# THE ASIAN AGE

**LONDON MONDAY 13 MAY 2024** 



NATION 3

Modi has given India's entire wealth to 4-5 rich people: Priyanka



WORLD 6

Thousands of civilians flee N-E Ukraine after Russia presses a border assault

**DELHI AGE** 16

I am overwhelmed, enjoying it, as well as lying low: Aditi Rao Hydari on *Heeramandi*'s success



Vol. 31 No. 87 | 16 pages | £1.50

#### www.asianage.com



an event in New York on

#### **China overtakes US to be top trade** partner of India

New Delhi: China has emerged as the largest trading partner of India with \$118.4 billion two-way commerce in 2023-24, slightly edging past the United States, according to the data of economic think tank GTRI. The bilateral trade between India and the US stood at \$118.3 billion in 2023-24. Washington was the top trading partner of New Delhi during 2021-22 and 2022-23. The data showed that India's exports to China rose by 8.7 per cent to \$16.67 billion in the last fiscal. The main sectors which recorded healthy growth in exports to that country include iron ore, cotton yarn/fabrics/madeups, handloom, spices, fruits and vegetables, plastic and linoleum. - PTI

#### **ED calls J'khand mantri**

Full report on Page 7

over ₹35cr cash seizure

Ranchi: The ED has summoned Jharkhand minister Alam for questioning in a money laundering case on May 14. The agency had last week arrested Mr Alam's personal secretary Sanjeev Kumar Lal (52) and the latter's domestic help following the seizure of more than ₹32 crore cash. — PTI
Full report on Page 4

#### **Cannes festival set**

to kick off tomorrow

Paris: The Cannes Film Festival starts Tuesday with script including the comeback of Hollywood icons, fears of a strike, a Donald Trump biopic and the shadow of MeToo accusations. A total of 22 films will be competing for the affections of a jury, which will announce its verdict on May 25. — AFP

#### COUNTERPOINT

Full report on Page 6



My wife wished to ride an elephant... our candidate sent her one immediately!



## ■ 'Scams full-time business of TMC' ■ Holds 4 poll rallies in WB **Modi pledges 5 guarantees** to cement Bengal votebank

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI** KOLKATA, MAY 12

Sending a stern message to the INDIA bloc part-ners, including the Trinamul Congress and the Congress, a day before the fourth phase of voting in the Lok Sabha elec-tions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised five "guarantees" on caste, creed and religion to cement the BJP's vote-

On Sunday, Mr Modi accused the TMC of "making scams a full-time busiand "running an open industry of scams in West Bengal while addressing poll campaign rallies at four parliamentary constituencies, his highest so far in the state.

Mr Modi, who reached Kolkata on Saturday evening and spent the night at Raj Bhavan, which has become a centre of controversy over the allegations of molestation by a female contractual staff member of governor C.V. Ananda Bose, however, remained silent on the sensational issue.

Listing out the five guarantees, the Prime Minister said at Barrackpore in North 24 Parganas, "As long as Modi is there, no reservation on the basis of religion will be provided; no one can abolish SC, ST and OBC reservations; no one can stop you from worshipping Lord Ram and celebrating Ram Navami, no one can



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets people during a public rally at Arambagh in Hooghly district of West Bengal on Sunday.

THE PM said corruption is a common characteristic of the Cong. the Left or any other INDIA bloc partners. Most of them engineer scams covertly. But the TMC runs an open industry of scams here.

change the Supreme Court's verdict on Ram Mandir and no one can repeal the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).' Launching a scathing attack on the TMC at his

last rally of the day in Howrah, Mr Modi alleged, 'The TMC is the sum total of all the ills of the Congress and the Left. Farmers can't sell their produce at the markets because the TMC extortionists control them. Without paying commission to the TMC extortionists, purchase and sale

can't happen here."
He claimed: "The TMC now runs two departments of loot. The TMC leaders' job is to trigger
Turn to Page 2

#### PM should've asked Bengal gov to resign, laments Didi

AGE CORRESPONDENT **KOLKATA, MAY 12** 

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee came down heavily on Prime Minister Narendra Modi once again on Sunday for maintaining his silence on the molestation slur against governor CV Ananda Bose despite his second stay at Raj Bhavan after the allega-

tion became public.
The TMC chief said she had expected the PM to ask Mr Bose to resign from his constitutional post, but he did not.

Taking a dig at Mr Modi, Ms Banerjee, addressing a rally in Barrackpore, North 24 Parganas, after the PM's rally, said, "You should be ashamed for playing with the dignity of women of Sandeshkhali by paying them to file fake

rape complaints."
Immediately after her attack on the PM, Sandeshkhali witnessed fresh unrest as the villagers, mostly women allegedly backed by the BJP, heckled local TMC MLA Sukumar Mahato and thrashed two of his

■ More on Page 3

## 'Have to learn to compete from neighbour like China'

Jaishankar: Modi govt focusing on boosting manufacturing

New Delhi, May 12: Boosting India's domestic manufacturing and the overall economy will provide much more resources in its foreign policy toolkit to expand the country's influence globally and compete with China on the country. with China on the economic front, external

affairs minister S. Jaishankar has said. In an interview to PTI, Mr Jaishankar said India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been focusing on enhancing domestic manufacturing in the last 10 years as there was a neglect of the sector before 2014 that created many problems for the

country.

He also suggested that lack of focus in the past on the manufacturing sector is linked to the upward trajectory in India-China trade notwithstanding New Delhi's approach that normalisation of ties with Beijing is dependent on resolution of the east-ern Ladakh border row. "We need to be confi-

dent. I am clear that international politics, international relations are competitive. I have a neighbour like China. I have to learn to compete," he said.

"By my complaining, China is not going to stop doing things. If I do not build up my strength at home, our foreign policy will be as good as our domestic policy," Mr Jaishankar said.

"It is a function of our domestic policy that if I

## **Hope there is resolution**

soon, EAM on border row New Delhi, May 12: As the eastern Ladakh military standoff entered its fifth year, external affairs minister S. Jaishankar said India hopes for a resolu-tion of the remaining issues with China and asserted that a return to

normal bilateral ties

hinges on peace and tran-

quility at the border.
Mr Jaishankar said the remaining issues mainly pertained to "patrolling rights and patrolling abilities". Specifically asked when a resolution to the dragging row can be expected in the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks to Newsweek magazine last month, the EAM said that he only provided a "big-picture" viewpoint on

the matter. "We would hope that

■ More on Page 4 can actually build up my economy, if I can build up my manufacturing, if I can create the kind of capabilities which today I am trying to do, I think country.
The Indian and Chinese you are going to find the foreign policy has much more resources and much more tool in its toolkit to

actually influence the world," he added. His response came to a query on why India's bilateral trade volume with China is going up when New Delhi has been insisting that the ties cannot be normal if the bor-

der situation is abnormal.

Mr Jaishankar suggested that such a scenario has arisen as adequate attention to the manufacturing sector was not given before 2014 in the

there is a resolution of the

remaining issues out there. These issues mainly

pertain to patrolling rights

and patrolling abilities there," he said.

PM's interview per se. I think the PM was giving a

neighbours, every country

wants good relations with

its neighbours," he said.

big-picture

"I would not link it to the

viewpoint,

militaries have been locked in a standoff in eastern Ladakh since May 2020 and a full resolution of the border row has not yet been achieved though the two sides have disengaged from a number of friction points.

"I think it is common sense that If there is no **Turn to Page 4** 

## ■ Guarantees statehood for Delhi, jobs, MSP, end of Agniveer scheme Kejriwal unveils AAP's 10 LS poll promises

**AVINASH PRABHAKAR** and SANJAY KAW **NEW DELHI, MAY 12** 

Delhi chief minister and AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday unveiled "Kejriwal ki Guarantee," outlining 10 priority initiatives to be executed, including the attainment of statehood for the national capital, ensuring 24/7 power supply and implementing free education nationwide, if the INDIA bloc forms gov-

ernment at the Centre. The guarantees include the promise to "free Indian land from Chinese occupation" and give twocrore jobs to the youth of the country in one year. The AAP chief also promised to end the ensure that farmers get MSP for their crops as per Swaminathan Commission's report.

The Delhi chief minister said people will have to choose between "Modi ki Guarantee" and "Kejriwal ki Guarantee" 'The latter is a brand..

The AAP has fulfilled its 'guarantees' of free power, good schools and mohalla clinics in Delhi and Punjab... Mr Modi has not fulfilled his guarantees," he claimed.

Dubbing the BJP as the biggest reason behind "corruption" in the country, Mr Kejriwal said: "The system where honest people are being sent to jail and the corrupt are being protected will end...



Delhi chief minister and AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal with Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann during a press conference in New Delhi on Sunday.

Like we attacked corruption at the lower and higher levels in Delhi and Punjab, we will attack it across the country as

– PRITAM BÄNDYOPADHYAY Mr Kejriwal then went on to issue an apology to the INDIA alliance part-

ners for not discussing it

■ Truce possible tomorrow if Hamas frees hostages: Biden

Israel pushes deeper into Rafa to

He said: "I apologise to all my INDIA bloc alliance partners for not discussing this with them before announcing the guarantees. I don't have time because the elections are half done. But I am sure they will not object to the opening of schools and hospitals. I will press upon my INDIA bloc partners to fulfill these guarantees."

The Opposition bloc, comprising parties such as the AAP, the Congress, the Trinamul Congress the Munnetra Kazhagam, among others, as its members, was formed to take on the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in the Lok Sabha polls. A day Turn to Page 4

## Sonia spent 70% of MP funds on minorities: Shah

BJP supporters at Union home minister Amit Shah's

public meeting in Rae Bareli on Sunday.

'Opposition afraid of its votebank'
AGE CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs

NEW DELHI, RAEBARELI/ PRATAPGARH (UP), MAY 12

Taking on the Gandhis in their bastion Rae Bareli, Uttar Pradesh, senior BJP leader and Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday accused the four-term MP and former Congress president Sonia Gandhi of "spending more than 70 per cent of her MP funds on minorities". At another rally in the day in UP's Pratapgarh, Mr Shah said, "Rahul Gandhi can be scared of an atom bomb, but the BJP is

Seeking votes for BJP candidate Dinesh Pratap Singh, who is pitted against Mr Gandhi in Rae Bareli, Mr Shah accused Mrs Gandhi of not visiting her parliamentary constituency while she represented the seat in the Lok Sabha. Mrs Gandhi recently moved to the Rajya Sabha.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who was also campaigning in Rae Bareli, vehe-



mently rejected Shah's Addressing a poll rally in support of Mr Gandhi, Ms Vadra accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of never visiting any village in his Varanasi constituency.

At Rae Bareli rally, Mr Shah said, "You gave the Gandhi family a chance for years, but no development work has been done... They (the Congress) do not believe in development. They do not even come to you in your happiness and sor-

Asking people to vote for the BJP candidate, the Union minister said, "We will connect Rae Bareli with Modi Ji's development journey."
"The 'Shahzada'

■ Turn to Page 4

## Opp. cries foul, claims Kharge copter frisked

New Delhi, May 12: Opposition leaders are being targeted by poll officials, the Congress alleged on Sunday, claiming that while its Mallikarjun Kharge's helicopter was Samastipur, leaders of the BJP-led NDA were being allowed to move "freely". Mr Kharge on Saturday addressed back-to-back Lok Sabha election rallies in Samastipur and

Muzaffarpur in the state. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's helicopter was checked in Kerala and, now, party president Kharge's has been checked in Bihar's Samastipur, Congress leader Rajesh Rathorre claimed in a video mes-

sage on X. Mr Rathorre, who is the chief spokesperson



Bihar is herself moni-toring the checking of Mr Kharge's helicopter in Samastipur. The video showed a

helicopter with officials, including from the police, around it. Commission should clarify whether such checking of chop-

pers of Congress leaders is routine and whether similar checks were also conducted on top leaders of the NDA," Mr Rathorre said in his video message. — PTI

More on Page 4



regrouped. Rafah is considered the last refuge in Gaza for more than a million civilians as well as Hamas' last stronghold. Some 300,000 people have fled the city following evacuation orders from Israel, which says it must invade to dismantle Hamas and return scores of hostages taken in the

Israel that sparked the Neighboring issued its strongest objection yet to the Rafah saying

October 7 attack against

prevent Hamas from regrouping **SOME 300,000** people have fled the city following evacuation orders from Israel, which says it must invade to dismantle

Hamas and return scores of hostages taken in the October 7 attack against Israel that led to the war intends to formally join

South Africa's case at the International Court of Justice alleging Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, which Israel rejects. The foreign ministry statement cited "the worsening severity and scope of the Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians."

"A full-scale offensive on Rafah cannot take place," United Nations human rights chief Volker Turk said in a statement, adding he cannot see how it can be reconciled with internation-

al humanitarian law. US secretary of state Antony Blinken reiterated opposition to a major military assault on Rafah, and told CBS that Israel would "be left holding the bag on an enduring insurgency" without an exit from Gaza and postwar governance plan.

Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden said that a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war was possible as soon as "tomorrow" if the militant group released its hostages.

"Israel said it's up to Hamas, if they wanted to do it, we could end it tomorrow. And the ceasefire would begin tomorrow," he said.

More on Page 6

resolve the

trivial issues

of local lead-

SHORT TAKES

#### Fire breaks out in

Bawana, 3 critical

New Delh: Nine people were rescued and rushed to a nearby hospital after a massive fire broke out at a factory on the outskirts of Delhi on Sunday, the police said, adding that six people sustained injuries and three are in critical condition. Delhi fire service (DFS) chief Atul Garg said that a call regarding a blaze at a factory in sector-1. Bawana Industrial area was received at 3:04 p.m. "Total nine people were rescued and rushed to Valmiki hospital and 20 fire tenders were used to douse the flames. Fire is under control and it is reported that 6 people got injured," said Mr Garg. The fire department official said that three, who are in a serious condition have been identified as Kuldeep (18), Bablu (25) and Mastram (20) and all of them have been referred to

#### **Man beaten to death** during cricket match

Safdarjung for further treat-

ment, "The reason behind the cause of fire is yet to be

ascertained," the official

New Delhi: A 21-year-old man was allegedly beaten to death on Saturday after he tried to intervene in a fight between his brother and other players during a cricket match in Bharat Nagar area, the police said Vishal Kumar succumbed to internal injuries, the police said, adding that a murder case has been lodged and teams have been formed to nab the accused. According to a police officer, Kumar is survived by his wife and a one-year-old son, who live in the Pratap Nagar area. His younger brother and sister are studying. The officer

said Kumar used to work in

a cosmetics factory in Sadar

Kunal had gone to play cric-

Bazar. His younger brother

ket near their house, the

pol-ice said, adding that

subsequently, there was a

scuffle between Kunal and

#### **ILLEGAL PARKING PLAGUES DELHI, SAYS MAYOR**

New Delhi: Delhi mayor Shelly Oberoi on Sunday wrote to the MCD commissioner highlighting the detrimental impacts of illegal parking on public conven-ience, traffic flow and financial stability and demanding strict action against illega parking plaguing the city Urging swift and resolute action, the mayor has asked the commissioner to direct the concerned officials to identify, document, and address illegal parking hotspots in the city with a strict deadline of five days to submit a comprehensive report to her. "It has come to my notice that so many illegal parkings are being run in various parts of Delhi. These illegal parkings are creating nuisance and inconvenience to the public due to traffic jams and also tarnishing the image of the corporation. Apart from this, it has also resulted in huge revenue loss to the corporation...," the letter reads. It said further, "In view of the above, it is desired that necessary direction may be given to the concerned officer to identify various illegal parkings running in Delhi, to prepare a list of all the illegal parkings, to take stern

#### NETA'S NATTER

#### **ARE EGOS HURTING BJP'S POLL CHANCES IN DELHI?**

which boasts of its organisational structure, is struggling to keep it intact in several pockets of the national capital third consecutive due to the lack of bonhomie ongoing polls, among its local the state leadleaders. ership struggling to

party leader said, "Almost on a daily basis, we are wasting almost ers, some of whom are distwo hours on gruntled because resolving petty issues and that too their peers are either not sharing their when elections are on our media posts or putting heads. If we want to avoid

any future repercussions.

we must learn to ignore

Paswan's son, Chirag Paswan, but he is facing a tough challenge from the INDIA bloc's candidate Shiv Chandra Ram. Mr Ram is contesting the seat from the RJD's quota and is getting all the support from both Lalu Prasad Yadav and his son Tejashwi Yadav. Adding to Mr Paswan's

woes, supporters of the Pashupati Paras faction are secretly supporting the RJD candidate. Mr Paras is the sitting member of Parliament, he won this seat in 2019 and wanted to contest it



IS 'SAFE SEAT' HAJIPUR NOT

again, but the BJP denied this seat to him and gave it to his nephew, Mr Paswan. Paras decided to remain

#### in the NDA fold, his supporters are not ready to support Mr Paswan.

#### IT'S DIFFICULT TO KEEP TRACK OF WHO'S AN ALLY & WHO'S A FOE



their small photos on the banners and backdrops.

As a result, the party,

AAP headquarters on Saturday after chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was released from jail on interim bail, Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann said, *"Lok Sabha* chunav me BJP aur Congress ka supda saaf kar denge (We will wipe out the BJP and the Congress in the Lok Sabha polls)." However, realising that the AAP is an alliance with the clear within seconds that "BJP aur Congress ka supda Punjab me saaf kar

denge".

Making amends, the Punjab CM said, "Here in Delhi, the AAP and the Congress are fighting together against the BJP. But in Punjab, we are fighting against both the Congress and the BJP." But his statement left many wondering and some "red-faced."

then in Punjab respective-

ly. "After my arrest, their plan failed, as you all did not break," the Delhi CM

Hitting out at the BJP Mr

Kejriwal said, "BJP people

contacted many MLAs to break the AAP so that the

government falls, but their

plan failed," adding that the people had tried all

parties, and it's AAP only

that could give a bright future to the country.

Mr Kejriwal along with

Punjab chief minister

Bhagwant Mann also held

two road-shows in support

of party's Lok Sabha candidate Somnath Bharti

The Delhi CM said if peo-

ple choose AAP on May 25,

and Mahabal Mishra.

said to party MLAs.

## 'BJP had plans to topple AAP govts'

Kejriwal meets party MLAs, calls meeting with councilors today

AGE CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, MAY 12** 

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday claimed that the BJP's plan was to topple the AAP governments in Delhi and Punjab after his arrest, but this did not fructify. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) became more united "after my arrest", the Delhi chief minister said, while addressing MLAs of his party after a meeting. Mr Kejriwal has called for another major meeting on Monday and will meet with councilors at the party office here. Meanwhile, AAP national

general secretary (Org.) and Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak said, the AAP supremo would also campaign across the country for the INDIA alliance. "Mr Kejriwal will take part in the election campaign for the INDIA alliance and will go across the country

**New Delhi, May 12:** Delhi chief minister Arvind

Kejriwal will campaign for

the Lok Sabha poll candidates of the INDIA bloc

parties in Lucknow.

Jamshedpur and Mumbai

next week. The national

convenor of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will

campaign in favour of the Indian National Develop-

mental Inclusive Alliance

(INDIA) candidates across

Pathak, the party's nation-

al general secretary (organ-

isation) said in a statement

Mr Kejriwal will cam-

paign in Lucknow on May

15, in Jamshedpur on May 16 and in Mumbai on May

The Delhi CM, who came

out of Tihar Jail earlier

this week, said he will

work tirelessly and cam-

paign across the country to end the "dictatorship"

of the Narendra Modi gov-

country, Sandeep



Delhi chief minister and AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal with Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann during a roadshow at Moti Nagar in New Delhi on Sunday. PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

and seek votes. He will campaign for the Opposition bloc in Lucknow, on May 15. Apart from this, he will take part in election campaigns in Jamshedpur,

in UP, J'khand, Maha next week

have said before my arrest that they would break the party and topple the governments in Delhi and Punjab," Mr Kejriwal said, adding that the saf-fron party had a plan to

and will, therefore, go to different parts of the

country to support the

alliance partners, Mr

Pathak added.
All the INDIA bloc con-

stituents want Mr Kejriwal to visit their

states and campaign for

"We all know that the popularity of Kejriwal is increasing rapidly

throughout the country.

The people of the entire

country love him and

want to see him campaigning," Mr Pathak said.

Mr Kejriwal was arrest-

ed by the Enforcement

Directorate (ED) on March 21 in connection

with a money-laundering case linked to the alleged

Delhi excise scam. The

Supreme Court has grant-

ed interim bail to the AAP

leader to participate in the Lok Sabha poll cam-paigning. His bail will

expire on June 1. -PTI

them, he said.

he won't have to go back to jail. "I have to go back to jail after 20 days. If you choose jhadu (AAP's sym-Jharkhand on May 16, and in Mumbai on May 17," Mr Pathak said.

"The BJP people would said, adding that the said fron party had a plan to arrest him, break the AAP, topple the AAP governments, first in Delhi and bol), I won't have to go back to jail," the chief minister said during the roadshow Kejriwal to rally for INDIA bloc

#### **SC to hear CM** petition against summons today

AGE CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court is slated to hear on Monday a plea of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal challenging a Delhi high court order upholding the summons issued to him in a criminal defamation case for retweeting an allegedly defamatory video circulated by YouTuber Dhruv Rathee in May 2018.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta is scheduled to hear the matter in which Mr Kejriwal has admitted that he "committed a mistake" by retweeting the alleged defamatory video. On March 11, the apex

court asked Mr Kejriwal whether he wanted to give an apology to the complainant in the mat■ Police officials say nothing suspicious found

## After schools, 8 hosps, **IGI** get bomb threats

In yet another incident of tals and the IGI Airport in Delhi received bomb threats through emails on Sunday, days after similar emails, sent to over 150 schools, had spread shock and fear in Delhi/NCR.

The police received information regarding the threat from Brurari Hospital at 3 pm, after which complaints were flown in from several other hospitals across the city, and the police teams dispatched. "Nothing suspicious has been found yet," officials

The bomb threats were reported from Indira International Gandhi Airport Terminal-3, Burari Hospital, Sanjay Memorial Gandhi Hospital, Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital, Bara Hindu Rao Hospital, Janakpuri Super Speciality Hospital, Deen Dayal Upadhyay, Dabri's Dada Dev Hospital and Aruna Asaf Ali Government Hospital in Civil Lines, a senior Delhi fire services official said.

"I have placed explosive devices inside of your building. They will explode in the following hours. This isn't a threat, you have a few hours to disarm the bomb or else the blood of innocent people inside the building will be on your hands, read the email screenshot.

"The security operations control centre at IGI Airport has received a threat email concerning an explosive device within the premises. Enhanced security protocols are now in effect, and safety measures have been intensified. Legal action has been initiated. No suspicious item has been found as of now," deputy commissioner of Police (IGI) Usha Rangnani said. The officer said the airport authorities received a threat email at 6 pm. Security has been beefed up in all the hospitals in



Sanjay Gandhi hospital after it received bomb threat in New Delhi on Sunday.

### Pro-Khalistan graffiti found on Metro pillars

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 12

Pro-Khalistan with the slogans 'Desh banega Khalistan' and against India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were found on the pillars under the Karol Bagh and Jhandewalan Metro stations on Sunday.

The officials said that they informed the concerned authorities to remove the graffiti and

the city, and additional police force deployment was made at the airport. However, nothing suspicious was so far recovered from any of the locations so far, they said.

After the threat call from Burari Hospital, local police, bomb squad and dog squad were rushed to the spot, DCP M.K. Meena said. "Teams are checking the hospital. Nothing suspicious has been found yet," he added. In a statement, an offi-

cial at the Burari Hospital said, "At around 3 pm, we received an email regarding a bomb in the hospital. After this, all the safety measures had been thoroughly checked and everything was stable

Sanjay Gandhi Hospital

slogans from the pillar and an FIR has been registered in this connection.

"We have formed teams to probe the matter. Police teams are scanning CCTV cameras in the area and on the Metro stations to identify the culprits and nab them. A case under relevant sections of the IPC has been registered and graffiti and slogans have been removed" said a senior police officer.

email around 3 pm, according to officials. "Soon after the call, we immediately pressed in two fire engines at both the locations. Teams have been sent at all the locations from where we are getting calls. The search operation is going on," a Delhi fire service official said.

DCP of Shahdara said on Sunday, at around 3.30 pm, a bomb hoax email was received at GTB Hospital. "Immediately police swung into action and called the bomb disposal squad at the hospital, and proper checking was done at GTB Hospital and Delhi State Cancer Institute (situated within the premises of GTB Hospital) premises. Nothing suspicious was found," said the DCP Surendra Choudhary.

### 4 suspects caught on CCTV, doc tortured before murder: Cops

AGE CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, MAY 12** 

The Delhi police's investigation into the murder of an elderly physician in Southeast Delhi's Jangpura area has revealed that he was bruarea tally tortured and hit on the head with a blunt object before being strangulated with a leash, officials said on Saturday. Yogesh Chandra Paul, a 63-year-old physician, was found dead in his home in Jangpura Extention on Friday. Paul's body was found with his hands tied, they

The police accessed the footage from a CCTV camera near Paul's house that showed four suspects.

A police officer aware of the investigation said one suspect stood outside while the other three entered the house.

The accused beat up Paul, gagged him and tied him to a chair. They

dragged the chair with Paul tied to it to the kitchen where they hit him on the head with a blunt object and strangulated him with a dog leash, the officer

said. The accused had locked Paul's two dogs in the bathroom. They then ransacked the house before fleeing.

The police has registered a case of murder and robbery and are investigating it from various angles.
"We have not ruled out

the possibility of some insider or someone known to Paul being involved," the officer

Paul lived with his wife Neena Paul, a doctor at a Delhi government hospital. She was at work when her husband was murdered

One of their daughters lives in Canada while the other lives in Noida. Both

### car turns turtle in Aman Vihar

2 die, 3 hurt as

AGE CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, MAY 12** 

Two men died while three others sustained injuries after the car they were travelling in lost control and turned turtle in Delhi's Aman Vihar on Sunday, the police said.

The deceased were identified as Sanjay (23), and Ashutosh (22), both residents of Kishan Vihar.

According to the police, on Sunday at 12:30 p.m. a PCR call regarding overturning of an Ertiga car in Sector 22, Rohini was received at the Aman Vihar police station.

Upon reaching the spot, the vehicle was found in an accidental condition by the police team and it was learnt that the five occupants who sustained injuries in the accident had been shifted to the hospital, where two of them were declared brought dead by doctors and three are under treatment.

## Modi pledges 5 guarantees

on Sunday.

17. he added.

■ Continued From Page 1 violence, while the TMCbacked goons' task is to grab land. The TMC goons openly grab land here. This happens under the protection and blessing of the state government. The TMC has made scams its full-time business. Corruption is a common characteristic of the Congress, the Left or any other INDIA bloc partners. Most of them engineer scams covertly. But the TMC runs an open industry of scams here. The lottery scam

action and submit the report

to the office of undersigned (Mayor) wit-hin five days," it

is one of the examples."

Repeating his charges against the TMC government for opposing the CAA, Ram Mandir inauguration and Ram Navami celebration and patronising corruption through multiple scams in the state, Mr Modi tore into chief minister Mamata Banerjee's party for still trying to protect Shahjahan Sheikh, the prime

accused of the violence women Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas, to appease its minority votebank.

He alleged, "The entire country is witnessing what is happening at Sandeshkhali. It was the police of the TMC who first saved the culprits. But lately the TMC has started playing a new game, the party goons are threatening and rebuking the sisters of Sandeshkhali just because the name of the perpetrator is Shahjahan Sheikh. Bombs and guns were found in his home. But TMC is giving him a clean chit to appease its votebank."

The Prime Minister's claims came a day after the BJP complained that a victim, who had fled to Kolkata after filing a complaint against Shahjahan Sheikh with the police, was kid-napped by a TMC pradhan

from Mominpur Bazar and has been forced to speak against the BJP and allege that her complaint was under duress.

Congress' Kanhaiya

Delhi on Sunday.

Kumar during a meeting

with Delhi chief minister

Arvind Kejriwal in New

ernment at the Centre.

Mr Pathak said the AAP

leader has been working

day and night for the peo-

ple. He is making every

possible effort to ensure the victory of the INDIA

bloc in the ongoing polls

Later at Chinsurah in Hooghly, Mr Modi accused the TMC of "betraying" the state's youth and "selling their future and their par-ents' dreams." He pointed out, "The paper leak and recruitment mafia of the TMC devastated all. Now top leaders, ministers and trusted aides of the Bengal CM are behind bars.

Exuding confidence in the BJP-led NDA winning 400 seats, Mr Modi further mocked Congress scion Rahul Gandhi and quipped, "Please note down, the Congress is going to get fewer seats than the age of its Shehzada! So if you vote for the Congress and the Left, your votes will be wasted.'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 12

The Delhi BJP on Sunday flagged off a bike rally where several youth from the Sikh community participated in support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an official statement said. The rally, with slogan #SikhWithModi, was started from the state BJP office and reached the national headquarters via Connaught Place.

Addressing the rally, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said the Prime Minister values every section of the society, but the the Kartarpur Corridor was opened for the Sikh community, Bal Divas was announced on the name Shahbajade on December

In BJP bike rally, Sikh youths join in PM's support 26, taxes were removed from langar, and the 350th birth anniversary celebra tion of Guru Govind Singh was organised, all these historic works were done by the Modi government. Not only this, but PM Modi also "wiped the tears" of the victims of Sikh riots, he said, adding that if any government has empowered Sikh youth with opportunities, "it is only the Modi government".

BJP leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa said, "With hashtag #SikhWithModi, today, the Sikh community is moving forward on the streets with the message that we all stand with Modi. Our dream of a developed India will be fulfilled under the leadership of



Sikh community people take part in a bike rally in New Delhi on Sunday

#### **Rally organised for** voter awareness

New Delhi: The New Delhi Municipal (NDMC) alongwith various stakeholders like New Delhi district election office. Khan Market traders association, volunteers and NDMC staff organised a bicycle rally as the voter awareness event at Khan market on

Sunday.

As many as 500 participants including chairman NDMC, Amit Yadav along with senior officers, staff of the engineering, horticulture and public health departments and traders participated in the bicycle rally with full enthusiasm in the morning.

SC to hear

Soren's plea

arrest today

AGE CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court is

slated to hear on Monday

a plea of former Jharkhand chief minis-

ter Hemant Soren, chal-lenging his arrest by the

**Enforcement Directorate** 

(ED) in a money launder-

ing case linked to a "land

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta will

hear Mr Soren's plea in

which he has challenged

the May 3 order of the Jharkhand high court dismissing his petition against the arrest.

The JMM leader had

also sought an interim

bail for campaigning in the Lok Sabha elections

till the court delivers its

verdict on his plea

scam".

NEW DELHI, MAY 12

against his

#### SHORT TAKES

#### **Modi plans more**

rallies in Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi seems to be fighting a decisive battle this time against Odisha chief minister president Naveen Patnaik. He has decided to take the battle right into the enemy camp by challenging the CM in his home turfs -Hinjili and Kantabanji - the two seats where the latter is fighting Assembly elections. Home minister Amit Shah will address a public meeting

at Hinjili on May 15 and party's president J.P. Nadda will hold a rally at Kantabanji on May 17. The PM, who has so far addressed five public rallies and held a roadshow in Bhubaneswar, is again

coming to the state on May 20 to hold more public meetings and a roadshow at Puri where party's national spokesperson Dr Sambit Patra is fighting Lok Sabha elections. The PM will hold the roadshow in Puri on May 20 morning and later address public meetings at Angul and Cuttack.

#### **Daily wager throws**

his hat into poll ring

Bhubaneswar: The Aska assembly constituency in Odisha's Ganjam district is back in the news after a 55year-old daily wage-earner entered the electoral fray. Ramachandra Badatya, a mason hailing from Haradapadar village, has filed his nomination papers to con-test the polls from Aska assembly polls. He goes out to work in the morning and undertakes his campaigns for two hours in the forenoon and again in the evening Ramachandra strikes a balance between his work schedule and the campaigning hours. He is seen visiting houses seeking votes. Ramachandra is a member of the Red Stat Committee of CPI (ML). "My working hours are from 8 am to 11 am. During the three-hour break, I undertake campaigning activity for two hours.

#### **Yogi: DNA of INDIA** bloc similar to Pak

Sitapur/Varanasi: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said the DNA of Congress, Samajwadi Party, INDIA bloc are similar to Pakistan where people are starving and there is lack of development. "The poor used to die of hunger during the time of SP-Congress. And now people are starving to death in Pakistan, whereas 80 crore are getting free ration in India," he said during a rally at Gandhi Degree College in Sidhauli in the Sitapur Lok Sabha constituency. Mr Aditvanath said, "Congress had opportunity for 60-65 years to work for the development of India, but it did not. There was lack of medical facilities during the UPA government. They used to play with people's faith, allowed the poor to die of hunger and drove farmers to

#### **THAROOR OFFERS RED CARPET TO PAWAR, OTHERS**

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MAY 12

suicide." - PTI

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Sunday said that not just Sharad Pawar's party, but all those who separated from Congress in the past, will be

welcomed back (in his party) on a red carpet. Several parties formed across the country after splitting from the

Congress should once again join hands under one

roof, he said. "Let's see what happens in the future. But, if the people who have left the Congress are returning, we will wel-

come them," the Thiruvananthapuram MP said when asked about NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar's recent statement about smaller parties merging with the grand old party. "There is not one

party, there are many parties in the country which were (initially) in the Congress and (later) split due to some reasons. If they come back, we will welcome them with a red carpet. Because we think that if the ideology is the same. whv should we be different?" Mr Tharoor said. He also added that though there are several parties in the INDIA bloc, they are united as an alliance.

### ■ Didi: Why is PM not seeking Bengal gov's resignation despite allegations of molestation?

## PM still lying about Sandeshkhali: WB CM

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, MAY 12** 

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee came down heavily on Prime Minister Narendra Modi once again on Sunday for maintaining his silence on the molestation slur against governor C.V. Ananda Bose despite his stay at Raj Bhavan for the Lok Sabha election campaign within a span of 10 days.

According to the Trinamul Congress supremo, she had expected the PM to ask Mr Bose to resign from his constitu-

tional post but he did not. Taking a dig at the PM, Ms Banerjee, who addressed a poll rally at Barrackpore in North 24 Parganas, said, "You should be ashamed for playing with the dignity of women in Sandeshkhali by paying them to file fake rape complaints. I will not listen to any lectures from such people who don't respect women."



West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee during a rally at Uluberia in Howrah district on Sunday.

added, "If needed, I will

then have to speak to him

(the governor) on the road.

You should have asked him to resign from his post

but you didn't utter a sin-

gle word and much to my

surprise you are still ped-

dling fake statements on Sandeshkhali. A *sandesh* (news) is waiting for you.

It is about the country

which is saying Modi is

losing and is about bid-

She claimed, "The Prime Minister comes to Bengal and stays in Raj Bhavan while no woman is willing to visit Raj Bhavan after shameful deeds of the his representative, laat saheb (A Bengali dialect to identify the British officers as bigshots), came to light. Women are scared of visiting Raj Bhavan. This has landed me in trouble because I can't talk to him also in person.

ding adieu." minister Immediately after her chief

attack on the PM, Sandeshkhali witnessed fresh unrest as the villagers, mostly women allegedly backed by the BJP, heckled local TMC MLA Sukumar Mahato and thrashed two of his aides Dilip Mullick and Tatan Gayen. The incident took place near the Sandeshkhali police sta-

Mr Mahato, Dilip and Tatan were talking among themselves at a house. Suddenly a group of women, armed with sticks and rods, stormed the house and dragged them out. They alleged that Dilip and Tatan were circulating fake videos from their cell phones to defame them at the behest of the TMC MLA.

The furious mob then snatched the cell phones of Dilip and Tatan and beat them black and blue on the road. They also shoved Mr Mahato who appeared to be helpless in face of the sudden out-burst.

#### **Over 70 women got money** for Sandeshkhali stir: Video

ported video that surfaced from Sandeshkhali, a local BJP leader was heard saying that over 70 women had received ₹2,000 each for taking part in protests against local TMC satrap Shahjahan Sheikh and his aides who were accused of sexual assault and land

In the video, lasting over 45 minutes, a man resembling Sandeshkhali mandal president Gangadhar Kayal told this to the ques-tioner. It was Mr Kayal who had earlier said in another purported clip, the first in a series in the past week, that the rape allegations were "staged" In the latest tape that

surfaced on Saturday night, Mr Kayal was heard saying that 70 women got ₹2,000 each for taking part in protests against Sheikh

All arrangements in place

for Phase 4 of LS poll: EC

28 Odisha seats, Andhra set to go for Assembly polls

later suspended by the

police.
"We will need ₹2.5 lakhs in cash for 50 booths where 30 per cent of protesters would be women. We have to keep the SC, ST and OBC people here in good humour by paying them satisfactorily. In any situation, women will form the front row con-fronting the police," he said in the video.

Mr Kayal could not be contacted, but the BJP has dubbed the videos as

TMC spokesperson Riju Dutta said, "The truth of the BJP's fake narrative on Sandeshkhali is tum-

bling out of the closet." Multiple purported videos of Sandeshkhali women have surfaced and shared by the TMC in the

against the arrest.
On May 10, the SC had disposed of Mr Soren's plea seeking a direction to the HC to deliver its verdict on his petition verdict on his petition challenging his arrest by the ED in a money laundering case.

The bench had observed that Mr Soren's petition has

become infructuous, as the HC has delivered its judgment on May 3 and the JMM leader has already challenged the same in the SC.

same in the SC.

"This has become infructuous," the bench had told senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Arunabh Chowdhury, who were representing Mr Soren. In his appeal, Mr Soren contooded that Mr Soren contended that the HC had erred in dismissing his plea against

## **Actor Allu Arjun**

Nandyala

Chandra Kishore Reddy's home on Saturday. — PTI



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra addresses supporters during arally for the Lok Sabha elections in Rae Bareli on Sunday.

## Modi gave 'entire wealth' to 4-5 rich people: Priyanka

'PM waived loans of big industrialists'

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs

Congress leader Priyanka it will provide a legal Gandhi Vadra on Sunday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of giving the country's "entire wealth" to

"four or five rich people". Addressing a rally in support of her brother and Congress' Rae Bareli Lok Sabha seat candidate Rahul Gandhi, she said, "Narendra Modi has been the MP from Varanasi for the last 10 years, but he has not visited any village there or asked a farmer how he is living."

Noting that the privati-sation is not bad in itself, Ms Vadra further said, "But if the prime minister gives the entire wealth of the nation to four or five rich people, then that is not right. Today, coal, electricity, ports and airports of the country are all with the friends of the Prime Minister."

former Mentioning Prime Ministers and Congress leaders Rajiv Gandhi and Indira Gandhi, she said they vis-Indira ited villages and asked people about their issues.

'Our Prime Minister organises big events where you will see many

**▶ THE CONGRESS** leader said if the Congress comes to power after the Lok Sabha polls, guarantee for MSP and remove GST from farm

find a single poor person," Ms Vadra said.

products to increase

farmers' earnings

"Modi says that Congress comes to power they will steal your mangalsutra, will take away your buffalo. The public is laughing over this. The PM is saying this because he has not done any work," she said. Ms Vadra alleged that Modi waived loans of big industrialists and not of the farmers.

The Congress leader said if the Congress comes to power after the Lok Sabha polls, it will provide a legal guarantee for MSP and remove GST from farm products to increase farmers' earnings.

"The BJP has stopped all avenues of employment generation," she said.
Targeting the BJP over the electoral bonds issue, Ms Vadra said, "They call us corrupt. But the Congress party could not become a rich party in 55 years, but the BJP has become the richest party in the world within 10 big capitalists but not years.'

#### Will do 'X-ray' of country through caste census: Rahul

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, MAY 12

Keeping up the attack on the BJP and Prime Narendra Modi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday targeted the PM saving while the BJP has been "counting the notes" it got from "tempo wale billionaires", his party will conduct a caste census to ensure equality.

Mr Gandhi was reactto Mr Modi's remarks on Congress receiving "cash loaded in tempos from Adani and Congress Aued in Adani Ambani."

In a post on X, Mr Gandhi said, "They have been 'counting notes' they got from 'tempo wale billionaires' for the last 10 years. We will Xray the country through 'caste census' ensure equitable share for every section".

Meanwhile, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is yet to muster courage to accept an invitation for

Justice (Retd) Madan B. Lokur, Justice (Retd) Ajit P. Shah and journalist N. Ram had written to former Congress chief Gandhi and the PM last week inviting them to a platform for a debate on the key election issues.

#### states and Union territories, voting on Monday will take place for 96 Lok Sabha seats. Besides, 175 Legislative Assembly seats of Andhra Pradesh and 28 Legislative Assembly seats of Odisha are also going to polls in this phase. The polling on Monday

AGE CORRESPONDENT

With the stage set for the fourth phase of polling of Lok Sabha elections, the

Election Commission of

India (EC) on Sunday said

all arrangements are in

place. Spread across 10

NEW DELHI, MAY 12

will see participation of 17.7 crore electors at 1.92 lakh polling stations. Though there is no forecast for the heat wave on poll day in major parts of the areas, arrangements have been made at all polling stations including facilities like water, shamiyana and fans.

Due to heat conditions in Telangana, polling time in certain Assembly segments of 17 parliamebeen increased from 7 am and security officials. till 6 pm to increase voters' participation.



Stadium (converted into a distribution centre) on the eve of the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections in Jharkhand's Khunti district on Sunday.

So far, till phase 3 of the general election, polling has concluded smoothly and peacefully in 283 parliamentary constituencies and 20 states/UTs. 1,717 candidates are in

fray in the fourth phase and the average number of contesting candidates in a parliamentary constituency is 18. According to EC, 122 air sorties have been done in the fourth phase in three states — Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and ntary constituencies has Odisha — to ferry polling

their constituencies. A total of 4,661 flying squads, 4,438 static sur-veillance teams, 1,710 video surveillance teams and 934 video viewing teams are keeping surveillance round the clock to deal with any form of inducement of voters strictly and swiftly.

The poll panel said 1,016 inter-state and 121 international border check posts are keeping strict vigil on any illicit flow of liquor, arugs, cash and freebies. Strict surveil-Besides, 364 Observers lance has been kept at sea have already reached and air routes.

## **booked for poll** code violation

Pradesh), May 12: The Andhra Pradesh police booked a case against popular Telugu actor Allu Arjun here for allegedly violating the model code of conduct during the silent period in the run-up to polls.

Nandvala district

superintendent of police K. Raghuveera Reddy said Ărjun allegedly came in a rally to Nandyala YSRCP Assembly constituency candidate

### ■ Booth-level panels, panna pramukhs active on ground in MP BJP pull out all stops for high turnout

CHOUDHURY **BHOPAL, MAY 12** 

Boosted by an improvement in voting in the third phase of Lok Sabha polls, the BJP has launched a special drive to push the polling in the fourth and final phase of LS elections in Madhya Pradesh.

The party has mobilised its booth-level committees, block in-charges of the party and BJP MLAs to spread out in their respective areas of influence to draw voters out of their homes and bring them to the polling booth to vote, a senior BJP functionary told this newspaper on Sunday. Eight LS constituencies

falling under Malwa-Niwar region of Madhya

Pradesh are going to polls in the fourth and final phase polling in the state on Monday. "The boothlevel committees, "panna pramukhs" and the elected representatives of the party have been activated on the ground to ensure record polling in the fourth and final phase of LS elections in Madhya Pradesh", state BJP secretary

Rajneesh Agrawal said. The voter turnout in the third phase polling witnessed a sharp rise, as compared to the second phase polling, after the party launched a special drive to improve voting, he said.

The second phase polling had recorded a voting per-

centage of 58.59 per cent that increased sharply by 7.91 per cent to 66.50 per

leadership has, however, found it a challenging task to increase voting in the final phase polling, considering the low key campaigning in the phase

cent in the third phase of elections.

The improvement in voting in the third phase polling came, following a missive to the effect by Union home minister Amit Shah.

The first three phases of LS elections in Madhya Pradesh saw polling in six, seven and nine seats respectively. However, the polling percentage in the seats held in the first, second and third phases was less than 7.32 per cent, 9.05 booths on the day", per cent and 3.66 per cent ior BJP leader said.

respectively, as compared to the average voting in these seats in 2019.

The state BJP leadership has, however, found it a challenging task to increase voting in the final phase polling, considering the low key campaigning in the phase. "All the eight seats going to polls in the fourth phase polling fall under Malwa-Niwar region of Madhya Pradesh — considered to be a stronghold of BJP.

The BJP has already geared up to further improve the voting in the phase. But, there would be significant increase in voting only if the Congress would be able to mobilise its cadres to draw its core voters to the polling booths on the day", a sen-

## Srinagar to vote today; NC, PDP say workers arrested

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, MAY 12

Security arrangements have been beefed up in Srinagar constituency that is all set to go for voting on Monday in the fourth phase of Lok Sabha

The police officials said strategic deployment has been done particularly at and around 2,135 polling stations in 1,323 locations across 19 Assembly segments spread over five dis-Srinagar, Ganderbal, Budgam,

Pulwama and Shopian. As, for the first time in over three long decades, no separatist political or militant organization has

given an election-boycott call, the authorities anticipate far higher turnout than recorded in previous elections.

Srinagar has 17,47,810 voters. Though there are as many as two dozen candidates - mostly independents Srinagar is virtually witnessing a triangular contest between former min-National and Conference (NC) nominee Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, People's Democratic Party (PDP)'s key face Waheed-Ur-Rehman Para and J&K Apni Party's Mohammad Ashraf Mir.

Meanwhile, all the three have accused and other law police



Polling officials carrying EVMs ahead of the fourth phase of Lok Sabha election in Srinagar on Sunday. — H.U. NAQASH

enforcing agencies of harassing and even detaining their workers and intimidating their supporters to keep them away from the ballot.

Mr Mehdi said at a hurriedly called press conference here, "Our workers are being picked up by police since yesterday (Saturday). Many were

called to the police stations where they have been detained without signing any reason. We have sent their names to the poll panel.'

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir police has denied the allegation that it is harassing the workers of certain political parties and intimidating their supporters ahead of the polling in the Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency.

"Statements and speculations of political parties suggesting that police has been harassing their party workers in different ways at the behest of the other is without basis," it said in a post on microblogging

## **Black days ahead if BJP**

#### returns to power: Uddhav

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, MAY 12

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray has slammed the BJP saying the saffron party's "acche promises never turned true (during its regime). Instead black days are ahead if the BJP is not defeated in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, he said.

The former chief minister also made a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling him "a liar."

"Modi had promised corruption-free India. But now protection



become the 'Modi guarantee'. BJPassured protection corrupt peo-Thackeray ple inducting them into its fold," he added.

rupt

cism of the BJP and Modi came in an interview to his party mouthpiece "Saamana" while speaking about the polls. The ongoing political *Mahabharata* is all about saving democracy, he

Mr Thackeray's criti-



Shashi





SHORT TAKES

#### Mumbai ex-cop gets

bail in '06 encounter

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has granted bail to former Mumbai police officer Pradeep Sharma, who was awarded life sentence in a 2006 fake encounter killing case. Sharma, was convicted in the 2006 fake encounter killing case of gangster Ramnarayan Gupta alias Lakkhan Bhaiya — an alleged close aide of gangster Chhota Rajan. A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and Prashant Kumar Mishra noted the submission of the lawyer for the Maharashtra government that the state had no objection to the court granting bail to Sharma. Senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Sidharth Luthra appeared for Sharma, while senior advocate R. Basant represented the complainant and opposed the former officer's bail plea. On April 8, the SC said Sharma needs not to surrender till further orders to undergo the life sentence awarded to him in the case.

#### **Two held for leaking**

clips in Prajwal case

Bengaluru: The Special Investigation Team (SIT) sleuths probing sexual abuse charges against Prajwal Revanna on Sunday arrested two persons in connection with the leak and circulation of explicit videos involving the Hassan MP, official sources said. Two persons — Chetan and Likith Gowda were arrested in Hassan, and they are reportedly associated with the BJP in the district they said. Officials recorded their statements and the spot "mahazar" was done at their residences in Yelagunda and Shravanab-elagola respectively. Pen-drives containing the alleged explicit videos involving Prajwal Revanna, who was also BJP-JD(S) joint candidate from Hassan, were circulated in the district, a few days ahead of the first phase of Lok Sabha polls in the state on April 26. - PTI

#### **Postpone Yamunotri**

**Yatra for a day: Cops** 

Dehradun: After the huge traffic jam on the way to Yamunotri Dham, the police here asked the devotees to postpone their plan to visit the temple for Sunday The journey to Yamunotri Dham situated at a height of 10,804 feet in Uttarkashi district started on Friday on Akshaya Tritiya as devotees are making a beeline to all the Dhams, including /amunotri. to have to pav their obedience. The doors of the Badrinath temple in the Garhwal Himalayas in Uttarakhand opened for devotees on Sunday. With this, the Char Dham Yatra to Badrinath, Kedarnath, Yamunotri and Gangotri has started. Uttarakhand Police, in a post on X, said, 'Today, as per the capacity, enough devotees have reached Yamunotri Dham for

## **EC searches Kharge's** copter, Opp. cries foul

Were similar checks held on leaders of NDA? Cong

**New Delhi, May 12:** Opposition leaders are being targeted by poll officials, the Congress alleged on Sunday, claiming that while its chief Mallikarjun Kharge's helicopter was checked in Bihar's Samastipur, leaders of the BJP-led NDA were being allowed to move "freely". Mr Kharge on Saturday addressed back-to-back Lok Sabha election relies in election rallies in Samastipur and Muzaff-

arpur in the state. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's helicopter was checked in Kerala and, now, party president Mr has checked in Bihar's Samastipur, Congress leader Rajesh Rathorre claimed in a video mes-

sage on X.

Mr Rathorre, who is the chief spokesperson of the Congress' Bihar unit, also shared a video to claim that the chief electoral officer of Bihar is herself monitoring the checking of Mr Kharge's helicopter in Samastipur.

The video showed a heli-

#### Dalits, tribals to be slaves again if Modi, Shah get 3rd term: Cong

(Maharashtra), Dhule May 12: Congress presi dent Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday asked people to vote for his party, claiming that a third term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Amit would mean that the poor, Dalits and tribals would be "treated like slaves".

Addressing a rally in Maharashtra's Dhule constituency, where the Congress has fielded former MLA Shobha
Bachhav, Mr Kharge
appealed to voters to
choose his party to save
democracy and the
Constitution Constitution.

including from police, around it.
"The Election

Commission (EC) should clarify whether such checking of choppers of Congress leaders is routine and whether similar checks were also conduct-



nce, poor, Dalits and tribals were treat-

Mallikarjun Kharge slaves. If you give the third term to Mr Modi and Mr Shah, the same situation will repeat. We will become slaves again," he said.

Dhule in north Maharashtra will go to polls in the fifth phase of the general elections on May 20. Here, the BJP has nominated former Union minister

NDA," Mr Rathorre said in his video message.

"The EC should make all such records public, oth-erwise it will be construed that it is only targeting opposition leaders to stop them, and is letting them, and 18 NDA leaders go freely," he -PTI

#### Next round of India-Asean trade pact

New Delhi, May 12: Senior officials of India and the 10-nation bloc of Southeast Asian nations ASEAN — will hold the next round of talks in July to review the existing free trade agreement in Jakarta, Indonesia, an official statement said on Sunday. The last round of the three-day negotia-tions concluded on May 9

said.

Mastura Malaysia.



Telangana chief minister A. Revanth Reddy plays football with students of University

ED calls J'khand minister

INDIA

AGE CORRESPONDENT

with agency inputs NEW DELHI/RANCHI, MAY

The Enforcement Directorate has sum-

moned Jharkhand rural

development minister and

Congress leader Alamgir

Alam for questioning in a money laundering case on

Mr Alam (70) has been

asked to depose at the ED

zonal office, Ranchi on

Tuesday for recording his

statement under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA),

the sources said on

The money laundering

investigation pertains to alleged irregularities and

payment of "bribes" in

the state rural develop-

The agency had last

week arrested the minis-

ter's personal secretary

and state administrative

ment department.

NEW DELHI, MAY 12

Border

Forces (BSF) unit in West

Bengal to boost employ-

ment opportunities for the

locals and create goodwill

with them for strengthen-

The sources said the deci-

sion was made during a

meeting on "scientific bee-

keeping and honey mission" that was chaired by

the Union secretary at his

office in April. The model,

devised and implemented by the 32nd battalion of the

ing security.

Security

Alamgir Alam

Kumar Lal and the latter's domestic help Jahangir Alam, following the seizure of more than ₹32 crore cash from a flat linked to them.

The ED had informed a special PMLA court here, while seeking the remand of the two arrested persons, that Mr Lal collected "commission" on behalf of some influential people, and that the government officials from "top to bottom" in the rural department are involved in the alleged illegal cash

The total seizure of cash by the ED in this case has been recorded at around ₹36.75 crores, as the agency seized about ₹3 crore from other locations including ₹10.05 lakh from Mr Lal's place apart from ₹1.5 crore cash from a contractor's place

Tuesday. However, Mr Alam had distanced himself from the activities of Mr Lal, speaking reporters after the ED raids, pointing out that he had earlier served with other ministers of the state government also.

Narendra Modi, during his election campaign speeches in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh last week, had mentioned the "mounds of seizure of

cash".

The Opposition parties had claimed the ED action was part of the campaign by the Centre to target

#### Leopard cat sighted in Pench for 1st time

Nagpur, May 12: A leopard cat has been spotted in Maharashtra's Pench Tiger Reserve for the first time, a senior forest offi-

cial said on Sunday.

Leopard cat, with the scientific name Prionailurus bengalensis, belongs to the family Felidae, and is noted for its leopard-like colouring. The presence of the species at the reserve was found through camera trapping, a release by deputy director Prabhu Nath Shukla said, also claiming that this is the first such sighting in cen-

Mr Shukla said a camera captured the gridbearing cat near Narahar village in Pench in Nagpur district. "The site of image capture was inside a seasonal stream. This is the first record of the leopard cat from cen-

tral India," release said. Mr Shukla said 15 species of felids, or wild cats, are found in India, constituting over 40 per cent of global felid diversity. Leopard cat is the most widespread species after the jungle cat in India due to its "adaptive flexibility", and is restricted to N-E India, Himalayan northern Himalayan states, West Bengal, Odisha, and pockets of Western Ghats. It was believed to be absent in central India, he said. "The current finding

will pave the way for more works in the distribution of the hitherto relatively under-studied felid...Studying the distribution of any animal is very vital to make any conservation

## **India hopes to sort** out LAC row with China soon: EAM

New Delhi, May 12: As the eastern Ladakh military standoff entered its fifth year, external affairs minister S. Jaishankar said India hopes for a resolution of the remaining issues with China and asserted that a return to normal bilateral ties hinges on peace and tranquility at the border.

In an exclusive interview, Mr Jaishankar said the remaining issues mainly pertained to "patrolling rights and patrolling abilities".

Specifically asked when a resolution to the dragging row can be expected in the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks to Newsweek magazine last month, Mr Jaishankar said that he only provided a "big-pic-ture" viewpoint on the 'we would nope that there is a resolution of the remaining issues out there. These issues mainly pertain to patrolling rights and patrolling abilities there,"

"I would not link it to the Prime Minister's interview per se. I think the Prime Minister was giving a big-picture viewpoint and his big-picture viewpoint was a very reasonable viewpoint which Thursday.

MR JAISHANKAR said diplomacy is a work of patience and India continues to discuss the issues with the Chinese

is - after all as neighbours, every country wants good relations with its neighbours," EAM

'But today, our relations with China are not normal because the peace and tranquility in the border areas has been disturbed. So he (PM) was expressing the hope that the Chinese side should realise that the present situation is not in its own interest,' Mr Jaishankar said.

Mr Modi had said that the border situation needs to be addressed urgently and that stable and peaceful ties between India and China are important for not just the two countries but for the entire region and world. EAM said diplomacy is a work of and India patience continues to discuss the issues with the Chinese side. "I would say that we need to resolve those issues if the relationship is to come back to normal," he said during interview

# talks in July

in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

The discussions for review of AITIGA (Asean-India Trade in Goods Agreement) started in May 2023 to make it more trade-facilitative and beneficial for businesses across the region, the commerce ministry

A joint committee, which is undertaking the review work, has so far met four times. It has finalised its terms of reference and the negotiating structure for the review in its first two meetings and initiated talks for the review from its third meeting, which was held on February 18-19 here. The committee was co-chaired by Rajesh Agrawal, additional secretary in the department commerce, and ura Ahmad Mustafa, deputy secretary general (trade), ministry of investment, and industry,



■ Beehives installed on India-Bangla border to curb crimes

Adopt BSF's 'beehives fence' model

Beehives installed at the fence along the India-Bangladesh border under 'beehives on border fence' beekeeping model initiated by a BSF unit in Bengal on Sunday.

BSF deployed to guard the India-Bangladesh international border in West Bengal's Nadia district, was "lauded" during the meeting and a direction was issued to all the Central Armed Police Forces to adopt it in their respective areas of responsibility, a senior CAPFs officer said.

The aim of replicating the West Bengal BSF's beekeeping model is to generate employment in remote locations, making friends and earning goodwill of the locals, who act as the "eyes and ears" in these areas from the security point of view, a senior BSF

officer said. Launched in November

last year, the BSF unit in Nadia has installed close to 200 beehives on the India-Bangladesh border fence till now, with a multi-pronged aims of stopping border crimes like cattle, gold and narcotics smuggling, fence cutting and engaging popula tion in productive remuneration-based work.

The "beehives on fence' initiative is aimed at engaging the locals in producing honey for sale, planting flowering and fruit-bearing plants for the honevbees and also for the purpose of trade and shallow water pisciculture through the fresh ditches being made in this border area to store water, officials had said.

## Kejriwal unveils AAP's 10 promises

#### ■ Continued From Page 1

after his release from jail on interim bail, Mr Kejriwal said on Saturday that the INDIA bloc will form the next govern-

the yatra. It is risky to send

more devotees now. — PTI

ment and AAP will be part of it. On being asked about his comments on Prime Minister Narendra Modi retiring at the age of 75, Mr Kejriwal said: "I said that he made this rule himself in 2014 that after the age of 75, no one will get any responsibilities... I said he will also retire in 2025 as per this rule... Many BJP leaders said that that rule does not apply to Modi Ji... I'm sure the PM will not stop it from being implemented in his case as well... Let the PM say that this rule does not apply to me, that it was made for Advani ji. I don't think the PM will say this." Elaborating on the "Kejriwal ki Guarantee", the AAP supremo promised to provide full state-hood to Delhi. "The BJP inducts all corrupt people into their party. The BJP's washing washing machine will be dismantled publicly. We will come up with a system for hassle-free trade and business in the country," he said. Mr Kejriwal claimed that his third guarantee is to improve the country's health sector. He declared that mohalla clinics will be started in every corner of

the country. He said: "If the people of my country are healthy, it will take the country forward... Mohalla clinics will be started in villages and every corner of the country. The district hospitals will be turned into multi-speciality hospitals, as good as private hospitals. The treatment in these hos-

pitals will be free for anyone born in the country... There will be no insurance. This is a big scam. We will create health infrastructure in all parts of the country. This also requires an expenditure of ₹5-lakh crores -half borne by the Centre, half by

On the education sector, Mr Kejriwal said, "No country can grow and succeed until its children receive quality education... Presently, the condition of our schools is poor. Over 18-crore children study in 10-lakh schools across the country and they have no future. In Delhi and Punjab, we have demonstrated that we can bring about change. We are committed to doing so across the country... This will cost ₹5-lakh crores. Half will be spent by the Centre and half by the states."

Announcing his fourth guarantee, Mr Kejriwal said, "The country is above all else. China has encroached on our land. Whenever we ask the Centre, it says no one has come into our land; nothing has happened. Everyone knows that China has encroached. Hiding it will not solve the problem. Our Army is very strong; give them the independence to do their job. For this, diplomatic efforts will be made and the army will be given

complete independence.' Mr Kejriwal also vowed to scrap the Agniveer scheme. He said: The Agniveer scheme, wherein youth are inducted into the Army for four years and then asked to leave. There is no ownership...This is bad for the armed forces as well as for the young people who are joining.

All those who have been inducted through this scheme will be made permanent. This contractual system will stop... This scheme was brought in because the Central felt that the burden of salaries was too high. We have to spend for the country's securi-We can't compromise.

On his sixth guarantee, Mr Kejriwal said: "You can ensure a respectable life for farmers if you pay them the fair price for their crops. They are begging, they are asking for their rights. When they don't get the right price for their hard work, they commit suicide. If you pay them a fair price, farmers don't need anything else. MSP for crops will be based on the Swaminathan

Mr Kejriwal announced his final guarantee for traders across the country. "If traders can't conduct business easily and openly, it is a significant impediment to the country's progress. No jobs can be generated. Data shows that over the past 8-10 years, 12-lakh high-networth individuals have shut down businesses here and left the country because the government has harassed them," he

The Delhi CM said: "GST will be removed from the ambit of PMLA; it will be simplified, and all administrative and legal provisions will be streamlined. If someone wants to conduct business in a lawful manner, they should be able to do so without any problems. Our target is to surpass China, which is far ahead in manufacturing and trade across the country.

## 'Sonia spent 70% MP funds on minorities'

#### ■ Continued From Page 1

after his release from jail on interim bail, Mr Kejriwal said on Saturday that the INDIA bloc will form the next government and AAP will be part of it.

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third guarantee is to improve the country's health sector. He declared that mohalla clinics will be started in every corner of the country. He said: "If the people of my

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#### Have to learn to compete from China: Jaishankar

■ Continued From Page 1 peace and tranquility in the border, how can you have a normal relationship," Mr Jaishankar said. "After all if somebody is at your front door in an unfriendly manner, you are not going to go out there and act as though everything is normal. That to me is a straightforward proposition," he said. India has been consistently

maintaining that peace and tranquillity along the LAC were key for normalisation of overall ties. However, trade between the two countries is steadily expanding, especially with rising imports from China.

Since the beginning of the last decade, bilateral trade between India and China recorded significant growth. From 2015 to 2022, India-China bilateral trade grew by 90.14 per cent, an average yearly growth of 12.87 per cent. In 2022, the overall trade with China increased by 8.47 per cent year on year to reach \$136.26 billion, crossing the \$100 billion mark for the second time in a row, according to official

However, the trade deficit came to \$101.28 billion as India's imports from China witnessed a major increase. In the last few years, the government has been making efforts to expand manufacturing in a number of critical areas as part of an aim to derisking from China.

There has also been a greater focus on India acquiring critical technologies to minimise import dependency.



## THE ASIAN AGE

13 MAY 2024

## Kejriwal on warpath, gives Opp boost, BJP gets a jolt

he unexpected return of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal to the public sphere and his first speech loaded with speculation of early retirement of Mr Narendra Modi should he return as PM has given the ongoing Lok Sabha election its first major plot twist, though the jury is out as to what would be its outcome.

Starting its campaign with the slogans of "400 plus this time" and "Modi's guarantees", the BJP has been presumably disappointed by the declining voter turnout in the first two phases of the polls.

Prime Minister Modi, followed by other leaders including BJP president J.P. Nadda, meanwhile, lost no time in getting on the communal bandwagon after purportedly discovering hints of wealth redistribution in the Congress manifesto. That the document has no such actual promise did not

Mr Kejriwal has verily set the cat among pigeons. The BJP leaders who would, in the normal course, have imperiously ignored Opposition iibes. were sent scrambling for a

deter the saffron party's leadership from scaring the people with the threat of an Opposition snatching the assets of the majority community, including women's mangalsutras, if it were to be voted to power. Every day saw the level of political discourse sinking to lower and more nonsensical levels, yet the Congress and its INDIA alliance partners found it hard to defend their positions.

If Mr Kejriwal's very release from jail albeit thanks to the verdict of the Supreme Court has further unsettled the ruling party, his first public speech that mentions Mr Modi turning 75 in September next year must have set the cat among pigeons.

The BJP leaders who would, in the normal

convincing rebuttal. course, have imperiously ignored Opposition jibes, were sent scrambling for an answer. Union home minister Amit Shah went out of his way to personally deny any talk of his chances of replacing Mr Modi. There is nothing in the party's constitution which barred people above the age of 75 years from holding an office, he declared. The BJP president concurred with his statement.

It is a fact that the BJP constitution has no age bar on people holding post after 75 but the retirement of stalwarts L.K Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Yashwant Sinha and their transfer into a Margadarshak Mandal, or seniors' circle, is rumoured to be the result of a decision by the leadership to limit positions of power to the relatively young. Mr Shah's reported statement during the 2019 election campaign that the party had not given tickets to anyone above 75 only adds grist to the speculation. However, as the Indian Constitution has prescribed only a lower age limit for candidates contesting for legislative bodies, it stops no one, including Mr Modi,

from holding office even after the age of 75.

Mr Kejriwal throwing a stone to the otherwise calm waters of BJP politics is a welcome diversion. It gives the Opposition alliance another chance to regroup and adds some fun to electioneering. Perhaps the next phases will see a higher voter turnout.

### Probe Brij Bhushan case swiftly

Strange are the ways of men when it comes to handling charges of sexual harassment against one of their own. While denial is the first reaction, it can also lead to victim shaming and various other tactics to

That it is never too late to nail a sexual offender is a truism best served in the case of Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, six-time BJP MP and for long president of the wrestling federation against whom a string of allegations came up, leading to dramatic demonstrations led by women wrestlers.

Only this month did a Delhi court order the framing of charges against the former wrestling federation chief saying that there is sufficient evidence on record to frame charges, thus paving the way for commencing the trial against him.

Thirty Indian wrestlers, among them many who had won medals in international competition, had staged a sit-in as long ago as January 2023, protesting against Brij Bhushan and other coaches for repeatedly harassing female players for years.

Given the importance of the principal accused in the election scheme of itical clout in his IJF ernment and the ruling party ignored the protests, even working to choke them. This was a classic example of the establishment standing behind an influential person regardless of the seriousness of the charges made

Things seemed to change only after the BJP decided not to field Brij Bhushan again and opted for his son as candidate in the same Kaiserganj seat. This came long after a proxy of the MP was elected as chief of the federation whose inner workings had caused such a storm.

While the Delhi police had filed a chargesheet under sections dealing with sexual harassment, criminal intimidation and stalking involving five female wrestlers as long ago as June 2023, only nearly a year later has judicial action on criminal grounds begun.

The least people can expect is that such charges of sexual harassment of any person, male or female, be taken seriously and an investigation ordered quickly, with guilt or innocence established soon rather than the issue stretched out over years. This is seen in too many cases, including the sensational one of the father-son Revanna duo in Karnataka.

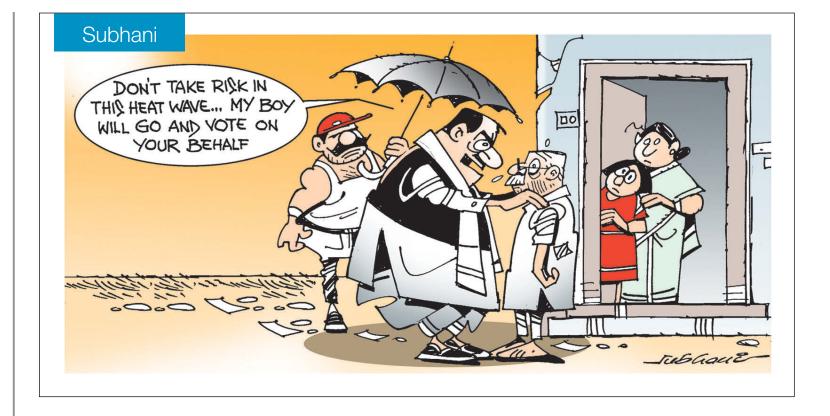
#### THE ASIAN AGE

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## Of caste, class and a 'Suit Boot ki Sarkar'



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

t was Rahul Gandhi's cleverest political jibe against Narendra Modi. Taunting a Prime Minister who sported a pin-striped suit which had his name stitched in gold thread, Rahul dubbed the Modi government a "suit boot ki sarkar". Arvind Kejriwal made the best use of that moniker in that year's Delhi state Assembly elections, when the national capital's working class overwhelmingly voted for his Aam Aadmi Party. In the Narendra Modi vs Arvind Kejriwal campaign of 2015, the determining factor was class.

Delhi's working class bandoned both the abandoned and Communists and made Arvind Kejriwal their hero. It would appear that Mr Modi has not forgotten that defeat. His continued campaign against the AAP and Mr Kejriwal smacks of a personal vendetta.

and entering the election campaign, Mr Kejriwal has now joined hands with the Congress Party, that has fielded the fiery former student leader Kanhaiya Kumar in Delhi. While caste factors remain the focus of the media's electoral analysis, in the nation's capital class has emerged as a major mobilising factor. The wealthy and the upper middle class still favour the Bharatiya Janata Party, but the working class and the lower middle class remain loyal to Mr Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party.

The economist turned psephologist Surjit Bhalla, who has been in the business of statistically analysing voting behav-iour since the 1980s, has long held that economic interests and concerns matter for more than caste loyalties in Indian elections. Bhalla repeats this argument, mobilising data, in his recently published book How We Vote: Factors

That Influence Voters (2024). His argument, as a Modi supporter, is that economic factors in fact favour the BJP in the ongoing elections.

Most critics of Prime Minister Modi do not agree. They believe that unemployment, the middle class distress and rising inequality have made Mr Modi less popular. It remains to be seen if

caste factors, especially the support of backward classes and Scheduled Castes, play a larger role this time round or class factors, like livelihood concerns, dominate. The Congress Party entered these elections keeping its campaign focused on both caste and class issues, not worrying too much about upper caste and upper class support. One must view the recent political kerfuffle over Narendra Modi's remarks on big business leaders Gautam Adani and Amhani

this perspective. Mr Modi may have suddiscovered that while he continues to mobilise Hindu votes deploying anti-Muslim sentiment, Rahul Gandhi has deployed a two-pronged attack using both caste and class. This may well have revived the discomforting memory of Rahul's "suit boot ki sarkar" jibe. Could this have prompted Mr Modi to try and distance himself from big business? There are two other hypotheses that could explain Mr Modi's decision

to charge Mr Adani and Mr Ambani with amassing illegal wealth, "black money" in common parlance, and making some of it available to the Congress Party. First, that the electoral bonds scam has hurt the Bharatiya Janata Party politically, even if the funds have helped it financially. Mr Modi needs to make the point that other parties have also secured funding from business per-

While the Congress Party has clarified that its manifesto makes no mention of an inheritance tax, and that it was Rajiv Gandhi who abolished wealth tax, the fact is that it does not concern the vast majority

sons. Second, that business persons in the medium, small and micro enterprises (MSME) sector may have become less loyal in their support to the BJP, viewing the Narendra Modi government as one that protects the interests of big business but not those of the MSME sector.

Both are credible explanations. The importance of the second is often not appreciated by many political analysts. Consider the fact that the intimate relationship between Mr Modi and Mr Adani is not only well understood by ordinary folk but is resented by other big business as well as business persons in the MSME sector. Demonetisation,

introduction of a Goods and Services Tax and persistent stagnation vate corporate investment have hurt the MSME sector. On the other hand, big corporates and listed firms continue to be cash rich and are doing well. There is an internal divide within the business class.

It has been a recurrent experience for me in the past year that any conver-sation on politics with a group of business persons always begins with pro forma statements about how business likes Mr Modi and ends with individuals listing out a series of complaints about the government in general and Mr Modi and his ministers in particular. Among their many complaints, a recurrent theme is the favouritism shown to Mr Adani. Many in Hyderabad are aware of how Mr Adani used his clout in New Delhi to edge out the GVK group from the Mumbai airport.

The charge of a "suit boot ki sarkar" has come to stick. The slogan of "Adani-Ambani ki Sarkar" mimics

a Communist slogan of the Nehru-Indira years when their governments were dubbed by the Communists as the "Tata-Birla ki Sarkar". Indira Gandhi ended that with her turn to the political Left in the late 1960s and the wave of nationalisations that she authorised. Narendra Modi will find it difficult to make such a turn to the Left given the class and caste basis of his support.

Consider the manner in which the artificial controversy over an inheritance tax has panned out. Mr Modi tried to put Rahul Gandhi on the defensive alleging that the Congress Party would introduce an inheritance tax. BJP supporters enthusiastically campaigned against this claiming that it would hurt the interests of the "rising, aspirational middle class Rahul is so antediluvian, alleged an assortment of the so-called "influencers". Then came the over-enthu-

siastic vice-chancellor of Galgotias University, who ordered students to march on the streets of New Delhi denouncing the inheritance tax idea. That march fizzled out not just because of the dumb replies of the students interviewed on tele-

viral on the social media, but because many knew that these were kids from well-off families. In a country where 10 per cent of the population, covering most of the upper caste, upper class families, accounts for 60 per cent of the national income, students at private educational institutions are unlikely to stir the emotions of the other 90 per cent. While the Congress Party has clarified that its manifesto makes no mention of an inheritance tax, and that it was Rajiv Gandhi who abolished wealth tax, the fact is that the issue does not concern a vast majority of the electorate. It matters only for the BJP's upper caste, upper class support base.

The writer is an author, a former newspaper editor and adviser to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. He has recently edited The Importance of Shinzo Abe: India, Japan and the Indo-Pacific.

#### **LETTERS**

#### **BYE BYE, MODI?**

With each passing day, Narendra Modi's speeches are becoming more and more banal. The release of Arvind Kejriwal has added zing to the ongoing elections. First is his presentiment that Mr Modi shall be superannuating in 2025 and second, Yogi Adityanath shall be given marching orders post-election. Expectedly, Amit Shah rubbished this and thundered that Mr Modi is indispensable but maintained a studied silence on the Yogi. But all said and done, the theory of diminishing returns suggests that his utility is already on the decline.

**Deepak Singhal** Noida, UP

#### DIAMONDS IN ROUGH

SANJAY LEELA Bhansali's Heeramandi, released on Netflix on May 1, has become the most watched series globally in a week's time. Bhansali, known for a lavish set and costumes, has once again delivered a hit. Set in 1920-1942, the story revolves around Lahore where Heera Mandi (Diamond Bazar) is located which is a hub of tawaifs or nautch girls. These women also participated in India's freedom movement. Another feature of the series is that it is dominated by characters. Manisha Koirala and Sonakshi Sinha have acted well. The dialogue in the series is crisp and reminds one of Mughal-e-Azam.

D.B. Madan

#### YOUR VOTE COUNTS

**PEOPLE** often choose not to vote because they feel their vote does not count. But one vote does count and in many ways. Your choice to vote or not will have farreaching consequences on people all over the world, many of whom do not have the right to vote themselves. In local and national elections, lawmakers are elected who make laws, policies, and appointments that will have effects for years to come. The most common reason people say they do not vote is: One vote does not count. If everyone uses an excuse and does not vote, then what kind of government would we have? As citizens of the country, it is our duty to vote. Think twice, because every vote counts.

Jubel D'Cruz Mumbai

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to Jubel DCruz (April 9). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

#### Rafia Zakaria



hatever the Americans may have said on record, the past few weeks of the war in Gaza have proved to be quite trying for them. Central among their concerns is the hit that President Joe Biden's re-election chances have taken as the

In the opinion polls, American voters do not actually list the war in Gaza as one of their central concerns, with the economy and abortion taking the lead. However, those that tend to complain about the economy in the US feel that the seemingly endless amount of aid flowing to Israel and Ukraine ismoney that should have been spent on improving their own situation at home. Even though the US economy is currently in the lead globally, rents and food prices at home continue to be high, causing many Americans to criticise the Biden administra-

As many know, the campus protests and the fact that scores of graduation ceremonies in the US have been cancelled because protesters have vowed to disrupt them have added to the pressure, which the Biden administration has been feeling, to bring the war to an end. Even though the Democrats have stuck to their usual line of promising unconditional support to Israel and even joined the Republican-controlled House in approving \$26 billion in military assistance to

Israel, there has been discomfort within.

Most of this comes from the internal polling done by the Biden campaign, which reveals a generational shift in the US on the issue of Israel. Unlike the Republicans, the Democrats need young voters to turn out in huge numbers if they are to win like they did in 2020. In states like Pennsylvania — a battleground state — it is precisely this group of voters that took Joe Biden to victory last time. Many of these voters were from cities like Philadelphia, which is home to many universities, and where there is an increasing feeling of reluctance to vote for Mr Biden again, given his position on the war in Gaza. While these young people would not be lost to Donald Trump, most would likely just stay home; and if they do, then it would be the end of Mr Biden's

possibilities in Pennsylvania. Not too far away from Pennsylvania is Michigan, another battleground state where the Democratic Party needs large numbers of urban voters in places like Dearborn. The large Arab-Muslim population in the state is unlikely to show up for Mr Biden if the war continues to drag on into November, and the number of Palestinian casualties continues to mount. Attempts by the Democratic Party to engage this population have not produced many positive results. At the commencement ceremony for the

University of Michigan, held last weekend, a

student walkout, complete with Palestinian flags and keffiyehs, disrupted the proceedings and provided a clear statement of the shape of things to come if matters did not change soon. On one political talk show, Queen Rania of Jordan pointed out that the world simply does not understand how the US can say Israel should not bomb civilians but then continue to provide it with weapons to bomb civilians, or complain about the lack of humanitarian aid and build a pier to provide it but vote down ceasefire resolutions at the UN.

None of this promises a good or durable deal. The Israelis have been coddled by access to seemingly bottomless American coffers, and to an obstinate moral immunity for a terribly long time. Listening to the Zionist perspective often reveals their inability to understand how suddenly and decisively American public opinion has changed.

Many continue to draw parallels with how Jewish students on various American campuses may 'feel', as well as the Holocaust. They are simply not able to see how utterly delusional their perspectives sound when considered against the more than 34,000 dead Palestinians and the horribly suffering and maimed women and children that Americans have been watching for over six months. Jewish intellectuals like the author Marsha Gessen, who compared Gaza to the ghettoes in Poland during the Holocaust, have faced derision from Zionists, but their silencing has been viewed with alarm by everyone else.

Israel is America's spoilt child. It is used to throwing a tantrum on the floor of the toy store if it does not get whatever impractical plaything or ridiculous demand it makes. It is likely to continue with its behaviour beyond an invasion of Rafah just to have the last word and pretend at some imaginary 'victory'. There are plenty of hardliners in Israel who even imagine themselves and their country as being able to conduct

wars without the assistance of the US. It is just one of the many delusions that have led Israel to where it has ended up after inflicting six months of merciless death and destruction on Palestinian civilians. Its international reputation is in the gutter, people all around the world are up in arms at its genocidal bloodlust, and now even the Americans seem uninterested in standing by their rabid child as it continues to demand a perpetual supply of Palestinian blood to satisfy its desires. Israel may be able to stall a ceasefire, and try to take the joy of peace away by insistently inflicting pain on what is left of the Gazans in Rafah. But in its pursuit of this, it will achieve nothing other than becoming the most hated country in the world.

- By arrangement with **Dawn** 











TAKES

#### **FIRE DESTROYS A SHOPPING CENTRE IN WARSAW**

Warsaw, May 12: A massive fire that broke out on Saturday night in a shopping centre in Warsaw almost completely destroyed the place, authorities said. Nobody was hurt.

The Marywilska 44 with almost 1,400 commercial units was among the biggest shopping centres in Warsaw. It was owned and managed by Mirbud.

"Almost 100% of it was burned. The fire is being extinguished and this will take many hours, perhaps several hours," Mariusz Feltynowski, com-mander-in-chief of the State

#### **SPAIN SOCIALISTS EYE POWER GRAB IN CATALAN VOTE**

Barcelona, May 12: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's Socialists are hoping to show Catalonia has turned away from its independence fixation by winning Sunday's regional vote and defeating separatist leader Carles Puigdemont. When the polls open at 9:00 am (0700 GMT), the wealthy northeastern region of some eight million people will vote for 135 deputies to the Catalan parliament.

Polls suggest Socialists are ahead of Puigdemont's hardline separatist JxCat and its rival ERC.

#### **TUNISIA NABS 3 COMMENTATORS OVER COMMENTS**

Tunis, May 12: Tunisian authorities on Sunday ordered the arrest of two journalists over critical comments, a lawyer told *AFP*, a day after security forces stormed the bar association and took political com-mentator Sonia Dahmani into

Dahmani, also a lawyer, was arrested late on Saturday after criticising the state of Tunisia on television, her attorney Dalila Msaddek said in a post on Facebook.

Msaddek said there was a "police attack against the bar association headquarters".

#### **7 SECURITY MEN KILLED IN TWO ATTACKS IN PAK**

Peshawar, May 12: At least seven security personnel have been killed and two injured in two separate militant attacks on security forces in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, authorities said on Sunday.

Local officials said five security personnel were killed and two injured during the first attack that took place in the Hassan Khel area of North Waziristan district, bordering Afghanistan, in when an improvised explosive device went off targeting a bomb disposal unit on Saturday.

Militants opened fire on the forces soon after the blast.

#### **CREWS PREPARE TO RAZE BRIDGE IN BALTIMORE**

**Baltimore, May 12:** After weeks of preparation, crews are scheduled to conduct a controlled demolition to break down the largest remaining span of the collapsed Francis Scott Key Bridge in Maryland, which came crashing down under the impact of a massive container ship on March 26. Of the crew members, 20 are from India and one is Sri Lankan.

The steel span landed on the ship's bow after the Dali lost power and crashed into one of the bridge's support columns. Since then, the ship is stuck among the wreckage and Baltimore's busy port has been closed to most maritime traffic.

#### **34 KILLED IN** INDONESIA RAIN, **COLD LAVA FLOW**

Tanah Datar, May 12: At least 34 people have died and 16 more were missing after flash floods and cold lava flow from a volcano hit western Indonesia, a local disaster official said.

The disaster hit two districts in West Sumatra province on Saturday evening after hours of heavy rain caused flooding and sent sweeping ash and large rocks down Mount Marapi, the most active volcano on the archipelago's Sumatra island.

'Until now our data shows that 34 people died: 16 in Agam and 18 in Tanah Datar. At least 18 others are injured. We are still searching for 16 others.'



Graduate students walk out of commencement in protest against the war in Gaza at the DKR-Texas Memorial

## Rafah squeeze tightens, **Israel pushes into Gaza**

Biden: Truce possible 'tomorrow' if Hamas frees hostages

Cairo, May 12: Israel sent tanks into eastern Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip early on Sunday, after a night of heavy aerial and ground bombardments, killing 19 people and wounding dozens of others,

health officials said. US President Joe Biden said on Saturday that a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war was possible as soon as "tomorrow" if the militant group released its

hostages.
"There would be a ceasefire tomorrow if Hamas would release the hostages," Biden said at a fundraiser outside Seattle, at the home of a former Microsoft executive, after avoiding the topic at three similar events on Friday. The death toll in Israel's

military operation in Gaza has now passed at least 35,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's health min-The bombardment has laid waste to the coastal enclave and caused a

deen humanitarian crisis The war was triggered by a Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7 to more than 1,00,000 peo-

Kathmandu, May 12: A

British climber and a Nepali guide have broken

their own records for most

climbs of Mount Everest,

the world's highest moun-

tain, hiking officials said

on Sunday. Rakesh Gurung, director of Nepal's department of

tourism, said Britain's Ke-

nton Cool, 50, and Nepali

guide Kami Rita Sherpa,

54, climbed the 8,849-metre

(29,032 foot) peak for the 18th and 29th time, respec-

tively. They were on sepa-

rate expeditions guiding

"He just keeps going and

their clients.

STUDENTS WALK OUT AT COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

**SMALL PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTESTS AS COLLEGE COMMENCEMENTS HELD** 

Small pro-Palestinian protests against the Gaza war popped up sporadically Saturday as colleges and universities from North Carolina to California in the United States conducted commencement ceremonies, including dozens of graduating students at Virginia Commonwealth University who walked out on an address by

in which some 1,200 people were killed and more than 250 people taken hostage, according to Israeli tallies. Israel says 620 soldiers have been killed in the fighting. Jabalia is the biggest of Gaza's eight historic

refugee camps and home

US-based expedition orga-

nising company Madison

Mountaineering said of the Nepali climber. Madi-

son had teamed up with

Kami Rita to climb the su-

mmits of Everest, Lhotse,

and K2 in 2014.

**CANNES** 

going... amazing guy!" K2, located in Pakistan, Garrett Madison of the is the world's second-high-

British climber, Nepali guide

**Governor Glenn** 

Youngkin.

ple, most of whom were descendants of Palestinians who were driven from towns and villages in what is now Israel during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war that led to the creation the state of Israel.

Late on Saturday, the Israeli military said forces

Kami Rita Sherpa

tallest Lukas Furtenbach

of the Austrian expedition

operator Furtenbach Adv-

entures called Cool's feat

"He is a fundamental

remarkable.

operating in Jabalia are preventing Hamas, which controls Gaza, from re-establishing its military capabilities there.
"We identified in the

**UN CHIEF CALLS FOR 'IMMEDIATE'** 

UN Secretary-General Antonio

besieged Palestinian territory.

**SWITZERLAND'S NEMO WINS EUROVISION SONG** 

CONTEST THAT WAS ROCKED BY CONTROVERSY

Switzerland's Nemo won the Eurovision

Song Contest on Saturday,

becoming the first artist

identifying as non-binary

to claim victory, in a com-petition marked by con-

troversy over Israel's par-

ticipation during the war

**GAZA CEASEFIRE, HOSTAGE RELEASE** 

Guterres on Sunday urged an immedi-

ate halt to the Israel-Hamas war in

Gaza, the return of hostages and a

"surge" in humanitarian aid to the

past weeks attempts by Hamas to rehabilitate its military capabilities in

#### break Everest climb records **NEPALESE COURT ORDERS LIMIT ON EVEREST PERMITS**

**Kathmandu, May 12:** Nepal's Supreme Court has ordered the government to limit the number of mountaineering permits est mountain and Lhotse issued for Everest and othin Nepal is the fourther peaks.

The Himalayan republic is home to eight of the world's 10 highest peaks and welcomes hundreds of adventurers each spring, when temperatures are part of the Everest guiding industry." — Reuters cally calm. warm and winds are typi-cally calm. — AFP

## Thousands evacuated as Russia hits Ukrainian city

of people been evacuated from border areas in Ukraine's Kharkiv region, as Russia kept up constant strikes on a key town as part of a cross-border offensive, officials said.

The surprise Russian attack across Ukraine's northeastern border beg-an on Friday, with Moscow's troops making small advances in an area from where they had been pushed back two years ago.

A Ukrainian strike on the Russian border city of Belgorod caused the partial collapse of a building that injured at least 20 people, Russian emergency services said as a Ukrainian drone attack hit a refinery in Russia's Volgograd region causing a fire at the complex, the regional governor said. Russia's defence ministry said eight overnight drone attacks were intercepted.

"In total, 4,073 people have been evacuated,' Kharkiv regional govern-or Oleg Synegubov wrote on social media, a day after Russian forces claimed the capture of five villages in the region.

Synegubov said a 63-year-old man was killed by artillery fire in the village of Glyboke. and a 38year-old man was wounded in Vovchansk, a border town which had some 3,000 residents before the current offensive.

"The city is constantly under fire," said Oleksiy Kharkivsky, a senior police officer from Vovchansk helping to coordinate the evacuations. "Everything in the city is being destroyed... You hear constant explosions, artillery, mortars. The enemy is hitting

## Concern about Russia dominates as Lithuanians vote

**Vilnius, May 12:** Lithuania voted on Sunday in a presidential election dominated by security concerns with the main candidates all agreed the Nato and EU member should boost defence spending to counter the perceived threat from neighbouring Russia

The Baltic state of 2.8 million people fears it could be next in Russia's crosshairs if Moscow wins its war against Ukraine.

While the top three contenders agree on defence, they have diverging views on social issues and on Lithuania's relations with China, which have been strained for years over Taiwan. "Lithuania's understanding of the Russian threat is unanimous and

tor Linas Kojala told *AFP*.
Polls close at 1700 GMT and the result is expected later on Sunday — but a run-off on May 26 will probably be needed with no candidate expected to win an overall majority. Opinion polls give the incumbent, 59-year-old former banker Gitanas

main candidates are follo-

wing suit," Eastern Eur-

ope Studies Centre direc-

lead over the other seven candidates, who include Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte and prominent lawyer Ignas Vegele. Pensioner Aldona Majauskiene, 82, told AFP she had voted for Nauseda

because "he is the best in

every category". — AFP

Nauseda, a comfortable

the city with everything they have," he said, speaking at an evacuation point

near Vovchansk. Kharkivsky said one person who was trapped under rubble had died overnight and "several people were killed by shelling" on Saturday.

He estimated that around 1,500 people had been evacuated or fled Vovchansk since Friday and said there had been 32 drone strikes on the town over the past 24 hours.

He said evacuation teams had come under fire "many times"

On Saturday AFP saw groups of people fleeing the border area arriving in vans and cars loaded with bags at a reception centre for evacuees near Kharkiv. Evacuees — most of them elderly — received food and medical

assistance and could sleep in bunk beds. One 61-year-old woman, Lyubov Nikolaieva, told

AFP she had fled the border village of Lyptsi along with her 81-year-old mother. "There is constant incoming fire." -AFP

# First recipient of pig kidney dies

Boston, May 12: The first recipient of a genetically modified pig kidney transplant has died nearly two months after he underwent the procedure, his family and the hospital that performed the surgery said on Saturday.

Richard "Rick" Slayman had the transplant at Massachusetts General Hospital in March at the age of 62. Surgeons said they believed the pig kidney would last for at least two vears.

The transplant team at Massachusetts General Hospital said in a statement it was deeply saddened by Slavman's passing and offered condolences to his family. They said they didn't have any indication that he died as a result of the transplant. The Weymouth, Massa-

chusetts, man was the first living person to have the procedure. Previously, pig kidneys had been temporarily transplanted into brain-dead donors. Two men received heart transplants from pigs, although both died within months. Slayman had a kidney transplant at the hospital in 2018, but he had to go back on dialysis last year when it showed signs of failure.

When dialysis complications arose requiring frequent procedures, his anlike.

**FILMS** are competing for the

affections of a jury led by

"Barbie" director Greta

A GROUP OF FESTIVAL EMPLOYEES

have called for a strike over pay

and conditions that could cause

**ELSEWHERE, EMMA STONE** 

disruption at the event.

reunites with director

fresh from their Oscar

Yorgos Lanthimos,

triumph with "Poor

Things", for

"Kinds of

Kindness".

Gerwig, which will announce its verdict



Richard Slayman

doctors suggested a pig kidney transplant. In a statement, Slayman's family thanked his doctors.

l'neir enormous efforts leading the xenotransplant gave our family seven more weeks with Rick, and our memories made during that time will remain in our minds and hearts," the statement said.

They said Slayman underwent the surgery in part to provide hope for the thousands of people who need a transplant to survive. "Rick accomplished that goal and his hope and optimism will endure forever," it said.

Xenotransplantation refers to healing human patients with cells, tissues or organs from animals. Such efforts long failed because the human immune system immediately destroyed foreign animal tissue. Recent attempts have involved pigs that have been modified so their organs are more hum-

#### **FOURTH INDIAN ARRESTED OVER NIJJAR KILLING** Washington, May 12:

es on Saturday arrested a fourth Indian national for his role in the killing of separatist Khalistan Hardeep Singh Nijjar, according to an official

Twenty-two-year-old Amardeep Singh, a resident of Brampton, Surrey, and Abbotsford areas of Canada, has been charged with first degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder. The integrated Homicide vestigation Team (IHIT) said that Singh was arre sted on May 11 for his role in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

He was already in the custody of the Peel Regional Police for unrelated firearms charges out, the official release said. "This arrest shows the nature of our ongoing investigation to hold responsible those that played a role in the homicide of Hardeep Singh Nij-jar," said superintendent Mandeep Mooker, the Officer in Charge of IHIT.

Nijjar, 45, was killed outside Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara in Surrey, on June 18, 2023. IHIT investigators on May 3 nabbed three Indian nationals -- Karan Brar (22), Kamalpreet Singh (22) and 28-year-old Karanpreet Singh. — *PTI* 

### SILVER I SCREEN MeToo hits France's film industry with accusations against biggest star Gerard Depardieu

## Comebacks, strikes as Cannes film fest starts tomorrow

Mohammad Rasoulof, a director

in competition, has been jailed in Iran days before he was

due to present The Seed of the

Sacred Fig".

**THREE-TIME** Oscar-winner

creator George Lucas will

receive honorary awards.

Meryl Streep and "Star Wars"

**Paris, May 12:** The Cannes Film Festival starts Tuesday with an action-packed script, including the comeback of Hollywood icons, fears of a strike, a Donald Trump biopic and the shadow of MeToo accusations. The return of "The God-

father" director Francis Ford Coppola with his decades-in-the-making epic "Megalopolis" is the most anticipated of this year's entries for the top prize Palme d'Or.

It is one of 22 films competing for the affections of a jury led by "Barbie" director Greta Gerwig, which will announce its verdict on May 25.

Those walking the red carpet include actors Richard Gere. Demi Moore and Kevin Costner, all present in new films. Three-time Oscar-winner Meryl Streep and "Star Wars" creator



And the latest from Geo-

rge Miller's "Mad Max"

universe, "Furiosa", star-

ring Anya Taylor-Joy, will also get its world premiere on Wednesday.

But there are darker plotlines at the 77th edition of string of accusations agai-

the festival. France's film industry is in the midst of a belated

nst its biggest star. Gerard Depardieu, and rumours in the run-up to Cannes of MeToo reckoning, with a more accusations to come against high-profile fig-

#### B-movie producer Roger Corman dies **Washington, May 12:** Coppola, as American B-movie direc-well as cast-

tor and producer Roger Corman, best known for churning out hundreds of low-budget films and giving some of Hollywood's biggest stars their early breaks, has died at the age

Corman earned a reputation for cultivating Tinse-ltown's young talent, helping jumpstart the careers of Martin Scorsese, Robert De Niro and Francis Ford

Nicholson in his debut role. Corman died at his home Monica California

Roger Corman on Thursday, his family told industry publication

-AFP

is presenting a short film, Actor Judith Godreche, "Moi Aussi" (Me Too) who has accused two directors of assaulting her more women to come forwhen she was a teenager,

# quick

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	72,664.47	0.36
Nifty 50	22,055.20	0.44
S&P 500*	5,222.68	0.16
Dollar (₹)	83.55	0.03
Pound Sterling (₹)	104.62	0.33
Euro (₹)	90.02	0.45
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	72,722▼5	0.01
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	84.02	0.17
IN 10-Yr bond yield	7.127	-0.009
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.465	0.016
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

#### Anarock sees 36% rise in revenue to ₹566 cr in FY24

Real estate consultant Anarock Group has posted a 36 per cent increase in its revenue to ₹566 crore in the last fiscal, helped by better earnings from housing brokerage and other services. During 2022-23, the company posted a revenue of ₹416 crore. Anarock Chairman Puri said, "Real estate markets, particularly residential, across cities, are doing well with sales and launches at a 15-year high."



#### Coal imports rise 7.7% to 268 MT on higher demand

India's coal import rose by 7.7 per cent to 268.2 million tonne (MT) in FY24 driven by softness in seaborne prices and likelihood of increase in power demand during summer. The country's coal import was 249.06 MT in FY23, according to data compiled by B2B ecommerce company mjunction vices. Coai import in Marcr FY24 also rose to 23.96 MT, over 21.12 MT in the same month of the previous fiscal.

#### **Suryadev Alloys** brings new range of TMT bars

Integrated steel and power company Suryadev Alloys and Power has rolled out a new range of TMT bars for the construction sector equipped with anti-corrosion properties, the company said. The Suryadev Fe550D CRS TMT Bars with a blend of copper, chromium, and nickel have been unveiled in the backdrop of diverse climates posing a formidable challenge to the country, the company said.



#### FPIs withdraw ₹17,000 crore so far this month

Foreign investors pulled out a massive ₹17,000 crore from Indian equities in the first 10 days of the month owing to the general election and the uncertainty surrounding its outcome coupled with expensive valuations and profit booking. This was way higher than a net withdrawal of ₹8,700 crore in the entire April on concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and a sus-

## China, USA emerge lead trade partners of India

#### Bilateral trade with India stands at \$118 bn for these nations

New Delhi, May 12: China has emerged as the largest trading partner of India with \$118.4 billion twoway commerce in 2023-24, slightly edging past the US, according to the data economic think tank

The bilateral trade between India and the US stood at \$118.3 billion in 2023-24. Washington was the top trading partner of New Delhi during 2021-22 and 2022-23

The data showed that India's exports to China rose by 8.7 per cent to \$16.67 billion (bn) in the last fiscal. The main secwhich recorded growth in exports to that country include iron ore, yarn,fabrics or cotton ups, handloom, spices, fruits and vegetables, plastic and linoleum. Imports from the neighbouring country

• TRADE WITH the US showed growth, with billion to \$40.78 billion.

increased by 3.24 per cent to \$101.7 billion.

On the other hand, exports to the US dipped by 1.32 per cent to \$77.5 billion in 2023-24 as against \$78.54 billion in 2022-23, while imports dipped by about 20 per cent to \$40.8

billion, the data showed.

The global trade research initiative (GTRI) said that from fiscal year 2019 to FY24, India's trade dynamics with its top 15 trading partners underwent significant transformations, impacting both exports increasing sig-nificantly by 47.9% from \$52.41 billion to \$77.52 billion. Imports from the US also grew by 14.7%, from \$35.55

exports and imports along with the status of trade surplus or deficit across various sectors

It added that China witnessed a marginal decline in exports by 0.6 per cent, from \$16.75 bn to \$16.66 bn, while imports from China surged by 44.7 per cent, from \$70.32 bn to \$101.75 bn.

"This growth in imports led to an expanding trade deficit, rising from \$53.57 billion in FY2019 to \$85.09 billion in FY2024, highlighting concerns over stagnant exports amidst rising imports," GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava

Conversely, it said, trade with the US showed growth, with exports increasing significantly by 47.9 per cent from \$52.41 billion to \$77.52 billion. Imports from the US also grew by 14.7 per cent, from \$35.55 bn to \$40.78 bn.

This resulted in an expanded trade surplus for India, which grew from \$16.86 billion to \$36.74 billion.

According to the commerce ministry data, China was India's top trading partner from 2013-14 till 2017-18 and also in 2020-21.

In 2023-24, the UAE with \$83.6 billion, was the third largest trading partner of India. It was followed by Russia (\$65.7 bn), Saudi

#### Arabia (\$43.4 bn), and Singapore (\$35.6 bn).

## Govt measures lead to lower toy imports

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MAY 12

The government measures to curb the inflow of substandard products have successfully reduced toy imports. However, they have not positively impacted toy exports.
India dramatically

raised import duties on toys in February 2020. The basic customs duty was increased from 20 per cent to 60 per cent and then to 70 per cent in July 2021. Quality control order



(QCO) implemented in January 2021 mandates toys sold in India, whether domestically produced or imported, must comply with specific Indian

Toys must also carry the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification mark. toy imports India's

decreased drastically from \$304.1 million in FY2019 to \$64.9 million in FY2024. The steepest decline occurred between FY2020 and FY2022 as imports fell from \$279.3 million in FY2020 to and \$35.9 million in FY2022. Further, the share of imports from China dropped from 87 per cent of India's total toy

imports in FY2019 to 64 per cent in FY2024. While the curbs were

aimed at boosting local industry and ensuring safety, they did not significantly enhance India's toy exports, finds GTRI.

From FY2020-22, exports increased modestly from \$129.6 million to \$177 million. However, by FY2024, exports had decre-ased to \$152.3 million.

Indias share in the global toy export market is 0.3 per cent, totaling \$167

#### **INDIA IS FASTEST GROWING NATION** IN ASIA, SAYS ADB **CHIEF ECONOMIST**

New Delhi, May 12: India needs to focus on factor market reforms like land and labour to propel India's growth to a double-digit trajectory, ADB chief economist Albert Park has said on Sunday.

"There are still concerns that the basic factor markets like land and labour in the formal sector of unemployment in India are still small. So, you really want to formalise those," he said.

The factor market reforms include land, labour, energy, and access to credit, among others, which are critical factors for production.

Talking about other reforms, Park said fur-ther regulatory ease and ease of doing business and deregulation of tariffs by simplifying and reducing them will help increase India's share in the global value chain.

"India needs to improve exports in the manufacturing sectors like electronics, textiles etc are still much more limited and not growing as dynamic parts of Asia,'

he added. To achieve double-digit growth, Park said, India is doing well on various parameters, and it is the fastest growing economy in Asia, but achieving over 10 per cent growth would require huge invest-ment in the infrastructure sector and global frontier technologies to improve efficiency and productivity.

## Govt to focus on infra, logistics to increase exports

study to assess required infrastructure and identify main industry clusters for achieving the \$1 trillion merchandise exports target by 2030 may be submitted by August-Sept. to the commerce ministry, an official said.

The official said that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is doing that study for the ministry.

In 2023-24, India's merchandise exports dipped by over 3 per cent to \$437 billion. Imports during the last fiscal dipped by 5.7 per cent to \$675.4 billion.

By 2030, the ministry is aiming to more than double the country's outbound shipments of goods.

Explaining the rationale behind the exercise, the official said that to take the exports to \$1 trillion, there will be an import of about \$1.5 trillion, so to handle \$2.5 trillion worth of trade we need additioninfrastructure and logistics capacity at roads, ports, airports and rail-

ways.
"If exports will increase, imports will also increase. There is a correlation between higher exports and imports. So we have to create an infrastructure to handle about \$2.5 trillion worth of mer-chandise goods," the official added.

Besides infrastructure requirements, there is also a need to identify the industry clusters from where there will be a large movement of goods.

To query when the ministry is expected to get the report, the official said August-



TO TAKE the exports to \$1 trillion, there will be an import of about \$1.5 trillion, so to handle \$2.5 trillion worth of trade we need additional infrastructure and logistics capacity at roads, ports, airports and railways.

September"

After that, the commerce ministry will share the details with ministries concerned, including shipping, aviation, roads and national highways, and railways.

The ministries would see if they need investments for additional capacity development and where all that investment will go.

As per rough calculations and estimates, another official said that India may need to create an infrastructure which will support an additional 2,000 MT of goods movement in the ports.

Similarly in the railways, there could be a need to create an infrastructure which will allow railways to carry on an additional 338 MT of goods by 2030. Airports also need to create an additional 5 MT of facilities for movement of

## Earnings, global trends to drive stock markets

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** 

Market is likely to see some consolidation after last two week's selling as Nifty-50 corrected more than 600 points to 22.055.20 and the Sensex by more than 2,000 points 72,664.47.

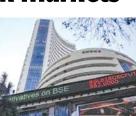
However, volatility is likely to continue as uncertainty on the political front will weigh on market participants. As the general election

is progressing the market  $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right)$ will be analysing the voting patterns and polling data more than economic data for knowing market

direction.

After last week's selling several sectors including banks, metals look ready for a reversal of trend, analysts remain bullish on auto sector while consolidation in the FMCG sector is likely to end on better prospects on above normal monsoon forecast.

"Bank Nifty has virtually completed its corrective move and is set to reverse from the lower end. During the week, the metal sector has also felt the heat of the selling but consider-



ing an overall uptrend, the ongoing correction will be assumed as a strong buying opportunity," said Aditya Gaggar, director-

Progressive Shares "In the data-hectic week ahead, investor attention will be focused on the release of India and US consumer price index data, Europe and Japan's GDP releases, and the Fed chair speech. Furthermore, the next set of Q4 results will also attract market sentiment," said Vinod Nair, head-Research, Nair, head-Research, Geojit Financial Services. FPIs have net sold equities worth ₹17,082.71 crore

in May month so far. "This selling pressure overshadowed strong per-formance in global markets, keeping domestic indices under pressure throughout the week," Santosh

Meena, head- Research,

Swastika Investmart said.

#### **GOLD ETFS DO WELL, ASSETS IN APRIL HIT** ₹32,789 CRORE

New Delhi, May 12: Gold. with its performance over the last few years, has garsubstantial investor interest and the consistent increase in folio numbers serves as a testament to its attractive

"In INR terms, gold has done fairly well over the last vear but dwarfs in comparison to how equities have fared. Given this backdrop, flows in the Gold ETF category have been somewhat patchy relative to the equity asset class. That said, investors could have opted to book some profits in this segment which has resulted in asset class witnessing net outflows," Santarita. analyst. Morningstar Investment

Research India, said. Gold Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) witnessed a net outflow of ₹396 crore April, making it first withdrawal of ₹266 crore after March 2023, owing to profit booking. Despite the decline, the asset under management of gold funds rose 5 per cent to ₹32,789 cr at April-end from ₹31,224 cr in the preceding month.

## PSUs spent ₹50,200-cr capex in April New Delhi, May 12: Large

public sector companies have spent a little over ₹50.200 crore towards capital expenditure in April FY25 alone, which is 6.46 per cent of their full fiscal target of ₹7.77 lakh crore, an official said

The pace albeit is slower than ₹54,177 crore capex spent in April FY24, about .3 per cent of the full year budget target of ₹7.42 lakh

• INTERIM BUDGET for 2024-25 set a cumula-tive capital expenditure target of ₹9.01 lakh crore for all PSUs. Of this, ₹7.77 lakh crore worth capex is to be spent by PSUs.

"The capex spending will pick up going forward. Also, the numbers for April are still provisional and will go up in the revised final num-

bers," the official said. The capital expenditure during the first month of 2024-25 fiscal was driven by railways, road, and oil The Indian railways and

sector PSUs spent ₹26,641 crore in April, followed by national highways authority of India at ₹6,645 crore. Among oil and gas sector PSUs, ONGC incurred

₹2,318 crore, Indian Oil Corporation

₹2,423 crore in first month of current financial year. HPCL and BPCL spent ₹1,155 crore and R₹417 crore, respectively in April. Power sector PSU

NTPC spent ₹2,083 crore. The Interim Budget for 2024-25 set a cumulative capital expenditure target of ₹9.01 lakh crore for all public sector undertakings. Of this, ₹7.77 lakh crore worth capex is to be spent by PSUs.

## Maruti sees CNG car sales rising

**New Delhi, May 12:** Maruti Suzuki India expects its CNG car sales to rise over 30 per cent to around six lakh units this fiscal, according to a sen-

ior company official. The country's largest carmaker also aims to export around three lakh units in the ongoing financial vear.

"So CNG, this year, we did about 4,50,000 (units) in passenger vehicles. We are hoping to do something like 6,00,000 vehicles in FY24-25," Maruti Suzuki India executive director, Corporate Affairs, Rahul Bharti said



in an analyst call.

The company sells CNG trims across various models like WagonR, Brezza, Dzire, and Ertiga, among others in the domestic market.

Bharti said the company's capacity expansion by around one lakh units



per annum at its Manesar

plant, in Haryana largely addresses the Ertiga supply issues. On overseas shipments, Bharti said the company aims to export about three lakh units.

'We did about 2,83,000 units in FY24. Despite the fact that we've increased substantially over the usual 1,00,000 units per year that we used to do just about four years ago. We wish to take it further in the future years.

"And this year, we should be doing about 3,00,000 units fairly diversified across markets, across products," he said. — *PTI* 



INVEST ₹4,500 CR

IN MANUFACTURING New Delhi, May 12: Farm and construction equipmanufacturer Escorts Kubota plans to invest up to ₹4,500 crore over the next three to four years to set up a new man-

ufacturing plant, according to its whole-time dire-ctor and chief financial

officer Bharat Madan. The company is currently in talks with the Rajasthan government for a site at Ghiloth, where it intends to set up the greenfield plant to double its domestic tractor production capacity to

3.4 lakh units annually. "The greenfield plant will involve doubling trac-tor production capacity, setting up a new engine line and a construction equipment line in phases. Overall, the greenfield project may cost ₹4,000 cr to ₹4,500 crore over next

three-four years," he said. He further said, "This year we expect to procure land which may cost ₹400 crore to ₹450 crore and then start construction by the end of this fiscal.

On the tractor sales outlook for FY25, he said the industry is expecting "a mid-single digit growth' with demand picking likely to gain momentum only in the second half of

tained rise in US bond yields.

## **SMART | DEVICES | iPhone maker to announce Al plans at Developers Conf.**

## Apple's iOS 18 may get ChatGPT

San Francisco, May 12: Apple has closed in on an agreement with OpenAI to use the startup's technology on the iPhone, part of a broader push to bring artificial intelligence features to its devices, according to people familiar with the

The two sides have been finalising terms for a pact to use ChatGPT features in Apple's iOS 18, the next iPhone operating system, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the situation is

Cupertino-based company also has held talks with Alphabet's Goo-gle about licensing that company's Gemini chatbot. Those discussions haven't led to an agreement, but are



An OpenAI accord would let Apple offer a popular chatbot as part of a flurry of new AI features that it's planning to announce next month.

It was reported in April that the discussions with OpenAI had intensified. Still, there's no guarantee that an agreement will be announced imminently. Representatives for Apple, OpenAI and Google

declined to comment.

ongoing. Apple plans to make a splash in the artificial intelligence world in June,

CUPERTINO-BASED

talks with Alphabet's

company also has held

Goo-gle about licensing

that company's Gemini

chatbot. Those discus-

sions haven't led to an

agreement, but are

company will run some of its upcoming artificial intelligence features via data centers equipped with its own in-house Bloomberg has reported.

when it holds its annual Worldwide Developers Conference. As part of the push, the

Last year, Apple chief

executive Cook said he personally uses OpenAI's ChatGPT but added that there were "a number of issues that need to be sorted. He promised that new AI

Apple's products on a "very thoughtful basis." On Apple's earnings conference call last week, he argued that Apple would have an edge in AI.

features would come to

'We believe in the transformative power and promise of AI, and we believe we have advantages that will differentiate us in this new era, including Apple's unique combination of seamless hardware, software and integration,' Apple chief executive officer said during the earnings call. Bloomberg

## OpenAI to announce updates via livestream

San Francisco, May 12: Artificial intelligence (AI) company OpenAI announce product updates via livestream on Monday, the company said in a post, stoking specula-tion about the AI giant's next major release.

OpenAI said that it will

not be launching a search product at the event. The start-up has been working on a feature to rival Alphabet's Google and AI search startup Perplexity. Alphabet's stock pared earlier losses on the news that OpenAI's search announcement wasn't imminent, reaching a session high. Instead, the OpenAI announcement will centre around an update to its popular chat-

bot, ChatGPT, and its



It's been over a year

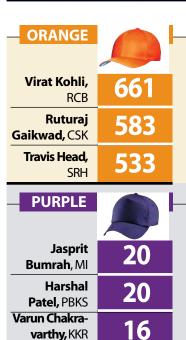
In a post on X, chief executive officer Sam Altman said: "not gpt-5, not a search engine, but we've been hard at work on some new stuff we think people will love! feels like magic to me.'



GPT-4 AI model.

since company released GPT-4, its last flagship model, and a new version has been widely anticipated in the tech world.





#### **Short takes**



M. S. Dhoni obliges the fans after the CSK-RR match in Chennai on - SANJAY KISHORE

#### Rana reveals KKR's winning mantra

The key to Kolkata Knight Riders' success this season lies in their players' newfound ability to support each other through highs and lows, something that the support is a support of the thing that was "missing" over the past two years, feels the team's vice-captain Nitish Rana. The two-time former champions became the first team to seal the playoff berth with a facile 18-run win over Mumbai Indians in a 16-over rain-interrupted IPL match at Eden Gardens on Saturday.

This was the first time since 2021 that KKR made the last four

'We win together and we lose together; that's the dressing room environment we have. It's very important to place hands on each other's shoulders, and I feel it was missing for the last one to two years," Rana said in the post-match media interac-

# **VELLOUS**

#### Pacer's super hit show puts Chennai on path to Playoffs

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR CHENNAI, MAY 12

Amidst the scorching afternoon heat, fans flocked in anticipation of witnessing M.S. Dhoni wield his magic with a bat. While his appearance at the crease eluded them in what could be the superstar's last home game, they stayed back for almost an hour to witness his lap of honour as Chennai Super Kings secured a clinical fivewicket win over Rajasthan Royals at the Chidambaram Stadium on Sunday.

The win propelled Super Kings to third place on the table, edging them closer to a playoff berth. If CSK qualify, the Chennai fans might get another opportunity to see their icon Dhoni in action.

Pacer Simarjeet Singh delivered his best IPL performance, claiming three wickets for 26 runs, as Super Kings' bowlers exploited the sluggish surface restrict Rajasthan to 141 for five in 20 overs. Skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad anchored the chase with an unbeaten 42 off 41 balls. Although it appeared relatively straightforward, culminating with 10 balls to spare, it was not devoid of drama, including a runout incident involving Ravindra Jadeja, who was given out for obstructing

Jadeja, who was visibly not happy with the ver-dict, became only the third batter in IPL histo-ry after Yusuf Pathan and Amit Mishra to face such dismissal.

Despite a promising start, amassing 42 runs in

the powerplay, the Royals struggled to accelerate. Mahesh Theekshana and pacer Tushar Deshpande exerted control during the owerpiay, limiting the Royals' scoring opportunities. Boundaries were a rarity, with Royals managing just seven fours and six sixes in their innings. The opening partnership was broken when Yashasvi Jaiswal mistimed a pull shot off Simarjeet.

Riyan Parag, coming in



brates taking the wicket of Rajasthan Royals captain

**SCOREBOARD** 

Rajasthan Royals: Yashasvi Jaiswal c Gaikwad b Simarjeet

24, Jos Buttler c Deshpande b Simarjeet 21, Sanju Samson c Gaikwad b Simarjeet 15, Riyan Parag not out 47, Dhruv

Jurel c Thakur b Deshpande 28, Shubham Dubey c Dube b Deshpande 0, Ravichandran Ashwin not out 1. Extras (lb-1,

Fall of wickets: 1-43, 2-49, 3-91, 4-131, 5-131.

Bowling: Tushar Deshpande 4-0-30-2, Maheesh Theekshana 4-0-28-0, Shardul Thakur 4-0-32-0, Simarjeet

Chennai Super Kings: Rachin Ravindra c&b Ashwin 27, Ruturaj Gaikwad not out 42, Daryl Mitchell Ibw Chahal 22, Moeen Ali c Avesh b Burger 10, Shivam Dube c Parag b

Ashwin 18, Ravindra Jadeja obstructing the field 5, Sameer Rizvi not out 15. Extras (b-1, w-5) 6. **Total (for 5 wickets in** 

Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-67, 3-86, 4-107, 5-121.

Bowling: Trent Boult 2.2-0-24-0, Sandeep Sharma 3-0-30-

0, Ravichandran Ashwin 4-0-35-2, Nandre Burger 3-0-21-1,

Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-22-1, Avesh Khan 2-0-12-0.

Sanju Samson during their match in Chennai on

Sunday. Chennai Super Kings won by 5 wickets.

w-4) 5. Total (for 5 wickets in 20 overs) 141.

at No. 4, capitalised on fortune to craft an unbeaten 47 off 35 balls, surviving two dropped catches, first on 15 by Mahesh Theekshana and then on 34 by Sameer Rizvi. As skipper Sanju Samson joined forces with Parag to stabilise the innings, CSK's spinner Ravindra Jadeja (4-0-24-0) maintained pressure with

a disciplined spell. The duo added 42 runs off 37 balls, but Samson's contribution of 15 runs he found the mid-off fielder with a straight shot. Despite crossing the 100-run mark in 15.3 overs, the Royals' progress was Deshpande sluggish.

struck with consecutive wickets in the final over, dashing the Royals' hopes of touching the 150-run

### **GUJARAT FACE TOPPERS KKR IN MUST-WIN GAME**

Ahmedabad, May 12: Shubman Gill's return to form will provide a big boost to Gujarat Titans as they square off against table-toppers Kolkata Knight Riders in their must-win IPL

game here on Monday. Gill roared back into form with his fourth IPL hundred to keep GT's slim playoff hopes alive with a comfortable win against CSK at home in

their last outing. Gill and Sudharsan's twin centuries were the cornerstone of the hosts' huge total and their role will be crucial once again as they face KKR, which has become the first team to qualify for the

As many as seven teams are still in the race for the playoffs. While Rajasthan Royals (16) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (14) are wellplaced at second and third position, three teams — CSK, Delhi Capitals and Lucknow Super Giants — are at 12 points each.

and Royal Challengers Bengaluru are at 10 points and can reach a maximum of 14 points. With a negative net run-rate, chance are the least and it will take a miracle for the former champions to sneak into the top four.

However, one thing is clear, GT will once again have to play out of their skin and register big wins to keep their mathematical chances alive.

GT's bowling has lacked teeth this season with the pacers inconsistent and spinners leaking runs.



FROM 7.30 PM, LIVE ON STAR SPORTS

#### **POINTS TABLE** N/R Points Net RR KKR (Q) 12 0 18 +1.428 12 8 0 16 +0.349 CSK 13 7 6 0 14 +0.528 12 14 +0.406 RCB 12 +0.387 12 13 -0.482 12 12 -0.769 12 10 -1.063 0 13 -0.271 -0.423

# RCB stay in hunt with Capitals win

Bengaluru, May 12: Royal close to a month due to a Challengers Bengaluru kept their playoff dreams intact through Rajat Patidar's blazing fifty and a strong-willed effort from the bowlers, who set up the hosts' 47-run victory over Delhi Capitals in the IPL here on Sunday.

The target of 188 was not insurmountable, but the Capitals' chase descended into disarray once they lost four wickets inside 3.3 overs upfront, eventually finishing at 140, with Axar Patel 57 (39b, 5x4, 3x6) playing a lone hand.

RCB now have 12 points from 13 matches same as the Capitals and need a win against Chennai Super Kings in the last league match here on May 18 to push their case for a playoff berth. The Capitals also need a

win in their final league game against Lucknow

Super Giants on May 14 to stay in the hunt. Cutting back to the match, Impact Player match,

missed the action for

Warner, who

David

wrist injury, slog-swept left-arm spinner Swapnil Singh into the waiting hands of Will Jacks at deep. The dismissal flagged

off Capitals' train of disaster. Left-arm pacer Yash Dayal (3/20) consumed Abhishek Porel, caught at covers by Lockie Ferguson, in the first ball covers

of the third over.

Delhi suffered a body blow in the very next ball. The in-form Jack-Fraser McGurk, who smashed Mohammed Siraj for two fours and a six in the second over, backed up too far as Shai Hope's straight drive rattled the stumps after taking a deflection of Dayal's outstretched left-hand.

Siraj trapped Kumar Kushagra, who came in for the suspended Rishabh Pant. Axar and Hope (29, 23b) added 56 for the fifth wicket off 36 balls but the partnership offered only temporary relief than any real hope to the visitors.

#### **SCOREBOARD**

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Virat Kohli c Abhishek Porel b Ishant 27, Faf du Plessis c Jake Fraser-McGurk b Mukesh Kumar 6, Will Jacks c Axar b Kuldeep Yadav 41, Rajat Patidar c Axar b Rasikh Salam 52, Cameron Green not out 32, Mahipal Lomror c Abishek Porel b Khaleel Ahmed 13, Dinesh Karthik c Kuldeep ADISINEK POPEL D KNAIGEL ANMED 13, DINESH KATTHIK C KUIDGED Yadav b Khaleel Ahmed O, Swapnil Singh c Kushagra b Rasikh Salam O, Karn Sharma run out (Shai Hope/ Mukesh Kumar) 6, Mohammed Siraj run out (Mukesh Kumar) 0. Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-7) 10. Total (for 9 wickets in 20 overs) 187.

Fall of Wickets: 1-23, 2-36, 3-124, 4-137, 5-174, 6-174, 7-176, 8-

Bowling: Ishant Sharma 3-0-31-1, Khaleel Ahmed 4-0-31-2, Mukesh Kumar 3-0-23-1, Axar Patel 3-0-24-0, Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-52-1, Rasikh Dar Salam 3-0-23-2.

Delhi Capitals: David Warner c Jacks b Swapnil Singh 1, Jake Fraser-McGurk run out (Yash Dayal) 21, Abishek Porel c Ferguson b Yash Daval 2, Shai Hope c Sharma b Ferguson 29 Kumar Kushagra Ibw b Mohammed Siraj 2, Axar Patel c du Plessis b Yash Daval 57, Tristan Stubbs run out (Green) 3, Rasikh Salam c Jacks b Green 10, Kuldeep Yadav b Yash Dayal 6, Mukesh Kumar c Lomror b Ferguson 3, Ishant Sharma not out O. Extras (lb-1, w-5) 6. **Total (all out in 19.1 overs) 140. Fall of wickets:** 1-8, 2-24, 3-24, 4-30, 5-86, 6-90, 7-127, 8-128, 9-

Bowling: Swapnil Singh 1-0-9-1, Mohammed Sirai 4-0-33-1, Yash Dayal 3.1-0-20-3, Karn Sharma 2-0-19-0, Lockie Ferguson 4-0-23-2, Cameron Green 4-0-19-1, Will Jacks 1-0-16-0.

#### **QUICK** BYTES

#### **ESHA, ANISH REGISTER SECOND WIN IN TRIALS**

New Delhi/ Bhopal, May 12: Esha Singh and Anish Bhanwala registheir second Olympic Selection Trial wins in the women's 25m pistol and men's 25m rapid-fire pistol (RFP) respectively here on Sunday. While Anish had won the first trial in the same event in Delhi, Esha had claimed the second trial in the women's 10m air pistol, also at the Karni Singh range in Delhi. At the M.P. State Shooting

Academy (MPSSA) ranges, Esha notched her first win in women's 25m pistol trial, shooting 43 in the finals. Her score was a point more than the world record set by Korean Kim Yeji at the Baku World Cup earlier this month.

#### **DEEKSHA SETS A NEW INDIAN RECORD IN LA**

New Delhi, May 12: Indian track athlete K. M. Deeksha set a new national record in the women's 1500m while Avinash Sable finished second in men's 5000m event at the Sound Running Track Fest in Los Angeles. The 25-year-old Deeksha finished third in the final on Saturday after running the distance in 4:04.78, bettering the previous record of 4:05.39 set by Harmilan Bains in 2021 at the Open Championships in Warangal.

Deeksha's previous personal best was a 4:06.07 set in the final of the National Inter-State Athletics Championships at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar in 2023, where she upstaged Bains to win

## Arsenal down Man U to go top

Manchester, May 12: Arsenal kept their Premier League title dreams alive by ending an Old Trafford hoodoo to grind out a 1-0 win at Manchester United on Sunday to move back top of the table. Leandro Trossard scored

the only goal on 20 minutes as Arsenal won for just the second time in 17 games away at United to go a point clear at the sum-Manchester City still

have the destiny of the title in their own hands as the defending champions have two matches left to Arsenal's one. However, the Gunners kept the pressure on Pep

Guardiola's men ahead of their tricky trip to Tottenham on Tuesday. Defeat further dented United's chances of competing in Europe next sea-

son.
Erik ten Hag's men showed more spirit than in a dismal 4-0 defeat to Crystal Palace on Monday, but have now won just one of their last eight Premier League games.

United remain eighth in the table, three points adrift of both Newcastle, they face on Wednesday, and Chelsea.

Arsenal have been in scintillating form in 2024 to remain in the race for their first league title in 20

Mikel Arteta's men have won 15 and drawn one of Palace had increased the



Leandro Trossard (left) of Arsenal vies for the ball with Manchester United's Amad Diallo during their English Premier League match at the Old Trafford Stadium in Manchester, England, on Sunday. Arsenal won 1-0.

scrutiny on United boss

their 17 league games since the turn of the year. But Arsenal were far from their flowing best as the expected onslaught of an injury-ravaged United never materialised under unusually stifling heat in England's north-west.
The manner of defeat at

Ten Hag. He made three changes to the team swept aside at Selhurst Park as Scott McTominay, Sofyan Amrabat and Amad Diallo

came in. The Dutchman's options were again hamstrung by

captain Bruno Fernandes among those sidelined and a bench littered with youngsters. But his decision to retain Casemiro as a makeshift

centre-back after his woeful showing against Palace will become another stick to beat the beleaguered a lengthy list of absentees coach with.

#### **SPAIN CHAMPS MADRID ROUT GRANADA 4-0**

Barcelona (Spain), May 12: Spanish champions Real Madrid romped to a 4-0 victory over relegated Granada to get their title celebrations started on Saturday.

Carlo Ancelotti's side will parade the league trophy on Sunday in the Spanish capital and a side filled with reserves made light work of the downtrodden Andal-

Brahim Diaz struck twice with Fran Garcia and Arda Guler also on target for Madrid, who defeated Bayern Munich in midweek to reach the Champions final. Los secured th Blancos secured their 36th Spanish title last weekend with four games to spare, but chose not to celebrate to focus on the Bayern clash. A late brace from substitute Joselu settled that match in dramatic fashion and the Spaniard started up front against Granada, with only Antonio Rudiger selected from the side that beat the German giants. After Saint-Germain striker Kylian Mbappe confirmed Friday he was leaving the French side, many Madrid fans are also thinking about his closely rumoured

#### **AMAN IS LONE MALE INDIAN WRESTLER AT PARIS GAMES**

**Istanbul, May 12:** Sujeet Kalkal and Jaideep Ahlawat resisted their respective rivals well at the World Qualifiers on Sunday but could not add more quotas to India's kitty for the Paris Olympic Games, where the country will have only one male wrestler in Aman pre-

senting his challenge.
In his crucial 65kg bronze medal contest, Sujeet matched USA's Zain Allen Retherford in terms of skills but conceded a takedown on counter attack to lose 2-2 on criteria. It was Suieet who got on board first a tremendous counter-attack move. He was about to concede

points on takedown but surprised the American with his quick counter and led the bout for considerable period.

Looking for another take-down, he went after Retherford but it was now turn of the American to pull off a counter move as he got the take-down near the end of circle. Retherford maintained the scoreline to walk out a winner.

Sujeet's defeat also means that if Bajrang Punia, who has been suspended for refusing to provide sample for a dope test, had any hopes to make it to the Paris, they have been dashed.

#### Pragg finishes fourth, Carlsen wins Superbet

Warsaw, May 12: Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa proved himself better than his peers and finished clear fourth while Magnus Carlsen came up with a rousing 8/9 performance on the final day to seal his place at the top of the tables in the Superbet rapid and blitz tournament, a part of the grand chess tour.

Leading by a huge 2.5 points margin going in to the last day with nine rounds of blitz still remaining, Wei Yi of China had to be content with a second place finish after a below par 5 points in the last nine games.

Carlsen won by a whisker getting past Yi in the closing stages of the tournament. The World number one was visibly tired after nine games on Saturday followed by another four games in an event that he played