST Act.

As the inspector did not register the complaint, the advocate approached the Thoothukudi district court seeking direction to the Kovilpatti West police inspector to register complaints against the two lady cops. Hearing the case, the court on January 1, 2024 ordered the Kovilpatti police to register FIR against Arockiya Jency and Saranya. The inspector, however, kept the court order in abeyance, giving his colleagues time to move the Madurai bench of the Madras high court to file a quash petition against the order of the Thoothukudi district court. The quash petition filed by the two personnel, however, was dismissed by the high court that upheld the order of the lower court. Despite the court order, the Kovilpatti West police failed to register the case, following which advocate Muthusamy along with another lawyer, Ponnusamy, on April 25 sought the intervention of the Kovilpatti revenue divisional officer Jane Christy for implementation of the court order.

Following his complaint, the RDO held talks with the Kovilpatti west inspector. On Wednesday the Kovilpatti west police booked Arockiya Jency and Saranya under the SC/ST (prevention) of atrocities Act.

The complainant said that though he was happy that his struggle for justice had borne fruit, the attitude of the police officer in protecting his colleagues is regrettable. The advocate also is sceptical about a fair investigation in the case.

## Teen who consumed rat poison treated successfully

G. SRINIVASAN | DC  
THANJAVUR, MAY 8

Meenakshi Hospital here has saved a 14-year-old girl who consumed an extremely lethal rodenticide (ratol paste containing yellow phosphorus) by performing plasmapheresis, an advanced blood treatment that removes toxins circulating in the bloodstream.

Dr.T. Senthil Kumar, head, critical care medicine and toxicology unit of the hospital, told mediapersons on Tuesday that the patient consumed the rodenticide due to personal problems and depression.

She was admitted to the hospital after she complained of vomiting, diarrhoea and headache four days after ingestion. "Following the treatment, she stayed in the hospital, mainly for psychological rehabilitation, and was discharged as a healthy child," Dr. Senthil Kumar said.

## Mass chanting of Rama nama in Thanjavur

DC CORRESPONDENT  
THANJAVUR, MAY 8

Akanda nama sankeerthanam and Ramayanam discourse are being conducted every day from May 4 till May 12 at Namadwar Prarthana Centre here.

The centre has been established with the blessings of Sri Muralidhara Swamigal.

Nama sankeerthanam is held from 6 am to 6 pm daily. Ramayanam discourse is delivered by Kabila Vasudevan, a disciple of Muralidhara Swamigal, at 6 pm every day.

Thirukalyanam and other events are also celebrated.

Besides chanting Rama nama, women take part in programmes like kolattam and other traditional dances.

Muralidhara Swamigal has appealed to people to participate in the events and get the blessings of Lord Rama.

## Baby, 9-year-old boy injured in different pet attacks in city

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, MAY 8

Two children, one of them a 10-month-old boy, were attacked by pet dogs in two separate incidents.

In the first incident that took place on Tuesday evening, Aswanth (9), the nephew of Vinotha, who is a cop attached to the women police station in Ashok Nagar, was attacked by a Siberian Husky.

When he was visiting his aunt Vinotha at the Alandur police quarters for summer vacation, constable Karthikeyan came to 'B' block with his pet dog. The dog

chased Aswanth and the other children playing there and bit him.

An injured Aswanth tried to hide in the motor room, but the dog continued to attack him. When the boy cried for help, neighbours and relatives rushed to the spot and rescued him.

He is under treatment and his condition is said to be stable. On Vinotha's complaint, the St. Thomas Mount police have registered a case against the owner of the dog and further investigations are underway.

In another incident that happened on Saturday, a 10-month-old baby was bitten by a Canadian citi-

zen's Pomeranian dog in the OMR area of Chengalpet district.

Krish, a 35-year-old software engineer, had taken his 10-month-old baby to the park in their apartment complex. Meanwhile, Canadian resident Velayutham was also out on a walk with his Pomeranian dog on a leash. When he playfully shouted, "Baby, baby", his dog became agitated and ferociously stared at the baby who then started crying. The dog then bit the baby's right hand. When Krish questioned Velayutham, he claimed that his dog was just playing with the baby. He claimed that the

dog was vaccinated but refused to show the certificate.

Krish then took the baby to a private hospital on OMR, where doctors who examined the baby informed that he needed to get vaccinated for the dog bite.

Krish filed a case against Velayutham at Thalambur police station. The police registered it in the CSR (community service register) and questioned Velayutham.

The incidents happened when the city witnessed on Sunday an attack by two Rottweiler dogs of a five-year-old girl at a corporation park in Thousand Lights.

## IIT-M raises record ₹513 cr in FY 2023-24

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, MAY 8

The Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) has raised a record Rs 513 crore in funding from its alumni, industry and individual donors during the financial year (FY) 2023-24.

Addressing a press conference, IIT-M director V. Kamakoti said on Wednesday the institute had also attracted total new pledges of ₹ 717 crore from alumni and corporate partners during the FY 2023-24. "The funds received would be used for technology research and development as well as for deploying technology

This is a 135 per cent increase from the amount raised in the previous financial year of 2022-23, that was ₹218 crore

already built by IIT-M, in various parts of the country based on societal needs. In addition, it is also used to support deserving students with scholarships as well as to support the growing infrastructural needs of the institute.

This is the second consecutive year, the institute has set a record for the highest amount of funding raised in one

financial year by an academic institute to undertake pathbreaking tech research, student projects as well as to develop cutting-edge infrastructure on the campus. This is a 135 percent increase from the amount raised in the previous financial year of 2022-23, that was ₹218 crore. The number of donors giving over Rs 1 crore to the institute is 48 (16 alumni donors and 32 corporate partners). The funds were raised from the IIT-M alumni and individual philanthropists in addition to CSR funds and grants from Indian as well as multinational corporate firms.

## New traffic diversions make life unbearable for T. Nagar residents

T. SUDHEESH | DC  
CHENNAI, MAY 8

At a time when traffic diversions are being implemented as Usman Road flyover has been closed in connection with new flyover works, T. Nagar residents bear the brunt of improper diversion plans imposed by the traffic authorities.

The residents from many streets, including Rangan Street, Ramasami Street, Mahalakshmi Street, Motilal Street, Sarojini Street, Venkatesan Street, Pinjala Subramanian Street, Mangesh Street, Ramanathan Street, Natesan Street and Dandapani Street, are unable to come to terms with the new diversions as there is heavy traffic in interior lanes now.

Already hit by works on phase II of CMRL, the residents of T. Nagar are now facing a double-whammy. No emergency vehicle can reach them on time - if there is an emergency. There are no proper sign boards or traffic cops to regulate the overcrowding traffic in the area.

B. Kannan, secretary, T. Nagar Residents Welfare Association, has decided to move the high court to get some relief from the nightmare. He said no resident association in the area was consulted before the traffic diversions were implemented.

"We are living in distress as residents are unable to get easy access

to an emergency vehicle, if there is an emergency. T. Nagar is a commercial hub. Because of this, we are already facing a lot of inconvenience, including noise pollution and encroachments. The police implemented new traffic regulations without removing the encroachments from the road. I am fed up with this noisy life. We are seriously thinking of leaving this place now," he said.

V.S. Jayaraman, a resident of Motilal Street, in T. Nagar, pointed out that mobility has now become the biggest problem for locals. The residents can't walk around even small lanes as they are overcrowded. We are not against development. But, it is not fair to implement projects at the cost of the local residents. They have brought in almost a year-long regulation here. But they don't have any concern about the life of the local resident. The officials tell us the project will be completed by December. But we are not sure whether they will meet the deadline. Till then, we are destined to suffer, he said.

Mohan Ranganathan, a long-time resident of Rangan Street, criticised the cops for barricading the right and left side of his street. Now, it is a daunting task to reach home from office. The Rameswaram lane is one of the small lanes in the area. Even this lane is filled with vehicles. Streets like Ramanathan

Street and Rangan Street are jam-packed with heavy vehicles. The local residents find it difficult to get access to even taxis and autorickshaws due to the traffic diversions. We have complained to the traffic authorities. But, they told us they could not deploy traffic cops in all streets due to manpower crunch. We will move the court to get a solution for this issue, he said.

The authorities began the work to demolish 120 metres of the down ramp of the flyover for linking it to the new flyover, connecting to Anna Salai. Once the portion of the existing flyover near Rangan Street is demolished, the authorities will take up the task of connecting it with the upcoming 1.2 km flyover work at Madley Junction, T. Nagar.

Greater Chennai Traffic Police have announced traffic diversions until December. As a result, vehicles coming from North Usman Road towards T. Nagar bus terminus are restricted from using the Usman Road flyover near Panagal Park.

A traffic official said all traffic inspectors had been given instructions to clear encroachments from the streets to ease congestion in the area. We are doing our best to regulate the traffic properly as the traffic regulation is unavoidable in the area till 2025 due to the development works, including CMRL phase-2 projects, said the official.



Chief Secretary Shiv Das Meena inaugurates the Naan Mudhalvan Kalloori Kanavu 2024 - Career Guidance Programme at Anna Centenary Library in the city on Wednesday.

## Ease GST registration for online MSMEs in TN: FIRST India

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI | MAY 8 |

The Forum for Internet Retailers, Sellers & Traders (FIRST) India, a division of India SME Forum, has forwarded a representation letter to the Principal Chief Commissioner of Central GST and Central Excise of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, highlighting the challenges faced by online MSMEs in obtaining GST registration in Tamil Nadu.

The GST registration process, intended to facilitate ease of doing business, has become arduous for potential sellers looking to conduct business in Tamil Nadu. FIRST India has brought attention to the incorrect interpretations and stringent requirements imposed by registration authorities in the state, creating hurdles

for online MSMEs seeking to operate in the region.

Several sellers applying for registration are encountering unnecessary scrutiny and requests for clarification on trivial matters. These queries range from the use of shared spaces for business operations to justifying Tamil Nadu as the state of registration despite having a presence in other states. The notices received by FIRST India members highlight the impracticality and inconsistency of some of these requests.

The lack of understanding and adherence to GST guidelines by the authorities is resulting in unwarranted hardships for honest sellers seeking business opportunities in Tamil Nadu. This situation not only discourages sellers from entering the

Tamil Nadu market but also leads to revenue loss for the state.

Recognizing the evolving landscape of e-commerce, FIRST India emphasised the importance of providing sellers with a progressive platform for ease of business. Allowing sellers to establish their principal place of business at shared facilities without unnecessary physical record requirements would promote efficiency and reduce overhead costs.

FIRST India urged the authorities to reconsider their approach and adopt measures that support the growth of online MSMEs in Tamil Nadu. Creating an environment conducive to business development and innovation is essential for the sustainable growth of the e-commerce sector in the region.



After the Tamil Nadu government, led by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, took charge, Valluvar Kottam, dedicated to classical Tamil poet-philosopher Tiruvalluvar, is currently being renovated by spending crores. The work involves improvement of the Tirukkural Manimadam (where all the 1,330 couplets from all 133 chapters of Tirukkural are inscribed on bas-relief); painting for arangam mandapam; upgradation of thiruthur (the 39-metre-high [128 feet] stone car, replica of the famed temple chariot of Tiruvavur. The bottom portion of the chariot features bas-relief sculptures of all the 133 chapters of Tirukkural); thorana gate; construction of Tirukkural laboratory and Tirukkural library; and stabilisation of perimeter walls. The auditorium has a seating capacity of around 1,400 and is equipped with world-class air-conditioning and infrastructure works such as sound and lighting. In addition, work on a new, double-decker car park at the rear of the chariot, a canteen and Tirukkural artefacts and book store are progressing rapidly. Officials said additional recreational works like installation of musical fountain in Valluvar Kottam, display of chariot with sound and light system, creation of lawn and park with flowering plants are going on. The monument is visited on an average by about 400 people during weekdays and 1,000 people during weekends. Valluvar Kottam was conceived and executed by the late Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi during the 1970s. It was designed by traditional architect V. Ganapati Sthapati, who is also the architect of the Tiruvalluvar statue at Kanyakumari. A life-size statue of Tiruvalluvar has been installed in the chariot. Valluvar Kottam was inaugurated in April 1976 by the then President of India, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed.

-N. Sampath

## Malaysia invites Tamil Nadu IT firms for partnerships in semiconductor manufacture

OP. ARULN | DC  
CHENNAI, MAY 8

Malaysia has extended an invitation to IT firms in Tamil Nadu to forge strategic partnerships in semiconductor manufacturing within India. Speaking to mediapersons in Chennai, Mr. Wan Ahmad Tarmizi Wan Idris, Matrade's trade commissioner for Chennai, highlighted Malaysia's significant role in the semiconductor market, underlining its handling of a substantial portion of global trade and its status as a preferred destination for key industry players.

Wan Ahmad Tarmizi Wan Idris pointed out Malaysia's impressive achievements, with the country accounting for 7 per cent of the world's semiconductor trade, conducting 13 per cent of global chip assembly, testing and packaging operations, and hosting

The success of Malaysia's electrical and electronics exports (E&E) is evident with exports valued at USD 127 billion in 2023

six out of the 12 largest semiconductor companies globally.

Moreover, Malaysia boasts a robust presence in the electronic manufacturing services (EMS) sector, with six out of the top 10 EMS companies operating within its borders. Notable Malaysian companies such as V.S. Industry Berhad, SKP, SMT Technologies, and ATA IMS Berhad have earned places in the global top 50 ranking of EMS providers for 2022.

Malaysia's strength in automated test equipment (ATE) manufacturing further enhances its competitiveness, offering on-site

equipment solutions and automation with comparable performance to providers from the US or Europe. Penang, often referred to as the Silicon Valley of the East, contributes significantly to global semiconductor sales for equipment and medical technology industries.

The success of Malaysia's electrical and electronics exports (E&E) is evident with exports valued at USD 127 billion in 2023, accounting for a substantial share of total manufactured and total exports. Semiconductor devices, ICs, transistors and valves lead the exports, constituting 67.3 per cent of total E&E exports, with major destinations including Singapore, China, Hong Kong, USA, and Taiwan.

Wan Ahmad Tarmizi Wan Idris emphasised Matrade's role in facilitating global expansion of Malaysian semiconductor

companies through government grants and participation in international exhibitions. As India embarks on a mission to strengthen its semiconductor and display ecosystem, partnerships with Malaysia can bolster supply networks, ensuring access to essential technologies, materials and components for semiconductor fabrication.

Matrade invites Indian players to participate in Semicon South East Asia (SEA), the region's largest electronics supply chain event, scheduled for May 28-30, 2024, and plans to organise visits for Malaysian electrical & electronics companies to Bengaluru and Chennai in July. These initiatives aim to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange, contributing to India's projected USD 100 billion semiconductor market by 2032.

SHORT TAKES



YouTuber Savukku Shankar produced before the court in Madurai on Wednesday. —DC

**Video journalist trampled to death by elephant in Kerala**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVNANTHAPURAM, MAY 8

A video journalist from a Malayalam news channel was trampled to death by a wild elephant while he was working on an assignment in Palakkad district.

The incident occurred on Wednesday morning when video journalist A V Mukesh, 34, was on an assignment to cover the wild elephants that had strayed into a residential area in Malampuzha. As he was taking the visuals a wild elephant unexpectedly charged at the crew. While the reporter and driver managed to run to safety, the wild elephant trampled Mukesh.

The video journalist who sustained serious injuries in the attack was rushed to the district hospital in Palakkad, but he could not be saved.

Mukesh who was a native of Parappanangadi in Malappuram district, leaves behind his wife Tisha.

Apart from his photography work, Mukesh was also a popular columnist who wrote a column titled "Athijeavanam" on Mathrubhumi.com. Before joining the Palakkad bureau in Palakkad, he had a long stint in Delhi.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan forest minister A K Saseendran, opposition leader V D Satheshan consoled the tragic death of the cameraman. Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ) also expressed their sympathies.

**Noted film director Sangeeth Sivan passes away**

**Thiruvananthapuram, May 8:** Noted film director and cinematographer Sangeeth Sivan passed away in Mumbai, according to film industry sources on Wednesday. They said Sivan, aged 65, was admitted to a hospital in Mumbai due to an illness. His end came on Wednesday.

He directed approximately 20 films in Malayalam and Hindi.

Yodha, Vyuham, Gandharvam, and Nirnayam are among the Malayalam films directed by Sivan.

Kya Kool Hai Hum and Apna Sapna Money Money are some of the Hindi films he directed.

Son of eminent still photographer-cinematographer Sivan, Sangeeth Sivan made his directorial debut with the film Vyuham in 1990.

He has two brothers - eminent cinematographer Santhosh Sivan and director Sanjeev Sivan. Their family is based in Thiruvananthapuram.

"My dear chetta (elder brother), Death has robbed us of our best but has not extinguished the light. ... RIP wherever you are." Sanjeev Sivan said in a Facebook post. Renowned actor Mohanlal, who played lead roles in his hit movies like Yodha, Gandharvam and Nirnayam, consoled the demise of Sangeeth Sivan. —PTI

**Move to oust EPS if AIADMK is drubbed**

**G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC**  
CHENNAI, MAY 8

A group of leaders in the AIADMK is reportedly planning to seek a change in leadership in the event of the party finishing behind the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections, whose results will be declared by June 4, with the sole aim of ousting the reigning general secretary, Edappadi K Palaniswami, by blaming him for the fiasco.

Though Palaniswami's position in the party is otherwise firm with the leaders and functionaries in the lower rung fully backing him, there has been a talk of some senior leaders privately resenting the party breaking away from the BJP at the 'wrong time' and not fielding the right candidates for the April 19 elections.

Social media, particularly YouTube channels, is abuzz with the move to replace Palaniswami for quite some time. A former AIADMK MP, K C Palanisamy, in an interview to a YouTube chan-

nel, about five days back accused Palaniswami of not listening to anyone in the party and said that the intention of the leaders expressing resentment in private was not to shake Palaniswami's hold in the party.

He said that people like him were concerned about the future of the party. Once the results were out, people would try to blame Palaniswami by adding up the votes polled by the AIADMK and BJP and pointing out that if they had fought the elections together they would have done better, he said, adding that it was wrong to look at it that way.

However, many self-styled political analysts too have started going on social media channels by pointing fingers at Palaniswami's 'wrong decisions' even without knowing the outcome of the elections. Since one of the schemes of things advocated was the reunion of the old AIADMK, which in other words meant that V K Sasikala, T T V Dinakaran and O

Panneerselvam should be brought into the party fold.

Sasikala, who had been vocal about that idea since her release from jail, had recently written to party functionaries at the middle and lower levels to push for unity. It is also learnt that one of her acolytes Vaithilingam was canvassing with many leaders for bringing all the disparate leaders of AIADMK together to put up a strong fight against the DMK and BJP.

In fact, those blaming Palaniswami for alleged goofing up in the elections are also blaming the speculated growth of the BJP in the State on him. They feel that the BJP would have not taken the bold step to go it all out on its own if the AIADMK had not snapped ties at what they say was an 'inappropriate moment.'

So those advocating a change in leadership are referring to the 2026 Assembly elections and saying that the party could not be left to be helmed by Palaniswami in those cru-

cial polls that would give the party an opportunity to return to power. Palaniswami would have failed the party 10 times by then - the Lok Sabha elections is the 10th election the party faced under his leadership - and yet another risk could not be taken, they claimed.

Despite all the undercurrents in the party's higher echelons, at the grassroots level Palaniswami was having a firm hold, some of his supporters claimed. So even if the demand for a general council meeting was made by those seeking to oust Palaniswami, it would not have any perceptible impact as he would win the voting in the general council, they said.

Whatever it would be, as of now everyone in the party is keeping mum and waiting for the election results as the issue was likely to be raised only in the event of the AIADMK finishing third behind the BJP both in terms of vote percentage and in its overall position in the 40 constituencies.



Chief Minister M. K Stalin visits his nephew Durai Dayanidhi, son of Alagiri, admitted to CMC in Vellore on Wednesday. —K. Senthil Nathan

**SSLC results tomorrow**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, MAY 8:

Results for tenth standard, SSLC, examinations would be declared at 9.30 am on Friday, May 10, at the Directorate of Government Examinations inside the DPI complex in Chennai. An official press release

on Wednesday gave the list of the websites through which students could know the results as: www.tnresults.nic.in, www.dge.tn.gov.in, www.results.digilocker.gov.in/ The National Informatics Centre (NIC) offices inside the premises of the district collector's office and branch libraries would also be able to help students to know their results besides their schools. Students would also be informed of the results through SMS in the numbers given by them in the examination registration forms, the release said.

**BJP's first TN MLA Velayuthan passes away**

**Chennai, May 8 C** Velayuthan, who was the BJP's first MLA in the Tamil Nadu Assembly died on Wednesday in his home district of Kanyakumari, the party said. He was 73.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP national president J P Nadda consoled Velayuthan's death.

In a post on X, Modi said: "Anguished by the passing away of Thiru C. Velayutham Ji, the first BJP MLA from Tamil Nadu. It is people like him who have built our party in Tamil Nadu and explained our development agenda to the people. He will also be remembered for his concern for the poor and downtrodden. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti."

BJP national president JP Nadda recalled the deceased leader's commitment and dedication to the party and society and said it will always be remembered.

Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai hailed Velayuthan as a pioneer of the party in the state who worked hard and "sowed the seeds of confidence for the party's growth in Tamil Nadu".

In a post on 'X', he consoled the death of Velayuthan and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family.

Several other BJP leaders, including Union Minister L Murugan consoled Velayuthan's death and fondly recalled that he was their party's first MLA in the Tamil Nadu Assembly. Velayuthan's victory in

the 1996 Assembly election was remarkable, not only because the saffron party opened its account in the assembly on its own, but it happened when the DMK-led alliance swept the polls, decimating the AIADMK. Velayuthan was elected from Padmanabhapuram Assembly constituency in Kanyakumari district, where the party has several pockets of influence and cadre strength.

In 1996, Velayuthan defeated his nearest rival Bala Janathipathy of the DMK and won by a margin of 4,540 votes. He was associated with Sevabharathi, an RSS affiliated social service organisation and took part in the anti-Emergency movement from 1975 to 1977. —PTI

**Ooty braces for rare 'triple regale' this weekend**

**B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC**  
OOTY, MAY 8

This queen of hill stations has geared up for a 'triple splendour' as the famed annual flower show, rose show and dog show, slated for this weekend, herald the peak of summer tourist season in the hills.

Due to the election model code of conduct, the vegetable show at Kotagiri, the harbinger of summer festival in May first week, was cancelled. In order to compensate for that, the annual flower show at the Government Botanical Garden (GBG), that is generally held for five days in May third week, was advanced to the second week and will get underway from Friday till May 20. While the bloom of flowers in more than 100 varieties already commenced which keeps the GBG in a riot of colours and magnificence, the recent good rains has added a luster. Flowers in around 35,000 pots are being readied for the 11-day flower show to charm the visitors to the GBG.

The annual rose show which is generally held at the Government Rose Garden (GRG) here in May second weekend is being held as usual this summer. It will also run up to May 20. This apart, the annual dog show, being conducted



**'Allow free entry for Nilgiris residents to flower show'**

**B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC**  
OOTY, MAY 8

The Baduga Desa Party (BDP), a local political outfit here, has appealed that hill residents be exempted from paying entry fees to visit the Government Botanical Garden (GBG), which is hosting the annual flower show from May 10.

Manjai V. Mohan, president of the BDP, said the annual flower show at GBG, the 126th edition this summer, is part of hill culture and tradition since the British era and hill residents really feel proud of the show.

Though entry fee to GBG during flower show days used to be nominal, which was affordable by people from all walks of life, now, the present Nilgiris district administration has hiked it up to Rs. 150 per person. It is certainly a merciless action, he said. Though objections were raised over this hike, it fell only on deaf ears of the Nilgiris district administration and Tamil Nadu government, he bemoaned. This shows that the district administration and government has suddenly taken an 'anti-people' stance to check locals visiting GBG

in good numbers to enjoy the flower show, he said.

He suggested that the government can intervene and instruct the Nilgiris district administration to give exemption to Nilgiris residents to visit the flower show by allowing free entry for them. They can produce Aadhaar card as proof of address and have free entry, he said.

This arrangement will draw more locals to the 11-day flower show this summer that, in turn, will help traders get good business and earn good revenue through this famed horticulture-related summer show, he explained.



The Greater Chennai Corporation had set up drinking water pots in many parts of the city for summer, but due to lack of maintenance, there is no water in the can kept near Anna Arivalayam. —N.Sampath

**TN man held for smoking aboard Muscat-Mumbai flight**

**Mumbai, May 8:** A 51-year-old passenger was apprehended for smoking in the lavatory of a flight during his journey from Muscat to Mumbai, an official said on Wednesday.

The incident occurred on board Vistara's UK234 flight, which took off from Muscat for the Maharashtra capital at 11.56 pm on Monday, he said.

The passenger, Balakrishna Rajayan, who was on board the flight, went to the lavatory at the rear side of the aircraft and smoked a cigarette,

the official said.

Rajayan hails from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, he said.

The incident came to light when the pilot of the aircraft noticed it with the help of a smoke detector, he added.

The pilot informed the crew members about it, following which they checked the lavatory and found a cigarette bud in the wash basin, the official said.

After the flight landed at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai on

Tuesday morning, the crew members informed the security supervisor on the ground about the unruly behaviour of the passenger, he said.

The security officials then took the passenger to their office and enquired about his act.

He admitted that he had smoked inside the lavatory, he said, adding that Rajayan also produced a matchbox used for lighting the cigarette.

He was later taken to the Sahar police station in the city, where a complaint

was filed against him by the security supervisor.

As per the complaint, Rajayan had deliberately violated the safety-related rules by smoking inside the plane, putting all the travellers of the flight at risk.

A case was registered against the passenger under section 336 (act of endangering life or personal safety of others) of Indian Penal Code and section 25 of the Aircraft Rules, he said. Probe into the case is underway, he added. —PTI



District Collector M. S. Sangeetha distributing a booklet to a student during the Kalluri Kanavu programme under Naan Mudhalvan scheme held at Lady Doak College in Madurai on Wednesday. —K.Manikandan

**Thirumavalavan raises concern with EC on voter turnout data delay**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, MAY 8

Member of Parliament from Chidambaram and founder-president of Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK), Dr. Thol. Thirumavalavan, has written to the Election Commission of India (ECI), highlighting delay and discrepancies in publishing voter turnout data by the ECI.

Chief Election Commissioner, Thirumavalavan highlighted several concerns and urged for transparency and timely disclosure of crucial election-related information.

He expressed dissatisfaction over the unusual and undue delay in releasing the final voter turnout data for the first two phases of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The data was made public 10 days after the first phase

of polling and four days after the second phase, raising questions about the reasons behind the delay.

Thirumavalavan pointed out that during the previous elections, ECI had promptly published voter turnout data within 24 hours of polling. The sudden change in this practice, without any clarifications or justifications from ECI, has raised concerns among political parties and activists

● In the light of these concerns, Thirumavalavan urged ECI to publish voter turnout data for the remaining phases of the election within 24 hours of polling, alike.

The MP asked why ECI failed to provide polling booth-wise numbers even though considerable time had passed since the conclusion of the first phase of voting.

One of the key issues highlighted in the letter was the discrepancy in the reported voter turnout figures.

The initially reported voter turnout percentages were later revised, leading to doubts about the accuracy and reliability of the data, he said.

Thirumavalavan emphasised the importance of transparency in reporting election-related informa-

tion, including votes polled in each parliamentary constituency and Assembly constituencies.

The letter also raised concerns about ECI omitting essential information, such as the exact number of voters registered in a constituency, the number of voters who cast their votes, and the seat-wise breakup of the voter

site has led to questions about potential attempts to manipulate or doctor the final results.

In the light of these concerns, Thirumavalavan urged ECI to publish voter turnout data for the remaining phases of the election within 24 hours of polling. He also called upon the commission to disclose voter turnout data for every polling station, as recorded in Form 17C, to ensure transparency and uphold

principles of parliamentary democracy enshrined in the Constitution.

The VCK leader said he was hopeful that ECI will address these concerns promptly and take necessary steps to ensure transparency and fairness in the electoral process.

The timely disclosure of accurate and comprehensive election-related information is vital to upholding the integrity of India's democratic system, he said.

SHORT TAKES

HC quashes Maha dists renaming plea

Mumbai: The Bombay high court on Wednesday dismissed petitions challenging notifications issued by the government officially renaming Aurangabad and Osmanabad cities as Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and Dharashiv. The court held that notifications issued by the state government do not suffer from any illegality and petitions were dismissed as "bereft of merit". A division bench of chief justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Arif Doctor said, "We have no hesitation to hold that the notification issued by the state government renaming Aurangabad and Osmanabad does not suffer from any illegality." While rejecting the plea, the bench quoted William Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet" and said, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Covishield no longer to be used in India

London/New Delhi: United Kingdom-based pharmaceutical major AstraZeneca has started global withdrawal of its Covid-19 vaccine, which was provided in India as "Covishield" in partnership with Serum Institute of India, days after it admitted to rare side effects of blood clotting and low platelet counts. The withdrawal has been initiated due to a surplus of available updated vaccines since the pandemic, the company said in a statement. AstraZeneca had partnered with Oxford University to develop the Covid-19 vaccine, which was sold in India as Covishield and as Vaxzevria in Europe. The European medicines agency, the medicines regulator for the European Union (EU), issued a notice on Tuesday to confirm that Vaxzevria "known as Covishield in India" is no longer authorised for use in the 27-member economic bloc after AstraZeneca (AZ) voluntarily withdrew its authorisation in March. It said it will similarly work with regulatory authorities worldwide to initiate withdrawal of vaccine. — PTI

Phase 3 turnout climbs to 65.68%

New Delhi: The updated approximate voter turnout figures for polling in the third phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections stands at 65.68 per cent, the Election Commission said on Wednesday. The figures were retrieved at 10 pm on Wednesday, it said. The figures will continue to be updated by the field level officers, the poll panel said. Voting for the third phase was held on Tuesday in 93 constituencies spread over 11 states and Union Territories with stray incidents of violence.

INDIA REVIEWS HAJ READINESS IN SAUDI ARABIA

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 8

With over 1.75 lakhs Indian pilgrims scheduled to visit Saudi Arabia under the 2024 Haj quota this year, India conducted a review of preparations for Haj in Jeddah and Madinah during the visit of the MEA's secretary Muktesh K. Pardeshi to Saudi Arabia, New Delhi said on Wednesday, adding that the visit from May 4 to 7 was "aimed at strengthening the strategic partnership" between the two nations.



Muktesh K. Pardeshi

"During his visit, the secretary met with vice-Haj minister Abdul Fattah Mashat and discussed logistical arrangements and infrastructure developments aimed at the welfare and comfort for pilgrims," the MEA said. In Riyadh, Mr Pardeshi held substantive discussions with Saud bin Mohammed Al Sati, deputy minister for political affairs at the Saudi ministry of foreign affairs, and reviewed the progress under the strategic partnership council along with several topics of bilateral interest, it said. "The secretary met with assistant minister of electricity affairs Nasser Al Qahtani and assistant minister for petroleum and gas Mohammed Albrahim to discuss deepening energy cooperation," it said.

Defeat a foregone conclusion, PM scared of own shadow: Cong 'Modi's chair shaking, he has started attacking his friends'

New Delhi, May 8: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's chair is "shaking" after three phases of the Lok Sabha polls, as he has started attacking his own "friends" and this shows the "real trend" of the result.

His remarks came after the Prime Minister, during a rally in Telangana, said the Congress should explain to people why it had stopped raising the "Ambani-Adani" issue what its "Shehzada" had been doing for the past five years and asked if it has struck a "deal".

"The times are changing. Friends are no longer friends! After the completion of three phases of elections, today the Prime Minister has started attacking his own friends.



Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury during an election rally in West Bengal's Murshidabad district on Wednesday. — PTI

It is becoming clear that Modi's chair is shaking. This is the real trend of the results," Mr Kharge said in a Hindi post on X.

At a poll rally in Telangana's Vemulavada, Mr Modi said, "Ever since elections have been

announced, these people (Congress) have stopped abusing Ambani-Adani. I want to ask from Telangana soil, let the Shehzada announce, how much has been lifted from Ambani-Adani. Has tempo loads of notes (currency)

reached the Congress? What deal has been arrived at, that abusing Ambani-Adani has stopped overnight."

"Certainly something is fishy. For five years, (they) abused Adani-Ambani and it stopped overnight. It means you have received some tempo loads of 'chori ka maal' (loot). You have to answer the nation," the Prime Minister added.

After the PM's attack, the Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the tide of this polls has turned so "violently" that the "pappa" of "hum do hamare do" is turning on his own children.

"Defeat is a foregone conclusion. The Prime Minister is now spooked even by his own shadow," he said in a post on X and shared a PM's photo along with his shadow. — PTI



Congress candidate from Amritsar Gurjeet Singh Aujla tries wrestling as he visits an "Akhara" during his election campaign in Amritsar on Wednesday. — PTI

Male aims to step up 'long-standing' India partnership

Male, May 8: Maldives foreign minister Moosa Zameer arrived in New Delhi Wednesday on his "very first bilateral official visit", the maiden high-level visit from Male since bilateral ties came under severe strain after President Mohamed Muizzu, a pro-China leader, assumed office six months ago.

During his visit from May 8 to 10, Mr Zameer will meet with minister of external affairs S. Jaishankar and hold discussions on deepening and expanding the long-standing partnership between the Maldives and India, the foreign ministry here said in a statement.

"This is foreign minister Zameer's first official visit to India since assuming office.

"Departing to New Delhi on my very first bilateral official visit. Looking forward to meeting my counterpart Minister of External Affairs, Dr @DrSJaishankar, and discuss deepening and enhancing cooperation between #Maldives and #India for the mutual



Moosa Zameer

benefit of our peoples," Mr Zameer said in a post on X.

The bilateral ties came under severe strain after President Muizzu insisted on the withdrawal of nearly 90 Indian military personnel operating three aviation platforms in the island nation.

India has already withdrawn most of its military personnel. President Muizzu had set May 10 as the deadline for the exit of all Indian troops from his country.

On Monday, Mr Muizzu's spokesperson announced that 51 Indian military personnel have left the Maldives and confirmed that the rest would leave the island by May 10 as agreed by the two countries. — PTI

BJP paying money to buy votes, claims Didi

Kolkata, May 8: West Bengal chief minister and Trinamul Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday alleged that the BJP is paying money to people to buy votes.

Speaking at an election rally at Arambagh in support of TMC candidate Mitali Bagh, Banerjee alleged that the saffron party is paying money to the extent of ₹5,000, ₹10,000 and ₹15,000 to people to purchase votes.

"The BJP leaders at present are former CPI(M) 'harmads' (anti-socials). If you don't want a reign of terror to usher in, then refrain from voting for the BJP", she said.

Ms Banerjee said this election is to change the power equation in Delhi. "This power equation in Delhi has to be altered and change has to be brought in", she added.

"The BJP is in the habit of 'defaming' the people of Bengal. They have dishonoured the women of Sandeshkhali by paying money to make false rape allegations", she said. — PTI

BJP will change fate of Odisha: Rajnath

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO RAYAGADA/BHAWANI PATNA (ODISHA), MAY 8



Rajnath Singh

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday launched a broadside on Odisha's ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) by calling them "bhrast" (corrupt), and urged people to give Bharatiya Janata Party a chance to change the fate of the state.

Addressing separate poll rallies at Bhawanipatna under Kalahandi parliamentary constituency and Rayagada under Koraput, Mr Singh said Odisha continued to suffer from backwardness due to the "misgovernment" of both the BJD and the Congress.

"A lot of development work has taken place in the country for 10 years under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. Once the BJP government is formed in Odisha, rapid developments will take place

across the state with special focus on Kalahandi that is considered as one of the backward places in the country," said the defence minister.

"The Congress had been in power for a long here. Be it Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi or Manmohan Singh, all of them only claimed to eradicate poverty. Unfortunately, they could not live up to their words. However, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power, the Centre has been able to uplift over 25 crores people from poverty," Mr Singh added.

The BJP leader flagged that the BJD government has deprived the Odisha people of the benefits of the Centre's Ayushman Bharat scheme.

ED raids Jharkhand's rural development dept premises

Top bureaucrats, netas being probed, says ED

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA with agency inputs NEW DELHI/RANCHI, MAY 8

BJP releases 28-page 'Aarop Patra' against JMM-led govt

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday raided the premises of the Jharkhand government's rural development department in Ranchi, as part of the ongoing money laundering probe after the arrest and questioning of Jharkhand minister Alamgir Alam's personal secretary Sanjeev Lal and the minister's domestic help Jehangir Alam.

In a search operation conducted on Monday, the Central agency seized over ₹30 crores and arrested Mr Lal and the minister's domestic help Jehangir.

Mr Lal, 52, collected "commission" on behalf of some influential people, the ED had claimed before a court on Tuesday, adding that government officials from "top to bottom" of the rural development department are involved in the alleged

Ranchi, May 8: The Jharkhand unit of the BJP on Wednesday released a 28-page "Aarop Patra", highlighting alleged corruption, deteriorating law and order and crumbling infrastructure under the JMM-led regime in the state.

Releasing the "Aarop Patra" days ahead of Jharkhand's first phase of

illegal cash payments nexus. The ED said the names of "senior bureaucrats and politicians" have emerged in the case and are being investigated.

The money laundering case of September 2020 is based on a Jharkhand police anti-corruption branch (Jamshepur) case and a March 2023 FIR filed by the economic offences wing of the Delhi

voting on May 13. BJP state chief Babul Marandi alleged that corruption has reached its peak under the JMM-led alliance government in the state.

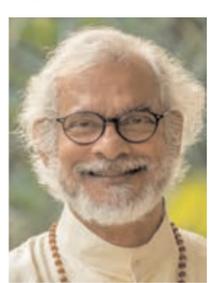
"Corruption is rampant under the protection of the government. Bundles of notes were recovered in raids by the ED," Mr Marandi alleged. — PTI

police against former chief engineer of the state rural works department Veerendra Kumar Ram and some others.

The ED arrested Mr Ram last year. The former chief engineer was with the water resource department of the Jharkhand government and was sent on deputation to the rural development and works department (special division).

Believers Church head K P Yohannan passes away after car accident in US

DC CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MAY 8



Holiness Athanasius Yohan 1, our honourable Metropolitan, reposed in the Lord this evening, the 8th of May 2024." Further details will be announced by the Synod, it added. Yohan had sustained multiple injuries includ-

ing a head injury, in an accident that took place at 6.45 am (US local time) on May 7 when the bishop was on his morning walk along a county road. The impact of the accident was severe and it caused fractures to ribs, and injuries to the lungs resulting in internal bleeding. He was subjected to an emergency surgery at the hospital.

According to Church officials, it was not a hit-and-run case and prima facie there is nothing suspicious. The local police have recovered the vehicle involved in the mishap and registered a case in this connection.

Yohan was airlifted to a Dalla hospital soon after

the accident. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Cabinet colleagues mourned the death of Bishop Yohan.

The 74-year-old Bishop was born in 1950 in a Mar Thoma Syrian Church family in the Upper Kuttanad village of Niranom.

In 1993 he founded the Believers Eastern Church as part of the Gospel for Asia (GFA) World Apostolate and was consecrated its bishop in 2003.

According to the Believers Eastern Church, they have a membership of 3.5 million people across 10 countries. The Church at present has 30 bishops.

Sule: Baramati lost image for recent slugfest

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MAY 8

A day after the polling in the much-hyped Baramati Lok Sabha constituency, which was marred by several allegations of malpractices, NCP-SP candidate Supriya Sule on Wednesday said the image of Baramati has been tarnished by the events that took place during the voting.

She said the voting percentage also dropped as the people have lost hope due to the current political situation.

The contest in Baramati LS seat has caught the eyes of the entire country, where Supriya Sule and Ajit Pawar-led NCP's Sunetra Pawar are locked in a fierce battle.

K'taka cops summon Nadda and Malviya over online post

Bengaluru, May 8: The Bengaluru police has summoned Bharatiya Janata Party president J.P. Nadda and the party's IT cell head Amit Malviya in connection with a social media post allegedly intimidating members of SC and ST community not to vote for a particular candidate, officials said on Wednesday.

They have been asked to join the probe at the High Grounds police station. "For the purpose of investigation of the said case, you are hereby directed to appear before the undersigned investigation officer at 11 am at High Grounds police station within seven days of receipt of this notice," the summons read.

The move comes after an FIR was registered against Mr Nadda, Mr

VIDEO posted on social media allegedly featured animated characters of Rahul Gandhi and chief minister Siddaramaiah. In the clip, SC, ST and OBC community are portrayed as "eggs".

Malviya and BJP's Karnataka unit chief B.Y. Vijayendra in connection with a social media following a complaint filed by the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) with the Election Commission and the police on May 5, alleging violation of the model code of conduct.

They were booked under sections of Representation of People Act and Section 505 (2) (statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes)

of the Indian Penal Code, a senior police officer said.

In the complaint, the KPCC cited the video uploaded on social media platform "X" by the official account of Karnataka state BJP which, it alleged, is operated by Mr Malviya, on instructions of Mr Nadda and Mr Vijayendra, BJP state president and social media incharge, Karnataka BJP, on May 4. "The said video posted on social media featured animated characters of (Congress leader) Rahul Gandhi and (chief minister) Siddaramaiah. In the clip, SC, ST and OBC community are portrayed as 'eggs' in a nest and it also suggested Rahul planting a big egg labelled as Muslim community," it alleged. — PTI

MP: Bus with EVMs, officials catches fire

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, MAY 8

A bus carrying polling staff and electronic voting machines (EVMs) late Tuesday night caught fire near Sonora Gaula village in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district.

One polling officer was injured, while four EVMs were damaged in the incident, Betul district collector Narendra Suryavamsi said. The incident took place at around 11 pm when the bus, carrying election officials of six polling booths, six EVMs and other poll materials, was returning from Saikheda to Betul, a senior district officer said. "While four EVMs were damaged, two others were safe," the DC said.

9th ANNIVERSARY

**M. G. Gunasekaran**  
(Ex-Vice president - Ramapuram panchayat)

Wife - G Malliga  
Son - G. Dhanaprabhu  
Daughters - G. Menaka and G. Mega Ramya  
Macherla Gangaih - Padmavathy Ammal  
Family Members

IN BRIEF

Sex racket busted in Gurgaon, 10 held

Gurgaon: A joint team of the CM flying squad and the local police last night busted a prostitution racket being run in a guesthouse here, said the police. The police arrested 10 accused allegedly involved in the prostitution, including two Uzbek women and two guesthouse operators named Dilbag and Sanjay, and registered an FIR in this regard. The arrested accused were produced in a city court on Wednesday and sent to the judicial custody, they added. According to the police, they had received a tip-off about an alleged sex racket being run at a guesthouse in the G Block of Sector 57. A special team was formed and a decoy customer was sent to the guest house, and he negotiated with the manager named Sanjeev, the police said. When the deal was finalised, the decoy customer entered the guesthouse and signalled the police, which raided the place. Six women were found on the spot, whose age is said to be between 24 and 34 years. Two women were from Uzbekistan, two from Bangladesh and one each from Assam and Kolkata. The women from Bangla-desh were allegedly found without visa, said the police. "We have registered an FIR under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act and the Foreigners Act," the police said.

On Thalassemia Day, India Gate lit up in red

New Delhi: In an effort to raise awareness towards Thalassemia on the occasion of World Thalassemia Day, Sir Ganga Hospital illuminated the India Gate in red colour. Dr D.S. Rana, chairman, Sir Ganga trust society, said that it is important to prevent the disease by identifying the carriers with simple blood test. In the last 20 years, over 55,000 pregnancies have been screened in Sir Ganga Ram Hospital and not a single patient of thalassemia has been born. The hospital held event into two parts: a walkathon was held in the morning, and in the evening, Dr Rana was the chief guest at the historic event of illuminating the India Gate in red colour.

COP ARRESTED, 1 SUSPENDED OVER ₹4L EXTORTION

Gurgaon: The Gurgaon police has arrested a head constable and suspended a station house officer for allegedly extorting ₹4 lakh from a Delhi man who was arrested in a case of theft, an officer said on Wednesday. The two were deployed at the Civil Lines police station. According to the police, head constable Kulwinder was accused of extorting ₹4 lakh by a Delhi resident on May 3. In his complaint filed with DCP (West) Karan Goel, the victim, who deals in scrap, alleged that on April 24 HC Kulwinder had arrested him in a case of theft and subsequently produced him in a court. He alleged that after the appearance, Kulwinder demanded ₹4 lakh from him for not taking him on remand or framing him in another case. On April 26, his nephew gave ₹4 lakh to Kulwinder, said the police. Based on the complaint, an investigation was conducted by ACP city Mukesh Kumar, who found the allegations to be true. Kulwinder was booked under section 384 (extortion) of the IPC and Prevention of Corruption

2 docs, 7 staff held in RML bribery racket

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA NEW DELHI, MAY 8

The CBI on Wednesday unearthed a bribery racket at the top central government hospital in Delhi - Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) hospital and arrested two cardiologists on corruption charges. Cardiology professor Ajay Raj and assistant professor Parvatagouda Channappagouda have been arrested for taking bribes from medical equipment suppliers to use their products and stents, the agency officials said. The central anti-graft agency sleuths also nabbed medical equipment supplier Naresh Nagpal of Nagpal Technologies who paid ₹2.48 lakh to Parvatagouda for promoting the sale of medical equipment, Bharat Singh Dalal of Bharti Medical Technologies who bribed Raj using UPI twice, and Abrar Ahmed who paid bribes to the Cath Lab in charge in the hospital Rajnish Kumar, they said. Rajnish Kumar, clerks Bhuvral Jaiswal, Sanjay

Kumar, and Vikas Kumar have also been arrested. All the arrested accused were produced before a special court here which sent them to the CBI custody till May 14. The CBI alleged that Bhuvral Jaiswal took bribes for fixing appointments with doctors while Sanjay Kumar took bribes for fake medical certificates. A probe revealed that the accused were collecting bribes from the patients and the medical equipment suppliers. "The agency arrested nine persons, including doctors, clerks of RML and middlemen and medical equipment suppliers after carrying out searches at around 15 locations, including the hospital on Wednesday," the agency officials said. In its FIR the agency named a professor and an assistant professor of the cardiology department of RML, a senior technical in-charge, a nurse, two clerks, several private medical equipment supplier companies and unknown government servants.

24-yr-old man arrested for mowing down Cong leader

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 8

The Delhi police on Wednesday arrested a 24-year-old property dealer for allegedly mowing down a Congress leader with his mini SUV in Rohini's Prashant Vihar area, the police said. Harikishan Jindal, 62, a former district Congress committee president, died after being hit by a car while he was on a morning walk Tuesday near his house in Rohini's Prashant Vihar area. According to deputy commissioner of police (Rohini) G.S. Sidhu, the car driver, Chirag Chaudhary, was arrested from his house in Sector 14, Rohini. "On sustained questioning, Chaudhary revealed that he was going to drop some of his friends in Rohini, when he suddenly lost his control on a turn and hit Jindal," Mr Sidhu said. Chaudhary, who runs a property business, fled after the incident. The officer said the vehicle, a white Grand Vitara, has also been seized.

'Cong turncoats to help BJP secure votes in minority-dominated areas'

SHASHI BHUSHAN and BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, MAY 8

After the induction of former Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely and other local leaders Raj Kumar Chauhan, Neeraj Basoiya, Nasseb Singh, and Amit Malik into the BJP, the saffron party is working on a strategy to make their best use in the Congress dominated pockets for the seven Lok Sabha seats in the national capital. It is partly learnt that the party may soon announce a fresh campaign plan to organise meetings of these leaders to woo Congress voters for the BJP candidates. The BJP sources said, "Even though the Congress has been out of power in Delhi since 2013, there are still some pockets, particularly minority-dominated, in the city where they enjoy a strong presence and these former Congress leaders will help in transferring that vote to the BJP." Mr Lovely, meanwhile, emphasised that his allegiance will now remain with the BJP. "I will rather quit poli-



Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva and party leader Arvinder Singh Lovely during an interaction with the media in New Delhi on Wednesday. - PTI

tics instead of leaving the BJP," he said. "Last time, I had taken the decision to quit Congress due to anger. This time, however, we have taken the decision with a cool head and much thought. Now, we will do politics here (in BJP) only or quit politics instead of leaving the party," Mr Lovely told this newspaper. Mr Lovely is one of the 40 star campaigners of the BJP for the polls in Delhi. He further hinted that many other leaders in the Delhi Congress will join the BJP in the coming days. "Raj Kumar Chauhan

is a big leader in Northwest Delhi but his influence is not limited to that constituency only. Similarly, myself and Nasseb Singh are based in the trans-Yamuna area where there are two seats. This is just the beginning; if the party allows, our other friends too will come," he said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP chief J.P. Nadda, Union minister Amit Shah, and the Delhi BJP for his entry into the saffron outfit, saying he had friendly relations with many leaders in the party earlier also.

Sibal to contest polls for SC Bar president

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 8

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal has announced his candidature for the post of president in the upcoming Supreme Court Bar association elections. The veteran advocate has announced his candidacy after holding the post thrice between 1995 and 2002. Senior advocate Adish Aggarwala is currently the president of the SCBA. A Harvard Law School graduate, Mr Sibal was designated as senior advocate in 1983. He had served as

the additional solicitor-general of India during 1989-90. He is also a former Union minister. SCBA honorary secretary Rohit Pandey said Mr Sibal is contesting for the post of the president. The date for filing nomination for the SCBA polls is May 9. The elections will be held on May 16 to elect the executive committee of the bar, including president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer.

BSES discoms launch plan for replacement of old ACs

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 8

The BSES power discoms have launched a scheme for the consumers in the city to exchange their old air conditioners with energy-efficient ones with discounts of up to 63 per cent, according to a statement. The summer season this year is anticipated to be intense with temperatures already reaching 40°C in Delhi and expected to rise even higher, it said. Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, who also appeared for the ED, had opposed showing any leniency to Mr Kejriwal on account of the Lok Sabha polls and said granting interim bail to the AAP national convenor would amount to creating a separate class for politicians. The top court has divided the hearing on Mr Kejriwal's petition against his arrest into two parts with the main petition

SC to pass order on Kejriwal bail May 10

RAKESH K SINGH NEW DELHI, MAY 8

The Supreme Court will deliver its order on granting interim bail to Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in a money laundering case linked to the excise policy "scam" on Friday. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who headed the bench that heard Mr Kejriwal's petition against his arrest in the case by the Enforcement Directorate, said, "We will pronounce the interim order (on interim bail) on Friday. The main matter related to the challenge to arrest will also be taken on the same day." Justice Khanna, who was sitting in a different combination with Justices M.M. Sundresh and Bela M. Trivedi, remarked after additional solicitor general S.V. Raju, who was appearing for the Centre in a matter related to goods and services tax (GST), appeared for the Enforcement Directorate (ED).



Arvind Kejriwal

challenging his arrest by the ED and seeking it to be declared illegal and the second issue relates to the grant of interim bail to enable him to campaign in the ongoing parliamentary polls. The apex court reserved the order on Tuesday on the issue of grant of interim bail. During the hearing on Tuesday, the top court said that if it grants interim bail to Mr Kejriwal, he cannot function as the chief minister as it will have a "cascading effect" on other issues. "We are on the issue of propriety today, not on legality. We do not want anything to affect the functioning of the government," the bench had noted. On Tuesday, the Rouse Avenue court had extended Mr Kejriwal's judicial custody till May 20. Mr Kejriwal was arrested on March 21 and is currently undergoing judicial custody in Tihar jail.

Cabin crew alleged that airline is being mismanaged, there is lack of equality Over 90 AI Express flights cancelled after crews go on 'mass sick leave'

DC CORRESPONDENT with agencies input NEW DELHI, MAY 8

Hundreds of passengers were stranded at several airports after more than 90 flights of Air India Express got cancelled on Tuesday night after over 200 senior cabin crew reported sick to protest against alleged mismanagement at the Tata group-owned airline. Apart from going on mass sick leave, the staff has also switched off their mobiles. This turbulence in the Tata group comes nearly a month after another carrier, Vistara, witnessed pilot woes, forcing it to cancel more than 100 flights. Air India Express MD in a letter to the employees on Wednesday said the company leadership to ready to address the concerns of the employees. He added that the act of going

on mass leave is largely of L1 employees and is not representative of nearly 2000 employees of the AIE. Earlier, an AIE spokesperson said that the airline is engaging with the cabin crew members to understand the reasons for reporting sick and apologised for the flight disruptions. "A section of our cabin crew has reported sick at the last minute, starting last night, resulting in flight delays and cancellations. While we are engaging with the crew to understand the reasons behind these occurrences, our teams are actively addressing this issue to minimise any inconvenience caused to our guests as a result. "We sincerely apologise to our guests for this unexpected disruption and emphasise that this situation does not reflect the standard of service we

AIR INDIA Express MD in a letter to the employees on Wednesday said the company leadership to ready to address the concerns of the employees. He added that the act of going on mass leave is largely of L1 employees and is not representative of nearly 2000 employees of the AIE. Earlier, an AIE spokesperson said that the airline is engaging with the cabin crew members to understand the reasons for reporting sick and apologised for the flight disruptions. "A section of our cabin crew has reported sick at the last minute, starting last night, resulting in flight delays and cancellations. While we are engaging with the crew to understand the reasons behind these occurrences, our teams are actively addressing this issue to minimise any inconvenience caused to our guests as a result. "We sincerely apologise to our guests for this unexpected disruption and emphasise that this situation does not reflect the standard of service we

strive to provide. Guests impacted by cancellations will be offered a full refund or complimentary rescheduling to another date. "Guests flying with us today are requested to check if their flight is affected, before heading to the airport," said the spokesperson of Air India Express. The airline is to operate 360 daily flights during the summer sched-

ule that started in the last week of March. Hundreds of Air India Express passengers, mostly scheduled to travel to the Gulf nations, protested at airports in Kerala against last-minute flight cancellations. Some of them claimed that they were informed about the cancellations after the completion of security checks. Flight disruptions are happening at various airports, including Kochi, Calicut, Delhi, and Bengaluru. Discontent has been brewing among a section of the cabin crew at the low-cost carrier for some time now, especially after the start of the process to merge AIX Connect, formerly AirAsia India, with itself. Aviation experts said the group is going through a merger which always leads to human resource issues. Late last month, a Union representing a section of the Air India Express cabin crew alleged that the airline is being mismanaged and there is a lack of equality in the treatment of the staff. Air India Express Employees Union (AIXEU) had also alleged that mismanagement of the affairs has affected the morale of the employees. The Union has reportedly alleged that employees find themselves 'silenced' while attempting to address grievances, with management 'suppressing' dissenting voices on company platforms.

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED Credit Recovery and Management Department Administrative Office, No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001. E-mail: crmd@cityunionbank.in, Phone: 0435 - 2432322 Fax: 0435-2431746. RE-TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002. The following properties mortgaged to City Union Bank Limited will be sold in Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of Rs.29,12,336/- (Rupees Twenty Nine Lakh Twelve Thousand Three Hundred and Thirty Six Only) as on 05.05.2024 together with further interest to be charged from 06.05.2024 onwards, other expenses and any other dues to the bank by the borrowers/guarantors No.1.Mrs.R.Sundari.W/o.Raghavan, No.13/6, 20th Avenue, Kalaignar Karunanidhi Salai, Chennai-600078. 2.Mr.N.Raghavan,S/o.Nagarajan, No.13/6, 20th Avenue, Kalaignar Karunanidhi Salai, Chennai-600078. SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY. Immoveable Properties Mortgaged to our Bank. Property Owned By Mrs.R.Sundari. All that piece and parcel of a vacant house site bearing Plot No 7 measuring about 1,034 Sq.Ft in the approved layout-out named as 'Kumaran Nagar' (Layout approved vide DTPC No.190/RV/2017, Chengalpattu, Zone) together with Building to be constructed thereon in future. Comprising in Old S.No.168/4B, New S.No.168/4B/1A/1, as per Patta No.543, No.13 Arunag Village, Kattankulathur Panchayat Union & Keerappakkam Panchayat Limits, Chengalpattu Taluk, Kancheepuram District and the Land being Bounded on the: North by: Plot No.2B, South by: Aranyak Road, West by: Plot No.8 & East by: Plot No.6. Admeasuring East to West on the Northern Side: 22 Feet East to West on the Southern Side: 22 Feet 6 Inches North to South on the Western Side: 49 Feet and North to South on the Eastern Side: 45 Feet Situated Within the Registration District of Chennai South and Sub Registration District of Guduvanchery. Reserve Price: Rs.28,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakh Only). RE-AUCTION DETAILS. Date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale: 28.05.2024. Venue: City Union Bank Limited, Anakaputhur Branch, No.168/3-D, Kamaraj Salai, Anakaputhur, Chennai, Kancheepuram - 600070. Telephone No: 044-22483667 Cell No: 9344023527. Terms and Conditions of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale: (1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself/herself. (2) The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from The Manager, City Union Bank Ltd., Anakaputhur Branch, No.168/3-D, Kamaraj Salai, Anakaputhur, Chennai, Kancheepuram-600070. (3) The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd., together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of 'City Union Bank Ltd.' on or before 12.00 Noon on the date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. (4) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact Telephone No:044-22483667 Cell No: 9344023527 (5) The properties are sold on 'As-is-where-is', 'As-is-what-is' and 'Whatever there is' basis. (6) The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at 01.00 PM on the date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. (7) The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% (inclusive of EMD paid) of the sale amount immediately on completion of sale and the balance amount of 75% within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of 25% shall be forfeited. (8) The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. (9) The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. (10) The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues) TDS/GST if any, due to Government, Government undertaking and local bodies. (11) The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever. Place: Kumbakonam, Date: 08.05.2024. Authorised Officer. Regd. Office: 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamilnadu - 612001. CIN - L85110TN1904PLC001287, Telephone No. 0435 - 2402322, Fax: 0435 - 2431746. Website: www.cityunionbank.com.

ENGINEERING WORKS IN MALIGAON. Tender Notice No.:11 of 2024. Dated: 03-05-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No.: DCESTM/07-2024; Name of Work: Provision of boundary wall on Railway boundary to prevent encroachment in the jurisdiction of ADENI/Maligaon (3.36Km). Advertised Value: ₹2,33,79,306.03; Earnest Money: ₹2,68,900/-; Tender No.: DCESTM/08-2024; Name of Work: Provision of outer fencing wall around Nambani area under the jurisdiction of SSE/W/Nambani. Advertised Value: ₹2,32,52,823.99; Earnest Money: ₹2,66,300/-; Tender No.: DCESTM/09-2024; Name of Work: ADENI-Maligaon-Provision of Fire Detection system and alarm system in Central Hospital. Advertised Value: ₹86,61,125.22; Earnest Money: ₹1,73,200/-; Date & time of closing/opening of above tenders at 13:00 hrs. on 27-05-2024. For complete information please visit in website www.ireps.gov.in. Dy. CE/Estimate,Maligaon. NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY. Serving Customers With A Smile.

ENGINEERING WORKS IN ALIPURDUAR JUNCTION. E-Tender Notice No.: 48/W-Z/APDJ. Dated: 04-05-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No.: 25-AP-I-2024; Name of Work: Provision for additional goods line at Dhurguri for simultaneous loading, unloading and holding two rakes at a time. Tender Value: ₹6,47,89,735.25; Earnest Money: ₹4,74,000/-; Date & time of closing/opening of E-Tender on 27-05-2024. For details please visit in the website http://www.ireps.gov.in. DR/ML, Alipurduar Junction. NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY. Serving Customers With A Smile.

REPLACEMENT, REPAIR AND RESTORATION WORK. E-Tender Notice No.: N-2024-25-TSK-NIT-03 Dated: 03-05-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: E-Tender No.: N-2024-25-TSK-T-03. Brief Description of work: Replacement, repair and restoration of various make Electronic Interlocking in Tinsukia Division. Tender Value: ₹2,19,47,656.54. Earnest Money: ₹2,59,700/-; Date & Time of closing of E-Tender on 27-05-2024 at 15.00 hrs. For details please visit www.ireps.gov.in. DST/ETINSUKIA. NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY. Serving Customers With A Smile.

CENTRAL SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY. Established by an Act of Parliament. (Formerly Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, under Ministry of Education, Government of India). 55-57, Institutional Area, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058. Ph. No. 011-26524933, 26524935, 26520929, 26520966. Website: www.sanskrit.nic.in. Notification No.-CSU/36014/Advt./S-1/2024-25/01. 05-05-2024. ONLINE APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER "ADARSHA SCHEME 2022" & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE YEAR 2024-25 UNDER "SCHEMES FOR SANSKRIT PROMOTION". Central Sanskrit University, Delhi is the nodal agency for implementing Central Schemes of Ministry of Education, Government of India for the Promotion of Sanskrit Language. Accordingly, applications are invited from interested NGOs/Voluntary Organizations/Individuals/Students, through online as applicable under the following Schemes for Sanskrit Promotion: S.No., Name of the Scheme, Online Registration Starting date, Closing date. 1. Grant of recognition to institutions under "The Scheme for Financial Assistance to Institutions Recognized as Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidyalayas (ASMs)/Adarsh Sanskrit Shodha Sansthan (ASSS)-2022" vide notification CSU/Ad/Revised Scheme/2023-24/01 dated 05.03.2024 - the university invites applications from voluntary organizations registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1931 or a Trust registered under Trust Act or a Non-Profit making Company registered under the Companies Act hereinafter called "the Parent Body", maintaining a Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya or Sanskrit Shodha Sansthan, for grant of recognition to that institution under "The Scheme for Financial Assistance to Institutions Recognized as Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidyalayas (ASMs)/Adarsh Sanskrit Shodha Sansthan (ASSS)-2022" under clause 6. 10.05.2024 30.06.2024. 2. Sanskrit Teaching - Engagement of Sanskrit or Modern Subject Teachers for teaching in Traditional Sanskrit Pathshalas/Mahavidyalayas/Government Schools/Guru-Sistya Pariparama Institutions and Residential Scholarships. 3. Samman Rashi - Annual grant to Eminent Sanskrit Pandits living in Indigent Circumstances. 4. Programmes & Activities for Promotion of Sanskrit - Financial Assistance for implementation of various Sanskrit Programmes & Activities. 5. Publication, Bulk Purchase and Re-print of Rare Sanskrit Books. 6. Shastra Chudamani - for utilization of Services of Eminent Shastric Scholars or Retired Sanskrit Scholars. 7. Vocational Training - Conduct of Vocational Training to the students of Registered Traditional Sanskrit Institutions. 8. Scholarships - Award of Scholarships to the Students regularly studying Sanskrit/Pali/Prakrit languages from 9th class to Ph.D level in Traditional/Modern Streams. 10.05.2024 15.09.2024. 2. The interested parties, while submitting their applications for financial assistance, may kindly keep in mind the following instructions: i) Interested parties are advised to forward their applications in respect of the above-mentioned schemes through online mode only. The applications submitted in any other mode will not be entertained. ii) As per the guidelines of the above-mentioned schemes, interested parties are required to submit hard copies of publications/books/necessary documents etc., along with hard copy of their filled in online application duly certified by the Competent Authority. All pages of application and annexures should be signed in ink and self-attested. iii) Only after filling the online applications, take the printout and hard copy of the completed applications should invariably be sent separately by Registered post, within 20 days from the closing date of the online registration to Registrar, Central Sanskrit University, 56-57, Institutional Area, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058. Name of the scheme is to be superscribed on the top of envelop. iv) Before filling the application form, it is advised that the scheme guidelines be referred. v) For more details regarding guidelines, remuneration, required documents, how to apply in online and application forwarding process etc., please visit the Central Sanskrit University's website www.sanskrit.nic.in/schemes. vi) For each scheme indicated from Sl. No. 2 to 8 above, it is mandatory for all grantee institutions of previous years to apply afresh for each scheme, as automatic renewal will not be done. vii) Further, consideration or rejection of the application for grants/recognition depend upon the availability of funds and approval of the Competent Authority, as per applicability, every year. Therefore, it is mandatory to apply every year on scheme-to-scheme basis separately for financial assistance. viii) In case of any clarifications or doubts, interested parties may contact Central Sanskrit University through e-mail at help.schemes@csu.edu.in or through above mentioned phone numbers or postal address. Sd/- Registrar I/c. CBC 21212/12/0002/2425

CAREER CHRONICLE

RAMAGUNDAM FERTILIZERS AND CHEMICALS LIMITED (A Joint Venture Company) Fertilizer City, Ramagundam, Dist.: Peddapalli, Telangana-505210. WALK IN INTERVIEW. RAMAGUNDAM FERTILIZERS AND CHEMICALS LIMITED, a joint venture company, at its Ramagundam Unit, is looking for two (2) qualified and experienced Medical professionals to be engaged on fixed tenure basis of 1 year on contract as Medical Officer (MO) on full time duty. The educational qualification is MBBS degree from a recognized university & minimum 05 years of experience after internship in a reputed Hospital. The monthly remuneration is lump sum ₹ 87,550/- (Upper Age Limit - 64 Years). Please visit the career section of our website www.rfcl.co.in for detailed advertisement with terms & conditions. Interested candidates meeting the eligibility criteria may attend Walk-In Interview, scheduled on 18/05/2024 from 09:30 am to 04:00 pm at RFCL Ramagundam Unit. The address of correspondence: HR Dept., Technical Building, Ramagundam Fertilizers And Chemicals Limited, Fertilizers City, Ramagundam, Dist. Peddapalli, Telangana State-505210. Candidates are requested to forward their resumes on varenyashukla@rfcl.co.in latest by 17/05/2024.

# DECCAN Chronicle

9 MAY 2024

## BJP must face Haryana vote: A taste of its own medicine?

With three MLAs belonging to the Haryana Legislative Assembly defecting to the Congress camp, the state government led by BJP's Nayab Singh Saini finds itself reduced to a minority. It now has 43 MLAs in an 88-seat House and is two short of an absolute majority.

It is only proper, therefore, that it takes early steps to prove its majority on the floor of the House and assert its legitimacy before proceeding with matters of governance in the state.

Ironically, there won't be many who will beat their chests at the fact that the party that has been conducting Operation Lotus to topple elected governments in state after state is now getting a taste of its own medicine. Although it is perhaps several years since a BJP government is threatened by defections, it cannot afford to ignore the crisis altogether either, especially since its former ally, the Jannayak Janta Party with 10 MLAs, has declared that it will vote against the government in the Assembly.

Haryana is due to have an Assembly election later this year. The BJP came to power for the first time in the state in 2014, winning 47 seats in a 90-member Assembly. Until then the political stage here had been shared by the Congress and various offshoots of the party once headed by Choudhary Devi Lal.

**Does this gesture by the Independents have more to it than meets the eye? It is a question that the BJP must seriously ask itself. Lofty talk during campaign is not unusual but it must keep its ear to the ground.**

The BJP could not muster the numbers in the elections in 2019 but managed to hold on to power with the support of the JJP, led by Dushyant Chautala, the great-grandson of Devi Lal.

Recently, the party effected a leadership change in the state. It replaced Manohar Lal Khattar who was its face since 2014 with Mr Saini.

It was part of the election management strategy of the BJP which calculated that the anti-incumbency feelings against the Khattar leadership could be neutralised by a largely

unknown new face. Such a strategy has been seen to work in several other states.

It is not yet clear if the Saini government will sail through a confidence vote in the Assembly but the fact remains that the three Independents have chosen to break free from NDA. Which is headed by BJP that claims it will return to power in the Centre winning more than 400 of the Lok Sabha's 543 seats.

Does this gesture by the Independents have more to it than meets the eye? It is a question that the BJP must ask itself seriously.

Grandstanding during election campaigns is not unusual but the Haryana development must cause the party to keep its ear to the ground. For, realpolitik can take you only so far; it's the will of the people that actually does the job.

## Pitroda lands Cong in soup

Poll time is the open season when motormouths rattle off speeches the moment a microphone is sighted. Sam Pitroda, Overseas Congress chairman who is often described as a Congress leader's mentor, is a specimen case who finds a lot to comment on and it is up to the audience to decide whether to laugh or cry at his verbal outpourings.

Even a standup comedian, bereft of ideas on how to invoke laughter, may have hesitated to use the lines that Mr Pitroda did to classify Indians with a distinctly racial overtone — "Where people in the East look like Chinese, people in the West look like Arabs, people in the North look like, maybe White, and people in South look like Africans."

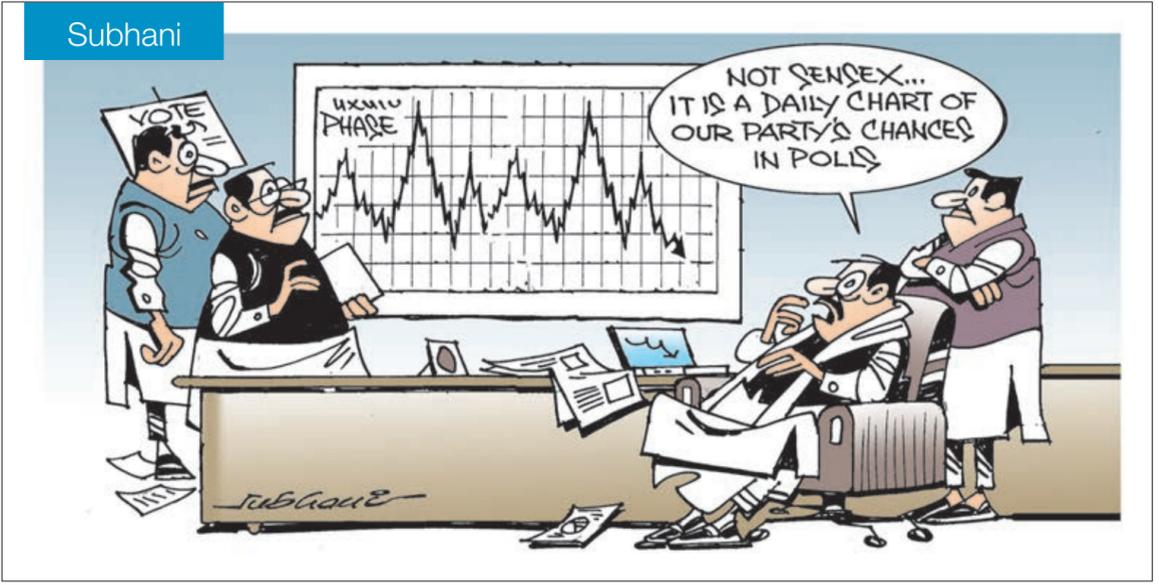
**The pity is, such excesses of a loose tongue by a person in politics and public life only invites pointed criticism from political rivals while injecting greater divisiveness into an already vitiated poll atmosphere**

Mr Pitroda's description of India's diversity is without foundation. Indians are rather proud of their Indianness, regardless of what the colour of their skin is, and even a school student would know pigmentation is genetically typed by what climatic conditions their ancestors may have lived in and mingled with upon migrating.

The beauty of the rainbow lies in its multiple hues. The unity and diversity of the modern world is reflected in its multiculturalism, and India, with its spatial spread and multiple ethnicities has been as good an example of it as any. To reduce such a cultural melting pot of a nation to racist definitions as Mr Pitroda did should, therefore, invite scorn and ridicule.

It is not known how Mr Pitroda would define himself after a look in the mirror. But his maverick views belittling the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and his borrowed idea on inheritance tax had landed him in controversies earlier.

The pity is, such excesses of a loose tongue by a person in politics and, by extension, in public life only invites pointed criticism from political rivals while injecting greater divisiveness into an already vitiated poll atmosphere that fully reflects the polarised times we live in when partisan politics is breeding all kinds of negative thinking.



## Amid global stir, why are Indians so quiet on Gaza?



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray

Reflections

When the Young Men of British Literature — John Braine, John Wain, Alan Sillitoe, Kingsley Amis and others — were rampaging in the 1950s and 1960s, the highly successful W. Somerset Maugham remarked cynically that an additional thousand pounds a year would dissolve their anger. Actually, it wasn't money alone that defused their protest but the opportunities created by the social revolution of the welfare state.

One looks in vain for a similar transformation in India. Young India doesn't have the money which is mainly in the hands of billionaires who fund political parties through anonymous electoral bonds and snap up major airports. At the same time, the obsession with caste suggests that a social revolution is almost as remote today as it was when temple entry agitated South Indian reformers. That leaves civil society at the mercy of India's one great certitude — an unchanging religious hierarchy that draws millions of voters. Additionally, the Hindutva project, its instrument for long-term social and political control, is useful in marginalising unwanted minorities.

Other concerns have been swept under the carpet. The upsurge sweeping through American university campuses where thousands of pro-Palestine protesters were arrested is a harsh reminder of the sudden silence of the torchbearers of India's revolution to usher in a brave new world. That's why it seemed like a flicker of future hope when students of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, once notorious as the "red fort", forced the authorities to cancel an invitation to Eric Garcetti, the American ambassador to India, to talk about US-

India ties. "We are protesting against the US support for the genocide in Gaza committed by Israel", explained the JNU students' union president, Dhananjay.

It was a pity to miss out on Washington's exposition of an important relationship, but the US ambassador's presence would have been another propaganda event in an India that recently added insult to injury by abstaining when the United Nations Human Rights Council urged countries to "cease the sale, transfer and diversion of arms, munitions and other military equipment to Israel."

Time was when young urban middle class India was in the forefront of every protest movement against injustice. The "city of processions" — Jawaharlal Nehru's nickname for Kolkata — lived up to its reputation with massive rallies chanting "Amar naam, tomar naam, Vietnam, Vietnam" (My name, your name, Vietnam is everyone's name), as evocative a slogan as John F. Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner."

Now, it's not Kolkata alone but India as a whole that seems to have abandoned idealism for avarice. A profusion of start-ups and dot-com millionaires herald the revival of the grab-as-grab-can 19th century free market under the label of "neo-liberalism". Elderly British friends, veterans of the old Labour movement, ask me in wonder whatever happened to the liberal socialism they associated with Jawaharlal Nehru, Jayaprakash Narayan and V.K. Krishna Menon. They find the NDA's market economics as un-Indian as "Howdy! Modi!"

Showmanship isn't Indian. Neither is the pretence that "Vande Bharat" is more than just a marketing gimmick to repack old merchandise. "There aren't any good, brave causes left", Jim-

**Why has Ukraine not touched Indian hearts? For one, even those who surreptitiously yearn for an American 'green card' dare not publicly champion the US military-industrial machine. Also, race and colour are the ultimate realities...**

my, the embittered anti-hero of Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, lamented. Russia's ravaging of Ukraine has not touched Indian hearts and souls like the Vietnam war did. One reason could be that even those who surreptitiously yearn for an American "green card" dare not publicly champion the US military-industrial machine. Another is that race and colour being the ultimate realities, Indians object more strongly to Europeans brutalising an Asian nation and killing 882,000 Vietnamese. Russians and Ukrainians are indistinguishable from each other to most Indians.

Indian men are not afraid to die so that wives and children at home can survive. More than 147,000 of the casualties in the two world wars (excluding the three million killed in the 1943 Bengal Famine) were Indian. Now, the NDA government is pushing jobless young Indians into the trenches of West Asia through a pact with Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

Of course they are not forced to go. But 1.3 crore Indians would not have migrated if home had not been so bleak. About a lakh give up their Indian citizenship every year because of inadequate employment opportunities in India. A few might aspire to be Rishi Sunak or Sundar Pichai. Most sell their assets and raise funds to join the deadly queues trying to smuggle into the United States or down in the Mediterranean seeking a foothold in Europe. Those who can do neither must shut their eyes to the surrounding misery, stuff their ears to cries for food, and block their consciences to appeals for help. Pressures will inten-

sify with America's economic slowdown, China's reduced consumption and the construction crisis in Canada.

Meanwhile, Israel has virtually obliterated the Gaza Strip and continues to massively destroy life, property and the supporting economy. Not content with the havoc already wrought, Mr Netanyahu vows to invade Rafah to massacre more Palestinian men, women and children and further devastate the civic infrastructure even if Hamas sues for peace. The stark truth is that the Cairo and Qatari middlemen who are trying to bring about a ceasefire need not bother. Needing a ceaseless war against the Palestinians for his own political survival, Mr Netanyahu will not desist. President Joe Biden has again promised that the US will support him all the way.

It's shaming that while London, Berlin and Paris seethed with anger, Delhi and Kolkata remained placid. Of course, it can be argued that India's necessary relationship with the US should not be sacrificed at the altar of West Asian wars. Israel's side of the quarrel also deserves a hearing, especially after Hamas's abominable conduct on October 7. The world's most populous country, which never tires of repeating that it will soon boast the world's third largest economy, may be said to have a certain responsibility to exercise such weight as it has for the benefit of the global community. But New Delhi's ambition seems to be prestige more than action — joining the high table of the United Nations rather than exercising its influence to benefit mankind.

That is power politics, the game for which the land of the Buddha and the Mahatma supposedly had no appetite. Perhaps Maugham was right after all, not just about literature's Angry Young Men but Angry Old Nations as well. The JNU's is the small voice of morality amidst so many serving their own ends.

*The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author*

## LETTERS PRESS FREEDOM DECLINING

Press freedom has been on a constant downward slide in the world's largest democracy. Many observers describe a decline in the quality of freedom of expression in India ever since the BJP came to power in 2014. India's score in the World Press Freedom Index fell over the last year from 36.62 to 31.28 as reported by Reporters Without Borders (RSF for Reporters sans Frontiers). Under the Modi government, journalists, especially from smaller media outlets, have constantly been facing harassment and threats. But every attack on the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression only adds to the strength of the Fourth Estate in our country.

R.Sivakumar  
Chennai

## HISTORIC INDIAN ELECTIONS

It is truly the greatest show on Earth, an ode to a diverse and democratic ethos, where 900 million plus are eligible to vote and playing their small part in directing their ancient civilization into the future. Its challenges are immense, more so probably than anywhere else, particularly in development and fending off terrorism — but considering these challenges and our neighbours, it is even more astounding that the most diverse nation on Earth, with hundreds of languages, all religions and cultures, is not only surviving, but thriving. India ticked all the boxes right and the greatest Indian election in history.

C.K.Subramaniam  
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Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu

## As secys retire, some stop-gap solutions amid talent shortage

In the wake of S.K.G. Rahate's retirement, the temporary assignment of senior AGMUT cadre IAS officer Raj Kumar Goyal as secretary, justice, underscores the Modi Sarkar's struggle to maintain a robust talent pool. Of course, this could be due to the government's preoccupation with the Lok Sabha elections currently underway, but it highlights the challenges faced in finding suitable successors for key positions.

While Mr Goyal's appointment may be a stopgap solution, it also raises questions about the long-term sustainability of such arrangements. The reason, many observers have pointed out, is talent deficit. Major reforms such as lateral entry and 360-degree appraisals have been introduced, and now the Prime Minister is giving a fresh push to lateral entry, with a focus on filling top government positions by selecting subject matter specialists and posting them in departments for which they are best suited. It is essential to address the systemic factors contributing to talent shortage in the bureaucracy.

Interestingly, there are hints that the government is keen to change crucial aspects of judicial management after the elections

when it forms the next government. While little has been revealed or said, quietly and definitively, Mr Narendra Modi hopes to continue to change the rules of babudom.

### IPS OFFICER VINDICATED AGAINST BOGUS FIRS

Justice is finally knocking on the door for Chhattisgarh IPS officer Gurjinder Pal Singh. After getting slapped with three FIRs in 2021 because he didn't play ball with the big shots in the state government, Mr Singh is now getting the green light to hop back into action. The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) has just ordered his reinstatement within four weeks.

Back in 2021, Mr Singh found himself in hot water, suspended from duty, starting at three FIRs — one for corruption, one for sedition and one for extortion! But here's the kicker: Mr Singh was doing his job, leading the charge on an SIT to sniff out allegations against former Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh in a multi-crore public distribution system (PDS) scam. When he couldn't find the "smoking gun", the state government fired back vindictively with bogus

FIRs. It turns out that the case against Mr Singh, including serious charges like sedition and extortion, was orchestrated by the state Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB).

The CAT order stated that there was substance in Mr Singh's plea that two kilograms of gold and seditious material had been planted by the investigating officer illegally to frame Mr Singh in a criminal case. Hopefully, Mr Singh can now put his nightmarish experience behind him and get the justice he deserves. And all this for daring to ruffle some feathers.

### A CLASH OF TITANS

In the latest twist of the drama surrounding the Vadra-DLF land deal in Haryana, senior IAS officer Sanjeev Verma has escalated tensions by writing to state chief secretary T.V.S.N. Prasad, calling for disciplinary and criminal action against noted whistleblower and colleague Ashok Khemka. Known for his fearless stance against corruption, Mr Khemka had recently questioned the sluggish pace of the investigation into the controversial land deal.

At the heart of the matter is Mr Khemka's

unwavering commitment to transparency and justice in his handling of the Vadra-DLF land deal back in 2012. His decision to cancel the mutation of a high-profile land transaction set off a chain of events that continue to reverberate within the state's political and babu circles. Several setbacks in his quest have only strengthened his determination to see the matter through to the end.

Interestingly, both Mr Verma and Mr Khemka, have their own history of conflict, notably over alleged irregularities in recruitment at the state Warehouse Corporation. Their ongoing feud underscores the entrenched power struggles in Haryana's babudom and mirrors the political rivalries playing out in the state. Interestingly, Mr Khemka is one of few IAS officers who has managed to rub all political dispensations the wrong way, with his adherence to transparency and accountability. If he has so many foes, surely, he must be doing something right!

*Love them, hate them ignore them at national peril, is the babu guarantee and Dilip's belief. Share significant babu escapades dilipcherian@hotmail.com.*

SHORT TAKES

**'It's great, green & trashy': Danish envoy flags bylane 'full of garbage'**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 8

In a major embarrassment for the national capital Delhi's civic agencies, Danish ambassador Freddy Svane set the cat among the pigeons on Wednesday afternoon by flagging a bylane full of trash adjoining his country's embassy in the posh Chanakyapuri area of the city. The Danish envoy posted a video of the trash and demanded an action by the civic agencies to clear it.

In the scathing video that he posted that reflected his anguish and frustration at the surroundings, the Danish ambassador said, "Welcome to great, green and trashy New Delhi. Here we have the Danish Embassy and we have the Greek Embassy over there.

**Man loses ₹1.88cr in WhatsApp scam**

**Thane:** A 48-year-old coaching class owner in Thane district was duped of more than ₹1.88 crore in a share trading scam that started with the membership of a WhatsApp group, police said on Wednesday. As per the complainant, an unidentified person added him to the WhatsApp group "STOCK Vanguard (F)" in March, said an official. The group had 170 members and advice about share trading used to be posted there, he said. He found them trustworthy and invested as recommended, and later he was added to another group, "STOCK-Vanguard-VIP". Three, identified as Isha, Divya, and Raj Rupani showed him some kind of "SEBI certificate" to gain his trust, and told him that he could make huge profits by investing through an app called CIN-VEN/IC SERVICES, complainant said. — PTI

**Militant shot dead in J&K encounter**

**Srinagar:** A terrorist was killed in a fresh gunfight with security forces on Wednesday near the site of an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district where two ultras were killed a day earlier. During search of houses near encounter site in the Redwani area of the district, the fresh exchange of fire took place with a terrorist hiding there, officials said. One terrorist was killed today, the officials said and added that the identity of the deceased was being ascertained. They said firing was going on till last reports came in. Two ultras, including wanted terrorist of Lashkar-e-Tayyaba Basit Dar, were killed in the encounter with security forces on Tuesday. — PTI

**MODI: RAHUL TOOK TEMPO LOADS OF MONEY FROM AMBANI-ADANI**

FROM PG 1

Countering the charge, Mr Gandhi later in the day dared Mr Modi to hold a probe by the CBI or ED into whether businessmen Adani and Ambani sent his party "money in a tempo". Taking a swipe at the Prime Minister, Mr Gandhi, in a video message, asked whether Mr Modi was speaking from his "personal experience" about money being sent by businessmen. It is for the first time that Mr Modi referred to the country's two most powerful industrialists in his election campaign and to everyone's shock, he also talked about tempo loads of black money still being in circulation in the country post-demonetisation. "I am asking shehzada (prince) from this soil of Telangana to explain how much money he took from Adani and Ambani? How much 'kala dhan' (black money) he looted? Whether Congress received tempo loads of currency notes," he said. The Prime Minister said Rahul Gandhi started chanting about five industrialists after his efforts to portray the Rafale deal in poor light fell flat. He then started talking about Ambani and Adani. Seeing a huge crowd at the meeting, Mr Modi said he was happy to see such a massive crowd, which he did not witness in his home state of

**■ Court pitches for preventive steps to tackle problem  
Cloud seeding no solution to U'khand forest fires: SC**

New Delhi, May 8: The Supreme Court on Wednesday said cloud seeding or "depending on rain god" is not the answer to the raging forest fires in Uttarakhand and that authorities will have to take preventive measures to tackle the problem. The Uttarakhand government apprised the apex court about the steps taken to control the forest fires and said 0.1 per cent of the wildlife cover in the state was on fire due to such incidents.

The state government told a bench of Justices B.R. Gawai and Sandeep Mehta that since November last year, there were 398 forest fires in Uttarakhand and five people were killed in such incidents.

Deputy advocate-general of Uttarakhand Jatinder Kumar Sethi told the court that all the fires were man-made. A total of 350 criminal cases have been lodged in connection with the forest fires, he said, adding that 62 people have been named in those.

"People say that 40 per cent of Uttarakhand is on fire, whereas 0.1 per cent of the wildlife cover was on fire. And all this was man-made. From November till today, we have 398 fires, all man-made," the counsel said. The court was hearing an application that has raised the issue of raging forest fires in Uttarakhand.

**West Bengal suit: Top court reserves order**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 8

The Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved an order on the maintainability of a suit of West Bengal in which it has challenged the power of the CBI to investigate cases in its jurisdiction, despite revocation of general consent.

A bench of Justices B.R. Gawai and Sandeep Mehta said it was only deciding a legal issue and the court will not permit either of the parties to make political arguments.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the West Bengal government, argued that once the state had withdrawn its consent on November 16, 2018, the Centre cannot allow the probe agency to enter the state for investigation.



An Indian Air Force helicopter conducts a "Bambi Bucket" operation to control the forest fire in Pauri Garhwal district on Wednesday. — PTI

During the hearing, the bench told the state's counsel, "Cloud seeding or depending on the rain god is not the answer. He (applicant) is right in saying that you have to take preventive measures."

The state government placed before the bench an interim status report containing details of the various steps taken by authorities to deal with forest

fires. Mr Sethi said helicopters of the Indian Air Force were also pressed into service to extinguish the fires. "What is the number of human lives lost?" the bench asked. The counsel said five people were killed due to the forest fires. The bench sought to know how many animals were killed in such incidents. — PTI

**CM shunts 10 officials, hikes pine needles' price to ₹50/kg**

PRITHVIRAJ SINGH  
DEHRADUN, MAY 8

Uttarakhand government on Wednesday suspended 10 frontline forest department personnel for the raging wildfire that has spread over nearly 1,350 hectares of Himalayan hills in the past one month. No official has been held responsible so far.

Decision to suspend 10 forest guards and foresters was taken following an emergency meeting of the senior government officials with the Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama. Mr Dhama on Wednesday suspended all his engagements to chair meeting with the forest department officials.

Meanwhile, the state returned to his predecessor Trivendra Singh Rawat regime's plan of dry pine needle, known as pirul, collection to prevent forest fires raising its price sharply from ₹3 to ₹50 per kilogram. Mr Dhama said it's aimed at preventing forest fires as pine needle is highly inflammable material and major cause of forest fires in high hills.

**Live-in relationship 'stigma' in Indian culture: C'garh HC**

FROM PG 1

One Abdul Hameed Siddique of Dantewada in Chhattisgarh had filed a petition in the high court seeking custody of the child born from a live-in relationship with Kavita Gupta.

The Dantewada family court had earlier rejected such a petition by him, leading the petitioner to move the high court.

While seeking custody of the child, the petitioner

argued that the two had married under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, as it was an interfaith union. Under the Mahomedan law, counsel claimed, Mr Siddique was allowed to perform a second marriage.

He contended that he is entitled to the custody of the child. Ms Gupta's counsel held that the petitioner is not entitled to a second marriage since his first wife was alive and that he cannot claim cus-

tody of the child born from a live-in relationship.

Her counsel argued that the petitioner lacks evidence to provide validity of the marriage.

While dismissing the petition, the high court held that provisions relating to more than one marriage of a Muslim man under their personal law "cannot be invoked before any court of law unless and until the same is pleaded and proved".



Dark clouds cover the city skyline, in Kochi, Wednesday.

**Pitroda makes racist comments on Indians, resigns as IOC chief**

FROM PG 1

Caught in a tricky situation, the Congress immediately "distanced" itself from the racist remarks. By Wednesday evening, Mr Pitroda had resigned from the post of chief of the India Overseas Congress.

Hitting out at the Congress, Mr Modi demanded a response from Rahul Gandhi, saying that the country "won't tolerate disrespect on the basis of the colour of skin". Repeating his "shehzada" (prince) barb for Mr Gandhi, Mr Modi said, "Shehzade, you will have to answer. The country will not tolerate the disrespect of our countrymen on the basis of their skin color. Modi will definitely not tolerate it."

Taking to X, Jairam Ramesh said, "Mr Pitroda has decided to step down as chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress of his own accord. The Congress president has accepted his decision." He added: "The analogies given by Mr Pitroda for India's diversity are extremely wrong and unacceptable. The Indian National Congress completely disassociates itself from these analogies."

However, the BJP was unrelenting in its attack on the Congress over Mr Pitroda's statement. The party's Tamil Nadu unit chief K. Annamalai said the Congress mindset and thinking believe that India is a land of invaders and we are descendants of invaders and only the Congress, which has its masters outside the country, can go to the extent where it can call Indians descendants of invaders. Condemning Mr Pitroda's remarks, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "After I heard Mr Pitroda's statement, I looked at myself in the mirror and I appear as a proud Assamese and Indian, not as a Chinese... This is a racist comment."

Gandhi always insult the Northeast. The people of the Northeast are proud Indians. You should never challenge our nationalism... Mr Pitroda and Mr Gandhi are not two separate people. Mr Pitroda is Mr Gandhi's friend, philosopher and guide. Why are you (the Congress) not disowning him (Mr Pitroda)?... How is this a useless issue? This issue is connected to our sentiments. You are completely advocating racism," Mr Sarma said.

Distancing itself from Mr Pitroda's remark, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said none of the members of the INDIA bloc support the Congress leader's alleged racist remarks and accused the BJP of "hating" the Dalits.

A few weeks back, Mr Pitroda had got the Congress into another embarrassing situation when he talked about inheritance tax. The Congress had to distance itself from Mr Pitroda's statement at that time, too.

**Bose to show CCTV to 100 people in molestation case**

'Won't show video to politician Mamata, her police'

Kolkata, May 8: In the backdrop of a woman employee levelling molestation charge against West Bengal governor C.V. Ananda Bose, Raj Bhavan on Wednesday said it would show the related CCTV footage to 100 people, except "politician" Mamata Banerjee and "her police".



C.V. Ananda Bose

Following the allegation, the police had requested Raj Bhavan to share the CCTV footage concerned. The governor, however, directed his staff not to cooperate with the police in this regard.

"Governor Bose has launched a programme 'Sach Ke Saamne' in the background of the mischievous and fabricated allegations by the police that Raj Bhavan is not sparing the CCTV footage of an incident which is under the illegal and unconstitutional investigation of the police," Raj Bhavan said in a post on X.

It asked the people to send requests over email or phone to attend the pro-

gramme at Raj Bhavan and the first 100 people would be allowed to see the footage inside the governor's house on Thursday morning.

"The governor has decided that the CCTV footage can be seen by any citizen of West Bengal, except politician Mamata Banerjee and her police for the stand they had taken, which is in public domain," the post read.

A contractual woman employee of Raj Bhavan on Friday lodged a written complaint with the Kolkata police alleging molestation by the governor.

**FOLLOWING THE** allegation, the police had requested Raj Bhavan to share the CCTV footage concerned. The governor, however, directed his staff not to cooperate with the police in this regard

Mr Bose had described the allegation as "absurd drama" and labelled chief minister Mamata Banerjee's politics as "dirty".

The Kolkata police has constituted an inquiry team to probe the woman employee's allegation of molestation by Mr Bose. The police has summoned a few of Raj Bhavan officials and policemen posted there in connection with their investigation of the allegation.

However, under Article 361 of the Constitution, no criminal proceedings can be instituted against a governor during his term in office.

**Contracts must not be cancelled without assigning reasons: SC**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 8

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said contracts awarding work to private parties should not be cancelled without assigning reasons and reserved its judgment on an appeal against a Calcutta high court order.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said private parties, making investments after bagging a contract, have reasonable expectation of getting a return.

Justice Chandrachud said, "How can a contract be terminated without assigning any reason? A private person invests in pursuance of award of contract."

Referring to the facts of the appeal matter, the CJI said no reason was given for cancellation of the contract. On May 25, 2023, a division bench of the Calcutta high court had upheld the verdict of a single judge bench, which had approved the cancellation of the contract awarded to a firm headed by Subodh Kumar Singh Rathour.

Mr Rathour's firm had secured a contract for maintaining two underpasses on the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass in Kolkata for 10 years.

As part of the contract, the firm was allowed to place advertisements both inside and above the underpasses for which he was required to undertake some construction work.

On February 7 last year, the Kolkata metropolitan development authority (KMDA) terminated the contract.

The KMDA has agreed to refund the licence fee deposited by Mr Rathour and the cost incurred by him on construction activity and maintenance.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the KMDA, told the apex court that a fresh contract has now been awarded to another party and Mr Rathour can be compensated.

Senior advocate Shyam Divan, representing Mr Rathour, said though he did not want disruption of maintenance activities at the underpasses, the impugned communication by which the contract was cancelled, has to be set aside.

**India & EU hold talks on Ukraine war, Indo-Pacific**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, MAY 8

The European Union on Wednesday said that developments in Europe, including Ukraine, as well as South Asia and the Indo-Pacific figured in security and defence talks between India and the EU that were held earlier this week.

"On May 6, the European Union and India held their second consultations on security and defence in New Delhi."

"They exchanged views and respective assessments on international and regional issues in Europe, including Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as developments in South Asia and in West Asia," it said in a statement.

Furthermore, they discussed security and defence policy developments, it added.

The EU also informed on the implementation of the EU's strategic compass and the Indo-Pacific strategy, including the European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS), as well as new European Union operations, such as the EUNAVFOR Aspidos".

**ALL GOVT SCHOOLS TO GET NET CONNECTION**

FROM PG 1

Now, by June, all the schools would get the 100 Mbps connection and be equipped with the labs that would go a long way in preparing the students to face the developing technological world and making education easy and enjoyable for them.

The scheme will help over 46 lakh students learn their lessons through videos, assess their own learning online, develop computer applications skills, improve English language skills and get career guidance, among other things.

All government school students enrolling for higher education courses would receive Rs 1,000 as monthly assistance from June. Hitherto, only girls who studied from Class VI to XII in government schools were getting the assistance but now it has been extended to boys, too.

Announcing that the male students would get the assistance from the coming academic year at a 'Kalluri Kanavu' (College Dreams) event organised

in Chennai as part of the Chief Minister's ambitious 'Nan Mudhalvan' scheme, chief secretary Shiv Das Meena said four more such events would be held in the coming days at different places to cover all the districts.

The Chennai event was for students who had passed higher secondary education in the districts of Chennai, Trichy, Coimbatore, Nagapattinam, Madurai, Tirunelveli and Salem. The rest of the events would be on May 9, 10, 11 and 13, he said.



Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra addresses an election meeting for Lok Sabha polls, in Raebareilly, Wednesday. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

**AFGHAN BLAST KILLS 3 TALIBAN SECURITY MEN**

Kabul, May 8: Three Taliban security personnel were killed when a motorcycle carrying an explosive device blew up near a military vehicle in northern Afghanistan being used in opium poppy eradication operations, an interior ministry spokesman said on Wednesday.

Protests have rolled several districts in the northern province of Badakhshan where farmers object to Taliban security forces' attempts to wipe out opium cultivation — the backbone of many household incomes in impoverished Afghanistan.

**ANOTHER TORIES LAWMAKER DEFECTS TO OPPN**

London, May 8: A lawmaker in Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party defected to the opposition Labour Party on Wednesday, the second to do so in less than two weeks.

Sunak's Conservatives are trailing Labour by about 20 points in opinion polls ahead of a national election expected this year, and the party suffered heavy losses in local elections last week.

"Under Rishi Sunak, the Conservatives have become a byword for incompetence and division," defecting lawmaker Natalie Elphicke said.

**JSP-N CHIEF: NO AFFECT OF SPLIT ON NEPAL GOVT**

Kathmandu, May 8: Deputy Prime Minister and chairperson of the Janata Samajbadi Party-Nepal (JSP-N) Upendra Yadav on Wednesday said that he will approach the court against the "unconstitutional move" to divide his party when he was abroad as he insisted that the split won't affect the stability of the coalition government. The JSP-N, one of the coalition partners in Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda-led government, suffered a division early this week when Yadav was in the US to attend an event.

**RESTRUCTURING: SL EYES \$17 BN DEBT SLASH**

Colombo, May 8: Sri Lanka is looking at a reduction of approximately \$17 billion from its overall debt burden in the ongoing debt restructuring process, foreign minister Ali Sabry said on Wednesday and highlighted his government's efforts to foster strong ties with major partners and creditors, including China and India, for further negotiations with the IMF.

**DEFAMATION OF ROYALS: THAI LEADER JAILED**

Bangkok, May 8: A court in Thailand on Wednesday sentenced a prominent pro-democracy activist to three years in jail for royal defamation.

Critics say the government has used the strict lese-majeste laws to silence dissent, prosecuting scores under the tough legislation that protects King Maha Vajiralongkorn and his family. Panupong Jadnok, 27, was among the leaders of 2020's youth-led demonstrations, which saw thousands take to the streets to make unprecedented calls to reform the monarchy.

**DISPLACED IN MYANMAR NOW AT 3MN, SAYS UN**

Yangon, May 8: The number of displaced people in Myanmar has reached three million, the United Nations said, with the vast majority forced to flee their homes by conflict unleashed by the military's 2021 coup.

Around 2.7 million have fled since the putsch that toppled Aung San Suu Kyi's government after a short-lived experiment with democracy.

The coup sparked renewed clashes with established ethnic armed groups and birthed dozens of new "People's Defence Forces" that the military has failed to crush.

**Israel bombards Gaza city as Cairo ceasefire talks resume**

Israel reopens a key Gaza crossing but the UN says no aid has entered

Rafah, Jerusalem, Cairo, Washington, May 8: Israel bombarded the overcrowded Gaza city of Rafah, where it has launched a ground incursion, as talks resumed on Wednesday in Cairo aimed at agreeing the terms of a truce in the seven-month war.

The Israeli military said on Wednesday that it has reopened the Kerem Shalom crossing into Gaza, a key terminal for the entry of humanitarian aid that was closed over the weekend after a Hamas rocket attack killed four Israeli soldiers nearby.

Despite international objections, Israel sent tanks into Rafah on Tuesday and seized the nearby crossing into Egypt that is the main conduit for aid into the besieged territory.

The White House condemned the interruption to humanitarian deliveries, with a senior US official later revealing Washington had paused a shipment of bombs last week after Israel failed to address concerns of the US over its Rafah plans.

The Israeli military said hours later it was reopening another major aid crossing into Gaza, Kerem Shalom, as well as the Erez crossing. But the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said the Kerem Shalom crossing — which Israel shut after a rocket attack killed four soldiers on Sunday — remained closed.

It came after a night of



A Palestinian descends on a rope across the concrete wall of Israel's controversial separation barrier into the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Beit Hanina after having climbed and crossed over from occupied West Bank's al-Ram, on Wednesday. — AFP

heavy Israeli strikes and shelling across Gaza. AFP-TV footage showed Palestinians scrambling in the dark to pull survivors, bloodied and caked in dust, out from under the rubble of a Rafah building.

"We are living in Rafah in extreme fear and endless anxiety as the occupation army keeps firing artillery shells indiscriminately," said Muhanad Ahmad Qishta, 29.

"Rafah is a witnessing a very large displacement, as places the Israeli army claims to be safe are also being bombed," he said.

Al-Ahli hospital said a strike on an apartment in

devastated Gaza City killed seven members of the same family and wounded several other people.

An emergency doctor working in Rafah and neighbouring Khan Yunis said that with humanitarian access compromised, the health situation was "catastrophic".

"The smell of sewage is rife everywhere," said doctor James Smith. "It's been getting worse over the course of the last couple of days." The war was sparked by Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel, which resulted in the deaths of more than 1,170 people, mostly civil-

ians, according to Israeli official figures. Israel in response vowed to crush Hamas and launched a military offensive that has killed at least 34,844 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

Militants also took about 250 hostages, of whom Israel estimates 128 remain in Gaza, among them 36 the military says are dead. Talks aimed at agreeing a ceasefire resumed in Cairo on Wednesday "in the presence of all parties", Egyptian media reported. — Agencies

**AT AL-SHIFA HOSPITAL, 49 BODIES FOUND**

Gaza Strip, May 8: Gaza health workers uncovered on Wednesday at least 49 bodies at Al-Shifa hospital, a medical facility and Hamas authorities said, the latest such discovery at the facility previously raided by Israeli forces.

The Israeli military has repeatedly targeted Al-Shifa, the Palestinian territory's largest hospital, and other medical facilities in its war against Hamas, triggered by the Palestinian group's unprecedented October 7 attack.

Israel accuses Palestinian militants of using hospitals as command centres and to hold hostages abducted on October 7. Hamas denies the accusation.

Motassem Salah, head of the emergency department at Al-Shifa, told journalists that "a third mass grave was found inside this hospital." The statement accused Israel of "killings... inside and outside hospitals", without offering further information concerning the bodies found on Wednesday.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment.

AFP footage from Al-Shifa hospital showed at least a dozen bodies wrapped in black plastic body bags. — AFP

**BRITAIN WILL EXPEL RUSSIAN DEF. ATTACHE**

London, May 8: Britain will expel Russia's defence attaché, remove diplomatic status from some properties and limit the length of Russian diplomatic visas in response to what interior minister James Cleverly called Moscow's "malign activity".

Britain's action was among several taken across Europe on Wednesday. Estonia summoned the head of the Russian embassy to protest the jamming of GPS signals and Poland said it had been targeted by a hacking attack from a Russia-linked group.

Last week, Nato members said they were "deeply concerned" about recent attacks they attributed to Russia that affected the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Britain.

Addressing Parliament on Wednesday, Cleverly said Britain was already "an extremely challenging operating environment for Russian intelligence services." — Reuters

**Trump classified docu case judge cancels May trial date**

Washington, May 8: The federal judge in Florida presiding over the classified documents prosecution of former President Donald Trump has canceled the May 20 trial date, postponing it indefinitely.

The order from US District Judge Aileen Cannon had been expected in light of still-unresolved issues in the case and because Trump is currently on trial in a separate case in Manhattan charging him in connection with hush money payments during the 2016 presidential election.

The New York case involves several of the same lawyers representing him in the federal case in Florida. Cannon said in a five-page order Tuesday that it would be "imprudent" to finalise a new trial date now, casting further doubt on federal prosecutors' ability to bring Trump to trial before the Nov. presidential election.

Trump faces dozens of felony counts accusing him of illegally hoarding at his Mar-a-Lago estate in

**Biden, Trump win Indiana primaries**

Washington, May 8: President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump have won the Indiana Democratic and Republican primaries ahead of the US presidential election in November.

Tuesday's win gives Trump, already the presumptive Republican nominee, another 58 delegates, said US media reports. Trump, 77, was the only active candidate on Indiana's Republican ballot.

Palm Beach, Florida classified documents that he took with him after he left the White House in 2021, and then obstructing the FBI's efforts to get them back. He has pleaded not guilty and denied wrongdoing. Trump faces four criminal cases as he seeks to reclaim the White House, but outside of the

President Biden, also the presumptive Democratic Party candidate, won all 79 delegates in Indiana's Democratic primary.

In Indiana, 81-year-old Biden's name was the only one that appeared on the ballot.

The race between Biden and Trump will mark the first time since 1912 that a former president and a sitting president will do battle in the November 5 election. — PTI

New York prosecution, it's not clear that any of the other three will reach trial before the election.

The SC is weighing Trump's arguments that he is immune from federal prosecution in a separate case from special counsel Jack Smith charging him with plotting to overturn the 2020 prez poll. — AP

**German state min. hit on head**

Berlin, May 8: A senior figure in Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party became the latest target in a string of attacks on German politicians when a man struck her from behind with a bag containing a hard object in a Berlin library, officials said on Wednesday.

Berlin senator and former city mayor Franziska Giffey was slightly injured

and taken to hospital for a short time to treat the pain. A 74-year-old suspect, who was previously known to police for hate crime and unspecified incidents against state security, has been detained, police said, adding the suspect was also believed to have mental health issues.

The attack on Tuesday coincided with an emergency meeting of state ministers calling for greater police protection of politicians after a rising number of verbal and physical assaults ahead of European and local elections this year.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who was in the German capital attending a party conference, said perpetrators must face the full force of the law. — Reuters

"We must protect all those who stand up for our democratic society and our country from attacks - no matter what party they belong to," she said. "If these people are no longer safe, then our democracy is no longer safe either."

Meanwhile, two people were arrested in Dresden after a member of the Greens party was shoved and spat at. — Reuters

**Blackouts after Moscow strikes Kyiv power grid**

Kyiv, Moscow, May 8: Russian missiles and drones struck nearly a dozen Ukrainian energy infrastructure facilities on Wednesday, causing serious damage at three Soviet-era thermal power plants and blackouts in multiple regions, officials said.

Russia said on Wednesday it had captured two more frontline villages in Ukraine, including in the north-east Kharkiv region where its troops had been pushed back two years ago.

Moscow has made a string of gains on the front in recent months, pressing its manpower and weapons advantage on the battlefield as Kyiv waits for critical supplies of Western aid.

The Russian defence ministry said its Army units had "liberated the village of Kyslivka in the Kharkiv region" and "Novokalyynove in the Donetsk People's Republic".

Ukraine's air force said it shot down 39 of 55 missiles and 20 of 21 attack drones used for the attack, which piles more pressure on the energy system more than two years since Russia launched its full-scale invasion.

"Another massive attack on our energy industry!" Energy Minister German Galushchenko wrote on the Telegram app.

Two people were injured in the Kyiv region and one was hurt in the Kirovohrad region, interior minister Ihor Klymenko said.

Galushchenko said power generation and transmission facilities in the Poltava, Kirovohrad, Zaporizhzhia, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Vinnytsia regions were targeted.

Some 350 rescuers were racing to minimise the damage to energy facilities, 30 homes, public transport vehicles, cars, and a fire station, the interior ministry said.

National power grid operator Ukrenergo said



Volodymyr Zelenskyy

**4 ARRESTED FOR DUPING INDIANS TO FIGHT FOR MOSCOW**

New Delhi, May 8: Indian police said four people linked to a network of human traffickers have been arrested on suspicion of luring young men to Russia with the promise of lucrative jobs or university places only to force them to fight the war.

About 35 Indian men were duped in this manner, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said.

The four Indian nationals arrested were a translator, a person facilitating visa processing and the booking of airline tickets as well as two "main recruiters" for the southern states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the CBI said.

The investigation "is continuing against other accused persons who are part of this international network of human traffickers," the CBI said.

The families of two Indian men killed in the war have told Reuters they had gone to Russia expecting to work as "helpers" in the Army. — Reuters

it was forced to introduce electricity cut-offs in nine regions for consumers and that it would expand them nationwide for businesses during peak evening hours until 23:00 (20:00 GMT).

Officials urged Ukrainians to limit power consumption. — Agencies

**Boeing cargo plane lands without front wheels in Istanbul**

Istanbul, May 8: A FedEx Airlines Boeing 767 plane landed at Istanbul Airport on Wednesday without its front landing gear, a Turkish transport ministry official said, adding there were no casualties and authorities had launched an investigation.

The aircraft, flying from Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, informed the control tower in Istanbul that its landing gear had failed to open and touched down with guidance from the tower, managing to remain on the runway, a ministry statement said.

Airport rescue and fire fighting teams were scrambled before landing, but no one was injured. The ministry gave no reason for the failure.

The aircraft involved is a nearly 10-year-old Boeing 767 freighter, one of the most common cargo planes and based on the 767 passenger model dating back to the 1980s.

An official from Turkey's transport ministry said its teams were conducting examinations at

the scene as part of the ongoing investigation, but did not provide further details.

Boeing referred queries to FedEx, which said in a statement it was coordinating with investigation authorities and would "provide additional information as it is available".

Video footage obtained by Reuters showed sparks flying and some smoke as the front of the plane scraped along the runway before coming to a halt and being doused with firefighting foam. No fire appeared to have broken out. The video showed the pilots holding the plane's nose above the runway for several seconds after the main wheels had touched the ground, apparently executing the emergency drill for landing with a retracted nose gear, according to the SKYbrary aviation database.

In June last year, a small 22-year-old Boeing 717 flown by Delta Airlines made a similar smooth landing without a nose gear in Charlotte. — Reuters

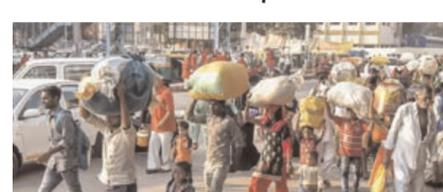
**HIGHEST RECIPIENT In '22, India received \$111 bn remittances**

United Nations, May 8: India received over \$111 billion in remittances in 2022, the largest in the world, becoming the first country to reach and even surpass the \$100 billion mark, the United Nations migration agency has said.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), in its World Migration Report 2024 launched on Tuesday, said that in 2022, India, Mexico, China, the Philippines and France were the top five remittance recipient countries.

"India was well above the rest, receiving more than \$111 billion, the first country to reach and even surpass the \$100 billion mark. Mexico was the second-largest remittance recipient in 2022, a position it also held in 2021 after overtaking China, which historically had been the second-biggest recipient after India, it said.

According to the report's data, India was the top country receiving remittances in 2010 (\$53.48 billion), 2015 (\$68.91 billion), and 2020 (\$83.15 billion), with



Three countries in Southern Asia — India, Pakistan and Bangladesh underscoring the significance of labour migration from the subregion. — Agencies

the remittances crossing the \$100 billion mark to reach \$111.22 billion in 2022. It noted that with a very

large number of migrant workers from the subregion, Southern Asia receives some of the largest inflows

of global remittances.

Three countries in Southern Asia — India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, rank among the top ten recipients of international remittances in the world, underscoring the significance of labour migration from the subregion.

With India estimated to have received more than \$111 billion in 2022, it is by far the largest recipient of international remittances in the world.

India is the first country to ever reach that figure, the report said.

Pakistan and Bangladesh were the sixth and eighth largest international remittance recipients in 2022, receiving nearly \$30 billion and \$21.5 billion, respectively.

The report however noted that while remittances remain a lifeline for many people in the subregion, migrant workers from these countries continue to face a myriad of risks, including financial exploitation, excessive financial debt due to migration costs, xenophobia and workplace abuses. — PTI

OTHER STORIES

BOOK REVIEW



**A comprehensive dictionary of Bharatanatyam**

R MOHAN | DC CHENNAI:

Danseuse Vidya Bhavani Suresh has brought out her dictionary of Bharatanatyam. Studded with photographs that explain the concepts, terms and descriptions of the ancient performing art, the book is an extension of Bhavani and her daughter Mahitha Suresh's commitment to documenting Bharatanatyam, besides practising the art.

Vidya, a qualified company secretary who quite her profession to start a publication and popularise art and culture, has been associated in many projects like well-researched books on dance and web series.

Beginning with Abinaya, naturally enough as it comes up first in the alphabetical order a dictionary must adhere to, the book takes the dance enthusiast through the art form in comprehensive detail after taking the pains to point out the differences between Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam and Kathakali. Further into the book, Kuchipudi and other dance forms are also explained with the authors' felicity in crisp and simple descriptions.

It can be argued that more models than her daughters could have been used to portray the intricacies of this very formal art when practised in its most traditional fashion. But difficulties with copyrights or getting all the famous danseuses to collaborate may have been a stupendous task.

Those more inclined to watch Bharatanatyam without wishing to delve into its intricacies might be better informed if they do read up on Bhava and how Bhava, Abhinaya and Rasa form the core of any performance. A glossary of terms associated with core concepts reflect a depth of understanding of the visual art that a documenter needs.

To the uninitiated, dance terms are very well explained while those with knowledge of the art form might find the descriptions like "the focus in dance being entirely on context, situation and visual" triggering an urge to debate a point or two.

The concept of the book has been well marketed too in garnering advertisements that may have subsidised the cost of producing a glossy book which alone might suffice to present a visual art form. This is a fine family effort with Vidya's husband Suresh being the Editor and Publisher, with vast experience in the field. It is a must read for aspiring dancers and dance teachers.

(A Comprehensive Dictionary of Bharatanatyam - Published by Skanda Publications)

# Maradona's World Cup Golden Ball trophy found

Paris: Diego Maradona's Golden Ball trophy from the 1986 World Cup has resurfaced. The award, which had been missing for decades, will be auctioned in Paris next month, the Aguttes house said Tuesday.

Maradona, who died in 2020 at age 60, was awarded the trophy for his scintillating play at the tournament, where he captained Argentina in its 3-2 win over West Germany in the final in Mexico City. Before that, he scored the controversial "Hand of God" goal and the "Goal of the Century" in a 2-1 win over England in the quarter-finals.

The auction house said it expects the trophy "to fetch millions due to its uniqueness." Maradona received the award — given to the tournament's best player — at a ceremony at the Lido cabaret on the Champs-Élysées in 1986. It subsequently disappeared, giving rise to rumours.

Some say it was lost during a wild poker game, or sold to pay off debts, Aguttes said. Others said Maradona had stored it in a safe in a Naples bank that was robbed by local gangsters in 1989, when he played in the Italian league. According to the story told by a reformed member of the mafia, the trophy was then melted down into gold pieces.

"A far-fetched theory, given that it was made of a gold-copper alloy," Aguttes said in its auction catalogue.

Aguttes said the trophy



reappeared in 2016 among other lots that were acquired from a private collection at auction in Paris. "It was thoroughly investigated and authenticated as Diego Maradona's Adidas Golden Ball trophy," he said.

The "Hand of God" goal came when Maradona punched the ball into England's net for his team's opener. Maradona was also a magician with the ball at his feet and four minutes later, he weaved through England's midfield and defence and then past goalkeeper Peter Shilton for what FIFA later declared the greatest goal in World Cup history.

"To say that this World Cup had it all would be an understatement... it was also, and above all, the tournament where Diego Maradona really showed the world what he could do with his feet, and even with his hands," said François Thierry, a sports expert at Aguttes.

Bidders will be asked to make a deposit of \$1,61,000 to participate in the June 6 auction. — AP

<<<<<<<<<

A trophy won by Maradona in the 1986 World Cup had mysteriously disappeared. On resurfacing, it is up for auction in Paris in June. — AP



The Garrick Club in London, founded 1831, was a men's only club for close to 200 years. Its members voted recently to admit women.

## London's men-only Garrick club votes to admit women

London: Members of one of London's oldest gentlemen's clubs, the Garrick Club, voted on Tuesday to allow women to join for the first time following a row that has bitterly divided its male-only membership.

The club's membership is a closely guarded secret but is known to include leading figures from the civil service, the law, journalism, publicly funded institutions and the arts.

The Guardian and Telegraph newspapers reported that a motion to allow women to join passed with around 60 percent of votes in favour. The Guardian said the vote occurred at the end of a private meeting where several hundred members spent two hours debating the issue. The Telegraph reported that 40 percent of the club's 1,500 members voted against.

Several high-profile members had reportedly threatened to quit the club if the proposal was rejected. BBC world affairs editor John Simpson last week tweeted: "Various Garrick Club members including (musicians) Sting, Mark Knopfler and leading actors and producers have reportedly written to the club chairman saying they'll resign if the membership doesn't vote to accept women next Tuesday." He added: "Many others like me would also find it impossible to stay."

In March, the head of Britain's spy service Richard Moore resigned after a list of the club's membership was made public for the first time.

Moore sent a message to MI6 employees acknowledging the reputational hit that news of his membership posed to the service — in particular the risk of it undermining its work to attract more women to join MI6.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's most senior policy adviser, the civil service leader Simon Case, also quit his membership. Founded in 1831 for

actors and "men of refinement and education", the Garrick is one of the last such clubs not to allow women in, except as guests of men.

A petition launched in 2021 backing the admission of women attracted the support of Cherie Blair, a leading barrister and wife of former prime minister Tony Blair.

She recalled that in 1976 as a trainee lawyer she was left standing outside while her future husband Tony was allowed in for dinner. "It's outrageous that so little progress has been made since then," she wrote.

Organisers of the petition said that the large number of judges and senior lawyers who were members deprived women of networking opportunities in a profession in which women were under-represented, particularly in the higher echelons.

Charles Dickens: A previous vote in 2015 on allowing female members saw the narrowest of majorities — 50.5 percent — back continuing the ban on female membership.

The Garrick, located in Covent Garden in central London, offers members overnight accommodation, a restaurant, bars and a library.

Other high-profile figures reported to be members include "Sherlock" star Benedict Cumberbatch and senior minister Michael Gove. An early member was Charles Dickens.

The Guardian reported that members who supported women's membership have drawn up a list of seven women they plan to nominate to join. It included a historian, a former interior minister and an actor.

The club's admissions process is opaque and slow, meaning it is unclear when the first women will join. The process involves numerous seconders, an invitation to dine at the club and discussions by committee members who can block nominees. — AFP

## Monty Panesar's political stint over in one week

London: Former England spinner Monty Panesar has ended his political stint in just one week as he announced that he is withdrawing as a parliamentary candidate for George Galloway's Workers Party of Great Britain. The 42-year-old Panesar was unveiled by Galloway amid much fanfare in Westminster last week.

The former left-arm spinner was due to contest the Ealing Southall seat in West London at the next general election. Panesar, however, decided to withdraw his candidacy after a series of challenging media interviews, in one of which he struggled to offer an opinion on the UK's continued membership of NATO.

"I'm a proud Brit who has had the honour to represent my country at the highest level of cricket," Panesar wrote on X. "I now want to do my bit to help others but I recognise I am at the beginning

of my journey and still learning about how politics can help people. "So today I am withdrawing as a General Election candidate for The Workers Party," he added.

"I realise I need more time to listen, learn and find my political home, one that aligns with my personal and political values. I wish The Workers Party all the best but look forward to taking some time to mature

and find my political feet so I am well prepared to deliver my very best when I next run up to the political wicket." Earlier, Panesar had expressed prime ministerial aspirations and said that he wanted to be "the voice for the workers of this country".

Panesar, whose full name is Mudhsuden Singh Panesar, became the first practising Sikh to represent England in 2006 during a tour of India. —PTI



Mr. Takajashi Muneo, Consul-General of Japan in Chennai (right) presented the institution of "The Order of Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette", on Mr. Boddupalli Rama Bhadra, President, ASA Bhanu Japan Center, Hyderabad. Mr. Rama Bhadra was conferred the decoration for his contribution to introduce Japanese culture to India and promoting friendly relations and mutual understanding between Japan and India.

# DRAKE- KENDRICK LAMAR FEUD BIGGEST BEEF IN RAP HISTORY

Los Angeles: In one of the biggest beefs in recent hip-hop history, Drake and Kendrick Lamar are feuding to the point that police were asked about their feud after a security guard was shot outside Drake's Toronto mansion on Tuesday. But it wasn't always this way.

Over a decade ago, the pair collaborated on a few songs: On Drake's 2011 track "Buried Alive Interlude," on Lamar's 2012 release "Poetic Justice," and on A\$AP Rocky's "(Expensive) Problems" that same year.

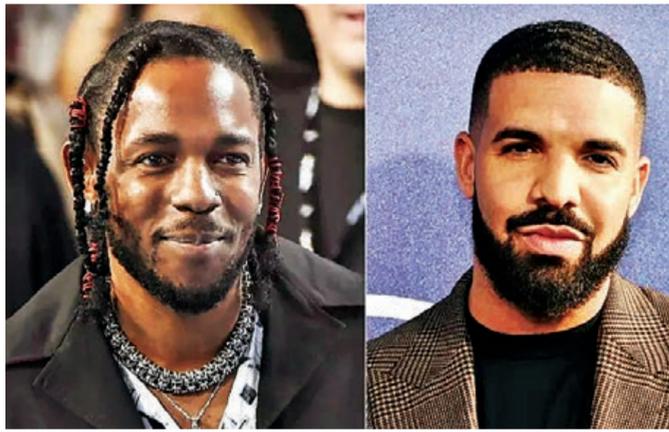
That didn't last very long. In 2013, Pulitzer Prize winner Lamar was featured on Big Sean's "Control," in which he called out a slew of contemporary rappers including Drake, J. Cole, Meek Mill, Pusha T, A\$AP Rocky, Big K.R.I.T., Wale, Pusha T and even Big Sean

among them. "I got love for you all, but I'm trying to murder you," he rapped. "Trying to make sure your core fans never heard of you."

Drake responded in a Billboard cover story, saying "I know good and well that Kendrick's not murdering me, at all, in any platform." Shortly afterward, at the 2013 BET Hip-Hop Awards, Lamar took another jab at Drake.

Over the next few years, the rappers launched diss tracks at each other with less frequency. Drake had other beefs with other performers, like Meek Mill in 2015, and most infamously Pusha T in 2018, where the latter rapper dropped "The Story of Adidon," revealing Drake is a father.

Which brings us to the current moment. It should be noted that diss tracks between rappers often



Rap artists Kendrick Lamar and Drake have had a long running feud to which another chapter was added as a security guard was shot at outside Drake's Toronto mansion.

include exaggerated truths and unsubstantiated rumours for dramatic effect, and that police have not said the feud led to Tuesday's shooting. —AFP

## RUSSIAN EDUCATION FAIR IN CITY MAY 11-12

Chennai: The All-India Russian Education Fair for the academic year 2024-2025 will take place on May 11 and 12 at the Russian Centre of Science and Culture in Chennai and will feature participation of 8 leading higher educational institutions, all belonging to the Russian government.

As many as 8,000 MBBS seats will be on offer for Indian students, up from 5,000 seats last year. The rise in the number of seats reflects the growing demand for medical education in Russia, the only foreign country at present to fully comply with the National Medical Commission of India's lat-

est norms set for medical education overseas.

Spot admissions for MBBS and other programs can be made at the fair, which is scheduled to take place also in many locations in Tamil Nadu. It will be held in Madurai on May 14; Tiruchir on May 15; Salem on May 16 and Coimbatore on May 17.

There is no entry fee for the fair. For details about the programs and fair, students can call: 9282 221 221. As the courses are highly subsidised by the Russian government, they are also the most affordable, with the total fee, starting from as low as Rs. 3 lakh per annum.

Mr. Oleg Avdeev, Consul General, Consulate General of Russian Federation in Chennai, South India, said, "Russian universities have a long-standing reputation of providing high-quality medical education in the world. Students from India have been admitted to Russian universities for the last 60 years. Russia continues to be the top choice for Indian students seeking medical education abroad, as Russian universities proactively adhere to the changing norms and guidelines of India's National Medical Commission (NMC) to ensure that their MBBS programs are recognised in India."

**quick BITES**

| INDICATORS             | %              |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Sensex                 | 73466.39 -0.06 |
| Nifty 50               | 22302.50 0.00  |
| S&P 500*               | 5,190.73 0.06  |
| Dollar (₹)             | 83.51 0.011    |
| Pound Sterling (₹)     | 104.33 0.35    |
| Euro (₹)               | 89.79 0.06     |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹)       | 71,214.66 0.09 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)*  | 83.38 0.26     |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield    | 7.138 0.009    |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 4.49 0.029     |

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

**Lam Research to expand supply chain to India**

Lam Research Corporation announced its plans to expand its global semiconductor fabrication equipment supply chain to include India. The company said it is assessing capabilities across various supply chain segments and is exploring India-based suppliers who can collaborate to fulfil the need for precision components, custom parts, and other assemblies that go into semiconductor wafer fabrication equipment.



**DG Innovate forms JV with EVage Motors**

UK-based advanced R&D firm DG Innovate announced its entry into the domestic electric vehicle space through a joint venture with electric commercial vehicle start-up EVage Motors to manufacture its Pareta electric drive system in Punjab. The JV will be 60 per cent owned by DG Innovate and 40 per cent by Indian partner, will produce electric motors for domestic and overseas markets, EVage said.

**RBI lifts ban on Bank of Baroda mobile app**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday lifted the ban imposed on Bank of Baroda's 'bob World' mobile application, which barred it from onboarding new customers. In October 2023, the regulator had asked Bank of Baroda, India's second largest state-owned lender, to suspend any further onboarding of its customers onto the 'bob World' mobile application with immediate effect.

**India INX helping gold importers to take hedge**

BSE's arm India International Exchange (India INX) on Wednesday said India's leading gold refiner, which brings in up to 20 per cent of the country's gold, has started trading gold futures on its platform. This suggests that India INX, set up at Gujarat international finance tec-city (GIFT City), is becoming the main place for Indian jewellers and gold importers to hedge against the risk in gold prices.

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**CEA: India's FY24 GDP growth may touch 8%**

Higher than RBI's estimate of 7.5% growth for economy

New Delhi, May 8: Chief economic adviser V Anantha Nageswaran on Wednesday said there was a high possibility of GDP growth touching 8 per cent in FY24 on the back of robust growth registered during the three quarters of the financial year ended March 2024.

India's gross domestic product (GDP) grew 8.4 per cent in the third quarter ended December 2023. In the second quarter, the GDP growth was 7.6 per cent while 7.8 per cent in the first quarter.

"The IMF has projected a growth rate of 7.8 per cent for FY24. But if you look at the trajectory of growth in the first three quarters the possibility that the growth rate touches 8 per cent is quite high," he said at an event organised by Ncaer here.

This is higher than RBI's estimate of 7.5 per cent



● **THE IMF** has projected a growth rate of 7.8 per cent for FY24. But if you look at the trajectory of growth in the first three quarters the possibility that the growth rate touches 8 per cent is quite high.

growth for the Indian economy in 2023-24.

For the ongoing financial year, he said, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has an estimate of 6.8 per cent but the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) expects a 7 per cent GDP growth for FY25.

"If that materialises, of course, it will be the fourth consecutive year after Covid starting from FY22 that the economy will have grown at 7 per cent or more. The RBI forecasts of 7 per cent for

FY25 turns out to be either correct or even underestimated, then it would be the fourth consecutive year of 7 or higher growth rate," he said.

However, he said, a lot would depend on how the monsoon shapes up. Although the expectations are that there will be an above-normal monsoon, spatial and temporal distribution will matter.

On the growth beyond FY25, Nageswaran said, there is a possibility of India growing between

6.5-7 per cent because the key difference this decade compared to the last is the one of balance sheet strength in the financial sector and the non-financial sector in the corporate sector as well.

The investment made in supply-side augmentation of both physical and digital infrastructure has placed the economy to pursue non-inflationary growth, he said, adding that this also helps absorb the challenge of overheating.

He also said that the household sector's net financial savings flows were lower in 2022-23 at 5.1 per cent due to the bulk of savings shifting to real sectors.

Asked about the RBI's recent circular on under-construction infra project financing, chief economic adviser said, this is draft guidelines and would not like to comment. — PTI

**Public sector units not in disarray: Sitharaman**

FC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 8

Defending the performance of public sector undertakings (PSUs) in the country, union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said that PSUs are not in disarray, but thriving under the current government.

The finance minister in a social media post on X (formerly Twitter) said that under the Modi-gov-



ernment, public sector undertakings (PSUs) are thriving, benefiting significantly from the culture of professionalism infused

in them along with increased operational freedom.

The finance minister also said that the government's focus on capital expenditure has led to substantial growth in the stock performance of PSUs, as the net worth of all central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) increased 82 per cent from ₹9.5 lakh crore as of March 2014, to ₹17.33 lakh crore as of 2022-23 fiscal. "The greater alignment

of management incentives (through the sharpening of performance-linked incentives), capital management guidelines on dividends, buybacks, etc. And the calibration of the disinvestment strategy have helped improve the performance of the CPSEs and reposed investor confidence," she said.

"Due to better management of PSUs, their share prices have tremendously increased in the last three years," she added.

**Central banks up gold purchases**

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 8

Several Central banks have been increasing gold holdings in their forex reserves. Gita Gopinath of International Monetary Fund finds that this is meant to hedge against economic uncertainty and sanctions risk.

"Looking at global FX reserves, the most notable development during 2022-23 has been an increase of gold purchases by central banks," First deputy man-

aging director of IMF Gita Gopinath said in a speech. India is one among the countries which have been increasing gold assets in its forex reserves. It had added 19 tonne to its forex reserves in the March quarter, which has a total of 822 tonnes.

Gold is generally viewed as a politically neutral safe asset, which can be stored at home and be insulated from sanctions or seizure. It can also be an inflation hedge but cannot be easily used in trans-

actions, Gopinath said. The share of gold in the FX reserves of the China bloc has been rising since 2015, a trend not exclusively driven by China and

Russia. Importantly, during same period, the share of gold in FX reserves of countries in the US bloc has been broadly stable.

This suggests that gold purchases by some central banks may have been driven by concerns about sanctions risk. This is consistent with a recent IMF study confirming that FX reserve managers tend to increase gold holdings to hedge against economic uncertainty and geopolitical issues, including sanctions risk.



**APPLE UNVEILS IPAD PRO WITH NEW CHIP FOR AI**

San Francisco, May 8: Apple unveiled its latest iPad Pro with a new chip for artificial intelligence (AI) computing as it rushes to catch up with its big tech rivals in a race to dominate the emerging technology.

Debuting its latest chip in a tablet rather than its Mac laptops is unusual for Apple, and suggests it is eager to give app makers a head start creating AI-related software ahead of its annual software developer conference next month, analysts said.

Apple said the iPad Pro's highest-priced model - will have upgraded displays and start at \$1,000 for an 11-inch (27.9-cm) model and \$1,300 for a 13-inch (33-cm) model.

"With this level of performance, the neural engine and M4 chip is more powerful than any neural processing unit in any AI PC today," Tim Millet, VP of platform architecture at Apple, said.

Apple also introduced new models of its mid-priced iPad Air, which will now come in a larger 13-inch screen size at \$800, as well as the 11-inch size it previously came in for \$600. — Reuters

**Pixel comes with new updated screen at \$499**

California, May 8: Alphabet Inc.'s Google rolled out a new version of its \$499 lower-end Pixel smartphone, aiming to entice budget-minded shoppers with an updated screen and artificial intelligence (AI) features.

The Pixel 8a device, which comes a year after the 7a model, adds a faster processor, brighter screen, an option for double the storage and new AI features, the company said.

Google is also cutting the price of its Pixel Tablet by offering a new \$399 version. The updated

Pixel phone looks slightly different than the 7a, with more rounded edges. And it comes in four new colours. The \$499 model continues to include 128 gigabytes of storage, but a pricier 256-gigabyte version also is available for the first time. The new screen is 40 per cent brighter and includes a faster, 120-hertz refresh rate, matching screens on many higher-end devices.

The announcements come a week ahead of Google's I/O event, where it will roll out new AI and Android software features. — Bloomberg

**GOOGLE BRINGS DIGITAL WALLET APP TO INDIA**

FC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 8

Google launched the Google Wallet app for Android users in India to securely store essentials like boarding passes, loyalty cards, event tickets, and public transport passes. It comes as a complementary service to Google Pay app.

"Google Pay is not going anywhere, it will remain our primary payment app, Google Wallet is specifically tailored for non-payment use cases," said Ram Papatla, GM and India Engineering Lead, Android at Google.

**COMPUTE | BIG Searching to be key area of interest for AI industry**

**OpenAI feature to cite sources**

San Francisco, May 8: OpenAI is developing a feature for ChatGPT that can search the web and cite sources in its results, according to a person familiar with the matter, potentially competing head on with Alphabet Inc.'s Google and AI search startup Perplexity.

The feature would allow users to ask ChatGPT a question and receive answers that use details from the web with citations to sources such as Wikipedia entries and blog posts, according to the person. One version of the prod-



● **THE FEATURE** would allow users to ask ChatGPT a question and receive answers that use details from the web with citations to sources such as Wikipedia entries.

uct also uses images alongside written responses to questions, when they're relevant. If a user asked ChatGPT how to change a doorknob, for instance, the results might include a diagram to illustrate the task, the person said.

OpenAI is under immense pressure to expand the capabilities of its most well-known product as a growing list of rivals are pushing out chatbots - and search has proven to be a key area of interest for the AI industry.



**INDIA SEES NEW INVESTMENTS OF ₹11.5 LAKH CRORE IN MARCH QUARTER**

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 8

State-level investor meets helped India witness its second-best quarterly new investment announcements worth ₹11.5 lakh crore in the March quarter of FY24.

The new investment announcements of ₹11.5 lakh crore in Q4 was much higher than ₹5.2 lakh crore in Q3 FY2024.

This was mainly supported by a few state investor meets held in Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Goa, and Gujarat in Jan. 2024, which together saw investment proposals amounting to ₹9.5 lakh crore.

However, the aggregate new proposals during Feb.-Mar 2024 slowed to ₹2 lakh crore, suggesting some transient caution amid the onset of the Model Code. The momentum is likely to remain subdued in the Election quarter of Q1 FY25, based on the historical trends.

After peaking at ₹39.1 lakh crore in FY2023, the value of new investment projects declined sharply to ₹27.4 lakh crore in FY2024, while exceeding the average annual cost of ₹19.5 lakh crore, that was seen during FY 2015-2022.

The number of newly announced projects dipped to an 18-year low 3,183 in FY24 against 5,897 in FY23.

**Vehicle sales rise 27% in April to 22 L units: FADA**

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, MAY 8



The automobile retail sales surged 27 per cent in April, the first month of this fiscal, to over 22 lakh units compared to the year before, the federation of automobile dealers associations (FADA) said on Wednesday. As many as 17.4 lakh units were sold in April 2023.

Positive market sentiments, bolstered by stable fuel prices, a favourable monsoon outlook, festive demand and the marriage season, contributed to this sales rise, FADA said.

New model launches also helped drive growth, despite some delays in supply, it noted.

Sales of two-wheeler, three-wheeler, passenger vehicle, tractor and commercial vehicle grew by 33 per cent, 9 per cent, 16 per cent, 1 per cent, and 2 per cent respectively.

Auto dealers sold 3.35 lakh passenger vehicles in April to mark a record as against 2.89 lakh units sold last year.

As many as 90,707 commercial vehicles were sold in April compared to 88,663 units the same time last year. The segment grew 2 per cent Y-o-Y growth and decline 0.6 per cent month-on-month.

Three-wheeler sales touched 80,105 units, compared to 73,310 in April 2023. As many as 56,625 tractors were sold, compared to 55,857 units in April 2023.

"The passenger vehicle category experienced double-digit year-on-year

● **THE PASSENGER** vehicle category experienced double-digit year-on-year growth, supported by enhanced model availability and favourable market sentiments, particularly around festive events.

growth, supported by enhanced model availability and favourable market sentiments, particularly around festive events like navratra and gudi padwa, said FADA president Manish Raj Singhania.

He said despite strong bookings and customer flow, high competition, excess supply and discounting presented challenges for sustained growth. The lack of new models in some portfolios also impacted market traction, Singhania noted.

The two-wheeler segment grew due to improved supply and demand for 125cc models. As many as 16.4 lakh two-wheelers were sold in April compared to 12.3 lakh units in the same month last year.

Improved supply and planning in 2W segment have improved customer bookings and market sentiment, driven by positive crop yields, said FADA about its May outlook.

**TOP GEAR**

**TVS MOTOR NET UP 15% TO ₹387 CR**

TVS Motor Company on Wednesday said its consolidated net profit increased 15 per cent to ₹387 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2024, riding on robust sales. The company had reported a net profit of ₹336 crore in the January-March period of the previous fiscal. Revenue from operations rose to ₹10,042 crore in the period under review compared with ₹8,031 crore in the fourth quarter of FY23.

**HERO**

**HERO MOTOCORP NET RISES 16.3%**

Hero MotoCorp on Wednesday reported a 16.3 per cent rise in consolidated profit after tax to ₹943.46 crore in the fourth quarter ended on March 31, riding on higher sales. The company had posted a consolidated profit after tax of ₹810.8 crore in same period a year ago, it said.

**AUTO PARTS**

**BHARAT FORGE Q4 PROFIT AT ₹227 CR**

Auto components major Bharat Forge on Wednesday reported a 77.8 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at ₹227.12 crore (cr) in the fourth quarter ended March 31. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹127.7 cr in same period of the last fiscal, Bharat Forge said. Consolidated revenue during the quarter under review stood at ₹4,164.21 cr as against ₹3,629.05 cr in the year-ago period, it added.

**Bank stock prices skid on RBI's new draft project finance norms**

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MAY 8

Bank stocks have seen selling pressure after RBI prescribed 5 per cent provisioning of standard assets in its draft project finance norm on May 3.

HDFC Bank, SBI, ICICI Bank, PNB were major losers in the last three sessions losing up to nine per cent since RBI released the draft guidelines seeking banks comments by June 15.

On Wednesday however,



there was a reversal of trend among the PSU banks which gained as reports said public lenders may oppose RBI's proposed norms on infra project financing.

NSE's Nifty Bank index fell intraday 0.89 per cent

to 4,851.15 but later recovered on a rally in PSU bank to close down by 0.55 per cent at 48,021.10.

The fall in heavyweight private bank stocks also pulled the market lower to a flat close for Nifty-50 as it remained unchanged from previous day close at 22,302.50 while the Sensex fell 45.46 points or 0.06 per cent to 73,466.39.

The broader market gained as the BSE mid-cap index was up 0.78 per cent while BSE small-cap index rose 0.50 per cent.

**Meta testing AI tool to make marketing content**

California, May 8: Facebook and Instagram parent company Meta Platforms is testing new tools that will let advertisers create marketing material, including images and messaging, using generative AI prompts.

If an advertiser uploads a photo of their product, Meta's artificial intelligence (AI) tools can now generate new, different images of that product for marketing purposes. In the coming months, marketers will also be able to use text prompts to create different versions of the

original image, the company said.

Meta's AI tools can also generate text for advertisements, including headlines and primary ad copy. "We are currently testing the ability for the generated text to reflect your brand's voice and tone, by highlighting key selling points based on your previous campaigns and text input," Meta wrote in a blog post.

The companies can use Meta's generative AI tools to create promotional texts and images for free, it said. — Bloomberg

# BLITZCRICK



- Chennai Super Kings
- Delhi Capitals
- Gujarat Titans
- Kolkata Knight Riders
- Lucknow Super Giants
- Mumbai Indians
- Punjab Kings
- Rajasthan Royals
- Royal Challengers Bengaluru
- Sunrisers Hyderabad

| ORANGE               |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Virat Kohli, RCB     | 542 |
| Ruturaj Gaikwad, CSK | 541 |
| Travis Head, SRH     | 533 |

| PURPLE                  |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Jasprit Bumrah, MI      | 18 |
| Harshal Patel, PBKS     | 17 |
| Varun Chakravarthy, KKR | 16 |

## SUN SCORCHES

### Piping hot Hyderabad cook Lucknow in biryani contest

MOSES KONDETY  
HYDERABAD, MAY 8

Who's got the best biryani, Hyderabad or Lucknow? Sunrisers settled that debate on Wednesday night by serving it piping hot to the visitors as they had them for dinner at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium.

They made a mockery of LSG's modest total of 165 by smashing it down inside 10 overs with all 10 wickets in hand. Opener Abhishek Sharma bludgeoned 75 in 28 balls, eight of which crashed against the boundary and six soared over it. His partner Travis Head bulldozed his way to an energetic 89 in 30 balls with eight fours and an equal number of sixes.

When Sun came out to bat, it rained boundaries, from the blazing blades of Abhishek and Head, who are the flavour of the season. K. Gowtham, Yash Thakur and Ravi Bishnoi bore the brunt as the hosts brought up the team 50 in the fourth over and then wrapped up the match much before the half-way stage.

It was the biggest win for the Sunrisers in terms of the total chased down with all wickets intact. The victory also took them to third on the points table and also boosted the net run-rate.

Earlier, a fighting near-century stand for the unbroken fifth wicket between Nicholas Pooran and Ayush Badoni lifted LSG from a shaky 66 for 4 to a decent 165. Both put their heads down and got into damage control. Pooran packed in six boundaries and a six in his 26-ball 48 while Badoni batted diligently to make 55 in 30 balls.

The visitors were slow off the blocks. As Sun skipper Pat Cummins came in to bowl the second over, the screen at the stadium flashed "Happy Birthday Captain Cummins."

His opposite number Rahul played two dot balls and smashed the third into the stands.

Two brilliant catches, by Nitish Reddy on the boundary and Sanvir Singh on the edge of the



Bhuvneshwar Kumar of Sunrisers Hyderabad celebrates the wicket of Lucknow Super Giants batter Quinton de Kock in Hyderabad on Wednesday — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

● Sunriser Hyderabad opener Abhishek Sharma bludgeoned 75 in 28 balls, eight of which crashed against the boundary and six soared over it. His partner Travis Head bulldozed his way to an energetic 89 in 30 balls with eight fours and an equal number of sixes.

inner circle, saw LSG lose big guns Quinton de Kock and Marcus Stoinis inside the Powerplay period, at the end of which the score read a terrible 27 for 2.

Cummins finally got his man, courtesy a fine catch on the fine leg fence by T. Natarajan that ended

Rahul's 33-ball 29 right at half-way stage.

Lucknow 57 for 3 after 10 overs, during which the ball had crossed the boundary just four times.

Sun sent it 30 times (16 fours and 14 sixes) in the same period to make it a no-contest.

### YASHASVI CAN BREAK MY TEST RECORD: LARA

New Delhi, May 8: Yashasvi Jaiswal's Test career is just nine games old but the great Brian Lara feels if there is anyone who can get close to his lofty feats, including the record 400 not out, it is the 22-year-old southpaw from India.

Lara's high praise for Jaiswal doesn't come out of the blue. The left two-handers share a special bond, having spent a lot of time over the past year following their "4 am conversation" during the IPL when the West Indian was coaching SRH and the young opener was in the Rajasthan Royals' camp.

A lot has changed since IPL 2023 with Jaiswal now becoming an integral part of India's Test and T20 team. His exploits in the longest format stand out as he averages close to 70 with three hundreds in the recent home series against England. What has impressed Lara is Jaiswal's ability to change gears as per the situation of the game.

— PTI

| POINTS TABLE |    |   |   |     |        |        |
|--------------|----|---|---|-----|--------|--------|
| Teams        | P  | W | L | N/R | Points | Net RR |
| KKR          | 11 | 8 | 3 | 0   | 16     | +1.453 |
| RR           | 11 | 8 | 3 | 0   | 16     | +0.476 |
| SRH          | 12 | 7 | 5 | 0   | 14     | +0.406 |
| CSK          | 11 | 6 | 5 | 0   | 12     | +0.700 |
| DC           | 12 | 6 | 6 | 0   | 12     | -0.316 |
| LSG          | 12 | 6 | 6 | 0   | 12     | -0.769 |
| RCB          | 11 | 4 | 7 | 0   | 8      | -0.049 |
| PBKS         | 11 | 4 | 7 | 0   | 8      | -0.187 |
| MI           | 12 | 4 | 8 | 0   | 8      | -0.212 |
| GT           | 11 | 4 | 7 | 0   | 8      | -1.320 |

## Royals face Punjab in battle of survival

Dharamsala, May 8: A resurgent Royal Challengers Bengaluru will look for their fourth consecutive victory when they face an unpredictable Punjab Kings as the two sides fight for survival in the Indian Premier League, here on Thursday. After a horrendous start to the tournament, RCB have managed to claw their way back into the tournament. They have the winning momentum on their side, having won their last three games comprehensively.

The wins have not only boosted their sagging morale but also taken them to the seventh spot in the points table. With eight points from 11 games, RCB can still make the playoffs if they win all their remaining three fixtures although the chances are slim.

Punjab Kings too stare at a similar situation. They occupy the eighth spot, having collected eight points from 11 games. However, between the

**ACTION TODAY**

**PBKS VS RCB**

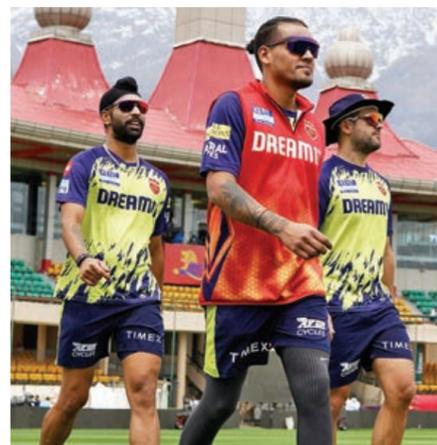
**FROM 7.30 PM, LIVE ON STAR SPORTS**

two — only one team can reach the all-important 14 points mark.

Having beaten PBKS earlier in the season and heading to this clash with three wins on the trot, RCB will feel more confident than the hosts.

Virat Kohli remains consistent at the top, while skipper Faf du Plessis broke his string of poor scores with a belated knock in the last game.

PBKS, on the other hand, will be low on confidence having suffered an inexplicable batting collapse against Chennai Super Kings. The Kings showcased their very best and worst against CSK. — PTI



Punjab Kings players during a training session in Dharamsala on Wednesday.

### SCOREBOARD

**Lucknow Super Giants:** KL Rahul (c) c Natarajan b Cummins 29, Quinton de Kock c Reddy b Bhuvneshwar 2, Marcus Stoinis c Sanvir b Bhuvneshwar 3, Krunal Pandya run out 24, Nicholas Pooran not out 48, Ayush Badoni not out 55. Extras (lb-1, w-3) 4. **Total (For 4 wickets in 20 overs) 165.**  
**Fall of wickets:** 1-13, 2-21, 3-57, 4-66.  
**Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-12-2, Pat Cummins 4-0-47-1, Shahbaz Ahmed 2-0-9-0, Vijaykanth Vijaykanth 4-0-27-0, Jaydev Unadkat 2-0-19-0, T Natarajan 4-0-50-0. **Sunrisers Hyderabad:** Abhishek Sharma not out 75, Travis Head not out 89. Extras (lb-1, w-2) 3. **Total (in 9.4 overs) 167.**  
**Bowling:** Krishnappa Gowtham 2-0-29-0, Yash Thakur 2-4-0-47-0, Ravi Bishnoi 2-0-34-0, Naveen-ul-Haq 2-0-37-0, Ayush Badoni 1-0-19-0.

### Short takes

#### Hayden happy with Samson's IPL show

Former Australian opener Mathew Hayden is mighty impressed with the IPL performance of Sanju Samson and has lauded the T20 World Cup-bound power-hitter for "handling both spin and pace with finesse". "Sanju Samson was batting like a dream, scoring 86 off 46 balls. He's proven his worth time and again... Throughout the tournament, he's been a master blaster, handling both spin and pace with finesse," Hayden said. "He times his innings well. He's got the power. And the power is a big thing in T20 cricket. Yet, what stands out is his commitment to his team. He just needed a bit of luck, especially towards the end of the match," he added.

#### Sanju fined 30 per cent match fees

Rajasthan Royals captain Sanju Samson has been fined 30 per cent of his match fees for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his side's 20-run loss to Delhi Capitals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. The offence committed by Samson, who made 86, was not specified but it could be for arguing with the umpires when he was given out after Shai Hope took a catch just near the boundary ropes in the 16th over. The question was whether Hope's feet touched the boundary ropes while taking the catch. The third umpire ruled Samson out but the RR skipper was not happy. He initially started walking towards the pavilion, only to return to the middle and have some words with the on-field umpires.

### QUICK BYTES

#### OLYMPIC FLAME ARRIVES IN FRANCE AMID FANFARE

Marseille (France), May 8: The Olympic flame arrives in France on Wednesday where a highly choreographed ceremony and a crowd of 150,000 people will be a first major test for organisers and security forces ahead of the 2024 Paris Games.

The transfer of the flame onshore in the southern port of Marseille will mark the start of a 12,000-kilometre (7,500-mile) torch relay across France and its far-flung overseas territories.

Under bright skies and calm seas the Belem, the ship carrying the torch, was sighted off the coast of Marseille early on Wednesday. — AFP

#### STIRLING NAMED IRISH CAPTAIN AT T20 CUP

Dublin, May 8: Veteran opening batter Paul Stirling was on Wednesday named Ireland skipper in their 15-member squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup in West Indies and USA.

Besides Stirling, the experienced faces in their squad are Andrew Balbirnie and George Dockrell as Ireland begin their campaign against India in their Group A fixture in New York on June 5.

They had qualified for the Super 8 stage in their debut in 2009. — PTI

**Ireland squad:** Paul Stirling (captain), Mark Adair, Ross Adair, Andrew Balbirnie, Curtis Campher, Gareth Delany, George Dockrell, Graham Hume, Josh Little, Barry McCarthy, Neil Rock (wk), Harry Tector, Lorcan Tucker (wk), Ben White and Craig Young.



Mats Hummels (right) of Borussia Dortmund scores against Paris Saint-Germain during their Champions League semifinal second leg match at the Parc des Princes Stadium in Paris on Tuesday. Dortmund won 1-0. — AP

## Hummels stuns Mbappe & PSG

Paris, May 8: Mats Hummels headed in the only goal as Borussia Dortmund stunned Kylian Mbappe and Paris Saint-Germain in their Champions League semifinal second leg on Tuesday, winning 1-0 on the night and advancing 2-0 on aggregate to next month's final at Wembley.

Hummels struck five minutes into the second half at the Parc des

Princes and PSG were unable to muster a response, the home side all out of luck as they hit the woodwork four times in total.

Dortmund, who sit fifth in the German Bundesliga, were never expected to go so far and will be underdogs in the June 1 showpiece regardless of whether they face their old rivals Bayern Munich or Real Madrid,

who meet on Wednesday. It will be their first final since 2013 when, remarkably, the match was also played at Wembley and Jurgen Klopp's Dortmund lost to Bayern.

Hummels played in that final and here, 11 years later, he was the hero as Dortmund built on the advantage given to them by Niclas Fullkrug's goal in the first leg. "It'll take us a bit of time

to realise that, but we're looking forward to it extremely," Dortmund coach Edin Terzic told broadcaster Amazon Prime of getting to the final.

"We did it somehow, making it to London." The story of this semifinal, however, is as much about PSG's failure in another crunch knockout tie in the competition. — AFP

### JAPAN BOWL OUT MONGOLIA FOR 12, 2ND LOWEST TOTAL IN T20s

Sano (Japan), May 8: Seven months after they made their international debut at the Asian Games, Mongolia capped an ignominious milestone when they were bowled out for 12, the second lowest score in T20I history in a match against hosts Japan here on Wednesday.

In response to Japan's imposing 217 for 7 after the hosts elected to bat, Mongolia were folded in 8.2 overs, etching their name in the annals of infamy with the second lowest score in T20I history after Isle of Man's 10 all out against Spain in on February 26, 2023.

For Japan, 17-year-old Kazuma Kato-Stafford returned with 5 for 7 from his 3.2 overs, while Abdul Samad (2/4) and Makoto Taniyama (2/0) bagged two each in the match. Tur Sumaya (4 off 11) was the top-scorer for Mongolia, while opener Namsrai Batyalat faced a maximum 12 deliveries. — PTI  
**Brief scores:** Japan 217/7 in 20 overs (Sabaorish Ravichandran 69; Zoljavkhan Shurentsetseg 3/32, Luvsanzundui Erdenebulgan 2/6) beat Mongolia 12 in 8.2 overs (Kazuma Kato-Stafford 5/7, Abdul Samad 2/4, Makoto Taniyama 2/0).

## Neeraj to compete in India after 3 yrs

New Delhi, May 8: Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will compete at home for the first time in three years after confirming participation in the National Federation Cup to be held in Bhubaneswar from May 12 to 15.

The 26-year-old superstar is expected to travel to India from Doha after opening his season in the first leg of the prestigious Diamond League series on May 10.

"As per entries @Neeraj Chopra and Kishore Kumar Jena will compete in domestic com-

petition starting May 12 in Bhubaneswar," the Athletics Federation of India tweeted.

Chopra's coach Klaus Bartonietz also confirmed that his ward is taking part in the Bhubaneswar event.

The 28-year-old Kishore Jena, who won a silver in the Hangzhou Asian Games where Chopra won gold, will also be competing in the Doha Diamond League on May 10. Chopra last took part in a domestic competition at the same event on March 17, 2021, when he won a gold with a throw of 87.80m. — PTI

### I'VE HIT ENERGY-SAVING MODE: NIKHAT ON OLY PREPARATIONS

New Delhi, May 8: A long-cherished Olympic debut just about three months away, two-time world champion boxer Nikhat Zareen has hit "energy-saving mode" ahead of her date with destiny. "So, she is off social media, is embracing solitude, devaluing sweets on her cheat days, and binge-watching Netflix magnum opus 'Heeramandi'."

Zareen, who is a medal favourite in the 50kg category, believes activities that might sound like leisure to many, are actually legitimate ways to ensure that she has a calm frame of mind ahead of the Games beginning in Paris on July 26.

"The feeling that I am going to be an Olympian soon hasn't sunk in yet. As days are passing, the nervousness is increasing. But I always train my brain to focus on a good performance," she said.

## Testing time ahead Lara urges ICC to save Test cricket

New Delhi, May 8: Admitting that T20 leagues have devoured a lot of Test cricket's space, West Indian legend Brian Lara has appealed to the ICC to step in to give a structure to the unremitting invasion of the franchise-based tournaments. In the latest instance that fuelled questions over the relevance of Tests, South Africa recently sent an under-strength squad to New Zealand as their first-choice players were involved in the SA20 at home.

"I think ICC (should) put their head together and find a way where franchise cricket takes over, but in a much more structured way and not in terms of the free fall that is going on at the moment," Lara said.

"I hope the astute thinkers could find a way to make sure that it (Test) remains relevant. I like the Test

**In the latest instance that fuelled questions over the relevance of Tests, South Africa recently sent an under-strength squad to New Zealand as their first-choice players were involved in the SA20 at home.**

Championship and I think it is important to make sure that the game remains relevant."

So, is cricket now taking the football route where leagues take precedence over international assignments?

While Lara agreed in principle to the point, he found differences too in the two models.

"Well, yes (cricket following the football way). Let's just look at football. For instance, other than the big cups, European cups, World Cup, South American cups they may have a few friendlies. So, Barcelona, Manchester

United, Manchester City, they have their footballers generally for 11 months of the year.

"That seems to be working for football. It's taken off the burden as well for each country to be finding ways of making money by having football matches," Lara began.

But Lara said the wealth being accumulated among three big nations — India, Australia and England — presented a rather different scenario in cricket.

"The West Indies now is in a situation where our gate receipts can't make us survive. So, we are very thankful whenever India tours the West Indies. It's a lot of TV

rights money passing around which is great.

"So, it's hard to see outside of the big three — Australia, England and India — how countries are going to survive when economically it's tough for them."

From a cricketer perspective, the elegant left-hander said teams often not having their best players available also make things tough for teams outside the big three.

Lara might have had someone like Trent Boult in mind as the pacer recently turned down New Zealand central contract to become a T20 freelancer.

"Secondly, they (teams) don't have their best players because their best players are making a living for their family elsewhere (leagues)," he added.

In March this year, BCCI had introduced a Test Cricket Incentive Scheme.

— PTI

## VIVEK, MATHIVANAN, SARAVANAN STAR IN STANDARD WIN

Chennai, May 8: R. Vivek scored an unbeaten century, while M. Mathivanan and P. Saravanan took five wickets each as Standard CC beat SRIHER RC by 200 runs in the first division of the TNCA-Thiruvallur DCA league.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
I Division: Standard CC 286/9 in 45 overs (R. Vivek 116 n.o., D. Prashanth Prabhu 68, S Rishi Silora 3/57, M Mani Bharathi



5/107) beat SRIHER RC 86 in 19.5 overs (M. Mathivanan 5/30, P. Saravanan 5/27)

**Velammal Sports Academy summer camp**  
The Velammal Sports Academy will conduct residential summer cricket coaching in the Velammal International School Ponneri from May 10 to 25. For details contact 7418390546 / 8248573874

## CSK-ROYALS IPL MATCH TICKETS TO GO ON SALE TODAY

Chennai, May 8: The online ticket sale for the IPL match between Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals (on May 12) will begin at 10.40 a.m. on May 9 (Thursday) on Paytm and www.insider.in. Sale details

(read as stands, rate): C/D/E lower, 1700; C/D/E upper, 3500; I/J/K lower, 4000; I/J/K upper, 2500; KMK Terrace, 6000. Only two tickets will be issued per person. Entry gates will be opened at 1.30 p.m. on match day.

The TNCA has also identified limited seats in the 'T' lower stand for physically challenged patrons requiring a wheelchair to access the stadium. These seats will be reserved for physically challenged patrons.

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