





## IN BRIEF

## India believes in fairness: Jaishankar

**New Delhi:** Union external affairs minister S. Jaishankar spoke at Delhi University's Gargi College about how Bharat is a 'Vishwa Bandhu' and how it believes in fairness, responsibility and generosity towards others which has been demonstrated many times, whether it was sending medicines and vaccines to other countries during Covid or safely evacuating our citizens and others from war zones. Gargi college's principal Sangeeta Bhatia, union advisor Dr Poonam Phogat and student council president Devanshi Ahluwalia were present during the session. Dr Jaishankar said, India is a rising power and an important advocate for the rights of the Global South. The vision of *vishwa bandhu* is to be liked and respected but also to be objective, firm and give primacy to our interests. After the session the Union minister answered questions from the students, and teachers and was able to elaborate and clarify his vision of an emerging India, whose time has come.



S. Jaishankar

## Russian man held with LSD in Gurgaon

**Gurgaon:** The police has arrested a Russian national from Badshahpur here and have recovered LSD and charas from his possession, officials said on Saturday. Acting on a tip-off, the police conducted a raid and arrested Mikhailuk, a native of Russia on Friday night from the Golf Course Road, they said. The police recovered 0.25 grams of Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and 250 grams of charas from his possession, they said. The accused is being interrogated to find the drug trail. The team is also verifying his visa and passport, a senior police officer said. An FIR was lodged against Mikhailuk under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act at Sadar police station. Further investigation is underway, he said. — PTI

## 'Will end inspector raj if elected for LS'

**New Delhi:** BJP Lok Sabha candidate from Chandni Chowk Praveen Khandelwal on Friday said that within one year of being elected he will end inspector raj for all retailers. Speaking at an event organised by the Federation of Retailer Association of India (FRAI), a representative body of about 80 lakh micro, small and medium retailers from across the country, in support of his candidature, Mr Khandelwal said, "Our vision is to forge a prosperous 'Vikshit Bharat' under the leadership of our esteemed Prime Minister Narendra Modiji, wherein every segment of the society, including retailers and traders, experiences progress and has their concerns addressed."

## WAS PROMISED RS SEAT, BIZMAN DUPED OF ₹2CR

**New Delhi:** The Delhi police has arrested two men for allegedly duping a businessman of ₹2 crore by promising him a Rajya Sabha seat, officials said on Saturday. The police said the accused had prepared two forged documents of the President's Office to win the trust of the victim. Deputy commissioner of police (Southwest) Rohit Meena said a PCR call was received at the Kishangarh police station on April 25 wherein the caller said he had caught hold of a fraudster and sought the police help. On reaching the spot, the complainant Narender Singh (63) produced before the police one Naveen Kumar Singh, saying he was cheated by him. Narender alleged that he met Naveen through one Nanak Das in August, 2023. According to the complainant, Naveen had posed as a protocol officer at the President's office and convinced Narender that he and Nanak could help him in securing a seat in the Parliament's Upper House through President's quota, DCP Meena said. The accused duo demanded ₹2 crore from Narender, the officer added.

■ **BJP will not cross 400 seats, AAP will win all Punjab LS seats: CM** ■ **'Kejriwal is not a person, but a thought'**

## AAP will be part of INDIA bloc govt on June 4: Mann

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, MAY 11

Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday asserted that the AAP will be part of the government that will be formed at the Centre on June 4 and said the BJP will not cross 400 seats in the Lok Sabha elections.

Addressing the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) workers a day after Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was released on interim bail, Mr Mann called him "dictatorship's nemesis."

"I had said it everywhere; Kejriwal is not a person, but a thought. You can arrest a person but not a thought. Dictatorship's nemesis is Kejriwal," he said.

Mr Mann thanked the "revolutionary people of Delhi who stood with the party in difficult times."

"The people want to hear what Kejriwal will say about the condition and direction of the country's politics," he said.

Mr Mann commended the people of Delhi for standing rock solid with his party in a time of crisis.

■ **'WE HAVE to work hard. There are only 20 days left for polls. We have worked for 18 hours as against 12 hours. The first three rounds of polls have revealed that '400 paar' is not possible for Modi ji,' said Mr Mann.**

"Your company does not let us feel tired. You people are organic," he said.

Mr Mann said there is a need to "work hard" since there are only 20 days left for the polls.

"We have to work hard. There are only 20 days left for polls. We have worked for 18 hours as against 12 hours. The first three rounds of polls have revealed that '400 paar' is not possible for Modi ji," said Mr Mann.

"You cannot win the elections by arresting the Opposition leaders and sending the ED and the CBI after them," he charged.

Using a cricket analogy, Mr Mann said Mr Kejriwal was only "retired hurt" and will hit "sixes and fours with the same fervour."

"He was only 'retired hurt' and not out. He has come back to batt. The bat is the same, the pitch is the same. He will hit the same sixes and fours," he added.

Exuding confidence about the results in Punjab, he said, "BJP and Congress will be wiped out in Punjab and all 13 seats will go to AAP."

In Punjab, the AAP is fighting the polls solo.

After Mr Mann, Mr Kejriwal addressed the party workers and launched a scathing attack on the BJP.

Slogans in support of Mr Kejriwal and the AAP were raised during Mr Mann's address.

AAP supporters and workers danced to the 'dhol' beats on Saturday with pahadi musicals and bhanga performances setting the stage to welcome the chief minister in Mehrauli.

A man painted himself as the flag of India as he awaits the arrival of Mr Kejriwal in the Assembly constituency for the first time since his release from Tihar jail on Friday.



Delhi chief minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal with Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann (left) during a roadshow at Mehrauli in New Delhi. Mr Kejriwal with wife Sunita offers prayers at Navagraha Mandir on Saturday. —

## Raut: Delhi CM will address MVA's May 17 Mumbai rally

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI, MAY 11

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal will attend the Maha Vikas Aghadi's joint election rally in Mumbai on May 17.

It will be the final rally for six Mumbai Lok Sabha constituencies that go to poll on May 20.

Shiv Sena UBT leader Sanjay Raut informed that Uddhav Thackeray extended an invitation to Mr Kejriwal, which he has accepted.

The BJP-led Mahayuti rally, which will see Prime Minister Narendra Modi and MNS chief Raj Thackeray sharing the stage for the first time, will also be held in Mumbai on the same day.

The Supreme Court on Friday granted Mr Kejriwal—who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in the money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam—interim bail for 21 days to campaign for the



An AAP supporter during chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's roadshow in Mehrauli.

— PTI

ongoing Lok Sabha election.

"Uddhav Thackeray spoke to Mr Kejriwal over the phone after his release on bail. The Delhi CM is going to participate in the election campaign. He has accepted the invitation for the May 17 rally in Mumbai," Mr Raut said.

The rally will be held a day before the election campaign for 13 seats in Maharashtra including six Mumbai seats.

The campaign for these seats will end at 5.00 pm on May 18 and the voting

will take place on May 20. This will be the last election phase in Maharashtra.

Almost simultaneously, the BJP-led alliance will also hold a rally at the iconic Shivaji Park ground.

It will be the first time Raj Thackeray and the PM will address a joint rally.

Interestingly, the ground has been booked for the rally by the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, which is not contesting even a single Lok Sabha seat.

## 'PM should clarify BJP 75 yrs rule'

**New Delhi, May 11:** Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh on Saturday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should come forward to clarify the BJP's '75 years retirement formula' which they have imposed on their senior party leaders. The AAP leader was responding to Union home minister Amit Shah's statement that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will continue to lead the nation post the Lok Sabha elections.

Mr Singh said that Mr Kejriwal raised the "genuine" issue of '75 years age rule', which was made by Prime Minister Modi.

Reiterating Mr Kejriwal's earlier statement, Mr Singh said the '75 years age rule' was implemented on the BJP leaders like L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Yashwant Sinha, Sumitra Mahajan and several MPs, and they were asked to not to contest the elections.

— PTI

## Delhi's lone trans candidate makes toilets poll issue

**New Delhi, May 11:** In the national capital's South Delhi constituency, 26-year-old Rajan Singh has been reaching out to the electorate with the slogan "sauchalay se sansad tak."

The poll plank for Singh, the lone third-gender candidate in the Lok Sabha polls in Delhi, is the lack of basic amenities for the transgender community such as separate public toilets.

"I am participating in the Lok Sabha election to address our community's basic needs which are so fundamental and necessary. Yet, we still have to fight for them," Singh told a news agency.

"Beginning with the demand for separate toilets to advocating for seats for transgender people in Parliament, our journey ahead is long. It begins with the motto 'sauchalay se sansad tak,'" the candidate said.

A native of Bihar, Singh, who lives in the Sangam Vihar area of the city, is fighting the election on the poll symbol 'bucket' and plans to take out a march in the constituency on May 12 with a few people.

While filing poll nomi-



Rajan Singh

nation on May 3, Singh had said the reason behind participating in the parliamentary elections was to "draw the attention of people as well as the authorities towards the problems faced by the third gender persons due to lack of separate civic amenities for them and also for their social acceptance and rights."

"I want the government to set up a national transgender commission so that our basic needs and necessities, such as separate washrooms and queues at government offices and service providers, and also at least one per cent reservation in jobs and education could materialise," Singh had said.

— PTI

## 'My rival is seeking votes in PM name'

**New Delhi, May 10:** INDIA bloc's candidate for Northwest Delhi Lok Sabha constituency Udit Raj said he has done work during his last

Udit Raj

tenure as a Member of Parliament from the seat and will do it again, while his opponent is seeking votes in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mr Raj claimed that when he was an MP between 2014-19, he was declared as one of the best MPs of the country by an NGO for two years.

"There was no such person in my constituency who I met and did not try to help him. I helped everyone. There was merely any MP who was holding 'janata darbar' for five years," Mr Raj said.

"When I was an MP, I raised the issue in the Parliament that the Metro line should be extended till Bawana and Qutubgarh. We need to fight for this also. The proper drainage system, roads, and repairing of streets in the constituency are also my priorities," he said. — PTI

## Storm in Delhi leaves 3 dead, 23 others hurt

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, MAY 11

A sudden thunderstorm accompanied by high-speed gusty winds swept the entire Delhi-NCR region in the intervening night of May 10-11 during which three people lost their lives while 23 others suffered injuries.

In Southeast Delhi's Shaheen Bagh area, a 19-year-old woman lost her life after a brick wall fell on her.

Sharing details, DCP (Southeast) Rajesh Deo said information regarding an MLC was received at the Shaheen Bagh police station from Alshifa Hospital regard-

ing a girl having been brought dead due to the impact of a brick wall falling upon her.

The deceased woman was identified as Shireen Ahmed, a resident of Abul Fazal enclave.

The father of the deceased alleged that the incident occurred due to the fall of a weak wall built by the owner of the top floor of the adjacent building. Following this, the Delhi police registered a case under Section 304A (causing death by negligence) and 288 (negligent conduct with respect to pulling down or repairing buildings) of the IPC and began probing the matter.

## Man, sister-in-law kill self in rented house in Noida

**Noida, May 11:** A 24-year-old man and his 21-year-old sister-in-law, who were living together in a rented accommodation in Noida, allegedly committed suicide, the police said on Saturday.

The duo consumed a poisonous substance and were admitted to a private hospital but died during treatment on Friday, additional deputy commissioner of police Hirdesh Katheriya said.

"The man and the woman had arrived in Gautam Buddh Nagar two days ago at their rented accommodation in

Habibpur village. Their landlord informed the police that they had come from Govardhan area of Mathura district," Mr Katheriya said.

The landlord took the victims to the hospital. Later, when the police contacted their families, they found that the woman was the man's sister-in-law," he said.

The reason behind the alleged step is yet to be ascertained, the police said.

The police had informed the victim's families and further investigation is underway, they said.

— PTI



Commuters pass by a fallen tree a day after a dust storm hit Delhi-NCR on Saturday. — PTI

Power was also disrupted in many areas as the dust storm swept the national capital late on Friday night.

In West Delhi's Vikasp-

uri, a person on a two-wheeler died after a branch of a tree fell on him near Janakpuri flyover.

The police said the

branch was removed with the help of cranes and the victim, Jaiprakash, was rushed to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival.

A car was also damaged in the incident but its occupants were unhurt, a police officer said.

In the other incident, a labourer was trapped under a tree that fell on him near IB Block at K.N. Katju Marg around 11.00 pm.

The victim, Hariom, was taken to a nearby hospital but the doctors said he was already dead.

The police officer said in this incident also a car was damaged but its occupants were safe.

## Traffic lights synchronisation cut congestion calls by 16% in W. Delhi

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, MAY 11

The synchronisation of traffic lights in the western part of Delhi has reduced congestion calls by over 16 per cent in April as compared to the corresponding month last year, the police said on Saturday.

According to the police, in an ongoing commitment to mitigate the traffic congestion in West Delhi, the western range of traffic police has initiated a significant endeavour to synchronise and

reassess the timing of traffic signals at multiple junctions.

"Initially, we have successfully synchronised 60 traffic lights spanning across 20 junctions, primarily in the areas of Dwarka, Nangloi, and Paschim Vihar traffic circles. We are delighted to share that by the end of April, there was a notable reduction in congestion reports within the western range area," the police said.

"Compared to March 2024, there was a reduction of 59 calls of conges-

tion calls. In April 2023, 453 such calls were received, while the numbers reduced to 378 in April this year. This progress underscores our commitment to improving traffic flow and enhancing the commuting experience for all," a senior police officer said.

The police said that the synchronisation initiative enhances traffic flow. By coordinating the timing of signals, vehicles experience reduced wait times at intersections, leading to a more continuous flow of traffic.

## MORE SUMMER SPECIAL TRAINS-2024

In addition to already announced Summer Special Services, Railways will run following additional Summer Special Trains as per following details:-

09425/09426 Sabarmati-Haridwar-Sabarmati				08 Trips	
Special Express					
Train No. 09425	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	Train No. 09426	ARR.
---	18:45	---	Sabarmati	21:30	---
19:40	19:50	---	Mahesana Jn.	19:45	19:55
21:45	21:47	---	Palanpur Jn.	18:48	18:50
23:00	23:10	---	Abu Road	17:20	17:30
00:08	00:10	---	Jawai Bandh	16:14	16:16
00:20	00:22	---	Falna	16:00	16:02
00:32	00:34	---	Rani	15:46	15:48
02:30	02:35	---	Marwar Jn.	15:13	15:15
04:50	05:00	---	Ajmer Jn.	13:15	13:25
05:37	05:39	---	Kishangarh	11:50	11:52
06:20	06:22	---	Phulera Jn.	10:20	10:22
07:22	07:24	---	Ringas Jn.	08:45	08:48
08:03	08:05	---	Nim Ka Thana	07:45	07:47
09:30	09:32	---	Narnaul	06:40	06:42
11:15	11:20	---	Rewari Jn.	05:55	06:00
12:20	12:22	---	Gurgaon	04:42	04:44
12:40	12:42	---	Delhi Cantt.	04:20	04:22
13:30	13:40	---	Delhi Jn.	03:30	03:40
14:30	14:32	---	Ghaziabad	02:45	02:47
15:16	15:18	---	Meerut City	01:42	01:44
16:30	16:32	---	Muzaffarnagar	00:54	00:56
17:50	17:52	---	Roorkee	23:00	23:02
19:00	---	---	Haridwar	---	21:45

Days of Run : 09425 Ex. Sabarmati on 14, 17, 20 & 23.05.2024 and 09426 Ex. Haridwar on 15, 18, 21 & 24.05.2024  
Accommodation : 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General

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SHORT TAKES

Bhushan: Electoral bonds bribe by firms

**Kolkata:** Lawyer Prashant Bhushan on Saturday labelled the electoral bonds as the biggest scam in the history of Indian democracy and alleged that they were used as bribes for contracts, shielding people from central probe agencies, manipulating policies, and influencing drug regulators. He said the Supreme Court would soon commence hearing on a petition filed before it seeking a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into alleged quid pro quo arrangements between corporates and political parties. “The electoral bonds were used (by companies) as bribes to get contracts, to protect themselves from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the CBI and to save themselves from drug regulators,” Mr Bhushan said. Out of the ₹16,500-crore electoral bonds, half went to the BJP and the rest to parties like the TMC and the Congress, he said. — *PTI*

BJP theatrics won't work this time: Maya

**Shravasti (UP):** Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Saturday said none of the theatrics and catch-phrases of the BJP is going to work in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls. Addressing a rally in support of Haji Daddan Khan, the BSP candidate from Shravasti, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said the people of the country “have understood the BJP”. She said the BJP has made innumerable promises regarding good days for the poor, weak, middle class and other working sections of the society but in reality, not even a quarter of those are fulfilled. “None of its theatrics, statements and guarantees will be of any use this time,” she added. She claimed the BSP as country’s only political party to have taken no money through electoral bonds. — *PTI*

MP: Campaign for 4th phase polls ends

**Bhopal:** Nota (None of the above) hogged limelight in Indore Lok Sabha constituency, as campaigning for the fourth and final phase of LS polls in Madhya Pradesh ended on Saturday evening. Indore Lok Sabha constituency has come into focus as Congress, in a strange decision, chose to campaign for Nota after party’s official candidate Akshay Kanti Bam withdrew his nomination at the last moment, denying the party to field its nominee in the seat. The party was expected to extend support to one of the 13 independent candidates who are in the fray in the seat to take on the Bharatiya Janata Party in the constituency. But, the state party leadership has decided to campaign for Nota to secure more votes for the provision than what BJP candidate gets.

RAJ'S 'FATWA' TO HINDUS: VOTE FOR MAHAYUTI PICKS

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MAY 11

MNS chief Raj Thackeray has sparked a controversy by issuing a “fatwa” that all Hindus must vote for Mahayuti’s candidates in Maharashtra. He claimed “fatwas” were being issued from mosques to vote for the Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT) candidates, therefore, he is also issuing one. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader



Raj Thackeray

Sanjay Raut said the souls of Prabhodhankar (Raj’s grandfather) and Balasaheb must be in pain seeing Mr Raj rubbing shoulders with “Maharashtra’s enemies”. Addressing an election rally in Pune on Friday to campaign for the BJP candidate Murlidhar Mohol, the MNS leader alleged that Maulavis are issuing “fatwas” to Muslim community to vote for MVA candidates. “There are many sensible Muslims who will not fall prey to such propaganda. But if such ‘fatwas’ are being issued from mosques, then today I am also issuing one that my Hindu brothers, sisters and mothers should vote for candidates of the BJP, Eknath Shinde’s Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar’s NCP,” he said.



Dog squad of CRPF patrols on a street on Saturday after security was beefed up ahead of voting in the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections in Srinagar. — *PTI*

INDIA bloc is sweeping south, PM slipping in north: Tharoor

‘Cong able to foil BJP’s bid to communalise polls’

SRIRAM KARRI HYDERABAD, MAY 11

After a long time, we are witnessing an election that is not feeling like one big election with a wave, but a sum of many disparate local and state-level polls, and though we have just completed three phases, (or around a little over half the total number of parliamentary seats), we can clearly see that the Narendra Modi-led BJP would not get a majority, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Saturday said. The parliamentarian from Thiruvananthapuram who is equally renowned for his diverse identities — author, speaker, intellectual, former diplomat, and India’s favourite human saurus, aka “Tharoorosaurus” — said the two biggest undeniable trends of the elections that could be bet upon are the downward slide of the BJP across its strong areas in the northern states and the near-complete sweep of the INDIA bloc led by the Congress in the south. Mr Tharoor is confident of retaining his seat yet again, after a face-off with the BJP minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar. “We are sure of winning



We are sure of winning all 60 seats as an alliance in Tamil Nadu (39), Kerala (20) and Puducherry (one). — Shashi Tharoor, Cong leader.

all 60 seats as an alliance in Tamil Nadu (39), Kerala (20) and Puducherry (one). The Congress is extremely positive about big numbers in Karnataka and Telangana states,” the Congress leader said, while speaking exclusively to this newspaper. The Congress and its allies have been able to successfully foil the attempts of the BJP to communalise and polarise the elections, he said, adding that the mainstay of the campaign had been around economic issues like jobs, price rice, and the difficulties of common people on the one hand, and the failure of the Modi government in delivering on most of its grandiose promises. “The grandiloquence of Mr Modi is no longer fascinating to anyone. The saffron party is clearly having some pockets of

strength but is losing in several of those north Indian states where it previously swept all seats, or nearly all the seats. These losses, further accentuated by their inability to make any solid gains elsewhere, or build a coalition, is clearly an indication that Mr Modi will not in most likelihood be the next Prime Minister of India,” he said. Refusing to be drawn into predicting numbers or discussing possibilities that could emerge after the results, Dr Tharoor said, “it is never wise to predict either a cricket match or an election. All I can say is that once the BJP loses power, by definition, it comes richly loaded with possibilities. And good old politics, is after all, the art of the possible. And some would, what seemed not so long ago, as nearly impossible.”

Dhami: Ganga will not wash away Opp. sins

**Jaunpur (UP), May 11:** Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Saturday targeted the Opposition, saying even the Ganga would not be able to wash away its sins. Addressing a youth conference for the BJP’s Jaunpur candidate Kripashankar Singh in Badlapur, the BJP leader said the Samajwadi Party, Congress and the Bahujan Samaj Party know that their defeat in the LS polls is certain. “These people (Opposition) are fighting the elections to save their families, to hide their sins and corruption. But the sins of the opposition will not be washed away even in the Ganga,” he said.

According to a release issued by the BJP, Mr Dhami said the elections are not just to elect MPs but to choose the country’s future direction. The CM said, “Anti-national forces are working as sleeper cells of the opposition to stop Modi ji in the name of casteism and classism.” The Uttarakhand CM said historic decisions have been taken under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership. — *PTI*

‘Why PM kept mum over money to Cong by Ambani & Adani?’

**Samastipur / Muzaffarpur, May 11 :** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, questioning why his government did not take any action if, as per his allegation, industrialists Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani were sending black money to the Opposition party.

Addressing back-to-back election rallies in Bihar’s Samastipur and Muzaffarpur, Mr Kharge asserted that Modi could become the Prime Minister of India only because Congress fought for the country’s Independence. “PM Modi says we are silent on Ambani and Adani, which we are not... I am asking why his government did not take any action if, according to his allegation, we received black money from these industrialists? Is it because they themselves received black money?” the Congress chief asked. “Finally, the PM has admitted that these two businessmen have black money... then why did you not take action against them? Where was the



Mallikarjun Kharge

black money coming from? You should answer,” the Congress leader said. Mr Modi on Wednesday, for the first time during the Lok Sabha elections, accused the Congress of having struck a “deal” with “Ambani and Adani”, and asked if the grand old party had received “tempo loads of black money” from the two industrialists. Mr Kharge said, “The PM calls himself ‘chowkidar’ of the country, so, why did not the chowkidar stop these tempos?” Alleging that the BJP would end democracy if it was not voted out, Mr Kharge said it was because of this democracy that a tea-seller’s son could become Prime Minister of India. — *PTI*

Modi: BJP will sweep LS polls in WB; also form Odisha govt

‘Left, Cong, TMC pushed WB backward, people of state seek change’

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, MAY 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday predicted BJP’s clean sweep in Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal and Odisha. He also exuded confidence that Bharatiya Janata Party would get a clear majority in Odisha state polls and form its own government in the state.

Speaking to a national television on the sidelines of his massive roadshow here on Friday evening, Mr Modi said, “People of West Bengal gave 18 Lok Sabha seats to the BJP in 2019 general elections. They also made the saffron party the major Opposition in West Bengal Assembly by electing around 70 of our candidates. This time, we will sweep the West Bengal Lok Sabha polls.” Stating that West Bengal, once the commercial capital of India, has been pushed backward by the Left parties, the Congress

Modi’s challenge to Patnaik: Name 30 dists without paper

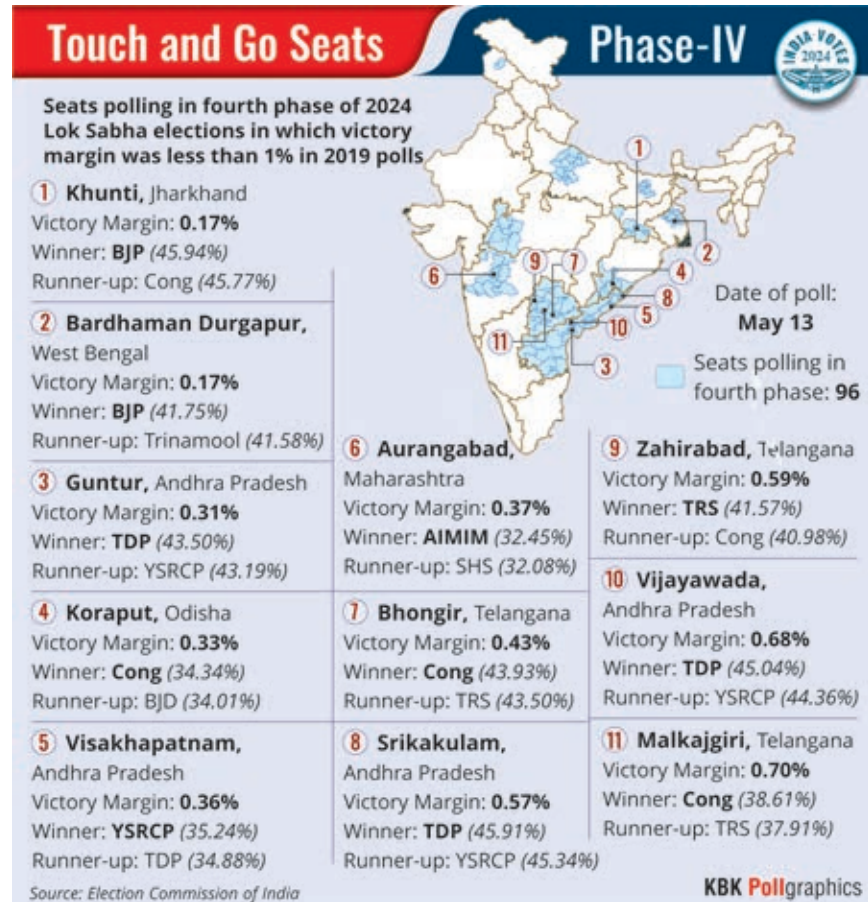
AGE CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, MAY 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday dared Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik to tell the name of 30 districts of Odisha and their headquarters without referring to a written paper. Addressing a mammoth poll rally at Phulbani under Kandhamal Lok Sabha constituency, Mr Modi said, “Normally, I

don’t talk ill of others. But I want to tell the world that Naveen Babu has been the CM of Odisha for over 24 years. But I doubt he can speak the language of the land. Let me throw him a challenge of telling names of 30 districts and their headquarters without referring to a written paper.” Odisha CM has never been heard in public delivering his speech extempore, the PM claimed.

and the Trinamul Congress, said the Prime Minister. “For many centuries, Bengal led the socio-economic reforms of India. I do still have faith in the people, especially the youths of West Bengal. However, the kind of politics the state is now witnessing is dragging it

down. Mamata Didi has completely changed her stance. She is now defending the issues, which she used to object to in the Parliament. She has lapped such issues like gold mines to mop up votes,” Mr Modi observed. Stating that people of West Bengal cannot tolerate Mamata Banerjee’s



People love Modi, will make him PM for 3rd time: Anurag

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI/HAMIRPUR (HIMACHAL), MAY 11

Union information and broadcasting minister Anurag Thakur on Saturday said the BJP would hit a four and six in Himachal Pradesh by winning all the four Lok Sabha seats and the bypolls in six Assembly seats in the state.

Mr Thakur, the BJP candidate from Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat, said the people were happy with the performance of the BJP-led government at the Centre and wanted to make Narendra Modi the Prime Minister for the third term.

“We constructed the Ram Mandir. The Congress says it will build a mosque. The Opposition parties said they would crush Sanatan and equate it with HIV Aids and malaria,” said the minister, addressing a huge gathering at Gandhi Chowk in his parliamentary constituency Hamirpur. “Like the Mughals and



Union minister Anurag Thakur along with former Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur during a roadshow in Hamirpur district on Saturday. — *PTI*

Britishers came and left, the Congress is also going. Sanatan tha, Sanatan hai aur Sanatan rahega,” the Union minister added. Mr Thakur took a dig at the Congress’ “Pakistan with nuclear bomb” jibe, saying Islamabad is struggling for food, as the grand old party is struggling for votes. “We defeated Pakistan in 1965, 1971 and in the Kargil war. If Pakistan will raise an eye on India, we will not take time to raze it to the ground,” said

change of stance on certain issues, the PM said they were waiting for a change and are seeking an opportunity to bring the BJP to power in the state. On the allegation of misuse of Central investigating agencies, Mr Modi said, “If I first talk about Enforcement Directorate (ED), only 3 per cent cases are related to politicians, and the 97 per cent are against bureaucrats, drugs and mafia and gun runners. Secondly, the huge seizure of notes in West Bengal, Jharkhand and other parts of the country point to the circulation of black money that needs to be probed by ED.” The PM said the BJP doesn’t do politics on the issues of caste and religion. “It is the Congress that has back-stabbed the spirit of India. Whatever Baba Saheb Ambedkar had said on reservation, they (Congress and its allies) are doing exactly the opposite,” Mr Modi said.

Rahul: Modi will not be PM after June 4

**New Delhi, May 11:** Congress leader and the party LS candidate from Raebareli Rahul Gandhi on Saturday claimed the storm of INDIA bloc is everywhere and Narendra Modi will not be Prime Minister after June 4. He said this while sharing a post on X by sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of a crowd at a rally at Nandurbar in Maharashtra. “Be it Maharashtra or Uttar Pradesh, Haryana or Bihar, the storm of

India is blowing everywhere. I say it again that Narendra Modi will not be Prime Minister after June 4,” Mr Gandhi wrote. The post by Ms Vadra showed a huge crowd gathering for the Congress rally. “Heartfelt gratitude to the people of Nandurbar, Maharashtra for this enthusiastic welcome. The message of Maharashtra is clear - India’s government is going to be formed,” the Congress leader said.

Nandurbar was a Congress stronghold for long but the party lost for the first time in 2014. Bharatiya Janata Party’s Heena Gavit defeated Manikrao Gavit — a nine-time MP of the Congress — who had held the seat since 1981. This time Heena Gavit has Congress candidate Gowaal Padavi as her main opponent. The Congress former president’s “Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra” had passed through this area in March. — *PTI*



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party leader Y.S. Sharmila in Andhra Pradesh’s Kadapa. — *PTI*

NORTHERN RAILWAY			
1st Corrigendum			
Subj: 1st Corrigendum to Tender No. 332-Dy.CEE/C/NDS/2022-23(R-5) dated 04.05.2024 for the work of "Design, Supply, erection, testing, commissioning, & modification of 25 kV AC single phase OHE for the Electrification work of : Redevelopment and Major upgradation Faridabad Station." In partial modification to the tender document, the following changes have been made and may be read as below:-			
S. No.	Item/Clause No.	Existing Provision	Modified Provision and Read as
1.	Sale/availability of tender document on Rty. Website	Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 04.05.2024 to 27.05.2024 upto 11:30 hrs.	Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 04.05.2024 to 20.05.2024 upto 11:30 hrs.
2.	Last date/Time of upload of tenders	27.05.2024 at 11:30 hours. Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website w.e.f. 13.05.2024 to 27.05.2024.	20.05.2024 at 11:30 hours. Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website w.e.f. 11.05.2024 to 20.05.2024.
All terms and conditions of tender are same			
No.: 332-Dy.CEE/C/NDS/2022-23(R-5) Dated : 11.05.2024 1430/2024			
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE			



SHORT TAKES

Rhino poacher killed in fierce gunfight

**Guwahati:** In a major breakthrough, the forest guards on Saturday shot dead a rhino poacher after a fierce gunfight in Kaziranga National Park in Assam. The park authorities said that the encounter took place inside the Agoratoli Range of the national park. The park authorities said that the gun battle broke out when a group of poachers entered the Agoratoli forest range at around 3 am to kill rhinos and were intercepted by forest guards near Erasuti forest camp. The director of the park, Sonali Ghosh told reporters that after getting a tip off about the movement of poachers a team of forest guards was alerted and accordingly a cordon was laid down to nab poachers. Informing that poachers who were armed opened fire on forest guards ensuing a gun battle, she said that 3-4 poachers entered the National Park, while one of them was killed.

Father-in-law guns down soldier in J&K

**Jammu:** A soldier was gunned down allegedly by his father-in-law over some matrimonial dispute in J&K's Reasi district on Saturday, police said. Village Defence Guard (VDG) member Doulat Ram allegedly fired his .303 rifle on his son-in-law Amit Singh, an army soldier, at Kembal Darga village, causing chest injuries to him, they said. Ram, a resident of Panasa village, had come to meet his son-in-law, who was posted outside and had come on leave to his home, police said. However, he lost control after finding that Singh had thrashed his wife over matrimonial dispute and in a fit of rage opened fire, causing injuries to the soldier, they said. A police party rushed to the scene on getting information about the firing incident and shifted both Singh and his wife, who had suffered injuries due to physical assault, to the hospital. — PTI

3 more arrested in PMLA against Soren

**New Delhi/Ranchi:** The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday said it has made three more arrests in connection with an alleged land grab linked money laundering case in which it had arrested former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren and some others. Sanjeet Kumar, Md. Irshad and Tapas Ghosh were taken into custody on May 9 under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, as per ED. “These persons have been arrested for their role in forgery, tampering and fabrication of land records, thus changing the nature of lands which are designated as non-saleable under Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act (CNT Act), a legislation with objective to protect the land rights of tribal and marginalised communities,” the federal agency said in a statement. — PTI

Army rescues 2 US tourists stuck in HP

**Nahan (HP), May 11:** Two stranded American women trekkers of Indian origin were rescued by Army choppers on Saturday morning from the Churdhar Valley in Himachal's Sirmaur district, officials said. Sirmaur deputy commissioner Sumit Khimta said two American citizens Richa Abhay Sonawane and Sonia Ratan were rescued from the Churdhar Valley in the Nohradhar-Churdhar trek route with the help of two Army choppers and have been admitted in a hospital in Chandigarh. Both the American women, who were born in India, are out of danger, he added. Mr Khimta said the district administration got a phone call from Joginder Singh, a resident of Nohradhar village, on Friday late evening informing that two women travellers were stuck at Teesri, about 10 km away from Nohradhar, after one of them, Sonia Ratan, had some health problem. He said a team comprising officials from the police, health and revenue departments were rushed to the spot. The teams provided immediate medical help to the tourists and later teams of NDRF and SDRF also reached the spot. After the home ministry and ministry of external affairs were alerted about the incident, two Army helicopters were requisitioned. Around 6.30 am on Saturday, two army choppers landed in the area and the stranded tourists were rescued with the help of NDRF and SDRF jawans who carried them up to the helicopters, Mr Khimta said. Ramlal, a local resident of the Haripurdhar area, told PTI that currently the weather in the Churdhar valley is very hostile and people must avoid trekking to the Churdhar peak under such circumstances. — PTI

PoK erupts; 1 police official killed, several hurt in clash

**YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, MAY 11**

Almost all cities and towns of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, including capital Muzaffarabad, witnessed massive anti-government protests on Saturday, leaving, at least, one police official dead and scores others including security personnel and protesters injured. Demanding an end to exploitation of the held territory's natural resources, implementation of AJK high court's order on the use of hydroelectric projects, involvement of indigenous population in decision-making and resources management, reduced power tariffs and control over rising prices of the essential commodities particularly thewheat floor, protection of environment and unconstitutional release of arrested leaders, thousands of people marched towards Muzaffarabad from various places including the towns of Dhirkote, Palandari, Bagh, Mirpur, Chinari, and Rawlakote, reports received here from across the Line of Control (LoC) said. They were soon met by riot police and, at places, by the Pakistan army personnel leading to clashes between the two sides, the reports said.

‘Cong won’t win even 50 seats’

■ **Continued from Page 1** was always apprehensive of Pakistan's atom bomb. Hence, it always dithered to take the required actions against that nation. However, my government has always appropriately responded to such incidents,” said Mr Modi. Recalling the achievements of the previous BJP government at the Centre under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister added, “May 11 is special for every Indian. The Pokhran tests in 1998 by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee showed the prowess of our scientists and the exceptional leadership of Vajpayee Ji. But the Congress discounts this accomplishment and they try to scare India by citing other nations. Shameful!” The PM said the Congress' dream of winning 10 per cent of the total Lok Sabha seats in the ongoing elections to get the Opposition status will not be fulfilled. The party will get below fifty seats. “The number of seats the Congress will get will be less than the age of its Shehzada (referring to Rahul Gandhi). They are desperately looking for 10 per cent votes. However, let me make it clear that their dream will remain unfulfilled,” said Mr Modi. Castigating the Congress for “criticising” President Droupadi Murmu for her visit to the Ram temple at Ayodhya, Mr Modi said it was an act of “disrespect” to her.

“Ms Murmu represents tribal communities. She is the Commander-in-Chief of the country's three armed forces. However, a top leader of the Congress called a press conference a day after she offered prayers to Ram Lalla at Ayodhya's Ram temple. Is it not disrespectful to her? Should you not teach them a lesson through your ballot?” asked Mr Modi as the crowd thundered in unison, saying “yes.” The PM claimed that the countdown for Odisha's ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has started and that the BJP will form its own government in the state. “As I had earlier announced, the BJP will win the Assembly elections in Odisha. On June 6, we will name our chief minister's candidate and on June 10, you will have an Odia CM who is quite versed in Odisha language and culture,” said Modi. Mounting further attacks on the chief minister Naveen Patnaik government, he said that in the last 25 years, he has ruined Odisha through ill-governance and nepotism. “The last five years have been more disastrous. Mr Patnaik and his officers have literally ruined the state. All-pervading corruption, lack of governance and nepotism have pushed the country into a state of utter backwardness,” Mr Modi observed. Targeting the Odisha CM's

close confidante V.K. Pandian, a Tamil Nadu-born bureaucrat-turned BJD politician who is now virtually controlling the state administration, Mr Modi said, “Odisha is now being ruled by a super chief minister who is a baahari (outsider). Should we tolerate a baahari?” At an election rally in Jharkhand's Chatra, Mr Modi said that the Congress will get fewer seats than the age of its Shehzada and the INDIA bloc has already accepted defeat in the Lok Sabha polls. “The mentality of the Congress is of the 18th century. After the President paid obeisance at the Ram temple in Ayodhya, they talked about cleaning the temple. They insulted the President,” Mr Modi said. The Prime Minister also asserted that NDA governments will be formed in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Arunachal Pradesh, where simultaneous Assembly polls are underway. “We worship tribals, but the JMM and the Congress are not able to digest the respect shown to them,” he said, urging people to vote for the BJP to oust such forces. The Prime Minister also alleged that the INDIA bloc has plans to hand over the country's assets to Muslims and the OBC, SC and ST reservations to the coalition's votebank.

■ Shared edited video: CM on molestation allegations on gov Will not visit Raj Bhavan till Bose is Bengal gov: Mamata

**Saptagram (WB), May 11:** West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday slammed governor C.V. Ananda Bose over allegations of molestation against him, and said he must explain why he should not step down. Addressing a poll rally here in support of TMC's Hooghly candidate Rachana Banerjee, the CM asserted she would not step inside the Raj Bhavan till Bose remains the governor. Bose had screened multiple CCTV footage of the Raj Bhavan on May 9, in a bid to clear the air over allegations of molestation brought against him. “The governor says ‘didigiri’ (high-handedness) will not be tolerated...But, I say Mr governor, your ‘dadagiri’ will not work anymore,” the TMC supremo said. “Governor please tell what was my fault. Who do you think you are? Why should you torture the woman,” Ms Banerjee said. “He must explain why he



should not resign after such allegations were levelled against him,” she said. A contractual woman employee of Raj Bhavan had last week lodged a complaint with Kolkata police, alleging that she was molested by Bose in the governor's house on April 24 and May 2. Bose had screened multiple CCTV footage of the Raj Bhavan on May 9, in a bid to clear the air over allegations of molestation brought against him.

■ **A CONTRACTUAL** woman employee of the Raj Bhavan had last week lodged a complaint with the Kolkata police, alleging that she was molested by governor C.V. Ananda Bose in the governor's house on April 24 and May 2

“The governor had released an edited video. I saw the entire footage and its contents are shocking. The truth is yet to come out. I have got another video... Your conduct is shameful,” the chief minister said. “I am not going to the Raj Bhavan till he is the governor... I prefer to meet him on the streets,” she asserted. Referring to the closure of industries under Left rule, Ms Banerjee said her government had taken initiatives to reopen Dunlop

and Jessop, which employed thousands of people but faced road-blocks by the BJP. “We had taken initiatives to reopen Dunlop and Jessop in 2016, but due to the Centre's non-cooperation, no progress could be made. If I am given permission, we can initiate opening of both units soon, but they are not allowing us to do it for political reasons,” she said. At the second meeting at Jagatbhallavpur in Howrah district in support of TMC candidate from Srirampore Lok Sabha seat Kalyan Banerjee, she accused the BJP government at the Centre of looting crores of money from the general public and airing advertisements in print and electronic media to make “false claims about achievements of the BJP government.”

■ Uniforms of forces, Naxal materials recovered from Bijapur encounter site Naxals use CRPF, Cobra gears to dodge bullets?

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY RAIPUR, MAY 11**

Maoists use combat uniforms of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and COBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action), elite counterinsurgency wing of CRPF, to mislead security forces during encounters. The seizure of combat uniforms of CRPF and COBRA at the encounter site in Pedia jungle under Gangaloor police station in Bijapur district under south Bastar in Chhattisgarh on Friday has suggested this. The Friday's encounter between the Maoists and

security forces in Pedia forest led to killing of 12 Maoists including two women cadres and injuries to two other ultras and one local villager who was caught in the crossfire. “This was the first time combat uniforms of CRPF and COBRA were recovered along with other Naxal materials including weapons at an encounter site in Bijapur district.” “This suggests that Maoists use them to mislead the security forces during the encounters”, Bijapur district superintendent of police Jitendra Kumar Yadav told this newspaper on Saturday.

■ **12 BODIES** of slain Naxals were identified on Saturday. They carried a cumulative bounty of ₹31 lakh

■ **THE COUNTERFEIT** combat uniforms of CRPF and COBRA are available in the open market. Maoists may have procured them from the open market

A counterinsurgency officer in Chhattisgarh police told this newspaper that “The seizure of combat uniforms of the Central paramilitary forces indicated that Maoists have changed their combat strategy to trap security forces in the ambush during encounters”. Security forces had also noticed that the Maoists had changed their uniforms to plain clothes during the encounter to pose as villagers. “A peculiar thing was noticed. Maoists after being surrounded by security forces were spotted changing their uniforms and wearing the plain

clothes to pose as villagers and conceal their identities. Several Maoists in plain clothes were arrested during the search and cordon operation after the encounter”, Mr Yadav said. The encounter that took place at nine different places in Pedia forest lasted nearly 12 hours. The Maoists had laid ambushes thrice during the encounter to target the security forces. But, the forces broke the ambushes successfully and came out of them unscathed. The 12 bodies of slain Naxals were identified on Saturday. They carried a cumulative bounty of Rs 31 lakh.

Famous Punjabi poet and writer Patar passes away

**Ludhiana, May 11:** Padma Shri recipient Punjabi poet Surjit Patar passed away on Saturday morning at his residence near the Barewal Colony here. He was 79. Patar died in his sleep, his family members said. His wife Bhupinder Kaur tried to wake him up around 6.30 am but he did not respond. He was declared dead by a doctor, they said. Patar is survived by his wife and two sons — one of them lives in Australia. Gurbhajan Gill, a close associate of Patar, said cremation is likely to be

performed, on Monday after Patar's son arrives from Australia. Many political leaders, actors and singers, including Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann, expressed grief over the demise of Patar and said it is a big loss for the Punjabi literary community. Patar's poetic works include *Hawa Vich Likhe Harf*, *Hanere Vich Sulagdi Varanmala*, *Patijhar Di Pazeib, Lafzaan Di Dargah* and *Surzameen*. He received the Padma Shri in the field of literature and education in

2012. Patar was the president of the Punjab Arts Council. He had also been the president of the Punjabi Sahit Akademi. The poet and writer has been awarded with the Sahitya Akademi Award, Panchnad Puruskar, Saraswati Samman and the Kusumagraj Literary Award. From Patar village in Jalandhar district, he did his graduation from Randhir college in Kapurthala and Ph.D on “Transformation of Folklore in Guru Nanak Vani” from the Guru Nanak Dev University. — PTI

People like Kejriwal, Sisodia not welcome in BJP: Anurag

■ **Continued from Page 1** leanings. “He (Kejriwal) has not been cleared or absolved of the charges against him. The charges against him still stand and a case would continue against him in court. He has now got some relief in the wake of elections for 15-20 days. That too is interim relief with several clauses and conditions, as he cannot see or handle files related to his case, cannot comment about the cases against him, cannot visit the secretariat, cannot meet people connected to the liquor scam. After June 1, he has to return back to the jail

and surrender,” he told the news agency. “All those who are bursting crackers on the release of Arvind Kejriwal, it looks like the Opposition is seeking the support of a twig before drowning. They all will still drown,” the Union minister claimed. Asked if he would get public sympathy after he was jailed, Mr Thakur said people have seen his corruption. The people have seen that ED summoned him nine times, but he still did not turn up. “It seems there is something fishy. After skipping the summons nine times, he was arrested and is still dilly-

dallying. I am saying today, if you have to clear this country of corruption, then decisions have to come early in such matters,” he asserted. Mr Thakur, who is contesting the Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat in Himachal Pradesh for the fifth time in a row, also noted that “if anyone has tried to crush the Constitution, it is Arvind Kejriwal”. “Even the creators of the Constitution would have never thought that a chief minister and deputy CM would be in jail for corruption and still are reluctant to resign from their posts,” he said. — PTI

Ph-4 campaign ends; Mahua, Akhilesh, Owaisi, Teni in fray

■ **Continued from Page 1** TDP and Pawan Kalyan-led Jana Sena Party (JSP). The campaign saw BJP leaders led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi attacking the Congress over the remarks of Rahul Gandhi's close aide Sam Pitroda on “race” and “skin colour” of Indians. They accused the INDIA bloc parties of being “anti-Hindu” and engaging in “loot, appeasement” and “dynastic politics”. The Congress targeted the BJP over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's “tempo loads of money” remarks and persisted with its offensive on the issues of protecting the Constitution and reservations. Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath addressed election rallies in Unnao, Kannauj and Kanpur on Saturday, while the Samajwadi Party (SP) held a public outreach programme in Kannauj Lok Sabha constituency. Among the 13 poll-bound constituencies, a close contest is on between SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and sitting BJP MP Subrat Pathak in Kannauj, while in Unnao, incumbent BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj is up against SP's Annu Tandon. Prime Minister Modi on Wednesday accused the Congress of having a “deal” with businessmen Ambani and Adani, and asked if the party has received “tempo loads of black money” from the two for its leader Rahul Gandhi to stop “abusing” them. Hitting back, Gandhi dared Prime Minister Narendra Modi to hold a probe by the CBI or ED

into whether Adani and Ambani sent black money to his party and taunted if Modi was speaking from his “personal experience” that they send their “money in a tempo”. On the same day, Pitroda resigned as the Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress after his controversial remarks spurred the BJP to label the Congress “racist” and left it scampering to control the damage. Slamming the Congress and INDIA bloc, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in on May 5 said that Muslims now understand that the Congress and INDIA bloc are using them as pawns, asserting that the community is distancing itself from them after seeing the development carried out by the BJP. On Friday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said an INDIA bloc storm is arriving in Uttar Pradesh, and asserted that Narendra Modi will not make it to the post of Prime Minister this time. Mr Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav addressed joint rallies in Kannauj and Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh, where the two parties are contesting as allies. Under their seat-sharing agreement, the Congress is fighting on 17 of the 80 Lok Sabha seats in the state. In his Kanpur address, Mr Gandhi claimed the Congress will win at least 50 seats in UP. The SP chief on Saturday termed the ongoing Lok Sabha elections as a “national movement” for the cause of the Constitution and to protect reservations. — PTI





THE ASIAN AGE

12 MAY 2024



Ranjona Banerji

Off the beaten track

Populism or elitism? What's your poison?

Is it fair to write a column about other columnists? Let's see. For the past 12 years or is it 13, India's best-known and most-read columnists have informed the nation that anyone who does not admire the Narendra Modi phenomenon has abandoned their critical faculties, their sense of how vast sections of India feel and does not understand the world that they live in. Anyone who questioned Mr Modi's credentials, his past statements, his rampant bigotry and his role in the 2002 riots when he was chief minister of Gujarat was wasting their time concentrating on minor details. This new Modi was going to bring progress to India, create jobs, end corruption and so much more.

Now, 13 years later, Narendra Modi himself has campaigned for a third term as prime minister on the following issues: if the Congress Party comes to power, it will take away everyone's wealth and give it to Muslims, it will enter your homes and take away your family's gold and the *mangalsutras* — a sign of being wed — from the necks of women, if you own two buffaloes it will take away one, it will decide on the members of the Indian cricket team depending on their religion...

Not a single line about his own amazing achievements. The jobs and wealth created. The new India, full of progress and development. The end of corruption. The glory of India, long suppressed by all politicians but him, now revealed to the world. Interestingly, although his trademark rampant Islamophobia has not ended, he does not appear to be puffed with pride about his own recent inauguration of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya. Modi has been associated with the Ram Janmabhoomi movement for decades, from the organisation of BJP founder L.K. Advani's Rath Yatra to polarise India in the 1990s to the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 and onwards. But oddly, what one might assume would be his crowning glory, has somehow taken a backseat to his obsession with the Congress Party.

His latest claim that Rahul Gandhi has stopped mentioning crony capitalism and Modi's dependence on two of India's top industrialists because they have been sending tempo-loads of cash to Rahul Gandhi, is the funniest and most telling of all. He has actually named two of his top financiers here. He has accused them openly of supporting his biggest political rival. And he has accused them of breaking Indian law.

In some places, this would be called a meltdown by the Prime Minister of India. But in our own version of reality, how long before some much-admired columnist and commentator spins Modi's accusations as a masterstroke of blaming the Opposition for what he himself does? If indeed Modi represents some sections of Indian society more effectively than anyone else, it appears that he speaks for the less savoury elements. Those who are filled with bile and hatred for others, those who revel in divisive disharmony, those who cherish violence and those who are bent low by their massive insecurity about their worth. These are the people who appear to admire Modi and his rhetoric the most. If indeed his words and actions are "masterstrokes" as we've consistently been told for over a decade, then it is a masterstroke in the minds of some of our finest to whip up the worst in humanity.

And perhaps it is, would you argue? If the only purpose of a politician is to win elections, then for our social experts, no rules must or can apply. (It is another matter that no rules apply to the ruling party, according to our state agencies.) To consistently promote incompetence or the fomenting of hatred because of popularity amongst a certain section of the populace is to bow down to become the first step towards fascism. To deliberately promote rank populism over responsibility displays the cheapest form of cowardice in the face of bigotry, hatred and the road to dictatorship.

And so very, very sadly this is what our commentariat have done. Even today, as Modi's comments appear to become more and more bizarre, they decide to pick on some unnecessary comments by a remote Congress functionary and somehow equate them with the campaign speeches of the Prime Minister. Aided helped by a culpable media, they attempt to control the narrative and steer it towards Modi's greatness.

The tragedy is that rather than be honest to themselves and their worthy opinions, they are as likely to run after any other power centre should it emerge. That is what thrills them: to be around and thus "assess" the trappings of power. For this privilege, they are happy to compromise everything else.

You may argue that they were not wrong. That someone like Modi is very popular. The problem is that Modi is not a filmstar, whose work sells on his popularity. As a politician he is a supplicant, begging from the people. As Prime Minister he is a constitutional entity with responsibilities. A failure to uphold those responsibilities cannot be excused by popularity. No matter how beautiful your words or compelling you think your argument is.

What will actually happen on June 4, when the results of these elections are declared, who knows? I certainly don't. If you know, then perhaps you are one of those who revels in the breaking of the system of secret ballot and Constitutional agencies whose job it is to secure and defend our democracy.

And if you do not hold those in power accountable, then you are of course a stooge. No matter how popular a mind you might consider yourself.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on media affairs, politics and social trends. She tweets at @ranjona.

Subhani



Kashmir on the mend, but threatened by hate rhetoric



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

The abysmal level of discourse in the ongoing national elections has left millions of Indians appalled. The extent of juvenile and malicious acrimony on issues that are irrelevant to the needs of the common person, has reached a new low of repugnant immaturity. I thought, therefore, that, physically at least, I should reach higher heights, and have been travelling in Kashmir for a few days, truly a paradise on earth.

After a long hiatus, Kashmir too will vote, and one of my purposes was to gauge what has changed here since the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019. Is there pent-up resentment waiting to erupt, or are things gradually leading to an acceptance of the new reality? On the surface, there is certainly the appearance of normalcy. Is this only a sullen, frozen peace due to the overwhelming presence of our military and para-military forces, or a genuine reconciliation with what now appears to be irreversible? What exactly is the truth between the triumphant propaganda of the government, and the outright condemnation of its critics?

Some facts are incontrovertible. Kashmir has never seen such a tourism boom. In 2023, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) received a record 2.11 crore tourists, more than half of which were for Kashmir. Flights going to Srinagar are filled to capacity. In peak season, one cannot get a room for love or money, even though new hotels, including home-stays, are mushrooming. There has been a 700 per cent increase in foreign tourists too, which now number over 50,000.

With tourism, the sale of handicrafts, carpets and

shawls has increased manifold. New shops have emerged, old ones refurbished, malls — still a few — are thriving, and restaurants doing brisk business. I was delighted to see the houseboats on the Dal and Nagina lakes not lying forlorn and empty but largely occupied, and shikaras dotting the waters packed with selfie taking tourists. Tourism is largely concentrated in Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg, but an attempt is being made to develop off-beat destinations, including those offering adventure tourism.

From what I could gather, the apple sector is also seeing a new high. Kashmir exports around 18 metric tonnes of apples, and accounts for 75 per cent of India's total apple production. For the first time last year, a box of 15 kilos of apples sold for between Rs 1,300 to Rs 1,600 as against an average of 700 to 800 rupees in previous years.

The overall Kashmir economy grew by eight per cent post-Covid — higher than the national level. The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has doubled to over Rs 2.25 lakh crores, thereby increasing per capita incomes. Land prices have increased exponentially, and several infrastructure projects initiated. Many people I spoke to were particularly happy about the opening of the Srinagar-Jammu highway that has furthered integration and halved travel time between the two state capitals. The Kashmir willow, famous for making cricket bats, is also doing well, and people recalled the recent visit of Sachin Tendulkar where he proudly bought one.

Has terrorism decreased? According to official figures, terrorist incidents have dropped to 44 in 2023 compared to 228 in 2012, the

The apple sector is also seeing a new high. Kashmir exports around 18 tonnes of apples, and accounts for 75 per cent of India's apple production. Land prices have increased exponentially.

number of active terrorists has fallen to an all-time low of 31, and targeted attacks against civilians has decreased to 14 in 2023 as against 81 in 2022. However, stray terrorist acts are still a worry, especially in the Rajouri, Poonch and Kupwara sectors.

Is the ordinary Kashmir happier? Most said yes, because — especially with increased tourism — incomes have increased. Have Kashmiris accepted the abrogation of Article 370? The response is difficult to gauge, but several people told me that this is more an issue with politicians, less with the common person. Do Kashmiris still want 'azaadi'? Most people said no. The answer of one was that Pakistan cannot provide food to its own people, how will it take care of us? Many are also aware of the deplorable state of affairs in POK.

One pervasive issue is that of unemployment. For one vacancy in the armed or paramilitary forces, there are lakhs of applications. The more educated have no jobs. Kashmir has seen little or no investment in industry, faces shrinking government jobs, and prolonged power-cuts. Even Srinagar often faces power-cuts of hours each day, and the situation is much worse elsewhere. This also affects the tourism industry, since only large hotels can run on generators. The government needs to urgently tackle these issues. I also sensed a subterranean anger against Kashmiri politicians, who, many said, have only feathered their own nests, and perpetuated family fiefdoms.

There is unhappiness too with the bifurcation of the state, and the prolonged delay in holding democratic state elections.

The greatest resentment is against the perceived policy of the BJP against Muslims. People are aware that the Narendra Modi government has not a single Muslim, either in the Cabinet or in Parliament. If the Prime Minister (PM) himself insinuates that Muslims are "infiltrators", you cannot expect the Muslims in Kashmir — or for that matter anywhere in India — to feel an integral part of the country — as they, indeed, are. While there are fringe extremists on both sides of the religious spectrum, when senior ruling party leaders make incendiary statements against Muslims, or condone and overlook openly communal statements and events targeting them, it is bound to impact the sense of inclusion of India's only Muslim majority state. Such a policy also provides a convenient propaganda handle to Pakistan, and reenergises the sleeper terrorist units it has sponsored within India.

If only Prime Minister Modi had actually followed his initial slogan of *Sabka Saath and Sabka Vishwas*, he would have been seen as a statesman, and not just a successful political leader. But since he has come to power, the policy of minority exclusion has only gathered more divisive momentum. This can be clearly seen in the speeches being made in this round of national elections, where the PM's narrative has almost completely congealed into Hindu-Muslim venom. Whether we accept it or not, to make Kashmir not only physically but emotionally a part of India, such a milieu is a big impediment. Especially now, when increased prosperity and normalcy are helping in healing the wounds of history in Kashmir.

The writer is an author, diplomat and former member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)

LETTERS

KEJRIWAL EFFECT

The Lok Sabha election till now has been seeing a low voter turnout. This was as much a worry for parties, in general, and the EC, in particular. Perhaps a single party's dominance in the ongoing campaign cavalcade has affected the psyche of an electorate that craves to be part of the decision-making process. AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal's re-entry into the fray, enabled by a pre-scient Supreme Court, must, therefore, have rejuvenated it. Elections are perhaps not so much on finding the winner but also the degree of voter participation that drives the electoral process itself.

R. Narayanan  
Navi Mumbai

BENGALURU'S PLIGHT

WHENEVER ONE hears of Bengaluru, one thinks of a well-laid-out city with scientific superstructure and an abundance of high tech facilities. This year has dented that image on account of unplanned and illegal construction activities. As the summers are in full swing, so is the challenge of water scarcity, with housing wiping out ponds and other water bodies. Rampant construction is destroying the natural beauty of Bengaluru, the science capital of India, which hosts 1.4 crore people. Nine out of 60 labs of DRDO are in this city besides the Indian Institute of Science and the Indian Statistical Institute. Traffic snarls due to bus stops set up close to road junctions are now an everyday menace. All this when the town planners of this city should be showing the way.

Vijay Singh Adhikari  
Nainital

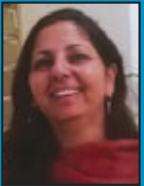
UNFORGETTABLE CHUNI

IT IS INDEED overwhelming to note that Spain's Sevilla FC club has not only honored late Chuni Goswami with a tribute on its Facebook page; but also imagined the magic which could have occurred in the field had the Indian legend and Diego Maradona (arguably the greatest footballer on the planet) played alongside each other! Though Goswami had matched the international standard in terms of skill and quality, Sevilla FC still deserves thanks from the Indian football fraternity for acknowledging this unrecognition truth.

Kajal Chatterjee  
Kolkata

Anita Katyal

Political Gup-Shup



Priyanka v Modi at the hustings; Rahul absence to damage Smriti?

The ongoing Lok Sabha election campaign is increasingly becoming a Modi Vs Priyanka battle. While former Congress president Rahul Gandhi remains Prime Minister Narendra Modi's chief target of attack, it is Priyanka Gandhi who has been responding to his charges against the Congress, her brother and her family. Whether it is Modi's constant reference to Rahul Gandhi as *shehzada* or his declaration that the Congress party's election manifesto promises to take people's wealth, including the *mangalsutra* of women, and distribute it to Muslims, it is Priyanka Gandhi who has hit back in equal measure. Priyanka Gandhi's speeches — alternating between emotive and feisty — accuse the Prime Minister of focussing on inane matters while ignoring burning issues like price rise and unemployment. She has even overshadowed Rahul Gandhi's poll campaign as she is a far better orator than him. But for all her jibes and charges against Mr Modi, the Prime Minister is making a conscious effort to overlook Priyanka's speeches even as he keeps the focus on "Rahul Baba" given that the BJP has invested

heavily in discrediting him over the past 10 years.

Sam Pitroda, close friend of the Gandhi family and head of the Indian Overseas Congress, has a penchant for courting controversy. He invariably stirs up trouble both for himself and the Congress in the middle of an election. So far, the Congress had chosen to ignore Mr Pitroda's off-the-cuff remarks but his latest patently racist comment, describing Indians from different regions as Chinese, Arabs, Whites and Africans, could not be overlooked. The matter was taken up at the highest level with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge pointing out, "I am dark too.... Should I be now called an African." He suggested that Mr Pitroda should not be allowed to get away this time as it would look like the Gandhi family is shielding him. Nehru-Gandhi scion Rahul Gandhi agreed and Mr Pitroda was then asked to send in his resignation as chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress. The next step is to find a replacement for Mr Pitroda who is equally well-connected abroad as Rahul Gandhi is scheduled to go overseas on several trips after the

end of the election campaign. Milind Deora would have been a good choice but he is now with the BJP. The search is on for a new IOC chairman.

That Nationalist Congress leader Sharad Pawar continues to have a large and dedicated fan following in Maharashtra is an acknowledged fact. This was demonstrated in the last election when Mr Pawar delivered a speech while standing in pouring rain. This time, the trigger was provided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's description of Mr Pawar as a "*bhatakati aatma*" during the course of his election campaign. This did not go down well with the people of Baramati who were furious with the Prime Minister for insulting Mr Pawar. Incidentally, Baramati is Mr Pawar's long-time Lok Sabha constituency, now held by his daughter Supriya Sule who is locked in a high-stakes electoral battle with her estranged cousin Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra. A panic-stricken Ajit Pawar went into damage control mode and quickly replaced Mr Modi's posters with his own. He was also forced to camp in Baramati for a few days to

assuage people's anger.

Bahujan Samaj Party leader Mayawati's last-minute decision to change her party's candidate for the Jaunpur Lok Sabha constituency has an interesting backstory. According to the political grapevine in Uttar Pradesh, the move can be traced to the strained relationship between chief minister Yogi Adityanath and Union home minister Amit Shah. The BSP had originally fielded Srikala Reddy, wife of former MP Dhananjay Singh, known for his proximity to Yogi Adityanath. She was given a ticket since Mr Singh was not eligible to contest this election as he was jailed for seven years in an old case of kidnapping and extortion. Though out on bail, his sentence has not been suspended. The BJP candidate, former Maharashtra minister Kripa Shankar Singh, said to be Amit Shah's choice for this seat, was finding it tough going in Jaunpur, having to contend with Mr Singh's personal reputation. A discreet word was sent to Srikala that she withdraw from the contest but she was not ready to do so. The BJP leadership in Delhi is learnt to have then contacted

Mayawati who lost no time in changing the candidate.

Two distinct assessments are emerging from the ongoing poll campaign in Amethi. Disappointed and unhappy that Rahul Gandhi chose to contest from Rae Bareilly and not from his old seat, voters in Amethi feel they have little choice but to vote for BJP's candidate Smriti Irani. On the other hand, there are voters who believe Rahul Gandhi decided not to contest from Amethi because he is hurt over his 2019 defeat and not because of his family connection with Rae Bareilly. Regretful Amethi residents can be heard saying, "*Rahul ko manana hai, Smriti ko harana hai*." On the other hand, Ms Irani's campaign has lost much of its punch after Rahul Gandhi shifted to Rae Bareilly. Ms Irani also has to work doubly hard to win a second consecutive term as two MLAs — former Congress legislator Aditi Singh and former Samajwadi Party Manoj Pandey — are apparently not cooperating with her.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist



## SHORT TAKES

## IRAN PARL POLL: HARD-LINERS ARE IN THE SADDLE

Dubai, May 11: Iran's hard-liners won most of the remaining seats in an election run-off to give them full control over the country's Parliament, authorities said on Saturday, while not sharing any details on the turnout.

The result, and that of the previous vote in March, gives hard-liners 233 of the 290 seats in Iran's Parliament, according to an *Associated Press* tally. Hard-liners seek more cultural and social restrictions based on Islamic sharia, including demanding that women wear the Islamic veil in public.

## PANAMA WILL SHUT DOWN MIGRATION ROUTE

Panama City, May 11: Panama is on the verge of a dramatic change to its immigration policy that could reverberate from the dense Darien jungle to the US border.

President-elect Jos Ral Mulino says he will shut down a migration route used by more than 5,00,000 people last year. Until now, Panama has helped speedily bus the migrants across its territory so they can continue their journey north.

Whether Mulino is able to reduce migration through a sparsely populated region remains to be seen, experts say.

## NK HACKERS STOLE SK COURT COMPUTER DATA

Seoul, May 11: North Korean hackers stole sensitive data, including individuals' financial records, from a South Korean court computer network over two years, Seoul police said on Saturday.

The nuclear-armed North is known to operate an army of thousands of hackers operating both inside the largely isolated country and apparently overseas, and has been blamed for cyberattacks in the past.

South Korean national police said the hackers pilfered 1,014 gigabytes of data from a court's computer system.

## END POLITICAL MISSION, IRAQ GOVT ASKS UN

Baghdad, May 11: The Iraqi government has requested that the United Nations end a mission set up to promote governance and human rights reforms in the country by the end of 2025, the latest in a series of international bodies operating in the nation that Iraq has sought to wind down.

The letter sent on Wednesday by Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani to United Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres declared that there is "no need for the continuation" of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

## KUWAIT'S EMIR DISSOLVES PARL AGAIN

Dubai, May 11: Kuwait's emir again dissolved the small, oil-rich country's Parliament on Friday, citing the political deadlock that has prevailed in recent years.

Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber made the announcement in an address carried by state television, saying other unspecified portions of the constitution had been suspended as well. He put the suspension at "a period of no more than four years," without elaborating. "The unhealthy atmosphere experienced by Kuwait in previous years has encouraged the spread of corruption to reach most state facilities."

## PHILIPPINES SENDS SHIPS TO DISPUTED ATOLL

Manila, May 11: The Philippines said on Saturday it has deployed ships to a disputed area in the South China Sea, where it accused China of building "an artificial island".

The Coast Guard sent a ship "to monitor the supposed illegal activities of China, creating 'an artificial island,'" the office of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said, adding two other vessels were in rotational deployment in the area.

Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson Commodore Jay Tarriela told a forum there had been "small-scale reclamation" of the Sabina Shoal.

## Israel orders people in more areas of Rafah to evacuate

US issues stunning criticism of Israel's use of American weapons in Gaza

Rafah, May 11: Israel ordered new evacuations in Gaza's southern city of Rafah on Saturday, forcing tens of thousands more people to move as it prepares to expand its military operation closer to the heavily populated central area, in defiance of growing pressure from close ally the United States and others.

Israel's military also said it was moving into an area of devastated northern Gaza where it asserted that the Hamas militant group has regrouped.

Israel has now evacuated the eastern third of Rafah, which is considered the last refuge in Gaza. The United Nations and others have warned that Israel's planned full-scale Rafah invasion would cripple humanitarian operations and cause a disastrous surge in civilian casualties.

Rafah borders Egypt near the main aid entry points, which already have been affected. Israeli troops have captured the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing, forcing it to shut down.



A Palestinian boy checks the rubble of a residential building destroyed in an Israeli strike in Al-Zawayda in the central Gaza Strip on Saturday.

US President Joe Biden has said he will not provide offensive weapons to Israel for Rafah. On Friday, the US said there was "reasonable" evidence that Israel had breached international law protecting civilians in the way it

conducted its war against Hamas — the strongest statement yet that the Biden administration has made on the matter.

In response to the United States report, Ophir Falk, foreign policy adviser to Israel's Prime Minister,

said that Israel acts in compliance with the laws of armed conflict and the Army takes measures to avert civilian casualties, including alerting people to military operations via phone calls and text messages.

## 1 MORE ISRAELI HOSTAGE DEAD: HAMAS VIDEO

Jerusalem, May 11: Palestinian Islamist group Hamas said on Saturday that another one of the hostages abducted during its Oct. 7 attack on Israel has died.

Hamas released a video saying that Nadav Popplewell, who was taken hostage from the southern Israeli community of Kibbutz Nirim, died after being wounded in an Israeli strike in Gaza.

The Israeli military did not offer immediate comment on the latest video. It has referred to previous videos of hostages released by Hamas as psychological terror.

Earlier on Saturday, Hamas released an undated video of the 51-year-old captive in front of a white wall, with a bruise on his right eye, and speaking his name.



Northern lights illuminate the night sky along a highway north of San Francisco in California, on Saturday.

## Dazzling auroras: First solar storm in 20 years

Washington, May 11: The most powerful solar storm in more than two decades struck Earth on Friday, triggering spectacular celestial light shows from Tasmania to Britain — and threatening possible disruptions to satellites and power grids as it persists into the weekend.

The first of several coronal mass ejections (CMEs) — expulsions of plasma and magnetic fields from the Sun — came just after 1600 GMT on Friday.

But a statement from the office of his mother Melania Trump, the former president's third wife, soon put a stop to the convention plan.

Donald Trump said on Saturday that former Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley was not being considered to be his running mate.

"Nikki Haley is not under consideration for the VP slot, but I wish her well!" Trump wrote on his social media platform Truth Social.

It was later upgraded to an "extreme" geomagnetic storm — the first since the "Halloween Storms" of October 2003 caused blackouts in Sweden and damaged power infrastructure in South Africa.

More CMEs are expected to pummel the planet in the coming days. Social media lit up with people posting pictures of auroras from northern Europe and Australasia.

"We've just woken the kids to go watch the Northern Lights in the back garden! Clearly visible with the naked eye," Iain Mansfield in Hertford, England, told *AFP*.

That sense of wonder was shared in Australia's island state of Tasmania. "Absolutely biblical skies in Tasmania at 4am this morning. I'm leaving

SPECTACULAR CELESTIAL LIGHT

2 decades after which the most powerful solar storm in more than two decades struck Earth, triggering light shows from Tasmania to Britain.

1ST OF SEVERAL CORONAL MASS EJECTIONS (CMEs) — expulsions of plasma and magnetic fields from the Sun — came just after 1600 GMT on Friday.

2003: "Halloween Storms" caused blackouts in Sweden and damaged power infrastructure in South Africa.

11 year cycle peak of heightened activity sun is approaching.

Northern lights over Vienna on Saturday.

SOLAR STORM DISRUPTS MUSK'S STARLINK

STARLINK, the satellite arm of Elon Musk's SpaceX, warned on Saturday of a "degraded service".

5,000 satellites of Elon Musk's Starlink are in low Earth orbit.

THE SOLAR STORM is the biggest in a long time. Starlink satellites are under a lot of pressure, but holding up so far.

— ELON MUSK on his X platform

today and knew I could not pass up this opportunity," photographer Sean O' Riordan posted on social media platform X.

The excitement spread across Europe and North

America, from Mont Saint-Michel on the French coast to Payette, Idaho, where the sky shimmered with green light above the western US states.

## JOINT LETTER

European elections are scheduled to be held from June 6 to 9

## Call for a strong and united Europe

Rome, May 11: The Presidents of Germany, Italy and Austria called for a strong and united Europe in a joint letter published Saturday ahead of June's European elections.

The joint letter was carried in Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* a month before the June 6-9 elections where far-right parties are expected to do well.

"We see that the fundamental values — our values — of pluralism, human rights and the Rule of Law are being challenged, if

not openly threatened, all over the world," wrote the three leaders.

"At stake here is none other than the foundations of our democratic order." Although they all hold largely ceremonial roles, the presidents are all tasked with ensuring respect for their countries' constitutions.

"It is therefore essential to defend democratic institutions and values, the guarantees of freedom, the independence of the media, the role of democratic political oppositions,

the separation of powers, the value of limits to the exercise of power," wrote Italy's Sergio Mattarella, Germany's Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Austria's Alexander van der Bellen.

In Italy, the far-right Brothers of Italy party is in first place and credited

## Russia annexes 5 Ukraine villages; 1,700 civilians flee

Kyiv, May 11: Russia on Saturday said it had captured six villages in Ukraine's east during a surprise ground offensive that prompted evacuations, as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made an urgent call for military aid.

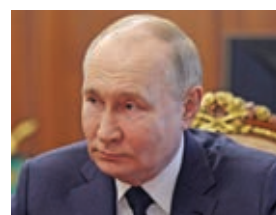
The Russian defence ministry said its troops had "liberated" five villages in Ukraine's Kharkiv region near the border with Russia — Boryshivka, Ogirteve, Pletenivka, Pylina and Strilecha — as "a result of offensive actions".

Two people were killed and another wounded in two separate Ukrainian drone strikes on the Russian border provinces of Belgorod and Kursk, the regions' governors said on Saturday.

Belgorod region governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said in a statement posted on the Telegram messaging app that one man had been killed and another injured after a Ukrainian drone hit a parked truck in the border village of Novostroyevka-Pervaya.

The village of Keramik in the Donetsk region was also now under Russian control, it said.

Ukrainian officials said that the country's forces were resisting but there was heavy fighting in the Kharkiv region near the border. "Fighting for vill-



Vladimir Putin

ages... continues in the border area", Ukrainian military spokesman Nazar Voloshyn said on national television, while "the enemy is currently localised".

There is "heavy fighting" in the border area and 1,775 people have been evacuated, Kharkiv regional governor Oleg Syngubov wrote on social media.

He insisted there was "no threat of a ground operation" for the city of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest.

At an arrival point for evacuees near Kharkiv, groups of people were arriving in vans and cars loaded with bags.

Evacuees — many of them elderly — received food and medical assistance in makeshift tents.

One 61-year-old woman, Lyubov Nikolaieva, told *AFP* she had fled the border village of Lyptsi along with her 81-year-old mother.

## Ruling coalition in Pakistan loses seats in Punjab

Lahore, May 11: The ruling coalition led by the PML-N in Pakistan's Punjab has been jolted as the provincial Assembly's Speaker restrained 27 lawmakers on reserved seats after the Supreme Court's ruling suspending a lower court's verdict denying the Sunni Ittehad Council its share of reserved seats for women and minorities, according to media reports.

Speaker Malik Mohammad Ahmed Khan issued the ruling barring the women and non-Muslim members appointed to the reserved seats via past notifications of the Election Commission of Pakistan, *The Express Tribune* newspaper reported.

According to the ruling, they cannot function as members or partake in Assembly proceedings until their status is clarified by either the ECP or the Supreme Court.

Of the suspended MPAs, 23 belong to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), two to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and one each to PML-Q and IPP, the *Dawn* newspaper reported.

The decision by the Speaker was taken on a point of order raised a day ago by opposition lawmaker Rana Aftab of PTI-backed SIC during the house proceedings.

Aftab had argued that the apex court had suspended the decision of the ECP of allocating the reserved seats of the SIC to other parties on the plea that the SIC had neither contested elections nor had submitted a list of nominees for the seats reserved for women and minorities.

## IMF DOUBTS PAK'S CAPACITY OF REPAYMENT

Islamabad, May 11: The IMF has said that Pakistan faces major debt-repayment challenges and expressed serious doubts over the cash-strapped country's capacity to repay the global lender, according to a media report on Saturday.

The Washington-based bank's assessment of Pakistan's economy came as an IMF support team reached the country on Friday to hold talks with officials here after Islamabad requested a fresh bailout package under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

## PIA STAFF FORGET TO PUT BODY OF BOY ON AIRCRAFT

Islamabad, May 11: In a shocking case of negligence, Pakistan International Airlines staff left behind at the airport here the body of a six-year-old boy which was to be sent to Pakistan-occupied Gilgit Baltistan on a flight on which his parents travelled, a media report said.

The deceased was receiving treatment at a hospital in Rawalpindi when he died on Thursday. His body was to be transported on Friday through a PIA flight to his native village of Katshi in the Pakistan-occupied Gilgit Baltistan region.

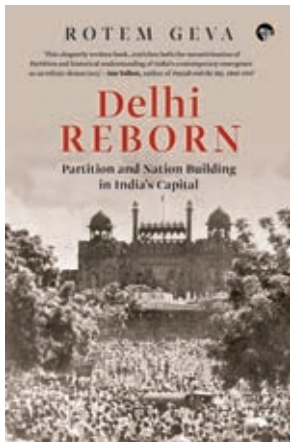




INDIAN TOP 10  
BESTSELLERS

## NON-FICTION

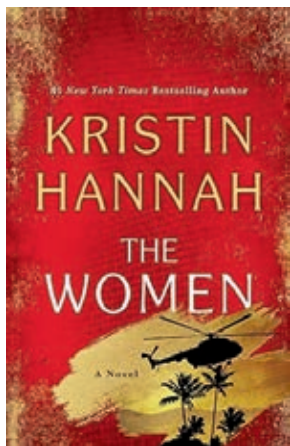
- 1 KNIFE**  
Salman Rushdie  
Penguin, ₹699
- 2 WHY WE DIE**  
Venki Ramakrishnan  
Hachette, ₹699
- 3 ACCELERATING INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT**  
Karthik Muralidharan  
Penguin Viking, ₹1,299
- 4 THE COOKING OF BOOKS**  
Ramachandra Guha  
Juggernaut, ₹699
- 5 WHY BHARAT MATTERS**  
S. Jaishankar  
Rupa, ₹695
- 6 COVERT**  
A.S. Dulat  
HarperCollins  
₹699
- 7 AGE OF REVOLUTION**  
Fareed Zakaria  
Penguin, ₹1,299
- 8 JUST A MERCENARY**  
Duvvuri Subbarao  
Penguin, ₹799
- 9 DELHI REBORN**  
Rotem Geva  
Speaking Tiger  
₹599
- 10 BAHIRONS: CHRONICLE OF A BOOKSHOP**  
Anuj Bahri and Anchal Malhotra, India  
Research Press, ₹350



## FICTION

- 1 BUTTER**  
Asako Yuzuki  
HarperCollins, ₹599
- 2 FUNNY STORY**  
Emily Henry  
Penguin, ₹799
- 3 ACTS OF GOD**  
Kanan Gill  
HarperCollins, ₹399
- 4 TABLE FOR TWO**  
Amor Towles  
Penguin, ₹799
- 5 UNTIL AUGUST**  
Gabriel Garcia Marquez  
Penguin, ₹799
- 6 THE FURY**  
Alex Michaelides  
Penguin, ₹799
- 7 MARTYR!**  
Kaveh Akbar  
Picador, ₹599
- 8 THE WOMEN**  
Kristin Hannah  
Pan Macmillan, ₹750
- 9 THE BOOK OF EVERLASTING THINGS**  
Aanchal Malhotra  
HarperCollins, ₹799
- 10 PLENTIFUL SPRING**  
Anjaly Thomas  
India Research Press  
₹399

Bahrisons, New Delhi



# Rao unshackled the elephant, reforms took on human face

Jayanta Roy  
Chowdhury

review

Those were anxious, tumultuous days. The last decade of the 20th century was ushering in great changes in the Indian subcontinent. None knew whether those changes were for the better or the worse. P.V. Narasimha Rao had emerged as a consensus Prime Minister for a country in the throes of a financial crisis. And he needed to turn the country around as of yesterday for the huge nation to be able to stave off what was nothing short of bankruptcy.

Some time back, Rao's young boss and former PM, Rajiv Gandhi, who had brought a whiff of fresh air into India's corridors of power by ushering in a telecom and computer revolution, had died a horrible death, blown up by a human bomber. Before his death, a political upheaval had brought two short-lived coalition governments which had taken the country to a position from where it was about to default on a huge foreign loan.

S. Narendra, the last of the truly powerful spokespersons of the Government of India, describes in his book, *India's Tipping Point*, those years when India did its version of the perestroika and unshackled the lumbering elephantine nation from many of its chains. He can be forgiven for being more than charitable to his boss, Rao *Garu* as his followers called him, for indeed the ninth Prime Minister of India did much to save India from the kind of fate which countries like Pakistan

and Zimbabwe, which keep falling into bankruptcies or near-bankruptcies, face today. After all, Rao did go forth bravely to steady the ship of state by dismantling the licence-permit raj and push the "Hindu rate of GDP growth" to hitherto unheard of heights. Indeed some political economists believe, what he did in five short years on the economic front has not been matched either before or after him. "Liberalisation's children", or those born after 1990, would not be aware of the significance of the date — July 24, 1991 — when overnight the country opened its doors to new industries by abolishing licences to produce most things.

A few months back, the *Economist* magazine in a lead article had called India a "caged tiger" which had willingly walked into a lifelong trap by creating a bewildering plethora of rules and regulations. It went on to say that if "India could put its economy right, many of its other difficulties would immediately seem less overpowering; they would not vanish, by any means, but they would at least begin to seem to be beatable".

Months after this admonishment, Narasimha Rao and his hand picked finance minister, former RBI governor Manmohan Singh, seemed to be doing just that. Besides abolishing the license raj, the rupee was devalued and overseas trade controls dismantled, spurring commerce, the lifeblood of any nation. Foreign investment which till sometime ago was

looked upon with suspicion was wooed to bring in much-needed technology and jobs.

Narendra and his legion of public perception managers in the government were given the unenviable task of explaining to the nation what the reforms meant and winning popular support for the move among a people used to a socialist order of managing the economy. His team came up with the slogan "Elephant Unshackled". This was not without opposition. The first few ads explaining the reforms were opposed by the Left bloc in Parliament as anti-people; the elephant messaging which came a bit later, was opposed by a section within the Congress who favoured the tiger uncaged symbolism.

In true *Yes Minister* style, Narendra wrote a note explaining that the tiger symbol had been appropriated by the Southeast Asian economies, while the lion symbol identified

**Liberalisation's children, or those born after 1990, would not be aware of the significance of the date — July 24, 1991 — when overnight the country opened its doors to new industries by abolishing licences to produce most things**

with Singapore and Africa. He explained his choice of an elephant, borrowing from both basic geography and Hindu mythology: "India is habitat of the Asian elephant. Importantly this animal is identified with Lord Ganesha and *gajagamana* — meaning strides of an elephant — sure-footed, graceful and impactful."

Despite the burst of reforms which changed India forever, Narasimha Rao was a worried man. One worry which he never articulated openly, but many of us who covered those tumultuous days guessed was, how would the perestroika impact him and India? The fear in the minds of India's top leadership and indeed among many others was would we follow in the path of the Soviet collapse?

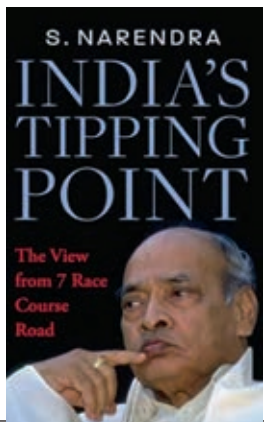
To answer those fears, Rao developed a new political philosophy — reforms with a human face. He enunciated this at the 1992 Tirupati session of the Congress Party, where he spoke of measures to ensure India's poor or "*daridranarayan*" as he put it, were not left behind in the reformist spree. At a meeting of the National Development Council, he sent a chit to his old friend and then deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, Pranab Mukherjee, on whether allocations for rural development schemes could be substantially increased. With Mukherjee's support, the money outlay for these schemes

was more than doubled and new schemes like free midday meals for school-going children launched to spread literacy. Soon afterwards, in his address to the US Congress, he expressed his reservation over the feeling that capitalism had triumphed as the Soviet Union had collapsed. He rejected Francis Fukuyama's "end of history" argument and expressed his worry about the plight of the poor.

Then came December 6, 1992, Rao's moment of realpolitik truth. The right-wing BJP which had been trying to bump up its support base in the Hindi heartland, badly mauled by Rajiv Gandhi in the 1980s, had launched the Ram Mandir movement. Its culmination was the arrival of a huge mob at Ayodhya which demolished the old Babri Masjid. Rao, had to resolve the crisis which broke out in the wake of that fateful event. According to Narendra, the PM and his Cabinet swiftly moved to dismiss the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh and scotch the riots which broke out in the wake of the Masjid's destruction. However, the damage had been done. Was Rao misled into letting the *kar sevaks* or volunteers gather at Ayodhya? Did he believe that a dose of masterly inactivity would make the headache go away? No one really knows. Narendra quotes him as saying: "he told me more than once that he was particularly saddened by the betrayal of promises (that no penultimate action on Ayodhya would be taken) by L.K. Advani and Atal Behari Vajpayee".

History will judge whether the reformer PM erred or faltered. However, history will always remember P.V. Narasimha Rao as the man who changed India forever.

*The writer is a senior journalist*



**INDIA'S TIPPING POINT: THE VIEW FROM 7 RACE COURSE ROAD**  
By **S. NARENDRA**  
Bloomsbury  
pp. 210; ₹699

## TALE OF TWO OR MORE DELHIS CINEMATIC, BUT INEXACT



Ankit Rath

review

I found myself wondering how many Delhis had slipped through the cracks of history, how many still hovered like ghosts trapped under the surface of the indistinguishable palimpsest that constituted the city, waiting to be freed and to reveal themselves in brief flashes of immortality. *Half as old as time* — no, Delhi was older than time," says William Rhodes, one of the protagonists of the book. "Enjoy your Delhi. Someday this too will be in the past," echoes a reverberating response.

To bring to life this city as an experience is, perhaps, what Aishwarya Jha attempted to do, within the

narrative she weaves. *The Scent of Fallen Stars* is a striking debut and an unputdownable read. Jha tells the story of two people, Will and Aria, and of two Delhis, about 23 years apart. A complex narrative then begins to draw itself through constantly shifting timelines, perspectives, and people. The author employs a mix of Urdu, Hindi, and a few varieties of English, as well as highly detailed and descriptive prose to paint a picture of bustling life in India. Her style bears a resemblance to that of Alka Joshi's (author of *The Jaipur Trilogy* of books) and possibly has been inspired by the same, giving

the book, replete with visual cues, a cinematic appeal. A handful of characters appearing, disappearing, and reappearing throughout the book are what, or rather who, drive the narrative, and the same stands true for the city of Delhi. For each character, the city takes on a



**THE SCENT OF FALLEN STARS**  
By **AISHWARYA JHA**  
Penguin Viking  
pp. 376, ₹599

different appearance: to one, it is a way of evading a certain past, to another, a puzzle waiting to be solved, its pieces all scattered. Yet many of its facades do not get the spotlight; they remain in the minds of the secondary characters, many of whom often forget to exist. Delhi remains the only anchor to the chaos that seems to permeate into the plot as the pages turn.

*The Scent of Fallen Stars* is the story of "[a mother] and [a daughter]" and the many forms of love" and an unending search for the self. The book thus takes on a philosophical appearance, almost as if it intends to unravel and lay bare the mysteries of the world. Consequently, the scope of the book expands and shrinks too frequently and too rapidly, and it begins to appear confused. The ornamentally embellished exterior becomes too heavy for the tenuous internal structures to hold; the structural integrity of the narrative is

compromised and it runs the risk of imploding. A clear agenda seems to be absent. *L'art pour l'art*, some may argue. But they must understand that even "art for art's sake" is an agenda in itself, for it is a defiance.

Despite these limitations, Jha's *The Scent of Fallen Stars* has potential. The themes and tropes as portrayed in the book — a quest for meaning, learning the various forms of love, etc. — are better suited to an audio-visual or filmic form. With a few minor changes, the book would make for a compelling base for the screenplay of a commercial film, or even an audiobook, as it already makes many Bollywood references. Such a tale of dedication, love, and undying resilience, as has been tested by time, is sure to resonate with the admirers of the genre.

*Ankit Rath is the founder of The Biblioraptor and a PhD scholar*



## IN OTHER NEWS

Writer and actor from New York City **Eboni Booth** has won the 2024 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for her work, *Primary Trust*. She is currently a playwrighting fellow at Juilliard. Booth is known for *Daredevil* (2015), *Come Play* (2020) and *We Were the Lucky Ones* (2024). *Primary Trust* is a stage play that tells the story of Kenneth, a bookstore worker who

embarks on a journey of self-discovery. After being laid off from his long-time job, he considers applying for a new one at the Primary Trust Bank. The play premiered Off-Broadway at the Laura Pels Theatre. The production was directed by Knud Adams. William Jackson Harper won an Obie Award for distinguished performance, and it was nominated for Outstanding Play by the Lucille Lortel Awards.



Aloke Roy Chowdhury

review

In some ways the back story of this novel is as intriguing as the novel itself. It is an unfinished book and the author wanted it to be destroyed.

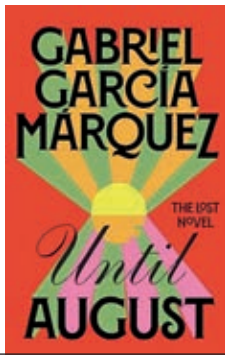
Gabriel Garcia Marquez, one of the world's greatest story tellers, died in 2014. Ten years after his death his children decided to publish *Until August*. This was against their father's express wishes. It is now left to the readers to deter-

mine if the action of the children is an act of betrayal. It must be said that they examined all the drafts of the novel, carefully edited the text and what we have now is perhaps an imperfect work of the master: moments of sheer brilliance with patches of the banal. From this reviewer's perspective, it is much better to have the book than not. It is not one of Marquez's masterpieces but we can feel the stamp of

the author in the texture of the writing. It is also the only book by Marquez in which the protagonist is a woman. Ana Magdalena Bach is in search of experiences which would enrich and later haunt her. But she is not afraid to challenge long-held values of the male dominated world and ready to take the consequences.

Every year on 16 August Ana Magdalena, a middle-aged woman, travels from the city to an unnamed island by ferry to lay a bunch of gladioli on her mother's grave in an unkempt cemetery on a hilltop. Perhaps, Ana wonders, her mother chose this place for the spectacular view of island below. The island itself is poverty-stricken and Ana

Magdalena checks into a rundown hotel where she



**UNTIL AUGUST**  
By **GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ**  
Penguin Viking  
pp. 144, ₹799

has stayed every year. It is here that she has a passionate sexual encounter with an unknown stranger. In the morning, the stranger is gone leaving a twenty dollar bill between the pages of book she was reading. Ana searches in vain for the man who has left her shamed and humiliated.

Back home, her husband notices her changed personality. Ana, perhaps to rid herself of her guilt, forces her husband to confess to an act of infidelity. None of these actions have any clear motive and Ana would return to the island each year, lay the gladioli on her mother's grave and find a new partner for the night. Each of these experiences transforms Ana till she discovers why her

mother chose to be buried on that island. This, in brief outline, is the story.

The unevenness in the narration creeps into some of the encounters on the island. The descriptions are at times very ordinary, and no more than what we find in substandard romances. Here is one example: "She was astonished by the magician's mastery with which he removed her clothes, piece by piece..." What redeems the story is the study of the alienation at home and Ana's futile search for the men she met on the island only to discover that one of them had a deadly criminal past.

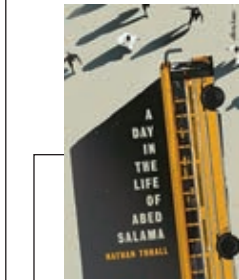
How Marquez wanted to end the novel we shall never know because his

battle with dementia began before he could reach the ending. Publishing the book instead of destroying it was a brave decision. It is for posterity to judge its worth. For the reviewer, reading a novel by Gabriel Garcia Marquez remains an exhilarating experience, even if there is the odd blemish.

On a slightly different note, Franz Kafka, in his will had asked his literary executor to destroy all his works including *The Trial* and *The Metamorphosis*. Thankfully his instructions were ignored, because Gabriel Garcia Marquez found his inspiration from Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*.

*The reviewer is a retired publisher*

## OFF THE SHELF



**A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ABED SALAMA: A PALESTINE STORY**  
By **NATHAN THRALL**  
Penguin  
pp. 250, ₹1,243  
Winner of 2024 Pulitzer Prize

Milad is five years old and excited for his school trip to a theme park on the outskirts of Jerusalem, but tragedy awaits: his bus is involved in a horrific accident. His father, Abed, rushes to the chaotic site, only to find Milad has already been taken away. Abed sets off on a journey to learn Milad's fate, navigating a maze of physical, emotional, and bureaucratic obstacles he must face as a Palestinian.

Interwoven with Abed's odyssey are the stories of Jewish and Palestinian characters whose lives and pasts unexpectedly converge — a kindergarten teacher and a mechanic who rescue children from the burning bus; an Israeli army commander and a Palestinian official at the scene of the crash; a settler paramedic; ultra-Orthodox emergency service workers; and two mothers who each hope to claim one severely injured boy.



**NIGHT WATCH**  
By **JAYNE ANNE PHILLIPS**  
Knopf  
pp. 304; ₹2,549  
Winner of 2024 Pulitzer Prize

In 1874, in the wake of the American Civil War; erasure, trauma and namelessness haunt everyone. Twelve-year-old ConaLee, the adult in her family for as long as she can remember, finds herself on a buckboard journey with her mother, Eliza, who hasn't spoken in more than a year. They arrive at the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum in West Virginia, delivered to the hospital's entrance by a war veteran who has forced himself

into their world. The omnipresent vagaries of war and race rise to the surface as we learn their story. In the asylum, they begin to find a new path. They get swept up in the life of the facility — the mysterious man they call the Night Watch; the orphan child called Weed; the fearsome woman who runs the kitchen; the remarkable doctor at the head of the institution.

In his ninetieth year, India's best loved writer, Ruskin Bond, looks back on his rich and varied life as an author. He talks about the experiences that have shaped him, the events that inspired his most famous books and stories, and how the mountains, solitude, and Pari Tibba, Fairy Hill (that he can see from his window) have influenced

his work. A book of wisdom, beauty, calm, and wonder.

Ruskin Bond is the author of several best-selling novels and collections of short stories, essays and poems. These include *The Room on the Roof* (winner of the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize), *A Flight of Pigeons*, *The Night Train at Deoli*, *Time Stops at Shamli*, *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* (winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award), *Angry River*, *The Blue Umbrella*, *Rain in the Mountains*, *Roads to Mussorie*, *A Little Night Music*, *Tigers for Dinner*, *Tales of Fosterganj*, and *A Gathering of Friends*.

Ruskin Bond was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1999, a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Delhi government in 2012 and the Padma Bhushan in 2014.





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

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**8**

# MIX & MATCH

## Iyer shines before disciplined Mumbai restrict KKR to 157/7

**Kolkata, Nov 11:** Venkatesh Iyer stood out with a 21-ball 42 before a disciplined Mumbai Indians bowling unit restricted Kolkata Knight Riders to 157 for seven in the IPL, here on Saturday.

In reply, openers Ishan Kishan and Rohit Sharma were off the blocks from the word go and touched the half-century mark in just 30 balls. Kishan's quickfire 38 off 19 balls was well supported by India captain Sharma's calculative knock (17, 18b) as Mumbai posted 62 in 6 overs without any loss.

Earlier, battling a strained hamstring, Iyer lifted KKR after their worst start of the season with his counter-attacking knock after MI won a good toss following a late start because of rain.

The highlight of the left-hander's innings was the way he hit Jasprit Bumrah for a six and two fours.

Having missed 11 matches because of a finger injury, Nitish Rana made a 23-ball 33 in a key partnership with Iyer before getting run out.

But Mumbai bounced back well with leg-spinner Piyush Chawla returning 2/38 from his three overs, taking the two key wickets of Iyer and Andre Russell (24 off 14 balls; 2x4, 2x6).

Russell was looking in the mood and his wicket against the run of play denied KKR some extra runs.

Bumrah (2/39 from four overs) ended his splendid spell by dismissing Rinku Singh for a 12-ball 20.

On a tacky wicket that remained under covers for three days owing to persistent rain in the city, KKR had their worst start of the season and lost their openers — Phil Salt (6) and Sunil Narine (0) — in seven balls.

After being hit for a first-ball six, Nuwan Thushara dismissed Salt with a slower one and Bumrah flummoxed Narine with a delivery that angled away but swung in late to rattle his off-stump. — PTI



Venkatesh Iyer of Kolkata Knight Riders plays a shot against Mumbai Indians in Kolkata on Saturday. — AP

### SCOREBOARD

**Kolkata Knight Riders:** Phil Salt c Kamboj b Thushara 6, Sunil Narine b Bumrah 0, Venkatesh Iyer c Yadav b Chawla 42, Shreyas Iyer b Kamboj 7, Nitish Rana run out 33, Andre Russell c Kamboj b Chawla 24, Rinku Singh c Ishan Kishan b Bumrah 20, Ramandeep Singh not out 17, Mitchell Starc not out 2. Extras (lb-3, w-3) 6. **Total (For 7 wickets in 16 overs) 157.**

**Fail of wickets:** 1-6, 2-10, 3-40, 4-77, 5-116, 6-125, 7-148.

**Bowling:** Nuwan Thushara 3-0-31-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-39-2, Anshul Kamboj 3-0-24-1, Hardik Pandya 3-0-32-0, Piyush Chawla 3-0-28-2.

**Mumbai Indians were 62/0 in 6 overs. (scores incomplete)**

### ACTION TODAY

**RCB VS DC**  
**FROM 7.30 PM, LIVE ON STAR SPORTS**

ORANGE	
<b>Virat Kohli,</b> RCB	<b>634</b>
<b>Ruturaj Gaikwad,</b> CSK	<b>541</b>
<b>Travis Head,</b> SRH	<b>533</b>
PURPLE	
<b>Jasprit Bumrah,</b> MI	<b>20</b>
<b>Harshal Patel,</b> PBKS	<b>20</b>
<b>Varun Chakravarthy,</b> KKR	<b>16</b>

### Short takes

#### Ferreira rues why RR still not in playoffs

With the sheer momentum they had in the first half of IPL 2024, Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Donovan Ferreira said on Saturday the team should have qualified for the playoffs by now but with three more games still remaining, the side had a great chance to make the top-two. The Royals, who were leading the IPL table till just a few days back, have slipped to second spot following two consecutive defeats and would be desperate to get back to winning ways when they take on defending champion Chennai Super Kings here on Sunday.

"We should have already qualified for the playoffs by now. But, the IPL is a long tournament, and obviously, the second half is important," said Ferreira.

#### Gill believes GT can make it to last leg

Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill is optimistic about sneaking into the IPL play-offs, even though odds are heavily against them despite the 35-run win over Chennai Super Kings here.

The win lifted GT from the bottom of the table to the eighth spot. They have 10 points from 12 games, while CSK remained fourth with 12 points.

"The chances of us qualifying was 0.1 or 1 per cent. I think all of us, all 25-30 of us, believe that we can still make it into the play-offs.

"Because I have seen miracles happen with this team in the past couple of years and we all do believe in that," Gill said in the post-match press conference on Friday night.

# Dhoni's last dance in Chennai?

**C. SANTHOSH KUMAR**  
**CHENNAI, MAY 11**

As the clock ticks towards the death overs of a Chennai Super Kings innings, anticipation grips the stadium like a feverish crescendo. For the delirious fans gathered, the true essence of the match begins only when their icon M.S. Dhoni strides onto the pitch. It's not just an entry; it's a blockbuster event in itself, marked by the pulsating beats of 'mass' Tamil songs. To immortalise the moment, thousands of mobile

phones are hoisted high, their cameras capturing every Instagram-worthy angle of Dhoni's walk into the middle. In this frenzy, the departure of a fellow CSK teammate barely registers.

This ritual has become a customary scene across the country this IPL season as fans fervently believe it's Dhoni's last dance. As Super Kings take on the Rajasthan Royals in their final home game at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium, emotions will run high. This Sunday afternoon match under the swelter-

### ACTION TODAY

**CSK VS RR**  
**FROM 3.30 PM, LIVE ON STAR SPORTS**

ing sun could be their last chance to see Dhoni in action, especially if CSK fail to secure a playoff spot. However, if they do and win the Eliminator in Ahmedabad, the Chennai fans will have another opportunity in the

Qualifier 2. After a recent defeat to Gujarat Titans, where another top-order collapse cost them dearly, Chennai need a quick turnaround to stay in the playoff race. Meanwhile, the Royals will be aiming to solidify their top-two spot, as their qualification is almost certain.

The defending champions have been inconsistent this season due to frequent changes in the playing XI caused by injuries and player unavailability. The absence of Matheesha Pathirana and Mustafizur Rahman has weakened their bowling attack.

Captain Ruturaj Gaikwad seems unsure about his spinners as Ravindra Jadeja didn't complete his overs and Moeen Ali wasn't utilised against Gujarat. Despite being known for their spin dominance, CSK appear to be adopting a different strategy.

Royals, on the other hand, will rely on their spin duo of Ravichandran Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal. Ashwin, who picked up three wickets in the last match after a slow start to the season, will be eager to perform on his home turf.



RR's Riyan Parag trains in Chennai on Saturday. — SANJAY KISHORE

### MEN'S | WRESTLING

## AMAN, SUJEET ONE WIN AWAY FROM OLYMPICS QUOTAS

**Istanbul, May 11:** Deepak Punia was eliminated from the Paris Olympic Games qualification race following his crushing first-round defeat but young Aman Sehrawat and Sujeet Kalkal got closer to securing quotas by reaching the semifinals at the World Qualifiers, here Saturday. No Indian male wrestler has yet qualified for the Games and this is the last chance to secure berths.

Aman, the U23 world champion and also the senior Asian Championship title winner, was expected to put up a strong show and the 20-year-old did not disappoint. He logged points comfortably in both his bouts, winning 10-4 against Georgi Valentinov Vangelov before overpowering Ukraine's Andrii Yatsenko.

Yatsenko was quick but Aman proved too strong for him. Locked several times in arm-locks, Aman found ways to attack his rival's right leg and converted them into take down moves. He won by technical superiority, without conceding a single point against the Ukrainian. — PTI

## Neeraj finishes second best

**Doha, May 11:** Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra vowed to go one step ahead in the next Diamond League meeting after finishing a close second during the Doha leg here.

Chopra finished second at the Doha Diamond League as his big final effort of 88.36m fell short by just two centimeters of Jakub Vadlejch's winning effort on Friday night.

The 26-year-old Chopra trailed the veteran Czech — who won the title with his third throw of 88.38m — throughout the competition.

Chopra, taking part in his first competition of the season, made a last ditch effort but the Indian superstar failed to defend the title.

Two-time world champion Anderson Peters took the third sport with a throw measuring 86.62m.

"The most important competition for me this year is Paris Olympics, but Diamond League meetings are important too. This was the opener for me this season, I finished second with a narrow two centimetre margin but next time I will try to draw far and try to win," Chopra said.

The next Diamond League meeting which has men's javelin as a discipline will be held in Paris on July 7.

Chopra also thanked the



Neeraj Chopra reacts after an attempt in the men's javelin throw during the Diamond League athletics meet at the Qatar Sports Club Stadium in Doha on Friday. — AP

Indian diaspora in Qatar for supporting him.

"The support I am getting from the Indian people here in Qatar is always amazing, there aren't words enough for me to thank them for their support.

"Maybe in some years the Indian will throw really far! I feel really proud that I am an Indian."

At each DL meeting, athletes are awarded 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1 points for rank-

ing first to to eighth respectively. The top six javelin throwers will compete in the Diamond League Finals in Brussels on September 13-14 and the winner will lift the DL champion's trophy.

### HOMEcoming

Meanwhile, Chopra's presence will turn the National Federation Cup, starting Sunday, into a high-profile domestic competition though sever-

al top athletes have decided to skip the four-day Senior Championships in Bhubaneswar.

The 26-year-old Chopra will be competing in a domestic event for the first time in three years, after featuring in the 2021 edition of the same event. It will also be the first time that Chopra will compete in India after winning a historic gold in Tokyo Olympics in 2021. — PTI

## ANDERSON TO RETIRE AFTER LORD'S TEST

**London, May 11:** Legendary pacer James Anderson on Saturday announced that the first Test against the West Indies this summer will be his final appearance for England, bringing down the curtains on an illustrious career spanning over 20 years. Regarded as one of the greatest bowlers of all times, the 41-year-old is England's leading wicket-takers and is one of only three bowlers to take over 700 Test scalps. "Hi everyone. Just a note to say that the first Test of the summer at Lord's will be my last Test," Anderson wrote on his Instagram.

"It's been an incredible 20 years representing my country, playing the game I've loved since I was a kid. I'm going to miss walking out for England so much. But I know the time is right to step aside and let others realise their dreams just like I got to, because there is no greater feeling," he added.

Anderson's announcement comes after England red-ball coach Brendon McCullum conveyed to the seamer that they are looking at the future, with an eye on the Ashes 2025-26 in Australia. — PTI

## City sink Fulham to go top of table

**London, May 11:** Manchester City swept to the top of the Premier League as Josko Gvardiol's double inspired a vital 4-0 victory against Fulham on Saturday.

Pep Guardiola's side are two wins away from lifting an unprecedented fourth successive English title after a commanding display at Craven Cottage. Gvardiol put City ahead early on before Phil Foden's 25th goal in all competitions this season increased their lead.

By the time Gvardiol netted his second, City were strolling to three priceless points on a sunlit afternoon on the banks of the River Thames.

Julian Alvarez underlined City's superiority with a late penalty after

Fulham's Issa Diop was sent off for fouling the Argentine.

Now two points clear of second-placed Arsenal, City will look for a favour from their arch rivals Manchester United, who host the Gunners on Sunday.

If Arsenal fail to win at Old Trafford, City will be crowned champions if they beat Tottenham on Tuesday or West Ham in their final game on May 19. "Gvardiol's goals were absolutely unexpected. He is unbelievable with both feet," Guardiola said.

Regardless of Arsenal's remaining results against United and Everton, City know two more victories will make it a remarkable six titles in the last seven seasons. — AFP



Manchester City's Josko Gvardiol (left) celebrates after scoring during their English Premier League match against Fulham in London on Saturday. — AP



glam

Kareena gets court notice

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# delhi THE AGE

SUNDAY | 12 MAY 2024

matinee

Samantha's priority is her production house

16 >>



## CELEBRITIES 'TICKED OFF'

Several Hollywood celebrities are 'tick talking' about the symptoms and painful effects of Lyme disease, but some netizens are busy labelling it as the 'rich white person's disease'



ANDREA CUTINHO

Looks like several Hollywood celebrities and political leaders are getting 'ticked off' of being in the 'lyme-light.' From Gen-Z crush Justin Bieber to Victoria's Secret angel Bella Hadid, vocal queen Shania Twain, record breaker Alec Baldwin and US President George W Bush have all been at the receiving end of tick bites that cause Lyme disease. Lyme disease is a tick-borne illness caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* which is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected ticks found in domestic animals, deer, rodents, and birds. While celebrities are busy 'tick talking' on social media and seeking prayers and good wishes from fans, netizens are accusing the 'rich white and famous' of faking the 'non-existent' illness to generate attention and clout.



Alec Baldwin

### TICK TROUBLE

- **Hollywood A-listers** — Bella Hadid, Justin Bieber, Kelly Osbourne, Alec Baldwin, Shania Twain, and George W Bush have all suffered from Lyme disease (aka 'rich white persons' disease)
- **Lyme disease is caused** by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*. It is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected ticks
- **Symptoms of Lyme disease** include high fever, chills, headache, bullseye-shaped rash, muscle pain and fatigue

Cases of Lyme disease in India are found in Himachal Pradesh, UP and the North East

### THE LYME EPIDEMIC

Lyme disease is transmitted to human beings through the bite of an infected black-legged tick. It is the most common vector-borne disease in the United States. According to Dr Mohan Kumar Singh, Senior Consultant – Internal Medicine, Marengo Asia Hospital, Gurugram, "Studies indicate that Lyme disease is more common in the northern temperate hemisphere with white non-Hispanic people accounting for 97% of cases. Particularly in grassy and forested regions, black legged ticks prefer damp, humid climates." Approximately 4.76, 000 people are diagnosed with Lyme disease each year in the United States which explains the beeline of Hollywood celebrities catching the illness. In India, the disease is fairly uncommon, affecting only 3,000-5,000 people a year. According to Dr. Namita Jaggi, hairperson-Lab services and Infection Control & Chief- Education & Research, Artemis Hospitals "India being a tropical climate country has less prevalence of the disease as compared to the US and Britain."

PHOTO: INSTA



Bella Hadid during her Lyme treatment treatment



INDIA BEING A TROPICAL CLIMATE COUNTRY HAS LESS PREVALENCE OF LYME DISEASE AS COMPARED TO THE US AND BRITAIN."

— Dr NAMITA JAGGI, Chairperson, Lab services and Infection control & Chief-Education and Research, Artemis Hospitals



Justin Bieber announces his Lyme disease diagnosis on Instagram



## Gambhir praises SRK

Unlike Sanjiv Goenka, LSG team owner, who crossed all limits with his team captain after his team lost the match, Gautam Gambhir says SRK is great team owner

While the ugly incident involving Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) owner Sanjiv Goenka and KL Rahul, captain of the IPL franchise, continues to stay among the headlines, Gautam Gambhir, mentor and former captain of the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) has come out with a heartwarming testimony about the team's owner and Bollywood idol Shahrugh Khan. "I have a fabulous relationship with him [SRK]. For me, he is the best owner I have worked with. And the reason is not just that he is humble, he is pretty grounded," Gambhir said on Sportskeeda.

"I don't think he has ever interfered in crick-eting matters and it is a very big thing for some-one like me because you get the freedom of decision-making. You have the freedom and trust that whatever decision I take, I know he's going to back me," the cricketer-politician added.

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## WALL OF FAME



TURN TO PAGE 10



THIS IS SURPRISING BECAUSE HIS UNCLE PAWAN KALYAN IS OPPOSING THE YSRCP PARTY AND IS A STAUNCH CRITIC OF JAGAN MOHAN REDDY



## ALLU ARJUN'S VISIT TO YSRCP CANDIDATE'S HOUSE RAISES EYEBROWS

M. SRINIVAS

THE ASIAN AGE

The sudden arrival of popular film actor Allu Arjun along with his wife Sneha Reddy to the residence of YSRCP Nandyal Assembly constituency candidate Shilpa Ravindra Kishore Reddy on Saturday surprised everyone in Kurnool. Thousands of fans came to Reddy's residence to see him. As a large number of people assembled in front of Reddy's house, the police had to come to the rescue of Allu Arjun to safely accompany him into the house.

A group of fans welcomed him with a huge garland. Fans had to jostle with each other outside the house to see the actor. A few minutes later, Arjun and Reddy waved to the crowd from the balcony.

The sudden visit of Arjun to Nandyal and to meet the YSRCP candidate left everyone surprised at a time when his uncle and Jana Sena Chief Pawan Kalyan is contesting from Pithapuram Assembly constituency. He and YS Jagan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

In India, cases have been reported in certain areas like Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra." Dr Namita adds that other factors such as outdoor activities, and exposure to tick habitats may also play a role in the observed variations in the incidence of Lyme disease.

### DOUBTS OVER CLOUT

Celebrities have caused quite a stir on social media by disclosing their Lyme disease diagnosis. This has left many ordinary people scratching their heads in disbelief, wondering why the illness seems to disproportionately affect the rich and famous rather than people of all races. In August 2023, model Bella Hadid and her mother, Yolanda Hadid, faced severe trolling on Instagram, accused of feigning the illness for sympathy. Yolanda Hadid Foster has been open about her struggles with Lyme disease, frequently sharing images of her treatment on Instagram. However, this prompted a relentless barrage of criticism. Even her fellow cast members from The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills, including Lisa Rinna, publicly questioned her authenticity with the illness.

Singer Justin Bieber faced backlash on social media, accused of exaggerating his illness for sympathy and the changes in his appearance attributed to the disease. On the other hand, Shania Twain has spoken about her 20-year battle with Lyme disease, which has affected her voice, caused blackouts, and led to debilitating mental health struggles. Dr Sunil Rana, Associate Director and Head-Internal Medicine, at Asian Hospital, Faridabad says that Lyme disease can lead to long-term deformities. "If left untreated, the infection can spread to the joints and the nervous system, leading to joint deformities," he says. Dr Sunil adds that the common signs of symptoms

## CELEBRITIES 'TICKED OFF'

PHOTO: AFP



Former US President George W Bush

are an expanding red rash which appears at the sight of a tick bite which is non-painful, fever, loss of face agility, joint pains, palpitations, tingling in the arms and legs, and headache which makes it hard for early diagnosis.

### LYME DISEASE TREATMENT

The treatment for Lyme disease typically involves antibiotics, which are prescribed based on the stage of the infection and its severity. In the early stages, when the infection is localised and the symptoms are mild, oral

### TICK TALK

- Nearly 4.76 lakh people are diagnosed with Lyme disease each year in the US (Centre For Disease Control and Prevention)
- Patients with Lyme disease are mostly white women living in affluent areas (NIHR research)
- India witnesses only 3,000-5,000 cases of Lyme disease per year in areas like Haryana, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and UP
- Lyme disease is uncommon in India due to varied clinical manifestations and low index of suspicion among clinicians (Medical Journal Armed Forces India)

antibiotics such as doxycycline, amoxicillin, or cefuroxime axetil are commonly prescribed for a period of 2 to 4 weeks. Dr. Neha Mishra, Consultant, Infectious Diseases, Manipal Hospital, Old Airport Road, Bengaluru says, "Maintaining a high index of suspicion for patients with a travel history and who have developed symptoms of Lyme disease is essential so that the disease can be diagnosed on time. Lyme disease can be treated by the simplest of antibiotics like Tetracyclines and Cephalosporins." One of the main symptoms of Lyme disease includes a bull-eye skin rash which occurs near the tick bite.

Dr Kanu Verma, Consultant-Dermatologist & Cosmetologist, Aakash Healthcare, New Delhi says, "One should consult a physician and dermatologist to mitigate Lyme disease. Depending on the rash, oral antibiotics, anti-allergens and local creams



Yolanda Hadid underwent surgery due to Lyme disease

**IF LYME DISEASE IS LEFT UNTREATED, THE INFECTION CAN SPREAD TO THE JOINTS AND THE NERVOUS SYSTEM, LEADING TO JOINT DEFORMITIES."**

— Dr SUNIL RANA,

Associate Director, Head-Internal Medicine, Asian Hospital, Faridabad



**MAINTAINING A HIGH INDEX OF SUSPICION FOR PATIENTS WITH A TRAVEL HISTORY AND SYMPTOMS OF LYME DISEASE IS ESSENTIAL SO THAT THE DISEASE CAN BE DIAGNOSED ON TIME."**

— Dr NEHA MISHRA,

Consultant (Infectious Diseases), Manipal Hospital, Bengaluru



Justin Bieber

PHOTO-PTI

are prescribed by the doctors." Despite the questions raised regarding the authenticity and veracity of the illness, Lyme disease is a very real condition that demands immediate medical

attention. The perception that the disease is "non-existent" is a misnomer, as regions like Britain, Europe, and China continue to grapple with its horrors. In India, the lack of Lyme disease diagnosis is also attributed to varied clinical manifestations and a low index of suspicion among clinicians, resulting in many Indians being misdiagnosed. Individuals with Lyme disease need to receive prompt treatment to prevent the infection from progressing to later stages. Supportive care such as pain management, rest, and adequate hydration may be recommended to help alleviate symptoms and support the body's healing process.



Kelly Osborne (PHOTO-AP)

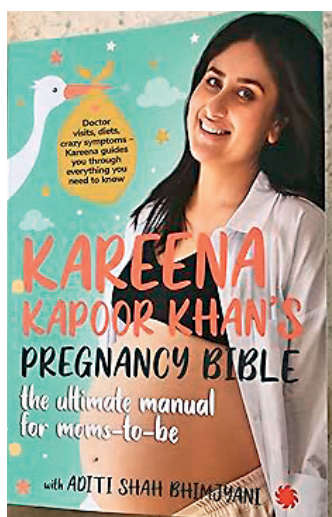


# KAREENA IN LEGAL TROUBLE; GETS HC NOTICE

For using 'Bible' in her pregnancy memoir title

✓ The Madhya Pradesh High Court has sent Kareena Kapoor Khan a notice over a suit filed against her book, *Kareena Kapoor Khans Pregnancy Bible*. The actress reportedly received the warning after an advocate petitioned the court to have the word "Bible" removed from the title of her book.

Following the birth of her second son, Jeh, in July 2021, the actress released the book. Kareena has stated that the book is a personal account of what she went through both physically and emotionally during her pregnancy, referring to it as her third kid.



THE NOTICE WAS SENT IN RESPONSE TO COUNSEL CHRISTOPHER ANTHONY'S REQUEST TO FILE A LAWSUIT AGAINST KAREENA AND THE BOOK'S SELLERS BY A SINGLE-JUDGE BENCH OF JUSTICE GURPAL SINGH AHLUWALIA OF THE MADHYA PRADESH HIGH COURT. THE ACTOR-WRITER HAS BEEN

ASKED BY THE COURT TO EXPLAIN WHY SHE USED THE PHRASE "BIBLE" IN HER MEMOIR.



RUTH FILED SUIT IN 2022. DURING A FACEBOOK LIVESTREAM PRESS CONFERENCE WITH HER LAWYERS, SHE CLAIMED THAT THE BACKSTREET BOYS MEMBER RAPED HER IN 2001 WHEN SHE WAS 17 YEARS OLD.

## 'Factually impossible'

Nick Carter is retaliating against those who have accused him of sexual assault

✓ The 44-year-old Backstreet Boys singer filed a motion seeking a hearing and asking the court to grant him a summary judgement on Shannon Ruth's claims "for sexual battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and negligent infliction of emotional distress," according to documents obtained by *People*.

"In fact, the only 'evidence' of harm Ruth has produced is an undated photograph of what appears to be a bruise on a person's arm." Citing Ruth's deposition, the complaint said, "Ruth testified that her friend Eleanor saw her bruise and took this picture."



# IT'S OK TO HAVE A BAD DAY: HARRY

The Duke delivers mental health message with students; Sussexes spend three days in Nigeria

✓ The Duke and Duchess of Sussex arrived in Nigeria on Friday for a three-day private tour. They will meet with wounded troops and visit local organisations, according to authorities.

The Sussexes are visiting Nigeria as "part of the Invictus community," according to Air Vice-Marshal Abidemi Marquis, head of sports for the Nigerian Defence Headquarters, during a media briefing on Thursday. Harry spoke to students and educators about the need of breaking the stigma surrounding mental health and acknowledging how one feels.

"Every single person in this room, the youngest, the oldest, every single person has mental health. So therefore, you have to look after yourself to be able to look after other people. And other people have to be able to look after themselves, to look after you. That's the way it works. And there is no shame to be able to acknowledge that today is a bad day, OK?"

DURING A VISIT TO A SCHOOL ON THE FIRST DAY OF THEIR 72-HOUR TRIP TO NIGERIA, PRINCE HARRY LEFT PUPILS IN TEARS AS HE SPOKE ABOUT 'MISSING LOVED ONES' AND MEGHAN ADVISED THEM NOT TO 'SUFFER IN SILENCE'.

OFF THE WEB



POSTCARD PERFECT

Priyanka Chopra, who is on holiday in Ireland, posted a postcard-worthy photo on Instagram. The photo, taken in Dublin, Ireland, shows Priyanka Chopra beaming joyfully with her husband Nick Jonas and daughter Malti Marie. The trio can be seen smiling as they stand in a lush green environment. "My angels," Priyanka Chopra captioned the image.





# ENTHUSIASM IS KEY TO SUCCESS!


**OSCAR CAINER**
**YOUR HOROSCOPE  
FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING**
**12 MAY 2024**
**ARIES**

**March 21 - April 20**

**Y**ou're feeling energised and galvanised. If there are rules that need to be broken, you're ready. If there are conventions that deserve to be questioned, you're on the case. Yet there are some forces that can't be pushed. And although your ruler's presence in your sign is giving you strength, you're not a superhero. Be mindful about boundaries and barriers this week. Invest your energy where it will be most effective. As long as you try your best, and do whatever you can, you'll manage to do more than you think possible.

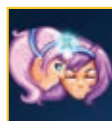
What does your heart desire and can you achieve it? For free audio and video forecasts visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**TAURUS**

**April 21-May 21**

**D**on't think love has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting tired." Mother Teresa wasn't referring to affairs of the heart. She was talking about the expansive love we feel for our fellow humans and our planet. With Venus, your ruler, in your sign, your compassionate nature is being enhanced. By demonstrating attributes like kindness and consideration you'll draw those qualities into your life. You're being gifted with the creativity to use them to heal yourself, and others. Do that, and it will be a good week.

View your challenges in a new light... and sort them! For free audio and video forecasts visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**GEMINI**

**May 22-June 22**

**D**o you really need to read your forecast for guidance on a decision you're trying to make? Can't you just flick a coin? The cosmos is clearly sending you lots of signs and signals... so you don't need me to interpret them... do you? OK. Since you're here, I'll tell you what I see! You already know the answer you think you're seeking. It's just you're not trusting yourself enough to act on it. The good news is that this week, as your ruler, Mercury, leaves its shadow, you'll find the confidence and clarity to start making real progress.

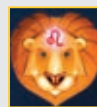
Will the dream you're chasing come true? Find out! For free audio and video forecasts visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**T**his week as Mercury leaves its shadow, new ways of thinking crystallise. In sport, people are encouraged to visualise the success they want to achieve. And we all know that we need to try to be the change we wish to see; and to treat others as we'd like them to treat us. All these concepts combine optimistic thinking with positive action. And as the Sun moves to converge with Uranus, then Jupiter, if we set ourselves goals, and have an enthusiastic attitude, the results will be inspirational.

**CANCER June 23-July 23**


**T**o err is human, and to forgive is divine." So, if you're going to move on from a difficult situation (which you don't feel you created) are you going to need to summon up some superpowers? Luckily, you're a sensitive Cancerian. Yet your natural compassion doesn't always seem to work in your favour. Sometimes, other people take advantage of your kindness. And that's when resentment can creep in. If you want to use your strengths to their best abilities this week, you need to be willing to let go. Forgiveness is key.

For great advice to guide you to a brighter future, check out your free audio and video forecasts. Visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**LEO**

**July 24-August 23**

**Y**ou're ruled by the Sun, the source of our light and power. If it didn't exist, we wouldn't exist. It occupies centre stage in our universe; and the other planets spin round it in a never-ending cycle. In your own way, you reflect its qualities in your life. When you're on form, you radiate. This week, like the planets rotating in a pattern, you're dealing with a set of familiar issues. You might doubt your ability to influence the outcome of one particular drama. But you're overlooking your natural resources. You can sort it out with style.

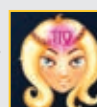
Live life to the max! For inspiring advice, check out your free audio and video forecasts. Visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**LIBRA**

**September 24-October 23**

**W**hen you've set out on an adventure, and challenges pop up, there's no point moaning. When you took those first steps along this particular route, you had a clear idea of what progress would entail. Unless, of course, you tricked yourself into thinking it would be easy. But if anyone's good at weighing up pros and cons, it's you. So, this week, if you find yourself dealing with a drama, don't berate yourself for putting yourself in this situation. Or worry. It's part of the process. If you relax, you'll find it leads to a great destination.

You've got so much to look forward to! Be inspired! Check out your free audio and video forecasts. Visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**VIRGO**

**August 24-September 23**

**Y**ou need to use your energy skillfully. There's no point exhausting yourself running down a hill when there's a way of effortlessly sliding down the slope. This week, as your ruler, Mercury moves out of its shadow, it brings insight and sharpens your intuition. You can use these gifts to apply a clever strategy to a situation that's been draining your enthusiasm. If you think cleverly, not only will you avoid an uphill struggle, you'll find a satisfying way forwards, that leads you on a path filled with helpful encounters, to success.

Change is possible! Get some valuable help. For free audio and video forecasts visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**SCORPIO**

**October 24-November 22**

**E**ven though the path ahead might not be completely clear, this week brings signs that the seeds you've planted are starting to sprout. A greater sense of certainty is growing. Still, there's no need to rush. If you continue in a relaxed way, and are thorough in your approach, you'll honour the work you've already put in. And nourish those seedlings. The results of your endeavours aren't going to manifest overnight. But knowing that you'll soon be reaping the fruits of your hard work should inspire you with the confidence to continue.

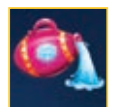
Nothing is hopeless. If you want positive news, check out your free audio and video forecasts. Visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**CAPRICORN**

**December 22-January 20**

**W**e often hear people proclaiming that a change is due. Usually, it's politicians. Or scientists. You're not particularly impressed by such statements. Experience has taught you that things tend to roll along in the same old way (despite the enthusiastic prognostications). Yet this week, don't dismiss an exciting suggestion. It could turn out to be realistic. Sometimes, delightful surprises come into our lives. And circumstances and patterns change. Not everything in your world is about to start afresh. But something is!

Solve problems. Ease troubles. Find solutions! For free audio and video forecasts visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**AQUARIUS**

**January 21-February 19**

**O**f course we all understand the need to be careful with our finances. Money is, so they say, a limited resource. Yet there are lots of other things we need to be careful about parting with. One of them, which we easily forget, is our power. Sometimes we don't even notice we've given it away. This week, as the Sun converges with your ruler, Uranus, it brings an inspirational way to redress an imbalance and reclaim an advantage. From your enhanced position you can orchestrate a change that benefits you, and others too.

I've got so much more to tell you. Great news awaits! For free audio and video forecasts visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**PISCES**

**February 20-March 20**

**I**llusionists might be able to look like they're producing something out of nothing. But they've got nothing on nature. How on earth does a tiny acorn ever become an oak tree? That's real magic for you! Its tricks might take a while, but they produce truly amazing (not to mention beautiful and useful) things. You haven't got a magic wand this week. But you don't need one. You can set a wonderful process in motion. And, as it unfolds over time, you'll experience a sense of satisfaction that makes your world a brighter place.

To find out how your life could change for the better, check out your free forecasts. Visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**SAGITTARIUS November 23-December 21**


**A**situation has slipped out of your control. It's disconcerting. But it's a blessing in disguise. The shift means you're no longer able to invest your precious energy into trying to preserve a precarious status quo. You didn't want to be the instigator of change. But, as you begin to assess the results, and the weight you've been carrying lessens, you'll realise that nothing's wrong. This week, as the Sun moves from a link with Uranus to convene with your ruler, it becomes clear that what's happening is more 'right' than you can imagine.

What's in the sky? Helpful planetary alignments! For free audio and video forecasts visit [infree.cainer.com](http://infree.cainer.com)

**WANT TO KNOW MORE?**

The late Jonathan Cainer's nephew Oscar, will bring you your weekly zodiac forecasts over the weeks and months to come. For more from Oscar, visit [cainer.com](http://cainer.com)



# WALL OF FAME

The incredible power of street art – graffiti, murals and illusionary 3D drawings have given many artists a voice to highlight socio-political satire and other pressing issues



The Street Art at Kannagi Nagar

ANDREA CUTINHO

Art speaks louder than words. The display of colourful spray paint, pale and bright hues and graphics on a wall have made passersby pause and ponder over the socio-political situation in the world. Throughout history, wall drawings and street art have served as a voice for the voiceless. From the stunning murals and carvings in the Ajanta-Ellora to buildings adorned with poetic protests by ancient Romans and Greeks. The visual medium grabs eyeballs. Today, wall artists are highlighting issues like mental health, sexual assault, animal cruelty, climate change, and societal hierarchies.

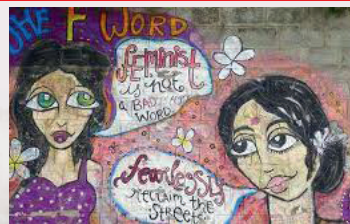
## ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS

Mental health, despite being as important as physical well-being, is often relegated to the sidelines. Those who speak out about their mental health are unfairly labelled as 'weak', 'sensitive', or 'attention-seekers.' For Karthikey Sharma, a Pune-based TEDx speaker, battling cancer twice didn't deter his pursuit for solace, comfort, and confidence in creating some of Pune's most celebrated street art and murals. He collaborated with acclaimed street artist Hanif Kureishi and the St+Art Foundation, to transform the narrative of Kannagi city in Chennai, once notorious for its crime, into a vibrant hub of art and culture. "Despite facing the debilitating tsunami, they rose, survived, and rebuilt their lives and we as artists managed to imbue the city with positivity through our street art," says Karthikey. Speaking about his non-profit campaign The #100wallcrawl Karthikey says that the main idea was to clean and paint the city which eventually progressed into themes of mental health.



Jas Charanjiva's Don't Mess With Me graffiti

## WOLVES OF WALL STREET



- **Banksy**, a pseudonymous street artist is famous for 'The Little Girl with the Balloon'
- **Daku**, a Delhi-based graffiti artist merges art, typography, and activism to highlight social and political issues
- **Yantr**, a pseudonymous graffiti artist from Delhi painted India's highest mural depicting animal conservation called 'Mission Leopard'

- **The Vayeda Brothers** are a young generation of Warli artists who painted a Warli mural in Delhi's Lodhi Art District
- **Nikhil Kapur and Chandni Mathur** from Hyderabad showcased a woman with the Superman logo had become viral for gender equality
- **Jheel Goradia**, a Mumbai-based street artist (#BreakingTheSilence) highlighted issues like assault, virginity and LGBTQIA+ rights
- **Jas Charanjiva**, a street artist created the 'Don't Mess with Me' art in the aftermath of the Nirbhaya gangrape case



Banksy's 'Girl with balloon' depicts social inequality and lost innocence

"Having battled anxiety and depression before my bout with cancer, I found solace in destigmatising mental health through my art," Karthikey says. Another movement that moved him was women's rights and autonomy in making decisions on abortion. Karthikey's Paper Planes provides art-based solutions to companies.

## FEMINISM THROUGH ART

According to The National Commission For Women, India received a whopping 28,811 complaints of crimes against women in 2023. Women are still shamed for wearing red lipstick, losing their virginity or being blamed for perpetuating sexual assault. Jheel Goradia, a Mumbai resident, who has a background in design, was moved by reports on sexual assaults and homophobia. She channelled her views through street art. Reflecting on her research into cases of gender dis-

parity and assault, she uncovered numerous instances where victims were silenced by societal stigma. Jheel says, "Bollywood resonates with both the educated and less formally educated, offering a universal platform for connection in our country." "My street art always featured catchy slogans and iconography of actors from Bollywood songs, albeit slightly altered to highlight the widespread issue of gender inequality," adds Jheel. The Jheels #BreakTheSilence campaign became famous. It showcased street art with Bollywood actors and catchy slogans that highlighted issues like rape, domestic violence and gender stereotypes. Jheel's art can be found in the suburbs of Andheri West and Bandra in Mumbai. "Graffiti and street art transcend barriers of class, creed, and gender, reaching all classes of society with its powerful message," adds Jheel, who works as a full-time graphic designer.

“MY STREET ART ALWAYS FEATURED CATCHY SLOGANS AND ICONOGRAPHY FROM BOLLYWOOD SONGS SLIGHTLY ALTERED TO HIGHLIGHT THE ISSUE OF GENDER INEQUALITY.”

— JHEEL GORADIA,  
graphic designer and illustrator

PHOTO: PRANAV GOHIL



## SUPERWO(MAN)

For Hyderabad-based urban art duo and founders of Hoozinc, Chandni Mathur and Nikhil Kapur, addressing gender issues and celebrating women's contributions was paramount. Their most renowned street art piece depicts a labouring woman sporting the Superman logo on her blouse, while their 'Portraits of a Woman' graffiti campaign aims to initiate dialogue by showcasing stylised portraits of women. Nikhil says, "Our piece, 'Superwoman' portrays an Indian woman in traditional attire, performing the everyday task of drying clothes on a wire. It symbolises the inherent strength and resilience of every woman, emphasising that no job is insignificant and deserves respect." Nikhil, who stresses on the significance of street art in providing a voice to social issues adds, "We firmly believe in the transformative power of art to spark conversations and drive change in society."

## THE TRAILBLAZERS

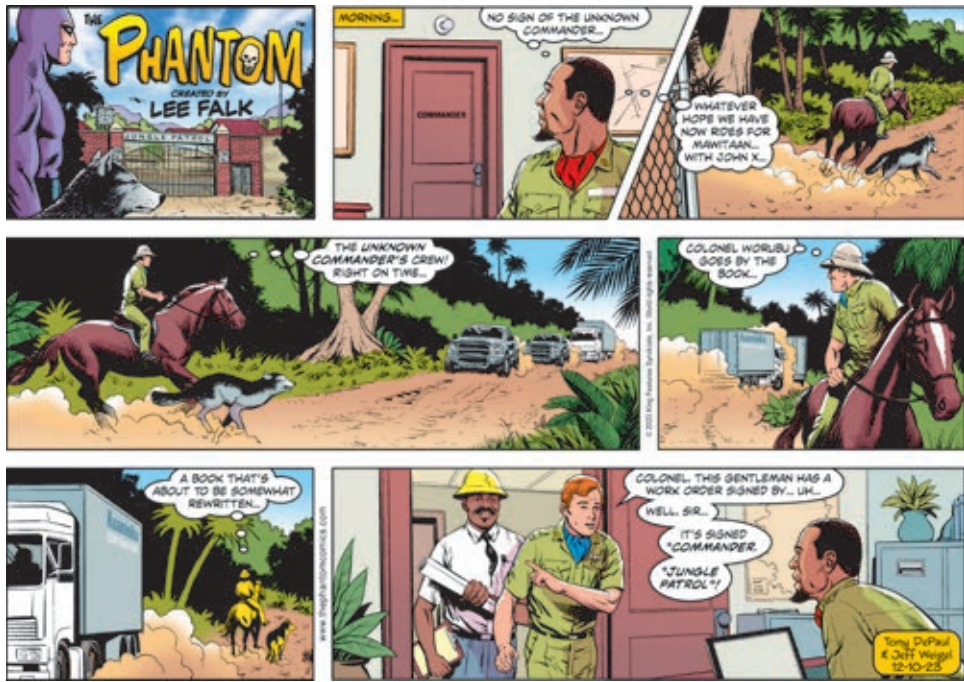
Numerous street, graffiti, and mural artists like Daku, Yantr, and Tyler, also known as India's Banksy, anonymously depict socio-political issues through their art. Despite the constant risk of arrest, vandalism charges, and public backlash for addressing sensitive topics, these artists remain undeterred, letting their actions speak volumes. Obtaining permission from local authorities, society residents, and government officials before spray painting a wall is crucial. Graffiti has a rich history as an art form used to shed light on social issues and combat injustice, dating back to the ancient Roman Empire. In modern times, it has served as a tool for protest and political expression in movements such as the Civil Rights movement, the 1968 student revolts, and anti-apartheid activism.



The famous street art by Anpu Varkey



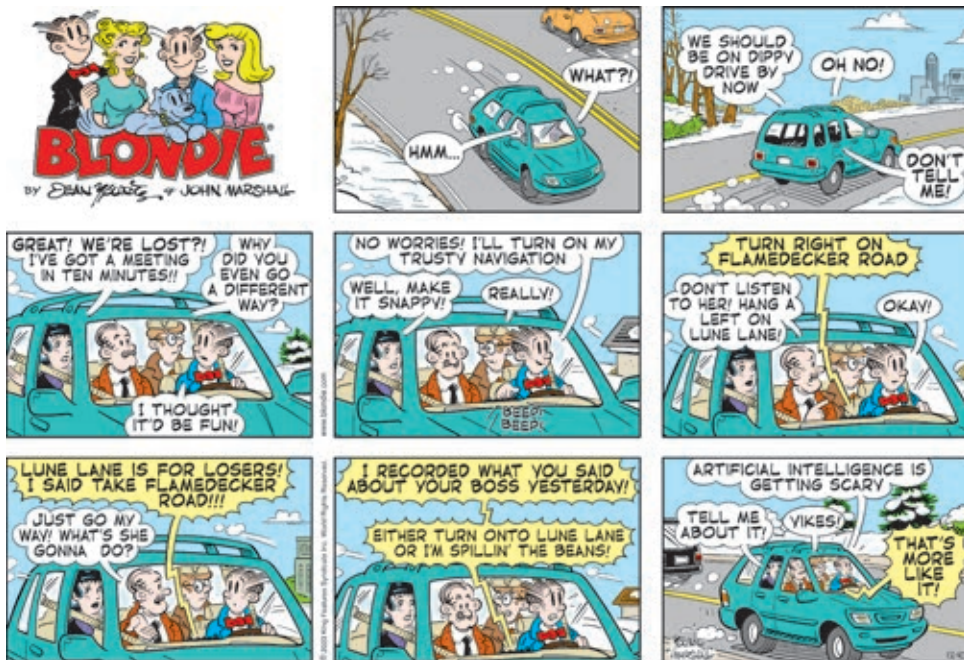
PHANTOM



GARFIELD



BLONDIE



FUNDAMENTALS SENJAM RAJ SEKHAR

Today's quiz is on chapels, churches and cathedrals across the world. Write with your suggestions, questions (with answers) to [senjam@gmail.com](mailto:senjam@gmail.com).

CHURCHES

1. If you visited the refectory of the Sant Maria delle Grazie church in Milan in Italy, what famous mural would you be able to see?
2. The Living Water Wayside Chapel is on the Guinness Book of World Records for the smallest chapel in the World. In which tourist location would you find this chapel?
3. The Sistine Chapel is known for Michael Angelo's classic 'The Last Judgement' which spans the entire ceiling and the wall behind the altar of Sistine Chapel. What was the role of a painter named Daniele de Volterra in the painting?
4. The construction of this church designed by Antoni Gaudi commenced in 1882 and remained uncompleted in 1926 till Gaudi's death. It is still under construction, reaching midpoint in 2010 and its anticipated completion year is 2026, the centenary of Gaudi's death. Which church?
5. The first church in India to be designated as a basilica has the mortal remains of St. Francis Xavier. Name this church in old Goa?
6. What is the essential difference between a church, cathedral and a basilica?
7. St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City which is regarded as the most magnificent church in Christendom is neither the Mother church or the Pope's official seat. Which church takes that

FUNDA OF THE WEEK

Why do 5117 people of 12 villages in the Kerameri mandal of Komaram Bheem district have two votes in the general elections? (Zunair Ghazia, Secunderabad)

ANSWERS:  
The 12 villages are subject of dispute between Telangana and Maharashtra, with the case pending in the Supreme Court. Maharashtra considers them to be the residents of Jivati taluk of Chandrapur district. The residents vote twice during Lok Sabha elections.

- honour?
8. What is special about the St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Church in Palayur in Kerala?
9. The magnificent St. Paul's Cathedral designed by Sir Christopher Wren sits on the highest point of the city of London. What is the name of the point?
10. Which Church is believed to be built on the site where Jesus Christ was crucified and also contains the place where Jesus was buried and resurrected?

ANYTHING GOES

1. Which animated character known for his extraordinary strength, courage, and intelligence lives in the fictional kingdom of Dholakpur? (Dr. Shanu Chandran, Kochi)
2. The writing system of this Asian country is known as quoc ngu which consists of 29 letters. Out of which, the 26 letters of the English alphabet (minus f,j,w and z) along with 7 modified letters using diacritics.

ANSWERS

1. The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci
2. Niagara Falls
3. He covered the genitalia in the painting on the instructions of some Church leaders and became known as the Breeches Painter
4. Basilica of Bom Jesus
5. Cathedral and Basilica are all churches. However, cathedral is a church which is the seat of a Bishop. A basilica is a church which has been granted the designation architectural or ecclesiastical considerations.
6. Sagrada Família in Barcelona
7. The Archbasilica of St. John Lateran
8. The Adyar Trophy in the Madras to traces its origin way back to 1st century version is Deepam Trophy.
9. Ludgate Hill
10. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem

ANYTHING GOES

1. Chhota Bheem
2. Vietnamese
3. Revenge bedtime procrastination.
4. Ahmedabad
5. Matthew Hayden
6. Connaught place or circus named after Prince Arthur, 1st Duke of Connaught and Stratford
7. Her Highness Sultan Jahan Begum of Bhopal.
8. The Adyar Trophy in the Madras to traces its origin way back to 1st century version is Deepam Trophy.