



BATHINDA NOT A CAKEWALK FOR SAD'S HARSIMRAT INDIA VOTES



AFTER TWIN TERROR ATTACKS, SECURITY BEEFED UP J&K



CARBON FINANCE PROJECTS HOLD POTENTIAL INFOCUS

CONG CONSIDERS LS SEATS AS ANCESTRAL PROPERTIES: PM NATION



f/THETRIBUNECHD | T/THETRIBUNECHD WWW.TRIBUNEINDIA.COM

MONDAY | 20 MAY 2024

Canada
Study + Spouse Visa Together
Do you know?
GLOBIZZ
has the highest approval rate of Study + Spouse Visa together.
Call us at 9815519600
CHANDIGARH | LUDHIANA | PATIALA

Bibhav erased phone data, assault footage blank: Cops

Claim vital Maliwal case evidence lost | Say attack could have proven fatal

SAMAD HOQUE
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 19

The CCTV footage related to the Swati Maliwal assault case that was accessed from Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence turned out to be blank, the Delhi Police told a local court while seeking the custody of AAP chief's personal assistant Bibhav Kumar late last night.

In its application seeking seven-day remand, the police claimed that Bibhav had "admitted to formatting his password-protected iPhone-15 in Mumbai a day before his arrest". They said the device and the accused needed to be taken to Mumbai to recover the data, which was "vital evidence". The police, which was allowed Bibhav's five-day custody, also argued that the alleged assault on Maliwal, AAP's Rajya Sabha MP, on May 13 could have proven fatal.

The police said digital video recording of the drawing room of the CM's Civil Lines residence where the alleged assault took place was not provided officially, and that a portion of it procured unofficially had turned out to be blank.

In their submission in the court, the Delhi Police said Bibhav could not explain as to why he, despite the termination of his appointment as secretary to the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's personal secretary

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



CM Arvind Kejriwal with MPs Sanjay Singh and Raghav Chadha at a protest in New Delhi. MAHARAJAN BHUI

Kejri leads protest to BJP office, alleges 'Op Jhaadu' launched to wipe out AAP

NEW DELHI, MAY 19

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday fired salvos at rival BJP claiming it had launched "Operation Jhaadu" to crush the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as the saffron outfit saw it as a 'potential threat'.

Putting up a brave face in the midst of a massive political storm over the Swati Maliwal assault case, AAP convener Kejriwal, who led party leaders in a protest towards the BJP headquarters here, asked why no money had been recovered

in the Enforcement Directorate raids in the alleged liquor scam. Kejriwal had on Saturday said that AAP leaders would protest at the BJP headquarters and he had dared to "arrest them all".

AAP's march was stopped midway amid sloganeering by the party's leaders and workers. "We waited for half an hour on the road for the police to come and arrest us. But the BJP accepted its defeat," said an AAP statement.

Flanked by MPs Sanjay

Singh and Raghav Chadha and Delhi ministers Gopal Rai, Saurabh Bhardwaj, Atishi and Kailash Gahlot, Kejriwal said people were curious to know if there was any liquor scam, why no money was recovered.

"They (probe agencies) are themselves saying in the Supreme Court that not a single paisa has been recovered.... They say the scam is worth Rs 100 crore. If that's so, why haven't they found even Rs 100 in raids? They have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

IT'S MODI'S GUARANTEE

YOUR ONE VOTE

To Strengthen the Nation's fight against Corruption and Dynastic Politics

To make Viksit Haryana alongside Viksit Bharat

Phir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar

Press the Lotus Button Make BJP Win

Published by: Bharatiya Janata Party, R.A. Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi

Ph-5: Spotlight on Rajnath, Smriti, Rahul

Polling in 49 seats across six states, 2 UTs today | Omar, Lone face Baramulla test

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 19

Polling will be held on Monday in 49 seats across six states and two UTs in the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha poll that will decide the fate of several prominent leaders, including former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Union ministers Rajnath Singh and Smriti Irani and J&K ex-CM Omar Abdullah.

Among the seats going to the polls, 13 are in Maharashtra, 14 in Uttar Pradesh, seven in West Bengal, five in Bihar, three in Jharkhand, five in Odisha, one in J&K and the lone seat in Ladakh. This round covers the least number of seats (49) in the seven-phase elections. It is another important phase for the BJP as over 40 of these seats were with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

On the eve of polling, the EC

YOUTH CASTS 'MULTIPLE VOTES', EC TAKES NOTE

After the Congress and Samajwadi Party posted a video of a youth in UP's Farrukhabad purportedly casting multiple votes in favour of BJP candidate Mukesh Rajput, the Election Commission on Sunday said it had taken cognisance of the video and the authorities concerned had been told to take "prompt and effective action".

on Sunday pointed out that Mumbai, Thane and Lucknow had shown apathy towards voting in the past and asked city dwellers to turn out in higher numbers. The first four phases have registered a turnout of 66.95 per cent. Other prominent candidates include Union ministers Piyush Goyal (Mumbai North, Maharashtra), Sadhvi Niranjana

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

EDIT: PHASEV POLL



Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at a rally in Phulpur on Sunday. PTI

Copter carrying Iranian Prez Raisi crashes, rescue op on

Foreign minister on board too | Bad weather hits search

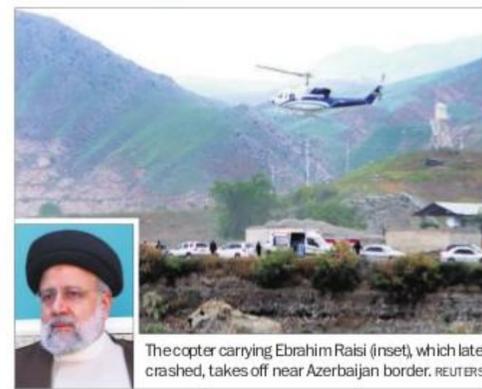
DUBAI, MAY 19

A helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his foreign minister crashed on Sunday as it was crossing mountain terrain in heavy fog, an Iranian official said, adding that rescuers were struggling to reach the incident site.

The official said the lives of Raisi and minister Hossein Amirabdollahian were "at risk following the helicopter crash", which happened on their way back from a visit to the border with Azerbaijan in Iran's northwest.

"We are still hopeful, but information coming from the crash site is very concerning," said the official on the condition of anonymity.

Iranian state media said bad weather was the cause of the crash and was complicating rescue efforts. The chief of



The copter carrying Ebrahim Raisi (inset), which later crashed, takes off near Azerbaijan border. REUTERS

staff of Iran's army ordered all resources of the army and the elite Revolutionary Guard to be put to use in search and rescue operations.

"It is dark and it has started raining, but the search continues. Rescue teams have

reached the area, but the rain has created mud, making the search difficult," a source said.

State TV had earlier stopped all its regular programming to show prayers being held for Raisi across the country and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

The Tribune INTERVIEW: KANGANA RANAUT, BJP CANDIDATE FROM MANDI LOK SABHA SEAT

'Nehru was ready to give up Assam, had announced it'

ONE would think actor Kangana Ranaut's plunge into politics was imminent, but the Bollywood "Queen" has sprung a surprise by stating she is feeling quite lost at the moment.

Even as her candid utterances in the past have come to haunt her, the actual grind of politics is far different from what she has portrayed in films like *Thalaivi*, the biopic on Jayalitha. The contest in Mandi is hogging

media attention, not just in Himachal but nationally, with the 'Mandi ki beti', as she likes to call herself, locked in a keen contest against Congress candidate Vikramaditya, the scion of the erstwhile Rampur royal family. Amidst scepticism about her being a 24X7 politician, she assures she is here to stay, irrespective of the outcome of the poll. In conversation with Dipender Manta, she shares her views on various issues.

“The Congress has ruled the country for about 60 years and the Nehru-Gandhi family has exploited people. Nehru was ready to give up Assam. Unhone announcement bhi kar di thi ki Assam hamare bus mein nahin raha (he had even announced it).

“Despite being well established in the film industry, why join politics?”

At the moment, I am feeling quite lost in politics. It is like making a movie, which is a

creative and gratifying work. The most difficult and tiring work is the marketing. The satisfaction comes when the film succeeds. The same situation applies in politics. As

part of campaigning, I am travelling 400 km daily on potholed roads, but the real happiness and contentment will come when I will bring about a change in the life of people, especially economic progress.

It is true that as an artiste I have done well in the film industry and was also awarded the Padma Shri. I wanted to serve the people of my state and the BJP gave me this opportunity.

“People are apprehensive if you are elected, you will not devote much time owing to your acting commitments.”

I want to make it clear that if people elect me, I will work wholeheartedly for their upliftment and development of this constituency. These apprehensions are being created against me by the opposition party, which has an adverse mindset against women joining politics.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



BJP candidate from Mandi Lok Sabha seat Kangana Ranaut.

SANGAT SAHIB BHAI PHERU SIKH EDU. SOCIETY (Regd). FARIDKOT

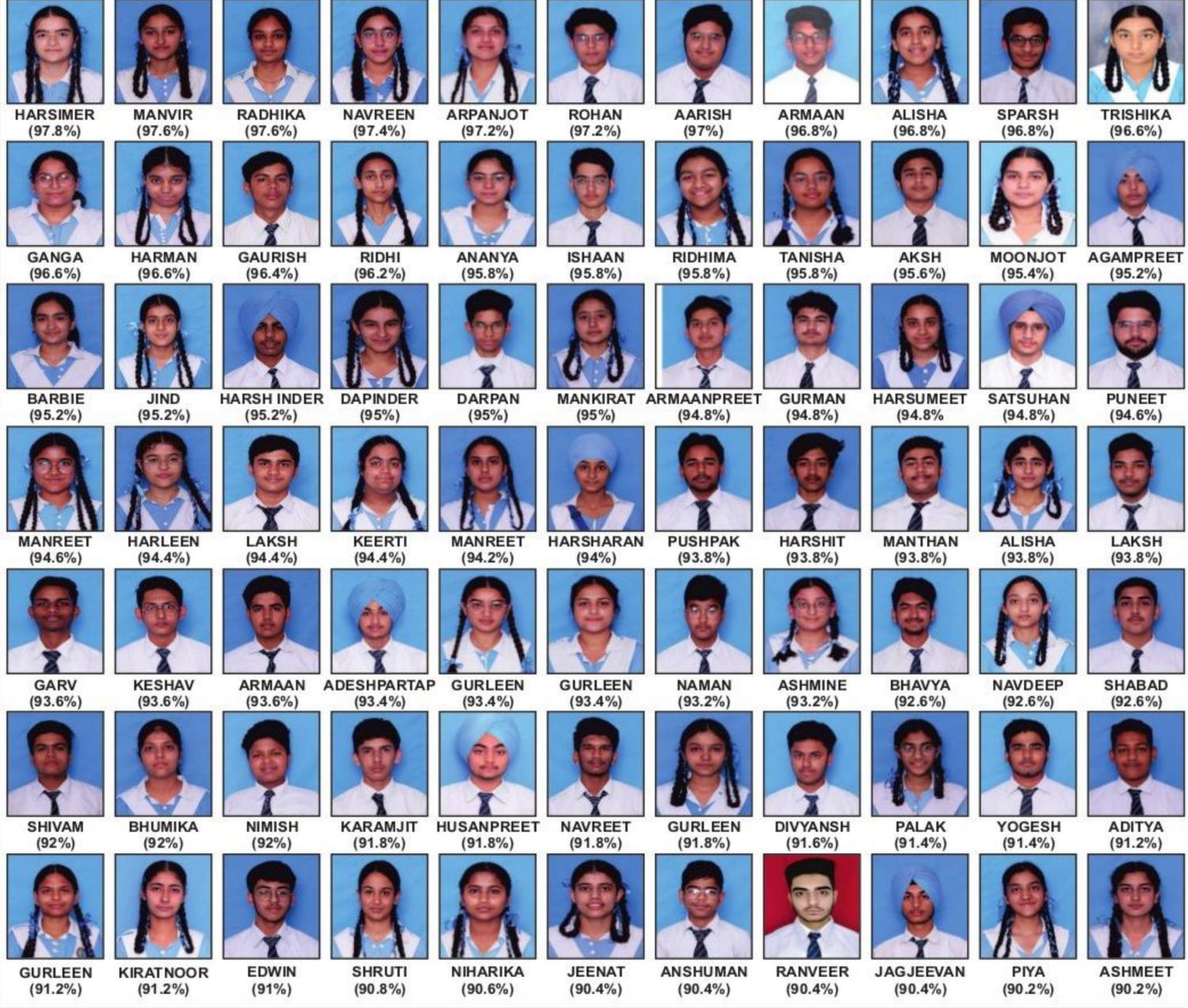
DASMESH PUBLIC SCHOOL, KOTKAPURA

All-India Secondary School Examination (X) March, 2024



Appeared: 184
Passed: 184
90% and above: 81 students
HIGHEST MARKS (Subject wise)

MATHS
 100% (3 students)
PUNJABI
 100% (21 students)
ENGLISH
 100% (1 student)
SOCIAL SCIENCE
 100% (5 students)
SCIENCE
 100% (1 student)
INFO. TECHNOLOGY
 100% (6 students)



DASMESH GLOBAL SCHOOL, BARGARI

All-India Secondary School Examination (X) March, 2024



Appeared: 249
Passed: 249
90% and above: 60 students
HIGHEST MARKS (Subject wise)

MATHS
 100% (4 students)
PUNJABI
 100% (13 students)
ENGLISH
 97% (4 student)
SOCIAL SCIENCE
 100% (4 students)
SCIENCE
 99% (1 student)
INFO. TECHNOLOGY
 94% (1 student)



Congratulations! Parents, Staff and Students for commendable performance.



India has become self-reliant under PM Modi, says Nadda

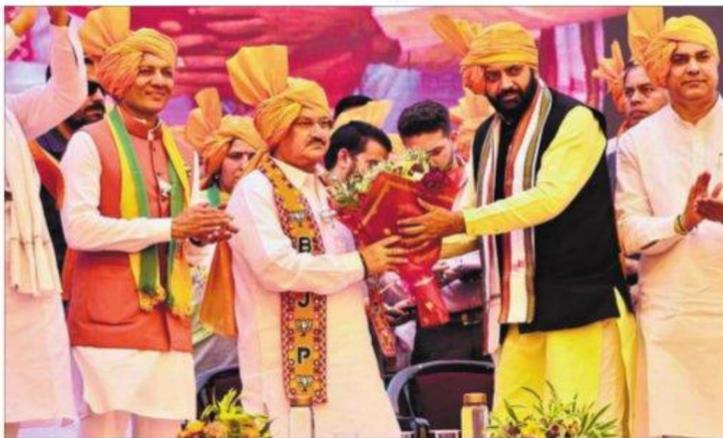
PARVEEN ARORA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL/KAITHAL, MAY 19
BJP national president JP Nadda hailed the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union Government as a beacon of strength and transformative progress in the past 10 years, and criticised the Congress and INDIA bloc on different issues.

He said that under the leadership of Modi, India has become strong and self-reliant. While addressing a well-attended gathering in Kaithal in the support of Kurukshetra Lok Sabha candidate Naveen Jindal, the BJP national president highlighted the achievements of the Modi government in empowering the poor and women, criticised the previous Congress and other governments for working on the basis of caste and religion for their vote bank.

Amid the backdrop of enthusiastic cheers and a sea of saffron flags, Nadda said, "It is an election to elect Modi ji as PM for the third time as the country has witnessed significant change in its political culture in the past 10 years. Earlier, the common man had a belief that nothing will change, but today, the country is progressing with a vision of Viksit Bharat."

He said the government was working on the vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'. Nadda highlighted the works done during the Covid pandemic by the Union Government and said that India has developed two vaccines. "Today, our country is



BJP national president JP Nadda being welcomed at a public rally in Kaithal on Sunday.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT TO HELP BJP WIN

Faridabad: JP Nadda on Sunday said women's empowerment under the BJP's rule is set to prove instrumental in bringing the party into power for the third term. Speaking at a programme organised by the party's Mahila Morcha here, he said while PM Narendra Modi is credited with recognising and promoting women power, the BJP had promoted women leadership at a larger scale as it had 41 women MPs out of the total 78 in the outgoing Parliament.

OPPN IS CORRUPT

Opposition parties promote 'parivaarvad' (dynastic politics) and their leaders indulge in corrupt activities.

JP Nadda, BJP NATIONAL PRESIDENT

not a nation that seeks, but has turned into that which gives," said Nadda.

He claimed that Modi has empowered all sections of society. As many as 25 crore people of the country have moved out of poverty, nearly two lakh common service centres have been established in villages, gas connections have been provided to households through PM Ujjwala Yojana and in the next five years, gas would be delivered through

pipelines.

He said that under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, nearly four crore pucca houses have been provided to the public and three crore more houses would be constructed if Modi returns to power. The BJP national president highlighted the achievements of Ayushman Bharat Yojana.

Nadda was accompanied by CM Nayab Singh Saini, party candidate Naveen Jindal and others. While appreciating the

attendance, Nadda said, "The enthusiasm I see here reassures me that you have decided to send Jindal to Parliament."

Later in Karnal, Nadda, along with former CM Manohar Lal Khattar and CM Saini, held a meeting with the intellectuals of the district at a hotel. He highlighted the achievements of the Manohar Lal-led state government over the past nine and a half years, asserting that the people of Karnal have "laddos" in both hands.

Public determined to oust 'capitalist-driven, autocratic govt': Pilot

Addresses rally for Cong's Selja

SIRSA, MAY 19

Congress leader Sachin Pilot today said the public is determined to oust the "autocratic and capitalist-driven" government at the Centre, and sought votes for party candidates.

The former Rajasthan Deputy CM was addressing a poll rally in Rampura Dhillon village here in support of Congress candidate for Sirsa Lok Sabha seat Kumari Selja. Interestingly, Selja gave Pilot's rally a miss to address a public meeting at Cotton Market.

Pilot said: "A democracy flourishes where judiciary, constitution, and media are robust." He accused the NDA of weakening these institutions and using "unprecedented tactics" to suppress the Opposition. "The public is now determined to oust the autocratic and capitalist-

driven government."

Pilot accused the BJP government of exploiting farmers to benefit a few wealthy individuals, noted that no government representative had genuinely advocated for farmers' interests in the past 10 years.

The Congress leader also criticised the government for failing to fulfill its promise of creating two crore jobs annually, instead creating a vast unemployed population. This, Pilot said, has led many youth into drug addiction and increased crime rates.

He said electoral victories and defeats were part of democracy, but using "unscrupulous methods to win is disgraceful".

He said those boasting about winning 400 seats were doing so out of frustration over impending defeat. —OC

DCs authorised to declare holidays

HEATWAVE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 19

In view of the prevailing heatwave conditions, the state government has authorised DCs to

declare holidays in schools. The DCs, in consultation with DEOs and DEEOs might decide the closure of schools on any particular day till May 31. —TNS

भारतीय सेना / INDIAN ARMY

पशु चिकित्सा कोर में अल्प सेवा कमीशन
SHORT SERVICE COMMISSION IN REMOUNT VETERINARY CORPS

भारतीय सेना के पशु चिकित्सा कोर में अल्प सेवा कमीशन हेतु पुरुष/महिला पशु चिकित्सा स्नातकों से संदर्भित नोटिफिकेशन दिनांक 25 अप्रैल, 2024 को समाचार पत्र में प्रकाशित किया गया था। अब आवेदन पत्र प्राप्त होने की अंतिम तिथि 20 मई, 2024 से बढ़ाकर 03 जून, 2024 तक कर दी गई है।

विस्तृत नोटिफिकेशन वेबसाइट www.joinindianarmy.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। यदि कोई पड़ताल करने से तो महानिदेशालय पशु चिकित्सा सेवाएं, क्वार्टर मास्टर जनरल शाखा, एकीकृत मुख्यालय, रक्षा मंत्रालय (धन सेना), पश्चिमी खण्ड-3, आर के पुन, नई दिल्ली-110066 से लिखित अथवा ई-मेल आई डी: persvet-1779@nic.in में संपर्क किया जा सकता है।

Kindly refer the advertisement for male/female veterinary graduates for Short Service Commission in Remount Veterinary Corps of the INDIAN ARMY published in newspapers on 25 Apr 2024.

The last date of submission of application form is extended from 20 May 2024 to 03 Jun 2024.

नोट :-

- सेना में भर्ती पूर्णतया पारदर्शी और मुफ्त है। इलाकों से सावधान रहें।
- विस्तृत नोटिफिकेशन और जानकारी के लिए कृपया www.joinindianarmy.nic.in पर जाएं।

Note:-

- Recruitment in the Army is totally transparent and free. Beware of touts.
- For detailed Notification, please visit www.joinindianarmy.nic.in

CBC 10681/11/0019/2425

Bulldozer rally in Sirsa ahead of Yogi's visit

ANIL KAKKAR

SIRSA, MAY 19

To support BJP candidate Ashok Tanwar at the Sirsa seat, local MLA Gopal Kanda and BJP leader Gobind Kanda organised a bulldozer rally ahead of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's rally scheduled for Monday.

Everyone was astonished to see the long line of JCB machines (bulldozers). Large cut-outs of the UP CM were placed on each bulldozer. The rally was led by Gobind Kanda.

The bulldozer rally started from near the Mela Ground on Begu Road. MLA Gopal Kanda flagged off the rally with a Shri Ram flag. He said the whole world knows UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as "Bulldozer Baba".



A bulldozer rally being held in Sirsa on Sunday.

Yogi has crushed the mafia in Uttar Pradesh. This bulldozer rally has been organised in his honour, he said. Gopal Kanda added that the people of Sirsa are fortunate to get an opportunity to see Yogi. BJP leaders Gobind Kanda, Ravi

Mehla, Amit Soni, Subhash Chaudhary and Mohit Joshi, among others, participated in the bulldozer rally.

Pradeep Mehta, district coordinator of the legal cell of the INLD has demanded action from the District Election Officer regarding the bulldozer rally.

SIMILAR EVENT IN KURUKSHETRA

Kurukshetra: To invite people to the Vijay Sankalp rally to be addressed by UP CM Yogi Adityanath in Kurukshetra on Monday, a bulldozer rally was organised by the BJP on Sunday. Led by Minister of State and Thanesar MLA Subhash Sudha, it covered various localities of the city and appealed to the people to attend the rally of 'Bulldozer Baba' in large numbers.

Mehta said the BJP is trying to influence voters by using saffron flags on JCB machines and by forcibly tying saffron flags on e-rickshaws in the city. Congress' Naveen Kedia, asked what message the BJP intends to convey by holding such a rally. —OC

Will support Cong in LS elections, says JJP's Babli

SIRSA, MAY 19

JJP MLA from Tohana Deveder Singh Babli today announced his support for the Congress in the Lok Sabha poll.

This decision was made public during a meeting with his supporters in Tohana. After consulting his supporters, the former Haryana cabinet minister decided to back Kumari Selja from the Sirsa Lok Sabha constituency. Montu Arora, a member of a core committee of his supporters, said the committee deliberated for several days before deciding to support the Congress.

The committee's decision was influenced by past incidents, including a 2019 episode where Ashok Tanwar, then with the Congress, allegedly ignored Babli's bid for a ticket from Tohana. In the 2019 Assembly elections, Babli contested on a JJP ticket after failing to secure Congress nomination. He defeated then BJP state president Subhash Barala by about 52,000 votes. Babli was later appointed as the Minister of Development and Panchayats from the JJP quota in December 2021.

Later, in a transparent move, he had sought opinions of his supporters through secret ballot to decide his next political move. —OC

Haryana Diary

Enthusiasm suits party leaders

Yamunanagar: The proposed visit of star campaigner and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge to Yamunanagar has led to a competition among local party leaders for gathering people at his public meeting, which will be held here on May 21. The leaders are contending for party tickets of various Assembly segments in the district. As a result, they are working hard to show their strength to bolster their claim for the party tickets in the state. This enthusiasm among the leaders suits the party, for it boosts its chances in the Lok Sabha and Assembly byelections.

Vij, Khattar show unity at PM's rally

Ambala: Before Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached Ambala on Saturday, both former state Home Minister Anil Vij and ex-Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar showed unity on the stage during a Vijay Sankalp rally. Both leaders, who got a massive response from the public, held hands and raised them as a mark of unity. Vij also praised the former CM and called him Manohar Lal 'Tyagi' for sacrificing his post after being directed to do so by the party.

Modi's handshake with Kartikeya Sharma talk of the town

Ambala: Prime Minister Narendra Modi shaking hands with Rajya Sabha MP Kartikeya Sharma in Ambala has become the talk of the town. A video of the PM interacting with the Rajya Sabha member and meeting other BJP leaders with folded hands is being shared on social media platforms. Recently, Sharma and his father — former minister Venod Sharma, who heads the Haryana Janchetna Party — had announced the decision to BJP candidates and campaign for them in the state. Minister of State and Ambala City MLA Aseem Goel had defeated Venod Sharma in the 2014 Assembly elections.

Worried about own future, MLA seeks support for LS nominees

Faridabad: An interesting scenario came to light during a public meeting in Palwal when a BJP MLA expressed his anxiety over the party's Lok Sabha prospects. He was seen begging before a gathering to support to ensure the victory of the party's candidate from his constituency. "If the party candidates from my constituency fail to emerge victorious, then my chances of getting the party ticket from this segment will fade," said the MLA.

Videos of riots during quota stir surface

Rohtak: Videos and photographs of the ethnicity-based violence that took place during the Jat agitation in 2016 have suddenly started appearing on social media ahead of the LS elections. These videos and photos depict shops burnt in Rohtak. Similar videos had surfaced during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The motive? It's evident enough — to revive the terrible memories of 2016 with an intention of polarising votes on the caste lines.

CONTRIBUTED BY SHIV KUMAR SHARMA, NITISH SHARMA, BIJENDRAHLAWAT AND RAVINDER SAINI

Published by: Bhawesya Jaiswal Party, G.A., Panauti Duen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi

POLL
SNIPPETS

BJP MP JOINS TMC AT ABHISHEK'S RALLY

Kolkata: Jhargram BJP MP Kunar Hembram joined the Trinamool Congress (TMC) in the presence of party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee at an election meeting on Sunday. BJP state spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said, "His departure will not affect the BJP in any way. We welcome people who work for the masses, not for the ticket. Nominating anyone is the party's decision."

CONTROVERSIAL REMARKS: HANS PUT ON NOTICE

Faridkot: Three days after the alleged controversial remarks by BJP candidate Hans Raj Hans at Bihlewala village in Faridkot, Returning Officer of the Faridkot constituency issued a notice to him on Sunday. He will have to file a reply within 24 hours. The action comes following a complaint by representatives of the United Kisan Morcha who accused him of using "inflammatory" language, aimed at polarising voters along caste lines.

BJD MLA SAMIR DASH JOINS BJP

Bhubaneswar: In a boost to the BJP in Odisha, BJD Nimapara MLA Samir Ranjan Dash on Sunday joined the party after quitting the regional outfit. BJP Odisha unit president Manmohan Samal, party's Odisha incharge Vijay Pal Singh Tomar and other leaders welcomed Dash at the party headquarters here. Three-time legislator Dash had earlier in the day resigned from the regional outfit over the ticket denial for the Assembly poll.

Ahead of PM's Patiala rally, farmers plan a 'welcome'

Roads leading to Polo Ground to be sealed | Farmers to soon chalk out strategy

AMAN SOOD
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

PATIALA, MAY 19
Farmer unions, spearheading the protest against the Centre and also boycotting BJP candidates during their visit to villages, will hold a meeting in the next two days to chalk out a strategy in the wake of PM Narendra Modi's rally, his first, next week. Taking no chances, the police have identified routes to the rally venue to ensure that there is no untoward incident.

Despite the farmer unions' boycott call for BJP leaders, tight security arrangements will be in place for Modi's rally on Polo Ground here on Thursday, May 23.

The police have finalised the venue in consultation with the BJP cadre and foolproof security arrangements will be in place as Shambhu already has hundreds of farmers protesting against the Centre and now the farmers will try to oppose the PM visit.

Modi's rally in Patiala will mark his first rally this poll season in Punjab in support of candidate Preet Kaur, who had quit the Congress. Eyeing the vote bank of Patiala urban and rural, the rally will also target traders and businessmen.

However, given the farmer stir, the police are not taking any chances. Senior police officials confirm that two helpads have been reserved for the PM and no one will be allowed on the roads, leading to the rally venue.

"Earlier, we wanted the rally venue to be right next to the Patiala Aviation Club where AAP had earlier held a

huge rally. That venue is the best suited given the landing of the plane and it being the nearest. However, the BJP leaders wanted Yadavindra Sports Stadium or Polo Grounds as the rally venue. Finally, Polo Ground was finalised," said a senior cop.

Meanwhile, the farmer unions, which are already protesting against the BJP candidates, said they would continue their protests. "Our senior leaders will hold a meeting and decide what is to be done to oppose Modi's visit. We are asking questions from the BJP candidates and will also try to question Modi during his visit. We will discuss our strategy in the next two days", says senior leader Jaswinder Singh Longowal.

Talking to The Tribune, Patiala DIG HS Bhullar said security had been tightened in and around the venue and the Special Protection Group, which manages the inner cordon of the PM's security, will be in Patiala to inspect the venue on Monday. "We will deploy an adequate police force and hold special nakas. Everything will take place as per the standard operating procedures", Bhullar said.

"People wanted to listen to the Prime Minister and his vision for Punjab and its people. He will be here talking about the BJP government's road map for the state and for Patiala", said Preet Kaur.

During his visit to Punjab in January 2022, Modi cancelled his programme after a security breach left him stuck on a highway on the way to Perozepur because of protesting farmers.



Members of various farmer unions protest against BJP candidate Sushil Rinku at Phillaur in Jalandhar constituency on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

SPORTSMEN OBJECT

Local sports personnel have raised objections to the rally at the venue, claiming that such rallies and events damage the ground and will also mean no sports activity at the venue for two days. However, senior officials say that the government Sports Department will charge Rs 75,000 for the rally venue and the organisers will have to restore the venue in the condition they have rented it.

PM'S PUNJAB CAMPAIGN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address three public rallies in Punjab on Thursday and Friday, BJP state general secretary Rakesh Rathour said on Sunday. "Modi will address a public rally in the second half of the day on May 23 in Patiala followed by two rallies the next day in Gurdaspur and Jalandhar", he said.



Farmers protest against BJP candidate Anita Som Parkash at Jandwal village in Hoshiarpur. TRIBUNE PHOTO

BJP nominees face Doaba farmers' ire

APARNA BANERJI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

JALANDHAR, MAY 19

The march to Delhi by farmers may have failed to cross the Shambhu border, but its repercussions are being felt by BJP leaders in the state. The BJP candidates in Doaba — Sushil Rinku in Jalandhar and Anita Parkash in Hoshiarpur — are facing intense protests from farmer groups for their unfulfilled demands, including establishment of a law to guarantee MSP for crops.

While farmers at Chabbewal and Mukerian in Hoshiarpur opposed Parkash, Rinku had to face farmers' wrath at Phillaur today. The protests at both Mukerian and Phillaur were held after a call by the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, which had announced that they will protest against the BJP candidates. Yesterday, farmers also protested against Parkash at Chabbewal.

Farmers gathered at the Jandwal village in Mukerian against Parkash and gheraoed her, raising slogans against the BJP. Accompanied by BJP leader Tikshan Sud, she tried her best to pacify the farmers, but in vain. Heated scenes were witnessed as farmers posed pointed questions, which she patiently answered. Farmers, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the responses.

They questioned her about stance of the BJP and her husband Union Minister Som Parkash on the farmers' protest, the demand for MSP

Rinku in Jalandhar & Parkash in Hoshiarpur face intense protests

and on the issue of justice to the martyrs of the farmers' protests. Farmers then questioned her about the barricades put up at Delhi to prevent protesting farmers from entering into the capital. Regarding putting up barricades, Parkash said: "This is a matter between two governments." Farmers retorted: "The Punjab Government did not put up barricades. What did your government do for farmers?"

She stood surrounded by farmers for nearly 10 minutes, until they were dispersed by the police.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Sushil Rinku had to leave a campaign venue in just 30 minutes after farmers of various unions began protesting outside the venue at Phillaur today. Under a call by the SKM, farmers of the Jamhoori Kisan Sabha, Dehati Mazdoor Sabha, BKU Doaba, BKU Qadian and Shaheed Bhagat Singh Naujawan Sabha (non farmer) marched from a park in Phillaur to Rinku's campaign venue and indulged in sloganeering against Rinku saying "Rinku Vapas Jao".

Amidst heavy police presence, they later squatted outside the palace. Amidst fierce opposition, Rinku left the venue in about half an hour.

Have always given my 100%, be it cricket or politics, says Anurag

CAMPAIGN TRAIL
ANURAG THAKUR

PRATIBHA CHAUHAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

HAMIRPUR, MAY 19

It is 11 am as women sing Pahari songs in praise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the precincts of the Sasan Naun Shiv temple in Hamirpur as they eagerly await the arrival of their MP Anurag Thakur for an election meeting.

Thakur left his ancestral home in Samirpur at 8 am to address the first election meeting in Khagal village

under Neri panchayat. Having wrapped up the meeting, he arrives at Sasan at 11.10 much to the delight of the party workers who raise slogans in favour of Modi and Thakur.

Being a four-time MP, Thakur knows most pradhans and party workers by name and speaks to them in the chaste Hamirpuri dialect. He seeks blessings of the elderly by touching their feet and hugging children. Clad in white kurta-pyjama, comfortable walking shoes and the trademark colorful saffron scarf, he quickly gets down to business to be able to wrap up

the day's schedule on time.

Addressing six to eight small election meetings daily which are over by 10 pm, he barely gets five hours of sleep as he spends rest of the time strategising and meeting supporters at his home in Samirpur. Anurag, whose inflammatory chant 'desh ke gadaron kogi maro saalon ko' sparked outrage, retains the same aggressive streak in his fiery speeches with frequent reference to 'tukde tukde gang' and 'Congress ki nafrat ki dukaan'.

He father and two-time Chief Minister PK Dhumal is a big support and wields con-



CONNECT WITH MASSES

- A four-time MP Thakur knows most pradhans and party workers by name and speaks to them in the chaste Hamirpuri dialect
- He seeks blessings of the elderly by touching their feet and hugging children
- He barely gets five hours of sleep as he spends rest of the time meeting supporters at his Samirpur home

siderable influence even though health issue have prevented him from taking to aggressive campaigning this

energy booster which is always in my car," he says.

He admits cricket was always been his first love even though this left his father disappointed who wanted him to join the Army like his grandfather. "I have always given my 100 per cent, be it cricket or politics with the sole motive of making place in the hearts of people," he says. It is probably to fulfil this unfulfilled dream of his father that he became the first-ever sitting MP to become a Captain in the Territorial Army.

In sharp contrast to his image of a former powerful BCCI chairman and a suave

minister handling the important Information and Broadcasting ministry, on his home turf he comes across as a humble, accessible young leader who is a son and brother to most. A man who wears many hats, from being a powerful minister, a former cricketer and a Captain in the Territorial Army, Thakur has huge following among the youth.

The fact that he is likely to be inducted into the Modi Cabinet in case BJP retains power, further brightens his chances of winning. "I don't need to elaborate Modi's personality and achievements as

your song has said it all. This is precisely why Modi ji has provided 50 per cent reservation for women in assemblies and Parliament," he says addressing the women, the most reliable vote bank.

With the speeches over, it is self time, especially for women and youth who have eagerly been waiting to get clicked with him. "Bhashan ke liye 10 minute, selfie ke liye 20," remarks Balbir Thakur, booth level BJP agent hinting at Thakur's popularity. He asserts that to save Sanatan Dharam, getting Modi back to power is essential.

No cakewalk for three-time Akali MP Harsimrat in Bathinda

Villagers say AAP's Khuddian more accessible than her

RUCHIKA M KHANNA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

BATHINDA, MAY 19

A group of villager elders, in spite of the sweltering heat, sits under a tree at Bhaini Bagha village, cracking jokes and discussing mundane things.

Ask them about the political situation in the constituency and almost all 15 of them reply in unison: "We don't like to discuss politics here. It divides and we are here to enjoy ourselves."

As The Tribune team prods them further, urging them to elaborate on the deciding factors for them to cast votes, Karamjit Singh initially shrugs off the question saying the mercury was rising, but the political heat was yet to see an upward trend.

Slowly, as they begin to open up, these villagers compare the "inaccessibility of the three-time MP Harsimrat

Kaur Badal with the easy approachability and humble nature of AAP candidate Gurmeet Singh Khuddian, but they also reminisce the development works done during the Akali rule between 2007 and 2017.

The villagers also talk about an Independent candidate (Lakha Singh Sidhana) and a namesake of Gurmeet Singh being fielded by a political party, dismissing this as old tactics that won't work this time. "We have understood the ways of politicians. Such tactics used to work earlier, but not anymore," says Bhola Singh, a daily wagger hailing from Budhlada.

Even as the polling date (June 1) draws near, the constituency seems quite indifferent to elections this time. As we entered the constituency from Budhlada and traversed through Maur, Mansa



Voters of Bhaini Bagha village in Bathinda discuss the political scenario in the constituency, and (above) Harsimrat Kaur Badal. PHOTOS: RAM KUMAR & PRAWAN SHARMA

and Bathinda (urban and rural), we could hardly see any election paraphernalia. The billboards of most candidates were sparse; party flags and small pole flexes were a rare sight; and other than Harsimrat's party offices visible almost everywhere, the other candidates' campaign seemed a low key.

But this does not mean that the election is a cakewalk for the three-time MP and wife of Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal, though voters still laud the development works carried out during the Akali rule here.

This election for her has been made difficult by Khuddian, who had earlier defeated the Badal family patriarch, late Parkash Singh Badal, in the 2022 Assembly elections from Lambi. Being an Agriculture Minister and contesting from the largely agrarian Lok Sabha seat, he is getting voters' positive response. Free power (300 units) to domestic consumers is also helping out AAP.

The other challengers, including BJP candidate Parampal Kaur Sidhu, known here as the daughter-in-law of Akali leader Sikanar Singh Maluka and not as a former IAS officer; and former MLA Jeet Mohinder Singh Sidhu, who first switched from the Congress to the Akali Dal and is now

6,540 complaints on C-Vigil app in Hry

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 19

Haryana Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Anurag Agarwal said out of 6,540 complaints received on the C-Vigil app, 6,523 had been resolved, with 4,893 being addressed within 100 minutes.

The CEO said voters from 36 states across the country were making extensive use of the C-Vigil app. So far, the commission has received 4,24,320 complaints regarding violations of the model code of conduct. He noted that Uttar Pradesh had only received 6,000 complaints whereas Haryana had received 6,540 complaints.

Even in a large state like Gujarat, only 5,347 complaints have been received. He appealed to the voters of Haryana that whenever they received information about any kind of inducement or threats to vote during the elections, they should report it to the commission through the C-Vigil app.

back in the Congress, have also made deep inroads into the constituency.

Voters remember the work done by Maluka during the Akali regime in Punjab, when no one sought "bribe" from them. Interestingly, while the "betrayal" by the Maluka family maybe raised by some, for voters of Bathinda, it is a non-issue.

Across the nine Assembly segments of this Lok Sabha constituency, namely Lambi, Bathinda, Bhuchio, Bathinda Urban, Bathinda Rural, Maur, Mansa, Sardulgarh and Budhlada, drug abuse continues to be an important election issue.

Other than that, the non-release of compensation for crop loss due to bad weather (though the government has started releasing it); poor implementation of welfare schemes like distribution of ration; PM Grameen Awaas Yojana; and most importantly, the rapidly growing unemployment are the major issues here.

POLL SNIPPETS

33K SECURITY MEN DEPLOYED IN ODISHA

Bhubaneswar: Around 33,000 security personnel, including 102 companies of Central Armed Police Force and 66 platoons of Odisha Armed Police, have been deployed for the May 20 Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in the state.

54 IN FRAY FOR 3 LS SEATS IN JHARKHAND

Ranchi: Voting in three Jharkhand Lok Sabha constituencies — Chatra, Kodema and Hazaribag — and bypoll in Gandey Assembly seat will take place on Monday amid tight security, officials said.

OVER 500 CENTENARIAN VOTERS IN BARAMULLA

Srinagar: Over 500 centenarians are among the 17.37 lakh voters eligible to exercise their franchise in J&K's Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency, with political observers expecting a high turnout on the back of the huge crowds that thronged election rallies and roadshows.

Here, men tell women who to vote for

Men call the shots in rural Haryana | State has 47% female voters but only 16 women are in fray

GEETANJALI GAYATRI

CHANDIGARH, MAY 19 In this corner of patriarchal Haryana, women believe politics is best left to their men when it comes to contesting elections or even voting in them.



PHOTO: VICKY

Three columns of text with quotes from women: 'WOMEN DON'T KNOW', 'IN FAMILY'S INTEREST', and 'WE FOLLOW MEN'. Each column contains a quote and the name of the woman speaking.

dates, I don't know anything about the elections. I have to cast my vote in favour of somebody and I do it. It does not matter who it goes to.

She has hardly finished speaking when the villager who has brought her to work the fields with three other women jumps into the conversation.

They should vote for: We simply accompany tell them which button to press," 30-year old Joginder Singh proudly says.

ties, though there is some disagreement about which leader belongs to which party. At Jind's Nagura bus stand, Poonam, a third year political science student, is returning home after attending her classes.

In Phase-5, Lalu, Paswan's legacy at stake in Bihar

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 19

Five constituencies in Bihar — Saran, Hajipur, Muzaffarpur, Madhubani and Sitamarhi — will vote on Monday to decide the fate of 80 candidates.

Saran once used to be a RJD bastion from where Lalu Prasad Yadav won the Lok Sabha elections thrice. In 1977, he went to Parliament for the first time from Saran on a Janata Party ticket.

In the Hajipur (reserved) seat, the contest is between LJP (Ram Vilas) leader Chirag Paswan and RJD candidate Shiv Chandra Ram.

In Madhubani, the BJP's Ashok Yadav defeated Vikashil Insaan Party (VIP) candidate Badri Kumar Purbey in 2019. This time the RJD has placed Ali Ashraf Fatmi against Ashok Yadav.

In Muzaffarpur, the contest is between the BJP's Raj

ALL EYES ON POLITICAL HEIRS



Saran: RJD has fielded Rohini Acharya, youngest daughter of Lalu Prasad Yadav



Hajipur: Chirag Paswan, son of late Ram Vilas Paswan, will represent LJP (Ram Vilas)

Madhubani: Ashok Yadav, son of former four-time MP Hukumdeo Narayan Yadav, is in fray from BJP

IN UP, 14 SEATS GO TO POLLS TODAY

The stage is set for the 5th phase of the Lok Sabha polls for 14 seats in Uttar Pradesh on Monday, including prominent ones such as Raebareilly, Amethi and Lucknow, marking a crucial moment where the fate of several key candidates is at stake

The constituencies that go to the polls are Raebareilly, Amethi, Lucknow, Faizabad, Kaisarganj, Jalaun, Mohanlalganj, Jhansi, Hamirpur, Banda, Fatehpur, Kaushambi, Barabanki and Gonda

Voters will determine the fate of several prominent leaders, including Union ministers Rajnath Singh and Smriti Irani, along with former Congress president Rahul Gandhi

A total of 144 candidates are contesting in the fifth phase of elections. Initially, the EC received 466 nominations, of which 147 underwent scrutiny and nominations of 144 candidates were deemed eligible and approved for participation in the electoral fray

Bhushan Choudhary and Ajay Nishad of the Congress. In 2019, Nishad won on a BJP ticket defeating Choudhary, who had contested on a VIP ticket. This time, when the BJP dropped Nishad, he joined the Congress.

Fan surge forces Rahul, Akhilesh to leave Phulpur rally

NEERAJ MOHAN

NEW DELHI, MAY 19 Thousands of people broke barricades to get a closer look at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, forcing the two to leave in haste as a stampede-like situation prevailed at a public rally in the Phulpur Lok Sabha constituency of Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj region on Sunday.

workers from both Congress and Samajwadi Party lost control and attempted to breach the security to reach the stage. A massive crowd of workers from both parties flooded the rally, as Gandhi and Akhilesh attracted a large crowd, prompting the workers to break through the barricades and surge onto the stage.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav during a public meeting in Phulpur on Sunday. PTI

The two senior leaders of the INDIA bloc opted to exit the public rally without addressing the assembled crowd. The rally was organised in Padila in Phulpur Lok Sabha in support of Amamath Singh Maurya of Samjwadi Party who is pitted against Praveen Patel of the BJP and Jagannath Pal of the BSP

compromise in security. Visuals from the event depicted broken barricades and a growing crowd, underscoring the intensity of the situation. "This is not just a crowd...It's

post on his X account, with a video of Rahul Gandhi greeting the crowd. Revati Raman Singh, father of Congress candidate Ujjwal Raman Singh from Prayagraj, expressed concerns over the chaotic situation at the rally, saying the crowd was uncontrollable, and the police presence was insufficient.

"People surged towards the stage, leading Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav to exit without delivering their speeches in Phulpur," Singh attributed the mismanagement to the inadequate police force, possibly diverted for election duty elsewhere.

Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav have jointly addressed several poll rallies in Uttar Pradesh, even in Amethi and Raebareilly, a bas-

tion for the former Congress president until he lost the seat to BJP's Smriti Irani in the 2019 General Election.

Later, both leaders went to Allahabad to address another rally in support of Congress candidate Ujjwal Raman Singh. Akhilesh Yadav went to address another rally in Allahabad. Addressing the rally, Rahul urged the party workers to ensure Singh's victory by a margin of over five lakh seats.

"The farmer standing here will know that his income has not doubled. In the 10 years of government, one lakh farmers have committed suicide. Farmers are going to be helped in the coming times," Akhilesh said, urging the charged crowd to preserve their energy and anger against this government till the voting day of sixth phase.

Late don Shahabuddin's wife Hena queers pitch for RJD in Siwan

Defeat in three consecutive Lok Sabha elections — 2009, 2014 and 2019 — fails to deter her from running again

AKSHEEV THAKUR

SIWAN (BIHAR), MAY 19

Hena Shahab is a contrast to her husband Mohammad Shahabuddin, the late don of Siwan, whose writ ran large enough in the area for politicians of all shades to condole his untimely demise due to Covid in 2021.

in the past did not deter her from running again. Needless to say her entry has queered the pitch for RJD with Lalu Yadav's otherwise loyal Muslim vote bank at the risk of division. Campaigning near JP Chowk, a hub here, Shahab reminds people of her husband's philanthropic work.

A Siwan local Mohit Kushwaha tells this correspondent that he owes a lot to Saheb. "After his demise we want to support Hena ji. The RJD should have supported those who stood by them," he says.

Travels in the area took The Tribune to Pratappur, a village where Shahabuddin once lived. Locals here still remember him with awe. It was here that in 2001, Shahabuddin had a fierce encounter with the Bihar police in which 10 persons and two policemen died. "Saheb's family does not



The Siwan constituency has a considerable Muslim population. It has three lakh Muslim, 2.5 lakh Yadav and 2.5 lakh Extremely Backward Class voters

SAHEB TAUGHT ME A LOT

"Saheb (a reference to Shahabuddin) taught me a lot. He did a lot for girls' education and even ensured doctors did not fleece patients. I want to carry forward his work. Not only Muslims, I will get votes from all communities. The RJD abandoned Saheb's family. That was not right."

Hena Shahab, INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE, SIWAN

stay here anymore. But we remember the janta darbar he used to hold here. He heard and resolved our problems," said Mohammad Ayub, a resident of Pratappur.

Shahab gets strength from such locals and politically her claim was boosted when All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) extended support. She tells people of RJD's

desertion of the Shahabuddin family in the hope that her community and others will punish the RJD candidate. Shahabuddin helped a fledgling RJD gain strength

in Bihar and supported Lalu Yadav's party in its formative years through early 1990s. But after his death due to Covid in May 2021, the RJD distanced itself from his family.

Shahab says Muslims of Siwan voted for the RJD in the name of Shahabuddin who represented the segment twice as MLA (1990 and 1995) and four times (1996, 1998, 1999 and 2004) as MP. Shahabuddin died at 53 years while serving a life sentence for double murder.

Shahab is now recalling his legacy carrying the election symbol of auto-rickshaw. Her entry into politics was also linked to the bar on Shahabuddin to contest owing to his conviction in the murder of CPI (ML) activist Chote Lal Gupta. Shahab could never quite fill her partner's shoes. She contested 2009, 2014 and 2019 LS polls unsuccessfully.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, Shahab was defeated by JD(U) candidate Kavita Singh, wife of another gangster turned politician, Ajay Kumar Singh. As for the RJD the last time it won this seat was in

2004 when Shahabuddin was alive. Though, the main contest this time is between JD (U)'s Vijaylakshmi Kushwaha, wife of former JD (U) MLA Ramesh Kushwaha and RJD candidate Awadh Bihari Choudhary, former Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, Shahab's entry has made it triangular.

Ask her why she filed her nominations and Shahab says that in 2022, she sought a Rajya Sabha nomination from the RJD, which declined. "In February 2024, I announced that I will contest LS polls as an Independent," says Shahab. Currently the Grand opposition alliance rules the roost in Siwan. Out of Siwan's six assembly segments (Siwan, Ziradei, Darauli, Raghunathpur, Daraunda and Barharia), the BJP has just Daraunda. The Grand alliance has the rest. Siwan polls on May 25.

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Phase V poll

Amid campaign heat, real issues eclipsed

As voters head to the polling stations today in the fifth phase of the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections, they will determine the fate of 695 candidates vying for 49 seats across six states and two union territories, including Ladakh. With this phase, 428 seats would have been covered, leaving 115 for the final two phases. Key candidates in this round include the BJP's Smriti Irani (Amethi) and Rajnath Singh (Lucknow) and the Congress' Rahul Gandhi (Raebareilly).

The long-drawn-out polls being held amid a heatwave might be causing ennu, but the campaigning has been anything but dull. Political parties have gone all out to capture voters' attention, often drawing the ire of the Election Commission of India (ECI). Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sought to clarify his remarks about Muslims, suggesting that the reference to large families pertained to poorer sections of society. Meanwhile, Sam Pitroda of the Congress resigned, following a backlash over his allegedly racist comments. In West Bengal, BJP candidate and retired judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay received a show-cause notice from the ECI for his derogatory comments about CM Mamata Banerjee. The Aam Aadmi Party is in turmoil over allegations levelled by its Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal against Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar, allowing the BJP to capitalise on the controversy. And then there was Kangana Ranaut.

As a result, several key issues that impact the lives of citizens have been overshadowed. Political rhetoric has increasingly steered clear of a meaningful debate, focusing on personal attacks and inflammatory statements. This trend is eroding the integrity of the democratic engagement, undermining the voters' capability to make informed decisions.

Terror attacks in Valley

Centre must ensure that people vote without fear

TERRORISTS targeted a former sarpanch in Shopian and a tourist couple from Rajasthan in Anantnag on Saturday night ahead of polling for the Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency. The attacks, which claimed ex-sarpanch Aijaz Sheikh's life and left the visiting duo injured, remind us again of the fact that the security forces cannot afford to let their guard down. The violence is clearly an attempt to disrupt the electoral process in Kashmir. Baramulla goes to the polls today, while voting for the Anantnag-Rajouri seat will take place on May 25.

Major political parties, including the National Conference (NC), the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the BJP, have condemned the attacks. Notably, Sheikh was associated with the BJP, which is not in the poll fray in the Valley. The encouraging turnout (36 per cent) in the Srinagar constituency last week — way above the 144 per cent recorded in the 2019 General Election — has raised hopes of a similarly good response from voters in Baramulla and Anantnag-Rajouri constituencies. It is imperative for the Centre to beef up security in these areas and prevent terrorists from attacking local residents, tourists and migrant workers. People should be encouraged to vote without fear so as to send out a strong message that J&K is on the road to normalcy. Candidates and other political leaders have a big role to play in reassuring voters.

The terror attacks should not be allowed to eclipse the fascinating poll battles in Kashmir. While the Baramulla contest is primarily between former CM and NC nominee Omar Abdullah and People's Conference chief Sajad Gani Lone, wild-card entrant Sheikh Abdul Rashid is keeping both of them on their toes. Popularly known as 'Engineer Rashid', he was arrested in the run-up to the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and is still behind bars. The post-delimitation Anantnag-Rajouri seat is also witnessing a multi-cornered contest, with PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti pitted against the NC's Mian Altaf Ahmad and the BJP-backed Apni Party's Zafar Iqbal Manhas.

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, TUESDAY, MAY 20, 1924

Result of 'obstruction' in Bengal

A CLEAR note of irony runs through every line of the lengthy communique, a full text of which is now available, that has just now been published by the Bengal Government, giving reasons for its decision to abolish certain of its departments as a consequence of the rejection by the Swarajists of money grants covering those departments. This "being a transferred subject", says the communique, "His Excellency does not wish to deprive the Legislative Council of the responsibility which Parliament has placed upon them in such matters." As a statement of a well-established and sound constitutional practice, the announcement quoted above is quite correct, but read in the light of the subsequent action of Lord Lytton in retaining his Ministers whose salaries had been practically vetoed by the legislature, it has clearly the appearance of a malicious hit upon the obstructionist policy adopted by the followers of Mr C.R. Das in the Bengal Council. It will be remembered that the Bengal Legislative Council, in the last budget session, accepted a motion for the rejection of the total voted provision under the minor head '32 medical establishments'. By the motion, the Council refused the salaries of Civil Surgeons in charge of 13 districts in the Province and of Assistant Surgeons and Sub-Assistant Surgeons in medical charge of all sub-divisions, together with the establishment of these officers and of the establishment of the Surgeon-General and Civil Surgeons whose salaries are on the non-voted list. The Governor has taken the oppositionists at their word and refused to certify such items as related to the transferred departments.

Hindu-Muslim binary looms large

The CAA is a political ploy to demonstrate that the government is pro-Hindu

TRYSTS AND TURNS
JULIO RIBEIRO

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi said last week: "If I do Hindu-Muslim, I won't be fit for public life." He was commenting on the Election Commission of India's (ECI) notice to the BJP president on Modi's statement at a recent election rally in Rajasthan, where he said that the Congress was intending to snatch the assets accumulated by his supporters over the years (including their wives' *mangalsutras*) to redistribute the wealth among 'infiltrators' and their 'large families'.

Every citizen of our great country knew who the PM was referring to. Caught in a bind, he said he was referring to the 'poor' of India when he talked of those with large families. But he refrained from explaining his simultaneous reference to 'infiltrators' when he spoke about the Robin Hood tendencies of his political enemies. He had crossed the limits set by the ECI's model code of conduct and this was a possible escape route he was trying to explore.

In politics, some lies are to be expected. The problem arises when lies get rolled out every day, especially during election rallies. Take Modi's statement that he would not be fit for public life if he encouraged the Hindu-Muslim divide. Then what is the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that he and Amit Shah boast about, if not an attempt to divide? Last week, we were regaled with the news of the first beneficiaries of the CAA.

A family of Gujarati Hindus, settled in Pakistan's Sindh province, had applied for and succeeded in



PUZZLING: Modi has claimed that he would be unfit for public office if he fuelled Hindu-Muslim discord. PTI

receiving citizenship in India. How was it any different from the million Hindus from Sindh and elsewhere in Pakistan who had crossed over the years to be with their co-religionists? Did any of them face rejection? It would be surprising if even a single instance of such rejection were quoted.

The CAA is a political ploy to demonstrate that the government is out-and-out pro-Hindu, which the BJP dispensation led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee was not. I do not see any motive for introducing the CAA except to needle the minority Muslims and tell them that they are not wanted in Bharat. Hindus crossing over from Pakistan, both West and East, were always welcomed. Why is the BJP trying to prove that it was otherwise, when it was not?

I am happy that Modi clarified in his defence of his Rajasthan speech that large families are to be found largely in poorer households, irrespective of the faith of the couples involved. I hope his clarification is read and believed, particularly by his followers in Gujarat. I had a friendly altercation with them in March 2002, some 15 days after the Godhra train incident and the riots that followed all over that state. I had

I hope Modi's clarification that large families are to be found largely in poorer households is believed by his followers, especially in Gujarat.

gone to Ahmedabad to find out from my former police colleagues why they had failed to control the rioters. In 1985, I had headed the Gujarat Police for four months. The officers in charge in 2002 had worked as my juniors and knew what had to be done to control communal conflagrations.

Gujaratis have been my friends since my school and college days in Mumbai. The Gujaratis of Ahmedabad were well disposed towards me. I was invited to dinner by a respected doctor. He had two dozen couples as guests. After dinner, we

sat down to discuss the happenings in Ahmedabad.

It was soon apparent that communal passions predominated at that dinner. The more vociferous of the guests asserted that every Muslim had four wives and, of course, four or more children from each wife. I asked if in Gujarat there were four million Muslim women for the million Muslim men living there. Of course, my question stumped them, but it did not stop a chorus of voices from asserting the veracity of the original claim. I pointed out to them that in Kerala, with a 27 per cent Muslim population, the community's reproductive rate was reportedly no higher than that of Hindus or Christians because there was 100 per cent literacy among women and their men were gainfully employed in West Asia.

I cannot claim they were convinced. Communal passions were too high at the time of my visit. If Modi really means what he says, he should convince his followers in his own state and other states of India that large families are a corollary of poverty and illiteracy, especially among womenfolk. Religion cannot be blamed for that.

The PM's assertion that he does not dabble in Hindu-Muslim disensions puzzled me. When I returned from Romania in January 1994 and occupied my flat in the city of my birth, I was approached by fellow citizens concerned about the communal divide in Mumbai following the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and the riots that followed. Then Police Commissioner Satish Sahney conveyed to me the views of then CM Sharad Pawar that the alienation of the Muslims was a matter that needed the state's undivided attention.

Sahney and I, with the help of Sushobha Barve of Rajmohan Gandhi's Moral Rearmament outfit, started the Mohalla Committee Movement in the city's slums where arson, loot and killings had taken place in 1992-93. Over the years, after numerous visits to those localities and the active support of the police, we restored a semblance of civility and understanding in the relations between the two communities that live cheek by jowl in those slums.

Just when we started licking our chops and patting ourselves on the back, the Lok Sabha elections of 2014 brought in a BJP government headed by Modi. By 2019, our workers on the ground reported a perceptible change, with fear followed by hatred taking root. Disheartened, the workers had reported that 20 years of positive progress in communal amity has been replaced by divisiveness and hate based on fear. Now, they would have to work much harder to get the two communities to understand each other.

The only saving grace, if one wishes to call it that, was that the probability of clashes between the communities had receded because those who usually engineered violence were now in the driver's seat and those who organised defences felt the futility of doing so in the altered scenario.

So, the PM's contention that he would be unfit for public office if he fuelled Hindu-Muslim discord will continue to puzzle observers like me.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit. —Mahatma Gandhi

Cocktail of piety and politics

RK PRASHAR

ONE afternoon in April, I was having a cup of tea on the verandah when the gate of my house clanged open. A woman with a big smile on her face handed me a flyer which carried details of a religious congregation to be graced by a guru in a sports hall. She repeatedly asked me to attend the gathering.

The guru's name, which was printed on the handbill, rang a bell. A few years ago, I had spotted one of his books that lay on the desk of my colleague, who was his devout follower. As I had quickly browsed it in the colleague's absence, I perceived that the guru's writings bore an uncanny similarity to those of Osho Rajneesh.

The venue for the congregation had a festive look. Keen followers from remote hill districts and neighbouring states had already swarmed into the hall. A few stalls busily sold devotional merchandise to avid followers. The organisers, with an air of humility, hustled around discharging their duties.

As I weaved my way into the hall, a chirpy girl helped me to a corner, where I sat reservedly, intently watching the gathering build up. Before the guru had arrived, a saffron-clad, bearded *baba*, holding a *trishul* upright with a *damru* strung around, came out of nowhere. With saintly quietude, he occupied a seat in the front row. A hush fell over the audience when a clutch of local politicians, including a candidate of a major political party in the upcoming elections, arrived a few minutes before the guru's entry.

The crowd was joyously yammering for the guru's *darshan*. Anticipating his arrival, the followers broke into high-pitched singing of *bhajans*. Lo and behold! The sprightly guru entered the hall amid a deafening applause. Attired in an off-white wrap-around dress, he waved to the adoring crowd and reached the dais.

He had not yet settled down on the couch when the politicians came up the stage and bowed to touch his feet. They huddled together and whispered something to him. They resumed their seats, visibly happy with the guru's tacit electoral blessings.

The goings-on did not strike a chord with me, nor was there any palpable mystical aura about the guru. An exchange of pious platitudes between him and a posse of followers was followed by a Q&A session, during which he gave hopelessly unimpressive answers to mundane questions.

By then, I had concluded that the congregation was a heady mix of piety and politics. Before it became too horrible to bear, I walked out in a huff, pitying the people who fell prey to such humbug.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AAP's moment of truth

The alleged assault on AAP MP Swati Maliwal by Bibhav Kumar, a close aide of CM Arvind Kejriwal, is a stark reminder of the pervasive gender injustice within Indian politics. Maliwal's detailed account of the incident and the distressing nature of her allegations highlight a grave issue: no party, including AAP, is immune to such scandals. The unverified videos targeting Maliwal further complicate the narrative, showcasing the ugly political tactics at play. Kejriwal's silence is deafening and undermines his past advocacy for women's rights. This case is not just about individual culpability but also a test of AAP's integrity and the broader political commitment to gender justice. A transparent investigation is imperative for restoring the public's faith in our political system.

GURDEV SINGH, BY MAIL

Modesty of woman MP

Apropos of the editorial 'Assault on Maliwal'; Bibhav Kumar, the aide of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal accused of assaulting the AAP Rajya Sabha MP, has also filed a police complaint against her, alleging that she had breached the security of the Delhi CM's residence. But it is unfortunate that the AAP national convener has failed to address the incident so far. He must break his silence now; otherwise, it would give the public the impression that he had a hand in the assault on the MP. It is not merely a political issue. It is about the modesty of a woman parliamentarian.

UPENDRA SHARMA, BY MAIL

A matter of gender justice

With reference to 'Assault on Maliwal'; the case is a test for political ethos on gender justice. It underlines the pathetic state of affairs in national politics. The woman MP's allegations of being slapped and kicked by Arvind Kejriwal's aide deserve the attention of the entire nation. How can a prominent woman leader — a Rajya Sabha member — be thrashed like this, and that too, at the CM's residence in the national capital? The top AAP leadership must take a serious view of the episode and address it. When will women in politics start being

treated as dignified human beings with the same rights and privileges as men?

RAJ BAHADUR YADAV, FATEHABAD

Don't politicise religion

Refer to the news report 'PM Modi: Congress will bulldoze Ram Temple if elected'; it is a classic case of a politician exploiting the religious sentiments of a particular community amid the election season to yield electoral dividends. Such irresponsible utterances are beneath the dignity of any leader, let alone a sitting PM. The Congress must raise the matter with the Election Commission of India (ECI). It is now more important than ever to ensure that all political parties and leaders, including the BJP, comply with the code of conduct. No leader should be politicising a religious matter for votes.

JAGDISH CHANDER, JALANDHAR

Making all voices heard

The facility to vote from home provided by the Election Commission of India to those over the age of 85 years and the ones who are differently abled is welcome. Thanks to the initiative, my 95-year-old, ailing mother got to exercise her franchise. Whole teams of people from the district election office have been reaching out to such voters to make sure that their voices are heard. The ECI and government officials performing their duties during the peak of summer and reaching the doorsteps of elderly and specially abled people deserve kudos. This is a big win for Indian democracy.

VINAY KUMAR MALHOTRA, AMBALA CANTT

Chhetri's retirement

Football legend Sunil Chhetri has announced his decision to hang up his boots at the age of 39. Understandably, the news has left millions of his admirers across the world heartbroken. He proved himself to be an incomparable player, a leader and a sportsman par excellence. Football enthusiasts have travelled miles to watch him play in person or stayed glued to TV screens for hours, just admiring his skills. He never let them down and always lived up to their hopes. He has done the country proud.

SPS NARANG, GURUGRAM

External affairs add spice to Amritsar contest



KP NAYYAR
STRATEGIC ANALYST

IF there are a fistful of Lok Sabha constituencies in India where election campaigns overly emphasise external affairs, Amritsar leads them. This is more pronounced in the 2024 contest — four-cornered — than in the previous two parliamentary battles from Amritsar, which this columnist has observed.

Gastronomy is fundamental to the good life in Amritsar. The 2019 contest, among other things, enhanced the international culinary profile of the city, much to the delight of the Punjabi diaspora worldwide. Soon after that election, Hardeep Singh Puri, who contested unsuccessfully from this constituency, was appointed Minister of State with independent charge of Civil Aviation. He recast the in-flight menu of Air India — then a government undertaking — to include *Amritsari kulcha*. It turned out to be hugely popular on Air India's long-haul flights, which served full meals.

Emirates, one of the most popular airlines in the world, noticed the development. Not to be left behind, this flag carrier

of the UAE, posthaste got its flight kitchen conceptualisers to taste *Amritsari kulcha*. Emirates has been far more discriminating than Air India in its choice of food and does not hesitate to copy successful experiments by other airlines, especially in its business and first-class cabins. Finding approval after quick but rigorous vetting by the airline's multinational chefs, this signature Amritsari dish was soon on the in-flight menu of the global airline headquartered in Dubai. Emirates also added *Amritsari chhole* to its breakfast menu. The core passenger revenue of Emirates is owed to flyers from the sub-continent, of which India is at the top. Punjabi and Malayali cuisines are potentially big draws for ethnic Indian passengers. Dishes like *Amritsari kulcha* have made the grade in this respect, but cuisine from Kerala, like *appam* or *puttu*, is yet to be on the dining menus of global airlines.

The jewel in the crown of such internationalisation of Amritsar's foodie culture was when The Oval, among the world's most highbrow sporting venues, served *Amritsari kulcha* in the press box at the 2019 ODI World Cup, jointly hosted by England and Wales. The ingenious move of serving this *desi* preparation during the June 9 India-Australia match proved so popular that on June 27, the Old Trafford stadium in Manchester served *Amritsari chhole* for breakfast



PLEDGE Candidates are promising that India-Pakistan trade through the Attari-Wagah land route would be resumed. ISTOCK

during the India-West Indies match. Edgbaston, a cricket ground in Birmingham, also served *Amritsari kulcha* during the India-England match on June 30.

The foreign policy exceptionalism of candidates of all parties who are traditionally in the fray in Amritsar would surprise — even shock — practitioners of diplomacy in New Delhi, both in Chanakyapuri, the national capital's diplomatic enclave, and the South Block, seat of the Ministry of External Affairs. This election is no different. All candidates in the current election are promising that India-Pakistan trade through the Attari-Wagah land route would be resumed. This is of critical importance for farmers, small

and medium enterprises and exporters in Amritsar district. How they will do it is not clear because India's policy is that terror and bilateral talks cannot go hand in hand. Without bilateral talks, the idea of reopening the land route for trade is a pipe dream. Of the four main candidates in the contest, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the BJP's nominee, is more practical. Without waiting for the reopening of border trade, he is looking at Dubai as a re-export destination for goods from Amritsar that are in demand in Pakistan. For many decades, Dubai has been a transit point for Indian goods like sugar and processed rubber products like truck tyres to Pakistan. It is perhaps a reflection of

Without bilateral talks, the idea of reopening the land route for trade is a pipe dream.

the globalisation of Amritsar's aspirations that two of the four candidates put up by the political parties that matter in Punjab have been non-resident Indians (NRIs). It was the same in the Lok Sabha election five years ago. MA Yusuff Ali and Mukesh Aghi are not in the electoral fray in Amritsar, but their names are often heard not only in the urban segment of this Lok Sabha constituency but also in the border village of Attari.

In last year's *Forbes* list of billionaires, Ali was ranked 27th among the richest Indians. Anticipating another term of the Narendra Modi government, Ali is a regular caller on the BJP's Sandhu. Ali's Lulu Group, with an annual turnover of \$8.4 billion, according to *Forbes* magazine, has established a footprint in Punjab since 2019 in meat processing, agriculture value chains and real estate, including a mall and hypermarkets. Ali has put all his eggs in Sandhu's basket in this election because he anticipates the BJP candidate to be a bridge between Amritsar and New Delhi, irrespective of whether Sandhu wins or loses. Aghi is the President of the Washington-based US-India Strategic Partnership Forum, which is committed to promoting business relations between the two countries. Aghi, several NRIs from Amritsar and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries recently set up the Viksit Amritsar Initiative. It has raised \$100 mil-

lion for startups and human development-focused enterprises in Amritsar.

Elected to the 16th Punjab Vidhan Sabha from Ajnala, near Amritsar, Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal, the incumbent Minister for NRI Affairs and AAP's Lok Sabha nominee from Amritsar, gave up his American citizenship to become into state politics. To be precise, therefore, he was a Person of Indian Origin for consular purposes, an enlargement on an ethnic Indian's NRI status. Puri and Sandhu were NRIs in the technical sense, since they lived in the US as government servants, posted to New York and Washington. Because the deepest aspirations of the people of Amritsar have an international dimension, most of Dhaliwal's speeches in the ongoing campaign are about NRI affairs. Punjab is the only state that has a legally constituted NRI Sabha registered under the Societies Act. Last year, Dhaliwal announced that the state government had decided to hold regular elections to this representative organisation of Punjabis living abroad and returnees to the state.

The incumbent MP Gurjeet Singh Auja, is the only major candidate who does not overly stress Amritsar's external aspirations. But his social connect with people is obvious at weddings, childbirths and funerals. If re-elected, he may have to change course because globalisation is set to expand in this city.

Use the power of the ballot to bail out democracy



NEERA CHANDHOKE
POLITICAL SCIENTIST

WHAT is at stake in the 2024 elections? A great deal because for the past 10 years, the spectre of autocratisation, a process that whittles away the substance of democracy while retaining the façade, has been hanging heavily over our heads. Autocrats have done away with substantive democracy. More troublingly, they have cynically provoked intense polarisation among a people who had re-learned to live together. In the process, we bear witness to the death of the spirit of democracy, ie solidarity. In the heyday of Communism, solidarity referred to fellow feeling among the working classes. Today, the sentiment is important if we want democracy to survive.

Solidarity, or its cousin fraternity, is enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution. Consider the tasks that the Constitution makers had to confront. A

people who had been divided along lines of politicised religion had to accept each other as fellow citizens in a democratic political community. They had descended to the lowest level of humanity during the Partition. The makers of the Constitution tried to introduce a modicum of sanity in the charged atmosphere. They brought to the forefront the normative precepts of political theory — freedom, equality, justice and fraternity — in the Preamble. Indians who were in thrall of religion were offered an alternative: solidarity, which is important for at least two reasons.

One, democracy falters if people do not care about others, about their ill health or poverty, or if a particular community is subjected to rampant injustice. Without solidarity, we become a bunch of rights-bearing, self-interested individuals. Without solidarity, we will continue to live in Hobbes' state of nature, isolated and cut off from the virtues that make us complete as human beings.

Two, history shows that when people come together in shared webs of solidarity against oppression, they move the proverbial mountain. They dislodge regimes that claim to rule by divine right. They dis-



FRANCHISE: Defiance takes different forms — we have the vote. ANI

mantle powerful imperial empires. They challenge governments that abuse power merely by assembling on the streets, as they did in 1989 in Eastern Europe. In Iran, women called out patriarchy by publicly cutting off a lock of their hair. Germans brought down the Berlin Wall. In doing so, they have passionately and courageously propelled solidarity as the centrepiece of the political agenda.

It is not surprising that autocrats, who are in the business of accumulating power, try to divide people. There is nothing quite as awesome in history as the spectacle of masses with-

The tragedy of contemporary India is the closing in of the Indian mind through stories of manufactured enmity.

out leaders or organisations spontaneously arising to defy unjust laws. Defiance takes other forms — we have the vote. We do not need to cut off the King's head, as in the French Revolution. We need to use the vote prudently.

Why is our vote significant? In 2014, a sizeable number of Indians put their trust in Narendra Modi. His charismatic personality was extensively written and spoken about. Charisma in excessive doses can, however, be hazardous for democracy's health. Consider the relentless targeting of the Muslim minority in peculiarly uncivil terms. This is accepted because the leader

is charismatic. So, our Muslim fellow citizens have neither names nor distinct biographies; neither worthwhile belief systems nor languages. The minority is just a sack of potatoes and a mash of potatoes, as Karl Marx had once remarked in a different context. Perhaps, it is easier to inflict violence on people when they have become faceless. They are simply a part of a group that has been vilified through the politics of hate.

The deleterious consequences of right-wing majoritarianism are clear. Slurs that, till 10 years ago, were confined to the subconscious have been catapulted to the forefront of the political agenda and public sphere. We, the people of India, gave to ourselves a Constitution that created a democratic political community. We, the people of India, have been once again divided by cynical power politics. This is the tragedy of contemporary India: the closing in of the Indian mind through unbelievable stories of manufactured enmity.

And we, passionate defenders of democracy, justice, freedom, equality and solidarity, are suffocated when the ruling class casts a pall of fear over the country and when our fellow citizens suffer. Philosopher Brahm

Prakash, author of *Body On The Barricades*, writes that at least some of us are feeling suffocated by the situation shaping Indian society. We are feeling barricaded, chained in our bodies and spaces. I am looking for words and phrases to describe the times we are living through. For me, no other words match the potential and vulnerability of 'I can't breathe'. I am looking for a figurative image that can capture this situation in body and action. The image I see is that of the body on the barricades.

A caveat is in order here. Power that stifles democracy is constantly stalked by Goddess Nemesis, who punishes hubris. The 'significant other' of power is resistance. Resistance does not refute the legitimacy of the state; it rejects the idea that laws are justifiable simply because they have been enacted by the government. In the Gandhian sense, resistance is justified by the belief that ordinary human beings have the moral competence to protest against unjust laws. In solidarity, we protest, we march and we sing revolutionary songs for the sake of democracy and justice. Above all, we vote — one of the most potent weapons of resistance, provided it is used for democracy.

QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Temporary stop (5)
- Light-hearted (8)
- Ardent enthusiast (5)
- Commercial dealings (8)
- Wild hump-backed shaggy ox (5)
- Impudence (3)
- Steal (6)
- Relating to sight (6)
- Surpass (3)
- Concur (5)
- Assign (8)
- Unpromising (5)
- Wartime guerrilla fighter (8)
- Not sleeping (5)

DOWN

- Hermetically sealed (8)
- Hardened by experience (8)
- Tall/sleazy silky-coated dog (6)
- Hard-wearing cotton fabric (5)
- Bottle for condiments at table (5)
- Become aware of (5)
- Allow (3)
- Mild explosive sound (3)
- One-storeyed house (8)
- Easy task (8)
- Proscribe (6)
- Fortunate (5)
- Dazzling light (5)
- Bitterly pungent (5)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS: 1 Lacklustre, 6 Slit, 10 Spasm, 11 Superstar, 12 All the go, 13 Agent, 15 Outward, 17 Thunder, 19 Contend, 21 Abysmal, 22 Rabid, 24 Salutory, 27 Arbitrate, 28 Drape, 29 Nile, 30 Pretty well.

DOWN: 1 Last, 2 Charlatan, 3 Limit, 4 Suspend, 5 Rapport, 7 Lathe, 8 Turn turtle, 9 Treasury, 14 For certain, 16 Anecdote, 18 Demarcate, 20 Despair, 21 Ailment, 23 Babel, 25 Today, 26 Tell.

SU DO KU

7	8	1	9	6	
		3		5	9
		7		3	4
4	1				5
	7	5	1	4	2
2					1
1	2		8		
6	3		5	8	7
	9	6	4	2	

V. EASY

FORECAST

CITY	MAX	MIN
Chandigarh	44	27
New Delhi	44	28
Amritsar	44	27
Bathinda	45	27
Jalandhar	44	29
Ludhiana	45	28
Bhivani	46	30
Hisar	47	27
Sirsa	46	30
Dharamsala	36	24
Manali	28	14
Shimla	29	21
Srinagar	29	14
Jammu	42	26
Kargil	26	09
Leh	20	08
Dehradun	40	26
Mussoorie	28	18

CALENDAR

MAY 20TH 2024, MONDAY

- Shaka Samvat 1946
- Vaishakh Shaka 30
- Jyeshtha Pavishte 7
- Hijari 1445
- Shukla Paksha Tithi 12, up to 3.59 pm
- Siddhi Yoga up to 12.10 pm
- Chitra Nakshatra
- Moon enters Libra sign 4.35 pm

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

7	1	2	9	5	4	6	8	3
4	8	9	6	2	3	1	7	5
6	3	5	8	1	7	9	4	2
8	4	6	1	3	2	5	9	7
3	2	1	5	7	9	4	6	8
9	5	7	4	8	6	2	3	1
1	9	8	3	4	5	7	2	6
5	7	4	2	6	8	3	1	9
2	6	3	7	9	1	8	5	4

Golden Temple footfall drops to half amid soaring mercury

SGPC provides water coolers, sprinklers, additional mats for devotees' convenience

GS PAUL
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

AMRITSAR, MAY 19

The soaring heat has taken its toll on the footfall of devotees at Golden Temple.

Normally, between 90,000-1,00,000 visitors pay obeisance at Golden Temple daily. For the past few days, temple officials said this count had come down to half.

Nonetheless, to beat the heat, the SGPC has made special arrangements for the convenience of the devotees. The timing for visitors is between 4 am and 11 pm.

Golden Temple manager (parikrama) Narinder Singh said, "Barring Sundays, when local devotees also visit the temple, the actual footfall of outsiders has come down to 50,000-55,000 daily. It is just due to scorching heat, we believe," he says.

It requires courage to walk on the marbled *parikrama* (the path that circumscribes the sacred pool from all sides). So, SGPC staffers and volunteers keep on pouring buckets full of water from the sacred pool on the mats.

Narinder adds that it takes no time for the mats to dry up. So, we ensure these mats should remain soaked. "We have doubled the layer of mats. Normally, there used to be two-layered mats, now it's four-layered one," he says.

In the sanctum sanctorum, air-conditioners are on all through the day. Besides the ceiling fans, a special water



Sprinklers have been installed to give relief to the devotees at the Golden Temple. VISHAL KUMAR

FACILITIES FOR PILGRIMS

- In the sanctum sanctorum, air-conditioners are on all through the day
- Besides the ceiling fans, a special water vapour sprinkling mechanism has been introduced
- The carpets inside the shrine too have been replaced with special jute mats as the carpets used to emanate more heat
- Those moving around *parikrama*, can take shelter in verandahs to escape sun rays

NEW TIMINGS

The 'kiwad' (portals) opening time is 2 am when kirtan begins. The departure of 'Palki Sahib' from Akal Takht to the sanctum sanctorum is 4 am, followed by Asa Di Vaar, kirtan, hukumnama and holy reading of 'Rehras Sahib' at the sunset. Sukh Asan (departure of Palki Sahib from sanctum sanctorum to Akal Takht) at 11 pm.

vapour sprinkling mechanism has been introduced. It is fitted under the canopy that stretches from the 'Darshani Deodi' (the entrance gate) that leads to the sanctum sanctorum.

Here, the devotees have to wait in queues for at least 45 minutes and even more to gain entry to the sanctum sanctorum. Narinder says that this special mechanism has been introduced recently.

"The water gets circulated through special pipes fitted overhead. A motor is fitted to this system that converts the water into vapours that are jet sprayed," he says.

The carpets inside the shrine too have been replaced with special jute mats as the carpets used to emanate more heat.

Those moving around *parikrama*, take shelter in

verandahs to escape sun rays. Here fans and coolers have been installed. "Coolers' count too has been increased from 30 to 50 in the complex," says Narinder. A 'shamiana' fitted with the water vapour sprinkling system and fans is installed on the 'parikrama' near the Akal Takht too. Here, the pilgrims sit and listen to the 'Dhadi diwan' staged by the traditional ballad singers.

Jagdish from Maharashtra said though it was scorching heat, an adequate arrangement was done for the visitors. "It's my second visit. The water sprinkling arrangement seems to be successful in beating the heat. Similarly, hassles in walking up the *parikrama* are also minimised with water being thrown on it repeatedly," he said.

Vote for BJP: Manpreet to supporters

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MUKTSAR, MAY 19

Former Finance Minister and BJP leader Manpreet Badal, who is presently recovering from a cardiac problem, today made an appeal through a video message to his supporters to vote for the saffron party.

Manpreet had suffered a heart attack on March 10 and two stents were placed in his artery. He is politically inactive since then and various rumours are doing the rounds about him.

HAS BEEN POLITICALLY INACTIVE SINCE MARCH ON HEALTH GROUNDS

However, in the 4.22-minute video on his Facebook page, Manpreet claimed that the rumours about him were baseless. "The lotus (BJP's election symbol) will bloom. I appeal to my friends that don't wait for me or my health to improve, just vote for the BJP. The country will improve if the BJP comes to power again. Let us support the BJP to take the country forward," said Manpreet in the video clip.

He also lauded PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. In the video, Manpreet, however, did not name any leader of the state unit of the BJP. About a fortnight ago, BJP's Bathinda district president Sarup Chand Singla had sent a letter to Manpreet, seeking his support for the party nominee from Bathinda, Parampal Kaur Sidhu. In the letter, Singla had mentioned the names of some politicians of Bathinda, considered close to Manpreet, missing from the campaigning.



Anantveer Singh Badal campaigns for his mother in Lambi.

In battle of prestige, Badal kids hit the ground running

ARCHIT WATTS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LAMBI (MUKTSAR), MAY 19

In the absence of former CM Parkash Singh Badal, who passed away in April last year, the Badal family's next generation has hit the ground as campaigning has picked up.

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal and the party's Bathinda candidate Harsimrat Kaur Badal's three children - Harkirat Kaur Badal, Gurleen Kaur Badal and Anantveer Singh Badal - are actively campaigning for their mother.

Amid the scorching heat, 22-year-old Anantveer today toured several villages in Lambi Assembly segment, sought votes for his mother and appealed to those who had joined other political parties in the recent past to rejoin the SAD.

Though Anantveer did not give any speech, he sat among the people and allowed them to take selfies with him. In the 2022 Assembly poll, he had campaigned for his grandfather Parkash Singh Badal in Lambi.

Similarly, Harkirat is sweating it out in favour of her mother and campaigned in Bathinda city. In the 2022

Vidhan Sabha poll, she had held a door-to-door campaign for her father Sukhbir in Jalalabad segment.

Gurleen, who has always stayed away from politics, is this time campaigning for her mother. The trio was seen accompanying their parents on the day Harsimrat filed her nomination papers.

Sources close to the Badal family said Harkirat and Gurleen would campaign in Bhikhi and Mansa, while Anantveer would campaign in Lambi, Mansa and Budhlada. "This is the first time that the Badals' next generation is so actively campaigning in an election," said sources.

Besides, the Badal army of relatives is also campaigning. The Badals have also roped in some of their key supporters from the neighbouring segments for the Bathinda parliamentary constituency.

The three-time Bathinda MP, Harsimrat, is pitted against AAP Lambi MLA and Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian, Congress candidate Jeet Mohinder Singh Sidhu, BJP nominee Parampal Kaur Sidhu and SAD (Amritsar) candidate Lakhvir Singh Lakha Sidhana.

Several Oppn leaders join AAP

CHANDIGARH, MAY 19

Numerous leaders of rival parties today joined AAP in Patiala, Ferozepur, Amritsar and Chandigarh. AAP Punjab president and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann formally inducted all leaders into the party fold.

Former MLA Dr Dalbir Singh Verka and SGPC member Bikramjit Singh Kotla joined AAP in Amritsar.

In Patiala, senior BJP leader Inderjit Singh Boparai joined AAP. Even SAD's BC wing district chief Ranjit Singh also joined the party. In Ferozepur, Manjit Sandhu, ex-chairman, Muktsar Zila Parishad, left SAD and joined AAP.

The CM said, "The AAP government is tirelessly working for the masses. Around 830 mohalla clinics have been opened for the needy." — TNS

Duty-bound to criticise AAP in state: Khera

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

JALANDHAR, MAY 19

The Congress today defended critical views of its leaders on the AAP government in Punjab, saying it would have been a "betrayal of the state's people if we joined hands with AAP in the state".

Interacting with the media at the Press Club here, AICC general secretary and media wing in charge Pawan Khera said despite the Congress and AAP being part of the INDIA bloc, it was the responsibility of the Congress to ask questions from the AAP leadership.

"The Congress was tasked with the responsibility of being the Opposition party in Punjab. That means it is duty-bound to question the state government. If we side with

Attacks Centre over Agniveer scheme



AICC secretary Pawan Khera addresses the media in Jalandhar.

the (AAP) government in Punjab, who will ask questions. It would have been a betrayal of the state's people if we joined hands with the AAP here. It would be like siding with the BJP at the Centre. In Delhi, things are different as we didn't receive such a mandate from people. So, whenever the Punjab Government is wrong,

it's our responsibility to ask questions."

The Congress also attacked the Narendra Modi government over farm protest and Agniveer scheme. Asked about farmers' protests against the BJP in the state, Khera said: "While the (BJP) leaders sit in Delhi due to votes of the farmers, that same farm-

ers are not allowed to go to the national capital. What the farmers are asking from you. They are just reminding you of promises made by you to them. But instead the farmers are being called anti-national, Khalistani, etc. Farmers are seeking answers. That is why the Congress manifesto promises guarantees on the MSP."

Targeting Modi, he said, "While the PM has reserved the right to continue in politics, even after the age of 75, an Agniveer is expected to retire at 22. Is this justified?"

Asked about the Congress' repeated charges against the BJP of changing the Constitution if it retains the power, Khera said, "Their leaders — Anant Hegde, Diya Kumari and Arun Govil — have made statements regarding changing the Constitution."

Mann targets Badals at Jaito

FARIDKOT, MAY 19

SAD was the main target of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann when he was seeking votes for his friend and Faridkot's AAP candidate, Karamjit Anmol on Sunday. Mann addressed an election rally at Jaito town of Faridkot today evening.

Mentioning about an upscale resort of Badal family, Mann claimed it will be converted into a school. — TNS

Cong comes up with memes, songs, slogans to target rivals

RAJMEET SINGH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 19

A Punjabi version of *hath badlega halat* and meme *mashoori Mann* on CM Bhagwant Mann are being played at Congress rallies and campaigns across the state, besides on social media platforms.

With almost two weeks left for the polling in Punjab, Congress social media teams have come up with catchy phrases and quirky slogans to pin down its principal opponents BJP and AAP in the political slugfest.

Not only this, the party has also come out with cartoon-based posters to expose the real *badlaav* that the ruling party has brought, be it providing jobs, checking illegal mining, cutting down on government spending or pruning down the VIP security.

In one of the memes, CM Bhagwant Mann is seen dressed as Spiderman and flying around, spending money from the state exchequer on publicity for



the promises that still remain unfulfilled. The shots of the CM using the state chopper for short-distance travelling with AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal at party events are adding spice to the political slugfest.

In a cartoon-based meme, party leader Rahul Gandhi is shown speaking on promises being made on job generation, bringing law on cheating in the competitive exams and regular jobs in the Army by scrapping the Agniveer scheme and adopting an inclusive approach by taking along all religions and com-

munities together while BJP leaders are shown giving statements to divide the communities and religions.

Interestingly, some memes, songs and slogans are shared on the official party platform while others are pushed in through other social media platforms.

Durlabh Singh, who is managing the campaign, said, "While focusing the party manifesto in context of Punjab, the song mentions about the promises being made in the manifesto, specially on agriculture and giving Rs 1 lakh to poor women."

In Gurdaspur, Modi's rally to rejuvenate Babbu's campaign

RAVI DHALIWAL
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

GURDASPUR, MAY 19

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed rally in Dinanagar near here on May 24 is likely to rejuvenate BJP rank and file in Gurdaspur parliamentary constituency, where party nominee Dinesh Singh Babbu has been forced to run a low profile campaign amid farmers' protests at several places.

Gurdaspur constituency has nine Assembly seats, including Dinanagar. The party has followed a two-pronged strategy while selecting Dinanagar as the venue. First, it is equidistant from the remaining eight seats. Secondly, it will be easy for the local leadership to ferry in crowds from the neighbouring seats of Pathankot, Bhoja and Sujapur - all of which are Hindu majority areas.

Senior BJP leaders said Modi was to commence his

party's campaign from this parliamentary seat, but later had put his plans on hold. In 2014, when actor Vinod Khanna contested for the fourth successive time, the PM had kick-started the BJP campaign from Madhopur in Pathankot district. Modi had delivered a speech from near the statue of Jana Sangh founder Shyama Prasad Mukherjee.

Five years later in 2019, when the BJP had fielded actor Sunny Deol, Modi again decided to commence the campaign from this seat.

When Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a rally in Gurdaspur in June 2023, there were clear indications that the PM would sooner or later hold an election rally here. So much so, local leaders had used Shah's event as a dress-rehearsal for Modi's visit.

The rally organisers are worried that the scorching heat might play spoilsport.

Druglord Gopa's wife appears before police

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

JALANDHAR, MAY 19

Kuldeep Kaur, wife of Gurpreet Singh Gopa, a heroin smuggler who was murdered in Jalandhar on May 12, appeared before the police on Saturday after six days.

Kuldeep disclosed that she and her husband had been residing in Mitthapur. Gopa, who was booked in a 532 kg of heroin seizure case, had evaded arrest for four years.

Kuldeep confirmed Gopa's involvement in the heroin trade but denied her participation in his illegal activities.

Kuldeep recounted that on May 12, Gopa informed her that he had boarded a bus from Nakodar for home. She sent her cousin Arsh to receive him from near Wadala chowk. Later that day, Kuldeep received a call from Gopa's phone, indicating he had been shot and she must leave the city. Arsh subsequently arrived, and they quickly packed and left in a car owned by Kuldeep Singh Gora, another drug smuggler and associate of Gopa.

Punjab Diary

Shifting loyalty for security sake



Gurdaspur: SAD leader Ravi Karan Kahlon had been in touch with the AAP leadership, giving rise to the speculation that he could shift loyalties anytime. However, he joined the BJP, leaving both his party colleagues and detractors shocked at the turn of events. Recently, there were reports that an inquiry could be initiated into how he was given so many security guards. He knew that the first thing the BJP would do is to provide security to defectors. Hence, instead of joining AAP, he preferred the BJP. Security is the name of the game here.

All smiles now

Pathankot: Fortunes have turned for BJP candidate Dinesh Babbu. A fortnight ago, farmers did not allowed him to campaign in rural areas. That was a bad news for him. Now comes the good one. The BJP high command has earmarked the Gurdaspur seat as one where the party has decided to spend resources and allocate adequate manpower to ensure its win. Top leaders have been told to campaign for Babbu. The first in this series was Union Minister Gajendra Shekhawat, who addressed gatherings in the constituency. Once a much worried man, Babbu is all smiles now.

A family affair

Batala: Congress candidate Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa has made his campaign a family affair. Almost all members of his family have been assigned duties. His wife Jatinder Kaur looks after the guests who come to meet him at his residence in Dharowali village. His son is taking care of the youth. Likewise, other members have been given specific jobs. Then there are some others who are helping him but never step into the limelight. This is the election time and hence the astute politician in Randhawa is treating his family as friends and friends as family.

Race against time

Patiala: Other than raising slogans against the BJP candidates, the protesting farmers race against time to move from one venue to another. The idea is to question the BJP nominee over the denial of the minimum support price on crops and other farm issues. "Sometimes, we are left with just 15 to 20 members. Thus, we use bikes, cars and even tractors to reach the next destination well in advance," said a farmer.

Stop dreaming, Cong govt will complete five-year term: CM Sukhu to Jai Ram

CM uses 'sold out MLA' barb to target Congress rebels

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 19

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today advised Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur to stop dreaming (about returning to power) as the Congress government would complete its five-year term.

"The new coat that Jai Ram Thakur had got stitched hurriedly to take oath as the Chief Minister after trying to topple the Congress government through money power will remain with the tailor," said Sukhu while campaigning for Satpal Raizada, the Congress candidate from Hamirpur Assembly constituency, in Bilaspur today.

Taking a swipe at the former Congress MLAs who joined the BJP, Sukhu said the public knew why they tried to topple the government and went with the BJP. "Jai Ram Thakur is a flop director. His two films 'Riwaz Badlega' and 'Operation Lotus' have already flopped. His third 'Kangana, Mandi ke Angana' will also meet the same fate," the CM said.

The Chief Minister further



CM Sukhvinder Sukhu along with Congress candidate from Hamirpur Satpal Raizada during an election rally at Bilaspur on Sunday.

JAI RAM A FLOP DIRECTOR: SUKHU

Jai Ram Thakur is a flop director. His two films 'Riwaz Badlega' and 'Operation Lotus' have already flopped. His third 'Kangana, Mandi ke Angana' will also meet the same fate. Sukhvinder Sukhu, CM

said that the BJP has been representing the Hamirpur Lok Sabha seat for the last 26 years, but it has failed to

bring any major project to the constituency in all these years. "The state government is paying 50 per cent cost of

the Bhanupalli - Bilaspur - Leh line worth Rs 1,250 crore, apart from giving the land," he said. "The people should vote for Satpal Raizada, he will raise your voice in Parliament," said Sukhu.

The Chief Minister also reminded people that it was his government that did not compromise the interest of the people when the Adani Group

shut down the cement plant in Bilaspur a few months after his government was formed. "I made it clear to the Adani Group that the interest of the people will not be compromised, and the freight rates of truck operators will have to be revised. The Adani Group had to bow down before the government," the Chief Minister said.

AMBIKA SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SOLAN, MAY 19

The narrative of sold out MLAs is being used to the hilt by the Congress with Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu making it a point to harp on it at every election rally.

Since six Congress MLAs and three independents had voted in favour of BJP's Rajya Sabha candidate Harsh Mahajan, the Congress has been trying to set the narrative of these MLAs being bought by the BJP. Though the independents had earlier promised to support the Congress in the Rajya Sabha they too backtracked on their promise inviting sharp criticism from the ruling party.

At Nalagarh today to address a rally in favour of Shimla Lok Sabha candidate Vinod Sultanpuri, Chief Minister reiterated the same. The local independent MLA KL Thakur earned a new moniker of being 'KL Bikke' which Sukhu coined while addressing the gathering. "He is the first independent MLA who protested outside the Assembly to get his resignation accepted and also went to the High Court for the same but faced defeat



Chief Minister Sukhvinder Sukhu along with Shimla Lok Sabha candidate Vinod Sultanpuri at Nalagarh.

KL THAKUR AT THE RECEIVING END

The local independent MLA KL Thakur earned a new moniker of being 'KL Bikke' which Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh coined while addressing the gathering at Nalagarh in favour of Shimla Lok Sabha candidate Vinod Sultanpuri

His new name is KL Bikke," stated the Chief Minister.

He went on to state that the MLA did not appreciate the respect given by him but instead chose stuff given in the briefcase by the BJP. "He has been sold in the political market of BJP as his sole priority was his personal development," asserted the Chief Minister. The Opposition BJP, on

the other hand, is highlighting the achievements of the Central government to set a development agenda. Their leaders have been dwelling upon the fiscal package provided by the Central government for the rain-induced disaster and also the failure of the state government to utilise them for works like construction of rural roads.

BJP rebels entry enlivens contest



THE presence of BJP rebel and former Minister Ram Lal Markanda in the tribal Assembly constituency of Lahaul Spiti, bordering China, has made the contest tough, especially for Congress rebel and now BJP candidate Ravi Thakur, who has won two elections earlier. Congress played a smart move by fielding Zila Parishad chairperson Anuradha Rana, who is a ground leader. The three candidates shared their vision for the constituency in an interview with Abhinav Vashisht.

'Opportunists calling shots in Congress'

What compelled you to leave your party and defy the voter mandate?

It is not about ideology and manifesto any longer as the thrust is on professionalism and delivering. The Congress is on its way out across the country as opportunists are calling the shots while loyalists are being sidelined. The BJP is one of the best platforms to connect with the people. I joined the BJP to be accountable to the voters of Lahaul and ensure development.

What are the pressing issues in your segment?

The infrastructure of irrigation and drinking water needs to be improved. Horti-



Ravi Thakur, BJP

culturists and agriculturists require support. Road infrastructure needs to be uplifted. Areas of renewable energy plants, solar plants and micro hydel projects must be explored. An airport and new heliports are of dire necessity.

What are the main poll issues?

Health, education, tourism,

employment, economic development, environment conservation and civic issues like drinking water and waste management are the major issues.

What is the vision that you have for the constituency?

Irrigation and potable water facilities will be strengthened. Sewerage plants will be set up in Keylong, Udaipur and Kaza for improving waste management. Keylong hospital will be upgraded to 100-bed facility and colleges will be started in Kaza and Darcha. Religious tourism will be promoted while preserving the region's natural environment.

BJP nominee booked on PWD plaint

UNA, MAY 19

The Dehra police in Kangra district today lodged an FIR against Devinder Bhutto, BJP candidate from the Kulehar seat in the Assembly byelection, on a complaint filed by the PWD, Dehra.

The case reportedly pertains to some irregularities in a work tender issued to Bhutto's firm. Davinder Bhutto is

a partner in a firm, which undertakes civil construction works for PWD.

Bhutto termed it as 'political vendetta' by the Congress government in the state. He said some other complainant had filed the same case in the Himachal HC few months ago, but the Court had dismissed the case. —OC

'Saffron party preferred a turncoat to me'

What compelled you to leave BJP?

I have won three elections, including twice on the BJP ticket. The BJP claims that it was the party of workers but a person, who had abused the BJP and its leaders in the past, was imposed upon the BJP cadres. The BJP falsely assured the ticket and later preferred a turncoat and an opportunist, which hurt me and angered people who compelled me to contest.



Ram Lal Markanda, Independent

What are the main election issues?

There is the question of identity of Lahaul and there is a lot of interference by the outsiders in the politics of the

tribal region. People fear that Kullu might become the centre of politics of Lahaul and it will be controlled by people who are far-fetched from reality. Ravi Thakur had made statements against reservation and the tribals believe that reservation is their right to ensure equitable growth.

What are the most pressing issues in your segment?

Tourism, agriculture, horticulture, health, education and adventure sports are

pressing issues that need to be addressed. Unprecedented development is required in these spheres for growth of the region.

What is the vision that you have for the constituency?

The budget for the area will be restored. Tourism avenues and winter sports will be promoted. Subsidies would be revived in agriculture and horticulture. Overall development of the region would be ensured.

'Going against public mandate not acceptable to masses'

Do you feel the revolt by six Cong MLAs was justified?

This sort of happening occurred for the first time in this tribal area. Going against the mandate of the voters is simply not acceptable to the masses. There is anguish amongst the masses due to this politics of opportunism. Such incidents defy the spirit of vibrant democracy and anti-defection law.



Anuradha Rana, Cong

Rights Act are major issues. Water resources and availability of potable water are a matter of concern due to climatic changes and rapid melting of glaciers. Issues related to floods and natural disasters need to be addressed. Tourism

growth is concentrated in a few areas which needs to be taken to other areas. Means to generate employment and economic development need to be explored.

What are the main poll issues?

People are looking for a change from the orthodox system. Masses have seen the functioning of previous leaders of the constituency with utter disappointment. I am the first woman tribal candidate of the district and a woman has been fielded after

52 years. I have been given the ticket because of my performance as a Zila Parishad chairperson.

What is the vision that you have for the constituency?

Efforts would be made to improve health and education facilities. An environment friendly sustainable model of tourism will be developed and equitable growth of tourism would be ensured in all areas. Development will be ensured at panchayat level for overall development of the district.

PM Modi to hold rallies at Nahan, Mandi

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 19

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold two rallies in the state on May 24, one each in Nahan and Mandi. "The people of the state are

always excited about the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Whenever, he comes to the state, new energy is generated among the BJP workers and the public at large," BJP state president Rajeev Bindal, while holding

a meeting of party workers in Nahan, said.

The Prime Minister will hold the rallies for Suresh Kashyap, the BJP candidate for Shimla LS seat and Kangana Ranaut, the BJP candidate from Mandi. A

good contest is expected on these two seats between the BJP and the Congress. The BJP has started making committees and assigning duties to its leaders to make the PM rallies a grand success.

आवश्यकता है

मोटोसरो स्कूल के रि.पु. बल परिसर हल्लोमाजरा में अस्थायी तौर पर नियुक्ति (11 माह के लिए) हेतु योग्य मुख्य अभ्यर्थिका, अभ्यर्थिका तथा आवा की आवश्यकता है। वेतन एवं शैक्षिक योग्यता संबंधित विवरण निम्नलिखित है :-

पद	पदों की संख्या	वेतन	शैक्षिक योग्यता
मुख्य अभ्यर्थिका	01	9000/- रुपए	एन.टी.टी. या ने.बी.टी./प्रशिक्षित स्नातकोत्तर/प्रशिक्षित स्नातकोत्तर
अभ्यर्थिका	03	7000/- रुपए	एन.टी.टी. या ने.बी.टी./प्रशिक्षित स्नातकोत्तर/प्रशिक्षित स्नातकोत्तर
आवा	02	6000/- रुपए	हाईस्कूल (10वीं पास)

उपरोक्तानुसार योग्यता रखने वाले इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी (महिलाएं) अपने शैक्षिक प्रमाण-पत्रों की छाया प्रति, मूल दस्तोखत तथा स्वयं की नवीनतम पासपोर्ट आकार की दो तस्वीरें लेकर दिनांक 31.05.2024 को सुबह 9.00 बजे पुलिस महानिरीक्षक परिसरमांजर सेक्टर कार्यालय में तात्कालीन साक्षात्कार हेतु पहुंचें एवं सहायता हेतु फोन नंबर 9717483132 पर संपर्क करें।

कमांडेंट-5 सिगनल बटा. के.रि.पु. बल हल्लोमाजरा चंडीगढ़
फोन नंबर : 0172-2925227 (नियंत्रण कक्ष)

दिव्यांगजनों का मतदान करना हुआ आसान

चुनाव का पर्व
DESH KA GARV
LOK SABHA ELECTION 2024

Saksham-ECI App

सक्षम-ईसीआई एप
Saksham-ECI App

मतदान की तिथि
25 मई, 2024

मतदान केन्द्र पर सुविधाएं

- नव मतदाता पंजीकरण के लिए आवेदन
- दिव्यांग मतदाता के रूप में चिह्नित करें
- वोटर कार्ड में संशोधन
- वोटर कार्ड को आधार से लिंक करना

मतदाता के रूप में रजिस्टर करें

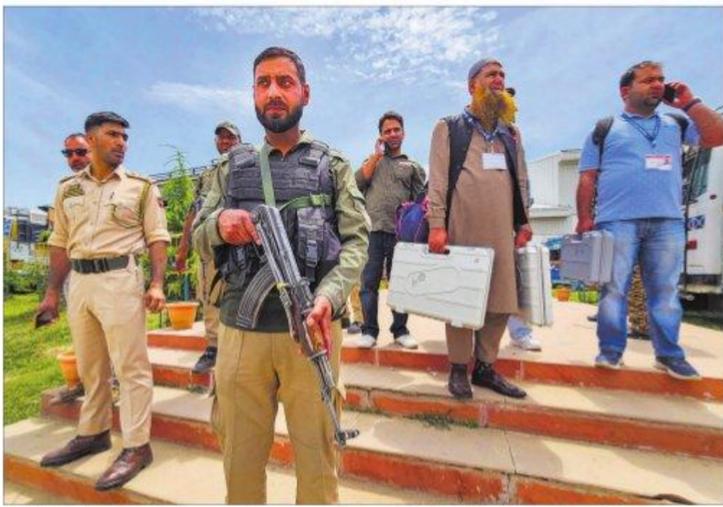
- व्हील चेयर की सुविधा
- निःशुल्क परिवहन सुविधा

प्ले स्टोर से
SAKSHAM-ECI App
डाउनलोड करने के लिए
क्यू आर कोड स्कैन करें

सूचना, लोक सम्पर्क, भाषा तथा संस्कृति विभाग, हरियाणा
www.pharyana.gov.in | Follow us on [social media icons] @dipharyana

मुख्य निर्वाचन अधिकारी, हरियाणा
30 बेज बिल्डिंग, सेक्टर 17, चण्डीगढ़
e-Mail: ceo_haryana@eci.gov.in | Website: www.ceoharyana.gov.in

1950
Voter Helpline



Officials being escorted by security personnel to a polling booth in Baramulla on Sunday. PTI

Big Baramulla battle today

17.3L eligible voters to decide future course of Valley politics

OUR CORRESPONDENT

INDIA VOTES 2024

SRINAGAR, MAY 19

In the fifth phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections on Monday, the Baramulla Parliamentary constituency in north Kashmir is all set to witness a significant contest. Leading the charge are three prominent candidates — NC vice-president Omar Abdullah, Peoples Conference chairman Sajad Lone and the latest entrant, an Independent, Engineer Rashid, who is lodged in Tihar jail since 2019.

The campaign for the Baramulla Lok Sabha seat has been fiercely contested, with Omar and Lone taking prominent roles in their respective campaigns. The entry of a new contender, Engineer Abdul Rashid, has further heightened the anticipation for Monday's election, in which 22 candidates will vie for victory. Jailed leader Engineer Rashid's campaign was led by his 23-year-old son Abrar Rashid. Abrar surprised many with

JAILED LEADER'S ENTRY ELECTRIFIES CONTEST

The campaign for Baramulla seat has been fiercely contested, with NC vice-chief Omar Abdullah and Peoples Conference chairman Sajad Lone taking prominent roles in their respective campaigns

The entry of Engineer Abdul Rashid, who is presently lodged in Tihar jail, has heightened the anticipation for Monday's election, in which 22 candidates will vie for victory

its popularity. He has directly challenged former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Peoples Conference Chairperson Sajad Lone. The NC has historically dominated Baramulla, winning the seat 10 times, including in 2019, when Mohammad Akbar Lone secured victory against the Peoples Conference candidate by a margin of 30,000 votes.

This time, Abdullah and Lone are personally invested in winning the seat, making this contest the most crucial one in Jammu and Kashmir. The defeat of any of these candidates will have a long-term impact on J&K politics.

According to the Election Commission (EC), 17,37,865 lakh people are eligible to vote in Baramulla on Monday, of which 8,75,831 are male and 8,62,000 are female voters. A total of 2,103 polling stations have been set up across the four districts of Baramulla, Kupwara, Bandipora and parts of Budgam. More than 8,000 polling staff,

including reserves, will be deployed on Monday. Besides, there are 28 border polling stations in Kupwara and Baramulla districts.

Voting will take place from 7 am to 6 pm before which there will be a mock poll in the polling stations in presence of polling agents. Voting can continue even after 6.00 pm, if the voters' queue is still there at a polling station.

Every polling station will be provided with Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs) like drinking water, electricity, toilet, ramp, furniture, verandah, shed, wheelchairs, etc.

A total of 18 polling booths will be managed by women (also called as pink polling stations), 17 by specially-abled persons and 18 by youths. There will also be 21 green polling stations in order to create awareness on environmental concerns. All 2,103 polling stations in Baramulla have been equipped with CCTV cameras for live webcasting.

Day after twin terror attacks in Valley, security beefed up in Poonch, Rajouri

Combing operations on in dense forest areas | Anantnag to vote on May 25

OUR CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, MAY 19

The deployment of security forces, including the Army and police, has been considerably increased in Rajouri and Poonch districts, which are part of the Anantnag Lok Sabha constituency, where polling will be held on May 25. Two terrorist attacks took place in the Valley yesterday, in which one person was killed and two were left injured.

With reports that terrorists might be hiding deep in the forest areas, the security forces are holding continuous combing operations in the areas of Rajouri and Poonch along the Line of Control (LoC). A search operation was also launched in Kathua district on Saturday evening, when a suspicious movement was detected near the International Border in the area.

A Special Police Officer (SPO) reported the presence of suspected terrorists near Tarnah nallah in Hiranagar area. However, nothing was found there until Sunday evening.

The attack on a vehicle of the Indian Air Force (IAF) in Surankote area of Poonch earlier this month has also



Northern Command GOC-in-C Lt General MV Suchindra Kumar interacts with troops near the LoC.

put the security agencies on alert. The Army and police are holding continuous searches in the region to stop any other attack amid poll preparation in the Anantnag constituency.

Jammu ADGP Anand Jain visited Rajouri and Poonch districts, where he held review meetings with the officers of police, Army and CAPF in connection with the election. He took stock of the

preparedness of elections and reviewed an area familiarisation exercise.

Senior police officials accompanied the ADGP. He undertook the area familiarisation exercise from Bhimber Gali to Rajouri via Manjakote. This exercise was aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the terrain and strategic points, ensuring enhanced security measures in the region. This

region has become a den of terrorists and Over Ground Workers (OGWs) in the past months as many attacks have taken place here.

The police also held a security review meeting which focused on the security arrangements put in place for the smooth conduct of elections. The ADGP sought inputs from officers on various projects planned to ensure safe and secure elections.

FAROOQ DEMANDS PROBE

NC chief Farooq Abdullah urged the Centre to order a probe into the attacks and also asked Pakistan to stop supporting terrorism in the region

The former Chief Minister said if a probe was not ordered into the two gruesome incidents, his party would "invite an international committee" to conduct an investigation to find out the culprits behind such attacks

ATTACKS REFLECT GOVT FAILURE: MEHBOOBA

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti said the twin terror attacks reflected the failure of the government, claiming that they could have been carried out "deliberately" to frighten people ahead of polling.

During the meeting, emphasis was given on the need for area domination by the police and security forces during the election. The ADGP asked officials to implement a fool-proof plan for the security of candidates and polling booths.

He added that security arrangements for polling booths should be put in place efficiently, keeping in view the vulnerability of the areas.

3 terror associates detained under PSA

JAMMU, MAY 19

Three men alleged to be over-ground workers (OGWs) of terrorists were detained under the Public Safety Act (PSA) in Poonch district on Sunday. Terming the action necessary to maintain public order, police said the three men were assessed to be posing a significant threat to the safety and security of the state.

Poonch and adjoining Rajouri district have witnessed some deadly terror attacks over the past two years, resulting in the killing of a number of security personnel and civilians.

Poonch and Rajouri are part of the Anantnag parliamentary constituency which is going to polls in the sixth phase on May 25.

The detainees were identified as Iftar Ahmed alias "Kaka", Khurshid Ahmed and Ghulam Abbas, all residents of Gursai village of Mendhar, a police spokesperson said. "All three notorious criminals have demonstrated a pattern of behaviour, characterised by the adoption of various tactics, to spread terror and fear within the peace loving community. "Their continuous actions

have posed a serious risk to public safety and tranquility. To prevent further criminal activities detrimental to security of the state and public order, the district police, acting upon a detention order obtained from the district magistrate, Poonch, have taken the necessary steps to detain the three OGWs," the spokesman said.

He said the detention follows a series of meticulously planned operations, reflecting the local police's relentless efforts to combat terrorism and ensure the safety of the public. — PTI

Knife attack at Poonch rally leaves 3 NC workers injured

MENDHAR/JAMMU, MAY 19

Three NC workers were injured when unidentified persons attacked them with knives at an election rally in Mendhar in Poonch district on Sunday, officials said.

NC president Farooq Abdullah was present at the rally organised by the party in support of its Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat candidate Mian Altaf in Mendhar. The rally continued without any disruption.

Officials said there was a clash between two groups

over some issue during the rally. Taking advantage of the melee, the attackers managed to escape, the officials said.

Police have registered a case in connection with the incident and are trying to nab the culprits, they said.

Sohail Ahmad and Yaseer Ahmad, both residents of Harni, and Mohd Inran of Kasblani village, received stab injuries and were taken to a local hospital, the officials said.

Senior NC leader Javed Ahmad Rana termed the incident a "security lapse". — PTI

Bukhari: NC, PDP have only deceived people

SRINAGAR, MAY 19

Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari on Sunday said the NC and PDP had a long history of "deceiving" people. He added that the leaders of these parties had created "empires" and established their family rule by deceiving innocent people who had placed their trust in them.

Bukhari was addressing a party convention at Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district. In his speech, he said dynastic rule had caused serious damage to the interests of Jammu and Kashmir and its people over the past 70 years. He urged people to use the power of vote to rid themselves of the ditches of these traditional parties and their leaders.

Talking about his association with the PDP in the past,



Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari

Bukhari said: "The founding leader of the PDP (Mufti Mohammed Sayeed) claimed that he believed in democratic values and was thus against dynastic politics. We trusted him, not knowing that he too was pursuing the establishment of his own family rule here." Bukhari said the people of J&K could never forget the deaths of children caused by the use of extreme force during the PDP regime. — OC

Bibhav erased phone...

on April 19, continued to work in the CM's residence where he had the "potential to tamper with crucial evidence in the case". "Bibhav Kumar was appointed private secretary to the CM on co-terminus basis on February 27, 2015, which was terminated by the competent authority on April 19, 2024. But he continues to work at the CM's residence," stated the three-pager remand application procured by *The Tribune*.

Citing the reasons for his arrest, ADPC (North) Anjitha Chepyala said, "This is a very serious case where an MP has been brutally assaulted, which could have been fatal. Despite specific questions, the accused has been non-cooperative in investigation and evasive in replies."

The remand application added that since "the attack had been made on a public fig-

ure, who is a sitting MP, and a sustained interrogation was required to find out the motive and ascertain the conspiracy angle and the involvement of persons and organisations inimical to the country".

The police said, "The investigation officer gave a notice to provide one of the most vital pieces of evidence—the digital video recording of the place where the crime took place—but it has not been provided yet. However, on the efforts of the investigation officer, a junior rank officer (at the CM's house)... provided video footage in a pen drive of only the dining room... but it turned out to be blank for the relevant period." The police said they "couldn't rule out tampering with crucial evidence". The police said the accused had to be interrogated in detail.

FROM PAGE 1

'Nehru was ready to give up Assam, had..

such remarks? Ask any patriotic person, there will definitely be anger against the Gandhi family. The Congress has ruled this country for almost 60 years and this family has exploited people. First PM Jawaharlal Nehru was himself a defeated person who was ready to give up Assam. You know, openly he had given away Assam. Unholy announcement bhi kar di thi ki Assam hamare bus mein nahin raha. Is tarhe ke PM the voh... Assam nahin jana chahata tha... Assam ke log keh rahi the Bharat ka koi to adhkari aageaye unke liye.

Then his daughter, Indira Gandhi, became Prime Minister... she imposed the Emergency, converting the country into an open prison. Then you had Sanjay Gandhi, who dreamt of being the PM, and forced sterilisation on people.

■ You are critical of the Gandhi family, and you went to the extent of stating that Independence was achieved by India after 2014. What is the basis

Next, Sonia Gandhi entered politics. During the UPA regime, when Sonia Gandhi was the UPA chairperson, several scams took place in the country. Now despite repeated rejection by the public, Rahul Gandhi is being launched and relaunched.

Regarding my remarks about India becoming Independent after 2014, it was not meant to insult freedom fighters, whom I respect. What I meant was that freedom fighters like Subhas Chandra Bose, Veer Savarkar and others, buried in the pages of history, got due recognition and honour after 2014. Is it only the Gandhi family which has sacrificed for the country? It is after 2014 that we got freedom of speech, thought and Sanatan, which was not there earlier.

■ The Congress has been targeting you over your controversial statements. What is your take? The Congress is anti-women, uses derogatory language against them, talks about their attire, points a finger at their character, especially whenever any woman enters politics. The Congress should learn to respect women and accept their growth in society.

■ What is your vision for the Mandi parliamentary constituency? The development projects which have not been taken up would be executed. The focus will be on having an airport in Mandi, completing the Shiv Dham project and setting up a medical university and a film city, besides improving the road and railway infrastructure.

Kejri leads protest to BJP office, alleges 'Op Jhaadu..

FROM PAGE 1

arrested our leaders in fabricated cases," said Kejriwal, who is on interim bail till June 2 in the liquor scam case.

One of the CM's interim bail conditions was "he will not comment with regards to his role in the present case". It's not yet clear what Kejriwal said today constituted contempt of court.

Silent on the Malviya case, the CM attacked the BJP for "attempting to finish off AAP". "The PM has made up his mind to completely destroy and crush AAP, for which he has launched 'Operation

Jhadoo', he said, urging supporters to brace for a bigger struggle. "Before AAP becomes too big a challenge for the BJP, it has to be crushed. Under this operation, top AAP leaders will be arrested and AAP's bank accounts will be frozen. The ED lawyer has already said in the court that AAP's bank accounts will be frozen immediately after elections," he said. The protest happened a day after Kejriwal's private secretary Bibhav Kumar was arrested for allegedly assaulting MP Malviya and was remanded to five day police custody. — TNS

Copter carrying Iranian Prez Raisi crashes, rescue op on

in a corner of the screen, live coverage of rescue teams deployed on foot in the mountainous area in heavy fog. The rescue teams were expected to reach the probable site of the crash later in the day.

The crash comes at a time of growing dissent within Iran over an array of political, social and economic crises. Iran's clerical rulers face international pressure over Tehran's disputed nuclear programme and its deepening military ties with Russia during the war in Ukraine.

Raisi, 63, was elected president in 2021, and since taking

office has ordered a tightening of morality laws, overseen a bloody crackdown on anti-government protests and pushed hard in nuclear talks with world powers.

In Iran's dual political system, split between the clerical establishment and the government, it is Raisi's 85-year-old mentor Khamenei, supreme leader since 1989, who has the final say on all major policies. For years many have seen Raisi as a strong contender to succeed Khamenei, who has endorsed Raisi's main policies.

Raisi's victory in a closely

managed election in 2021 brought all branches of power under the control of hardliners, after eight years when the presidency had been held by pragmatist Hassan Rouhani and a nuclear deal negotiated with Washington.

However, Raisi's standing may have been dented by widespread protests against clerical rule and a failure to turn around Iran's economy, hamstrung by Western sanctions. Raisi had been at the Azerbaijani border on Sunday to inaugurate the Qiz-Qalasi Dam, a joint project. — Reuters

Ph-5: Spotlight on Rajnath, Smriti..

Jyoti (Fatehpur, UP) and Shantanu Thakur (Bangaon, WB); LJP (Ram Vilas) leader Chirag Paswan (Hajipur, Bihar); Shiv Sena's Shrikant Shinde (Kalyan, Maharashtra), and BJP's Rajiv Pratap Rudy and RJD president Lalu Prasad's daughter Rohini Acharya (both Saran, Bihar).

Rahul, who has contested from Wayanad in Kerala, is also in the fight for Raebareilly, a Nehru-Gandhi family pocket borough represented by his mother Sonia Gandhi since 2004. The BJP has fielded UP Minister Dinesh Pratap Singh. In Amethi, Irani, who had defeated Rahul in 2019, is seeking a second term, while KL Sharma, an aide of the Gandhi family, has been field-

ed by the Congress. Senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh is eyeing a fourth term from Lucknow. He is up against SP MLA from Lucknow Central Ravidas Mehrotra.

In the Faizabad Lok Sabha seat, which covers the temple town of Ayodhya, the electoral contest is mainly between sitting BJP MP Lallu Singh, who is seeking a hat-trick, and Awadhesh Prasad, the SP MLA from Milkipur (SC) Assembly constituency.

In Baramulla, besides Omar Abdullah, former separatist Sajad Lone, ex-MLA Sheikh Abdul Rashid alias 'Engineer Rashid', currently lodged in the Tihar jail, and the PDP's former Rajya Sabha member Fayaz Ahmad Mir are among

the 21 others contesting. In Ladakh, Congress candidate Tsering Namgyal, BJP's Tashi Gyalsan, and Independent candidate and NC rebel Haji Hanifa Jan are locked in a keen contest. About 8.95 crore people, including 4.26 crore female and 5,409 third gender, will cast their votes in the fifth phase. There are 7.81 lakh voters above 85 years, 24,792 above 100 years and 7.03 lakh voters with disabilities, who have been provided the option to vote from their homes. Polling for 23 states and union territories and 379 seats has been completed so far. The sixth and seventh phases are on May 25 and June 1. The counting of votes is on June 4. (With PTI inputs)

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION VACANT

Prem Chand Markanda S.D. College for Women, Jalandhar requires Lady Assistant Professor in English- 2, Commerce- 5, Computer Sc.-4, Hindi- 1, Fine Arts-1, Punjabi- 3, Mathematics-1, Sanskrit-1, Psychology-1, TV/ Video Production- 1, Fashion Designing- 4, Economics- 2, Political Sc.-1, Home Sc.-1, Cosmetology- 2, Physics- 2, Chemistry- 2, Biology- 1, Physical Education- 2 and Instructor-1 (Cosmetology) purely on Adhoc and Temporary basis. Apply within 15 days on prescribed form available in office along with all testimonials Principal Contact 0181-2455122, website- www.pcmsd.ac.in (CL24017124)

Prem Chand Markanda S.D. College for Women, Jalandhar requires Lady Assistant Professor in Perspective in Education (2), Pedagogy subject (1) for BA, B.Ed (4 year Integrated Course) in Physical Education (2) on Management Paid Regular Basis. Reservation Policy as per Punjab Govt. Noms. Qualification and grade as per UGC/ PB. Govt./ GNDU norms. Apply within 15 days on prescribed form available in office on payment of Rs. 300/- along with all testimonials. Principal Contact 0181-2236122, website- www.pcmsd.ac.in (CL24017125)

Guru Teg Bahadur College of Education, Lehal Khurd, (Sangur) Punjab, Affiliated to Punjab University Patiala and Approved by NCTE. Applications are invited for regular post for B.Ed. Course: Assistant Professor in Social Studies- 03, Science- 03, Education- 03, Punjabi- 03, Mathematics- 03, Commerce- 03, English- 03, Hindi- 03, Economics- 03, Librarian- 01. Qualification and salary as per NCTE/ Punjab Govt./ Punjab University norms. Apply at collegejobs.punjabuniversity.ac.in and Email bio-data along with photograph within 15 days at gbecollege@hotmail.com and deandec@pbaiac.in Contact: 98558-04292. (CL24016909)

Guru Nanak College of Education for Women, Lehal Khurd, (Sangur) Punjab, Affiliated to Punjab University Patiala and Approved by NCTE. Applications are invited for regular post for B.Ed. Course: Principal- 01, Assistant Professor in Social Studies- 01, Science- 01, Education- 01, Punjabi- 01, Mathematics- 01, Commerce- 01, English- 01, Hindi- 01, Economics- 01, Librarian- 01. Qualification and salary as per NCTE/ Punjab Govt./ Punjab University norms. Apply at collegejobs.punjabuniversity.ac.in and Email bio-data along with photograph within 15 days at gnceducation@hotmail.com and deandec@pbaiac.in Contact: 98558-04292. (CL24016912)

Vidya International School, Malkwal, Nurpur, District Kangra (HP), urgently requires Special Educator for School. Qualification: B.Ed. (Special Education) or B.Ed. with two years Diploma in Special Education or PGDP in Special Education. Attend interview with original documents. Contact: 98053-94033. (CL24016934)

APJ Smart School, Mundi Kharar, Mohali required experienced qualified PGT Chemistry, PGT Physical Education (Gents preferred), handsome salary. 98789-61498, apjsmartchool@gmail.com (CL24017095)

BTCDAY College, Bankhet (Delhousie), District Chamba. Applications along with testimonials are invited within 21 days for the posts of Assistant Professor purely on temporary basis for the Session 2024-2025 to teach XI, XII, BA, B.Sc., B.Com., BBA & BCA and M.Sc. Physics & Chemistry, English-4, Mathematics-3, Commerce-4, Chemistry-6, Physics-6, Physical Education-1, Botany-2, Zoology-2, Economics-2, History-2, Hindi-2, Business Administration-3, Computer Science-3, Biology-1, Political Science-2, Geography-1, Sanskrit-1. Qualifications as per H.P. University/ Board/ UGC norms. Principal Tel: 97364-28001. Email: bcdvbk@gmail.com (CL24017105)

Montessori Pathankot School Defence Road Pathankot 145001 (CBSE), M. Nos: 98765-70911, 98765-70913 E-mail: mspathankot1@gmail.com, www.mspathankot.edu.in Day & Boarding School. Requires Residential Vice Principal experienced hands with Public School background preferred. Must have core computer skills. Residential staff is allowed free accommodation & Mess facilities. Salary Negotiable apply within 10 days. Principal (CL24017137)

DCM Group of Schools (Since 1946) invites applications for the post of Principal, Bursar, VP Academics, Academic Coordinator (Primary & Elementary), Admin Officer, Chief Warden for its School in Shimla Hills, Teh. Arki, Distt. Solan (HP)- just two hours drive from Chandigarh. Salary no bar for deserving applicants. Accommodation/ vehicle/ perks etc. available. Email CV at career.dcmho@gmail.com, apply.dcmlogs@dcmhschools.com, WhatsApp: 98559-66409. (CL24017148)

PUBLIC NOTICES

I. Rajender Singh son of Sh. Dhanveer Singh resident of House No: 212-5/9, Kumbhar Gali, Tehsil Nahar, District Sirmour 173001, declare that I have changed my name from Rajender Singh Chauhan to Rajender Singh. All concerned please may note. (CL24017147)

I. Harjinder Singh s/o Late S. Ram Singh residence 3115, Sector 22-D, Chandigarh, have changed my name from Harjinder Singh to Harjinder Singh Nagpal. (CL24017149)

For Circulation and Advertisement booking and other related queries please call at following numbers from Monday to Saturday between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.
Circulation: 0172-2670319, 2670250, 2670442
E-mail at: circulation@tribunemail.com
Advertisement: Classified: 0172-2670257, 2670338
E-mail at: classified@tribunemail.com
Display: 0172-2670256, 2670342
E-mail at: advt@tribunemail.com

COURT NOTICES

In the Court of Ms. Komple Dhanjal ACJ(SD), Nawanshahr (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar) CNR No. PBSB02-000193-2024
Next Date: 01.07.2024 at 10.00 am
Balihar Singh s/o Sohan Singh r/o Village Jethu Mazara, Tehsil Nawanshahr, Distt. SBS Nagar ...Applicant
Vs.
General Public and others ...Respondents
Succession Applications
Notice to: 1. General Public, 5. Rajwinder Kaur w/o Satnam Singh r/o Village Jethu Mazara, Tehsil Nawanshahr, Distt. SBS Nagar, 6. Jaswinder Kaur w/o Paramjit Singh r/o Village Jethu Mazara, Tehsil Nawanshahr, Distt. SBS Nagar.
In above titled petition the respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel dated 01.07.2024 at 10.00 a.m.
For details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=sbsnagar

Given under my hand and seal of this Court on 15.05.2024.
Sd/- (Komple Dhanjal) Addl. Civil Judge (Senior Division), Nawanshahr CL24016905 SBS Nagar

In the Court of Ms. Komple Dhanjal, ACJ (SD), Nawanshahr (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar) CNR No.: PBSB02-000370-2023
Next Date: 09.07.2024 at 10.00 a.m.
Charanjit Singh son of Gyan Chand son of Dhani Ram r/o House No. B-3/149 Street No. 1, Bakarkhiana Road, Nawanshahr and Distt. SBS Nagar. ...Plaintiff
Versus
Ravinder Singh and Others ...Defendants
Notice to: 3. Jaspal Singh son of Charanjit Singh son of Baljinder Singh r/o Village Savtaran Nagar, Ludhiana, 4. Kewal D/o Charanjit Singh wife of Kala r/o Village Aur, Tehsil Nawanshahr, Distt. SBS Nagar, 5. Seema Devi d/o Charanjit Singh and w/o Pardeep Singh r/o Village Bulewal, Teh. Balachar, Distt. SBS Nagar, 8. Resham Singh husband of Swarn Kaur d/o Gian Chand r/o Savtaran Nagar, Ludhiana, Teh. and Distt. Ludhiana, 9. Narinder Singh son of Charanjit Singh r/o House No. B-3/149, Street No. 1, Bakarkhiana Road, Nawanshahr, Teh. Nawanshahr, Distt. SBS Nagar.
In above titled petition the defendant(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s) should appear in person or through counsel dated 09.07.2024 at 10.00 a.m.
For details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=sbsnagar

Given under my hand and seal of this Court on 15.05.2024.
Sd/- (Komple Dhanjal) Additional Civil Judge (Sr. Divn.), SBS Nagar (Nawanshahr). CL24016910

DISCLAIMER
"The Tribune Trust does not take responsibility for the contents of the advertisements (Display/ Classified) carried in this newspaper. The paper does not endorse the same. Readers are requested to verify the contents on their own before acting there upon."

COURT NOTICES

(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)
In the Court of Ms. Manisha Jain
Principal Judge Family Court
SBS Nagar
Sunita Rani
Vs.
Pal Ram
CNR No. PBSB01-003945-2021
Next Date: 30.07.2024
MNT-198/2021

Publication issued to: Pal Ram s/o Sh. Nirmal Singh r/o V. Garhi Aji Singh, Aur, Teh. Nawanshahr, Distt. SBS Nagar.
In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 30.07.2024 at 10.00 a.m.
For details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=sbsnagar

Dated, this day of 01.05.2024.
Sd/- Principal Judge Family Court
CL24016911 SBS Nagar

In the Court of Ms. Komple Dhanjal, ACJ (SD), Nawanshahr (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar) CNR- PBSB02-000122-2023
Next Date: 02.07.2024 at 10:00 a.m.
Sukhwinder Singh son of Shingara R/o 10 COPPER WORKS WAY, WALSALL, WS. 3 1FQ UK through its attorney Rohitaj Chaudhary son of Rajinder Chaudhary R/o Nawanshahr, Tehsil Nawanshahr, Distt. SBS Nagar. Plaintiff..
Versus
Sucha Singh and Others ...Defendants..

Notice to: 1. Sucha Singh son of Shingara son of Karnail Singh, 2. Juhar Singh son of Shingara Singh son of Karnail Singh, 3. Kulddeep Singh son of Shingara Singh son of Karnail Singh All R/o Village Musapur, Tehsil Nawanshahr, Distt. SBS Nagar, 4. Prabhvir Singh son of Ranjit Singh R/o Village Ali Chak Tehsil Jalandhar-2, Distt. Jalandhar.
In above titled petition the defendant(s) could not be served. It is order that defendant(s) should appear in person or through counsel dated 02.07.2024 at 10:00 a.m. the details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=sbsnagar

Given under my hand and seal of the Court on 16.05.2024.
Sd/- (Komple Dhanjal) Additional Civil Judge (Sr. Divn.), SBS Nagar. CL24016925

In the Court of Ms. Komple Dhanjal, ACJ (SD) Nawanshahr (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar) CNR No. PBSB02-001410-2022
Next Date: 03.07.2024 at 10:00 am
Canara Bank Branch Office Banga, Tehsil Banga, Distt. SBS Nagar, through Sh. Manish Peshwani Senior Manager at Banga Branch, Tehsil Banga, Distt. SBS Nagar. Plaintiff..
Versus
M/s Bablu Garments and Others Defendants..

Notice to: 1. M/s Bablu Garments its sole owner and Prop. Simranjit Singh Main Road, Banga, 2. Simranjit Singh son of Gundeep Singh sole owner of and Prop. M/s Bablu Garments Main Road Banga, 3. Baljit Singh son of Gundeep Singh R/o H.No. 309/9, Railway Road Banga, Distt. SBS Nagar.
In the above title petition the defendant(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s) should appear in person or through counsel dated 03.07.2024 at 10:00 am.
For details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=sbsnagar

Given under my hand and seal of this Court on 15.05.2024
Sd/- Ms. Komple Dhanjal, ACJ (SD) Nawanshahr (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar) CL24016931

(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)
In the Court of Sh. Jasvir Singh Civil Judge (Senior Division)-N.R.I. Court, Jalandhar
Jaswant Kaur
CNR No. PBJL02-004609-2023
Next Date: 04.07.2024
Publication issued to: Jaswant Kaur w/o Late Karnail Singh s/o Late Rattan Singh r/o Village Chakrala, Tehsil and Distt. Jalandhar at present Block No. 47 Lengkok Bahru # 06-237 Singapore 151047.
In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 04.07.2024 at 10:00 a.m.
For details logon to https://highcourthd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=jalandhar

Dated, this day of 16.05.2024
Sd/- Civil Judge (Senior Division) N.R.I Court Jalandhar. CL24017128

LS seats or ancestral properties? PM targets Cong over dynastic politics



ADITI TANDON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 19
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said he would ensure every corrupt leader spent a lifetime in jail once his new government took shape post the declaration of Lok Sabha election results on June 4.

Addressing a poll gathering in West Bengal's Purulia, a day after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee named a few monks of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha and Ramakrishna Mission for 'openly aiding the BJP over the TMC' in elections, Modi also said a party that disregarded Indian civilisation by openly insulting monks who were bringing glory to India "didn't deserve even a single vote from people."

Later speaking in Jharkhand's Jamshedpur, the PM said the Congress was writing a will, and they consider Parliament seats as their ancestral property. The Congress had announced Rahul Gandhi's as its candidate from the Raebareilly seat, held by his



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being presented a memento during a rally in West Bengal on Sunday. PTI

LOOTED MONEY WILL BE RETURNED TO PAYEES
"On June 4, after the installation of the new government, the life of every corrupt leader will be spent in jail. Money of loot will be returned to those who are its original payees. Narendra Modi, PRIME MINISTER

mother Sonia Gandhi for the past two decades. "Rahul Gandhi is saying it is my mummy's seat, which not even an eight-year-old boy will say. Sonia Gandhi went to Raebareilly and said she entrusted her son to the voters. These people consider parliamentary constituencies as their ancestral property,"

Modi said. The PM's Purulia address, however, stood out for his sharpest remarks on corruption in the 2024 poll cycle so far. Speaking of "illegal cash recovered from the homes of some opposition party leaders, including the Congress, JMM and TMC," Modi said, "On June 4, after the installa-

tion of the new government, the life of every corrupt leader will be spent in jail. And the money of loot will be returned to those who are its original payees." The PM also indicated possibilities of a new law to return the money of the loot recovered by Central probe agencies to people. He said he would not put this money into the national treasury. "Modi is not recovering money to fill the national treasury. It is Modi's guarantee to find people who paid this money and return it to

them. This money belongs to innocent Dalits, tribals and people belonging to backward classes," the PM said.

In Bengal, he came down heavily on Mamata Banerjee for pin-pointing some leaders of Ramakrishna Mission, which Swami Vivekananda founded, and Bharat Sevashram Sangha for helping the BJP over TMC in Bengal.

"With trends indicating a TMC loss, Mamata Banerjee is now openly intimidating people. She dares to publicly name Ramakrishna Mission and Bharat Sevashram Sangha leaders and insult them. The TMC has crossed all limits to appease its vote bank. ISKCON, Ramakrishna Mission and Bharat Sevashram Sangha are adding to national glory. I charge the Bengal CM of working under instructions of Muslim fundamentalists to get votes," Modi said.

Banerjee had on Saturday in poll rallies named some seers for helping the BJP. The PM also brought up Sandeshkhali matter and accused the ruling TMC in Bengal of siding with their leader Shahjahan Sheikh, the alleged perpetrator of sexual assaults on women, and said, "Every daughter of Bengal will destroy the TMC by voting against the party."

Cong INDIA bloc govt will herald stable, predictable policymaking

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 19
Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh accused Home Minister Amit Shah of inciting "fear-mongering" and said an INDIA coalition government shall herald a new age of stable, predictable policymaking and overall prosperity.

He said the economic growth flourished significantly under the leadership of Dr Manmohan Singh. He said Dr Singh's era was marked by higher private investment and manufacturing share percentages. Ramesh attributed the current economic challenges to a series of self-inflicted policy blunders, including demonetisation, implementation of GST and a poorly-planned lockdown.

The Congress leader underscored the adverse impact of the Modi government's policies, which he argued has led to a climate of fear and uncertainty, prompting a notable exodus of traders from India to international destinations such as Dubai, London and Singapore.

Addressing the future outlook, Ramesh outlined the key focus of the INDIA government, emphasising the need to eradicate the prevailing atmosphere of distrust



Congress leader Jairam Ramesh being felicitated by party's Bihar president Akhilesh Singh in Patna on Sunday. PTI

and fear. He reiterated the commitment outlined in the Congress manifesto to foster a conducive environment for private enterprises, regulatory authorities, tax bodies and the government to collaborate harmoniously.

Ramesh condemned the Modi government's alleged vindictive and arbitrary approach, accusing it of favouring a select few and stifling competition. He warned against the ramifications of anti-competitive policies, which he claimed have contributed to underinvestment and exacerbated economic inequalities.

Highlighting promises outlined in the manifesto, Ramesh detailed the Congress' plans to overhaul the tax regime, including the

introduction of GST 2.0 with a single, moderate rate and the enactment of a Direct Taxes Code. Additionally, measures to eliminate exploitative tax schemes hindering investment in small companies and start-ups were emphasised.

The statement concluded with a reminder of the Congress' commitment to address issues such as inflation, unemployment and stagnant wages, all while upholding principles of fiscal responsibility. Ramesh compared fiscal deficit figures between Dr Manmohan Singh's tenure and the Modi government's final year, highlighting the former's superior performance in maintaining a lower deficit percentage relative to GDP.

FSSAI warns traders against use of calcium carbide to ripen fruit

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 19
The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has warned fruit traders and food business operators not to use the banned "calcium carbide" for the artificial ripening of fruits, especially during mango season.

Calcium carbide is commonly used for ripening fruits like mangoes. "It (calcium carbide) releases acetylene gas which contains harmful traces of arsenic and phosphorus. These substances, also known as 'masala', can cause serious health issues such as dizziness, frequent thirst, skin ulcers etc. Additionally, acetylene gas is equally hazardous to those handling it. FSSAI

Considering the issue of rampant use of banned calcium carbide, the FSSAI has permitted the use of ethylene gas as a safer alternative for fruit ripening in India. "Ethylene gas can be used in concentration up to 100 ppm, depending upon the crop, variety and maturity. Ethylene, a naturally occurring hormone in fruits, regulates the ripening process by initiating and controlling a series of chemical and biochemical activities. The treatment of unripe fruits with ethylene gas triggers the natural ripening process until the fruit itself starts producing ethylene in substantial quantities," the FSSAI said. The food regulator has advised the consumers to wash fruits thoroughly with water before consumption.

CAN CAUSE SERIOUS HEALTH ISSUES

These substances, also known as 'masala', can cause serious health issues such as dizziness, frequent thirst, skin ulcers etc. Additionally, acetylene gas is equally hazardous to those handling it. FSSAI

Southwest monsoon on course, hits Nicobar Islands

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 19
Southwest monsoon on Sunday made its onset over the Nicobar Islands, the southernmost region of the country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said here. The Met department said monsoon has advanced into some parts of the Maldives and Comorin areas as well. In 2023, the southwest monsoon onset over the South Andaman Sea made its onset on May 19.

Owing to a cyclonic circulation over Afghanistan and north Pakistan, light rainfall will occur in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit, Baltistan, Muzaffarabad and Himachal Pradesh on May 19 and 21 and Uttarakhand in



A waterlogged road after heavy rain lashed Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday. ANI

the next seven days. Last month, the IMD had predicted above-normal rain during the monsoon season

in India with favourable La Nina conditions, cooling of equatorial Pacific Ocean, expected to set in by August-

September. La Nina conditions help in a good monsoon season over India. Monsoon is critical for

India's agricultural landscape, with 52 per cent of the net cultivated area relying on it. It is also crucial for replenishing reservoirs critical for drinking water. June and July are considered the most important monsoon months for agriculture as most of the sowing for the kharif crop takes place during this period.

A large part of the country is battling with heat waves. The Met department said heat wave conditions will prevail over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi from May 19 to 23, Uttarakhand (May 19 to 22), West Rajasthan (May 21 to 23), East Rajasthan (May 22 to 23) and in some parts of West Uttar Pradesh (May 19 to 21) and East Uttar Pradesh (May 19 to 20).

CLICK BOOK PAY

Scan here to book your ad!

or log on to https://classified.tribuneindia.com

The Tribune
दैनिक ट्रिब्यून
Voice of the People
सिंधी हिमिदुत

GLOBE TROT



GUAVA PROTEST: Supporters of opposition Taiwan People's Party hold guavas, symbolising dishonoured ballots, during a march against ruling Democratic Progressive party in Taipei. REUTERS

2 climbers die on descent after scaling Mt Everest
ULAN BATOR: Two Mongolian climbers have died following their successful ascent of the tallest peak, Mt Everest, from the Nepali side, without supplementary oxygen and assistance of Sherpa guides. Tsendendamba Usukhjargal, 53, and Lkhagvajav Purevsuren, 31, were last in contact on Sunday evening from Camp 4. IANS

Musk launches satellite net service in Indonesia
DENPASAR: Elon Musk travelled to Indonesia's resort island of Bali on Sunday to launch Starlink satellite Internet service in the world's largest archipelago nation. Wearing a green Batik shirt, Musk was greeted with a garland of flower petals. Bali, where he launched the Starlink service alongside Indonesian ministers. AP

Will resign if 'no Gaza plan' by June 8, says Bibi's war minister

DEIRAL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP), MAY 19
 An Israeli airstrike killed 27 people in central Gaza, mostly women and children, and fighting with Hamas raged across the north on Sunday as Israel's leaders aired divisions over who should govern Gaza after the war, now in its eighth month.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces criticism from the two other members of his War Cabinet, with his main political rival, Benny Gantz, threatening to leave the government if a plan is not created by June 8 that includes an international administration for postwar Gaza.

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan met Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders on Sunday to discuss an ambitious US plan for Saudi Arabia to recognise Israel and help the Palestinian Authority to govern



Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu & war minister Benny Gantz

JORDAN DEMANDS INVESTIGATION OF 'WAR CRIMES'

AMMAN: Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said on Sunday that the kingdom demanded an international investigation into what it said were many war crimes committed during Israel's military campaign in Gaza. During a press conference with the head of the UN Palestinian refugee agency, Safadi said those responsible for documented crimes should be brought to justice.

Gaza in exchange for a path to eventual statehood. Israeli officials said Netanyahu and his senior aides would try to reach agreement with Sullivan about the need for press ahead with the Rafah push. Netanyahu opposes Palestinian statehood and has rejected those proposals, say-

ing Israel will maintain open-ended security control over Gaza and partner with local Palestinians unaffiliated with Hamas or the Western-backed Palestinian Authority. Gantz's ultimatum expressed support for normalising ties with Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries, but he also said "we will not allow any outside power, friendly or hostile, to impose a Palestinian state on us".

Gantz's withdrawal would not bring down Netanyahu's coalition government but would leave him more reliant on far-right allies who support the "voluntary emigration" of Palestinians from Gaza, full military occupation and the rebuilding of Jewish settlements there. Even as discussions about the future take on new weight, the war rages. — Reuters



TENSIONS FLARE UP: Pro-Palestinian protesters block a local street in the Brooklyn borough of New York City. REUTERS

Grads turn back on Biden during address

ATLANTA, MAY 19
 US President Joe Biden delivered the commencement address at Morehouse College on Sunday, receiving applause and cheers but also spurring some students to turn their back to Biden as his backing of Israel in its war with Hamas riles college graduations.

Biden's address at Morehouse College, a historically Black

men's college in Atlanta, is part of an election-year platform to repair bonds with young Black men and address the anger over his position on Israel. "It's a humanitarian crisis in Gaza, that's why I've called for an immediate ceasefire," Biden said to applause. "I know it angers and frustrates many of you including in my family," he said. — Reuters

Zelenskyy urges West to send Patriots as Russian strikes on Kharkiv kill 11

UKRAINE, MAY 19
 Russian strikes killed at least 11 people, including a pregnant woman, and injured 25 others in two separate attacks in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region on Sunday, local officials said.

It was the latest in what have been constant attacks in recent weeks on Kharkiv city and the region of the same name by Russian missiles and guided bombs as Russian troops have launched an offensive in the northeast of the region. The first strike on Sunday killed five and wounded 16 in a recreation area just outside Kharkiv, while another five people were killed and 9 injured later in the day in two



A devastated resort amid Russia's attack in Kharkiv on Sunday. REUTERS

villages in Kupiansk district. Local governor Oleh Syniehubov said Russian forces shelled two villages of the district with a self-propelled multiple rocket launcher. In the city of Kharkiv, Mayor Ihor Terekhov gave the toll of dead and wounded. After Sunday's attack President Volodymyr Zelenskyy again called on Western allies to

supply Kyiv with additional air defence systems to protect Kharkiv and other cities.

"The world can stop Russian terror - and to do so, the lack of political will among leaders must be overcome," Zelenskyy said on Telegram.

"Two Patriots for Kharkiv will make a fundamental difference," he said, referring to Patriot missile defence systems. Air defence systems for other cities and sufficient support for soldiers on the front line would ensure Russia's defeat, the president added.

Ukraine has frequently accused Russia of using "double tap" strikes to kill or injure emergency workers at the scene of strikes. — Reuters

DR Congo's armed forces foil 'coup bid'

KINSHASA, MAY 19
 The Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) armed forces repelled an attempted coup involving Congolese and foreigners on Sunday, a DRC army spokesman said. "An attempted coup d'etat has been put down by the security forces. The bid involved foreigners and Congolese. These foreigners and Congolese have been put out of action," spokesman Sylvain Ekenge said.

He did not specify whether this meant they had been detained or killed. Tina Salama, a spokeswoman for President Félix Tshisekedi, also confirmed that the presidential palace had been attacked on Sunday but the army had retaken control. — Reuters

US NSA, Saudi crown prince meet to discuss security deal

DUBAI, MAY 19
 President Joe Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan met Sunday with Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Salman to discuss what the kingdom described as the "semi-final" version of a wide-ranging security agreement between the countries.

Saudi state media released no images of Sullivan and Prince Mohammed meeting in Dhahran, a city in the kingdom's far east that's home to its state-run oil giant, Saudi Aramco.

"The semi-final version of the draft strategic agreements between the kingdom and the United States of America, which are almost being



US NSA Jake Sullivan & crown prince Mohammed bin Salman

finalised — and what is being worked on between the two sides in the Palestinian issue to find a credible path — were discussed," the statement released after the talks said.

That included "a two-state solution that meets the aspirations and rights of the Pales-

tinian people" and "the situation in Gaza and the need to stop the war there and facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid," the statement added. Saudi Arabia has long called for an independent Palestinian state to be created with east Jerusalem as capital. — AP

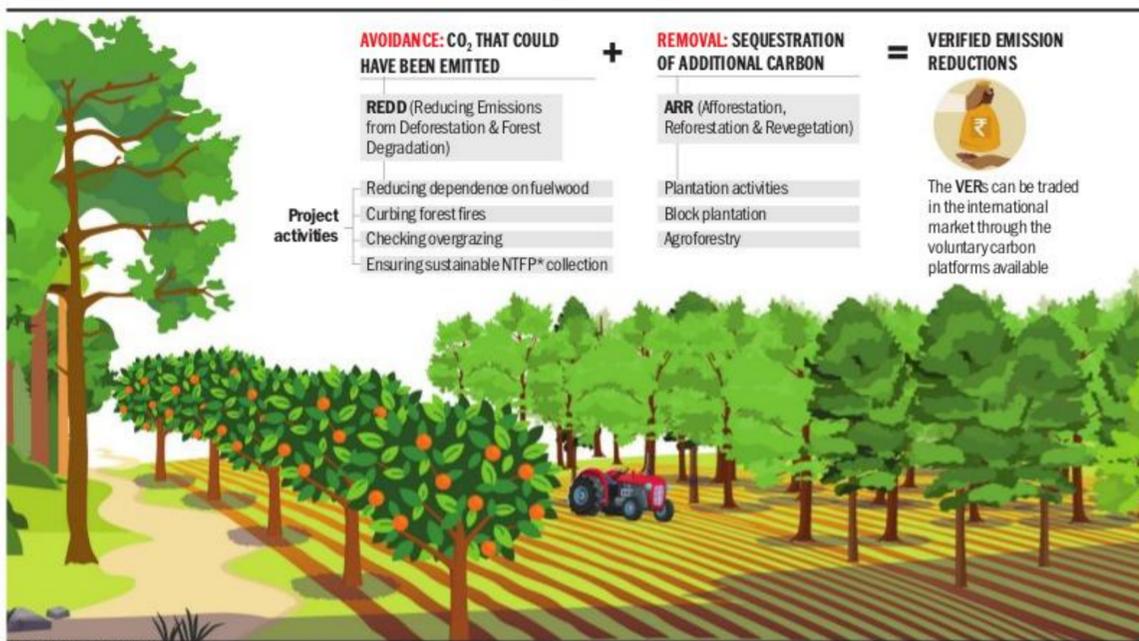
INFOCUS AGRICULTURE AGROFORESTRY

Leveraging carbon finance projects for a livelihood fillip

Carbon finance projects hold immense potential for driving sustainable development and poverty alleviation. By harnessing the power of environmental conservation to create economic opportunities, these initiatives not only mitigate climate change but also improve the lives of farmers and forest-dependent communities. As India continues its journey towards a greener and more inclusive future, investing in such projects is a necessity for building resilience and prosperity at the grassroots level.

JITENDRA VIR SHARMA
IN India, where agriculture and forestry are integral to the livelihoods of millions, the intersection of environmental conservation and economic empowerment holds immense promise. Carbon finance projects, particularly those focusing on ARR (Afforestation, Reforestation and Revegetation) and REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), are emerging as powerful tools for not only mitigating climate change but also uplifting the socio-economic conditions of farmers and forest-dependent communities, while simultaneously achieving Sustainable Development Goals. These projects help in either absorbing greenhouse gases (GHG) from the atmosphere or preventing their subsequent release into the atmosphere. The amount of CO₂ sequestered or the GHG emissions avoided are generated in the form of carbon credits, which can be traded in the international market via voluntary carbon platforms. Carbon financing is a result-oriented mechanism that allows companies wishing to offset their GHG emissions to buy carbon credits generated from such projects. It can serve as a key mitigation measure to combat adverse impacts of climate change.

The ARR way
 The agricultural sector is a crucial component of the economy, employing a significant portion of the workforce and contributing a substantial share to the country's GDP (around 15-20 per cent). However, it faces several challenges, such as low productivity, dependence on monsoons, fragmented landholdings, post-har-



vest losses and environmental degradation. Introducing carbon finance projects as an alternative livelihood through ARR initiatives can potentially address some of these challenges while providing additional income for farmers and communities. Recent research indicates that the ARR sector can contribute more than 2 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e) by 2030 if policies, finances and support are provided. In India, around 86 per cent of the farmers are small and marginal — they have landholdings smaller than 2 hectares. They can benefit from ARR-based projects. By incentivising the planting of trees and restoration of degraded forests, these projects offer tangi-

ble benefits to local communities. ARR-based carbon finance projects can supplement farmers' income by selling carbon credits in the carbon markets, enabling risk reduction and contributing towards climate resilience. These projects are designed to include activities like tree plantations of timber and horticulture species, harvesting of timber species and regular replanting of trees that are harvested. Farmers practising agroforestry and tree planting or interested in adopting agroforestry on their private farmlands and even the large community fallow lands can also be considered for these projects. The projects can also help states move forward towards carbon neutrality.

For farmers grappling with unpredictable weather patterns and fluctuating crop yields, participating in ARR projects presents a pathway to income diversification. By integrating trees into their agricultural landscapes or restoring degraded forest areas on their land, farmers can tap into additional revenue streams through carbon sequestration.

REDD+ projects
 The forestry sector plays a pivotal role in achieving India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) of creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂e. Presently, India's total forest and tree cover is 80.9 million hectares, which

is 24.62 per cent of the geographical area. Protected Areas (PAs) cover about 5 per cent of the total geographical area. Around 50 million people, staying in proximity of the PAs, depend on forest resources for their livelihood. This dependence is in the form of collection of a variety of non-timber forest products, fuelwood and fodder for subsistence and livelihood purposes. The PAs in India have been identified to have the potential for generating around 10,000,000 carbon credits, which can be traded in the carbon market. Thus REDD+ initiatives go a step further by addressing the root causes of deforestation and forest degradation while empowering forest-

dependent communities. At the heart of REDD+ projects lie community engagement and empowerment. By recognising the rights and traditional knowledge of local communities, these initiatives ensure that forest management decisions are made in consultation with those who depend on forests for their livelihoods. Participation in REDD+ opens doors to international carbon markets, where verified emission reductions or carbon credits can be traded. The revenue generated from carbon sales can then be reinvested in community development initiatives as well as to further enhance livelihood opportunities of local communities. Various platforms facilitate the registration and implementation of these projects, offering stakeholders opportunities to engage in meaningful climate action. Some key registration platforms for ARR and REDD+ projects are Gold Standard, Verra, Plan Vivo, Global Carbon Council, Social Carbon, Puro Earth and American Carbon Registry. Leveraging carbon finance projects hold immense potential for driving sustainable development and poverty alleviation. By harnessing the power of environmental conservation to create economic opportunities, these initiatives not only mitigate climate change but also improve the lives of farmers and forest-dependent communities. As India continues its journey towards a greener and more inclusive future, investing in carbon finance projects becomes not just a choice but a necessity for building resilience and prosperity at the grassroots level.

The author is Senior Director, The Energy and Resources Institute

BRIEFLY

KOBE (JAPAN)
India wins two medals in World Para Athletics C'ships
 The Indian team picked up its first medals in the World Para Athletics Championships with high jumper Nishad Kumar and 200m runner Preethi Pal winning silver and bronze, respectively. Nishad, a Tokyo Paralympics silver medallist, cleared 1.99 metres in the men's T47 high jump final. Ram Pal finished sixth with his season's best performance of 1.90m. Preethi finished third in the women's T35 200m final with a time of 30.49 seconds.

NEW DELHI
Sukant, Tarun, Suhas qualify for Paris Paralympics
 Indian para shuttlers Sukant Kadam, Tarun and Suhas have sealed their berths for the upcoming Paralympics in Paris. This is the first time Kadam will be taking part in the Paralympics. He will be playing in the men's SL 4 category. Tarun and Suhas have also qualified in the same category. Mandeeep Kaur in SL3 women's and Nithya and Sivarajan in mixed doubles SL6 also made the cut.

SHARJAH
Aravindh beats Salem to claim sole lead
 Indian Grandmaster Aravindh Chithambaram defeated local star AR Saleh Salem to emerge as the sole leader on 4.5 points after the end of the fifth round of Sharjah Masters chess tournament. The Iranian duo of Amin Tabatabaei and Bardiya Daneshvar and Americans Hans Moke Niemann and Sam Shankland have four points apiece. Top seed Arjun Erigaisi and Sankalp Gupta have 3.5 points each.

RIYADH
Usyk beats Fury to become heavyweight champ
 Oleksandr Usyk scored a razor-thin split decision win over Tyson Fury to become undisputed heavyweight boxing world champion in a thrilling contest in the early hours of Sunday morning. The 37-year-old Ukrainian is the first boxer to hold all four major heavyweight belts at the same time and the first undisputed champ since the end of Lennox Lewis' reign in April 2000.

IMOLA (ITALY)
Verstappen holds off Norris to win Emilia Romagna GP

Red Bull's Max Verstappen held off a late charge by McLaren's Lando Norris to win the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix. The triple Formula One world champion took the chequered flag 0.7 seconds ahead of the man who beat him at the previous round in Miami. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was third. AGENCIES

Satwiksairaj and Chirag win Thailand Open title for second time

Second coming



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty after winning the Thailand Open. PTI

“It has been a lucky tournament for us. The journey started from here. We won this title in 2019. We went on to win many tournaments.”
 Satwiksairaj Rankireddy

sairaj and Chirag turned the tables, moving to 16-12. They grabbed five game points and Satwiksairaj sealed the game with a superb service which the Chinese could only bury into the net.

The Indians made a solid 8-3 start after the change of sides and maintained the five-point cushion at the interval. At 15-11, Satwiksairaj received warning for delaying the game and Chen and Liu moved to 14-15.

But the Indians dashed any hopes of a fightback, with Chirag setting up a point with his fine placement and Satwiksairaj providing the finishing touch as they moved to 17-15. Satwiksairaj then unleashed a barrage of smashes to grab five match

points. They sealed the match after the Chinese sent Chirag's smash into the net. Satwiksairaj broke into a dance, while Chirag threw his shirt into the crowd.

Chirag hoped the win would spur youngsters to put in the hard yards and dream big. “Not just the men's doubles, doubles in general, I know such wins give a lot of boost to youngsters back home, to push themselves and not be satisfied,” Chirag said. “A lot of people thought the Chinese or Indonesians are notches above us but the way we have been playing the last couple of years, it definitely gives the youngsters a chance to rethink and beat the best players in the world.” — PTI

Abhishek powers SRH to easy win against PBKS

HYDERABAD, MAY 19
 Abhishek Sharma bossed Punjab Kings' bowlers with yet another explosive half-century as Sunrisers Hyderabad cruised to a four-wicket win in the IPL here today.

Opting to bat on a flat track, Punjab Kings posted an imposing 214/5 riding on Prabhshimran Singh's 45-ball 71, which included seven fours and four sixes, and skipper Jitesh Sharma's final-over heroics.

But SRH looked in complete control of the tall chase after losing Travis Head off the first ball and chased down the target with five balls to spare.

Abhishek went about his business with utmost nonchalance for a 21-ball fifty, his third half-century of the season. He smoked six sixes and five boundaries in his knock of 66 from 28 balls.

Henrich Klaassen (42 off 26 balls) Rahul Tripathi (33 off 18 balls) and Nitish Reddy (37 off 25 balls) made handy contributions. — PTI



Abhishek Sharma hit six sixes and five fours in his knock of 66 from 28 balls. PTI

41 200-plus totals in the IPL season so far, the second-most in any T20 tournament, behind the 42 in last year's T20 Blast of the UK.

IPL STANDINGS

T	P	W	L	NRR	PT
KKR	13	9	3	1.428	19
SRH	14	8	5	0.414	17
RR	13	8	5	0.273	16
RCB	14	7	7	0.459	14
CSK	14	7	7	0.392	14
DC	14	7	7	-0.377	14
LSG	14	7	7	-0.667	14
GT	14	5	7	-1.063	12
PBKS	14	5	9	-0.353	10
MI	14	4	10	-0.318	8

*Read under Teams, Played, Wins, Losses, Net Run Rate, Points

BRIEF SCORES

- PBKS:** 214/5 in 20 overs (Prabhshimran 71, Rossouw 49, Taide 46; Natarajan 2/33) vs **SRH:** 215/6 in 19.1 overs (Abhishek 66, Klaassen 42; Arshdeep 2/37)
- Saturday's result**
- RCB:** 218/5 in 20 overs (du Plessis 54, Kohli 47; Sharda 2/61) vs **CSK:** 191/7 in 20 overs: (Ravindra 61, Jadeja 42; Dayal 2/42)

Breach of privacy irks Rohit
NEW DELHI: India skipper Rohit Sharma today lashed out at the IPL broadcasters for “breaching” cricketers’ privacy by recording their conversations with friends and colleagues at training and then telecasting the contents. Rohit expressed his disappointment after a video involving him and Kolkata Knight Riders’ assistant coach Abhishek Nayar went viral. Rohit was seen making a request to the broadcasters to shut down the audio while recording him after his chat with Nayar. The conversation between the two took place on May 11. The audio of the chat was posted by KKR on their social media handle and fans assumed that the cricketer was speaking about leaving MI after the ongoing season. Following the controversy, the video was taken down by KKR’s social media team. On May 17, Rohit was seen having a chat with Dhawal Kulkarni ahead of MI’s fixture against Lucknow Super Giants. Seeing himself being recorded, the opener, with folded hands, requested the broadcaster to turn off the audio. PTI

No personal coaches, media blackout in federation’s guidelines to shooters

OLYMPICS TRIALS

NEW DELHI, MAY 19
 The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has laid down strict rules, including not taking the help of personal coaches at the national camp and a “media blackout”, for the Paris Olympics-bound shooters. The federation has issued a “national team protocol”, in which it has also told the shooters that parents will not be allowed to “visit” their wards at camps and the decision to make an exception solely lies with the High Performance Director (HPD), Pierre Beauchamp.

The NRAI has said that the objective of the protocol is to “ensure the clarity of the training and readiness plan” for the Olympics by the shooters, national team coaches and sport science support. As per the letter, only the NRAI-approved personal coaches and sport science consultants shall be allowed to assist with the training. “Athletes will not be

Manu most successful shooter at Olympics trials



BHOPAL: Olympian Manu Bhaker emerged as the most successful shooter in the Olympics trials (OST) for rifle and pistol, winning the women's 10m air pistol trial 4 on the concluding day of the exercise here today. This was Manu's fourth win in the trials across two events, the other being the women's 25m pistol. Manu shot 240.8, leaving Hangzhou Asian Games champion Palak Gulia 4.4 points behind in second. Rhythm Sangwan took the third spot. Earlier, Elavenil Valarivan won the women's 10m air rifle OST T4 with a score of 254.3, better than the current world record of 254.0 set by China's Han Jiayu in the ISSF World Cup earlier this month. Ramita Jindal (253.3) and Mehuli Ghosh (230.3) were second and third, respectively. PTI

allowed to talk to media during the media blackout, except for media designated days,” the NRAI letter said. For the shooters’ safety, the NRAI will also impose restriction on their movement abroad. “When travelling abroad, shooters’ free movement shall be restricted from hotel and elsewhere without the permission of the Chief Coach/HPD and/or designat-

ed person,” the letter adds. “Parents and personal coaches shall not stay or visit the concerned shooters while at camp and/or competition. However, HPD and Chief Coach may consider their request to interact with parents/personal coaches if required without disturbing the team environment at a different location,” the letter added. — PTI

Punjab’s Gurindervir back at his best

After overcoming health issues, sprinter eager to break national record

INDERVIR GREWAL
 TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 19
 Gurindervir Singh is back. The 23-year-old Punjab sprinter announced his return to the top bracket with a blazing run in the 100-metre final at the recently-concluded Federation Cup in Bhubaneswar.

Gurindervir finished almost two paces ahead of the silver medallist, flying across the finish line in 10.35 seconds before letting out an adrenaline-fuelled roar. Despite the fist-pumping excitement, there was an underlying relief in Gurindervir's mind. “The win means a lot because it has been a rough couple of years for me,” said Gurindervir, who belongs from Patial village near Bhogpur town in Jalandhar district.

After dominating the junior circuit—he broke the national U20 record with a time of 10.47s in 2018—Gurindervir was destined to become the next big thing in Indian



Punjab's Gurindervir Singh won the 100m gold medal at the recently-concluded Federation Cup in Bhubaneswar. PTI

“The win means a lot because it has been a rough couple of years for me. Now, I have got my rhythm back. My next target is to break the national record.”
 Gurindervir Singh

sprinting. Making steady development, he recorded his best time of 10.27s in 2021. But health issues put a halt to his progress.

“There was some issue with my digestion. It affected my diet. I could not eat eggs or chicken, which hit my pro-

tein intake. Diet plays a major role if you want to succeed in sprinting. I just did not have the energy in training,” Gurindervir said.

“I went to many doctors but they could not diagnose the problem. Finally, last year I discovered that there

was an issue with my intestines, which I was able to cure with medication. That was about six-seven months ago,” he added.

Gurindervir, who trains under Sarabjit Singh in Jalandhar, started seeing the results within months. “For two years, I could not breach 10.50s. I felt helpless and frustrated. Now, I have got my rhythm back,” he said.

Gurindervir was “really happy” to win his first gold in what “felt like a long time”, but not satisfied with his timing. He recorded his best a day before the final, running 10.33s in the heats. “The way I had been running during training, I was hoping to record around 10.10s. That is my next target — to break the national record,” he said.

The record stands at 10.26s, held by Amiya Kumar Mallick since 2016. Gurindervir will get a chance to go for the record next month at the inter-state championships at Panchkula.

Indian-American Theegala lies third



Theegala is one shot behind the leaders. USA TODAY SPORTS/REUTERS

LOUISVILLE (US), MAY 19
 Indian-American Sahith Theegala put himself in perfect position to make a bid for his maiden Major as he was in sole third and one shot behind leaders Xander Schauffele and Collin Morikawa after three rounds of the PGA Championships.

After 65-67 on the first two days, Theegala turned in a

67 on the third to be 14-under as Morikawa (67) — winner of 2002 PGA and 2021 Open — and Schauffele (68) were at 15-under. Morikawa is looking for a third Major while Schauffele is seeking his first one. Theegala may have just one PGA Tour win to his name but he has been second twice this season. — PTI

Man City achieve the unthinkable

Win 4th EPL title in a row

LONDON, MAY 19
 Manchester City won a record fourth-straight Premier League title on Sunday by beating West Ham 3-1 in the final game of the season.

City is the first team to be crowned champion of English soccer's top division four years in a row after holding off the challenge of second-place Arsenal, which beat Everton 2-1.

Two goals from Phil Foden in the first half set Pep Guardiola's team on course for its latest title. Mohammed Kudus pulled a goal back for West Ham with a stunning overhead kick, but Rodri restored City's advantage as it marched toward a sixth title in seven seasons.

Guardiola's team needed to beat West Ham at Etihad Stadium to be certain of the title, having gone into the



Manchester City's Phil Foden celebrates scoring their first goal against West Ham; BELOW: Arsenal fans check their phones after Foden's goal. REUTERS

game two points clear at the top of the standings.

Foden helped ease any potential nerves among the home fans when firing City ahead with a brilliant goal inside two minutes.

Receiving a pass from Bernardo Silva, Foden side-stepped West Ham midfield-

er James Ward-Prowse and unleashed a left-foot shot outside the area that rocketed into the top corner. The goal was timed at just under 80 seconds. Foden, England's footballer of the year, added a second in the 18th minute when converting Jeremy Doku's cross. — AP



Zverev wins 6th Masters title at Italian Open

ROME, MAY 19
 Alexander Zverev is an ATP Masters 1000 champion for the sixth time. The German moved past first-time Masters 1000 finalist Nicolas Jarry 6-4 7-5 on Sunday at the Italian Open to win the title in Rome for a second time.

Zverev will climb to No. 4 in the ATP Rankings on Monday, with his Rome title the biggest he has earned since he suffered a catastrophic ankle injury in the Roland Garros semifinals in 2022. Prior to Sunday, the 27-year-old's most recent Masters 1000 triumph came in Cincinnati in 2021, while he also lifted the ATP Finals trophy in the same season.

“Obviously winning my first ever (Masters) here in Rome and winning my first after my injury also in Rome, so Rome is a very special place for me,” Zverev said. “It is a very, very special week.”



Alexander Zverev beat Nicolas Jarry 6-4 7-5. REUTERS

Zverev showed great athleticism to soak up Jarry's big hitting during the one-hour, 41-minute minute clash and he took large cuts off both wings to take time away from the Chilean, who was unable to find the required consistency in crucial moments.

“He is playing huge and you can see by the players he has beaten this week,” Zverev said. — Agencies

Sixth Schedule key demand, Ladakh votes in crucial triangular poll today

BJP's Gyalson, Cong's Namgyal, Independent Hanifa Jan in the fray

ARJUN SHARMA

JAMMU, MAY 19

The stage is set for the polls in the lone constituency in northernmost union territory of the country — Ladakh — where a polling station has been established at the height of over 14,700 feet above sea level.

Only three candidates are in the fray. In parts of eastern Ladakh, as many as 50,000 Indian troops have been eyeball to eyeball with 50,000 Chinese soldiers for the last four years.

Moreover, mere weeks ago, a BJP rebellion in the ranks was nipped in the bud when sitting MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal — who had not been allotted the ticket despite being the face of the BJP's defence of the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, and since indicated he would contest as an Independent — was persuaded to stand down when Union earth sciences minister Kiran Rijju rushed to Ladakh to pacify him.

Jamyang had recently told *The Tribune*, "I was annoyed but the matter was like differences which sometimes crop up in a family. Those issues have now been resolved."

The fate of three candidates, including BJP's Tashi Gyalson, Congress' Tsering Namgyal and National Conference

1.84 LAKH VOTERS	
95,926	Kargil
88,877	Leh
577 POLLING STATIONS	
298	Leh
279	Kargil
HIGH-ALTITUDE POLLING STATIONS	
Anley Phoo	14,700
Shadey	14,500 ft
Phema	14,100 ft
Ralakun	13,800 ft



Polling officials at Warshi village, a unique polling station of five voters, in the Ladakh region on Sunday. REUTERS

(NC) rebel and independent Haji Hanifa Jan, will be sealed on Monday in the constituency, which has nearly 1.84 lakh voters — 95,926 in Kargil and 88,877 in Leh district.

The major issues for the Congress and independent candidate remains the demand for statehood and Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution for the region, while the BJP candidate has highlighted the development witnessed in the cold desert over the last 10 years.

The election campaign in Ladakh meandered through

twists and turns as the entire Kargil unit of the NC resigned after the party high command asked them to support the Congress candidate instead of Hanifa Jan. Political and religious leaders backed Hanifa Jan — a Shia Muslim — for the polls, which also gave nightmares to the Congress and BJP who have fielded Buddhist candidates.

The NC and Congress are contesting under the INDIA alliance. While there was no violent incident during the poll campaigning, cracks were visible in the society of the region

comprising Muslim-dominated Kargil and the Buddhist-majority Leh district. Yetindra M Maralkar, Chief Electoral Officer, Ladakh, on Sunday flagged off the polling teams to their respective polling stations. The teams departed with EVMs and other essential election materials to ensure a smooth and efficient voting process.

Multiple companies of the Central Armed Police Forces have been deployed in different parts of the region. There are 577 polling stations, including 298 in Leh and 279 in

Kargil. Polling parties were on Friday sent to far off areas of Kargil, including Phema, which is situated at a height of 14,100 feet, Ralakun (13,800 feet) and Shadey (14,500 feet). IAF helicopters were used to send these teams. A polling station has set up in Anley Phoo in Leh district, which is located at a height of nearly 14,700 feet and is the second highest polling station in India, as per officials. In Kargil, webcasting will be done at 140 polling stations, including 118 critical polling stations, on Monday to monitor the poll process.

Three Indian ships reach Philippines for S China Seadrill

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 19

A flotilla of three Indian Navy warships — INS Delhi, INS Shakti and INS Kilan — has reached Manila on a four-day visit, which will include a "maritime partnership exercise" in the South China Sea.

This is the second such India-Philippines exercise in the area since December. Also, it's happening amid recent tensions between China and the Philippines over maritime rights in the disputed hydro-carbon rich South China Sea.

Second such exercise since December, first after BrahMos delivery

Last month, the Philippines was joined in by the US, Japan and Australia — all three partners with India in the Quadrilateral, or the Quad — to carry out what they termed as Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA) in the South China Sea.

Also, this is the first India-Philippines exercise since India started the deliveries of the 300-km-range BrahMos missile to Manila.

The US is a key player in the region. When the China-Philippines tensions ratcheted up, the US State Department in March issued a statement that it stood by the Philippines amid China's "provocative actions" against lawful Philippine maritime operations in the South China Sea.



Lack of action may impact 40% spice exports: Traders

AKSHEEV THAKUR

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 19

After five countries — Singapore, Hong Kong, Maldives, Australia and Nepal — announced to ban and investigate the alleged contamination of spice mixes sold by MDH and Everest, the Indian spice export industry faces a crisis.

While government agencies have taken a slew of measures to ensure quality checks on spices and curry powders before being sold in the market, the Federation of Indian Spice Stakeholders (FISS) has said India's spice export may decline nearly 40 per cent if the issue of ethylene oxide contamination in spices is not addressed at the earliest.

"As per our estimate, spice exports could be affected by

40 per cent this year if the issue is not resolved quickly," said Tejas Gandhi, secretary of the FISS, an association of nearly 600 spice traders, exporters and farmers from across the country.

On May 17, Nepal banned the sale of four spice-mix products by MDH and Everest due to suspected ethylene oxide contamination. Under this, Madras curry powder, sambhar mixed masala powder and mixed masala powder of MDH and fish curry masala of Everest have been banned in Nepal over quality concerns.

The food regulatory agencies in these countries cite the presence of ethylene oxide, a toxic chemical used as a food stabiliser, beyond permissible limits. It increases the shelf life of spices.



Gopi Thotakura (C) has ventured into space as a tourist aboard Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin's NS-25 mission. FILE

Thotakura 1st Indian space tourist on Blue Origin's private astronaut launch

WASHINGTON, MAY 19

Gopi Thotakura, an entrepreneur and a pilot, on Sunday became the first Indian to venture into space as a tourist aboard Amazon founder Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin's NS-25 mission.

Thotakura was selected as one of the six crew members for the NS-25 mission, making him the first Indian space tourist and the second Indian to venture into space after the Indian Army's Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma in 1984.

Blue Origin's seventh human flight, NS-25, lifted off from Launch Site One in West Texas on Sunday morning, the company announced on social media.

This mission was the seventh human flight for the New Shepard programme and the 25th in its history. To date, the programme has flown 31 humans above the Karman line, the proposed conventional boundary between Earth's atmosphere and outer space.

New Shepard is a fully reusable sub-orbital launch vehicle developed for space tourism by Blue Origin.

According to Blue Origin,

"Gopi is a pilot and aviator who learned how to fly before he could drive." He co-founded Preserve Life Corp, a global centre for holistic wellness and applied health located near Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

In addition to flying jets commercially, he pilots bush, aerobatic, and seaplanes, as well as gliders and hot air balloons, and has served as an international medical jet pilot. A lifelong traveller, his most recent adventure took him to the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Andhra Pradesh-born Thotakura is a graduate of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Other crew members of the flight include Mason Angel, Sylvain Chiron, Kenneth L. Hess, Carol Schaller, and former Air Force Captain Ed Dwight, who was selected by President John F Kennedy in 1961 as the nation's first Black astronaut candidate but was never granted the opportunity to fly to space. During the flight, each astronaut carries a postcard to space on behalf of Blue Origin's foundation, Club for the Future. — PTI

Stuck in Kyrgyzstan, 700 students from Rajasthan contact MLA, seek state govt's help to return home

SUMEDHA SHARMA

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

GURUGRAM, MAY 19

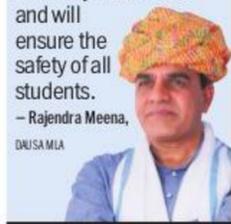
While the authorities have assured that the situation in Kyrgyzstan is under control, several Indian students in Bishkek have expressed fear and desperation to return home amid incidents in mob violence. Over 700 students from Rajasthan, most of whom belong to Dausa and Banswara districts, have, through their families and social workers, sought state government's help.

"We are scared. Institutions have barred us from posting anything online or even make video calls. The situation here is tense. Everything remains normal during the day but at night, locals in hordes roam the streets and target students without even checking their nationality. We

APPROACHED CENTRE

"We are in constant touch with the Centre and the Indian Embassy in Bishkek and will ensure the safety of all students."

— Rajendra Meena, DUSA SMLA



have been asked to keep the lights off at night... all students have been asked to shift to hostels," Satyender Phagna, a medical student in Kyrgyzstan, said in a phone call. Through a family friend, Phagna managed to get in touch with a local MLA.

Dausa MLA Rajendra

All students safe: Embassy

NEW DELHI, MAY 19

The Indian Embassy in Central Asian country of Kyrgyzstan today said the situation in Bishkek was "normal" and all Indian students were "safe".

The embassy put a post on X about the safety of all Indian students and asked them to continue following the guidelines prescribed by the authorities in the Kyrgyz Republic. Trouble had started brewing on May

13 between locals and the population of expatriate Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indians and Egyptians. A brawl ensued between foreigners and locals in a hostel of International University of Kyrgyzstan, in which 29 persons were injured.

Four persons, including three Egyptians, have been arrested. On May 17, locals targeted South Asian students, including Indians and Pakistanis. — TNS

Spell out stand on criminalising marital rape: SC to govt

NEW DELHI, MAY 19

As the newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) — which will replace the colonial era Indian Penal Code (IPC) on July 1 — fails to criminalise marital rape, a PIL in the Supreme Court has challenged the validity of the provision that treats marital rape as an exception to rape.

Acting on a petition filed by the All-India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) seeking to criminalise marital rape, a Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud has asked the Centre to spell out its stand on the contentious issue.

AIDWA contended that the marital rape exception went against Article 19(1)(a) (right to freedom of speech and expression) and Article 21 (right to life and liberty) of the Constitution as it took away a married woman's rights to bodily integrity, decisional autonomy and dignity. — TNS

Desire for badlav hands Cong an opportunity on 'family' seats



SANDEEP DIKSHIT

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

AMETHI/RAEBARELI, MAY 19

On the eve of voting in the twin VIP constituencies of Amethi and Raebareli in Uttar Pradesh, an undercurrent due to expectations unmet by the BJP may be tilting the scales in favour of the INDIA alliance.

The Congress office in Raebareli is alive with party workers busily discussing booth management. But this may be due to their desire to be noticed by Priyanka and Rahul Gandhi. However, the party's main office in the adjoining constituency of Amethi has just a few workers and a couple of vehicles as soon as party candidate KL Shar-



Poll officials carry EVMs and other election material in Raebareli on Sunday. ANI

ma, who has replaced Rahul Gandhi, leaves in a modest two-vehicle convoy.

"Janata chunav lad rahi hai" (the people are contesting the elections) is the com-

mon refrain from the few political workers on the ground, such as Samajwadi

Party's youthful Jai Pratap Yadav from Amethi.

Expectations were high here that Priyanka and Rahul would contest both seats. Those expectations have been dashed, but Sharma remains firmly in the contest. Smriti Irani's backers in Amethi may have unwittingly boosted Sharma's chances by terming it as a contest between a "family servant" and a Central Minister. The Congress lacks organisation here, and the BJP easily outmatches the Congress in visible presence.

But Yadav counts Sharma as "fortunate" to have got the ticket, and this is reflected in conversations all along the route from Lucknow.

"Awadh ka mijaz alag hai. Yeh tameez aur sajhvi viraat ki zameen hai. (Awadh has a different temperament. This is the land of shared diversity and culture). All this doesn't work here," says old-time Congress activist

Vishwanath Chaturvedi.

"Madam is on the verge of a loss. Here it is the panja that has the upper hand," says Sukanto Bengali, who runs a small shop of eatables in Jagdishpur constituency and counts himself as a neutral onlooker as he is not from the region — he's registered for voting in Kolkata's Diamond Harbour constituency.

The chances of Congress upsetting Irani in Amethi depend on the desire for 'badlav' reversing her 55,000 vote margin victory in 2019, says Chaturvedi. But the party will also have to make up for the loss of an estimated one lakh votes that the BSP had brought in in 2019 due to their alliance.

The Congress effort in Raebareli is more coordinated, and Rahul Gandhi had been seen as the frontrunner until a few days ago. "Ab kaante ki takkar hai," says Raja Ram Pal, waiting for a bus to take him back to his village.