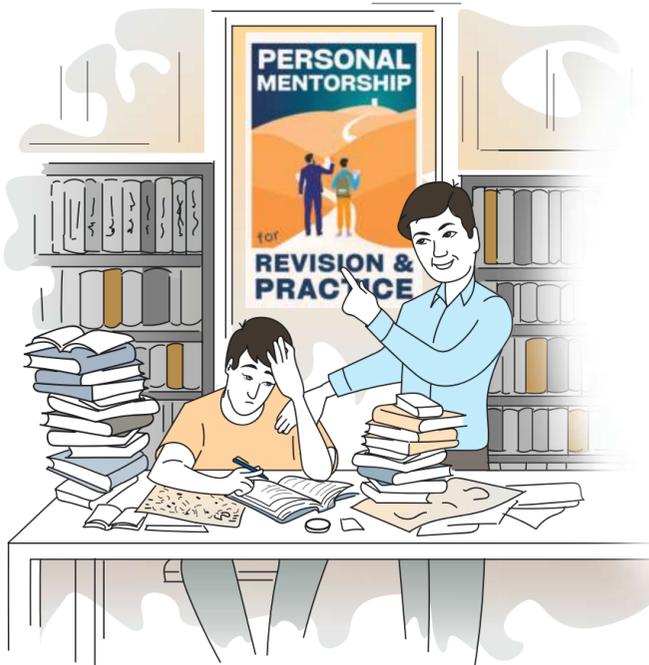


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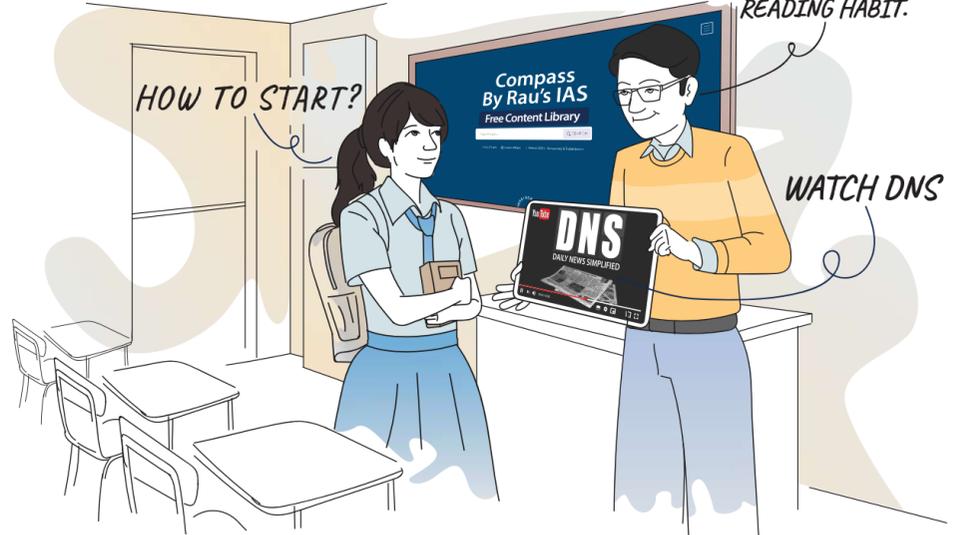
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58 LS seats to vote in Phase 6 today



Polling officials carry election materials to the booths on the eve of the sixth phase of polls in Bhubaneswar. BISWARANJAN ROUT

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

A total of 58 Lok Sabha seats in six States and two Union Territories will go to polls in the sixth and penultimate phase of the general election on Saturday. Over 11.13 crore people – 5.84 crore men, 5.29 crore women and 5,120 third-gender electors – will exercise their franchise to decide the fate of 889 candidates. Over 8.93 lakh registered voters above 85 years of age, 23,659 centenarians, and 9.58 lakh voters with disabilities have

been provided with the option to vote from their homes, the Election Commission (EC) said. Voting would also be held in the Anantnag-Rajouri seat in Jammu and Kashmir. Polling in the seat was shifted from Phase 3 due to adverse weather-induced logistical issues. Polling in 428 seats across 25 States and Union Territories has been completed so far.

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DELHIITES URGED TO VOTE
» PAGE 2

SC declines to issue order on booth-wise voter data

Court says that it does not want to divert attention of the EC in the middle of poll; application for publication of turnout data in Form 17C has already been sought in a petition pending since 2019

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to pass an interim order directing the Election Commission (EC) to upload authenticated, scanned, and legible copies of Form 17C showing the account of votes recorded booth-wise after each phase of polling in the Lok Sabha election. A Vacation Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma said the nation was on the evening of the sixth phase of general election. Mammoth polls required huge human resources, the court said, adding that it did not want to divert the attention of the EC in the middle of the election. "Everyone is for a fair

and free election. The Supreme Court cannot interrupt the conduct of elections. It can only enhance the conduct of the polls... We have to be conscious of the ground reality

JUSTICE DIPANKAR DATTA



and free election. The Supreme Court cannot interrupt the conduct of elections. It can only enhance the conduct of the polls... We have to be conscious of the ground reality," Justice Datta remarked. The court adjourned the application simpliciter. It said interim relief sought by the NGO, Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), in its application for publication of voter turnout data in Form 17C was

already part of relief sought in a petition pending since 2019. The court recorded that granting the interim prayer in an application would amount to giving the final relief in the writ petition itself. Senior advocate Maninder Singh, for the EC, said the ADR application was based on unfounded suspicions meant to discredit the EC. The poll panel said ADR had suppressed the information about an April

26, 2024 judgment in the EVM-VVPAT case, in which it had discussed aspects of Form 17C. "The April 26 judgment was holistic. ADR cannot raise supplementary points repeatedly. It cannot apply constructive *res judicata* in the midst of an election process involving 96 crore voters. Vested interests are interfering with this festival of democracy. The court should deal with them with a heavy hand," Mr. Singh urged. Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, for Trinamool Congress's Mahua Moitra, said for Mr. Singh to say the earlier judgment dealt with Form 17C was a travesty. It had made only a passing mention of the issue.

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JNU ROW
Spivak: Did not stop student from asking his question

NEWS » PAGE 8



SPIN AND WIN
Shahbaz, Abhishek put Sunrisers in IPL final

SPORT » PAGE 15

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Anti-election slogans found on DU campus; police file FIR

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police on Thursday registered two FIRs under sections pertaining to defacement after anti-election slogans were spotted on the walls of Delhi University's (DU) North Campus. The slogans were seen by a police team during their patrolling duty on Wednesday, said DCP (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi.

The university proctor Rajni Abbi said the affected walls have been whitewashed.

Claiming responsibility, the Bhagat Singh Chattri Ekta Manch (BSCEM) defended the act. "Painting slogans on walls has always been a democratic way to dissent in the history of India's student movements," said Gurkirat, a member of the student group.

"It is unfortunate that such undemocratic slogans were written," the ABVP said in a statement.

Women voters weigh the pros and cons of election promises

Ashna Butani
NEW DELHI

Twenty-one-year-old Sonia, who is looking for a job despite having recently completed courses offering specialisations in computers and salon services, says her vote on Saturday will go to the party that will ensure financial independence for women.

"We keep hearing about schemes to empower women, like Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) promise to give ₹1,000 to women every month. But I don't know which of these promises will actually be fulfilled," she says, adding that there are no jobs for women in north-west Delhi's Rithala, where she stays.

69 lakh voters In their bid to woo over 45% of the electorate — 69 lakh of Delhi's 1.52 crore voters — political parties have listed several schemes that aim to empower women. Besides AAP's Mukhyamantri Ma-



Financial independence is a top priority for women voters. FILE PHOTO

hila Samman Yojana, which pledges ₹1,000 in the bank accounts of women over 18, BJP candidates have promised to expand the Lakhpati Didi scheme, which will provide interest-free loans to women. Meanwhile, the Congress's Mahalakshmi scheme guarantees an annual cash transfer of ₹1 lakh to women belonging to poor families.

In 2019, AAP rolled out the Pink Tickets scheme, which provides free bus transport to women. As many as 11 lakh women make daily use of the scheme, but some say they

want more. Pinki, 19, says, "The pink tickets have been helpful, but if the metro were free too, we would benefit immensely."

'Better savings' Eighteen-year-old Renuka chips in, saying that the free bus rides have helped her save money. "We come from a humble background. My father works as a peon in a private company," she says.

"We want financial independence and jobs, but we want bhaichara (brotherhood) too," says 40-year-old Ujma, an ASHA worker living in Jahangirpuri.

Poll body chief appeals to Delhiites to come out and vote despite heat

'Commitment to democracy must be unwavering,' CEO tells voters; mercury expected to reach a maximum of 44 degrees Celsius today

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Appealing to voters to exercise their franchise in large numbers on Saturday, Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) P. Krishnamurthy said exercising one's franchise is a "fundamental civic duty", even if "the weather is harsh".

The weather department has issued a 'yellow' alert for Saturday as it predicted the mercury to reach a maximum of 44 degrees Celsius.

"While heatwaves, cold, and rain are part of every season, our commitment to voting should remain unwavering," Mr. Krishnamurthy said in a statement on Friday, adding that adequate arrangements have been made at polling booths to ensure a comfortable experience for voters.

"Shaded areas have been set up at each polling station, and the waiting areas are fully covered. Coolers and fans have been installed to mitigate any discomfort. Additionally, proper arrangements for drinking water, toilets, wheelchairs, and ramps for the disabled have been put in place," he said.

Paramedical staff equipped with medical kits will also be available at



Gearing up: A polling official carrying an electronic voting machine on the eve of polling amid heavy security. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

polling locations for the first time in Delhi, as will volunteers and sign language experts to assist elderly and disabled voters, Mr. Krishnamurthy said.

Of the 13,641 polling stations across Delhi, 2,891 booths have been identified as "critical" and will be monitored directly through a webcast, he added.

Heavy security The police have implemented an elaborate security arrangement for Saturday consisting of 60,000 police personnel, CCTV cameras, drones, and several PCR units, DCP (Election Cell) Sanjay Sehrawal said.

He added that 33,000 personnel will be stationed exclusively at polling booths. "Additional paramilitary forces will also be

deployed on the ground. Moreover, 13,500 home guards from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, and 4,000 from Delhi will also be stationed to maintain vigil," Mr. Sehrawal said.

Traffic police and PCR units have been instructed to facilitate the smooth movement of the voters in Delhi, the DCP said, adding that patrolling along the Uttar Pradesh and Haryana borders has been intensified to prevent untoward incidents. "We have requested voters to inform authorities in case they observe any electoral malpractice," an officer said.

A total of 1.52 crore voters, including 82 lakh men, 69 lakh women and 1,228 third-gender persons, are eligible to cast their votes across Delhi's seven parliamentary seats.

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(ii) ऑनलाईन आवेदन के क्रम में अर्थार्थी कडिका 1 के Table-1 में अंकित प्रमण्डलीय मुख्यालयों में अवस्थित शिक्षण संस्थानों के विकल्प (Choice) का भी अपनी सुविधानुसार चयन कर अपने आवेदन में अंकित करेंगे, ताकि उनका चयन उसी प्रमण्डल अवस्थित शिक्षण संस्थान के लिए किया जाय, जिसका चयन उनके द्वारा किया गया है। आवेदक जिले के विकल्प (Choice) में साक्षात्कार के दिन (दिनांक 08.06.2024 को) भी परिवर्तन कर सकते हैं- किसी भी परिस्थिति में किसी अर्थार्थी को उनकी सहमति (Consent) के बिना उक्त नों में से किसी जिले में पदस्थापित नहीं किया जाएगा, अर्थात् उनकी सहमति (Consent) से ही उनका पदस्थापन उपर्युक्त 09 में से किसी जिले में किया जाएगा।

(iii) अर्थार्थी द्वारा ऑनलाईन आवेदन करने के क्रम में कोचिंग संस्थानों में उन्हें प्राप्त मासिक मानदेय (Remuneration) का उल्लेख भी अंकित किया जायेगा। इसके साथ ही उन्हें संस्थानों के किसी एक वर्ष का Salary Slip लगाया जाना होगा तथा Salary Slip की अनुपलब्धता की स्थिति में किसी एक वर्ष का Income Tax Return की प्रति संलग्न करना होगा। Full time basis पर शिक्षकों/विषय-विशेषज्ञों की सेवा समिति में Outsourcing के आधार पर ली जाएगी।

3. इस प्रयोजन हेतु अर्थार्थियों का साक्षात्कार (Interview) दिनांक 08.06.2024 को बिहार विद्यालय परीक्षा समिति, सिन्हा लाइब्रेरी रोड, पटना-800017 में पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे से लिया जाएगा। उक्त तिथि में परिवर्तन होने की स्थिति में सूचना अर्थार्थी को उनके मोबाइल/ई-मेल पर दी जाएगी। आवेदकों द्वारा दी गई सूचना की गोपनीयता (full confidentiality) अक्षुण्ण रखी जाएगी।

4. इंटरव्यू में पटना के बाहर से आने वाले अर्थार्थियों को आने-जाने (To and Fro) के लिए वायुयान यात्रा के लिए Economy Class एवं रेल यात्रा के लिए AC के Actual Fare की 60% राशि इंटरव्यू के दिन ही दी जाएगी, जिसके लिए उन्हें एयर टिकट/रेल टिकट की फोटोकॉपी जमा करनी होगी।

विज्ञापित संख्या - पी.आर. 195/2024 सचिव

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

The Divisional Railway Manager (Engg)/ E.C.Railway/Samastipur for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open Tender from experienced and financially capable tenderers for the following works in E-Tendering mode of IREPS web portal of Indian Railways:-

1. Tender Notice No.: TC-93-2024-SPJ

Name of work: Provision of Side Pathway with stainless steel chequered plate in Bridge No. IUP, IDN, 14, 15, 15A, 16, 17 in SPJ-DBG section and 20A SKI-JYG and 41 in SKI-KSS section and 325,304 in NKE-PNYA section and 16A in SPJ-KGG section and 115, 114, 100, 72A, 61 in SHC-PRNA section and 77, 80, 81, 88, 97A in SKI-TMA section and 19A, 19, 16, 14, 13 in SHC-RGV section and 111, 116, 123, 143A in JUP-NMA section and 13, 17, 33, 38, 41, 52, 58 in RGV-LLP section and 71, 73, 88, 92, 97, 99, 107, 111, 113, 115, 118, 121, 123 in LLP-FBG section and 7A in JJP-LKQ section and 40, 44 in BNKI-BHGJ section and 2 in KSS-HPO section under of SPJ division SSE(Br)/SPJ. Tender Value: Rs. 127583093.74 Earnest Money: Rs. 787900.00 Completion period of the work: 18 Months.

2. Tender Notice No.: TC-94-2024-SPJ

Name of work: Metalizing of steel plate girder of Bridge no.- 1305(x 12.2) 127(2 x 12.2) 120(1 x 12.2), 119(8 x 12.2) 117(7 x 12.2) 96(5 x 12.2) 86A(7 x 12.2) 42(9 x 12.2) 14(10 x 12.2 & 3(5 x 12.2) of SHC-PRNA section, 9(5 x 12.2) MFP-SMI section, 13(5 x 12.2) 17(2 x 12.2) 18(1x12.2), 21(5 x 12.2) 22(5 x 12.2) 23(10x18.3), 24(5 x 12.2), 25(9 x 24.24) in RXL- SGL section, Br.no-4(5x18.3), 18(4 x 18.3) in DBG-SMI section, Br.no.-86(4x12.2) in RXL-NKE section, Br.no.- 159(4 x 12.2) 164DN(2X12.2), 195DN(1 x 12.2) 203(5X12.2), 213(X12.2) in MFP-SGL section, 248 DN(2X12.2) in SGL-NKE section, Br.no.-16A(4x18.3), 20A(3 x 12.2) 7(1x18.3) in DBG-JYG section, 329(4 x 12.2) 32(3 x 18.3) 383(3x18.3) in NKE-PNYA section under SSE(Bridge)SPJ of Samastipur Division. Tender Value: Rs. 26353545.81 Earnest Money: Rs. 281800.00 Completion period of the work: 15 Months

3. Tender Notice No.: TC-95-2024-SPJ

Name of work: Periodical painting of major/important /ROB bridge no. 16A in SPJ-KGG section, 77, 80, 81, 88, 97A in SKI-TMA section and Br.no.- 19A, 19, 16, 14 and 13 in SHC-RGV section and ROB/BMKI, ROB/NKE & ROB/HIR in MFP-NKE-PNYA section etc. and periodical oiling & greasing of 31 nos. of Major/important bridges etc. for the year 2024-25 under SSE/Br/Samastipur of Samastipur division. Tender Value: Rs. 5011246.78 Earnest Money: Rs. 100200.00 Completion period of the work: 06 Months

4. Tender Notice No.: TC-96-2024-SPJ

Name of work: 3-D Scanning of River beds of Br. No.- 17 (4x45.7m OWG) in SPJ-DBG section under SSE/Br/SPJ of Samastipur Division. Tender Value: Rs. 307605.70 Earnest Money: Rs. 6200.00 Completion period of the work: 03 Months.

5. Tender Notice No.: TC-97-2024-SPJ

Name of work: Repairs to damage coping and platform wall surface at different halt station in the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN-II/SPJ. Tender Value: Rs. 7204933.47 Earnest Money: Rs. 144100.00 Completion period of the work: 09 Months.

6. Tender Notice No.: TC-98-2024-SPJ

Name of work: Improvement of Leaky Roof in Staff Quarters at Narkataganj. Tender Value: 18396342.34 Earnest Money: 242000.00 Completion period of the work: 12 Months.

7. Tender Notice No.: TC-99-2024-SPJ

Name of work: Improvement of Leaky Roof in Staff Quarters at Rakaxal. Tender Value: 17409783.10 Earnest Money: 237100.00 Completion period of the work: 12 Months

i) Last Date & time for receiving of Tender in E-Tender mode on IREPS web portal: 18/06/2024 upto 12.00 hours. ii) Opening Date & time for E-Tender: 18/06/2024 after 12.00 hours. (iii) Website particulars where complete details of tender & tender document can be seen on tender: www.ireps.gov.in. Amendments/modifications if any shall not be published in the newspapers but the same shall be uploaded in the website.

Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-ord E.C.Railway, Samastipur PR/00338/SPJ/ENG/724-25/120

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THE PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director(s), Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

बिहार विद्यालय परीक्षा समिति शिक्षा विभाग, बिहार सरकार

JEE/NEET की कोचिंग हेतु Physical Chemistry विषय के शिक्षकों की आवश्यकता

बिहार विद्यालय परीक्षा समिति द्वारा इंजीनियरिंग तथा मेडिकल (JEE/NEET) प्रतियोगिता परीक्षा की तैयारी के लिए पटना में संचालित आवासीय शिक्षण (Residential Teaching) हेतु Full Time basis पर Physical Chemistry विषय के लिए योग्य एवं अनुभवी शिक्षकों की सेवाएँ प्राप्त करने हेतु (पूर्व में प्रकाशित विज्ञापित संख्या- पी०आर० 197/2023 दिनांक- 20.07.2023 के क्रम में) आवश्यक सूचना

एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि पूर्व में प्रकाशित विज्ञापित संख्या- पी०आर० 197/2023 दिनांक- 20.07.2023 के क्रम में बिहार विद्यालय परीक्षा समिति द्वारा राज्य के मेधावी छात्र/छात्राओं को इंजीनियरिंग तथा मेडिकल (JEE/NEET) प्रतियोगिता परीक्षाओं की तैयारी के उद्देश्य से आवासीय शिक्षण (Residential Teaching) की व्यवस्था की गई है, जिसके लिए Full Time basis पर Physical Chemistry विषय में शिक्षण देने के लिए योग्य, समर्पित एवं अनुभवी शिक्षकों का चयन किया जाना है।

2. तदनुसार Physical Chemistry विषय में Full Time basis पर शिक्षण हेतु योग्य एवं अनुभवी शिक्षकों/विषय विशेषज्ञों से निम्नरूपेण आवेदन आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं:-

(a) आवेदक दिनांक- 25.05.2024 से दिनांक- 03.06.2024 की रात्रि 11:30 बजे तक ई-मेल आई.डी.-computercellbseb@gmail.com पर आवेदन के साथ अपने अनुभव प्रमाण-पत्र (Experience Certificate) एवं Salary Slip की Scanned Copy PDF में तैयार कर ई-मेल कर सकते हैं या वेबसाइट coaching.biharboardonline.com पर दिये गये लिंक "Teacher (Full Time)" पर क्लिक कर अपना ऑनलाईन आवेदन दिनांक 26.05.2024 के पूर्वाह्न से दिनांक 03.06.2024 की रात्रि 11:30 बजे तक भर सकेंगे, जिसके लिए निम्न बिन्दु महत्वपूर्ण हैं:-

- (i) Dynamic and flexible payment structure के तहत अधिकतम तीन लाख रुपये तक प्रति माह (Upto Rs. 3,00,000/- per month) Professional Fees के रूप में भुगतान किया जा सकेगा।
- (ii) शिक्षकों के मानदेय में उनके Performance के आधार पर न्यूनतम 5 प्रतिशत से अधिकतम 10 प्रतिशत तक की वार्षिक वृद्धि की जा सकेगी।
- (iii) जिस अर्थार्थी का अंतिम रूप से चयन (Final Selection) होगा, उनके योगदान (Joining) के पहले पूर्व का सैलरी सत्यापन Bank Statement/ITR से कराया जा सकेगा।
- किसी प्रतिष्ठित कोचिंग संस्थान में अपने विषय का JEE अथवा NEET से संबंधित अध्यापन का कम से कम 08 वर्ष का अनुभव अनिवार्य। आवेदक को पिछले पाँच वर्षों में किसी भी एक वर्ष में JEE/NEET के किसी भी कोचिंग संस्थान में न्यूनतम 02 लाख रुपये प्रति माह अथवा 24 लाख रुपये प्रति वर्ष का भुगतान प्राप्त होना चाहिए।

(b) ऑनलाईन आवेदन भरने के क्रम में उन कोचिंग संस्थानों में उन्हें प्राप्त मासिक मानदेय (Remuneration) का उल्लेख भी आवेदन में अंकित किया जायेगा। इसके साथ ही उन्हें संस्थानों के कम से कम दो अलग-अलग वर्षों का Salary Slip लगाना होगा। Salary Slip की अनुपलब्धता की स्थिति में कम से कम दो वर्ष के Income Tax Return की प्रति संलग्न करना अनिवार्य होगा। Full time basis पर शिक्षकों/विषय-विशेषज्ञों की सेवा समिति में Outsourcing के आधार पर ली जाएगी।

3. इस प्रयोजन हेतु अर्थार्थियों का साक्षात्कार (Interview) दिनांक 08.06.2024 को बिहार विद्यालय परीक्षा समिति, सिन्हा लाइब्रेरी रोड, पटना-800017 में पूर्वाह्न 11:30 बजे से लिया जाएगा। आवेदकों के द्वारा दी गई सूचनाओं की गोपनीयता (full confidentiality) अक्षुण्ण रखी जाएगी।

4. इंटरव्यू में पटना के बाहर से आने वाले अर्थार्थियों को आने-जाने (To and Fro) के लिए वायुयान यात्रा के लिए Economy Class एवं रेल यात्रा के लिए AC के Actual Fare की 60% राशि इंटरव्यू के दिन ही दी जाएगी, जिसके लिए उन्हें एयर टिकट/रेल टिकट की फोटोकॉपी जमा करनी होगी।

विज्ञापित संख्या - पी.आर. 194/2024 सचिव

'Won't interfere with shooter's non-selection in Olympics'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The High Court on Friday declined to interfere with an order by a single-judge Bench, rejecting a plea by shooter Manini Kaushik to allow her to participate in the trials for the upcoming Paris Olympics in the 50 m rifle category.

The court said Ms. Kaushik's appeal, challenging the decision of the single-judge Bench, was infructuous as the trials had already been held.

The court observed that the trials were held between April 22 and May 19 and that if her exclusion from certain events had been deliberate, she should have filed a plea sooner.

Timings
DELHI

SATURDAY, MAY 25		
RISE	05:26	SET 19:11
RISE	21:16	SET 06:24
SUNDAY, MAY 26		
RISE	05:26	SET 19:12
RISE	22:13	SET 07:22
MONDAY, MAY 27		
RISE	05:26	SET 19:13
RISE	23:05	SET 08:25

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	42	31
Safdarjang	42	31
Palam	41	30

Delhi Palam Today
42°C Heat wave to prevail. Morning will be slight warm. The weather will be very hot and uneasy during the day. Night also will be uneasy.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
43°C Weather will be dry. Morning will be uneasy. The day will be very hot and uneasy. Night will be slight warm. Heat wave to continue.

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Bibhav sent to 4-day judicial custody; not cooperating: police

'Accused yet to disclose phone password; his counsel seeks copy of CCTV footage collected from CM House in connection with Maliwal assault case

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Delhi court on Friday sent Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's personal assistant Bibhav Kumar to four-day judicial custody in connection with the alleged assault on AAP's Rajya Sabha member and former Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) chairperson Swati Maliwal.

In her complaint to the police, based on which an FIR was registered, Ms. Maliwal alleged that she had gone to meet the Chief Minister at his residence on May 13, where she was slapped, kicked, and dragged by Mr. Kumar.



CM's personal assistant Bibhav Kumar was arrested on May 18 after AAP Rajya Sabha member Swati Maliwal complained of assault. PTI

'Falsely implicated'

Four days later, the CM aide filed a police complaint, claiming that the Rajya Sabha member had "forcefully and illegally" trespassed into the CM House on May 13, created "ruckus", and "falsely implicated" him. On May 18, Mr. Kumar was arrested and remanded in police custody for five days.

In their remand application, the Delhi police said electronic, scientific, and medical evidence, along with statements of witnesses, had been collected during the investigation.

"That the recovered network video recorders (NVRs) stated to contain relevant materials concerning the present case have

been seized as per the procedure and have been sent for examination, opinion, and analysis by the forensic experts, which is awaited and expected within the shortest possible time," the application stated.

It said the accused has to be confronted with the evidence gathered from Mumbai (where Mr. Kumar allegedly formatted his phone before being arrested) and the NVRs. It added that the team investigating the case was in Mumbai and was likely to return soon.

The police also told the court that the CM aide was not cooperating with the investigation, was evasive in his replies, and had not

disclosed his phone's password.

Mr. Kumar's counsel moved an application seeking a copy of the CCTV footage of May 13 collected from the CM House.

Special Public Prosecutor opposed the plea, saying the footage cannot be provided to the accused under the law at this stage.

The court reserved its order on Mr. Kumar's plea.

A day earlier, Mr. Kejriwal had attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi after claiming that the police were going to interrogate his parents in connection with the alleged assault on Thursday.

The police, however, did not show up.

'Modi has accepted excise case is false, no money recovered yet'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has "accepted that the excise policy case is false" as not even a penny of the "₹100-crore scam" has been recovered so far. He added that those arrested in the case must be released.

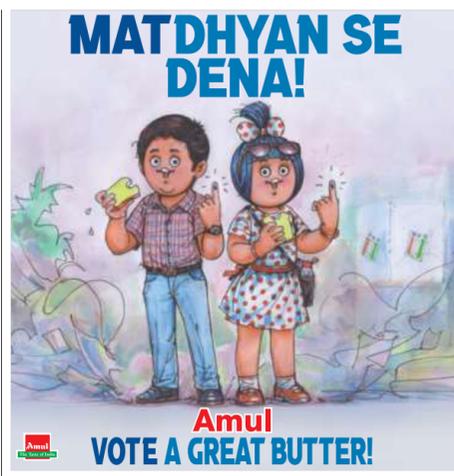
"Yesterday, the Prime Minister was asked in an interview to respond to my statement that no evidence had been found in the case. He said no money had been recovered because 'Kejriwal is an experienced thief'," the CM said in a video message.

"He accepted that no recovery had yet been made. When you have accepted that excise case is wrong, please release those who have been arrested," he

ED has arrested three senior AAP leaders - Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, and Sanjay Singh - in the case

added.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested three senior AAP leaders - Mr. Kejriwal, former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, and party's Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh - in connection with the case, which pertains to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation and execution of the now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-22. Mr. Singh was granted bail on April 4, the CM was given interim bail on May 10, while Mr. Sisodia, whom the High Court denied bail on May 21, remains in Tihar Jail.



Graceful of PM to remember Sheila ji, says Sandeep Dikshit

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day before Delhi is set to vote, Sandeep Dikshit, Congress leader and son of former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, on Friday expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

for his comments about his mother. "While our political differences remain, it is very graceful of the Prime Minister to remember Sheila ji and her contribution. My Mother and PM were fellow Chief Ministers for 12 years," Mr. Dikshit said on X.

Medha Patkar convicted in defamation case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday convicted social activist and Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) leader Medha Patkar in a more than two-decade-old criminal defamation case lodged against her by Vinai Kumar Saxena, the present Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi.

Metropolitan Magistrate Raghav Sharma of Saket Court convicted Ms. Patkar for the offence of criminal defamation under Section 500 of the Indian Penal



Medha Patkar

Code, 1860.

Mr. Saxena, who at the time was the president of the National Council for Civil Liberties, an NGO, had filed the defamation case in 2001 when, according to him, Ms. Patkar defamed

him through a press release issued by her.

In the press note, titled 'True Face of Patriot', Ms. Patkar said, "V.K. Saxena... praised NBA and gave a cheque of ₹40,000... But the cheque could not be encashed and got bounced. On inquiry, the bank reported the account does not exist." The cheque, the press note said, came from Lalbhai Group. "What is the connection between Lalbhai Group and V.K. Saxena? Who among them is more patriot?" the note read.

Mr. Saxena had ap-

proached a local court in Gujarat's Ahmedabad, which took cognisance of the offence. The case was moved to Saket Court in 2002 on the orders of the Supreme Court.

The court, while convicting Ms. Patkar, said her actions were deliberate and malicious. "... her decision to label the complainant a 'coward' and 'not a patriot' was a direct attack on his personal character and loyalty to the nation," it said. The arguments on the quantum of the sentence will be heard on May 30.



NEXA

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IN BRIEF



JMM govt. allowing infiltrators to enter Jharkhand, says Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday accused the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led (JMM) coalition government of allowing infiltrators to enter Jharkhand and unleashing a war against the tribal people's land and resources. Mr. Shah was campaigning for BJP candidate Sita Soren, who is contesting from the Dumka Lok Sabha seat. Ms. Soren, the eldest daughter-in-law of JMM chief Shibu Soren, had recently resigned and joined the BJP. "I want to appeal to the tribal brothers and sisters to elect a government which can stop infiltration. If infiltration is not stopped, the land and forests of the tribals will be in danger," Mr. Shah said in Jamtara.

Priyanka, Dimple to hold joint roadshow in Varanasi today

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple Yadav will hold a joint roadshow in Varanasi on Saturday in support of INDIA bloc candidate Ajay Rai. Congress spokesperson Shaileendra Singh said the roadshow will start from Durgakund temple and come to an end after paying obeisance at Ravidas Temple. During the roadshow, Ms. Vadra and Ms. Yadav will also garland the statue of Madan Mohan Malviya at Singhdwar of Kashi Hindu University. Varanasi Congress leader Raghavendra Choubey said the two leaders may visit Kashi Vishwanath Temple before the event. PM Narendra Modi is seeking a third consecutive term from Varanasi.

Poll expenditure observer inspects Sukhu's helicopter

Election authorities on Friday inspected the helicopter of Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, ahead of the upcoming elections in the State. Expenditure observer Kundan Yadav inspected the helicopter at Dhaliara, which falls under the Dehra Assembly segment in Kangra district. The Dehra Assembly seat falls under the Hamirpur parliamentary constituency. Mr. Yadav said the Chief Minister's helicopter was checked as part of a routine inspection. Mr. Yadav has been appointed by the Election Commission as the expenditure observer for 17 Assembly seats falling in the Hamirpur Lok Sabha constituency. The elections in 4 Lok Sabha constituencies and bypolls in six Assembly seats are scheduled for June 1.

Gauhati High Court notice on Kamakhya Corridor Project

The Gauhati High Court has issued notices to the Centre, the Assam government, the Archaeological Survey of India and others on a petition challenging the Kamakhya Corridor Project. Atop the Neelachal Hills in Guwahati, the Kamakhya temple is one of 51 peeths or pilgrimages of the Shakti cult of Hinduism. The Kamakhya Corridor, inspired by the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor Project, was one of several projects in Assam worth ₹11,500 crore that PM Modi had launched in February. Navajyoti Sarma, representing the Bardeuri Samaj associated with the temple, said in his petition that the project potentially threatens the temple complex due to large-scale demolition and reconstruction.

Hindu monks hit the streets against Mamata's remarks

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Hundreds of Hindu monks on Friday took out a 'Sant Swabhiman Yatra' in Kolkata to protest against the recent remarks by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee directed at certain religious orders and monks.

Organised by Bangiya Sanyasi Samaj, an apex body of saints in West Bengal, the rally saw the participation of leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

The protesters walked barefoot from the house of Maa Sarada in Baghbazar area of north Kolkata to the house of Swami Vivekananda on Shimla Street.

During an election rally in the State's Hooghly district last week, Ms. Banerjee had made a reference to Hindu religious orders like Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Ramakrishna Mission, and ISKCON.

The Trinamool Congress chief targeted Kartick Maharaj, a prominent monk of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha, and accused him of being behind the riots at Beldanga in Murshidabad during Ram Navami processions last month.

While the Chief Minister



Hindu monks take out the 'Sant Swabhiman Yatra' in Kolkata on Friday. DEBASISH BHADURI

later said the remarks were not targeted at any religious order, the development assumed significance amid the Lok Sabha poll.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his poll campaign accused Ms. Banerjee of threatening monks and claimed that she was trying to "appease her vote bank under pressure from Muslim fundamentalists".

'Personal attack'

Participating in the rally, Mr. Maharaj said the remarks were not a personal attack but an attack on Hindu religious orders.

Political observers have pointed out that the Chief Minister opening up a new front against Hindu monks in middle of elections could result in polarisation of Hindu votes.

Haryana set to vote for 10 Lok Sabha seats and one Assembly byelection

As many as 223 candidates, including 207 men and 16 women, are in fray for the Parliamentary election; new CM Nayab Singh Saini bids to enter the Assembly from Karnal constituency

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

With polling for the 10 Parliamentary constituencies in Haryana and a byelection for one constituency all set to be held on Saturday, elaborate security and other arrangements have been put in place for voting across the State where 2,00,76,786 voters will decide the fate of the candidates.

As many as 223 candidates, including 207 men and 16 women, are in the fray. Voting will be held from 7 a.m. and continue till 6 p.m. A byelection would also be held for the Karnal Assembly seat where Nayab Singh Saini, who replaced Manohar Lal as the Chief Minister, is contesting to enter the Assembly. There are nine candidates in the fray for the bypoll.

To ensure peaceful conduct of the polling process, over 35,000 Haryana police personnel, 112 companies of paramilitary forces,



Police officers stand near a mock-up of an EVM installed by the Election Commission as part of voter awareness campaign in Gurugram. PTI

and over 24,000 home guards have been deployed across the State, according to an official statement.

Over 20,000 booths

Haryana's Chief Electoral Officer Anurag Agarwal said a total of 20,031 polling

stations have been set up in the State, including 19,812 permanent and 219 auxiliary polling stations. "There are 99 polling stations which will be operated entirely by women staff. Apart from this, 96 polling stations will be manned by

youth employees, and 71 polling stations by Persons with Disabilities (PwD)," he said.

After the State saw an intense poll campaigning, Haryana is expected to witness practically a direct contest between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress. The BJP is toiling to repeat its 2019 performance of sweeping all the Lok Sabha seats while for Congress, the key challenger, the polls are a fight to revive the party in the State.

Congress-AAP tie-up

The Congress is contesting the general election with a seat-sharing arrangement with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as part of the INDIA bloc. The latter is contesting the Kurukshetra seat while the Congress is contesting the rest.

Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), the BJP's coalition partner until recently, and the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) are also in the fray, as is the Bahujan Samaj Party.

Family tried to blame their driver after Porsche crash, says Pune Police chief

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

Pune Police on Friday suspended two officers for 'dereliction of duty' in connection with an accident in which an allegedly drunk 17-year-old driving his Porsche car killed two IT employees in their mid-20s in the city on May 19.

Authorities said Police Inspector Rahul Jagdale and Assistant Police Inspector Vishwanath Todkari had reportedly 'mishandled' the probe and failed to inform the wireless control room of the accident.

The action comes amid outrage and aspersions cast by both the public and Opposition leaders on the 'role' of the police since the accused is the son of a prominent city realtor.

Earlier in the day, a local court sent Vishal Agarwal, father of the accused, and five others arrested in the case to 14-day judicial custody. Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar told reporters that Mr. Agarwal



Residents of Pune hold a candlelight vigil to pay condolences to the two youth who were run over by a luxury car on May 19. PTI

had tried to tamper with the evidence and made attempts to put the blame on a driver employed by the family. The accused minor, Mr. Kumar added, was under the influence of alcohol but "in his full senses".

He said the police's case was not dependent on the blood report alone as they had the CCTV footage of him drinking in the pub and driving the car. "After the accident, the accused was taken to Sassoon Hospital. His blood samples were taken around 11 a.m.

[on May 19]. While there is a lapse in the time of collection of blood samples, the police's case under Section 304 (culpable homicide) of the IPC is not dependent on the blood report," Mr. Kumar said.

Mother's appeal

Meanwhile, the accused's mother has appealed to the police to 'protect' her son after a video purportedly showing him boasting about how he got away with the car crash went viral. In a video message, the

teen's mother stressed that the clip was fake.

Late in the evening, the investigation into the case was transferred to the Crime Branch from the Yerwada police station, where the initial case was registered. However, the Madhya Pradesh-based parents of both victims have demanded that the Supreme Court monitor the probe and the trial be held in their State.

Bar employees protest

In the wake of the action against pubs and bars by the Pune administration following the car crash, scores of employees from such establishments held protests on Friday, stating that they are losing their livelihood due to it. "We are facing the brunt of the fault of two bars," said an employee of a bar.

About 2,500 employees along with the owners of bars and pubs gathered at Raja Bahadur Mills near the Pune railway station. (With inputs from PTI)

Will challenge High Court order on OBC certificates: Mamata

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday announced that her government will approach a higher court, challenging the Calcutta High Court order that cancelled all OBC certificates issued in the State since 2010.

Addressing an election rally in Sagar in South 24 Parganas district, she said the State government would appeal to the higher court against the order after summer vacation.

"We do not accept the order that scrapped OBC certificates. We will contest at a higher court after summer vacation," Ms. Banerjee said.

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday struck down as illegal the OBC status of several classes in the State granted since 2010, sparking a political debate in the middle of the Lok Sabha elections.

The court observed that

the inclusion of 77 classes of Muslims in the list of backward categories was to "treat them as a vote bank".

"I respect the courts, but a few judges are only following the diktats of the BJP and the CPI(M)." Ms. Banerjee urged electors not to cast a single vote to the BJP or any other party except the TMC so that the INDIA bloc can form a government at the Centre.

UCC implementation

She also accused the BJP of planning to implement the Uniform Civil Code to "undermine" the rights of people belonging to the SC and ST community.

Ms. Banerjee appealed to the families of Haj pilgrims to vote judiciously, as the "implementation of the Uniform Civil Code and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) could disenfranchise citizens". The TMC chief accused the BJP of running advertisements to "mislead" people.

One for my brother, appeals Afzal as Mukhtar Ansari's shadow looms large in Ghazipur

GROUND REPORT

Sobhana K. Nair
GHAZIPUR (U.P.)

There are no marigold garlands heaped on top of Samajwadi Party (SP) nominee Afzal Ansari's vehicle — the distinguishing mark of an election candidate. The cavalcade of three SUVs and a few young men on motorcycles threads through the narrow roads in Ghazipur's interior villages, almost noiselessly.

Mr. Afzal has had an itinerant political journey. Associated with the Communist Party of India early on, he won this Lok Sabha seat on an SP ticket in 2004. In 2019, he won Ghazipur

again after having shifted to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in an election where the party and the SP had joined hands.

But this election is not about him. The shadow of his younger brother and five-time U.P. legislator Mukhtar Ansari, who died on March 28 in Banda jail, looms large.

Then there is the pending judgment in a nearly 20-year-old case linked to the killing of BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai. The more immediate challenge is of holding on to Dalit voters after returning to the SP from the BSP.

Poll issues

Around 2 p.m., the cavalcade stops at Harsingh Pat-



Afzal Ansari, Samajwadi Party candidate for the Ghazipur Lok Sabha seat, campaigning in the constituency. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ti village. At a small clearing inside the village, predominantly of Rajbhars — an OBC group that had significantly shifted to the BJP after 2014 — is Mr. Afzal's first public meeting of the day.

He delivers a 35-minute speech in front of 200-odd people, who hang on to every word as he switches between Hindi and Bhojpuri, building his narrative from Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement of

2012 to the BJP's promise of two crore jobs annually before the 2014 general election.

He details "fanciful decisions" taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, from demonetisation to his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the high rate of inflation and unemployment. He also asks the crowd whether they doubt the EVM — the audience hisses in the affirmative.

It is only towards the end that Mr. Afzal speaks about his brother: "Have you heard the name of my younger brother Mukhtar Ansari?" They say yes, in a chorus. He alleges that Mukhtar was poisoned to death by the authorities to break apart his family "like

they did with [NCP (SP) chief] Sharad Pawar's".

"Make sure you vote in record numbers, so that it is clear to them that the Ghazipur voter is openly revolting against them," he signs off.

Conviction stayed

In April 2023, Mr. Afzal was disqualified as an MP after his conviction by a special court under the U.P. Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act for Rai's 2005 murder, a case he claims was foisted on him despite his acquittal in the main murder case.

His membership was restored by the Supreme Court, which stayed the conviction. The case is now pending before the Al-

lahabad High Court.

"This case has been resurrected as part of a BJP game plan. You can intimidate the voters but can't win their hearts. The BJP will not get even half a vote here," he says.

As the electoral caravan heads to Ghazipur in the seventh phase of polls on June 1, Mr. Afzal fancies an opening edge in terms of the Yadavs and Muslims, who constitute the dominant bloc among voters here. The SP also holds four out of the five Assembly segments under this seat, two of which it had wrested back from the BJP in the 2022 Assembly election; one is with O.P. Rajbhar's Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party.

In 2019, Mr. Afzal had defeated current J&K Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha — an opponent he had bested in 2004 as well — by a margin of 1.19 lakh votes on the back of support from Dalit and Muslim voters. He squares up this time against BJP candidate Paras Nath Rai, an old associate of Mr. Sinha, and BSP's Umesh Kumar Singh.

Mr. Afzal had even got his daughter Nusrat Ansari to file her nomination as an Independent to cover for the possibility of disqualification. While that scare has passed, whether his switch to the SP is a hit hinges on how much of the roughly 20% of the Dalit voters in the constituency he manages to retain.



K Kavitha. ANI

ED opposes Kavitha's bail plea in Delhi excise case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) opposed the bail petition of BRS leader K. Kavitha in an alleged money laundering case linked to the excise policy case in the Delhi High Court on Friday, saying her release would adversely affect further investigation to unearth the "deep-rooted, multi-layered conspiracy".

The ED stated that she has the potential to tamper with evidence and influence witnesses. It contended that the Telangana lawmaker is a "highly influential" individual and stands accused of having committed a grave economic offence.

"Ms. Kavitha has conspired with other people and actively involved in payment of kickbacks to the tune of ₹100 crore and then in establishing the money laundering ecosystem, that is, M/s Indo Spirits through her proxy which generated proceeds of crime of ₹192.8 crore. By such acts, she is involved in various processes and activities relating to proceeds of crime (POC) to the tune of ₹292.8 crore," it said.

Two die as heavy rain lashes Kerala; 201 in relief camps

Houses damaged in many districts including Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, Kottayam; IMD says intensity of current spell would reduce from today; isolated heavy rainfall likely till Monday

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government agencies remained on high alert on Friday, as heavy rain continued to pound several districts. Two persons died in rain-related incidents in Pathanamthitta and Malappuram districts, according to the State Emergency Operations Centre. In all, 201 people, including 47 children belonging to 61 families, are at present in nine relief camps across the State. Thiruvananthapuram with three camps accommodating 10 families is at the top of the list. Camps are operating in Kollam, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Malappuram, and Kozhikode.

Houses in several dis-



Youth watch the dark clouds over Kochi on Friday. PTI

tricts sustained damage, including seven in Thiruvananthapuram, four in Kozhikode, three in Malappuram, two each in Palakkad and Alappuzha, and one in Kollam.

A weather update from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) indicated that the current spell would start winding down in intensity from Saturday,

although isolated heavy rainfall is expected in seven districts, which have been put on yellow alert. The low pressure area over southeast Arabian Sea off the Kerala coast has become less marked. A cyclonic circulation lies over south Kerala and its neighbourhood. Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Ernakulam,

Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod are on yellow alert on Saturday. Heavy rainfall is likely to occur at isolated places in Kerala till Monday, the IMD said.

Fishermen have been advised against setting out to sea on Saturday, given the likelihood of squally weather along the coast.

Monsoon advances

The southwest monsoon has advanced into more parts of the Maldives and Kanyakumari area, south Bay of Bengal, the remaining parts of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andaman Sea and some parts of east-central Bay of Bengal. Conditions are favourable for its further advance over more parts of the Bay region during the weekend, the IMD said.

Allahabad HC grants bail to Azam Khan, wife and son in forgery case



Despite the bail, Azam Khan, his wife and son will remain in jail as several other cases are pending against them. FILE PHOTO

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

The Allahabad High Court on Friday granted bail to Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Azam Khan, his wife Tazeen Fatima and son Abdullah Azam Khan in a case related to fake birth certificate.

A Single Bench of Justice Sanjay Kumar Singh approved their bails and stayed the sentence of seven years awarded to them by a Special Court of Rampur. However, despite the High Court order, the trio will remain in prison as several other cases are pending against them.

The court was hearing the revision petition filed by them challenging the seven-year imprisonment order by the Rampur Special Court in October 2023 in the forgery case.

The court had found them guilty under sections 120 (B) criminal conspiracy, 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery valuable security), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), 471 (using as genuine a forged document), 472 (making or possessing

counterfeit seal with intent to commit forgery) of the Indian Penal Code and awarded seven years' imprisonment.

The case dates back to 2019, when Akash Saxena (presently a BJP MLA) lodged a complaint alleging that Azam Khan and Tazeen Fatima through a conspiracy got two birth certificates made for their son Abdullah Azam Khan.

The first certificate claimed he was born in Rampur, and the other said he was born in Lucknow. The first one was issued on June 28, 2012, while the second one was issued on January 21, 2015.

Azam Khan, a leading Muslim face in the SP, was convicted in October 2022 in four cases, out of which in one his appeal against the lower court's judgment was upheld and he was acquitted in May 2023.

Since 2017, when the BJP came to power in U.P., more than six dozen cases have been registered against the senior BJP leader for land grabbing, cheating, criminal conspiracy among others.

SC stays HC order to shift out of Nainital

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on May 24 stayed an order of the Uttarakhand High Court to shift out of tourist hotspot Nainital.

A Vacation Bench, headed by Justice P.S. Narasimha, froze a May 8 order of the High Court directing the State government to find a suitable site outside Nainital where it could be relocated. "There shall be a stay of the order till the next date of hearing. List immediately after the ensuing summer vacation," the Bench, also comprising Justice Sanjay Karol, ordered.

The order came on a petition filed by the Uttarakhand HC Bar Association, represented by senior advocate P.B. Suresh and advocates Vinod Khanna, Vipin Nair, Karthik Jayashankar, Ayush Negi, Kartikeya Hari Gupta, Dinesh Rawat and B.D. Pande.

Mr. Suresh argued that shifting the principal seat of the HC had the effect of interdicting a Presidential order, which had already established it at Nainital.

"It is only the Parliament or the Central government which can decide on the establishment of a Principal Bench, and not the High Court," he submitted.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the State, agreed with the High Court Bar Association's submissions. The Uttarakhand HC had earlier rejected the allocation of land for the High Court at Haldwani by the State.

NIA arrests 35-year-old man with LeT link in Bengaluru cafe explosion case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday arrested a 35-year-old convict in a Lashkar-e-Taiba terror conspiracy case as the fifth accused in the Rameshwaram Cafe blast case. Shoaib Ahmed Mirza alias Chhotu is from Hubballi city and has served a sentence in the case. He

has allegedly emerged as the key link to the Thirthahalli module that allegedly carried out the blast at The Rameshwaram Cafe on March 1. He allegedly introduced the module to an "online handler" suspected to be abroad.

"In 2018, Mirza had befriended and introduced accused Abdul Matheen Taha to an online handler suspected to be abroad.

Mirza had further provided an e-mail ID for encrypted communication between the handler and Taha, who was arrested on April 12 along with co-accused Mussavir Hussain Shazib, the alleged bomber at the cafe from Kolkata," it said.

"Further investigations into the role of handler and larger conspiracy behind the blast is under way," the NIA said. The probe into

the cases involved the Thirthahalli module, which was allegedly put together by Taha and Shazib, absconding accused in the 2020 Al Hind module case. The probe always pointed towards a handler, "Colonel", whose identity is not yet known.

The NIA has now claimed that Mirza was the contact between Taha and the handler.

Appeal to Voters of Delhi

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 - Follow instructions on "How To Vote"
 - Show courtesy to the polling team which is facilitating your vote
 - After casting your vote come out of the polling station quietly

- DONTs**
- Do not accept bribe in favour of your vote. Bribery is an offence.
 - Do not impersonate for someone else. Impersonation is an offence.
 - Do not cause any disturbance in the poll process. You may land up in prison.
 - Do not cause damage/tamper with poll material including EVM/VVPAT. You may land up in prison.
 - Do not obstruct the polling team in performing election duty. You may land up in prison.



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Welcome bounty

The RBI's transfer of surplus should help next government start confidently

The decision by the Reserve Bank of India's board to transfer a record surplus of almost ₹2.11 lakh crore to the Union Government for 2023-24 will serve as a welcome shot in the arm for the new government when it presents its Budget in July. More than double the previous year's ₹87,416 crore payout as well as the ₹1.02 lakh crore dividend-cum-surplus receipts from the banking and financial system and RBI that was pencilled into the interim Union Budget for 2024-25, the transfer should give the next Finance Minister a fair bit of elbow room when computing the spending and fiscal math. The surge in transferable surplus reflects the prudent asset management approach adopted by the Indian central bank, at a time of lingering global uncertainty and widespread policy tightening by central banks worldwide seeking to restore price stability. While the specifics of the RBI's 2023-24 balance sheet will be known in the coming days, clearly a combination of substantial gains from higher interest income earned on its holdings of overseas securities and the gains from its interventions in the foreign exchange market to smoothen volatility in the rupee's moves must have contributed in swelling the surplus. The weekly statistical supplement shows that as on March 29, total foreign exchange reserves had increased by \$67.1 billion over the course of 12 months to \$645.58 billion.

The RBI's prudence has also extended to the crucial provisioning done under the Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB), where it has raised the level of funds set aside to cover for any unforeseen contingencies and risks to the economy. By raising the level of provisioning by 50 basis points to 6.5% of its balance sheet size for 2023-24, the central bank has clearly signalled its increased confidence in the health of the domestic economy even as it strengthens the buffer against any sudden threats to stability from unexpected developments in the global financial system. For the new government that will assume office after the results of the ongoing general election are declared on June 4, the bountiful surplus transfer from the RBI will give it an opportunity to raise capital spending, especially at a time when the key engine of private consumption expenditure is still in search of sustained tailwinds. The opportunity to use some of the additional bonanza to bridge the fiscal gap can also help strengthen the government's finances and reassure investors of its commitment to the fiscal consolidation road map. The RBI has in its own quiet way paved the path for the next government to start with confidence in the resilience of the economy.

Southern sojourn

India must continue to oppose unregulated tourism in the Antarctica

Delegates from over 60 countries have convened in Kochi, Kerala to attend the 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) that is expected to go on until the month end. An annual affair, this is in essence a meeting of the 'Consultative Parties,' or the 29 countries that have a right to vote on affairs concerning the management of the continent. Other attendees are countries with a non-voting 'observer' status as well as independent experts and invited functionaries. One of the interesting points on the agenda this time relates to tourism. A group of 'like-minded' countries, that includes India, pressed for a proposal to introduce a regulatory framework governing tourism in the continent. Unlike other continents, the Antarctica does not have its own indigenous population.

With millions of hectares of untrammelled ice and its geographical isolation, it is not a tourist's everyday jamboree or the elite's regular private-jet getaway. This makes it irresistibly alluring. In this day and age, where every navigable square inch of land is up for fleeting, visual consumption, the Antarctica is the only continent that can be described as wild, its secrets buried under kilometres-thick blankets of ice. Given that the creation, capture and marketing of the 'exotic' experience is an industry that guarantees exponential returns, the Antarctica is now the 'wild south' that the wealthy traveller aspires to. A recent joint study by universities in Tasmania, the U.K. and Australia said that the number of tourists rose from 8,000 in 1993 to 1,05,000 in 2022. This does not include all the scientific expeditions and the long-term presence of scientific personnel at research stations maintained by different countries. Reports now suggest that the number of tourists exceeds scientists. To be sure, concerns about rising tourists have been expressed since 1966 at the consultative meets, with the attendant worries that more ships and more people mean more man-made pollutants and rising instances of accidents and disasters that lead to upsetting the unique biodiversity of the region. This urge to preserve the pristine purity of the continent – estimated to be the size of the United States and Mexico combined – however conceals the underlying anxiety of all nations. Will, despite the treaty's commitment to disallowing territorial claims, unexpected future circumstances effect a change in terms? Will the presence of more people from one country influence terms in their favour? Though India's Antarctica-bound tourists are minimal, this could very well change in the days to come, thanks to growing lop-sided prosperity. While a proponent of the proposal, India must be wary of any deal that could undercut future opportunities from tourism.

The missing links in IMEC, as shown by the Gaza war

On May 13, 2024, India and Iran finally signed a 10-year long-term bilateral contract for the operation of Chabahar Port – it was inked between the Indian Ports Global Limited and the Port and Maritime Organisation of Iran, in the presence of India's Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal. Mr. Sonowal said that the deal and the Chabahar Port is more important than just a bridge linking India with Iran. It is a critical economic route that links India with Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries.

But before this, a similar, and equally important, connectivity project, the IMEC, or the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor, was signed on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in New Delhi on September 9, 2023 by the European Union, France, Germany, India, Italy, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United States. Designed and formulated under the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), it aims to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf and Europe.

As a counter to the BRI

The IMEC will comprise two separate corridors – an east corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and a northern corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf to Europe. In addition to existing maritime and road transport routes, it will include a railway network that aims to be a reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network for goods and services to transit. The corridor also envisages along the railway route, the laying of cable for electricity and digital connectivity and a pipeline for clean hydrogen export. In its plan, the Indian ports of Kandla, Mumbai and Mundra will be connected by sea links to Fujairah, Jebel Ali and Abu Dhabi in the UAE in the east, followed by the rail-road link through Saudi Arabia and Jordan and onwards to Europe in the west by the port of Haifa in Israel, and along with the ports in Marseille in France, Messina in Italy and Piraeus in Greece.

This 4,800 kilometre-long IMEC corridor aims to secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility and improve trade facilitation across regions. Currently, much of the trade between India and Europe is through the Suez Canal as there is no overland access due to Pakistan being located to India's west overland. The IMEC will thus help overcome this obstacle and also cut down on the time, distance and costs of transit of goods from India to Europe significantly. It is



Rajeev Agarwal

a retired colonel, is the Assistant Director of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), New Delhi. He was Director in the Ministry of External Affairs and Director, Military Intelligence

estimated that the time and cost of transporting goods to Europe from India will be reduced by 40% and 30%, respectively. It is also being touted as an effective counter to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the region – and, therefore, has the U.S. as one of its major stakeholders.

The shadow of the Gaza war

But even before the potential impact of this path-breaking project could be examined by experts, the war in Gaza broke out on October 7, less than a month after its announcement. As a result, the whole project was stalled. In an interview on May 12, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar acknowledged that the delay in implementation of the IMEC in view of the current situation in West Asia is a matter of "concern" and the expectation generated following firming up of the initiative in September last has to be "adjusted" a bit now. He, however, was confident that work on the project would progress well after the war.

However, the Gaza war has amply proven that the IMEC has serious missing links in its current form. During the course of this war, the Houthis in Yemen have blocked the ships of Israel and its western allies from access to the Red Sea. Despite naval deployment by the U.S. Navy and Europe, the Houthis have not been deterred and have successfully targeted those ships. As a result, Israel and its western allies have been forced to take the longer route across the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, increasing shipping time as well as insurance costs.

During the same period, Iran has repeatedly threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz in the north through which most crude oil and natural gas is shipped to other parts of the world, including India. In fact, a similar situation happened during the Persian Gulf Crisis in the summer of 2019 which was triggered by the downing of a U.S. drone by the Iranian military; the drone was over Iran. Reports suggested that the U.S. President ordered retaliatory military strikes against Iran, to be executed at dawn on June 21 before changing his mind at the last moment.

During this period, there were repeated incidents of Iran intercepting ships in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. The Indian Navy had to launch 'Operation Sankalp' in order to ensure the safe passage of Indian flagged ships through the Persian Gulf. There were armed security teams from the Indian Navy on Indian flag ships transiting the Persian Gulf.

Coming back to the Gaza war, in Israel, two of its major ports, Eilat and Haifa, have suffered

heavy losses due to disruption in trade through the Red Sea and also the targeting of these critical ports by Hamas and its allies. A consortium led by India's Adani Group purchased Haifa port in January 2023, expecting an expansion and an increase in traffic but the Gaza war has put everything on hold.

On Oman and Egypt

The IMEC envisages that the ports in the UAE such as Fujairah and Jebel Ali will form the eastern offload points for ships transiting to India. The problem here is that all the ports of the UAE are located in the Persian Gulf and are well within the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, they will always be threatened by any conflict situation in the Persian Gulf.

What is the way out? Oman provides the perfect foil to this threat. Its ports open up into the Arabian Sea, well away from direct influence of an Iranian threat. It also offers the closest and direct link to ports in India. Traditionally too, merchants in Oman and India have traded for centuries through small boats called 'dhows' and Oman is considered India's gateway to West Asia. Oman is also an acceptable partner politically in the region as it has good relations with all stakeholders, including Israel.

Similarly, towards the West, instead of the ports of Israel, there has to be an alternate spur of the IMEC traversing through Egypt and ending at any of its major ports in the Mediterranean Sea – this will provide a safe and direct sea route to ports in Europe. Egypt is also a major player in West Asia and its inclusion will only help balance out the regional dynamics too. Like Oman, Egypt has good relations within the region and with Europe, Israel and the U.S.. In fact, Egypt had quietly voiced its displeasure on being left out of the IMEC and such an extension will not only take care of the politics but also the economics of it.

With the inclusion of Oman to the east and Egypt to the west, the IMEC can be made safe from disruptions from future conflicts and can, therefore, be considered vital to plug the critical missing links in the current structure of the IMEC.

The IMEC is a futuristic and path-breaking initiative. Building upon the wave of reconciliation within West Asia triggered by the Abraham Accords, this could be an ideal foil not only to China's BRI but also as a useful tool to better integrate the region and insulate it from threats posed to connectivity due to conflict. The missing links, highlighted by the Gaza war, can add a layer of insurance to this ambitious project.

The views expressed are personal

Any conflict situation in the Persian Gulf poses a serious threat, but there are solutions

Reading the lower voter turnout scenario

Low polling nationwide has been a notable trend in the first few phases of the ongoing general election 2024 in India. So, would anyone in particular gain from this?

Voter turnout decreased six times in the Lok Sabha elections held between 1957 and 2019. In 10 elections with increased turnout, the incumbent was victorious six times and lost four; in six elections with decreased turnout, the incumbent won four times and lost twice. This data, when analysed, shows that there is no statistically significant bias for or against the incumbent based on changes in turnout. An examination of comprehensive voter turnout data, however, must unavoidably be multidimensional.

It is conventional wisdom that in Indian elections, higher voter turnout is bad for incumbents. Nonetheless, a wave election was noted in 2014 and 2019. This time around, would the incumbent have any disadvantage if there was no wave like then?

The belief in America

Conventional political wisdom does exist in many countries. For instance, a deeply embedded belief in American political culture is that increased voter turnout systematically benefits Democrats. Many claimed that in the 2016 elections, Donald Trump's victory may have been reversed had voter turnout been a little higher, resulting in a possible surge in Democrat votes in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin. However, Daron R. Shaw and John R. Petrocik, the writers of the book, *The Turnout Myth: Voting Rates and Partisan Outcomes in American National Elections* (2020), thought that Hillary Clinton's support hardly varied depending on the electorate's size.

How about the Indian myth? In multiple publications in 2018, Milan Vaishnav and Johnathan Guy talked about their analysis of election data from 1980 to 2012 in 18 major States



Atanu Biswas

is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata

– voter participation "is not necessarily pro- or anti-incumbent; rather, the relationship between these two variables is likely shaped by the specific context at hand".

Perception about party's prospects

In 2024, a number of possible explanations for decreased turnout are floating, which include extremely hot weather, the COVID-19 pandemic effect, price rise, job losses, and voter indifference. However, the belief that a particular party would win handily may sometimes be a major deterrent to voting. Bill Clinton was well ahead of Bob Dole in the opinion polls for the 1996 U.S. presidential elections. This led to the lowest polling percentage in 72 years – just 49%. In reality, 9% of likely voters told Harris, a polling organisation, just before the election that "if the opinion polls show that Bill Clinton is certain to win with a big majority", they would be "very likely not to vote, because there is no real point in doing so".

But what impact does this have on different political parties? According to Harris' poll, 10% of Mr. Clinton supporters and 9% of Dole supporters, apparently evenly, said they were reluctant to cast ballots due to Mr. Clinton's perceived big victory. But the study also revealed that only 14% of Dole supporters and 54% of Clinton supporters thought Mr. Clinton would "win with a big majority". Thus, it is possible that a greater number of Mr. Clinton's supporters than Dole supporters abstained from voting. Therefore, in general, the party whose followers hold a stronger belief in a perceived foregone conclusion will be the one more affected by it.

The traditional support base for each party differs across various socioeconomic strata, especially in a diverse society like ours. In the American context, political scientists Michael D. Martinez and Jeff Gill, in a 2005 paper in *The Journal of Politics*, presented a methodology for evaluating the potential impacts of turnout on an

election outcome using simulations based on survey data. By adjusting simulated turnout rates for five U.S. elections between 1960 and 2000, they noticed that Democratic advantages from higher turnout (and Republican advantages from lower turnout) have consistently ebbed since 1960, correlating to the erosion of class cleavages in U.S. elections.

The U.S. elections from 2010 to 2020 were then analysed by Spencer Goedel, Thiago Moreira, and Brenna Armstrong in a 2023 paper published in *American Politics Research*. Expanding upon Martinez and Gill's methodology, for instance, to "increase" turnout by 5%, one could "add" the most likely voters to the electorate from those who did not vote until the turnout rate increased by 5%. One may calculate the extent to which this five-point increase in turnout benefited or harmed either party based on the predicted likelihood of these new voters casting Democratic or Republican ballots. Democrat votes would have increased by 1.5% in 2010 with a 15% rise in turnout, according to estimates, but only by 0.4% in 2020.

In India

However, I could not find any comparable research in an Indian setting. Nonetheless, the distribution of habitual voters' voting patterns ought to differ significantly from those of difficult-to-predict non-habitual voters. Furthermore, the effects of a few percentage votes from non-habitual voters in an Indian election will almost certainly be far more nuanced than in a two-party system such as the U.S. Additionally, the effects would vary across States. So, until the electronic voting machines are counted, these non-habitual voters rushing to the polling booths put political commentators in the realm of unknown unknowns. Without these non-habitual voters, however, everything is much easier to comprehend, and the situation is a known unknown.

An examination of comprehensive voter turnout data needs to be multi-dimensional

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ECI and election

The manner in which the Election Commission of India has functioned in the general election so far is very disappointing. From not pulling up the political class, especially the top leader, for divisive speeches to other lethargic responses involving discrepancies in the voting process, one wonders whether the ECI is merely functioning as an extended arm of the ruling party. Without prompt and decisive action, doubts in

the minds of the masses are only going to linger.
Ratheesh Chandran,
Thiruvalla, Kerala

Missing MP

It evokes one's curiosity how the law-enforcing agencies in the country did not budge an inch to arrest the Janata Dal (Secular) Member of Parliament from Hassan, who is alleged to be involved in the crime of assaulting women (Page 1, May 24). What is the underlying cause for this Himalayan lethargy? Who

are those powerful persons 'taking care' of the MP? It is a disgrace that the MP was nominated to stand for election. One is at sea wondering why the Prime Minister campaigned for him. It goes without saying that some godfathers do exist. The MP deserves severe and stringent punishment that is in consonance with law.
Mani Natarajan,
Chennai

The incident of the MP escaping after committing

heinous crimes is not an isolated one. Even after months of protest by the women wrestlers of harassment, an MP who is alleged to be involved in the case still goes around free. In Manipur, no one knows how many women have suffered assault. The tall talk by political leaders about their respecting women and ensuring their safety is just part of election campaigning which is eventually forgotten.
A.G. Rajmohan,
Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

Deficiency in service

I am an octogenarian and a consumer activist well before the Consumer Protection Act came into force in 1986. The 'Parley' topic (Opinion page, May 24) is what makes me share my experience when I had a sudden "stroke" on the eve of Republic Day, in 2012. I was to have unfurled the national flag at a function. I was taken to a hospital, but the doctor, a 'beginner in neurology', came from his home after three hours despite the duty nurse

explaining to him the urgency. After being in the ICU for 36 hours, he advised me to go to a "better" hospital. On consulting an expert doctor, I was told that I could have been saved had I been attended to within the 'golden hour'. I remain paralysed. Who cares?

C.K. Prem Kumar,
Palakkad, Kerala

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

ELECTIONS 2024



INDIA bloc will win remaining 27 U.P. seats: SP

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said on Friday that the Opposition INDIA bloc would win all the 27 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh that are going to polls in the sixth and seventh phases. In Lucknow on the eve of the polling in the sixth phase, he said the BJP's "farewell" in

Uttar Pradesh is certain in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. He said that the BJP's graph has gone down in the five phases of polls held so far, and the party will be completely wiped out from Purvanchal. "The manner in which the Samajwadi-PDA family, along with the INDIA bloc, is destroying the BJP, clearly shows that the INDIA alliance is going to create history by winning 27 out of the 27 Lok Sabha seats in the sixth and seventh phases of elections (in U.P.)," he said. PTI



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav addressing a meeting in Pratapgarh. FILE PHOTO

Chirag pays 'courtesy visit' to Nitish Kumar

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president Chirag Paswan on Friday paid a "courtesy visit" to fellow NDA partner and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who heads the JD(U). Mr. Paswan, who has reconciled with the State's longest-serving CM after having fought him

bitterly, which led to a brief rupture in the JD(U)'s ties with BJP, told mediapersons after the meeting that he discussed the campaign for the ongoing election with Mr. Kumar.

"It was a courtesy meeting in a relaxed atmosphere with just two more phases of Lok Sabha polls to go. I have campaigned for JD(U) candidates in many seats. I shared my reading of the situation there and he also enquired how those fighting on my party's tickets were doing," said Mr. Paswan. PTI



The PM's post is an institution. Modi occupies an important position. But there is no need to take cognisance of what he is speaking in poll rallies

Nadda: arrogant alliance against Dalits, tribals

Hitting out at the INDIA bloc, BJP chief J.P. Nadda alleged that the "ghamandia" alliance is against the Dalits, tribals and backwards because it wants to rob the reservation of these sections and appease Muslims. He said the alliance is "anti-Sanatana" and "anti-national". PTI



The Congress and the INDI alliance partners are making desperate attempts to spread confusion among Muslims and Dalits



The BJP has told the Supreme Court that the issue is pending before the Election Commission. AFP

BJP moves SC after HC bars ads targeting Trinamool

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP has asked the Supreme Court to urgently intervene against an injunction issued by the Calcutta High Court against publishing "derogatory" and "slanderous" advertisements against the Trinamool Congress till June 4, the day Lok Sabha election results are announced.

The BJP said the interim injunction order was passed by a Single Judge Bench of the High Court *ex parte*, without giving it a chance to be heard.

Moreover, the party has raised the question in the Supreme Court whether a political rival could approach the High Court simultaneously and get a freeze order in the midst of an election when the Election Commission is already seized of the issue and has issued notice to the BJP to respond.

"The issue is pending before the Election Commission, which by virtue of Article 324 read with Article 329 of the Constitution, has the authority to take appropriate action against any party that violates the Model Code of Conduct," the BJP argued in its special leave petition filed through advocate Sidhesh Shirish Kotwal.

The petition was mentioned before a Vacation Bench headed by Justice Bela M. Trivedi by senior advocate Saurabh Mishra on Friday. However, Justice Trivedi advised Mr. Mishra to try their luck before the next Vacation Bench of the court.

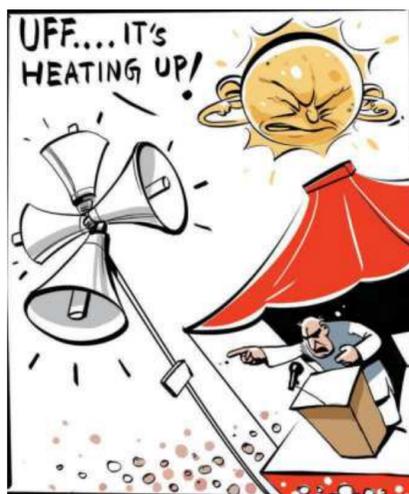
The Trinamool had filed written complaints about advertisements of four days on May 4, 5, 10 and 12.

The BJP said the actions of the Trinamool were "overzealous". The EC had issued show-cause notice on May 18, directing the BJP to file a response by May 21.

However, the Trinamool also approached the High Court on May 20.

"The Single Judge, despite observing that the EC is seized of the issue and a show-cause notice has been issued, proceeded to pass a blanket interim order which is in the nature of a final order, thereby restraining the petitioner from further continuing with the publication of the allegedly offending advertisements till June 4 or until further orders," the BJP petition submitted.

POCKET | SOUMYADIP SINHA



An author has the script, a doctor his prescription for Jhargram's progress

The constituency in the Jangalmahal region of West Bengal is going to the polls today; it is witnessing a direct contest between Trinamool Congress's Kalipada Soren, a Sahitya Akademi Award-winning author, and the BJP's Pranat Tudu, a doctor who quit his government job to contest the election

GROUND REPORT

Shiv Sahay Singh
JHARGRAM

Amid hectic campaigning for the Lok Sabha election, Kalipada Soren, a Santhali writer, loves to talk about his books. Mr. Soren, the Trinamool Congress candidate from Jhargram, which is voting on Saturday, has 31 works to his name in Santhali language. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2022 for his contribution to education and literature.

His works, which include plays, poems, and prose, have brought him several laurels, including the Banga Bibhusan, the highest civilian award given by the West Bengal government, earlier this year. Mr. Soren, who goes by the pen name Kherwal Soren, not only writes but also acts in his plays.

"I started writing at a very early age. The idea behind writing was to highlight the issues faced by the tribal community, particularly social ills such as superstition," Mr. Soren said.

The 70-year-old candidate, who is contesting his first election, puts a lot of emphasis on education be-



Trinamool candidate Kalipada Soren and, right, BJP candidate Pranat Tudu with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, ANI

cause he believes only education can transform the lives of people from the Scheduled Tribes (ST).

Photographs of Pandit Raghunath Murmu, the Santhali writer who is credited with the development of the Al-Chiki script, are found across Mr. Soren's two-storey house in Jhargram town.

Despite people and political leaders visiting him on a Sunday morning, he ensures that his daughters do not skip tuition amid the buzz.

Along with superstition, Mr. Soren has highlighted practices such as witchcraft and has spoken

against prevalence of alcohol abuse, particularly among the youth of the community, in his election campaign.

Jhargram, which falls under West Bengal's Jangalmahal region, had once been the hotbed of violence between the Communist Party of India (Maoists) and security forces. Recalling the years of violence when he was an employee of the State Bank of India, Mr. Soren credits Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for restoring peace in the region.

The writer said he had never thought of contesting any election till, a few



months ago, Ms. Banerjee told him to. "I see this ticket to contest the Lok Sabha election as an opportunity to work for the people of the community and achieve what I was trying to highlight through my writings," the Santhali writer said.

Focus on health

Jhargram is a seat reserved for ST candidates and like the Trinamool, the BJP too has fielded a new candidate, Pranat Tudu.

The 46-year-old anaesthetist, who resigned from service at the Jhargram Medical College and Hospital, has been focusing on

health and education in his election campaign.

"We need to upgrade the medical college and ensure that there is a trauma care centre and a burn unit," Dr. Tudu said. The BJP candidate has promised a Navodaya Vidyalaya to promote education in the region and bring in industries so that youth can get jobs.

Dr. Tudu, who had to approach the Calcutta High Court so that he be permitted to resign from government service to contest the election, was given ticket after the BJP decided to drop sitting MP Kunal Hembram. In 2019, Mr.

Hembram defeated the Trinamool's Birbaha Soren by a margin of less than 12,000 votes.

Among several election issues in West Bengal, wild elephants dominate the campaign in Jhargram. Human-elephant conflict has emerged as a major challenge in the region over the past several years.

The Hindu saw that in the fields outside Lodhashuli forest, next to the road connecting Jhargram town to the National Highway, a large tusker was surrounded by a group of people who were trying to poke the elephant with sticks even as it angrily blew dust to scare them away.

Barun Mahato, who is contesting as an Independent candidate from the seat, said at least four persons have sustained injuries in elephant attacks since the election was announced.

Wildlife experts have described south Bengal as the epicentre of human-elephant conflict.

Mr. Mahato, who in his campaign has also demanded the inclusion of Kurmis in the ST category, said the conflict is assuming new proportions in the region with every passing day but mainstream political parties have not addressed it.

Modi calls Cong. weak, says people in Himachal know the value of a 'strong' govt.

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday slammed the Congress, calling it "weak" and accusing it of failing to keep its promises in Himachal Pradesh, where the party is in power. Mr. Modi said people in the State understood the significance of a "strong" and "resilient" government.

"Modi will never let you face adversity. During the weak governance of the Congress, Pakistan would often challenge us, but under Modi's strong leadership, India asserted itself. Modi declared that India will no longer beg in front of the world, we will fight our own battles, and indeed, India struck back when it was attacked," he said.

The Prime Minister, who addressed public meetings in the hill State where the four seats will vote on June 1, said the Congress had neglected



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with BJP candidate Kangana Ranaut during a public meeting in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, on Friday. PTI

the border areas of India. "They didn't build roads in border States because they feared that enemies might infiltrate through those roads. Unlike Congress, Modi has invested many times more to build roads and infrastructure. Today, hundreds of kilometres of roads have been constructed along the border," he said.

"Congress deceived the people of Himachal Pradesh with plenty of lies and false promises to gain

power. The people of Himachal trusted them, but the promises were not fulfilled," he said.

The Prime Minister said the country was on the verge of rejecting the Congress for the third consecutive time. "The nation has witnessed five phases of election and it is certain that the BJP-NDA government is going to be formed again. Himachal will make it a hat-trick with the BJP winning four seats and the Congress zero," he said.

PM deserted people of Himachal in hour of need: Venugopal

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre of not standing with the people of Himachal Pradesh when a relentless monsoon last year brought the hill State to its knees.

Mr. Venugopal, addressing a press conference in Shimla, said the BJP's indifference towards the people of Himachal Pradesh, including its apple farmers, and disregard for other burning issues will ensure its defeat.

He also alleged that the Prime Minister was resorting to low-level attacks that were far removed from real issues, and involved in propaganda against Opposition parties, which clearly reflected his realisation that the BJP was not coming to power again.

Mr. Venugopal also blamed the BJP for attempting to destabilise and topple the Congress go-



K.C. Venugopal

vernment in Himachal Pradesh through unconstitutional means such as money and muscle power.

Meanwhile, in Chandigarh, Congress general secretary (communication) Jairam Ramesh said the INDIA bloc was headed for a clear and decisive mandate.

"History is repeating itself after 20 years, and just like the Congress-led alliance stormed to power then, it will storm to power this time also," Mr. Ramesh said.

On the Opposition's prime ministerial face, he said once the INDIA bloc got majority, the Prime Minister would be appointed within days.

BJP spreading lies about my health, says Odisha CM

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday said he was in good health and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders were spreading lies about him.

Mr. Patnaik's statement came in the wake of a no-holds-barred attack by the BJP leaders, who raised concerns about his health, age, and ability to make independent decisions, especially questioning his overdependence on his former private secretary V.K. Pandian.

"There is a limit to the amount of lies the BJP can tell. As you can see I am in very good health and have been campaigning all over the State for months," Mr. Patnaik said during his campaign on Friday.

Responding to the Opposition's criticism, Mr. Pandian said, "I only hope that the BJP comes with innovative ideas instead of talking about something which is non-existent. It is very unfortunate, below the belt."

IN BRIEF



6 pilgrims killed, 20 injured as truck hits minibus in Ambala

Six pilgrims, a woman and a minor girl among them, were killed and 20 injured when a truck rammed into the minibus they were travelling on in Haryana's Ambala early on Friday morning.

Death penalty for Parvez Tak in Laila Khan murder case

A sessions court in Mumbai on Friday pronounced death sentence to Parvez Tak for the murder of actor Laila Khan and five others of her family.

Got Karnataka request on May 21, says Jaishankar

Asian News International NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the Ministry received a request from the Karnataka government only on May 21 to impound the passport of Janata Dal (S) MP Prajwal Revanna, who fled to Germany last month amid allegations of sexual assault.

In an interview, Mr. Jaishankar clarified the procedural aspects, saying, "To impound a passport is governed by an act called the Passport Act. We need a judicial court or a police request to do so. The MEA got this request from Karnataka only on May 21."

Mr. Jaishankar said the External Affairs Ministry acted promptly upon receiving the request.

"We immediately acted on it. On 23rd of May... we have to follow a certain procedure and the procedure is initiated," he added.

Asked about the Congress government's accusations against the BJP of shielding Mr. Prajwal, the Minister said, "They did not take the first step... I mean, he's not the first case where impounding a passport is taking place."

Cyclone Remal likely to make landfall near Bengal tomorrow

The severe storm will cross coast between Sagar Island of Bengal and Khepupara of Bangladesh, says IMD; Coast Guard puts in place pre-emptive measures to ensure minimal loss of life

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Cyclonic storm "Remal", originating in the central Bay of Bengal, is expected to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm by Saturday.

According to the latest input of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the storm is likely to cross the coast between Sagar Island of West Bengal and Khepupara of Bangladesh around 6 p.m. of Sunday with a wind speed of 110-120 kmph, gusting to 135 kmph.

The Indian Coast Guard said on Friday that the cyclone is likely to make landfall near the West Bengal coast and the situation is being actively monitored. Comprehensive pre-emptive measures to ensure minimal loss of life and property at sea have been initiated.

According to the IMD, the well-marked low pressure area over west-central and adjoining south Bay of Bengal concentrated into a depression and lay centred at 5.30 a.m. on Friday over central Bay of Bengal.



West Bengal disaster management personnel make safety announcements ahead of the arrival of Cyclone Remal. PTI

"It is very likely to continue to move north-eastwards and intensify further into a cyclonic storm over east-central Bay of Bengal by May 25 morning. Subsequently, it would move nearly northwards, intensify into a severe cyclonic storm by May 25 night," the bulletin said.

Maritime safety Coordination efforts are underway with State administrations and stakeholders to facilitate a synchronised response to potential contingencies arising from the cyclonic storm, the Coast Guard said in a statement.

To ensure the safety of maritime traffic, the Coast Guard's remote operating stations at Haldia and Paradip are broadcasting regular and multilingual VHF (very high frequency) alerts, advising transit merchant mariners to take necessary precautions.

"Additionally, Coast Guard ships and aircraft are conducting surveillance along the projected path of the cyclonic storm to provide timely assistance and support," it added. Given the location of likely landfall, the Coast Guard has also notified the Bangladesh Coast Guard asking them to undertake

Calcutta HC orders interim stay in Raj Bhavan case

The Hindu Bureau KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Friday ordered an interim stay on the investigation being carried out by the Kolkata Police against three employees of the Raj Bhavan in connection with the allegations of sexual harassment against West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose.

The police had registered a case against the employees, one of them an officer on special duty, for allegedly wrongfully restraining the complainant from leaving the Raj Bhavan premises on May 2, after the alleged molestation incident.

The next hearing is on June 10.

The woman employee filed a complaint on May 2 at the Hare Street police station in Kolkata alleging that she was sexually harassed by Mr. Bose.

Following the complaint, the Governor issued an order banning the entry of the police and Minister of State for Finance Chandrima Bhattacharya into the Raj Bhavan.

Article 361 of the Constitution grants immunity to the Governor against any criminal proceedings.

Death toll in chemical factory blast rises to 10

The Hindu Bureau MUMBAI

The death toll in the chemical factory blast in Maharashtra's Thane district on Thursday rose to 10 with the discovery of three more bodies from the site, officials said on Friday.

The Thane Crime Branch Police apprehended two owners of Amudan Chemical Private Ltd. - Malti Pradeep Mehta and Malay Pradeep Mehta.

The accused have been booked for culpable homicide (Section 304) and under Sections of the Indian Penal Code concerning explosive substances and hazardous chemicals.

Sixty-eight people sustained injuries in the blast.

"Forty-two of the injured have been discharged, while 26 remain admitted. Of them, 12 are in the ICU," hospital authorities said.

Kashmir vacation turns horror story for Jaipur couple after militant attack

R. Sujatha CHENNAI

A vacation in Kashmir in the middle of the election season has left a Jaipur couple scarred from injuries sustained in a militant attack, but they are on the road to recovery with a little help from the Army authorities and the Rajasthan government.

Sunny Khan and Farha Khan had set off for the Valley on May 13 along with a group of 50-odd holidaymakers from Jaipur. The couple, who are in the real estate business, travelled with their two young children - daughter Humaira and son Haider.

The tour group spent the fifth day frolicking in the snow in Anantnag on May 18 and planned to cap it off with a dinner at a resort in Pahalgam. They came under fire from assailants from a distance of about 15-20 feet just after they had alighted from a



Sunny and Farha Khan with their children a few hours before they were attacked by gunmen in Anantnag. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

van. Mr. Sunny Khan and Ms. Farha were both hit by bullets, one grazing his nose and affecting his eyes, and another piercing her shoulder.

"Haider was the last to get out of the van. Suddenly some of the members screamed. They saw two persons with guns. A bullet grazed the bridge of Sunny's nose. Farha grabbed Haider and ran for safety but was shot on her shoulder," Arif Pathan, Mr. Sun-

ny Khan's elder brother, told The Hindu. Rushed to the Army's 92 Base Hospital in Srinagar, Ms. Farha got a shoulder implant. The Army doctors found her husband's right eye fully damaged and suggested that he be taken to Sankara Nethralaya in Chennai.

CM's assurance The Rajasthan government swung into action, with Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma approving a finan-

cial assistance of ₹1 lakh each to the couple from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Mr. Sharma spoke over the phone with Mr. Sunny Khan and inquired about his well-being, assuring him that he would be provided with all possible assistance until full recovery.

"The Chief Minister strongly condemned the terrorist attack and added that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, the courage of the terrorists has been completely defeated, and the attacks in Shopian [on the same day, May 18] and Pahalgam are a result of their panic," the Rajasthan government said in a statement. Mr. Sunny Khan checked into Sankara Nethralaya on Thursday, where doctors examined him and said they would try to restore sight in the left eye.

Ms. Farha has returned to Jaipur to continue her treatment.

Heatwave kills more than a dozen in Gujarat in a week

Mahesh Langa AHMEDABAD

More than a dozen people have died due to heatstroke or heat-induced illnesses in Gujarat as a severe heatwave with temperatures ranging from 45 degrees Celsius to 47 degrees Celsius sweeps through the State. Three persons died in Ahmedabad on Friday.

Deaths have also been reported in Vadodara, Surat, Jamnagar, Rajkot, and Morbi over the past week.

The cause of deaths has been reported as either heatstroke or heat-related illness, or heart attack.

The India Meteorological Department has issued a red alert for heatwave conditions till May 27 across the State.

On Thursday, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel urged citizens to take precautions against heatwave and not venture out from 10 a.m to 6 p.m., and



Hydration effort: A volunteer distributes buttermilk to an autorickshaw driver in Surat on Thursday. ANI

keep themselves hydrated.

The Opposition Congress has written to the Chief Minister to declare a compensation of ₹4 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased.

"We have seen reports of deaths... yet the government has not made any statement about it. The government must declare their families would be given compensation," Gujarat Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi said.

Six more deaths reported in Rajasthan

JAIPUR Six more deaths due to suspected heatstroke were reported in Rajasthan, where temperatures hit 49 degrees Celsius, officials said on Friday, as many parts of the State remained gripped by severe heat. Five deaths due to suspected heatstroke were reported on Thursday. PTI

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and solutions. Clues include: 13 Let's honour hospital staff - too fantastic (4,3,2), 14 Day-to-day expenses of training for marathons? (7,5), 18 Partly separated from terrible cheat, crushed by revolting misdeed (12), 21 Girl abandons inhibitions finally in secluded retreat - getting rubber (9), 23 Thousand on road in America for race (5), 24 Altogether fascinated by short story (2,5), 25 European commission ignoring England's latest issue (7), 26 Restrain director probing alien contraption (6), 27 Sad and tense about getting sanctioned (8). Down: 1 Cold and cough essentially, aristocrat's isolated (3,3), 2 Trip over a boy's small drum (6), 3 Younger daughter, excited to eat hot dog (9), 4 Blunder to hug a male, drunk and disorderly (5-3-6), 6 Increase in commotion about heartless despot (3,2), 7 Guy provided fancy set for show (8), 8 Wrong! Press one for answer (8), 9 What podiatrist might be doing without hesitation for economising (7,7), 15 Defeat in start of contest? Hell, team's terrible (9), 16 Escorting woman in posh club (8), 17 Gave gift hamper, mainly clothes (8), 19 Student bunking school, throwing tantrum endlessly (6), 20 Take off clothes finally in naughty dance (6), 22 Invest, it helps to save tax (5).

Sudoku puzzle grid with difficulty rating of five stars. Includes a solution to the previous puzzle and a solution to yesterday's Sudoku.

Advertisement for Sandalwood oil by Madgaldeep, featuring a QR code and the text 'Try Our New Sandalwood Oil With Sandalwood Oil'. Below the ad is a section titled 'FAITH' with the headline 'Krishna replies to Arjuna' and a short story about Lord Krishna's teachings on the mind.

IN BRIEF



IOB aims to open 88 new branches in FY24-25: MD

Indian Overseas Bank has drawn up plans to set up 88 new branches across India in this financial year, Managing Director and CEO Ajay Kumar Srivastava said. The bank, under its expansion drive recently, inaugurated a new branch in Nagapattinam and its 126th ATM in Puducherry. Inaugurating the 3,240th branch of the bank at the medical college in Nagapattinam, he highlighted the bank's aggressive plans, the lender said in a release here on Friday. PTI

Sundram Fasteners Q4 PAT rises 5.5% to ₹134.41 crore

Sundram Fasteners reported Q4 consolidated net profit rose 5.5% to ₹134.41 crore from ₹127.47 crore in the year-earlier period. Total revenue grew marginally to ₹1,477.70 crore, as compared with ₹1,451.46 crore in the same period of last year. The Board declared a second interim dividend of ₹4.17 per share, which, together with the first interim dividend of ₹2.68 per share paid in November 2023, would amount to a total dividend of ₹6.85 per share for FY24.

Manappuram Finance beats Q4 profit view on loan growth

Manappuram Finance reported a better-than-expected fourth-quarter profit on Friday, helped by strong loan growth at both its gold and non-gold segments. The company's consolidated net profit attributable to owners of the parent rose about 36% to ₹5.62 billion for the three months ended March 31, above analysts' expectations of ₹5.59 billion, according to LSEG data. Pick-up consumer spending has kept loan growth strong despite high interest rates. REUTERS

'Oil poses risk, farm sector to firewall'

Finance Ministry flags geopolitical tensions and volatile global commodity prices as 'substantial multi-frontal challenges' to economy; says early indicators suggest a continuation of growth momentum in the first quarter of the current fiscal year

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has flagged geopolitical tensions and volatile global commodity prices, especially of petroleum products, as "substantial multi-frontal challenges" to the economy, but noted that positive indications for the farm sector from a normal monsoon should "firewall" India against such adverse pressures and also help food prices and retail inflation to ease.

While retail inflation touched an 11-month low of

Buffered against risks

Positive signs for farm sector from normal monsoon should firewall India against volatile global commodity prices: FinMin

■ Ministry sees future inflation path shaped by several elements, including upcoming rabi harvest

■ Asserts the economy closed FY24 'strongly' with growth surpassing 'market expectations'



■ Says investment activity remains expansive, sees resurgence in rural consumption demand

4.83% in April, food inflation was 8.7%, the highest in four months. The ministry said the future inflation path would be shaped by several elements, includ-

ing the upcoming rabi harvest that should cool wheat and chana prices, and the predicted normal monsoon, which should bolster food production.

Asserting the economy closed FY24 "strongly" with growth "surpassing market expectations", the ministry said in its economic review that "early indicators suggest a continuation of the momentum" in the first quarter of this year, with metrics such as employment, price stability and fiscal management improving in a "mutually reinforcing" manner.

'Buffers as enabler'
Apart from improved farm output, the ministry also pointed to "macro-economic buffers nurtured and strengthened during

the post-COVID management of the economy" as an enabler to help the economy navigate geopolitical tumult and turbulent global commodity prices "reasonably smoothly".

The ministry asserted that investment activity remains expansive and consumption is being propelled by consistent growth in urban demand and a resurgence in rural demand. "For the first time in five quarters, rural fast moving consumer goods demand growth outpaced urban growth," it said about trends between January and March this year.

Ashok Leyland Q4 net rises 20% to ₹900 cr.

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Ashok Leyland Ltd. reported standalone fourth-quarter net profit grew 20% to ₹900 crore from ₹751 crore in the year-earlier period. Revenue from operations declined 3% to ₹11,266.69 crore.

Net profit almost doubled to ₹2,618 crore in FY24. Revenue from operations rose 6% to ₹38,367 crore with contributions from all business verticals.

"We continue to be optimistic about industry prospects in the short to medium terms backed by anticipated robust growth in the Indian economy,"



Chairman Dheeraj Hinduja said in a statement.

Meanwhile the company announced the appointment of K. M Balaji as Chief Financial Officer. Gopal Mahadevan, currently CFO and Whole Time Director, will continue to be associated with Ashok Leyland as Director - Strategic Finance and M&A.

Google to buy minority stake in Flipkart for \$350 million

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Internet major Google has proposed an investment of about \$350 million (about ₹2,900 crore) to buy a minority stake in e-commerce company Flipkart during a fresh funding round, the Walmart group firm said on Friday.

Flipkart is raising \$1 billion during an ongoing funding round and has received a commitment of \$600 million infusion from its parent firm and Flipkart posted a net loss of ₹4,846 crore in FY23.

Hindalco Q4 net rises 32% to ₹3,174 crore on stronger margins

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Aditya Birla Group's metal flagship Hindalco Industries on Friday reported a 31.6% rise in consolidated net profit at ₹3,174 crore for the March quarter, on the back of stronger margins and volumes across aluminium and copper business segments.

The company had posted a net profit of ₹2,411 crore in the year-earlier period, Hindalco said in a filing with the BSE.

Total income during the quarter under review rose

'Hindalco Industries concluded the year with very strong results across all business segments'

to ₹56,356 crore over ₹56,209 crore in the year-earlier period.

Hindalco concluded the year with very strong results across all business segments. This was a clear testament to its strategic focus on value-added products and margin improvement, Managing Director Satish Pai said.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	FRIDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	75,410	-0.01
US Dollar	83.10	0.22
Gold	72,650	-1.22
Brent oil	82.10	0.46

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3384.95	-2.35
Adani Ports	1416.10	-27.25
Apollo Hosp	5914.35	-55.70
Asian Paints	2874.75	-29.00
Axis Bank	1174.00	-8.75
Bajaj Auto	8948.20	-15.25
Bajaj Finserv	1601.70	-6.75
Bajaj Finance	6836.90	10.25
Bharti Airtel	1388.50	14.45
BPCL	654.10	-6.65
Britannia Ind	5240.70	-40.45
Cipla	1486.45	-2.70
Coal India	501.00	3.70
Divis Lab	4122.40	-9.40
Dr Reddys Lab	5865.75	-31.95
Eicher Motors	4880.95	28.10
Grasim Ind	2441.00	-12.80
HCL Tech	1345.20	-8.35
HDFC Bank	1517.20	24.60
HDFC Life	565.10	-0.55
Hera MotoCorp	5118.30	-26.90
Hindalco	673.25	-3.55
Hind Unilever	2369.05	-13.45
ICI Bank	1131.95	-2.55
IndusInd Bank	1441.80	0.95
Infosys	1465.10	-7.30
ITC	436.20	-5.15
JSW Steel	908.65	-8.35
Kotak Bank	1703.45	-5.60
L&T	3625.90	40.50
LTMindtree Ltd.	4839.75	8.45
M&M	2579.75	-29.45
Maruti Suzuki	13000.45	65.55
NestleIndia	2467.75	-6.40
NTPC	374.95	-2.65
ONGC	283.25	-0.20
PowerGrid Corp	318.80	1.10
Reliance Ind	2960.50	-11.60
SBI Life	1436.25	-10.55
State Bank	828.60	-3.50
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2397.50	-2.95
Sun Pharma	1486.70	-8.40
TataConsumerProduct	1098.25	-19.70
Tata Motors	960.55	-1.80
Tata Steel	174.85	-0.65
TCS	3849.50	-43.95
Tech Mahindra	1321.75	-15.75
Titan	3412.40	-39.65
UltraTech Cement	10231.10	60.55
Wipro	463.65	-2.15

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 24

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	82.90	83.22
Euro	89.85	90.20
British Pound	105.43	105.85
Japanese Yen (100)	52.82	53.03
Chinese Yuan	11.44	11.49
Swiss Franc	90.60	90.96
Singapore Dollar	61.40	61.64
Canadian Dollar	60.44	60.68
Malaysian Ringgit	17.59	17.67
Australian Dollar	54.84	55.06

Source: Indian Bank

Biocon ties up with Handok for weight loss drug in Korea

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Biocon has signed an exclusive licensing and supply deal with South Korean pharma firm Handok for commercialisation of chronic weight management drug Liraglutide in the East Asian country. The announcement saw the Bengaluru-based biopharmaceutical firm's shares touch a 52-week intraday high of ₹330.95 on the BSE on Friday.

Biocon will undertake development, manufacturing and supply of the drug product, while Handok will be responsible for obtaining regulatory approval and commercialisation in South Korean market.

India's 400-mn casual labour market needs a structural shift: ISF

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

With almost 85% informal labour generating more than half of the GDP, India requires a structural shift towards structured and formal employment, said the Indian Staffing Federation (ISF), the apex body representing the country's contract-staffing industry, "The plight of lower-income and semi-skilled workers underscores the pressing need for concerted action," said ISF ED Suchita Dutta

"Income inequality and rising poverty levels serve as stark reminders of the challenges we face."

It was imperative to initiate a structural shift to-



wards formalisation to ensure equitable opportunities and sustainable livelihoods for all.

The apex body also unveiled a blueprint for formalisation of informal workforce and implementation of labour codes in the country.

As per the document, ISF was going beyond stop-gap solutions, inviting inclusion through formalisation in the labour market.

JLR to make Range Rover, Range Rover Sport in India

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Tata Motors-owned Jaguar Land Rover will start producing the Range Rover and Range Rover Sport in India, marking a first for their iconic models to be rolled out from a country outside of the U.K.

Till now, the two models are being produced only in JLR's Solihull plant in the U.K. and exported to 121 markets globally, including India. Prices of the two models are set to come down in the range of 18-22% with the local production. The company already assembles Range Rover Velar, Range Rover Evoque, Jaguar F-PACE and Discovery Sport in Pune.

Shriram Life FY24 PAT increases a tad to ₹158 crore

Press Trust of India

Shriram Life Insurance has reported a profit after tax of ₹158 crore for the financial year ended March 31.

The company registered a PAT of ₹156 crore in FY23.

Total business premium for FY24 grew by 62% to

₹1,871 crore. Individual new business premium grew by 39% to ₹938 crore, as per a statement. Assets Under Manage-

ment in FY24 rose to ₹11,282 crore, a growth of 25%. The firm reported a claim-settlement ratio of 98% for individual policies.

'Bengaluru, Hyderabad see a jump in I-T job opportunities'

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Even as overall job opportunities in the IT sector declined by 3.6% nationwide, openings gained traction in technology hubs Bengaluru and Hyderabad that saw a growth of 24% and 41.5%, respectively, during April, as per a report.

As per data from Indeed, job postings in the IT sector have risen by 41.5% in Bengaluru and 24% in Hyderabad, highlighting the growing prominence of these cities as top destinations for IT professionals.

There has also been a significant growth in job clicks, with 161% rise in job seeker interest in Hydera-



bad and 80% in Bengaluru.

'Oveall decrease'

Overall, there has been a decrease in IT job opportunities nationally, with job postings declining by 3.6%, indicating tech companies are being cautious in hiring due to the uncertain global economic climate.

The report is based on data related to job postings

and job clicks on Indeed's platform in April compared with that of the corresponding month in 2023.

The rise in top five job postings are for skills in analysis, agile, APIs, javascript and SQL.

"Software and IT positions seem to be highly sought after, not just by those currently working in the field but also by individuals looking for new career opportunities. Despite the layoffs, the appeal of IT jobs has risen. This strong interest in IT could also be due to the extensive skill specialisation, training, and experience typically necessary for the roles," Indeed India Head of Sales Sashi Kumar added.

Zee demands \$90-million termination fee from Sony

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd. (ZEEL) has sought a termination fee of ₹90 million from the Sony Group for calling off the \$10-billion merger deal in January this year.

The company has sought termination fee from two Sony Group entities - Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI), now known as Culver Max Entertainment, and Bangla Entertainment (BEPL), according to a regulatory filing from Zee Entertainment Enterprises on Thursday.

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
Executive Engineer (C), Postal Civil Division, Thiruvananthapuram invites on behalf of the President of India, online percentage rate composite tenders for the following work NIT No.07/EE-TVM/24-25(2nd call). Name of work Construction of Post office building at Cherupuzha, Kannur Division, Kerala Circle. Estimated Cost: Rs. 11824258/- (Rs. 11356359/- (Civil Portion) & Rs. 467899/- (Electrical Portion)/- Earnest Money: Rs. 236485/- Period of completion: 12 months. Last date and time of submission of bid: 22.06.2024 upto 11.00 hrs. The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website <https://eprocure.gov.in>

IISER INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH BERHAMPUR
An Autonomous Institution of the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India

Recruitment Notice for Non-Teaching Positions Dated: 29.04.2024

Opening date for submission of online application: **0900 hrs. of May 27, 2024**
Closing date of submission of online application: **1730 hrs. of June 26, 2024**
Crucial date for calculation of age/qualification/experience: **June 26, 2024**

The Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Berhampur, an Institute of National Importance, established by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, in order to promote higher scientific learning and research as well as scientific exploration at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels of education and to create scientists and academicians of the highest quality invites ONLINE applications from eligible Indian nationals to fill-up the following sanctioned regular posts as per the reservation and mode of recruitment mentioned against each:-

S. No.	Position	Group	Pay Level (as per 7th CPC)	Mode of recruitment	Vertical Reservation					Horizontal Reservation		Total No. of posts
					UR	SC	ST	OBC/EWS	PWD	PWD		
1	Assistant Engineer (Civil)	B	7	Direct Recruitment	01	00	00	00	00	00	01	
2	Technical Assistant (Physical Sciences)	B	6	Direct Recruitment	01	00	00	00	00	00	01	
Total					02	00	00	00	00	00	02	

Note: The candidates are required to apply through ONLINE process only. Please visit Institute website www.iiserbpr.ac.in for submission of online application and full text of the advertisement for all other details regarding age relaxation, probation, recruitment rules etc.

Registrar

UT OF LAKSHADWEEP
LAKSHADWEEP DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
(A GOVT. OF INDIA UNDERTAKING)
Ph: 04842323448/458, Web: www.ldcl.nic.in
E-mail: amindivi@asianetindia.com
F.No: LDCL/Manning-1 Dt: 17.05.2024

TENDER

E-tender is invited for engagement of Manning agent for 4 Nos of Cargo Vessels and 2 Nos of Tugs vide LDCL/S/Manning/Barges/2024 and LDCL/S/Manning/Tugs/2024.

For details and E-tendering please visit website <https://www.tenderwizard.com/UTL> and <https://tendersutl.gov.in> Tender due on 06.06.2024 at 11.00 AM. For any help in e-tendering, please contact Help Desk No. 080-40482000 / 9605557738/96886115318 (<https://tenderwizard.com/UTL>) and 0120-4001002, 4001005, 6277787 (<https://tendersutl.gov.in>).

Sd/- MD (LDCL)

SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM LIMITED
CIN U75302KL2017SGC05027

GEM Procurement
Bids are invited for the following projects of Smart City Thiruvananthapuram Limited

Sl. No.	Item Category	Quantity (Nos)	Bid Number	Bid End Date
1	Vehicle Mounted Suction Cum Jetting Machine with Water Recycling system - Heavy Duty	1	GEM/2024/B/4975200	03.06.2024

(Sd/-) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SMART CITY THIRUVANANTHAPURAM Ltd.

SRI FUND
SELF RELIANT INDIA FUND

Self Reliant India (SRI) Fund (The First Scheme of NVCFCL)

Self Reliant India (SRI) Fund (The First Scheme of NVCFCL) invites bids from suitable and established Insurance Companies for Liability Package Insurance and Cyber Insurance, for complete details, kindly visit our website www.nvcfl.co.in

ODISHA STATE SEEDS CORPORATION LIMITED
(A GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKING)
SANTARAPUR, BHUBANESWAR- 751002.
Tel-MD 0674- 2340573, E-mail - mdosscitd456@gmail.com

NIT No.OSSC/Mktg(Hort)-98/2024

Short e-Tender Call Notice for Procurement of Certified Coriander Seed for Kharif - 2024
OSSC Ltd. invites short e-Tender only from Producers (and in case of GOI PSUs, their authorized Agencies) on item wise rate contract basis for Procurement of Certified Coriander Seed for Kharif-2024 in double cover system through online mode only for the work below.

Name of the work	Purchase of Certified Coriander Seed for Kharif - 2024
No of work	One
Availability of bid documents in Portal	15.00 hours on dt:27.05.2024 to 17.00 hrs of dt.03.06.2024
Last date of receipt of tender in portal	17.00 hrs of dt.03.06.2024
Date and Time of Opening of Bid	10.30 hrs of dt.04.06.2024

The detailed descriptions of crops, varieties, quantity, parameters, terms and conditions and other details of tender specified in the tender schedule would be made available in the e-Tender portal www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/- Managing Director, OSSC Ltd.
OIPR-01106/11/0009/2425

MADRID

EU's Borrell urges Israel 'not to intimidate', 'threaten' ICC judges



REUTERS

EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell on Friday urged Israel "not to intimidate" or "threaten" the judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC), whose prosecutor has requested arrest warrants for Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant on suspicions of war crimes. AFP

LONDON

Ex-Labour leader Corbyn to stand as Independent in U.K. election



REUTERS

Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, 74, announced on Friday he would stand in the U.K. general election as an Independent candidate, after the party suspended him following a drawn-out anti-Semitism scandal. The veteran left-winger has been sitting as an Independent MP since 2020. AFP

BUENOS AIRES

Argentina's Milei calls Spanish PM 'laughing stock of Europe'



AFP

Argentina's President Javier Milei (right, in the photo) has hurled fresh insults at Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, calling him the "laughing stock of Europe". "(Sanchez) attacked me in every way possible, and when I responded in the abstract, he felt targeted and used every state apparatus to respond", Mr. Milei said. AFP

YEREVAN

Armenia returns to Azerbaijan four border villages it had seized



AFP

Armenia has returned to Azerbaijan four border villages it seized decades ago, the countries confirmed on Friday — a key step towards normalising ties between the historic rivals. The Caucasus countries fought two wars in the 1990s and in 2020 for control of the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh. AFP

ICJ orders Israel to 'halt' Rafah offensive

The top UN court asks Israel to keep open the key Rafah crossing for 'unhindered' humanitarian aid, and demands the 'unconditional' release of hostages taken by Hamas during its October 7 assault; PM Netanyahu announces that he would convene senior Ministers to discuss the ruling

Agence France-Presse
THE HAGUE

The top UN court on Friday ordered Israel to halt military operations in Rafah "immediately", a landmark ruling likely to increase mounting international pressure on Israel more than seven months into the Gaza war.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) also ruled Israel must keep open the key Rafah crossing for "unhindered" humanitarian aid and urged the "unconditional" release of hostages taken by Hamas during its October 7 assault.

ICJ rulings are legally binding but the court has no concrete means to enforce them. For example, it ordered Russia to halt its invasion of Ukraine, to no avail.

The court said Israel

must "immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah Governorate, which may inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza conditions of life that could bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part".

Israel had argued before the court that an order to stop military activity would give free rein to Hamas extremists and prevent its Army from rescuing hostages taken in the group's brutal October 7 attack.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced he would convene senior ministers after the ruling.

'Provisional measures' South Africa hailed the ruling, with Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor saying it was a "much stronger... set of provisional measures, very



Thrown to streets: Palestinians sit in a destroyed room following an Israeli strike on a residential building in Rafah on May 22. AFP

clear call for a cessation".

The ICJ ruling comes hot on the heels of another highly charged decision on Monday by the International Criminal Court prosecutor to seek arrest warrants for top Israeli and Hamas leaders.

Prosecutor Karim Khan alleged that senior Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, plus

top Hamas officials, were guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity related to the war in Gaza and the October 7 attack.

'Unimpeded access'

South Africa brought the case before the ICJ last year alleging that Israel's Gaza offensive breached the 1948 UN Genocide Convention — a charge strongly de-

nieled by Israel.

In a ruling on January 26 that made headlines worldwide, the ICJ ordered Israel to do everything it could to prevent acts of genocide during its military operation in Gaza.

The ICJ on Friday also ordered Israel to ensure "unimpeded access" to UN-mandated investigators to look into allegations of genocide. But South Africa has since returned several times to the ICJ arguing that the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza compels the court to issue further emergency measures.

In public hearings last week, South Africa's Ambassador Vusumuzi Madonsela alleged that "Israel's genocide has continued apace and has just reached a new and horrific stage".

"Although the present application was triggered

by the unfolding situation in Rafah, Israel's genocidal onslaught across Gaza has intensified over the past few days, also warranting the attention of this court," he said.

South Africa argued the only way to enable humanitarian aid in to ease the crisis in Gaza was a full halt to Israel's military operations. The court will take months if not years to rule on the broader South African genocide case.

The ICJ described the humanitarian situation as "disastrous" and that Israel's evacuation efforts were insufficient.

Israel retorted during hearings that South Africa's case was an "obscene exploitation of the most sacred convention" and the picture Pretoria paints to the court was "completely divorced from the facts and circumstances".

Iran denies foul play in chopper crash that claimed Raisi's life

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran's Army has so far found no evidence of criminal activity in a helicopter crash that killed the country's President Ebrahim Raisi and seven others, state media reported.

The 63-year-old died on Sunday after his helicopter went down in the country's mountainous northwest while returning from a dam inauguration on the border with Azerbaijan.

"No bullet holes or similar impacts were observed on the helicopter wreckage," said a preliminary report by the general staff of the armed forces published by the official IRNA news agency late on Thursday.

"The helicopter caught fire after hitting an elevated area," it said, adding that "no suspicious con-



Ebrahim Raisi

tent was observed during the communications between the watch tower and the flight crew".

Raisi's helicopter had been flying on a "pre-planned route and did not leave the designated flight path" before the crash.

The Army said "more time is needed" to investigate the crash and that it would announce more details later.

Raisi was laid to rest in his hometown of Mashhad on Thursday.

Eight killed, one injured in knife attack in central China

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

A man killed eight people and wounded one more with a knife in central China, state media reported on Friday, citing local authorities. The stabbing took place on Thursday morning in the city of Xiaogan in Hubei province, state broadcaster CCTV said.

The wounded person's injuries were not life-threatening, state news agency Xinhua said.

The 53-year-old attacker surnamed Lu had previously been treated for mental illness, it added.

He is being held by police, who are investigating the attack.

Artistic direction



Ferries sail past the Sydney Opera House as it is illuminated with projections and lights at the start of the Vivid Sydney festival on Friday. It is an annual celebration of arts, innovation and technology, which is held for 23 days. AFP

China warns of Taiwan 'war' as Army drills encircle island

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

China warned on Friday of war over Taiwan and said it would ramp up counter-measures until "complete reunification" was achieved, as Chinese forces conducted military drills around the self-ruled island.

Warships and fighter jets encircled Taiwan on the second day of exercises that Beijing said were a test of its ability to seize the island, days after its new President was sworn in.

China's military kicked off the two-day war games on Thursday morning, surrounding democratic Taiwan with naval vessels and military aircraft as it vowed the blood of "independ-



Taiwanese armoured vehicles roll down a street in Kinmen on Friday as China warns the former of 'a perilous situation of war'. AFP

dence forces" on the island would flow.

The exercises were launched three days after Lai Ching-te took office and made an inauguration speech that China denounced as a "confession of independence".

Beijing's Defence Ministry spokesperson Wu Qian said on Friday that Mr. Lai

"has seriously challenged the one-China principle... pushing our compatriots in Taiwan into a perilous situation of war and danger".

"Every time 'Taiwan independence' provokes us, we will push our counter-measures one step further, until the complete reunification of the motherland is achieved," he said.

'Putin ready to stop Ukraine war on current frontlines'

Reuters
MOSCOW/LONDON

Russian President Vladimir Putin is ready to halt the war in Ukraine with a negotiated ceasefire that recognises the current battlefield lines, four Russian sources said, and that he is prepared to fight on if Kyiv and the West do not respond.

Three of the sources, familiar with discussions in Mr. Putin's entourage, said the veteran Russian leader had expressed frustration about what he views as Western-backed attempts

Ukrainian Foreign Minister said the Russian leader was trying to derail the Swiss peace summit

to stymie negotiations.

However, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on X that the Russian leader was trying to derail a Ukrainian-initiated peace summit in Switzerland next month by using his entourage to send out "phony signals" about his alleged readiness to halt the war.

Myanmar junta revives plans for its China-backed mega-dam project

Agence France-Presse
YANGON

Myanmar's junta has revived plans for a \$3.6 billion Chinese-backed dam in the north of the country that was suspended more than 10 years ago following huge public opposition.

The project to build the 6,000-megawatt Myitson dam in northern Kachin state was ended in 2011 under a previous junta.

Its opponents said the dam on the Ayeyarwady river — which would have exported around 90% of the power it generated to China — would cause huge environmental damage

and bring little benefit to the country.

The junta announced a new "leading group" for the hydropower project in a notice dated April 24 and released on an obscure government portal on Tuesday. The group is made up of 11 members, including the Deputy Minister for Electricity, and will "conduct and manage research, technical solutions and public relations" for the project, the notice said.

It will work with China's State Power Investment Corporation's (SPIC) Yunnan International Power Investment Company on "research, technical solu-

Opponents say that the dam on the Ayeyarwady river would cause huge ecological damage

tions, and public relations," it added, without giving details.

SPIC is a Chinese state-owned group and one of the biggest utility companies in the country.

A 2015 environmental assessment commissioned by the Myanmar government strongly advised against the dam's construction, saying the move could alter the river flow

on a wide scale.

A World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) report in 2018 estimated that some 34 million people in Myanmar live in the Ayeyarwady basin, roughly two thirds of the country's population.

Northern Kachin state has been rocked by fighting between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the military for decades.

Myanmar is a vital piece of China's Belt and Road Initiative, Xi Jinping's flagship \$1 trillion project that includes maritime, rail and road projects in Asia, Africa and Europe.

Investigators probe turbulence-hit plane of Singapore Airlines

Agence France-Presse
SINGAPORE

Singaporean investigators are analysing a cockpit voice recorder and a flight data recorder after one passenger died and more than 100 were injured when a Singapore Airlines plane hit severe turbulence this week, the country's Transport Minister said on Friday.

Passengers and crew aboard flight SQ321 suffered skull, brain and spine injuries when they were thrown violently around the cabin during Tuesday's

terrifying high-altitude ordeal.

Flight tracking data shows the Boeing 777-300ER plunged 1,800 metres in just a few minutes. The London-to-Singapore flight carrying 211 passengers and 18 crew was forced to make an emergency landing in Bangkok, where at least 48 people are still being treated in hospital.

"We have a team that went to Bangkok and they have obtained the data from the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder," the Minister said.



'Lean wolf' Usyk joins boxing's pantheon, his legacy undisputed

The Ukrainian defeated Tyson Fury to become the first man to simultaneously hold every heavyweight title in the four-belt era. And having dominated the amateur, the cruiserweight and the top division, the undefeated Usyk looks set to go down as one of the greats.

Associated Press
Agence France-Press

When Oleksandr Usyk defeated Tyson Fury by split decision in Riyadh last weekend, knocking down his hulking opponent in the ninth round and eventually earning a narrow win on two scorecards, the Ukrainian boxer created history. By adding Fury's WBC title to his own WBA, IBF and WBO belts, Usyk became the world's first undisputed heavyweight boxing champion in more than two decades. The 37-year-old's feat, moreover, is unprecedented in boxing's four-belt era – Lennox Lewis was the last man to unify the heavyweight titles, defeating Evander Holyfield in 1999, but there were three belts at the time.

Undeniable at every level
After winning a back-and-forth matchup between two previously unbeaten champions from a strong era of heavyweight boxing, Usyk looks set to go down as one of the greats. He has now dom-



It's a big win not only for me, it's a big win for my country. Nine months I worked. I missed the birth of my daughter. I missed all my family holidays... Now I'm happy
OLEKSANDR USYK

inated the amateur, the cruiserweight and the top division, winning every title of note. Usyk put together an outstanding amateur record, winning European and world titles and Olympic gold in 2012. After turning pro, he unified the cruiserweight belts in 15 fights before moving up to heavyweight, where he took three belts from Anthony Joshua in 2021, advancing a career that has always been on the rise. Last weekend, it reached its peak. The 6'3" Usyk had to overcome a major size disadvantage against the 6'9" Fury, but it was something he was confident he could achieve. As he told Ring magazine, "To win this, I don't need to be heavy, I need to be fast, and quick. You never see a fat wolf in the forest." Usyk certainly had the look of a lean wolf, as he gradually took charge of his bout against Fury. He repeatedly got inside his taller opponent's defences to land body shots. The typically flamboyant Fury taunted his ever-advancing opponent and showboated, guard down. Fury picked up his attack from the third round, working his size advantage and his un-

predictable movement to throw right hands behind his sharp jab. Fury appeared to hurt Usyk with body shots right at the belt, and he rocked Usyk twice in the sixth with vicious uppercuts.

Another late surge

But Usyk surged in the final rounds, just as the Olympic gold medalist has done so often in his career. He tagged Fury with two clean lefts in the seventh and landed a punishing hook that dazed the 'Gypsy King' in the eighth. By the next round, his barrage had Fury in serious trouble and the wobbling, bleeding Mancunian took a standing count before being saved by the bell.

Fury struggled to mount a consistent attack after nearly getting stopped, and the knockdown turned out to be the decisive factor in the decision. Two judges favoured Usyk, 115-112 and 114-113, while the third gave it to Fury, 114-113. According to CompuBox statistics, Usyk landed 41% of his 407 punches, while Fury landed just 31.7% of his 496 punches. Usyk both threw (260 to 210) and landed (122 to 95) more power punches.

The win improved Usyk's record to 22-0 and helped him join the likes of Jack Dempsey, Joe Louis, Floyd Patterson, Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier and Mike Tyson as an undisputed heavyweight champion. He is also



I'll have a holiday, go home, put it [the rematch option] to the wife and kids. I'm 36 in a few months. I've been boxing since I've been a child. Where does it all end? A hundred fights and brain damage, in a wheelchair? I'm not sure

TYSON FURY

now the lineal heavyweight champion by beating Fury, who beat Wladimir Klitschko to earn that distinction in 2015. Usyk can now legitimately claim to be the best of his era and has a case to be considered among the greatest boxers in history.

In addition to what he has achieved, Usyk also ticks all the boxes that the truly elite fighters tick. His heart and skill are enormous – a high-quality technician with a strong chin, the Ukrainian is clinical in the ring. Tales of his training are legendary, including 10-kilometre swims, four minute-plus breath-holds, juggling, and catching six coins at once to demonstrate his reflexes.

Usyk has had to overcome enormous adversity on his route to undisputed status. The 37-year-old, who briefly served as a soldier in the Ukrainian army after the Russian invasion of February 2022, spoke of the victory as a "great moment for me, for my family, for my country".

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky led the tributes to Usyk. "The Ukrainians hit hard! And in the end, all our opponents will be defeated," Zelensky said on Telegram.

Premature end?

Usyk's reign as undisputed heavyweight world champion may last only weeks, however. Many expect the IBF to take back its belt due to the Ukrainian's rematch clause with Fury, leaving Usyk with the WBA, WBC and WBO titles.

The IBF's long-time mandatory challenger is unbeaten Croatian Filip Hrgovic, who is scheduled to fight Britain's Daniel Dubois on June 1 in Riyadh. That bout could become an IBF title fight if the US-based body follows past form.

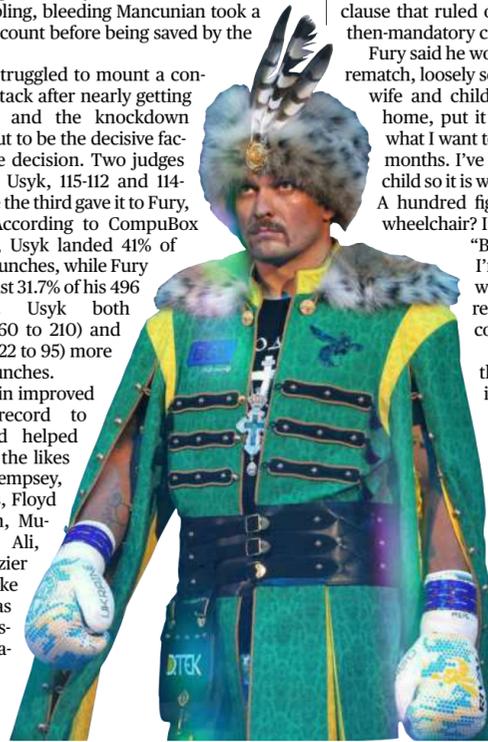
It stripped Fury in December 2015, 10 days after the Briton took that title along with the WBA, WBO and IBO belts from Ukrainian Wladimir Klitschko. Then, as now, there was a rematch clause that ruled out a title fight with the IBF's then-mandatory challenger Vyacheslav Glazkov.

Fury said he would discuss the potential Usyk rematch, loosely scheduled for October, with his wife and children. "I'll have a holiday, go home, put it to the wife and kids, I'll see what I want to do," he said. "I'm 36 in a few months. I've been boxing since I've been a child so it is what it is. Where does it all end? A hundred fights and brain damage, in a wheelchair? I'm not sure.

"But the one thing is, all the time I'm still loving the game – and I was having fun in there, I was really enjoying myself – then I'll continue to do it," said Fury.

Usyk said he was expecting the rematch to go ahead – but its value will diminish considerably because the undisputed status will not be in play, another damaging consequence of the territorial squabbles that have beset boxing for the past quarter-century.

But however the future pans out, Usyk knows that he will forever be remembered as the first undisputed champion of the four-belt era. Boxing fans just hope they don't need to wait another 25 years for the next.



STACKING UP

ATP Men's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Novak Djokovic	36	9,860	17
2	Jannik Sinner	22	8,770	19
3	Carlos Alcaraz	21	7,300	17
4	Alexander Zverev	27	6,345	26
5	Daniil Medvedev	28	6,295	19
6	Andrey Rublev	26	4,700	24
7	Casper Ruud	25	4,185	24
8	Hubert Hurkacz	27	3,885	24
9	Stefanos Tsitsipas	25	3,700	25
10	Grigor Dimitrov	33	3,615	22
11	Alex de Minaur	25	3,490	25
12	Taylor Fritz	26	3,025	25
13	Holger Rune	21	2,700	23
14	Tommy Paul	27	2,655	25
15	Ben Shelton	21	2,500	24

Top Indians

Sumit Nagal Rank 94 ▼ 1 spot	Ramesh Gurusamy Rank 343 ▲ 15 spots



English Premier League Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Man. City	38	28	7	3	96	34	62	91
2	Arsenal	38	28	5	5	91	29	62	89
3	Liverpool	38	24	10	4	86	41	45	82
4	Aston Villa	38	20	8	10	76	61	15	68
5	Tottenham	38	20	6	12	74	61	13	66
6	Chelsea	38	18	9	11	77	63	14	63
7	Newcastle	38	18	6	14	85	62	23	60
8	Man. United	38	18	6	14	57	58	-1	60
9	West Ham	38	14	10	14	60	74	-14	52
10	Crystal Palace	38	13	10	15	57	58	-1	49
11	Brighton	38	12	12	14	55	62	-7	48
12	Bournemouth	38	13	9	16	54	67	-13	48
13	Fulham	38	13	8	17	55	61	-6	47
14	Wolves	38	13	7	18	50	65	-15	46
15	Everton*	38	13	9	16	40	51	-11	40
16	Brentford	38	10	9	19	56	65	-9	39
17	N. Forest*	38	9	9	20	49	67	-18	32
18	Luton Town	38	6	8	24	52	85	-33	26
19	Burnley	38	5	9	24	41	78	-37	24
20	Sheffield	38	3	7	28	35	104	-69	16

* Everton deducted eight points and Forest deducted four points following breaches of the PL's Profitability and Sustainability Rules

Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Real Madrid	37	29	7	1	87	26	61	94
2	Barcelona	37	25	7	5	77	43	34	82
3	Girona	37	24	6	7	78	46	32	78
4	Atletico Madrid	37	23	4	10	68	43	25	73
5	Athletic Bilbao	37	18	11	8	60	37	23	65
6	Real Sociedad	37	16	12	9	51	37	14	60
7	Real Betis	37	14	14	9	48	45	3	56
8	Villarreal	37	14	10	13	64	64	0	52
9	Valencia	37	13	9	15	38	43	-5	48
10	Alaves	37	12	9	16	35	45	-10	45
11	Osasuna	37	12	8	17	44	55	-11	44
12	Getafe	37	10	13	14	41	52	-11	43
13	Sevilla	37	10	11	16	47	52	-5	41
14	Celta Vigo	37	10	10	17	44	55	-11	40
15	Las Palmas	37	10	9	18	32	46	-14	39
16	Rayo Vallecano	37	8	14	15	29	47	-18	38
17	Real Mallorca	37	7	16	14	31	43	-12	37
18	Cadiz	37	6	15	16	25	49	-24	33
19	Granada	37	4	9	24	38	72	-34	21
20	Almeria	37	2	12	23	37	74	-37	18



Test Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Kane Williamson	859	919
2	Joe Root	824	923
3	Babar Azam	768	882
4	Daryl Mitchell	768	804
5	Steve Smith	757	947
6	Rohit Sharma	751	813
7	Yashasvi Jaiswal	740	740
8	Dimuth Karunaratne	739	783
9	Virat Kohli	737	937
10	Harry Brook	735	773

Test Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	R. Ashwin	870	904
2	Josh Hazlewood	847	864
3	Jasprit Bumrah	847	881
4	Kagiso Rabada	834	902
5	Pat Cummins	820	914
6	Nathan Lyon	801	801
7	Ravindra Jadeja	788	899
8	James Anderson	739	903
9	Shaheen Afridi	733	836
10	Kyle Jamieson	729	836

WTA Women's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Iga Swiatek	22	11,695	19
2	Aryna Sabalenka	26	8,138	17
3	Coco Gauff	20	7,638	19
4	Elena Rybakina	24	5,673	19
5	Jessica Pegula	30	4,550	22
6	Marketa Vondrousova	24	4,035	17
7	Maria Sakkari	28	3,980	24
8	Qinwen Zheng	21	3,945	21
9	Ons Jabeur	29	3,748	23
10	Jelena Ostapenko	26	3,318	23
11	Daria Kasatkina	27	3,258	24
12	Danielle Collins	30	3,148	19
13	Jasmine Paolini	28	2,898	27
14	Beatriz Haddad Mala	27	2,885	24
15	Karolina Muchova	27	2,810	9

Top Indians

Ankita Raina Rank 276 ▼ 7 spots	Sahaja Yamalappali Rank 316 ▼ 1 spot

German Bundesliga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Leverkusen	34	28	6	0	89	24	65	90
2	Stuttgart	34	23	4	7	78	39	39	73
3	Bayer	34	23	3	8	94	45	49	72
4	RB Leipzig	34	19	8	7	77	39	38	65
5	Dortmund	34	18	9	7	68	43	25	63
6	E. Frankfurt	34	11	14	9	51	50	1	47
7	Hoffenheim	34	13	7	14	66	66	0	46
8	Heidenheim	34	10	12	12	50	55	-5	42
9	Werder Bremen	34	11	9	14	48	54	-6	42
10	SC Freiburg	34	11	9	14	45	58	-13	42
11	FC Augsburg	34	10	9	15	50	60	-10	39
12	Wolfsburg	34	10	7	17	41	56	-15	37
13	Mainz	34	7	14	13	39	51	-12	35
14	M'gladbach	34	7	13	14	56	67	-11	34
15	Union Berlin	34	9	6	19	33	58	-25	33
16	Bochum	34	7	12	15	42	74	-32	33
17	Cologne	34	5	12	17	28	60	-32	27
18	Darmstadt	34	3	8	23	30	86	-56	17

ODI Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Babar Azam	824	898
2	Shubman Gill	801	847
3	Virat Kohli	768	909
4	Harry Tector	746	767
5	Rohit Sharma	746	882
6	Daryl Mitchell	728	750
7	David Warner	723	869
8	Pathum Nissanka	711	728
9	Dawid Malan	707	730
10	Rassie van der Dussen	701	796

ODI Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Keshav Maharaj	716	741
2	Josh Hazlewood	688	727
3	Adam Zampa	686	695
4	Mohammed Siraj	678	736
5	Jasprit Bumrah	665	838
6	Mohammad Nabi	656	657
7	Shaheen Afridi	650	688
8	Kuldeep Yadav	645	760
9	Trent Boult	643	775
10	Bernard Scholtz	642	642

T20I Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Suryakumar Yadav	861	910
2	Phillip Salt	802	802
3	Mohammad Rizwan	781	875
4	Babar Azam	761	896
5	Aiden Markram	755	796
6	Yashasvi Jaiswal	714	739
7	Rilee Rossouw	689	724
8	Jos Buttler	680	687
9	Reeza Hendricks	660	674
10	Dawid Malan	657	915

T20I Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Adil Rashid	726	746
2	Wanindu Hasaranga	687	797
3	Akeal Hosein	664	683
4	Axar Patel	660	667
5	Maheesh Theekshana	659	684
6	Ravi Bishnoi	659	699
7	Josh Hazlewood	654	806
8	Tabraiz Shamsi	654	821
9	Rashid Khan	645	816
10	Reece Topley	643	662

Curbing the doping scourge: Anju Bobby George, Ashwini Nachappa have their say

The two champion athletes agree on both the crux of the problem — incorrect or insufficient guidance — and the reasons for it — increased competition and desperation to succeed — but differ in how accountability should be apportioned



ANJU BOBBY GEORGE



ASHWINI NACHAPPA

Uthra Ganesan

Anju Bobby George was 26 when she created history, winning the long jump bronze at the 2003 World Championships. She went on to claim silver at the 2005 World Athletics Final — upgraded years later to gold after Russian Tatyana Kotova was suspended — which makes the now 47-year-old one of Indian athletics' most decorated and, more importantly, clean achievers.

For a country that consistently figures in the world's top-three for doping cases, ironically without the results to show for it, these things matter. And so when Anju, now an administrator, admits it is an immense challenge to ensure young athletes stay clean, one is forced to pay attention.

"The challenge is very different with the new generation. Certain things that I am experiencing now, at the age of 45-46, they are already going through at 20! Honestly, I don't know what the reason is or even if there is one or a combination of factors — food habits, the environment, social changes or something else," the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) senior vice-president told *The Hindu*.

Not enough guidance

Indian athletics has come a long way since Anju's time. The ease of access to information from

The moment coaches feel the [athlete's] focus is shifting, they have to explain they still have time and don't need to take shortcuts

ANJU BOBBY GEORGE

across the world means ignorance is no longer an excuse. If anything, there is too much information and not enough guidance to filter the good from the bad.

The AFI has been fairly open to foreign coaches and support staff, and has worked to bring more youngsters into a formal system. The results are showing up only now, none bigger than Neeraj Chopra's Olympic gold, which broke open the floodgates for Indian athletes dreaming big. Unfortunately, it also fuelled the desperation to make it big, fast.

"During our times, our schedule was simple — train, eat, sleep, repeat. It is not a complaint, we know the world has changed but every coach is concerned about the amount of time kids are spending on other stuff — they are on the phone constantly, which affects rest and sleep cycles.

"To an extent, there is an overload of information. Youngsters want to reach the top very fast, they see others doing it and believe they also have to do it. There is the obvious physical challenge of competing at high levels but that mental pressure is also there.

"The physiological and biological changes they are facing is different from our times and this is a new challenge," Anju, who runs the Anju Bobby George Sports Foundation with her husband Bobby, admitted when asked about



I think the coaches' attitude of winning at any cost is what gets some of the athletes caught at 13-14 years... I feel the deterrent is not too harsh now because coaches are never penalised

ASHWINI NACHAPPA

the doping menace.

No innocent victims

More than a decade before Anju stepped into the spotlight, Ashwini Nachappa earned the sobriquet 'Indian Flo-Jo' and comparisons with USA's Florence Griffith Joyner for her speed on track and style off it. Ashwini was one of the rare athletes to challenge the legendary P.T. Usha in her prime and beat her on a couple of occasions, including at the 1990 Open Nationals.

Ashwini has been an outlier in the Indian athlete community, often raising her voice against performance enhancers. She agrees with Anju on the information overload, but feels the reasons for an increase in cheating are more complex and "selfish", with no innocent victims.

"You can say our lives were simple but I believe we were ignorant back then. Now, once you are among the best in the country, you have everyone in your team — physiologist, psychologist, physiotherapist and more. So the information in itself is not bad; it's how you deal with it that matters," said Ashwini, who was part of the Clean Sports India foundation but now focuses on her own Sports Foundation and School (KALS) in Coorg.

It is interesting to note that while the two champion athletes agree on both the crux of the problem — incorrect or insufficient guidance — and the reasons for it — increased competition and desperation to succeed — they differ on where the blame lies.

"The problem with youngsters is that they are not mature enough to understand what is right or wrong in the long term. The moment coaches feel the focus is shifting, they have to pitch in and explain the importance of staying on the right track, explain they still have time and don't need to take shortcuts. But the outside pressure, the social media all exert an influence," Anju explained.

Her senior disagrees. "I think the coaches' attitude of winning at any cost is what gets some of the athletes caught at 13-14 years. At that age, your coach is your mentor and being sensitive to these issues solely lies with the coaches. I feel the deterrent is not too harsh now because coaches are never penalised," said Ashwini.

"At the same time, I blame the athletes for the rot in Indian sports. It's a selfish world out there, there is no athlete support for fighting it and the biggest names wouldn't want to be associated with this fight. It's a 'you scratch my back, I scratch yours' scenario. It's all about safeguarding self-interest."

The coach's role comes under further scrutiny if one considers the fact that Khelo India, the government's flagship scheme to unearth talent, has had doping cases even at the School Games (12 in 2018), with athletics recording the highest number of positive cases.

There have been 14 cases involving minor athletes in the last one year alone. Interestingly, the AFI has, in its latest executive meeting, decided that coaches of those caught for doping will face similar punishments, including sanctions, to try and stem the rot.

"Khelo India is a great way to encourage sports but there are ills to it, too. The kind of money and recognition doled out, it helps make lives better but what about monitoring? I have an athlete where the mother would be waiting for the money to be deposited rather than worrying about the kid, it's that deep-rooted. Maybe the government should stop giving so much without checking on the results, there are ways of doing it," Ashwini suggested.

Incidentally the sports ministry, in March, had declared that medallists at all Khelo India Games, barring the school edition, will be eligible for jobs.

No easy solutions

Both Anju and Ashwini admit it is almost a losing battle. "It's a problem worldwide and at the highest level, we can try and control it to a certain extent — it can never be completely eliminated. But at the lower levels it is growing rapidly. People want instant results and are willing to risk everything. They reason that 'if I get caught then it will be the end of my career but if I don't, I can get everything I want'," Anju, who still holds the national long jump record, said.

Ashwini is more radical. "The bottom line is, it's not a clean environment at any level. It's not that other countries are cleaner — they are just better at masking! I will be slammed for saying this but what the heck, just legalise it and let everyone do it! I feel the authorities have it wrong — they need to work the other way round, getting better at washing away the substances instead of trying to stop their use, because that is not going to happen."

GAME THEORY

Measuring Sunil Chhetri — India's greatest goal machine

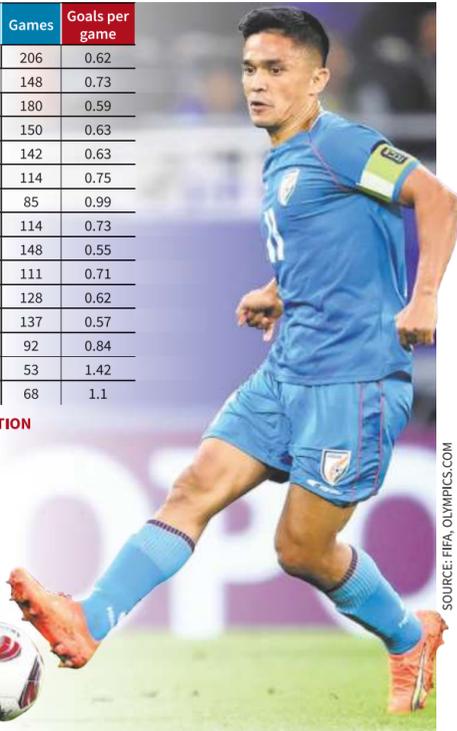
With Indian football icon Sunil Chhetri announcing that he will retire from the international game after the World Cup qualification match against Kuwait on June 6, we take a look at where he stands among the sport's most prolific goal-scorers. We also break his international goals down by competition

TOP SCORERS IN INTERNATIONAL MEN'S FOOTBALL

Rank	Player	Country	Goals	Games	Goals per game
1	Cristiano Ronaldo	Portugal	128	206	0.62
2	Ali Daei	Iran	108	148	0.73
3	Lionel Messi	Argentina	106	180	0.59
4	Sunil Chhetri	India	94	150	0.63
5	Mokhtar Dahari	Malaysia	89	142	0.63
6	Ali Mabkhout	UAE	85	114	0.75
7	Ferenc Puskas	Hungary	84	85	0.99
8	Romelu Lukaku	Belgium	83	114	0.73
9	Robert Lewandowski	Poland	82	148	0.55
10	Godfrey Chitalu	Zambia	79	111	0.71
10	Neymar	Brazil	79	128	0.62
12	Hussein Saeed	Iraq	78	137	0.57
13	Pele	Brazil	77	92	0.84
14	Vivian Woodward	England	75	53	1.42
14	Sandor Kocsis	Hungary	75	68	1.1

CHHETRI'S INTERNATIONAL GOALS BY COMPETITION

Competition	Goals	Games
SAFF Championship	23	27
FIFA World Cup qualifiers	10	23
Nehru Cup	9	14
AFC Asian Cup qualifiers	8	12
AFC Challenge Cup	4	8
Intercontinental Cup	13	11
AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers	3	6
AFC Asian Cup	4	8
King's Cup	1	1
Merdeka Cup	1	1
International friendlies	18	39
TOTAL	94	150



SOURCE: FIFA, OLYMPICS.COM

PICTURE THIS



GETTY IMAGES

The long drive

This photograph depicts low-light action from the 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps, which was held earlier this month in Belgium.

The 6 Hours of Spa is an endurance race for sports cars and forms a part of the FIA

World Endurance Championship (WEC).

Endurance racing is a form of motorsport which tests durability — of both equipment and driver. Teams have a roster of drivers (typically two to four) who attempt to cover a large distance in the event, with participants permitted to take a

break and switch during the race. Endurance races can be based on either distance or time i.e. the race can be run to cover a certain distance (laps) as quickly as possible or to cover as much distance as possible in a stipulated time frame.

The WEC is the first endurance series of world

championship status since the demise of the World Sportscar Championship in 1992.

The series features multiple classes, with points given to the top ten finishers on a sliding point margin scale. World champion titles are awarded to the top-scoring drivers and manufacturers over the season.

GRATITUDE

Kohli thanks Royal Challengers fans with heart-warming post



Virat Kohli thanked the fans for the love they showered on the players during the IPL 2024 campaign. "Thanks again to all the RCB fans for making us feel loved and appreciated as always," Kohli posted on Instagram. "The way we turned things around and qualified was truly special, something that I will always cherish."

BAT TO MIKE

Karthik in ICC's commentary panel for T20 World Cup in the Americas



Dinesh Karthik, who played for Royal Challengers Bengaluru in IPL 2024, was named in the International Cricket Council's commentary panel for next month's T20 World Cup. The legendary Sunil Gavaskar, Ravi Shastri and Harsha Bhogle are the other Indians in the list which includes several illustrious players.

IDEAL CHOICE

Gambhir will be a brilliant head coach for India, feels Swann



Former England player Graeme Swann believes Kolkata Knight Riders team mentor Gautam Gambhir will be a "brilliant" head coach for India. "If he is the head coach, he will be brilliant. He was a great leader, a great captain, and a great batsman. A lot of people look up to him," said Swann.

TOP PICK

Knight Riders will win the 2024 edition of IPL: Lee and Dilshan



Brett Lee and Sri Lanka opener Tillakaratne Dilshan have backed the Shreyas Iyer-led Kolkata Knight Riders to clinch the IPL 2024 title. "If you look at current form, it will be tough to beat KKR. I think the team deserves to finish No. 1," said Lee. "KKR is performing well in all three departments. I think it is going to win this IPL," said Dilshan.

Shahbaz, Abhishek do the star turn for Sunrisers

The two spinners combine to pick up five wickets and derail the Royals chase; Tripathi's cameo and Klaasen's mature knock propel Cummins' side to 175; it's Hyderabad vs. Kolkata in the final



Rise and fall: Klaasen's class came to the fore before Shahbaz, right, spun a web around the Royals batters. Hetmyer, centre, had no clue to a beauty from Abhishek. M. VEDHAN & B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM



SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
Travis Head c Ashwin b Sandeep 34 (28b, 3x4, 1x6), Abhishek Sharma c Kohler-Cadmire b Boult 12 (5b, 1x4, 1x6), Rahul Tripathi c Chahal b Boult 37 (15b, 5x4, 2x6), Aiden Markram c Chahal b Boult 1 (2b), Heinrich Klaasen b Sandeep 50 (34b, 4x6), Nitish Kumar c Chahal b Avesh 5 (10b), Abdul Samad b Avesh 0 (1b), Shahbaz Ahmed (Impact player in place of Head) c Jurel b Avesh 18 (18b, 1x6), Pat Cummins (not out) 5 (5b, 1x4), Jaydev Unadkat run out 5 (2b, 1x4); Extras (lb-1, w-7): 8; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 175.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-13 (Abhishek, 0.6 overs), 2-55 (Tripathi, 4.3), 3-57 (Markram, 4.6), 4-99 (Head, 9.6), 5-120 (Nitish, 13.5), 6-120 (Samad, 13.6), 7-163 (Klaasen, 18.1), 8-170 (Shahbaz, 19.3), 9-175 (Unadkat, 19.6).

ROYALS BOWLING
Boult 4-0-45-3, Ashwin 4-0-43-0, Sandeep 4-0-25-2, Avesh 4-0-27-3, Chahal 4-0-34-0.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS
Yashasvi Jaiswal c Samad b Shahbaz 42 (21b, 4x4, 3x6), Tom Kohler-Cadmire c Tripathi b Cummins 10 (16b, 1x4), Sanju Samson c Markram b Abhishek 10 (11b, 1x4), Riyan Parag c Abhishek b Shahbaz 6 (10b), Dhruv Jurel (not out) 56 (35b, 7x4, 2x6), R. Ashwin c Klaasen b Shahbaz 0 (3b), Shimron Hetmyer (Impact Player in place of Chahal) b Abhishek 4 (10b), Rovman Powell c Abhishek b Natarajan 6 (12b), Trent Boult (not out) 0 (3b); Extras (lb-1, nb-1, w-3): 5; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 139.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-24 (Kohler-Cadmire, 3.6), 2-65 (Jaiswal, 7.5), 3-67 (Samson, 8.3), 4-79 (Parag, 11.1), 5-79 (Ashwin, 11.4), 6-92 (Hetmyer, 13.4), 7-124 (Powell, 17.4).

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Bhuvneshwar 3-0-33-0, Cummins 4-0-30-1, Natarajan 3-0-13-1, Unadkat 1-0-5-0, Shahbaz 4-0-23-3, Abhishek 4-0-24-2, Markram 1-0-10-0.

TOSS: RR; **POW:** Shahbaz. SRH won by 36 runs.

QUALIFIER 2

N. Sudarshan
CHENNAI

A splendid bowling effort, masterminded by left-arm spinners Shahbaz Ahmed and Abhishek Sharma, helped Sunrisers Hyderabad defeat Rajasthan Royals by 36 runs at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Friday and march into its third Indian Premier League final.

Needing 176 to win, RR seemed on course at 65 for one, only for Shahbaz (4-0-23-3) and Abhishek (4-0-24-2), who had collectively taken just three wickets all season, to bamboozle the batters. Late-evening dew, which has hampered many a bowling side, made no appearance as SRH restricted RR to 139 for seven to set up a date with Kolkata Knight Riders for the ultimate prize on Sunday.

RR began slowly, reaching 32 for one after five overs. But in the sixth, Yashasvi Jaiswal (42, 21b, 4x4, 3x6) made the play, flat-batting Bhuvneshwar Kumar for a majestic six down the ground before following it up with three boundaries.

Tweakers take over
However, the introduction of Shahbaz and Abhishek pegged RR back. Jaiswal welcomed Shahbaz with a

reverse-swept six, but soon miscued one to long-off. Skipper Sanju Samson's slap off Abhishek went straight to Aiden Markram at long-on. Shahbaz went on to strike twice in the 12th over as Riyan Parag mistimed to deep mid-wicket and R. Ashwin was caught behind. When Abhishek rattled Shimron Hetmyer's stumps in the 14th over (92 for six), the 2008 champion's challenge was all but over. Dhruv Jurel (56 n.o., 35b, 7x4, 2x6) and Rovman Powell kept the flame flickering with a 32-run association. But Abhishek shut down the contest with a fine running catch from deep mid-wicket to send Powell back.

Earlier, after being asked to bat, SRH scored 68 in the PowerPlay, courtesy some belligerent hitting by Rahul Tripathi (37, 15b, 5x4, 2x6). If not for the

wicket-taking nous of Trent Boult (three for 45), SRH could have had more. Abhishek hit Boult for a six in front of square three balls into the innings and creamed the next ball down the ground for four. But Boult had his man, with the ball hitting high on the bat and lobbing to cover. For the next three overs, it was all Tripathi. The 33-year-old was brutal on Ashwin, sweeping, lofting and

late-cutting the offie for fours. Boult was dispatched beautifully through cover and point, and then clipped over fineleg for a tremendous six. But the left-arm quick outwitted Tripathi too, having him caught at short-third with a slow bouncer. After the PowerPlay, the runs dried up. The biggest barren patch – a 29-ball boundary drought from overs 7.5 to 12.3 – sent the crowd into a deep slumber despite the best efforts of the stadium jockey. But Heinrich Klaasen's was an assured presence.

The burly 32-year-old muscled the ball four times into the stands (50, 34b, 4x6), thrice off Yuzvendra Chahal and once off Boult. Sandeep Sharma and Avesh Khan were excellent for RR, conceding just 52 runs from eight overs and claiming five wickets. Sandeep even accounted for the uncharacteristically sedate Travis Head (34, 28b, 3x4, 1x6) with a slow bouncer and rearranged the dangerous Klaasen's stumps with a slow yorker. For a while the bowling effort appeared match-winning, but it was not to be.

Losing wickets in a cluster cost us the match, says Sangakkara

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Rajasthan Royals' Director of Cricket Kumar Sangakkara felt that the batters did not show intent and allowed panic to set in during the chase against Sunrisers Hyderabad in Qualifier 2 on Friday. "I think losing wickets in a cluster [cost us]. We had a great start, 51 in the PowerPlay. All we had to do was to get to 120 by the 14th or 15th over. With wickets in hand, 10 or 11 runs per over would not have been difficult," said Sangakkara. "I thought the pitch turned a bit, but [there was] a little bit of panic in not building partnerships after that first wicket," he added. Sangakkara felt that the Yashasvi Jaiswal's wicket came at the wrong time as it allowed SRH to bowl two left-arm spinners – Shahbaz Ahmed and Abhishek Sharma – in the middle overs. "All you needed was sensible batting. Yash stay-

ing there would have made a huge difference. The left-arm spinner from the other end would not have bowled," he explained. Sangakkara also drew attention to how Dhruv Jurel batted compared to a few others in the side. "I think, on wickets like this, you have got to show intent, and that's what Dhruv Jurel did. He just played really good shots. He used the reverse-sweep, hit over extra cover with the turn and straight down the ground. Once you do that, the ball doesn't seem to turn it all." Regardless, Sangakkara was happy with his side's show as it came close to making a second IPL final in three years. "I think it was a great season for us. We started really well and then we lost a close game to SRH in Hyderabad. Against Delhi also, we put ourselves in winning positions. That's how T20 goes. All we can do is put ourselves in positions for playoffs and vying for finals."



Inspired show: Abhishek, given an opportunity to bowl, produced a game-changing spell. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Kohli calls Karthik 'wise and honest', reveals how he helped him in 2022

Press Trust of India
BENGALURU

Virat Kohli paid tribute to Dinesh Karthik at the end of RCB's IPL 2024 campaign, describing the veteran wicketkeeper-batter as a "wise and honest" person who lifted his spirits during a phase of struggle in the league's 2022 season. "Off the field, I have had some really nice and interesting conversations with him. He is a wise man, and has great knowledge about a lot of things, not just cricket," said Kohli. Kohli recalled the 2022 season when he averaged just 22.73, scoring 341 runs from 16 matches, as the team missed a berth in the final after losing to Rajasthan Royals in Qualifier 2. "During that phase in 2022, I was really struggling for confidence," recalled Kohli. "He sat me down a couple of times and just gave me a very honest explanation of how he saw things and how I was not able to see them myself. "I like his honesty, his courage to go and speak to anyone about things that he really feels about. And that, I think, is the most special thing for me when it comes to Dinesh. That's something I've always cherished about him. And that's why we get along really, really well." Kohli also called Karthik a "technically correct and



Special bond: Kohli says he has had some interesting conversations with Karthik. EMMANUAL YOGINI

him all the very best for all his future endeavours moving forward," said Kohli. Recalling his first meeting with Karthik during India's tour of South Africa in 2009, Kohli said he found Karthik to be a "hyperactive and confused" person who was moving all over the place. "Hyperactive, confused" "The first time I met him we were playing in South Africa in the Champions Trophy 2009. It was the first time I shared the change room with Dinesh, and I found him to be a hyperactive, confused person. "Most of the time, he was moving all over the place, never stopping. That was my first impression of Dinesh. "He is an outstanding talent, brilliant batter to watch and my first impression and the present-day impression are not far apart – just that he has become wiser and calmed down a lot," said Kohli.

Sindhu stuns top seed Han, enters the last four

Former World champion, who exacted revenge on the Chinese, will take on Ongbamrunphan for a place in the final; Ashmita loses tamely against Zhang in her quarterfinal match



Turning it on: Sindhu raised her game in the decisive third game to knock out Han. X@BADMINTON_ASIA

MALAYSIA MASTERS

Press Trust of India
KUALA LUMPUR

Double Olympic medalist P.V. Sindhu took a giant stride towards securing the title at the Malaysia Masters after progressing to the semifinals with a hard-fought win over top seed Han Yue of China here on Friday.

World No. 15 Sindhu recovered from a mid-game slump to outwit Han,

ranked sixth, 21-13, 14-21, 21-12 in a 55-minute quarterfinal battle to avenge her loss to the Chinese in their last meeting at the Asia championships in Ningbo last month.

Sindhu, a former World champion, will now square off against Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrunphan for a place in the final.

However, Ashmita Chaliha's fine run ended in the quarterfinals with a 10-21, 15-21 loss to sixth seed Zhang Yi Man of China.

Sindhu, who last won

the Singapore Open in 2022, gave a good account of herself as she broke off from 3-3 in the opening game to take a 11-5 cushion at the break.

The Chinese slowly made her way to 13-16 but Sindhu reeled off the remaining five straight points to take the opening game.

Stung by the reversal, Han zoomed to a 5-0 lead after the change of sides. She continued to dominate the proceedings as Sindhu struggled.

Han jumped to a mas-

sive 15-2 advantage and despite some fightback from the Indian, the Chinese comfortably took the match to the decider.

Gathering her wits Sindhu gathered her wits in the third game to open up a massive 11-3 lead at the break, which proved decisive as Han just couldn't bridge the gap.

The results:
Women: Quarterfinals: P.V. Sindhu bt Han Yue (Chn) 21-13, 14-21, 21-12; Zhang Yi Man (Chn) bt Ashmita Chaliha 21-10, 21-15.

Now there is confidence and belief to win a Grand Slam

I don't think clay is our biggest strength, but Ebden and I are adapting and enjoying; in the last three Majors, we have a semifinal (Wimbledon 2023), final (US Open) and a win (Australian Open)

INTERVIEW

Rohan Bopanna

N. Sudarshan
CHENNAI

For World No. 4 Rohan Bopanna, the upcoming French Open will be doubly important. Not only is the tournament one of tennis' four crown jewels, there is added significance because the Paris Olympics' tennis event is set to be played at Roland-Garros and the 44-year-old Bopanna will be competing in the men's doubles category.

While the suspense over his choice of doubles partner continues, and Bopanna has himself chosen to remain tight-lipped, the reigning Australian Open champion spoke to *The Hindu* ahead of the year's second Major.

What are your expectations from this year's Roland-Garros?

To start better than last year [first round]. It's not one of the best clay-court seasons we've had so far [partner Matthew Ebden]. But it is a fresh beginning. The last three Grand Slams have been pretty fruitful. So, looking to just get a good start.

After winning the Miami



On a roll: Bopanna, along with partner Ebden, will look to continue the good run at the Majors when he plays in the French Open. PTI

Masters, results at Monte Carlo, Madrid and Rome (combined win-loss 1-3) have been below par. Is it worrying?

No, not at all. We are still the No. 1 team in the world [No. 2]. It's the first time we have been in a situation like this and sometimes losing early in tournaments is not something to really worry about. It's a fresh start and we are looking forward.

After becoming World No. 1 and the 2024

Australian Open success, have you recalibrated your expectations?

Of course! Now there is confidence and belief to win a Grand Slam. Earlier, the situation was different. To be honest, I don't think clay is our biggest strength. But both of us are adapting and enjoying. And we are confident because at the last three Majors, we have a semifinal (Wimbledon 2023), final (US Open) and a win (Australian Open).

You won your first Slam

on clay (French Open 2017, mixed doubles) and Masters 1000s at Madrid (2015) and Monte Carlo (2017). Don't these give you confidence?

As a team, I don't think it is a strength, but as an individual, I have really started enjoying playing on clay. I've adapted and am still learning. It has taken years. It is a surface which we don't have in our country. It doesn't come naturally, to Ebden either. We have to find small loopholes on which our strengths work.

For the second straight Slam, India will have representation in both doubles and singles (Sumit Nagal). How important is it for the country's tennis?

Extremely important. When you watch athletes from your own country, it really inspires. Sumit has been playing very well and this time he has qualified directly into the main draw, which is really good. I saw him play in Monte Carlo; he's grown and matured. Yuki Bhambri is also in the doubles main draw. It's definitely going to give a big boost for Indian tennis.

(Watch Roland-Garros 2024 from May 26, 2.30 p.m. IST onwards LIVE on Sony Sports Ten 5 SD & HD, Sony Sports Ten 2 SD & HD).

Jay Shah denies approaching anyone for India coach job

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

BCCI secretary Jay Shah clarified that he had not approached anyone for the post of head coach of the Indian men's cricket team.

Shah's clarification came hours after Ricky Ponting, Justin Langer and Andy Flower mentioned that they were not interested in the job. The deadline for submitting the applications is May 27.

"When we talk about international cricket, no role is more prestigious than that of the head coach of the Indian cricket team. Team India commands the largest fan base globally, enjoying support that is truly unrivalled. Our rich history and passion for the game make it one of the most lucrative jobs in the world," Shah said in a statement on Friday.

"The role demands a high level of professionalism as one gets to nurture some of the best cricketers in the world and an assembly line of talented cricketers to follow. Catering to the aspirations of a billion fans is a huge honour and the BCCI will pick the right candidate, capable of propelling Indian cricket forward."

While Ponting admitted to having an informal discussion before citing family commitments, Langer revealed that a chat with K.L. Rahul made him not opt for the job. Flower, meanwhile, stressed after Royal Challengers Bengaluru's loss in the IPL Eliminator that he was happy to stick with franchise cricket.

Indian to succeed Shah dropped the biggest hint that the BCCI likely to



Jay Shah. FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

opt for an Indian to succeed the incumbent Rahul Dravid.

"Neither I nor the BCCI have approached any former Australian cricketer with a coaching offer. The reports circulating in certain sections of the media are completely incorrect. Finding the right coach for our national team is a meticulous and thorough process," Shah said.

"We are focused on identifying individuals who possess a deep understanding of the Indian cricket structure and have risen through the ranks.

"It's crucial that our coach has an in-depth knowledge of domestic cricket framework to truly elevate Team India to the next level."

Should an Indian be preferred, V.V.S. Laxman would be the natural choice for the Cricket Advisory Committee, but the National Cricket Academy head is not interested in taking over from Dravid for personal reasons.

Frontrunners This would mean Harbhajan Singh (who has expressed interest), Gautam Gambhir and Zaheer Khan (a feeler has been sent to both) may emerge as frontrunners.

Langer drops India coach plan after Rahul's caution

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Former Australian cricketer Justin Langer was enticed by the prospect of becoming India's head coach but K.L. Rahul's word of caution regarding the "pressure and politics" that come with the job dissuaded him from pursuing the "amazing" opportunity.

Langer, who served as Lucknow Super Giants' head coach this IPL season, recalled a chat with franchise skipper and a senior member of the Indian team Rahul.

Never say never, but...

"You never say never. And the pressure of doing it in India... I was talking to KL (Rahul) and he said, 'You know, if you think there's pressure and politics in an IPL team, multiply that by a thousand... (that's) coaching India,'" said Langer.

"That was a good bit of advice, I guess. It would be an amazing job, (but) I



Talking straight: Langer revealed that Rahul warned him about the 'pressure and politics' in the India coach job. SANDEEP SAXENA

have (put myself out of contention)," he added.

Before taking up the assignment with Super Giants this year, Langer had coached Australia from May 2018 to February 2022, helping the team navigate a difficult period in the aftermath of the infamous ball-tampering scandal.

Under Langer's guidance, Australia lifted its first-ever T20 World Cup title and also went on to

win the Ashes. "I also know that it's an all-encompassing role, and having done it for four years with the Australian team, honestly, it's exhausting. And that's the Australian job!," the 53-year-old said.

The BCCI has invited fresh applications for the head coach position, with a deadline set for May 27 as Rahul Dravid is set to exit after the T20 World Cup.

Siwach outpunches Mukuka to give India a winning start

Press Trust of India
BANGKOK

National champion Sachin Siwach (57kg) produced an attacking display to register a dominant win over Alex Mukuka of New Zealand in the opening round of the 2nd Boxing World Qualifiers for the Paris Olympics here on Friday.

Siwach, a Strandja Memorial gold medalist, kept up the pressure over his opponent throughout the

bout, ensuring a unanimous 5-0 verdict from the judges to give the 10-member Indian contingent a winning start.

On Saturday, senior National bronze medalist Abhimanyu Loura will take on Bulgaria's Kristijan Nikolov in the opening round of the 80kg category.

Amit Panghal (51kg), a 2022 Commonwealth Games gold medalist, and 2022 Asian Games bronze medalist Narendra Berwal

(+92kg) have got a bye in the opening round.

India has fielded seven men and three women in the second qualifiers and all boxers will have to at least make it to the semifinals to stand a chance to book their berths for the Olympics.

Nikhat Zareen (50kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) have so far secured their entry to Paris at the Asian Games.

India women lose two on the trot

Press Trust of India
ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

The Indian women's hockey team lost its second game on the trot in the European leg of the FIH Pro League as Belgium handed the visitor a 0-2 defeat here.

The Indian women, under new coach and captain in Harendra Singh and Salima Tete, were earlier thrashed 0-5 by Argentina in its opening match on Wednesday.

Both Belgium goals came from field efforts through Alexia 'T Serstevens in the 34th minute and Dewaet Louise two minutes later on Thursday.

Contrary to the result,

the Indians started the match on an aggressive note and won an early penalty corner, but couldn't capitalise on it.

But the Indians absorbed the pressure well.

All guns blazing

Belgium came out all guns blazing after the change of ends and as took the lead through Alexia four minutes into the third quarter.

Two minutes later, Dewaet struck again to double Belgium's lead.

Down 0-2, India upped its ante and even won a penalty corner towards the end of the penultimate quarter, but failed to make the most of it.

Nagal faces World No. 18 Khachanov in first round

Press Trust of India
PARIS

India's top-ranked singles player Sumit Nagal was handed a tough opening round at the French Open as he is set to face World No. 18 Karen Khachanov of Russia here on Sunday.

Direct entry

World No. 94 Nagal earned a direct entry into the main draw of the Grand Slam after his consistent performances on the tour.

He became the first Indian man to qualify for the French Open main draw since Prajnesh Gunneswaran in 2019.

Indian men go down to Belgium in Pro League

Press Trust of India
ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

Defensive lapses cost the Indian men's hockey team as it went down 1-4 to host and World No.3 Belgium in the European leg of the FIH Pro League here.

Belgium took the lead in the 22nd minute through a field goal by skipper Felix Denayer.

Four minutes after half-time, the home side doubled its lead through a penalty corner conversion by Alexander Hendrickx.

The Belgians extended their lead in the 49th through another fine field goal by Cedric Charlier.

Young striker Abhishek pulled one back for India from a field effort but Belgium looked too strong as it sealed the affair in the final minute of the game when



Room to improve: Defensive lapses cost India the game. X@THEHOCKEYINDIA

Hendrickx sounded the board from a penalty stroke.

India skipper Harmanpreet was understandably disappointed with the performance. "We did some good things, but the finish-

ing wasn't there. Defensively we need to improve, man-to-man marking needs to get better. Excited to play them again on Saturday. Looking forward to improve," he said after the match on Thursday.

Ferrari's Leclerc tops practice two

The 26-year-old Monegasque driver clocks one minute and 11.278 seconds; Hamilton and Alonso finish second and third



Leading the charts: Leclerc zipping around the streets of Monte Carlo during second practice. AP

MONACO GP

Agence France-Presse
MONTE CARLO

Home favourite Charles Leclerc topped the times for Ferrari ahead of Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton as Max Verstappen struggled to match their pace in Friday's second free practice at the Monaco Grand Prix. The 26-year-old Monegasque driver was fast throughout the day as he clocked a best lap in one minute and 11.278 seconds to finish 0.188 seconds clear of Hamilton, who was fastest in the opening session earlier in the day. Fernando Alonso was third for Aston Martin, like Hamilton showing his experience with a rejuvenated performance around the merciless barrier-lined

Mediterranean street circuit. Championship leader Verstappen was only fourth, half a second adrift of Leclerc, who has yet to claim a podium finish on the roads he knows so well, proving his fears that Red Bull might struggle. "I'm jumping like a kangaroo and getting headaches," complained the Dutchman. Lando Norris, winner of his maiden F1 race in Miami three weeks ago, was fifth for McLaren ahead of Carlos Sainz in the second Ferrari, Lance Stroll in the second Aston Martin and Sergio Perez in the other Red Bull. A lively Alex Albon was ninth for the improving Williams team and George Russell 10th in the second Mercedes, ending the session complaining of steering problems.

Rain had threatened ahead of the second session which began with Hamilton again leading the exit from the pit-lane followed by Kevin Magnussen and Russell, all three showing some urgency in reaction to the principality's capricious micro-climate. Perez, Magnussen, Hamilton and then Verstappen set the pace before Hamilton took control only for Verstappen, in 1:13.265 and then Leclerc, in 1:12.372, regained the initiative. **Hitting the wall** In a busy opening charge, Logan Sargeant kissed the barriers in his Williams. "Oh, I've hit the wall!" he exclaimed, but without causing serious damage before most came in for a set of soft tyres to do some qualifying simulation laps before the expected rain.

Jyothi-Priyansh duo enters compound mixed team final

ARCHERY WORLD CUP

Sports Bureau

The Indian duo of V. Jyothi Surekha and Priyansh ensured a medal by reaching the compound mixed team final and Deepika Kumari remained in medal contention by entering the recurve women's individual semifinals in the Archery World Cup Stage-2 in Yecheon, South Korea, on Friday.

Jyothi and Priyansh joined hands to help India beat Vietnam 159-152, Mexico 156-155, and host Korea 158-157 (in the semifinals) to make it to the title clash against USA. The Indian recurve mixed team of Deepika and Tarundeep Rai received a bye and got the better of Colombia 5-3 before falling to Spain 2-6 in the quarterfinals. Deepika overcame a strong challenge from Slovenia's Tinkara Kardinar in

the first round to record a 6-5 (shoot-off: 9-8) victory. After that she got past Vietnam's Loc Thi Dao 6-2, France's Lisa Barbelin 6-0 and Turkey's Elif Berra Gokkir 6-4 to set up a semifinal date with top-seeded Korean Lim Sihyeon. Other Indian recurve female and male archers, including the Olympic qualified B. Dhiraj who lost to former European champion Pablo Acha Gonzalez 6-2 in the second round, exited early.

Will Manchester be Blue or Red?

FA CUP FINAL

Agence France-Presse
LONDON



Ten Hag will be desperate to win the FA Cup trophy. REUTERS

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag hopes to bolster his chances of avoiding the sack by ruining Manchester City's history bid in the FA Cup final on Saturday.

For the second successive season, Wembley will stage a Manchester derby in the showpiece fixture. Last year, City beat United 2-1 in the final en route an incredible treble-winning campaign that included Premier League and Champions League glory. City remains England's pre-eminent force, as it showed by clinching an unprecedented fourth successive Premier League title last weekend.

United left Wembley still optimistic about the future despite that defeat 12 months ago because Ten Hag had ended its six-year trophy drought by winning the League Cup earlier in the season.

Turbulent campaign

But the Red Devils return to north London shaken by a turbulent campaign that leaves the Dutchman fighting to save his job.

United finished eighth in the Premier League - its lowest final position since 1990 - and failed even to make it out of the Champions League group stage.

Ten Hag has blamed United's woes on injuries, but that might not convince the club's new co-owner Jim Ratcliffe to keep faith with him. The Dutch coach reportedly caused friction

among his squad after clashing with Jadon Sancho and Marcus Rashford, setting the tone for a series of embarrassing defeats against Crystal Palace, Bournemouth, Fulham, Copenhagen and Galatasaray among others. United only made it to the FA Cup final after blowing a three-goal lead and surviving a penalty shootout against second-tier Coventry in a semifinal that underlined the flaws in ten Hag's erratic team.

England boss Gareth Southgate, former Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino and Ipswich chief Kieran McKenna have all been linked with the Old Trafford job.

Ten Hag's hopes of staying at United into a third season would be improved if it can spoil City's bid to become the first English club to win both the Premier League and FA Cup two years in a row.

Focus

"I came here to win trophies," ten Hag said. "I'm just focusing on the job I have to do. That is first to win the game on Saturday and then keep going in the project."

Barcelona sacks coach Xavi after trophy-less season

Agence France-Presse
BARCELONA

Barcelona sacked coach Xavi Hernandez on Friday after the Catalan giant failed to win a trophy this season but just weeks since he and club president Joan Laporta agreed he would stay in the post.

Xavi will take charge of the team's final LaLiga match on Sunday at Sevilla before departing.

"Barcelona president Joan Laporta has told Xavi Hernandez he will not continue as coach for the 2024-25 season," said Barcelona in a statement.

Replacement

Former Bayern Munich and Germany coach Hansi Flick is heavily tipped to replace Xavi. In January, Xavi said he would leave at the end of



Xavi. GETTY IMAGES

the season but, after a run of strong form, in April he and president Laporta agreed the coach would stay for the next campaign, with his contract expiring in June 2025.

However, the situation quickly changed with Spanish media reporting Laporta was angered by Xavi's comments suggesting it was hard for the financially-hamstrung club

to compete with Real Madrid and other elite European sides.

"Barcelona wants to thank Xavi for his work as coach, which adds to his unmatched career as a player and the captain of the first team, and wish him all the best in the future," continued Barcelona's statement.

"In the coming days, Barcelona will reveal the new coaching structure for the first team staff."

Barcelona won LaLiga last season but was not able to successfully defend the title in the current campaign.

It was knocked out of the Champions League in the quarterfinals by Paris Saint-Germain, was hammered by Real Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup final and lost to Athletic Bilbao in the Copa del Rey.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is for notice of the General Public that a Political Party is proposed to be registered by the name of **VEER JANSHAKTI PARTY** (Name of the Party). The office of the party is located at 70, 2ND FLOOR, KAILASH HILLS, NEW DELHI-110065 (Give full address). This party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951 - Names/Address of the office bearers of the Party are as follows: - President- Dr. Manindra Kumar Jain General Secretary - Dharendra Kumar Jain Treasurer- Nikunj Bihari Sharma If any one has any objection to the registration of **VEER JANSHAKTI PARTY** (Name of the proposal party) they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party) Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi 110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE HON'BLE COMMERCIAL COURT, VATAKARA, C.S.No.54/2023
Shaji P.P. Plaintiff
Rakesh Kumar S/o. Not known to the Plaintiff, 41 Years, Residing at House No.5, Near Sai Mandhir, Patna, Bihar 800006, India. Defendant
Commercial Suit No. 54/2023 instituted by Shaji P.P against Rakesh Kumar, Defendant, is posted to 01.06.2024. The Hon'ble Court has directed affixture and publication of the notice in the Hindu Daily. Take notice that you are directed to appear on 01.06.2024 (Sd/-) Subramanyam Chandrashekarar Counsel for the Plaintiff

IN THE COURT OF SH. SURINDER S. RATHI, DISTRICT JUDGE (COMMERCIAL COURT-03) AT... ROOM NO. 303, SHAHDARA DISTT. KARKARDOOMA COURT DELHI
PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)
Case Reg. No.: CS(COMM) No. 514/2023 SHAHDARA DISTT. KARKARDOOMA COURT DELHI
ALPANA KUMARI SADH... Plaintiff
MANOJ GUPTA AND ANR... Defendant
To, RITIKA GARG LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE OF LATE SMT. SHOBHA GUPTA PROPRIETOR OF MS BALAJI FABRICS 1ST ADDRESS X-4022, GALI NO. 16, SHANTI MOHALLA, GANDHI NAGAR, EAST DELHI, DELHI-31 JIND ADDRESS HOUSE NO. A-265, SURAJ MAL VIHAR, DELHI-110092
WHEREAS you are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 03.06.2024 the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex-parte. Given under my hand and the seal of the court, this 08.05.2024
DISTRICT JUDGE (COMMERCIAL COURT-03)

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Sd/ (Bismita Das) Chief Manager (Proj. & CSR), NSTFDC

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2	NORTH-EAST DELHI	Sh. Suresh Chand 9868282971 pwpdc02@gmail.com	Sh. Suresh Chand 9868282971	011-22132054
3	EAST DELHI	Sh. Sunil Kumar Bhardwaj 9968854845 nodalofficerpwpdc03@gmail.com	Sh. Sunil Kumar Bhardwaj 9968854845	1800-11-1406 011-22010004
4	NEW DELHI	Sh. Rashmi Manchanda 9911325330 pwd.no.ls2024@gmail.com	Sh. Hom Karan 9015753972	011-23075139
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IN BRIEF



King propels West Indies to a win against South Africa

Stand-in captain Brandon King made 79 as West Indies defeated South Africa by 28 runs in the first T20I of a three-game series in Kingston on Thursday. Opener King, deputising for skipper Rovman Powell who has been away on IPL duty, racked up his runs off 45 balls with six sixes and six boundaries as WI made 175 for eight. In reply, SA laboured to 147 all out despite Reeza Hendricks scoring a half-century. "I know the conditions well, which was an advantage," said Player-of-the-Match King who was playing at his home Sabina Park ground. "We knew we had to go hard against the new ball as it'd get tougher."

The scores: West Indies 175/8 in 20 overs (King 79, Mayers 34, Chase 32 n.o., Baartman 3/26, Phehlukwayo 3/28) bt South Africa 147 in 19.5 overs (Hendricks 87, Forde 3/27, McCoy 2/15, Motie 3/25).

Hooda finishes third in F46 javelin but result put on hold

India's Rinku Hooda on Friday finished third in the men's F46 javelin throw event at the World Para Athletics Championship in Kobe but the result was put on hold after a competitor lodged a protest. Rinku's fourth round throw of 62.77m put him in the third place, but Sri Lanka's Priyantha Herath (64.59m), who finished second, lodged a protest apparently against top-spot holder Guillermo Varona Gonzalez (65.16m) of Cuba. "The Sri Lankan lodged a protest and that is why the result is yet to be declared official. In any case, a medal is assured for Rinku," said head coach Satyanarayan. Ajeet Singh finished fourth with a throw of 62.11m.

India's 27-member squad for Chhetri's farewell game

The contest against Kuwait will be the ace striker's final international match; The Blue Tigers are currently placed second in the group, having garnered four points from as many encounters

FIFA WC QUALIFIER

Press Trust of India
BHUBANESWAR

Forward Parthib Gogoi and defender Muhammad Hammad were left out due to injuries as India announced a 27-member squad for the World Cup qualifying match against Kuwait on June 6 which would mark the end of long-serving captain and ace striker Sunil Chhetri's international career.

The squad for the game to be held in Kolkata was announced by head coach Igor Stimac.

A total of 32 players had been camping here, out of which five – Phurba Lachenpa, Parthib, Imran Khan, Hammad and Jithin M.S. – have been released from the camp.

"All of them were very professional and hard-working. The competition is really strong amongst them, especially in the positions of Jithin and Parthib," Stimac said in a media release.

"Parthib and Hammad suffered minor injuries a few days back and will



Last hurrah: The Indian team will be keen on getting a victory in Chhetri's last game. AIF

need 7-14 days of rest," he added without specifying the nature of injuries.

The Blue Tigers will face Kuwait at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan on June 6.

India is currently placed second in the group, with four points from four matches. The top two teams in the group will qualify for Round 3 of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers and book their berth at the AFC Asian Cup 2027.

Chhetri, 39, announced

his decision to retire from international football on May 17.

The match against Kuwait will bring the curtains down on a glittering 19-year career during which he became India's top goal-scorer with 94 strikes.

He will leave the scene as India's most-capped player after competing in 151 matches at the end of his swansong contest. He currently sits fourth in the all-time list of international goal-scorers.

The squad: Goalkeepers:

Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Amrinder Singh, Vishal Kaithi; Defenders: Amey Ranawade, Anwar Ali, Jay Gupta, Lalchungnunga, Mehtab Singh, Narender, Nikhil Poojary, Rahul Beke, Subhashish Bose;

Midfielders: Anirudh Thapa, Brandon Fernandes, Edmund Lalrindika, Jeakson Singh Thounaojam, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Liston Coloco, Mahesh Singh Naorem, Nandhakumar Sekar, Sahal Abdul Samad, Suresh Singh Wangjam;

Forwards: David Lalhansanga, Manvir Singh, Rahim Ali, Sunil Chhetri, Vikram Partap Singh.

Pakistan announces T20 World Cup squad

Agence France-Presse
KARACHI

Pakistan on Friday became the 20th and the last team to announce a 15-man squad for the T20 World Cup to be held in the United States and the West Indies next month.

Pakistan's Group A includes arch rivals India as well as Canada, Ireland, and United States.

Babar Azam will lead the squad with Pakistan facing United States in its first match in Dallas on June 6.

The squad:

Babar Azam (Capt.), Mohammad Rizwan, Saim Ayub, Fakhar Zaman, Usman Khan, Azam Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Amir, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, Abbas Afridi, Haris Rauf, Abrar Ahmed.

Bhambri-Olivetti pair makes the summit clash in Lyon ATP tournament

Sports Bureau

Yuki Bhambri and Albano Olivetti squeezed their way past top seeds Santiago Gonzalez and Edouard Roger-Vasselin 6-3, 6-7(5), [10-7] in the doubles semifinals of the €651,865 ATP tennis tournament in Lyon, France, on Friday.

In the final, the Indo-French pair will play Harri Heliövaara of Finland and

Henry Patten of Britain.

Other results: €74,825

Challenger, Skopje, Macedonia: Quarterfinals: Ryan Seggerman & Patrik Trhac (USA) bt Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan & Vijay Sundar Prashanth 7-5, 7-6(5).

\$41,000 Challenger, Kachreti, Georgia: Semifinals: Charles Broom & Ben Jones (GBR) bt Yanki Erel (Tur) & Ramkumar Ramanathan 7-5, 7-6(6).

\$25,000 ITF men, Addis Ababa,

Ethiopia: Quarterfinals: Benjamin Lock (Zim) bt Ishaque Eqbal 7-6(3), (ret.); Eliakim Coulibaly (CIV) bt Adil Kalyanpur 6-1, 6-4; Siddharth Vishwakarma bt Kabir Hans 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Doubles (semifinals): Benjamin Lock & Courtney Lock (Zim) bt Chirag Duhan & Ishaque Eqbal 6-4, 6-2; Quarterfinals: Siddhant Banthia & Nitin Kumar Sinha bt Raghav Jaisinghani & Sina Moghimi (Iri) 6-7(3), 6-2, [10-4]; Chirag & Ishaque bt Kabir Hans & Karan Singh 7-6(4), 6-1.

\$15,000 ITF men, Kingston, Jamaica: Second round: Aryan Shah bt Joshua Sheehy (USA) 6-1, 6-4.

Doubles (quarterfinals): Adhithya Ganesan (USA) & Aryan Shah bt Reece Falck (Nzl) & Timothy Gray (Aus) 6-4, 7-6(4).

\$15,000 ITF women, Monastir, Tunisia: Quarterfinals: Zeel Desai bt Maria Gonzalez (Col) 6-4, 7-5; Doubles (semifinals): Angella Okutoyi (Ken) & Merna Refaat (Egy) bt Zeel Desai & Daria Khomutsianskaya 6-3, 6-1.

Suraj gets the better of Neeraj

Sports Bureau

Second seed Suraj Prabodh beat top seed Neeraj Yashpaul 6-2, 6-4 in the final of the HPCL Mittal ₹100,000 AITA men's ranking tennis tournament at the CLTA Complex in Chandigarh on Friday to complete a grand double.

NEW DELHI ROUND-UP

Mayank and Prince excel in FCI's easy victory

Player-of-the-Match Mayank Rawat scored an unbeaten 108 in just 84 balls and Prince Choudhary picked up four wickets as Food Corporation of India beat Collage Sports Club by eight wickets in the 47th All India Lala Raghurib Singh Hot Weather

tournament.

The scores: CSC 209 in 30 overs (Pardeep Parashar 44, Prince Choudhary 4/39) lost to FCI 210/2 in 26 overs (Mayank Rawat 106 n.o., Umang Sharma 54 n.o.).

Anurag shines for Maulana Azad Club

Anurag Pal's four wickets helped Maulana Azad Club beat IMCA Junior by four wickets in the 4th Harcourt Butler Under-14 tournament.

The scores: IMCA Junior 105 in 24 overs (Nakul 30, Anurag Pal 4/22) lost to MAC 111/6 in 19 overs (Shaurya 34).

Harsh and Suraj bowl well in Kashmere Gate Colts' win

Harsh Tyagi picked up three wickets for just one run and Suraj took two for seven runs as Kashmere Gate Colts beat Gemini Club by 85 runs in the DDCA T20 League.

The scores: KG Colts 164/8 in 20 overs (Taran Bisht 76, Tishant Dabla 3/23) bt Gemini Club 79/9 in 20 overs (Harsh Tyagi 3/1, Suraj 2/7).

Sonnet Club 221/1 in 20 overs (Jitesh 97, Sanat Sangwan 95) bt Kishan Ganj Gymkhana 175/9 in 20 overs (Nikhil Malik 62, Aditya Kumar 35, Lokesh Nagar 3/16, Aditya Bhandari 3/26).

Universal Club 146/3 in 20 overs (Viren 47 n.o.) bt Mata Ved Solanki Club 133/8 in 20 overs (Ishant Sharma 3/21, Ritik Kumar 3/17).

Shivtej gets past Prakaash

Sports Bureau

Shivtej Shirfule battled past fifth seed Prakaash Sarrann 7-6(5), 6-7(5), 6-4 in the boys quarterfinals of the Ramesh Desai memorial National sub-junior tennis championship at the KDLTA Complex in Kolhapur on Friday.

In the girls section, Swarnika Roy beat second seed Anandita Upadhyay 6-3, 6-4.

The results (quarterfinals):

U-16 boys: Prateek Sheoran bt Neel Kelkar 6-1, 6-3; Hruthik Katakam bt Saksham Bhansali 6-3, 6-2; Tavish Pahwa bt Harsh Malik 6-0, 6-1; Shivtej Shirfule bt Prakaash Sarrann 7-6(5), 6-7(5), 6-4. **U-16 girls:** Swasti Singh bt Deepshika Vinayagamurthy 6-2, 6-4; Parthasarathi Mundhe bt Shaivi Dalal 6-2, 6-2; Ranjhana Sangram bt Nainika Bendram 6-2, 6-3; Swarnika Roy bt Anandita Upadhyay 6-3, 6-4.

Decided to stand up and fight to the end: United's Onana on protecting his mental health

Associated Press
MANCHESTER

In his own words, Andre Onana arrived at Manchester United last year as the "best goalkeeper in the world."

Within weeks his reputation had taken a battering and he was left needing to protect his mental health.

"It was for me in certain moments like what happened?" Onana said as he prepared for Saturday's FA Cup final against Premier League champion Manchester City at Wembley Stadium.

As a modern ball-play-

ing keeper, he was seen as pivotal to manager Erik ten Hag's plans to mount a Premier League and Champions League challenge.

But, a series of costly errors in his opening weeks at the club saw him become a symbol of United's troubled campaign.

"I arrived as the best goalkeeper in the world and boom, it went down and you see how difficult football is sometimes," Onana said.

"I decided to not stay there but to stand up and fight to the end. I know who I am. I know what I did to arrive here and never forget what you did.



Tough times: Onana said it took him six months to feel good at Manchester United. AP

Senthilkumar, Abhay make the quarterfinals

SQUASH

Press Trust of India
DOHA

Velavan Senthilkumar and Abhay Singh entered the quarterfinals of the prestigious \$53,500 QSF 3 squash tournament with stunning second-round wins over seeded opponents here. The tournament is a PSA World Tour Bronze event.

Reigning National champion Senthilkumar defeated Egyptian seventh seed

Omar Mosaad, a former World No. 3, 13-11, 11-3, 9-3 after the latter retired in 30 minutes due to an injury.

Asian Games medallist Abhay then beat sixth-seeded Frenchman Auguste Dussourd 11-7, 5-11, 10-12, 11-5, 9-3, who also conceded his match in 59 minutes on Thursday.

World No. 55 Senthilkumar will meet Egyptian top seed and World No. 8 Tarek Momen next, while Abhay, ranked 67 in the world, will take on Malaysian third seed and World No. 15 Eain Yow Ng.

India junior men's hockey team loses to Dutch local club

Press Trust of India
BREDA

The Indian junior men's hockey team fought hard after a sluggish start but could not prevent a 4-5 loss to local Dutch side Bredase Hockey Vereniging Push in its third match of the ongoing Europe tour here on Thursday.

The journey

After a narrow 2-2 (4-2) penalty shootout victory, India had slumped to a 2-3

loss to the Belgium junior side in its previous match.

Captain Rohit (18th minute), Sourabh Anand Khushwaha (24th), Ankit Pal (32nd), and Arshdeep Singh (58th) surrounded the board for India, but the side was unable to overturn the five-goal deficit.

Next assignment
The Indian junior men's team will play its next match against Germany in Mönchengladbach on May 28.

Pooja stuns second seed Malak

Sports Bureau

Pooja Arthi knocked out second seed Malak Samir of Egypt 12-10, 11-6, 5-11, 11-7 in the women's quarterfinals of the HCL \$6,000 PSA Challenger squash tournament at the Daly College in Indore on Friday.

In the HCL Indian Open junior squash championship, Diya Dhillon beat Durga Paradhi 11-4, 11-2, 11-7 in the girls under-19 pre-quarterfinals.

The results (quarterfinals): PSA Challenger (quarterfinals): Men: Ravindu Laksiri (Sri) bt Diwakar Singh 9-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-8; Vedant Patel bt K.S. Arihant 8-11, 12-14, 13-11, 11-8, 11-9; Shamil Wakeel (Sri) bt Tavneet Singh Mundra 11-5, 11-5, 11-2; Om Semwal bt Bader Almaghrebi (Kuwait) 15-13, 11-7, 11-3.

Women: Rathika Suthanthira Seelan bt Navya Sundararajan 11-2, 11-7, 9-11, 11-6; Nirupama Dubey bt Anjali Semwal 7-11, 11-6, 11-7, 6-11, 11-3; Akanksha Gupta bt Yeheni Kuruppu (Sri) 11-7, 1-11, 11-7, 4-11, 12-10; Pooja Arthi bt Malak Samir 12-10, 11-6, 5-11, 11-7.

Indian Open juniors: Girls' under-19 (pre-quarterfinals): Diya Dhillon bt Durga Paradhi 11-4, 11-2, 11-7; Yashi Jain bt Diya Yadav (USA) 12-10 (ret.); Aishni Pathak bt Dhritik Kandpal 11-7, 11-5, 11-7; Rewa Nimbalkar w.o. Waikhom Chanu; Chhavi Saran bt Yashvi Lakhwani 11-1, 11-1, 11-2; Niruama Dubey bt Garima Nagar 11-3, 11-3, 11-1.



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