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Weather to remain changed for four days in State capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The weather will remain changed in Bhopal for the next 4 days, it will cloudy, while there may be light rain on April 7 and 8. Cloudy cover is expected on April 9 also. After this the effect of heat will increase again. There is a trend of intense heat and rain in Bhopal in the month of April. In the last 10 years, the temperature has crossed 42 to 43 degrees, while there has been rainfall in 7 out of 10 years between 2014 and 2023. According to the Meteorological Department, the first Western Disturbance in April is becoming active from Saturday. Its effect will be seen in Bhopal also. There has been rainfall for 7 years between 2014 and 2023. There was no rain in the years 2016, 2017 and 2022, whereas

last year 22.6 mm i.e. more than a quarter inch of water had fallen. According to the data of the last 10 years, the day temperature has crossed 43 degrees twice. On April 30, 2019, the temperature was recorded at 43.7 degrees and on April 30, 2022, the temperature was recorded at 43.3 degrees. In other years the temperature has remained above 40 degrees. In April, day temperature starts increasing and air pressure starts decreasing. The average temperature of the month is 38.5 degrees and the minimum temperature is 22.1 degrees. Many times the day temperature has even crossed 44 degrees. The wind direction is western, north-westerly. Dust storms also occur. Due to Western Disturbance, there are sometimes rainy periods

in North India. Along with lightning and thunder, it also rains. The average rainfall in Bhopal in April is 4.8 mm. It rains for one to two days. Due to Western Disturbance and Cyclonic Circulation System, there will be hailstorm, rain and storm in Madhya Pradesh for the next 4 days. Hail may also fall in Chhindwara, Seoni, Mandla, Balaghat and Pandhurna, while the weather will remain changed in 33 districts of the state. Storm can also blow at a speed of 30 to 50 Km per hour. More impact of the system will be seen in the eastern part of the state. At the same time, the impact will be less in the western part. It may rain in Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Ujjain. It will tell you that there is a trend of thunderstorms and rains in

the state in the month of April. It had rained 7 out of the last 10 years. This time also the weather will be similar. More impact will be seen in the eastern districts - Jabalpur, Rewa etc. Senior Scientist of IMD Bhopal said, the weather has changed due to western disturbance and cyclonic circulation system. There is also a possibility of hailstorm along with storms and rain. Another western disturbance is likely to become active from April 10. There will be thunderstorms and light rain at the speed of 30 to 40Km in Sehore, Narmadapuram, Betul and Harda. At the same time, the situation of lightning or thunder will also persist. Hail may also fall in Chhindwara, Seoni, Mandla, Balaghat, Panna and Pandhurna. Strong wind and rain with thun-

derstorms are expected in Anuppur, Dindori. There may be thunderstorms and light rain with a speed of 30 to 40 Km in Bhopal, Vidisha, Sehore, Rajgarh, Singrauli, Sidhi, Rewa and Mauganj. There is also a possibility of storm and hailstorm at the speed of 40 to 50 Km per hour in Chhindwara, Seoni, Mandla, Balaghat and Pandhurna. Bhopal, Raisen, Sehore, Rajgarh, Narmadapuram, Betul, Harda, Burhanpur, Khandwa, Kargone, Barwani, Alirajpur, Jhabua, Dhar, Indore, Ratlam, Ujjain, Dewas, Shajapur, Agar, Mandasaur, Singrauli, Sidhi, Anuppur, Dindori, Katni, Narsinghpur, Chhindwara, Balaghat, Damoh and Pandhurna may receive light rain. Storm will also blow at a speed of 30 to 40Km per hour in Seoni and Mandla.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan and BJP State President VD Sharma greet former Congress MLA from Ujjain district Ramlal Malviya and his supporters after they joined BJP at the party's office in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

SISTec organises its two-day Sagar Fiesta

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Sagar Group's Sagar Institute of Science and Technology (SISTec), Gandhi Nagar organized its two-day Annual Techno Cultural Fest - Sagar Fiesta 2022 with great fervor at its campus. The two fests witnessed a series of tech and non-tech grand events and competitions showcasing rich talent on this year's theme of 'Vridhhi - From Vintage to Vogue'. Sagar Fiesta witnessed the presence of over 2000 + students at its campus participating in grand competitions like SISTec Roadies, Clash-of-Codies, Shaark Tank, Robo Race, Technobuzz, Cyber Threat Hunt, Ideathon, Electro-Spark, Techno Buzz, Park, Sanrachna, Seek the Answer on whatsup, Abhinaya-Nukkad Natak, Rangrez-Painting Competition



Cinevista, ML Model Match-up, Battleground Blitz on the first day of the fiesta created a new definition of techno talent. On the second day cultural fiesta will witness Ojas, Ninad and Vioneet the Fashion show in which students will participate in various rounds with ramp walking redefining the colors in attractive attires. Sagar Fiesta was inaugurated

by Sudhir Kumar Agrawal Chairman Sagar Group in the presence of Jyoti Deshmukh Group Director SISTec, Principal Dr D K Rajoria, Dr Kuldeep Ganju Principal SICTec, Vice Principal Swati Saxena, Administrator BS Kushwaha, SISTec Business School HOD Nishant Srivastava and all the faculty were present.

Criminal absconding for past 9 yrs in vehicle theft case, arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bhopal Police have arrested a criminal who was absconding for 9 years in a vehicle theft case. On the basis of information received from an informer, the police have arrested the accused Pappu Pal from Gangarbada village of Vidisha district. In October 2015, Arish Qureshi (20), resident of Apsara Talkies, Bhopal, had lodged a complaint of theft of his Pulsar motorcycle. According to the complaint, Arish had parked the car in the parking lot of his building at night. The next morning his car was not found at that place. The police searched for the vehicle and the thief in this case, but they did not get any success.

About a month after the complaint, Arish Qureshi told the police that Ashoka Garden police station had confiscated his motorcycle. Arish had applied to the court in February 2018 to get his motorcycle back. After which, on the orders of the court, the police handed over the motorcycle to Arish. Two accused named Laxman Pal and Pappu Pal were involved in this case. The police arrested Laxman Pal in January 2020, while Pappu absconded. On the basis of information received from an informer, the police arrested the absconding accused Pappu from his village Gangarbada (District Vidisha) on 2 April 2024. Accused Pappu was presented in Bhopal court. At present he is in Central Jail, Bhopal.

600 employees absent from election training

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

More than 600 employees and employees remained missing from the 6-day election training in Bhopal. The district administration will give notice to such employees. After this they may also be suspended. In the training 16245 officers-employees are being given training at 8 centers of Bhopal from April 1 from 11 am to 4 pm. Saturday is the sixth day of training. On this day also the employees are being taught the basics of Lok Sabha elections. They are being given training on EVM, mock poll, voting, taking voting material till submitting it. What did they learn in the training? They are also giving exams for this. Employees who fail in the examination are also being given re-training.

More than 600 employees are also missing from training. Therefore, preparations are being made to give them notice. Their list will be given to Collector Kaushlendra Vikram Singh. How to conduct mock polls using EVM and VVPAT. Match the result displayed on the control unit with the mock poll slips of VVPAT. Clearing of mock poll results from CU and removal of mock poll slips from VVPAT drop box. Stamping the reverse side of VVPAT mock poll paper slips and sealing the black envelope with pink paper currency. Briefing the candidates and polling agents on secrecy of votes. Announcing the vote clearly and obtaining the signature of the candidate/polling agent. Filing certificate in Form 17A. Periodically matching the

numbers recorded in Form-17A with the total and informing the Returning Officer about the status of voting. Providing numbered slips to the people standing in the queue at the time of closing of voting. Voters standing in the queue have to press the close button after casting their vote. How to remove VVPAT power pack (battery). EVM and VVPAT machines are to be kept in proper boxes and sealed. Statutory and non-statutory documents also have to be sealed. Signatures of all the polling agents have to be taken in Part-1 of Form 17C and its certified copy has to be provided to everyone. How to accompany the security convoy to collect all the election materials at the collection centre.



Congress State President Jitu Patwari with other INDIA bloc leaders during a meeting to chalk out the strategy to counter dominant BJP for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections at MPCC headquarters in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

BMC clears encroachments in Shankar Nagar slums in presence of police

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Municipal Corporation and district administration reached and razed illegal encroachment built by people on government land in Shankar Nagar area on Saturday morning, complaints of encroachment reached the district administration and the Municipal Corporation. In the presence of the police, the officers of the corporation and administration got the bamboo sticks removed. During this period there was an altercation between the officers and the people. There is Oriya colony in Shankar Nagar located in Ward-76, where government land of the Municipal Corporation area, was encroached upon. Action was taken after receiving information that it was captured by using bamboo sticks on Saturday. Encroachment in-charge Nasir Khan said that he had reached the spot on the instructions of Additional Commissioner Pawan Singh. The land was being encroached upon here. People were advised not to do this. However, some women also protested. Due to this, strictness was taken. Tehsildar Dilip

There is Oriya colony in Shankar Nagar located in Ward-76, where government land of the Municipal Corporation area, was encroached upon

Kumar Chaurasia, Naib Tehsildar Ramji Tiwari, Chhola TI and policemen were also present. Encroachment in-charge Khan said that bamboo poles had been installed for the slums. This was done by 25 to 30 women of Nawab Colony area. Rachana Dhingra of Bhopal Group for Information and Action, an organization of gas victims, also reached the spot. Dhingra of the Gas Victims Organization said that the houses of the families living behind the Union Carbide factory were demolished 15 months ago. They have not been displaced anywhere till date. Now the Railways is also demolishing their houses. It was these people who had come to build their houses on government land and were harassed.

Official language meet held at AIIMS Bhopal

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The 25th Quarterly Hindi meeting of the Departmental Official Language Implementation Committee was successfully organized under the chairmanship of Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director, AIIMS, Bhopal. During the meeting, while reviewing the functioning of the Official Language Hindi in the Institute, Executive Director and Chairman of the Committee, Prof. (Dr.) Ajai Singh got information about the status of use of Official Language Hindi in the Institute. He directed to giving the top priority to the compliance of the Official Language Rules in the Institute, and ensure all necessary efforts to achieve the targets set by the Department of Official Language at the earliest. On this occasion, Col (Dr.) Ajit Kumar, Deputy Director (Administration) informed that the use of official language Hindi in the Institute is continuously increasing. He informed that appropriate measures are being taken in the institute to achieve the Targets set by the Department of Official Language and to speed up the use of the official language Hindi.

District administration collects samples from RJ Confectionery in Indore

PNS ■ INDORE

Sampling and inspection action was taken at various places in Indore by the team formed under the direction of Indore Collector Ashish Singh and guidance of Additional Collector Gaurav Benal. The team conducted a surprise inspection of RJ Confectionery located at Industrial Area Sanwer Road. On the spot, a total of 6 samples were taken for testing when the quality of raw material and finished confectionery being used in the manufacturing of confectionary was found to be doubtful. Apart from this, if the quality of the food color titanium dioxide used in the manufacturing is doubtful, a total quantity of 40 kg whose estimated value is around Rs 4 thousand and the total quantity of prepared confectionary lollipops and jellies whose total quantity is around 500 kg, whose total value is around Rs 65 thousand, was confiscated. Besides, another establishment Champion Ice Cream, Tigriya Badshah Indore was also surprise inspected and two samples of the food item

Medi-Caps varsity's Literature Club hosts thrilling Treasure Hunt

PNS ■ INDORE

Amidst the serene backdrop of Medi-Caps University's verdant valleys, the Literature Club orchestrated two exhilarating events - the high-stakes Treasure Hunt and the electrifying Open Mic. With fifty teams navigating the sprawling courtyard, competition was fierce, as each team pushed the limits to outshine the rest. The 'Baterang Boys' emerged victorious, clinching the coveted title amidst spirited competition, earning themselves a prestigious citation and a rewarding cash prize. Their triumph resonated with the infectious enthusiasm of all participants, fostering a culture of mutual support and encouragement among the vibrant student community.



Honorable Vice Chancellor, Prof. (Dr.) D.K. Patnaik, The participants captivated the audience with their artistic prowess, leaving an indelible impression with their performances. The melodies echoed through the air, enveloping everyone in a symphony of joy and excitement. Recognizing their talent and dedication, all participants were duly honored. The event not only showcased strong competition but also exemplified the unwavering team spirit among the students. Medi-Caps University continues to foster such enriching experiences, dedicated to the holistic development of its students. The invaluable contributions of Dr. ShaliniModh, the dedicated faculty coordinator, along with the passionate members of Sahitiyik club, and the enthusiastic participation of all partner clubs, were wholeheartedly applauded. Their collective efforts not only enriched the event but also inspired a commitment to spreading the essence of literature to every corner of the globe.

Under the radiant glow of the afternoon sun, the main auditorium of Medi-Caps University, Indore, transformed into a stage for creative expression, as an exhilarating open mic event unfolded. Graced by the esteemed presence of the

Deptt of Dermatology celebrates Foundation Day

Bhopal: The Department of Dermatology at AIIMS Bhopal marked a significant milestone as it celebrated its Foundation Day on the 5th of April, 2024. The occasion was graced by the presence of esteemed guests, faculty members, and students, commemorating the journey of excellence and service that the department has embarked upon. Speaking on this momentous occasion, Professor (Dr.) Ajai

Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, emphasized the importance of dedication and hard work in serving humanity. He reiterated the institution's commitment to supporting the ongoing development of the Department of Dermatology to ensure its continued growth and success. The event served as a platform for sharing insights into the evolving landscape of dermatol-

ogy, with distinguished ex-AIIMS faculty and alumni offering valuable perspectives. Additionally, the contributions of predecessors in the department were duly honored, recognizing their invaluable role in shaping its legacy of excellence. In a heart-warming gesture, the event also acknowledged the efforts of the security staff who tirelessly serve the institution, particularly during the scorching summers.

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CBI busts infant traffickers gang

Seven held, three children rescued in raids in Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has busted a network of traffickers involved in buying and selling of infants across India for the purpose of adoption through social media ads as well as for other illegal purposes. The CBI said as it carried out raids at multiple locations in the national Capital region and rescued three children while also arresting seven accused in connection.

CBI sources said, newborns were being bought and sold as commodities in the black market. Seven people, including women and a hospital staffer, allegedly involved in selling and buying children have been arrested by the CBI and are being questioned. The CBI is currently in the midst of interrogating all parties involved, including both the woman who sold the children and the buyers themselves. Three newborn babies were rescued from a house located in the Keshavpuram area of the national Capital after the CBI conducted raids at seven locations across Delhi and Haryana. The raids were carried out in several areas in Rohini and Keshavpuram on Friday evening.

During searches, the CBI seized Rs 5.5 lakh cash and other documents. The arrested persons have been identified as Neeraj of Sonapat and Indu Pawar of Delhi's Paschim Vihar, Aslam of Patel Nagar, Pooja Kashyap of Kanhaiya Nagar, Anjali of Malviya Nagar, Kavita and Ritu. Based on an input, the CBI on Friday evening started a search operation at seven locations in Delhi and Haryana when two infants - 1.5 days old and 15 days old -



During the operation, CBI official rescued two newborn babies from a house located in Keshav Puram

where found by the agency sleuths which the gang was planning to sell, the CBI said. The gang allegedly contacted childless couples desirous of adopting babies through advertisement, on social media platforms like Facebook page and WhatsApp groups. "They allegedly purchase babies from real parents as well as surrogate mothers and thereafter sell the infant children at the prices ranging from Rs 4 to Rs 6 lakh per

child. These accused are also allegedly involved in duping lakhs of rupees by creating fake documents related to adoption," CBI spokesperson said about the operation. According to CBI, among the arrested, masterminds Neeraj hails from Sonapat and Indu Pawar from Paschim Vihar, Delhi. Their associates Aslam from Patel Nagar, and Pooja Kashyap, Kavita and Ritu were tasked with taking care of the children. Anjali of

Malviya Nagar allegedly used to bring customers, the CBI said. The CBI has registered a criminal case under various penal provisions of IPC and Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 against 10 accused persons over allegations that a network of infant children traffickers involved in buying and selling of infants across India for the purpose of adoption as well as for other illegal purposes, the sources said. It is being said that certain hospitals, medical centres may also be on the list of the probe agency with their suspected role in the entire ordeal. The probe in this regard has so far revealed that the accused used to approach and get in touch with childless couples wanting to adopt babies across the country through advertisements on social media platforms. It is also said that the syndicate allegedly used to purchase babies from real parents, mainly very poor individuals, surrogate mothers and thereafter would sell the infant at the prices ranging from Rs 4 to 6 lakhs per child. They were also allegedly involved in duping many such couples of lakhs of rupees by creating fake documents regarding adoption.

SANDESHKHALI 2.0 NIA officials attacked by TMC goons in Bengal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday claimed a "state-sponsored attack" on the National Investigation Agency (NIA) officials in West Bengal and accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of inciting the violence to create hurdles in the 2022 blast case probe to protect those involved in the incident.

These charges were leveled after the NIA arrested two key conspirators in the 2022 blast case amid an attack on the probe agency's team by a crowd in West Bengal's East Medinipur district earlier in the day.

Reacting sharply to the incident, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said, "The attack on the NIA officials is Sandeshkhali 2.0 orchestrated by the State to put hurdles to the investigation into the bomb blast case".

"It was not just a coincidence but a well thought out experiment. It was a state-sponsored attack on the NIA officials. The attack was organised by the ruling TMC," he charged. Poonawalla alleged that the pattern of attack on the NIA



Purba Medinipur: Villagers argue with security personnel during an investigation into the 2022 Bhupatinagar blast case by National Investigation Agency (NIA), in Purba Medinipur district, on Saturday PTI Photo

officials in Bhupatinagar area of West Bengal's East Medinipur district was similar to the attack on the Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials, organised by the ruling TMC, in Sandeshkhali area in North 24 Parganas recently to "protect" Shahzahan Sheikh. "Two days ago, Mamata Banerjee, while addressing a rally in Cooch Behar, first gave inciting statements to provoke violence against the NIA officials. As soon as the NIA team was attacked today, Mamata swiftly came in to justify the violence and gave the attackers a complete clean chit," he charged. The BJP leader alleged that the attack on the NIA

officials in Bhupatinagar area on Saturday was "direct evidence of the TMC's Talibani mindset culture". "Political violence, violence against central probe agencies, corruption, protection to terror and radical elements have been clearly institutionalized under this Talibani mindset culture of Mamata Banerjee government," Poonawalla alleged. "TMC means too much corruption and too much chaos as well. 'Ma Mati Manush' slogan of the TMC Government has changed and it has now become 'bomb blast and save rapists,'" the BJP leader added.

Congress manifesto has Muslim League imprint: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/SAHARANPUR/AJMER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday slammed the Congress manifesto for its Muslim league imprints equating the grand old party to that of Mohammed Ali Jinnah led body that had ultimately caused the 1947 partition to carve out Pakistan and whatever part of it is left is completely dominated by the leftists. "The kind of manifesto released by Congress yesterday proves that today's Congress is

completely cut off from the hopes and aspirations of today's India. Reflecting a historical ideology akin to the Muslim League, the manifesto is heavily influenced by leftist ideologies. Overall, the Congress fails to address contemporary issues and is unfit to lead India into the 21st century," Modi said at a public meeting in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur, that will vote in the first phase of Lok Sabha elections on April 19. The Prime Minister said the Congress once fought for independence ended decades ago. Now, the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and BJP candidate Atul Garg during a road show, ahead of LS elections, in Ghaziabad PTI Photo

remaining Congress lacks neither policies for the welfare of the nation nor a vision for nation-building." "The Congress government had weakened India's image and made it a corrupt country. Today, the BJP government has made India's image strong and has made it a rapidly developing country. That's why today the whole country is once again saying - 'Phir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar'," the PM added.

After Saharanpur rally, stepping up the tempo of poll campaign, the Prime Minister addressed rally in Ajmer in Rajasthan and held a road show in Ghaziabad in support of BJP candidate Atul

Garg. In his first roadshow in the State since the announcement of the Lok Sabha polls last month, the prime minister was joined by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Garg in an open jeep as Modi waved at the enthusiastic lot of supporters. The roadshow started from the Maliwad Chowk and will culminate at Chaudhary Mod. The district administration has made elaborate security arrangements for the event including the deployment of large number of personnel and enforcing traffic diversions. This is the PM first roadshow in Uttar Pradesh after the announcement of Lok Sabha elections.



From left: Manoj Khadye (HJS), Virendra Ichalkaranjikar, Ranjeet Savarkar, Sandeep Shinde

Savarkar biopic long awaited, hits all the mark, says grandnephew

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Thursday evening turned out to be a memorable one for Ranjeet Savarkar, grandnephew of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, India's pioneer revolutionary. Ranjeet and his associates took time off to watch the film Swatantrya Veer Savarkar, a 178 minutes long biopic on the life and times of Savarkar at Mahim's City Light Cinema.

Savarkar, whose name has been maligned by powers that be as well as the Left ecosystem of the country, has been retold with facts by Randeep Hooda, the director who plays the lead role. "It was a heart-rending experience. History was distorted by a section of the Indian academia to portray Savarkarji in poor light. This movie, based on facts, is a right step in the direction," Ranjeet Savarkar, grandnephew of the freedom fighter told The Pioneer.

Ranjeet is the grandson of Dr Narayan Savarkar, younger brother of Savarkar. He was just two months old when Savarkar breathed his last. Narayan too was an accused in many cases foisted on Savarkar by the British masters and their acolyte, the communists.

Democracy in danger, Congress tears into BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

Congress on Saturday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of tearing apart the country's dignity and democracy and claimed that various tactics were being used to force Opposition leaders to join the BJP.

Addressing her first election rally for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the longest serving party president Sonia Gandhi claimed that for the last 10 years, the country has been in the hands of a Government that left no stone unturned to promote unemployment, inflation, economic crisis and inequality.



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with party leaders Sonia Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and Ashok Gehlot during a public meeting ahead of LS polls, in Jaipur, PTI

"Today our country's democracy is in danger. Democratic institutions are being destroyed and a conspiracy is being hatched to change our Constitution. This is a dictatorship and we all will give a reply to this. Considering himself great, Modi ji is tearing apart the dignity of the country and its democracy. Fear is being

installed in the entire system" Sonia said. Asserting that the country "is not the property of a few people and it belongs to everyone", she said, "Our ancestors have shed blood for it." Sonia Gandhi also alleged that various tactics were being used to intimidate opposition leaders and force them to join the BJP. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge described PM Modi as a "leader of liars" and sought to know what steps he has taken to fulfil the guarantees given by him earlier. He questioned the country's

foreign policy under the BJP Government and claimed that China encroaching on Indian land and changing the names of Indian villages but PM Modi was not talking about it.

Kharge said, "He (Modi) claims that he has a 56-inch chest... Whether it is 56 inch, 55 or 54, (we) will call a tailor, measure it and see what it is." "PM Modi, his people and the RSS say that if you give two-thirds majority, we will change the constitution of this country," the Congress president said.

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Vote and savour world's first republic rich heritage

Voting delight to first time voters

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Snap, Share, and Win! In a bid to spark youth engagement in the electoral process, the Vaishali district administration in Bihar has introduced an exciting initiative aimed at first-time voters. "Once the voter has exercised their democratic right, they simply need to snap a selfie at designated selfie points and share it. "Fifty lucky participants will then be selected through a lottery system. The fortunate few will be treated to an enriching tour of Vaishali's major tourist attractions. These include historical hotspots Buddha Stupa, Jain Stupa and a temple museum, all three located in Vaishali," District Election Officer cum District Magistrate, Yashpal Meena told The Pioneer about the innovative experiment. The idea is to ensure 100 per cent voting and increase the voting percentage in the Lok Sabha elections, he said.

Vaishali is revered as one of the world's first republic so it is obvious that the young voters must be offered something special that help elevate voter turnout, quipped an equally excited Yashpal. The move to tap in India's youngest eligible voters, aged 18 and 19 comes in the wake of Election Commission data showing them apparently hesitant to exercise their electoral rights.

Harnessing power of Reels, influencers to connect with voters

ASAD ■ NEW DELHI

The emergence of Reels, those bite-sized marvels of creativity, is not only popular among digital-savvy youths but also within the corridors of power. What once started as efforts by digital creators to capture the virtual world of fame has swiftly transformed into a potent game-changer for political parties.

With the seven phases of the 2024 general elections to begin from April 19, political parties of all hues are actively harnessing the power of Reels and influencers to connect with the

people, especially the 1.85 crore first-time voters in the 18-19 age groups.

"Through social media, political parties aim not merely to disseminate their messages but to build genuine connections, capturing hearts and minds of voters," says Dr Subi Chaturvedi, AI and social media expert, and former Member MAG, United Nations, Internet Governance Forum. Recognising the potential of this medium, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while interacting with party workers from 22,640 polling booths across 10 Lok Sabha



constituencies in Uttar Pradesh through the NaMo App, as part of the "Mera Booth Sabse Majboot" campaign of the party on Wednesday, advised BJP booth workers to utilise the power of social media.

Modi urged them to upload captivating Reels apprising people of the Government's welfare schemes. Other political parties too are using social media platforms to widen their reach to new

audiences in the remote corners of India's hinterlands. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi engaged in a dialogue with influencers during the Bharat Jodo Yatra. Previously, he collaborated with the Village Cooking Channel on YouTube. With smartphone penetration rising in rural India, many digital experts predict that Reels, YouTube and Shorts and influencers could wield significant influence in shaping the electoral verdict in 2024. "The meteoric rise of short-format videos and the reach of influencers reflect a seismic shift in digital consumption patterns,

compelling political parties to move towards this new source as a means to effectively engage with their desired audience. The popularity of Reels cannot be ignored, as it has driven more than a 40 per cent increase in time spent on Instagram since its global launch. In India, it continues to boost content creation and participation from Tier II and III cities. Therefore, this popular medium cannot be overlooked," says Professor Farhat Basir Khan, author of *The Game of Votes* and an expert on new media technology and political communication.

BJP's foundation day celebrated in the whole State

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The foundation day of Bharatiya Janata Party was celebrated with great enthusiasm in the entire state on Saturday. The main program took place at the party's state office in the capital Bhopal, where Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, State President and MP Vishnudutt Sharma and party officials hoisted the party flag. Apart from this, programs were organized at all 64523 booths of the state. During this, the party flag was hoisted by garlanding the pictures of Bharat Mata, Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee at every booth. The migrant workers discussed in detail about the glorious past of the Bharatiya Janata Party, its expansion and the development works and poor welfare schemes undertaken by the double engine government

under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After increasing 370 votes at each booth and discussing booth victory, micro donation, membership campaign and beneficiary contact were done. Apart from this, a large number of workers and citizens of other parties took membership of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the programs organized at the booths. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, Idgah Hills, Bhopal, BJP State President Vishnudutt Sharma Surajnagar, Regional Organization General Secretary Ajay Jamwal Kolukhedi, State Incharge of Lok Sabha Elections Dr. Mahendra Singh Royal Vilas Colony Misrod, State Organization General Secretary Hitanand ji Chhindwara, State Government Ministers Kailash Vijayargiya and Rakesh Singh attended the Foundation Day program in Jabalpur, Prahlad

Patel along with party workers in Singrauli. State Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav on the foundation day of the party, Ward No. of Gurunanak Mandal of the capital. Booth no. 10 Hoisted the flag on 46. Chief Minister Yadav, while addressing the meeting of Booth and Panna Committee, gave a pledge to the workers to increase the votes at the booth by 370. Addressing the workers, he said that today we are celebrating the foundation day of the party and under the beneficiary contact campaign, from the Chief Minister to the State President, every worker is reaching the booth and contacting the beneficiaries and adding new members. He said that BJP is the only party which gives respect to the booth workers and even makes them Chief Minister and Prime Minister. Party workers are work-

ing towards making the country a developed nation by following five things including national loyalty, equality, democracy, harmony among all religions and value based politics. Today, a campaign to add new members was launched at the booth level, under which Congress workers took membership of the party. He said that many friends are saying that if so many people come into the BJP, what will happen to the BJP people? I want to tell them that people who join BJP will be mixed like sugar in milk, when they meet, the joy of milk will increase further. People joined us, that is why BJP became the biggest party in the world, those who want to do good work will join us. Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav said that if we build a dam in a river, then many fields are irrigated and many houses get drinking water.

The wisdom is that with time we should learn to use it. Just as the soldiers on the border are protecting the country, similarly the BJP workers are serving Mother India while protecting the party. He said that Congress is continuously misleading the people in the country, which has to fulfill its pledge of more than 400 by teaching a lesson at the booth in the Lok Sabha elections. On this occasion, party candidate Alok Sharma, State Minister Rahul Kothari, District President Sumit Pachauri, Mandal President Rakesh Kukreja were present. BJP State President and MP Vishnudutt Sharma at booth no. of Surajnagar located on Bhabhada Road. Hoisted the BJP flag after reaching 7. The State President once again pasted stickers of the Modi government on people's homes and establishments and met the beneficiaries.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav with Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai during an election campaign for upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Kawardha, Chhattisgarh on Saturday. Pioneer photo



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, BJP State President VD Sharma and other leaders hoist party flag during 45th foundation day celebrations of Bharatiya Janata Party at BJP state headquarters in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

Police rescue man from clutches of money lender

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 49-year-old man was rescued by Piplani police who was held captive on April 2 in Sonagiri area; the victim was held captive when he had gone to discuss with the accused regarding his brother's failure to return borrowed money. A case of kidnapping of a person has come to light in the Misrod area of Bhopal. The brother of the person who was kidnapped had borrowed money from the accused. He was called to discuss the issue of returning this money and when the person reached the place told by him, he was taken hostage. After this there was fighting for 4 days. During this, the accused also got Rs 1.47 lakh transferred from the family members.

According to Piplani police, Anil Tomar lives in Sheetal Heights of Misrod area, and works in a private security agency. As usual, he left home at 9.30 am on April 2, when Anil did not return on time in the evening, Anil's wife Jyoti Tomar lodged a missing complaint at Misrod police station. Police searched on the basis of mobile location and reached Sonagiri area of Piplani police station area. From here Anil Tomar was rescued from the room of the house. On enquiry, Anil told that his brother Nikhil works in Reliance Fresh located in Indore. He had money transactions with Jharkhand residents Vibhuti Kumar and Tarun Kumar. Both of them said that they had to take about Rs 1.5 lakh. Vibhuti and Piyush had called me

regarding this transaction. After this he took him to Sonagiri on his bike. Took him hostage in his rented room there. Both of them said that they will not leave until their money is returned. When they told them that they did not have money, they started beating them with belts. During this time, he also got about Rs 1 lakh 47 thousand transferred online from my family members. Since the incident took place in Piplani police station area, Misrod police has sent the diary of the case to Piplani police station. Piplani police have registered the case and started investigation. The accused have been taken into custody. It is being told that both the accused were preparing for competitive examinations by staying in a rented room.

Marriage garden owner fined for throwing sewage in Kaliyasot river

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) has taken action against the marriage garden operator who discharged sewage water into Kaliyasot river. Dirty water from Keshi Marriage Garden located in Salaiya of Ward-83 was drained into the river. A fine of Rs 10,000 was imposed on him. Similarly, a fine of Rs 1,000 was collected on the complaint by the caretaker of Sulabh Jansuvidha Kendra located at Ashoka Garden Vegetable Market in Ward-69

to take effective measures to reduce air pollution, operate sweeping machines carefully and ensure use of green nets at construction sites. Corporation Commissioner Harendra Narayan took stock of the cleanliness system of the city on Saturday. Also saw the reality of air pollution Commissioner Narayan also inspected the air quality and humidity indicator boards in front of Banskhedhi Environment Complex, New Market, TT Nagar police station and Collector's office and directed to take effective measures to reduce air pollution. The Corporation Commissioner also gave instructions to operate the road sweeping machines safely and cautiously. It was also directed that it should be made mandatory to make arrangements for installing green nets at construction sites. The Commissioner instructed to carefully pick up and clean the soil etc. collected along the roads.

LG approves suspension of Asst Professor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved a proposal for immediate suspension of a Delhi government-run medical college's assistant professor facing charges of sexual harassment. In a note, Saxena said he has considered the proposal for suspension of the assistant professor and to initiate major disciplinary proceedings against him. He said the "shocking incident of sexual harassment" took place in a medical college, so a mere transfer of the accused, as recommended by the internal complaints committee of the medical college, will not mitigate the "intimidating atmosphere" for the students. "I approve the proposal of placing the officer under suspension with immediate effect, under Rule 10 of the CCS (CCA) Rules, 1965," the LG said and pointed the alleged act of the accused involved "moral turpitude".

The L-G also advised the department concerned to resubmit the proposal for initiation of disciplinary proceedings against the accused with due recommendations of the National Capital Civil Services Authority (NCCSA) as the Delhi chief minister, who is the chairman of the panel, is in judicial custody. The NCCSA is the body that deals with transfers and postings of officers. It is headed by the chief minister and comprises the chief secretary and a member secretary. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 21 in connection with a money laundering case linked to now scrapped excise policy of his government, is in judicial custody till April 15. The alleged incident took place on January 31 where the student levelled allegations against her professor of sexual harassment during a viva examination. An FIR under sections 354A (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage

her modesty), and 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered against the accused. The accused was subsequently apprehended in the matter. The Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena has hit back on Delhi Health Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj over his demand for removing the Principal of Baba Saheb Ambedkar Medical College where a professor allegedly sexually harassed a 22-year-old MBBS student, saying that the Principal of the college couldn't be removed due to Bhardwaj's inaction. Adding fuel to fire in the tussle between the Centre appointed LG and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Saxena accused Bhardwaj for "crying foul" over the alleged sexual harassment case and demanding the removal of its Principal, claiming that "the file for his transfer has been held up for nearly 45 days by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal himself".

Takasago International expands presence in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Takasago International Corporation (TIC), Japan-based company, engaged in the manufacture and marketing of flavors, fragrances, aroma chemicals, fine chemicals, inaugurated Takasago International India Fragrance Centre (TIIFC) in India on Wednesday. TIIFC comprises of fragrance research, creation and development and sensory evaluation of the fragrance products in an R&D set-up by the trained professionals. Paul Ireland, President, Global Fragrance Division, said, "While the glob-

al fragrance market continues to grow, Takasago is proud to lead the charge in India, where our business has grown tenfold, capitalizing on the nation's growing fragrance industry. With the fragrance market in India expected to significantly grow, Takasago reaffirms its dedication to India, pledging continued investment in R&D, creative personnel and disruptive innovation, ensuring our presence in this dynamic market for years to come." Shaheel T.T.P. Managing Director, India and South Asia, added, "Our Mumbai Centre stands as a testament to our commitment to R&D innovation, blending

art and science to craft fragrances tailored to local tastes with unprecedented speed. We are aiming higher in the market which is going to be the growth engine of the world. By leveraging Japanese technology to provide Indian consumers unparalleled experiences, we aim to create fragrances for India, in India." Takasago has F&F production plant in India with a production capacity of about 20,000 tons per year. Takasago plans to bring in its Japanese technologies to provide unique and differential experience to Indian consumers. Takasago International has big

AIIMS promotes food hygiene and nutrition Awareness

Bhopal: As part of the ongoing Swachhta Pakhwada initiative, AIIMS Bhopal organized an insightful awareness program on food hygiene and nutrition at the IPD Hall today, continuing its commitment to fostering a healthier community. Professor (Dr.) Ajai Singh, Executive Director of AIIMS Bhopal, underscored the significance of a clean diet in fostering a healthy body and lifestyle. He emphasized, "A healthy body and a healthy life are possible only if the diet is clean. If the diet is not clean, then the human body cannot remain healthy. Hygiene of food may be related to its storage, preparation, or consumption. It is very impor-

tant to maintain cleanliness of food at every stage. Along with this, proper disposal of leftover food is also very important. We also have to stop wastage of food. Only then can we play an important role in the development of the nation." Ms. Bhavna Ahirwar, Senior Dietitian at AIIMS Bhopal, further elaborated on the critical link between food and human health. She emphasized the importance of cooking, storing, and maintaining food items properly to ensure their cleanliness and nutritional value, stating, "The body of any person is affected by food and drink, and the cleanliness of food and drink is directly related to human health."



Visitors go through stalls during organic farmers', handicraft market and organic food festival at Anant Mahotsava at Gandhi Bhawan in Bhopal on Saturday. Pioneer photo

Married man caught for killing his paramour nurse

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The police have arrested accused who killed 37-year-old nurse to death at Lalghati, accused killed her over forcing to live with her leaving his wife. The murder was confirmed in the short PM report on Friday evening. In his statements to the police, the accused has informed about spending personal time with the woman before the murder. After this, he strangled the woman to death. The body was kept in the house for three hours and then the body was taken to the hospital. The crime was committed out of fear of revealing the secret of illicit relations. On information from the hospital, the police started investigating the case.

DCP Riyaz Iqbal said that Maya TM (37), wife of Raju Sundaram Vyankateshwara, lived on rent in Gayatri Vihar Colony, Bagsevania. She worked as a nursing supervisor at Sage Apollo Hospital. Before this she used to work in Trupti Hospital of Lal Ghati where she became friends with Deepak Katiyar who worked here. Later, illicit relations were established between the two. According to DCP, Deepak told in his statements to the police that he was married in April 2023. After marriage, Maya used to put pressure on me to live together. It was starting to bother him. If she did not agree, she would threaten to tell the truth about their relationship to his wife. There were disputes between them and fed up with he killed her. On the afternoon of April 3,

Deepak called Maya to his flat in Lalghati on the pretext of talking. Here both of them talked, after removing Maya's resentment, the accused spent personal time with her. After this he was strangled to death in the bedroom itself. Kept the body in the house for three hours, later took the body to the private hospital on Airport Road, from here he took the body to Sage Apollo Hospital. The accused told the doctors that Maya had fallen down due to dizziness. Since then she has not regained consciousness. However, after seeing the mark on the neck, the doctors found the case suspicious at first glance. Therefore, information about the matter was given to the police. Since the woman died in a flat located in Lal Ghati, Kohefiza police station established a track and started investigation.

Arya Samaj Vasant Vihar celebrates 150 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Arya Samaj Vasant Vihar celebrated the 150th Diwas with fervor on Saturday at Arya Samaj Mandir Vasant Vihar. This day commemorates the establishment of Arya Samaj in 1875 by Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati Ji. The celebration served as a vibrant reminder of the movement's core principles and its lasting impact. In the spirit of this milestone, Arya Samaj Vasant Vihar hosted a special event, Nootan Varsh Abhinandan Samaaroh, on Saturday, April 6, 2024 to further commemorate the 150th Arya Samaj Foundation Day, which is celebrated on April 9th every year. Santosh Kapoor,



President of Arya Samaj Vasant Vihar, emphasized the significance of the day. "Arya Samaj Foundation Day was a time to remember the vision of Swami Dayanand Saraswati Ji and recommit to the ideals enshrined in the Vedas," she stated. Speaking on the pious occasion Narinder Swaroop, the

Vice President, echoed her sentiments, highlighting how Swami Dayanand's teachings on social reform, education, and self-reliance continue to inspire them. The other members Managing Committee of Arya Samaj Vasant Vihar played the perfect hosts. Anju Puri, Kusum Duggal, Sunita Naiyyar, Sudhanshu Kansal,

Priya Suri, Puja Kapoor, Deepak Deewan and Vinod Kumar Pandey, made the occasion even more memorable. The event started with the havan and then followed by a cultural program by students of Mahatma Anand Swami Primary School and SBDV School followed by Bhajans by Arya Samaj Vasant Vihar Bhajan Mandli. Further they were talks on the Arya Samaj's ongoing efforts to promote social upliftment. Sumit Duggal, Secretary, highlighted their past initiatives in education and community service. "We were actively involved in providing educational opportunities for underprivileged children and supporting social welfare programs," he said.

Rabindranath Tagore University celebrating 14th anniversary

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Rabindranath Tagore University is celebrating its 14th anniversary, Rhythm 2024. This annual festival is organized by the Student Activities Council (SAC). To make this celebration even more special and memorable, the university organized a live music concert of famous Bollywood playback singer Aditi Singh in its campus. In the musical night, along with the university family, the people of the city also registered their presence and applauded the audience. Such excited and rhythmic audience even made guest Aditi Singh crazy. Aditi also could not stop herself from praising the audience.

In the musical night, along with the university family, the people of the city also registered their presence

created such an atmosphere that the grounds of Tagore National School of Drama in the University campus echoed with the greetings and applause of the audience. Such excited and rhythmic audience even made guest Aditi Singh crazy. Aditi also could not stop herself from praising the audience.

The live music concert started with the song 'Dhoom Machale Dhoom' from the film Dhoom 3. Aditi Singh, who created her own identity in Bollywood with 'Suraj Dooba Hai, Yaaron, Do Ghoont Nashe Ke Maaro' from the film Roy, 'High Rated Gabru Nu Mare' from the film Nawabzaade, 'High Heel Te Nachche' from the film Ki and Ka, Made its special place in the hearts of the people of Bhopal. Today, the closing ceremony of the ongoing Annual Fest Rhythm 2024 was celebrated in the university and what could have been better than the tunes of Aditi Singh to light up the atmosphere. In today's special performance, he made a place in the hearts of people by performing on the song 'Vande Mataram' with the Indian tricolor.

Santosh Choubey, Chancellor of the University, Dr. Aditi Chaturvedi Vats, Pro-Chancellor, Dr. Siddharth Chaturvedi, Chancellor Scope Skill Global University, Vice Chancellor Prof. Rajni Kant, Registrar Dr. Vijay Singh, IQAC Director Nitin Vats expressed their gratitude to guest Aditi Singh and recited ballads praising her melodious style. Singer Aditi Singh was also impressed by the love and hospitality of the University family and praised the beauty of the campus as well as the positive atmosphere created by the extraordinary energy of the youth of the University family. Aditi said that after meeting the family of RNTU and the people of Bhopal, it did not feel as if she was a guest here

BJP India's preferred party: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the BJP has become India's preferred party and expressed confidence that people will elect it for another term at the Centre, allowing it to build on the "ground covered in the last decade." He made these remarks on the occasion of the 44th foundation day of the BJP.

Greeting members of the BJP, he said the youth of India see it as the party which can fulfil their aspirations and provide leadership to the nation in the 21st century. Modi asserted the BJP has freed India from the culture of corruption, cronyism, casteism, communalism and vote bank politics, which was the "hallmark" of those who ruled the nation for the longest time. In today's India, emphasis is on clean and transparent governance which ensures the fruits of development reach the poor without any discrimination, he said. "Be it at the Centre or states, our party has redefined good governance. Our schemes and policies have given strength to the poor and downtrodden. Those who were left on the margins for decades found a voice and hope in our party,"



Modi said on X. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has worked towards providing all-round development which has boosted ease of living for every Indian, Modi said. "I also recall with great reverence the hard work, struggles and sacrifices of all those great women and men who built our party over the years. I can say with great confidence that we are India's preferred party, which has always served with the motto of 'Nation First,'" he said. It is a matter of great joy that the BJP has made a mark for its development-oriented out-

look, good governance and commitment to nationalistic values, said the party's pre-eminent leader under whose stewardship it has achieved unprecedented electoral successes in Lok Sabha and assembly elections in the last decade. The Prime Minister said, "Powered by our karyakartas, our party embodies the aspirations and dreams of 140 crore Indians. The youth of India see our party as one which can fulfil their aspirations and provide leadership to India in the 21st century." Modi said, "We are also proud to be an integral part of the

NDA, which manifests a perfect harmony between national progress and regional aspirations. The NDA is a vibrant alliance that encapsulates India's diversity. We cherish this partnership and I am sure it will get even stronger in the times to come." Referring to the upcoming general elections, he said, "India is all set to elect a new Lok Sabha. I am confident that the people are going to bless us with another term so that we can build on the ground covered in the last decade." In another event at state unit

headquarters, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva unfurled the party flag at the party office with the state officials and office staff. Subsequently, floral tributes were offered to Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. On this occasion, Lok Sabha candidate from New Delhi, Bansuri Swaraj, state office bearers Vishnu Mittal, Yogita Singh, Sardar Imprit Singh Bakshi, Brijesh Rai, Vikram Bidhuri, Vikram Mittal, C.L. Meena, and Amit Gupta were present.

The BJP was founded in 1980 by leaders of the erstwhile Bharatiya Jana Sangh, a party which has merged with other opposition parties to form the Janata Party to take on the Congress in the post-Emergency 1977 polls. It won only two Lok Sabha seats in the first national election it fought in 1984. However, it rose rapidly later under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani, coming to power in the 90s as the head of a coalition, before Modi led the party to its maiden majority in 2014 and then to a bigger mandate in 2019. Most political experts have tipped the BJP as the favourite to retain power for a third term in the seven-phase polls starting from April 19.

CPI releases manifesto for LS polls



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Communist Party of India (CPI) released its manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections on Saturday here, promising to scrap the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, remove the 50 per cent cap on reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs, and enhance the daily wage under MGNREGA to Rs 700.

The Left party called for the defeat of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to save secular democracy. It said the 10-year BJP rule has proven to be a disaster for the country. If elected to power, the CPI promised to scrap the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, remove the 50 per cent cap on reservations, conduct a caste census, introduce taxation measures such as wealth tax and inheritance tax, increase corporate tax, introduce reservation in the private sector, and

raise the daily wage under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Rs 700. "General elections for the 18th Lok Sabha are going to be very crucial and critical for our secular democratic republic, its future and to our constitutional ethos," the CPI manifesto stated. After releasing the manifesto, CPI general secretary D Raja said, "The elections are very critical for the country and its future. (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's rule has been disastrous for the country." The Constitution is under attack. BJP being political army of RSS is trying to change the Constitution and ultimately replace it," he alleged. The Left party said if voted to power, it will introduce measures to address the growing inequality. The CPI also said it aims to bring central investigative agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of

Investigation (CBI) under the purview of Parliament, and added it will "intensify its struggle for the abolition of Governor's Office to strengthen federalism by removing Union's interference." "Elected governments in states should be empowered to take major policy decisions..." the manifesto stated. The CPI said it will continue to fight politically and legally to remove the "arbitrary" cap of 50 per cent on reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs, and implement women's reservation immediately by removing the clause relating to delimitation and census. The party promised increasing the available work days under the MGNREGA to 200 in a calendar year as well as introducing an Urban Employment Guarantee Act and social security for gig-workers. "When the new government is formed, our party will play its role to raise people's issues," Raja said.

Nadda, five other newly elected RS members take oath



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP national president JP Nadda and five other newly-elected members of the Rajya Sabha took oath on Saturday. The oath was administered by Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar. Among others who also took oath include Ashokrao Shankarrao Chavan

(Maharashtra), Chunnilal Garasiya (Rajasthan), Anil Kumar Yadav Mandadi (Telangana), Sushmita Dev and Mohammad Nadimul Haque (both West Bengal). "Vice-President of India & Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar administered oath to Shri Jagat Prakash Narayan Lal Nadda ji as the elected Member of Rajya Sabha in Parliament House today,"

Dhankhar's office said in a post on X while sharing pictures of the oath-taking. His office also said Chairman, Rajya Sabha, also administered oath to the elected members of the Rajya Sabha in Parliament House which include Ashokrao Shankarrao Chavan, Chunnilal Garasiya, Anil Kumar Yadav Mandadi, Sushmita Dev and Mohammad Nadimul Haque.

17 Indians lured to Laos on way back home: Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said here on Saturday that 17 Indian workers, who were lured into unsafe and illegal work in Laos, are on their way back home. He also complimented the Indian embassy in Laos for its successful efforts in the case.

In a post on X, he said, "Modi ki Guarantee works for all at home and abroad. Seventeen Indian workers, lured into unsafe and illegal work in Laos, are on their way back home."

"Well done, @IndianEmblaos. Thank Lao authorities for their support for the safe repatriation," he added. The external affairs ministry on Thursday cautioned Indian nationals against falling prey to human traffickers promising lucrative job opportunities in Cambodia. In an advisory, the ministry



called upon Indians looking at job opportunities in the southeast Asian country to thoroughly check the background of the prospective employer. "It has come to attention that Indian nationals, lured by fake promises of lucrative job opportunities in Cambodia, are falling into the trap of human traffickers," it said. The ministry said these

Indian nationals are "coerced" to undertake online financial scams and other illegal activities. "Indian nationals intending to visit Cambodia for employment are cautioned to do so only through authorised agents. It is also advised that the background of the prospective employer in Cambodia is checked thoroughly," it said.

MEA Secretary to visit Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya to further strengthen ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Dammu Ravi, secretary, Economic relations in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), will visit Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya from April 7-12, as a "reaffirmation of India's commitment" to further strengthen its ties of friendship with the three African countries. The Ministry of External Affairs, in a statement on Saturday, said the visit seeks to "maintain the momentum of high-level contacts" between India and countries in Africa, post the entry of the African Union (AU) as a permanent member of the G20 during the Indian Presidency of the grouping. In Rwanda, he will represent the government of India, in an event marking "the 30th commemoration of the 1994 Rwanda Genocide (Kwibuka 30)" on Sunday, the MEA said. During the visit, he is also

expected to hold meetings with ministers and senior officials of the government of Rwanda, the external affairs ministry said in a statement. The secretary (ER) will thereafter leave for Uganda on April 8 and will be there till April 9. He will lead a 35-member multi-sectoral business delegation that "aims to increase trade and commercial ties between the two countries", it said. "He will also meet with ministers and officials of the Ugandan government, besides chairing a business session comprising captains of Indian and Ugandan industry. He is also expected to interact with the Indian community in Uganda," the statement added. The secretary (ER) will then travel to Kenya heading a "large delegation" comprising officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Indian agricultural companies and business chambers from April 10-12, the MEA said.

Coast Guard rescues nine fishermen with burn injuries off Andhra coast

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Acting swiftly, Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ship Veera on patrol off Andhra coast saved all nine fishermen who had suffered severe burn injuries after their boat caught fire and sunk at sea on Friday, Coast Guard said here on Saturday. Giving details, officials said Coast Guard ship Veera had received a radio message from nearby fishing boat about raging fire onboard an Indian fishing boat (IFB) Durga Bhavani at location around 65 nautical miles from Visakhapatnam harbour. Durga Bhavani, an Andhra registered boat, had sailed from Kakinada harbour with nine crew on March 24. On Friday, the boat had a fire incident resulting in explosion of gas cylinder onboard. All nine fishermen jumped into water to escape but some suffered severe burn injuries in the process. The fishing boat, damaged due to explosion, sank at the location within a few minutes. The information regarding fire and explosion was relayed to Coast Guard ship by a nearby boat. Sensing the urgency of situation, Veera proceeded at top speed, reaching at the location within a few hours to provide assistance to the survivors. All nine survivors were shifted to the Coast Guard ship where they were provided first aid by

a medical team. Meanwhile, Coast Guard District Headquarters No. 6 in coordination with JD Fisheries, Visakhapatnam promptly arranged ambulances along with medical teams to evacuate critically injured crew. All the injured fishermen were shifted to King George Hospital, Visakhapatnam for further treatment. In another rescue operation, Coast Guard evacuated a Sri Lankan fisherman suffering from medical emergency onboard a Sri Lankan fishing boat drifting in Indian waters due to engine failure. Giving details, officials said on April one, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) of ICG at Chennai received alert from MRCC Colombo about a Sri Lankan Fishing boat 'Kalpeni' that was adrift at sea due to engine failure. The boat had sailed from 'Codbay' harbour in Sri Lanka on March 22 with six crew and had ceased all communication from March 28. On receiving information, ICG diverted ships on patrol to the likely area. The Sri Lankan boat was sighted by ICG ship C-449 on April two about 40 nautical miles from Puducherry. Coast Guard technical team boarded the boat and attempted to repair the engine but the same was not feasible due to paucity of spares. ICG ascertained status of essential supplies on

PSA test every five years effective in screening prostate cancer: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A simple blood test checking for prostate-specific antigen (PSA) every five years is both safe and effective for screening low-risk men for prostate cancer, according to a study. The study has been presented at the ongoing European Association of Urology (EAU) Congress in Paris, France. Prostate cancer screening has long been a topic of debate due to the PSA test's tendency for false positives and false negatives. However, advancements such as MRI scans and active surveillance have contributed to changing perceptions. "This is gradually changing due to MRI scans which can avoid unnecessary biopsies and the use of active surveillance, where men with early-stage cancer are monitored and only undergo treatment if their disease progresses," said the researchers from Heinrich-Heine University, Dusseldorf in Germany. The team's study, presented at the ongoing European Association of Urology (EAU) Congress in Paris, France, showed that five years is enough to screen low-risk men for prostate. They noted that the "screening interval for those at low risk could be much longer with minimal additional risk". The findings come as a new analysis published in the Lancet Commission on Friday



showed that cases of prostate cancer are likely to double worldwide to 2.9 million per year, while annual deaths are projected to rise by 85 per cent -- to almost 700,000 deaths by 2040. The new study included men aged 45 split into three groups. Men with a PSA level of under 1.5 nanograms per millilitre (ng/ml) were deemed low risk and followed up with a second test after five years. While those with a PSA level between 1.5-3 ng/ml were deemed intermediate risk and followed up in two years, men with a PSA level over 3 ng/ml were found in the high-risk category and given an MRI scan and biopsy. Of over 20,000 men recruited to the trial and deemed low risk, 12,517 have now had their second PSA test at age 50.

The results, also forthcoming in the journal European Urology, showed that only 1.2 percent of these (146 in total) had high levels of PSA (over 3 ng/ml) and were referred for an MRI and biopsy. Only 16 of these men were subsequently found to have cancer -- just 0.13 per cent of the total cohort. "By raising the bar for low risk from 1 ng/ml to 1.5, we enabled 20 per cent more men within our cohort to have a longer gap between tests, and very few contracted cancer in that time," said lead researcher Professor Peter Albers, from the Department of Urology at the University. "Our study is still underway, and we may find that an even longer screening interval, of seven, eight, or even ten years, is possible without additional risk," he added.

India brushes aside allegations of interference in Canadian polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India has brushed aside Canada's allegations of its interference in Canadian elections, calling it "baseless" and said Ottawa instead, was meddling in New Delhi's internal affairs. This strong reaction came after a Canadian media report on Friday claimed India and Pakistan attempted to "interfere" in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections in Canada, the country's spy agency, Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), alleged. It also came amid the ongoing diplomatic row between both the countries over the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Canada's federal commission of inquiry into foreign interference is looking to examine claims of election interference by India in 2019 and 2021, according to media reports there. Responding to the reports, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "We have seen media reports about the Canadian commission inquiring into. We strongly reject all such baseless allegations of Indian interference in Canadian elections." "It is not the government of India's policy to interfere in the democratic processes of other countries. In fact, quite on the reverse, it is Canada which has been interfering in our internal affairs," he said. Unclassified documents by the



CSIS alleging election interference were tabled as part of the Federal Commission of Inquiry examining "possible meddling" by India, China, Russia and other countries in the 2019 and 2021 elections, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) reported. The CSIS, in its documents, alleged that the Indian government in 2021 had "intended to interfere and likely conducted clandestine activities", including using an Indian government proxy agent in Canada. Two years earlier, in 2019, "Government of Pakistan officials in Canada attempted to clandestinely influence Canadian federal politics with the aim of furthering the Government of Pakistan's interests in Canada," the CSIS claimed. In 2021, the spy agency alleged, that the Indian government's foreign interference activities "were centred on a small number of electoral districts". The CSIS documents claimed that the Indian government targeted those electoral districts due to New Delhi's perception that "a portion of Indian-

Canadian voters were sympathetic to the Khalistani movement or pro-Pakistan political stances". The CSIS has amassed "a body of intelligence" that indicates a government of India "proxy agent may have attempted to interfere in democratic processes" by providing illegal financial support to pro-Indian candidates, the document said. "Any such financial contribution could have remained unknown to the candidate," CSIS said, without identifying the specific electoral districts or candidates that may have been subject to India's alleged meddling in 2021. However, CSIS Director David Vigneault told the public inquiry that intel documents may not necessarily be factual and require further investigation as these documents warn about the summaries being possibly uncorroborated, single-sourced or incomplete, CBC News reported. The development came against the backdrop of diplomatic tensions between India and Canada after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged a potential involvement of Indian government agents in the killing of Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia, in June last year. India rebutted Canadian Prime Minister's allegations and called them absurd and motivated and said Canada was giving space to Khalistani elements targeting New Delhi. Nijjar, the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force, was designated as a terrorist by India in 2020.

India, Singapore bilateral trade grows to \$35.6 billion in FY22-23

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

The bilateral trade between Singapore and India rose to USD 35.6 billion in 2022-23, a growth of 18.2 per cent on the year, a senior diplomat at the Indian High Commission here said on Saturday. Singapore is India's eighth largest trade partner (2022-23), with a share of 3.1 per cent of India's overall trade, T Prabakar, the First Secretary (Commerce) at the high commission said.

He was addressing the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) Third International Conference being held in Singapore from April 5-6. Trade between Singapore and India saw a growth of 18.2 per cent in the year and rose to USD 35.6 billion in 2022-23, Prabakar said.

"Our imports from Singapore in FY 22-23 were USD 23.6 billion, a growth of 24.4 per cent, and exports to the city-state totalled USD 12 billion, up 7.6 billion in the previous financial year," he told some 100 delegates at the conference.

In terms of India's exports, Singapore is the sixth largest export destination in the world, and in terms of imports, the city-state is the eighth largest source for India globally during 2022-23.

It is not only in merchandise trade that India-Singapore ties are growing, Prabakar said, adding that FDI (foreign direct investment) equity inflows into India from Singapore during 2022-23 stood at USD 17.2 billion.



The cumulative FDI inflows from Singapore to India stood at USD 155.612 billion from April 2000 to December 2023, accounting for 23 per cent of the total FDI flows into India, he said. Giving an overview of India-Singapore relations, Prabakar pointed out that Singapore is also amongst India's largest sources of External Commercial borrowings.

He also highlighted a wide range of strategic cooperation between the two nations in new fields, such as technologies, AI and green energy. The two-day conference discussed a wide range of trade and technology issues, with ICSI members seeking insights into Singapore's law related to businesses that can be complementary to corporate and small enterprises in India.

With further predicted rise in temperatures, many studies have reported a decline in wheat production in the world. Rajbir Yadav, wheat breeder and Principal Scientist at Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), said the climate-smart seed varieties that India has developed can be easily grown in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

India better prepared than Pakistan to handle climate shocks in wheat crop

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Conducive weather conditions in both India and Pakistan are helping them to achieve record wheat output this year, but India is better prepared than the neighbour to handle climate change impact as it has developed many indigenous heat-resistant and short-duration seed varieties, according to agri-scientists.

India is the second and Pakistan is the eighth largest wheat-producing country in the world. While India is self-sufficient in wheat output, the latter imports 2-3 million tonnes. One of the reasons behind Pakistan still being dependent on imports to meet domestic requirements is its failure to develop indigenous varieties of climate-resilient seeds.

Presently, the harvesting of wheat crops is underway in both countries. India has projected wheat output to touch a new record of 114 million tonnes in the 2023-24 crop year (July-June), while Pakistan has set an ambitious target of 32.2 million tonnes from an area of 8.9 million hectares. While the two countries have been facing the adverse impact of climate change on wheat crop since 2010 onwards, the current year has been exceptionally favourable as there have been no events of terminal heat waves nor unseasonal rains affecting the crop.



"Climate has been favourable this year. During the crucial period of mid-January and February, there were no incidents of sudden heat waves, unseasonal rains, and lodging. We are expecting a bumper crop," ICAR-Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research (ICAR-IWBR) Director Gyanendra Singh told PTI.

He highlighted that climate-resilient wheat varieties have been sown in more than 80 per cent of the total wheat area of 34.15 million hectares this year because of the availability of newer seed varieties and also greater awareness among farmers. Out of 600 indigenous wheat varieties released so far in India, Singh said as many as over 100 climate-resilient varieties are in the seed chain now. Around 14 new varieties were released in the current year itself.

According to Naresh Kumar, Principal Investigator at ICAR's National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA), India is doing much better when compared to other countries in taking various agronomic measures such as changing planting dates and short-duration varieties besides promoting raised bed cultivation, sprinkler irrigation, and soil-water-nitrogen management. Wheat crop is highly sensitive to temperature increases. Hot and unseasonal warm weather cut India's wheat output in 2022 and 2023, leading to a drawdown in state reserves.

It is reported a 5.5 per cent decrease in wheat yield during the past 30 years (1980-2010) occurred due to a decadal temperature increase of 0.13 degree Celsius.

JSW Energy raises ₹5,000 crore from Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, others

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

JSW Energy Limited has raised Rs 5,000 crore by selling shares to institutional investors, including Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), to accelerate its growth plans. In a regulatory filing on Friday, the company informed that it has successfully completed its Rs 5,000-crore Qualified Institutions Placement (QIP). JSW Energy said, the proceeds from the QIP will further bolster its capital structure, enhance financial flexibility and enable the company to accelerate its ambitious growth plans. "The issue garnered a very strong interest from marquee global long-only investors, domestic mutual funds and insurance companies..." it added. The QIP witnessed more than 3.2 times subscription. Some of the largest global asset managers, such as GQG, Blackrock, Nomura, Wellington, UBS and ADIA, participated in the QIP issue. "This marks the first-ever equity raise by the company since its listing in 2010," JSW



Energy said. This is the largest primary equity raise in the Indian power sector in the last decade and among the top three largest primary equity raises in the history of the Indian power sector, the company said. Sharad Mahendra, joint managing director and CEO of JSW Energy, said: "India's strong investment cycle-driven economic growth momentum bodes well for power demand outlook. The strong institutional investor interest reflects their unwavering confidence in our positioning as a diversified energy transition platform focused on growing both the generation and storage

businesses, with optionality for green hydrogen and its derivatives." At JSW Energy, he said, "We are not just witnessing the transformation of the energy sector, we are actively shaping it, setting new benchmarks for industry leadership, and aiding India's journey towards net-zero targets by 2070." Jefferies India Private Limited was the sole book running lead manager. Khaitan & Co. Was the legal counsel to the company while Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co. And Linklaters Singapore Pte. Ltd. Were counsels to the book running lead manager. JSW Energy Limited, a part of the USD 23-billion JSW Group, has presence in

sectors such as steel, energy, infrastructure, cement and sports, among others. JSW Energy began commercial operations in 2000, with the commissioning of its first 2x130 MW thermal power plants at Vijayanagar, Karnataka. Since then, the company has steadily enhanced its power generation capacity from 260 MW to 7,189 MW having a portfolio of thermal 3,508 MW, wind 1,615 MW, hydel 1,391 MW and solar 675 MW. The company is presently constructing various power projects to the tune of 2.6 GW. JSW Energy has total locked-in generation capacity of 12.5 GW comprising 7.2 GW operational, 2.6 GW under-construction assets. Besides, the company has 3.4 GWh of locked-in energy storage capacity through battery energy storage system and hydro pumped storage project. The company aims to reach 20 GW generation capacity and 40 GWh of energy storage capacity before 2030. It has set the target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

Livspace says India business becomes cash flow positive on robust growth

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Home renovation platform Livspace has become "cash-flow positive" in India business on the back of robust growth in its revenue, a top company official said. Livspace is expecting around 30 per cent growth in its revenue during the 2023-24 financial year from around Rs 1,100 crore in the preceding fiscal. India business contributes 80-85 per cent to the company's total turnover. The company's EBITDA losses narrowed to 95.35 million Singapore dollar from 96.86 million Singapore dollar during the period under review. "Our revenue has grown 50 per cent CAGR (compounded annual growth rate) in the past two fiscal years. We have become cash flow positive from October-December quarter of 2023-24 in India business, which is 80-85 per cent of our total revenue," Livspace Founder Ramakant Sharma told PTI. Asked about the revenue during the last fiscal year, Livspace Chief Strategy Officer Ankit Shah said the



numbers have not been finalised yet but the revenue could be around 30 per cent higher in 2023-24. He asserted that the company is not burning cash anymore and is generating enough cash flow to expand business organically. "We have around USD 100 million cash in our balance sheet," he said, adding that the fund will be utilised for expansion. "Business expansion, investment in branding and experience centres, and

improving the supply chain have helped the company achieve high growth in the last two fiscal years," he said. Livspace is actively pursuing M&A opportunities to accelerate growth and enhance its market position. Using its proprietary technology, Livspace provides a one-stop renovation solution for homeowners — from design to managed last mile fulfilment for all rooms in a home. In India, the company is present in more than 50

cities and plans to expand business to 100-150 cities in the next 18 months. Livspace has raised around USD 450 million in capital from investors such as KKR, Ingka Group Investments (part of largest IKEA retailer Ingka Group), TPG Growth, Goldman Sachs, Kharis Capital, Venturi Partners, FFP (Peugeot Group's Holding Company), EDBI, Bessemer Venture Partners, Jungle Ventures, Helion Ventures, and UC-RNT Fund.

BUSINESS BRIEF



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD AT VIT-AP AMARAVATI: VIT-AP School of Business at VIT-AP University, in collaboration with the University of Newcastle, Australia and the International Institute for Better Future, Australia, organized International Conference on Innovation and Sustainable Business Practices in the Digital Era (ICISD'24). The two days' seminar highlighted the key objective of exploring the convergence of innovation and sustainability in today's digital landscape. With a rich agenda encompassing keynote speeches, panel discussions, technical sessions, and interactive forums, ICISD'24 brought together a diverse community of scholars, researchers, and industry practitioners. The event served as a platform to explore cutting-edge strategies, emerging technologies, and best practices driving both business growth and environmental stewardship.

BRPL WINS GOLDEN PEACOCK NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD
New Delhi: In recognition of excellence, BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) has been adjudged the winner of the coveted Golden Peacock National Quality Award. Bestowed by the Institute of Directors (IOD), these awards are considered the benchmark for corporate excellence in India. BRPL holds the distinction of being the first power discom in Delhi to receive this recognition. The awardees are meticulously evaluated by a distinguished jury led by Justice MN. Venkatchaliah, former Chief Justice of India, Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission of India, and the National Commission for Constitution of India Reforms.



Indiabulls Real Estate to raise ₹3,911 crore from Blackstone, Embassy Group, others

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indiabulls Real Estate said its board has approved raising Rs 3,911 crore through the issuance of shares and warrants to investors, including the Blackstone Group and Embassy Group. Global investment firm Blackstone will invest Rs 1,235 crore, while the Bengaluru-based Embassy Group will infuse Rs 1,160 crore. After the conversion of the warrants, the Embassy Group will hold 18.7 per cent while Blackstone will own 12.4 per cent. In a regulatory filing on Friday, IBREL (Indiabulls Real Estate Ltd.) informed that the board has approved "fund-raise via preferential issue of equity shares and convertible warrants, on a private placement basis, for cash consideration, aggregating to approx. Rs 3,910.93 crore." The move is aimed at recapitalising its balance sheet and positioning the company for organic and inorganic growth purposes. These include capital expenditure for the completion of existing projects and new launches as well as proposed acquisitions, other working capital

requirements and general corporate purposes. The board has approved the issuance of 9,13,55,606 fully-paid equity shares of a face value Rs 2 each of the company at Rs 111.51. It has also approved the issuance of 25,93,69,201 warrants, convertible into an equivalent number of equity shares, at an exercise price of Rs 111.51. These securities would be issued to certain entities of the Embassy Group, Baillie Gifford, entities controlled by funds managed by affiliates of Blackstone Inc. (Blackstone Real Estate Fund), funds managed by Quant Money Managers, Poonawalla Finance and other investors. The board's nod is subject to the approval of the shareholders of the company and other requisite clearances. In the filing, IBREL has said the board has approved asset acquisitions worth Rs 1,853 crore to re-energise the business and fuel growth. Sachin Shah, executive director, IBREL, said, "We are excited to announce the recapitalisation of the company, which also includes four strategic asset acquisitions that boost our project pipeline.



"We are grateful for the constant support of our two largest shareholders. We are thrilled that we have a roster of new blue-chip investors who have come on board and validated the company and its growth prospects. The funds will allow us to complete our existing projects and pursue new opportunities. This investment is a culmination of the turnaround strategy that has taken place over the past 13 months." "It can fit well in some areas as agro-climatic conditions are the same," he said. The situation of wheat farmers in Pakistan is different despite sharing similar agro-climatic conditions for growing wheat.

Since 2021, Pakistan's agriculture department has released as many as 31 wheat varieties through international collaborations to help cultivated fields become more productive, climate-resilient and disease-resistant. While Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) has acquired over 4,000 wheat germplasm varieties from various international sources for evaluation and utilization in national breeding programmes, it has yet to indigenously produce quality seeds and species with the ability to absorb climate shocks. Ejaz Rao, a progressive farmer

from Bahawalpur, said, "Pakistan's agriculture authorities have failed to improve seed quality for over 20 years. The hybrid seeds from countries with different climate present dual challenge i.e. Non-compatible with local agro-climatic conditions and disease-carriers. "During late 20th century, a hybrid seed from US carried a pest, locally named as 'AmrikanSundi', which could not be eradicated," Rao said. Stating that climate change has necessitated changes in sowing and harvesting seasons, he suggested adapting to new realities. "The availability of seeds, inputs, fertilizer and water must be ensured on time to ward off la niña and elniño effects." Dr Zahir A Zahir, Professor of Institute of Soil & Environmental Sciences, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, said the University in collaboration with Washington State has developed and acclimatized germplasm, a hybrid seed variety, which requires less water and gives more yield. "Pakistan has turned from net exporter of wheat to net importer of wheat in a short period of just five years, thanks to the formidable twin

challenge of climate change and population explosion affecting in tandem," says Mushtaq Ahmad Gill, Chief Executive, South Asian Conservation Agriculture Network (SACAN). Highlighting the importance of water amidst raging global warming, Gill who is also former Director General of Water Management, Punjab, Pakistan said Pakistan sadly only has water storage capacity for 30 days. "Half of the year, we face drought, the other half, floods," Gill said and called for increasing water storage and saving precious water worth billions of dollars from going into the sea every year. "We, the agricultural scientists and farmers from India and Pakistan, regularly stay in touch with each other and hold online/YouTube sessions to benefit from each other's experiences. We exchange technology, expertise and products to help each other get optimum yields," Gill said, while stressing on the need to maintain regular contacts. Punjab's Minister for Agriculture Syed Ashiq Hussain Shah ruled out any climate impact on wheat crop. "We are expecting a bumper crop this year."



ANUPAMA, THARUN WIN KAZAKHSTAN INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE TITLES

PTI ■ ASTANA
Indian shuttlers Anupama Upadhaya and Tharun Manneppalli emerged champions in the women's and men's singles competition at the Kazakhstan International Challenge tournament in Ural'sk on Saturday. The 19-year-old Anupama from Almora, who won the Polish International challenge last month, claimed her second successive title with a

21-15, 21-16 win over compatriot Isharani Baruah in a 41-minute final. The 22-year-old Tharun, who was runner-up at the senior national championships in Guwahati last December, beat eighth-seeded Malaysian Soong Joo Ven 21-10, 21-19 to register his maiden international title. In mixed doubles final, the Indian pair of Sanjai Srivatsa Dhanraj and Maneesha K lost 21-9, 7-21, 12-21 to Malaysia's

Wong Tien Ci and Lim Chiew Sien to sign off with a runner-up finish. Anupama, the former senior national champion, has been in good form this week as she defeated fellow Indian Harshitaa Rout, Czech Republic's fifth seed Tereza Svabikova, compatriot Devika Sihag and Japan's Sorano Yoshikawa en route to the final. Anupama, a former junior world No 1, has won the India

International Challenge in 2021, Polish Open (2022 and 2024) and Tajikistan International Series in 2023. Tharun also recorded some fine wins on way to the summit clash, defeating compatriot Gagan Balyan, 2022 World junior championships silver medalist S Sankar Muthusamy, fourth-seeded Dmitriy Panarin of Kazakhstan and seventh seed Le Duc Phat of Vietnam.

Chess: Vidit dumps Nakamura; Gukesh downs Praggnanandhaa

PTI ■ TORONTO
Indian Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi crashed through the defences of world number three Hikaru Nakamura of United States, while R Praggnanandhaa went down to compatriot D Gukesh in the second round of Candidates chess tournament here. After four draws in the first round, all the four games in the second round ended decisively on Saturday. Top seed American Fabiano Caruana was impressive in cruising past Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan and Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi outfoxed Firouza Alireza of France. In the women's section, R Vaishali went down fighting against Zhongyi Tan of China, while Russian Aleksandra Goryachkina proved superior than Ukrainian Anna Muzychuk. In the other games in this section, Koneru Humpy played out a draw with Kateryna Lagno of Russia and Nurgul Salimova signed peace with Tinjia Lei of China. Gujrathi along with Caruana, Nepomniachtchi and Gukesh emerged as the early co-leaders of the event with 1.5 points apiece while Nakamura, Praggnanandhaa, Abasov and Alireza share the fifth spot on half a point each. In the women's section, Tan remained in sole lead with her second victory on the trot and



Goryachkina was right behind her just half a point adrift. Salimova, Humpy and Lagno share the third spot with one point in their bags and Lei, Vaishali and Muzychuk share the sixth spot with half a point to their credit. A total of 12 rounds still remain in the biggest competition of the year that will decide the challengers for the next world championships matches. For the second day running, Gujrathi stole the show. It is clear that the Indian has gotten past his last below-par performance in the Prague masters. The Opening choice was a Berlin by Vidit who played his second black in a row. Nakamura was facing a finely crafted new idea as early as on move eight and the American was on his own. It was just three moves later that Gujrathi stunned his opponent with a Bishop sacrifice.

Accepting the sacrifice was the best way but Nakamura declined it and his position worsened slowly but surely. Vidit launched a king side attack soon and wrapped the issue in just 29 moves for a remarkable triumph. Gujrathi's dominance was certified by Nakamura, who was the first to say "good game" to the Indian. Asked about summing up the game, the Indian said that it was a day when everything worked for him. "Your prep comes in, he makes a mistake and you get a brilliant attack, cant add much to it," he said. Praggnanandhaa's Catalan opening yielded a decent yet extremely complex position in the opening. Gukesh, black, had to find things on the board and once he steered the game in to uncharted waters Praggnanandhaa was the first to err. Gukesh could have been on

top if he could find the best machine-like moves. However that did not happen and it was a wild position on board wherein Praggnanandhaa blundered amidst tactical complications. The game lasted 33 moves. Caruana opened with the Rossolimo variation against Abasov's Sicilian defense. The American got a tangible advantage in the middle game after a dubious pawn sacrifice by Abasov and technical part was handled quite well by the American. Nepomniachtchi also faced the Berlin defense and parted with a pawn early in the middle game. While the compensation remained it was never clear till Alireza failed to find the best continuation in the middle game. The Russian, who is playing under the FIDE flag, pounced on his chances and scored his first victory. In the women's section, Vaishali was outdone by a not-so-regular queen pawn opening. Playing black, the Indian equalized quite easily trading off both Bishops early and slow manoeuvring ensued by both players wherein the Chinese was going after the black king. It was on the 30th move that Vaishali blundered in her bid to keep the position closed, allowing a knights tango that resulted in material loss. The Chennai-based player called it a day after 34 moves.



Lille beats Marseille 3-1 to move into third in France

AP ■ PARIS
Lille moved into third place in the French league after a 3-1 victory over a faltering Marseille. The win took Lille above Monaco on goal difference and to within a point of second-placed Brest. It has not lost a league game at home since September. Jonathan David opened the scoring from the penalty spot after 53 minutes to take his season tally to 15, second only to Kylian Mbappé in the Ligue 1 scoring chart. Rémy Cabella made it two, and although Ismaily's own goal gave Marseille a glimmer of hope, Gabriel Gudmundsson restored Lille's two-goal advantage in the 83rd. It was Marseille's third league defeat in a row, its worst run this season. The south coast club remained in seventh place, above Reims and Rennes on goal difference, although both have a game in hand. Marseille's record away from home against the six teams above it in Ligue 1 reads played six, lost six.

Indian men hockey team lose 1-5 against Australia in first Test



PTI ■ PERTH
The Indian men's hockey team was expected to put up at least a decent fight but was hammered 1-5 by Australia in the first Test of the five-match series here on Saturday. The Australians controlled the tempo of the match from start to finish. The Indian team showed some sparks in the final quarter but it was too late by then. Tom Wickham (20th, 38th minute) scored a brace, while Tim Brand (3rd), Joel Rintala (37th) and Flynn Ogilvie (57th) were the other goal-getters for the winners. India's lone goal was scored by Gurjant Singh in the 47th minute. The Kookaburras showed positive intent from the start and took the lead as early

as the third minute through Brand, who shocked India early with brilliant individual skills from the left flank. He received a long pass from the deep and outfooted Jarmanpreet Singh with his stick work and pushed the ball past veteran India goalkeeper PR Sreejesh. Australia continued to press hard on the Indian defence and secured their first penalty corner in the eighth minute but could not breach Sreejesh's defence this time. Sreejesh made a reflex save with his extended right leg to deny Joel Rintala. A minute later, an alert Sreejesh used his razor-sharp reflexes to again keep Rintala out of target from Australia's second penalty corner. India secured their first penalty corner in the 10th minute but failed to utilise the

chance. Soon, Jake Whetton's reverse shot was parried away by Sreejesh. Australia was at their attacking best as their moves outwitted the Indian defence. The home team increased its lead just five minutes into the second quarter through Wickham, courtesy some sloppy defending by the Indians. Australia denied India to settle into a rhythm with their attacking hockey and relentless pressure to go into the halfway break with a 2-0 cushion. The hosts continued in the same vein after the change of ends as Rintala was in the right place at the right time to get a neat deflection off Ky Willott's reverse hit seven minutes into the third quarter. The Indian defence was caught napping by the ever-attacking Australians as

Wickham scored his second of the day with a fierce shot from the right corner past Sreejesh's extended right foot. Down by four goals, the Indians showed urgency thereafter but lacked ideas as they failed to create clear cut chances from field play. Twice in the third quarter India came close to registering goals but on both occasions Australia goalkeeper Andrew Charter easily kept the rivals at bay. Australia continued to play high-pressure hockey and secured another penalty corner just at the start of fourth quarter but failed to cash in on the opportunity. In turn, the Indians made quick counter-attack and reduced the margin through Gurjant, who scored with powerful strike from the top of the D after receiving an inch-perfect pass from Mohammed Raheel. India made some terrific incisive moves through the mid-field to expose Australian defence in fourth quarter but failed to create any scoring chances as the Australian defence stood tall. The Indians earned back-to-back penalty corners in the 51st minute, but on both occasions skipper Harmanpreet Singh failed to get past Charter in front of Australian goal. Australia secured another penalty corner three minutes from the final hooter. Jeremy Hayward's initial flick was saved by second Indian goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak but Ogilvie sounded the board from the rebound to register the comfortable win for the hosts. The two teams will meet again on Sunday in the second Test of the Perth International Festival of Hockey, considered as a preparation for the upcoming Paris Olympics.



Tvesa maintains momentum, lies T-7th in South Africa

PTI ■ KEMPTON PARK (SOUTH AFRICA)
Indian golfer Tvesa Mallick continued her momentum in South Africa as she was placed Tied-7th after the second round of the Absa Ladies Invitational on the Sunshine Ladies Tour here. Tvesa, who won her first-ever international title in South Africa in February, had rounds of 72-72 and is even par for 36 holes at the Serengeti Estates, where the conditions were tough with gusting wind and testing pin positions. The other Indian in the field, Ridhima Dilawari, a winner on the domestic Tour, also made the cut after rounds of 74-73 and was T-19th. Tvesa, who had three birdies and three bogeys in the first round, was looking very good on a windy second day on Friday. She had three birdies against one bogey in her first

six holes after starting from the 10th. She dropped shots on 17th and 18th and had two birdies against one bogey on her second nine. Overall Tvesa had five birdies against as many bogeys on day two. Kiera Floyd (67-71) and Casandra Alexander (68-70) will go into the final round sharing the lead after the pair of South Africans handled the conditions well. They are both at 6-under 138. They are three shots ahead of another the vastly-experienced Lee-Anne Pace of South Africa, who collected three birdies in four holes around the turn and posted a one-under 71. Spain's Harang Lee shot a 69 and leapt into fourth place on two-under-par and Namibia's Bonita Bredenhann and South African Stacy Bregman are on one-under.

Verstappen back after troubles in Australia, claims pole in Japan

AP ■ SUZUKA (JAPAN)
Max Verstappen was asked a few days ago if he had concerns going into the Japanese Grand Prix. His rear brakes caught fire just two weeks ago at the Australian GP, forcing him out on the fourth lap. "No, no," Verstappen replied. True to his word. No worries. The Dutchman claimed the pole for Red Bull in Saturday qualifying, poised to return to his unprecedented dominance in Formula 1 after the blip in Australia. Verstappen clocked 1 minute 28.197 seconds, just 0.066 ahead of Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez. Lando Norris of McLaren and Carlos Sainz of Ferrari — the winner in Australia — will make up the second row. "It was quite close at the end," Verstappen said of his teammate Perez. "I think overall this track is very sensitive with the tires. When you really want to go to the limit it doesn't always work out." Verstappen did not sound totally pleased with his day, but he'll take it. "The point is to be on pole," he



added. "Of course you want every lap to be perfect but around a track like this that's not always the case. But overall a very good day - a good starting position for tomorrow. And of course, tomorrow is what counts." He also relished starting alongside Perez. "It's great as a team of course to be one and two, and hopefully we can keep that going for tomorrow." Verstappen pointed to Ferrari as Red Bull's biggest threat, perhaps looking at Sainz who won in Melbourne and is in view again. "Ferrari look very comfortable," he said.

"Maybe they were not so quick on one lap, but they were definitely fast in the long runs." Verstappen is the three-time defending champion and has won 21 of the last 25 races entering Sunday's race in Japan. He's won every pole this season - four - and this was the 36th of his career and he chases his 57th win on Sunday. Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes, who dominated the sport before Verstappen, is without a win in 48 races — the last in 2021. He will start from seventh on the grid. Saturday was a sunny, dry day and race day should be the same with no rain in the forecast. Rain often plagued the race when it was traditionally held in the fall. This season it's been moved to the spring and dovetails with Japan's cherry blossom season. Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin was fifth, with McLaren's Oscar Piastri qualifying in sixth place ahead of Hamilton. Japanese driver Yuki Tsunoda of the RB team will start No. 10 on the grid as he tries to top his strong seventh-place finish in Australia.

Bhambri, Olivetti make semis exit in Marrakech

PTI ■ MARRAKECH (MOROCCO)
India's Yuki Bhambri and his French partner Albano Olivetti crashed out of Marrakech Open after losing the hard-fought semifinal to second seeds Lucas Miedler and Alexander Erler of Austria. The unseeded Indo-French pair lost the gruelling last-four stage match 5-7 6-3 7-10 in the ATP 250 clay court event on Friday night. Bhambri and Olivetti had earlier knocked out third seeds Nicholas Barrientos and Rafael Matos in the quarterfinals. It was a closely-contested match between the two pairs. Bhambri and Olivetti converted only two of the six breakpoints in the match while their opponents converted both their chances. There was no let up in the decider as the contest went down to the wire, where Miedler and Erler sealed the contest in the



Super tie-breaker. Bhambri has teamed up with Olivetti for the first time this season, having played with Dutchman Robin Haase in most of the tournaments. The Indian had paired with former partner Michael Venus from New Zealand at the Miami Masters where they made a first round exit. Bhambri's best performance of the season came at an ATP 500 Dubai, where as qualifiers the Indian and Haase reached the semi-

finals, earning crucial 225 ranking points. Ranked 62, the 31-year-old Bhambri is India's second highest ranked player behind world number one Rohan Bopanna. It will be interesting to see if Bopanna chooses Bhambri as his partner for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Bopanna being a top-10 player will have the choice of selecting his partner. Bhambri confirmed to PTI that as of today he has not heard from Bopanna about the possible pairing. The cut off date to consider rankings for direct entries is June 10 and the last date to submit names by the National Olympic Committees is June 19. Meanwhile, at the ATP Houston Open, India's N Sriram Balaji and his German partner Andre Begemann bowed out after losing their semifinal 7-6(5) 2-6 3-10 to fourth-seeded Australian duo of Max Purcell and Jordan Thompson.

Senthilkumar bows out of German Open

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
National squash champion Velavan Senthilkumar was handed a straight game defeat by higher-ranked Eain Yow Ng of Malaysia in the quarterfinals of the German Open in Hamburg. World no. 59 Senthilkumar, a 2023 Asian silver medalist, went down 7-11 6-11 4-11 to the fourth seed at the USD 50,000 PSA World Tour Bronze event on Friday. "It's always been a close affair (between us). For some reason, every time he (Senthilkumar) upsets a few players to get to me," Yow Ng told the official PSA website. "It's getting tougher every time, but I also know my strengths, I know I can hang in there, play the big points better, and I think it showed in the first and second games. "I'm just happy to get through in three today," added the Malaysian World no. 22, who has a 3-0 head-to-head record against the Indian in PSA events.

Nagal beats Cobolli in Monte Carlo Masters qualifiers

PTI ■ MONTE CARLO (FRANCE)
Ace Indian tennis player Sumit Nagal was off to a winning start in Monte Carlo Masters as he defeated world number 63 Flavio Cobolli of Italy in straight sets in the qualifiers here on Saturday. The unseeded 95th-ranked Indian registered a 6-2 6-3 win over eighth-seeded Cobolli. Nagal will now be up against the

winner of the two Argentinians — Facundo Diaz Acosta and Diego Schwartzman — in his final qualifier fixture. While Acosta is ranked 55th and seeded third, Schwartzman is ranked 124th and is a wild card entrant in the tournament. Seven qualifiers will be granted entry into the main round. Nagal has been in the headlines since making it to the main draw of the Australian Open in



January, where he had beaten Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan before bowing out in the second

round. He then emerged triumphant in the Chennai Open before playing two more Challenger competitions, along with an ATP 500 competition (Dubai Championship) and two ATP 1000 Masters (Indian Wells and Miami). Since his Chennai victory, Nagal has reached the semi-final only on one occasion, during the Bengaluru Challenger.



Rookie pacer Yadav in focus as LSG eye third win in a row

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

New pace sensation Mayank Yadav will be closely followed by all and sundry after his match-winning performances as Lucknow Super Giants eye a hat-trick of wins when they take on an inconsistent Gujarat Titans here on Sunday.



fast-tracked into the Indian team. But only two games can't be a parameter for a place in the Indian team. For Yadav, the crucial factor would be his consistency, which the national selectors will be closely following.

after a rare off day in the team's opener but the skipper needs to get his act together as he hasn't been able to capitalise on starts. The big-hitting Nicholas Pooran has been LSG's go-to man in the finishing overs while Krunal Pandya was also handy in the last game.

of Devdutt Padikkal and Australian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis.

In bowling, Yadav needs more support from the likes of Naveen-ul-Haq, Yash Thakur, Mohsin Khan, Stonis, and leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi.

LSG, who are placed fourth with two wins out of three games, would also look to keep a clean slate at home and cash in on familiar conditions to register the third successive win this season.

GT, on the other hand, have had a mixed bag campaign so far under new captain Shubman Gill, winning two and losing two games to occupy the seventh spot on the points table.

Gill, who scored an unbeaten 89 off 48 balls, found some much-needed runs in the previous game and would look to continue in the same vein.

more support from the likes of Azmatullah Omarzai, Umesh Yadav, Rashid Khan and Noor Ahmad.

TEAMS (FROM)

GUJARAT TITANS: Shubman Gill (c), David Miller, Matthew Wade, Wriddhiman Saha, Robin Minz, Kane Williamson, Abhinav Mandhar, B Sai Sudarshan, Darshan Nalkande, Vijay Shankar, Azmatullah Omarzai, Shahrukh Khan, Jayant Yadav, Rahul Tewatia, Kartik Tyagi, Shshant Mishra, Spencer Johnson, Noor Ahmad, Sai Kishore, Umesh Yadav, Rashid Khan, Joshua Little, Mohit Sharma and Manav Suthar. LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS: KL Rahul (c), Quinton de Kock, Nicholas Pooran, Ayush Badoni, Kyle Mayers, Marcus Stoinis, Deepak Hooda, Devdutt Padikkal, Ravi Bishnoi, Naveen-ul-Haq, Krunal Pandya, Yudhvir Singh, Prerak Mankad, Yash Thakur, Amit Mishra, Shamar Joseph, Mayank Yadav, Mohsin Khan, K. Gowtham, Arshin Kulkarni, M. Siddharth, Ashton Turner, Matt Henry, Mohd Arshad Khan.

RCB should try to chase targets to revive fortunes: Gavaskar

PTI ■ BENGALURU



Legendary batter Sunil Gavaskar said on Saturday that the embattled Royal Challengers Bengaluru should try to chase targets more to revive their fortunes in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL).

RCB are currently languishing at eighth place with two points from four matches, and in their fifth match they will face Rajasthan Royals in Jaipur on Saturday. "Of course, the toss is not in your control. But at all possible opportunities, they should chase targets as batting is their strong point. I think that will give them a better chance at winning matches," said Gavaskar here during the cricket talk show, Midwicket Stories, which also featured England batting legend Geoffrey Boycott and former New Zealand pacer Simon Doull.

Gavaskar was hinting at the out of form bowling unit of RCB that failed to defend totals on both the occasions they have been asked to. While chasing, the Bengaluru outfit has managed to eke out one win against Punjab Kings and went down against Lucknow Super Giants in the other.

Talking in general about the impact of T20, Gavaskar emphasised on the entertainment quotient it has brought to modern cricket.

"Modern cricket is hard but entertaining. These days not many balls are being left and a lot more shots are being played - switch-hits, reverse scoops etc. The concept of taking the shine of balls is not followed as it was the norm in our times," he said. That brought the talk to the future of Test cricket, and Gavaskar said the longest format would not fade away as many have been fearing. "Test cricket is not dying, it will survive. Perhaps, three or four nations will play five-match series against each other while the rest will play the three-match series. I think that is going to be the way forward for that format," Gavaskar noted.



CSK committed to back players in search of new hero: Fleming

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Terming pacer Mukesh Chaudhary's poor performance against Sunrisers Hyderabad as "tough baptism", Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming asserted that the defending champions remain committed to support their players in search of "a new hero when short on firepower".

CSK suffered a six wicket defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad on Friday, their second loss of the season.

Playing for the first time in the season, Mukesh, who was brought in as an Impact Sub, bowled the second-most expensive over of the 2024 IPL, conceding 27 runs.

Handed the ball by skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad in the second over, the left-arm pacer, who was CSK's highest wicket-taker with 16 scalps in 2022, faced the wrath of the in-form Abhishek Sharma (37 off 12 balls) who hit him for three sixes and two fours.

"We had a chance to introduce Mukesh Chaudhary today. He was good for us a while back. It wasn't his day. But that's part of the IPL," Fleming said at the post-match press conference on Friday.

"It's managing players, and when you do find yourself a little bit short on firepower, it's finding the new hero. It didn't happen today, but we put trust in the players that we introduced and they've been training well and doing the job. Tough baptism."

"The first five or six overs were the best to bat, and the aggressive way in which they played showed that," he added.

CSK had to rejig their team as they were without the services of pacers Mustafizur Rahman, who is back in Bangladesh to fetch his visa for T20 World Cup later this year and young Matheesha Pathirana.

When asked if CSK missed Rahman, Fleming said: "Without a doubt, it's part of the IPL. He's not here, so we can't use him. "But having injuries and losing players in an IPL is part of the process," Fleming added.

Faltering MI, DC desperate to arrest slide

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A fit-again Suryakumar Yadav will be expected to immediately deliver the goods when faltering Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals lock horns in a bid to arrest their slide in their Indian Premier League clash here on Sunday.

With three losses in a row, MI are languishing at the bottom whereas Delhi Capitals have spiralled down to the ninth spot in the 10-team points table following a 106-run hammering in their last match.

If MI have once again made a characteristic start of falling into a hole with a string of defeats, the misfiring Delhi Capitals have had a similar fate suffering three losses from four outings and are

under pressure to bounce back.

Suryakumar's potential return to action will keep him at the cynosure since the T20 World Cup follows this iteration of IPL immediately and his form and fitness will be crucial for the Indian campaign. Having spent the last three months nursing an ankle injury and recovering from a surgery for sports hernia, the world's premier T20 batter Suryakumar hit the ground running with his first training session here at the Wankhede Stadium on Friday.

Along with strength and mobility exercises, Suryakumar batted without any visible discomfort to get back in the groove and gear up to come to the rescue of his struggling teammates,



who have collectively failed in all departments. At the top, both Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan have looked promising but neither has notched up a big score yet. The same can be said about the other Indian batters such

as Tilak Varma and Naman Dhir, who, irrespective of how appealing they have looked in the middle, are yet to deliver a match-winning performance. Even the embattled captain Hardik Pandya has not been able to inspire his side.

However, for someone who has been subjected to brutal reaction from fans inside the stadiums so far, there could be some respite as the contest on Sunday afternoon will be attended by more than 20,000 children.

Akash Madhwal's three-for in their last match was the only positive from the bowling front, wherein MI changed the way they used Jasprit Bumrah by giving him three overs in the powerplay but did not have enough runs to challenge Rajasthan Royals.

For DC, comeback star Rishabh Pant (152 runs) has found consistency with two consecutive fifties but he needs support from the others.

Enduring the worst outing so far with the ball wherein DC

bowlers kept erring with the line and lengths to allow Kolkata Knight Riders pile up a humongous 272/7, the Pant-led side was short of spunk in reply with the bat to be bowled out for 166.

David Warner (148 runs) and Tristan Stubbs have been marginally better than the other batters but Delhi will hope get the more out of swashbuckling Prithvi Shaw, for whom the Wankhede Stadium is a homeground.

Mitchell Marsh has featured in each of Delhi's four matches so far but the burly Australian has not been able to impose himself on the opposition. Like a few others in his camp, Marsh too will be desperate to get a big score under the belt.

Squads:

Fans should not boo Pandya, not his fault if named MI captain: Ganguly

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly on Saturday reprehended the fans booing Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya, saying it is not the fault of the player if he has replaced much-loved Rohit Sharma, who shepherded the team in previous seasons.

Pandya has been at the receiving end of the fans' anger ever since Mumbai Indians announced that he will captain the five-time champions.

The India all-rounder was booed in the first game that he played as MI skipper upon his return at the home ground of his previous franchise Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad. The trend continued when Pandya went to Hyderabad to face the Sunrisers Hyderabad and much to the surprise of



many, the 29-year-old was booed when Mumbai Indians played their first home match of the season against Rajasthan Royals. "I don't think they should boo Hardik Pandya. It's not correct," Ganguly told the

media here during Delhi Capitals' training session at the Wankhede Stadium on Saturday.

"It's not correct. The franchisee has appointed him as captain. That's what happens in sport. Whether you captain India or you captain a state or whether you captain your franchise, you are appointed as captain. "He's (been) appointed captain. Obviously, with Rohit Sharma he's a different class. His performance for this franchise, his performance for India has been at a different level as captain and as a player," the Director of Cricket for Delhi Capitals said.

"But then it's not Hardik's fault that he's been appointed as captain. All of us need to understand that," he added. Mumbai Indians will take on Delhi Capitals on Sunday afternoon here.

Bazball is fine, but England Test team needs common sense: Boycott

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Batting legend Geoffrey Boycott on Saturday reiterated his aversion for England's 'Bazball' way of cricket, and exhorted the coaching staff to instill a dose of "common sense" to their methods. The root of Boycott's criticism was England's failure to emerge winners in two most important series -- in the Ashes against Australia in 2023 and in the series against India earlier this year.

"There are some amazing decisions under Brendon McCullum (England Test head coach), as he has changed the (team's) mindset into more positive. But they have gone a bit too far with it. "They want to save England cricket, the whole of Test cricket. But no Sir, the objective is to win a Test match or series," said Boycott here during the cricket talk show, Midwicket Stories, which also featured batting legend Sunil Gavaskar and former New Zealand pacer Simon



Doull. Boycott said the England team should learn to respect opposition players and conditions.

"We lost two Ashes Tests and with it the series, playing stupid cricket, and the same happened against India. They came to the series saying we have done practice in Abu Dhabi and all. But Players like (Ravichandran) Ashwin, (Ravindra) Jadeja and Kuldeep (Yadav) got their wickets not without talent. "Heavens! Those three have some 900 wickets among them in Tests. And we have a captain (Ben Stokes) who does not bowl. So, play with aggression,

which is fair, but have that bit of common sense too," said Boycott.

The Yorkshire great, who made 8112 runs at an average of 47.72 with 22 hundreds as opener, also derided England's obsession with veteran pacer James Anderson, who recently completed 700 Test wickets.

"To be fair to Jimmy, he was a great bowler, I mean he is still good. But he is not what he used to be as a bowler. When was the last time he bowled 20 overs or more in an innings, he bowled 12 or 14 overs per innings, and that puts pressure on other bowlers," noted Boycott.

Smith admits he needs to turn it around as Australia Test opener

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Australia batter Steve Smith has admitted finding it 'challenging' as an opener in Test cricket but is eager to turn it around after going through a rough patch since taking up the role.

Smith put his hand up to fill in the spot vacated by David Warner after he retired from Tests last Australian summer, but the former has had his share of troubles in his new batting position.

The move was indeed surprising since it diverted from the policy of appointing the specialists for the opening role including Cameron Bancroft, Matthew Renshaw and Marcus Harris. The promotion in the batting

order certainly has not worked for the 34-year-old Smith, considered one of Australia's best-ever, since he has averaged a mere 28.50 in four Tests against his career average of 56.97 and nearing 10,000 runs.

"I'm not reading too much into it. You know, I feel like I've still been batting well," Smith, a member of the Star Sports Incredible Star Cast, told PTI in an exclusive interaction at the channel's studio here.

"A few things I'd like to fix up a little bit technically, but I've had that going throughout my whole career, and it doesn't really matter where I'm at in that respect. We'll wait and see," he added. Smith has spent the majority

of his Test career at No. 4 garnering 5,966 runs at 61.50 with 19 centuries and 26 fifties, while at No 3. He has made 1,744 runs at 67.07 with eight hundreds and five half-centuries.

For that matter, even at No 5, the right-handed batter has enjoyed success with 1,258 runs in 19 Tests at 57.18 with four centuries and six fifties. In his defence, Smith pointed out that while the pitches he batted on as opener were tricky, the opposition batters did not flourish on them too until the ball had lost its sheen.

"It's been challenging so far. We've played with some tricky wickets, particularly new-ball wickets that have done quite a bit. It has been challenging. I'd



love to sort of turn it around and score some runs up there, that's for sure," he said. "(You) can't sort of underplay how difficult the wickets have been. A lot of the top orders

that we've played against haven't scored a great deal of runs, and it hasn't been until the 30-40 overs-mark that we've seen the wickets get a little bit better and the lower

order score some runs," he added. Former captain Tim Paine suggested Australia will be playing in India's hands if Smith is persisted at the top of the order and not moved back to his usual No. 4 slot.

The two teams are set to face-off in a five-Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy later this year and Smith, who remained non-committal about his future, said it was exciting to play that many games in the series.

"We really enjoy playing against each other. There's that sort of rivalry there now and it's going to be five Test matches for the first time, which is exciting. I'm looking forward to this summer; it is going to be a great contest," he said.

कार्यालय कलेक्टर, जिला इन्दौर (म.प्र.)

क्रमांक/11/का.से./2024 दिनांक 04/04/2024

मध्यप्रदेश पंचायत राज एवं ग्राम स्वच्छता अभियान 1993 (क्रमांक 1 सन 1994) और उसके अर्धीन बनाए गए मध्यप्रदेश ग्राम पंचायत कालोनियों का विकास निधि 2014 के अर्धीन एतद् द्वारा ग्राम-विकास, तारसील-संवर्धन, जिला-इन्दौर में आवासीय मूलभूत विकास प्रयोजन हेतु कालोनी विकसित करने की अनुज्ञा दी जाती है:-

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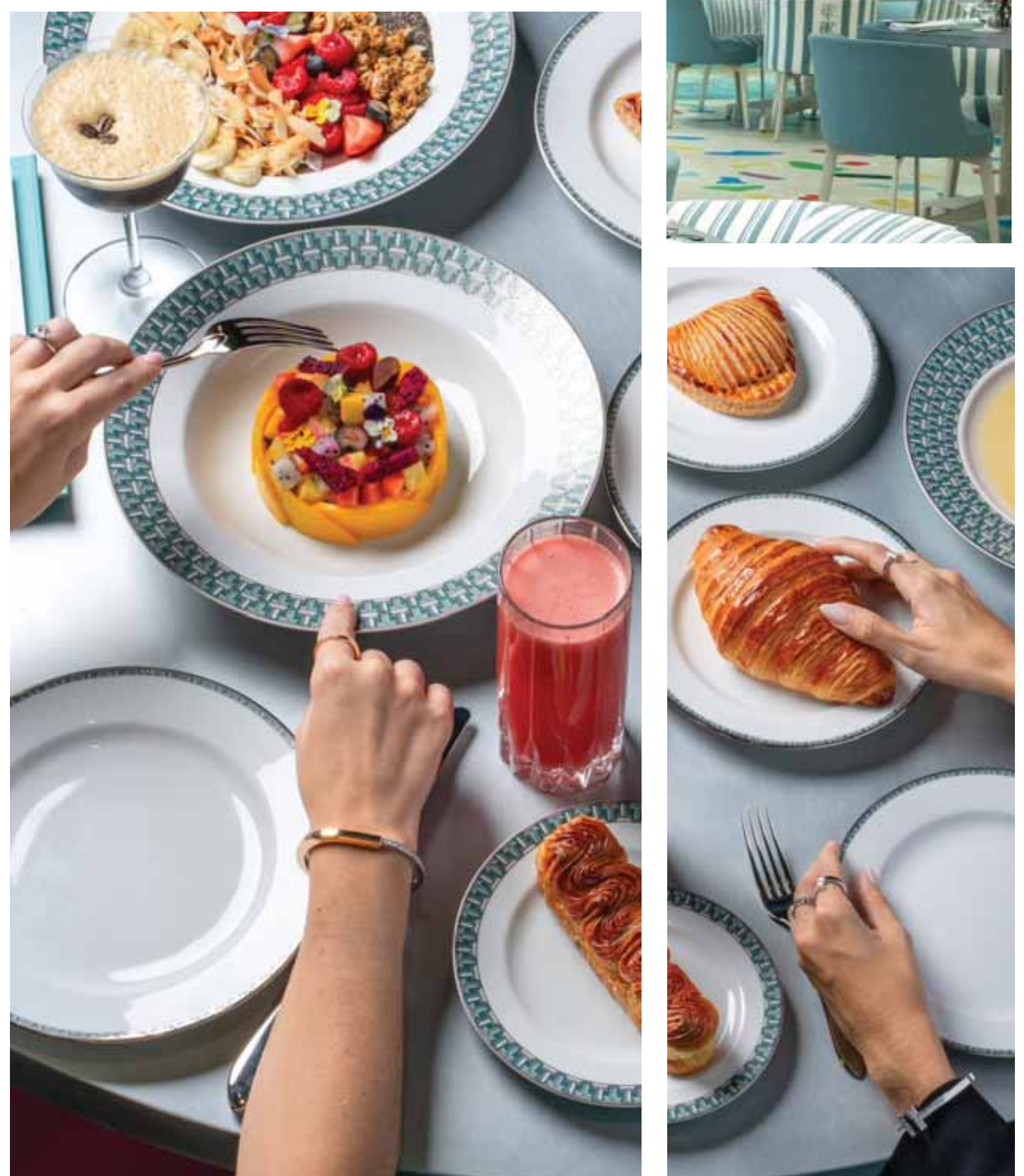
उपर्युक्त काम नंबर-4 में उल्लिखित 103 भूखंड इत कार्यालय में घोहर के रूप में बंधक रहे गये हैं अतः सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि उक्त भूखंडों का क्रय, विक्रय आगामी आवेदन तक नहीं किया जावेगा। अवर कलेक्टर जिला-इन्दौर

"So long as you have food in your mouth, you have solved all questions for the time being"
— Franz Kafka



HOW ABOUT BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S?

Renowned for its lavishness and extravagance, Dubai unveils yet another culinary treasure in its illustrious array. Presenting a dining oasis exuding sheer opulence, the distinguished Dubai Mall now hosts a luminous addition - the prestigious Blue Box Cafe by iconic jewellery brand Tiffany & Co



BY RUPALI DEAN

Although Truman Capote's 1958 novella and the famous 1961 movie featuring Audrey Hepburn implied a fancy event called 'Breakfast at Tiffany's,' this didn't become a real thing until Blue Box Café first opened its doors in 2017. For those who do not know, the title refers to Holly Golightly, a lively Texan woman in the story, enjoying pastries while looking through the windows of the famous Tiffany & Co. store on Fifth Avenue, making this scene well-known. Bid adieu to your routine coffee pit stops and embrace a decadent experience sipping from the renowned 1837 Blue cups at the Blue Box Café, overseen by the talented French chef Marion Lefebvre. Outside, the café maintains the House's enchanting tradition of creating captivating window displays, a legacy immortalized in the cinematic masterpiece 'Breakfast at Tiffany's.' The café's interior reflects the ambiance of Landmark while drawing inspiration from Tiffany & Co.'s renowned Fifth Avenue store. It's like stepping into a magical place filled with blue and white colours that that mirrors the elegance, promising a chic and refined rendezvous that is simply unparalleled. An exclusive chandelier crafted from the signature blue-coloured boxes is a visual delight. The menu presents three distinct culinary experiences inspired by French influences on traditional New York fare: 'Breakfast at Tiffany's,' 'Afternoon Tea at Tiffany's,' and A La Carte all-day dining. Imagine enjoying a royal breakfast and pretending to be Audrey Hepburn. I get to have Breakfast at 'Tiffany's' and taste Holly's



favourite dishes counting enjoying a delicious scrambled egg dish - the star of the prestigious Blue Box breakfast menu. Effortlessly blending global culinary influences, this establishment meticulously crafts a gastronomic journey that delves into the intricate textures and flavours of daily produce. The breakfast menu goes beyond Ms. Golightly's simple coffee and croissant, celebrating the flavours of both Paris and New York. I enjoy scrumptious pancakes, avocado toast, and a variety of pastries. With an unwavering passion for baking, the chef prides themselves on creating what could arguably be the finest croissants in the Middle East. Hand-crafted with pure



butter, these croissants are not only visually captivating but also transport one to the essence of French culinary tradition. A labour of love spanning three meticulous days, the croissant-making process unfolds in stages of initiation, lamination for layering, and proofing to achieve a golden-brown, caramelized spiral exterior. Each bite reveals hundreds of delicate, buttery layers meticulously formed as the croissants bake to perfection, exuding a symphony of flavours and textures that evoke a sense of indulgence and culinary excellence.



I must admit, indulging in this was quite a lavish treat for myself. I truly loved the luxurious experience and would definitely suggest it to anyone who loves the movie, the song, or the brand. Or maybe you just want to feel like Audrey Hepburn for a bit. If you happen to be in Dubai and seek something truly unique to do, I highly recommend booking a table for breakfast (or afternoon tea!) at The Tiffany Blue Box Cafe.

The author is a travel, lifestyle and food writer and photographer

FACT BOX

Blue Box Café Dubai
Located at Tiffany & Co. flagship store, Grand Atrium, Dubai Mall
Tel: 04 250 4935
Email: reservations@blueboxcafedubai.com
Hours of Operation: Monday - Sunday: 10:00 AM - 12:00 AM

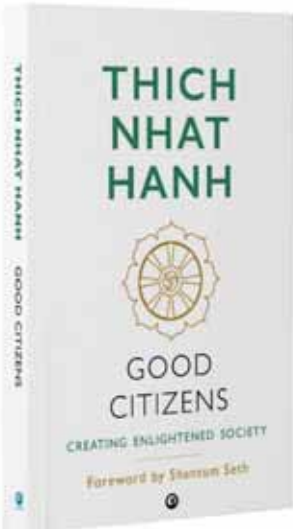
Through his life, his books, and his teachings, he continues to illuminate the path towards a world suffused with love, understanding, and mindfulness

THICH NHAT HANH

A GUIDE TO MINDFUL CITIZENSHIP, PEACE, AND ENLIGHTENMENT

BY GYANESHWAR DAYAL

In the midst of escalating stress and uncertainty, mindfulness emerges as an indispensable tool for navigating the complexities of modern life. The relentless pace of society, coupled with incessant demands and pressures, often leaves individuals feeling overwhelmed and disconnected. In such turbulent times, mindfulness offers a lifeline, providing a refuge amidst the chaos. By cultivating a present-centered awareness and cultivating an attitude of acceptance, individuals can develop resilience in the face of adversity. Mindfulness stands as a timeless practice with profound implications for modern living. In a world inundated with distractions and incessant stimuli, cultivating mindfulness offers a sanctuary of clarity and presence. By fostering a non-judgmental awareness of the present moment, mindfulness enables individuals to navigate life's challenges with grace and equanimity. It serves as a



powerful tool for managing stress, anxiety, and emotional turmoil, allowing practitioners to cultivate resilience and inner peace amidst adversity. Moreover, mindfulness fosters deeper connections with oneself and others, fostering empathy, compassion, and understanding. As we

embrace mindfulness, we unlock the profound potential to live more fully, authentically, and harmoniously in a world that often pulls us away from the essence of our being. Mindfulness is the essence of Thich Nhat Hanh's teaching. He taught just that and what is most amazing. He did it so

effortlessly and calmly that even before one realised one was already drawn into it. Renowned globally as Thay, meaning "teacher" in Vietnamese, Thich Nhat Hanh embodies the essence of tranquility and wisdom. His journey, from the serene landscapes of central Vietnam to the bustling cities of the

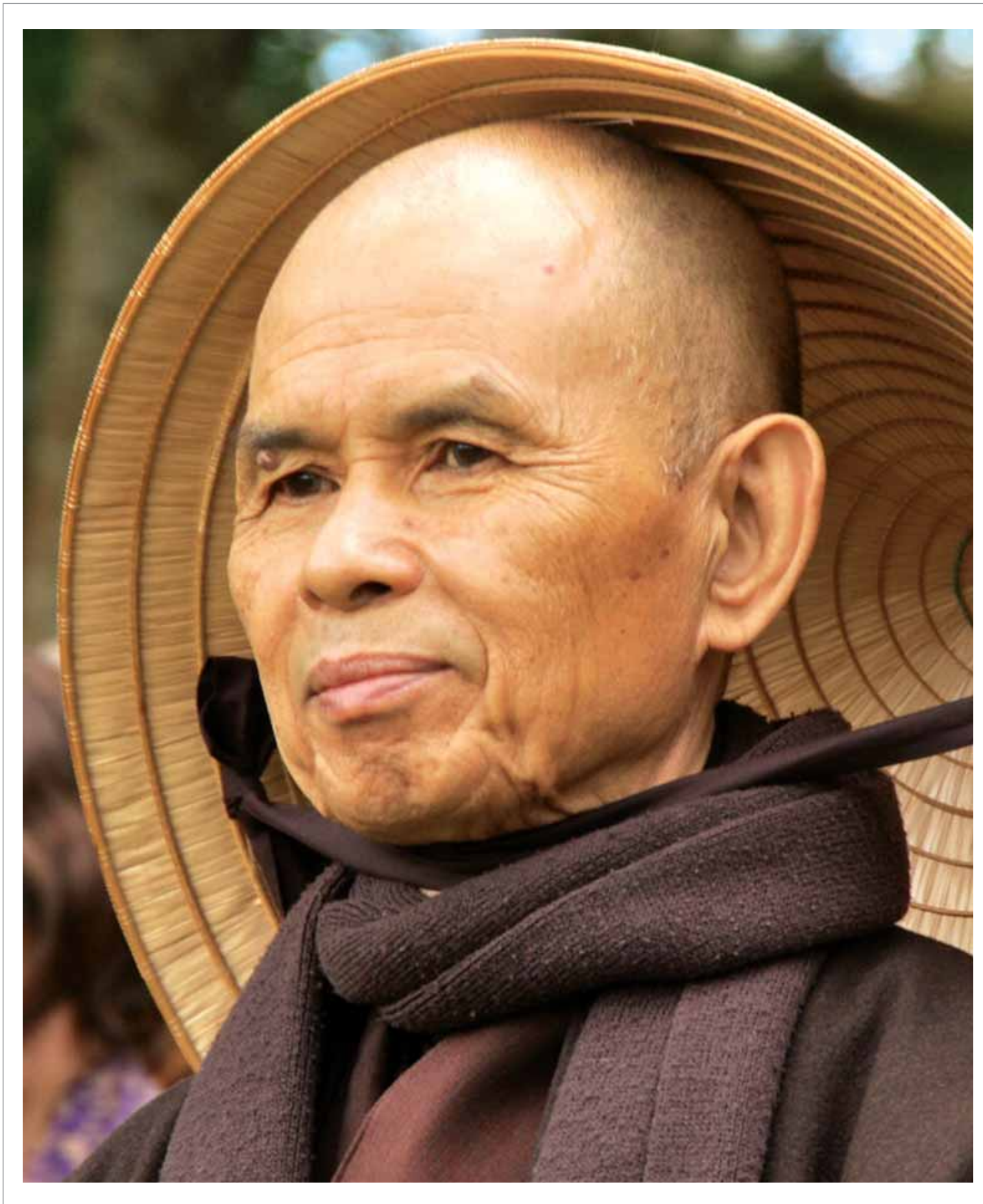
West, has been marked by a profound commitment to peace, compassion, and mindfulness. Ahimsa Trust recently organised a session of meditation and lectures to promote his teaching in New Delhi. The occasion was the launch of his book 'Good citizens.' In this book Thich

Nhat Hanh addresses citizens of every tradition, culture and religion to lay the foundations of a renewed ethic capable of leading humanity towards a world of peace and sharing of wealth, capable of overcoming divisions to live in total harmony. Through practical mindfulness exercises and examples taken from the life

of the Buddha, the Vietnamese monk indicates a path entirely based on the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism: through awareness of the existence of pain and the search for the roots of evil, we proceed to understand its causes to finally be able to embark on a path towards

happiness and found a global ethic based on mutual respect. Born in 1926, Nhat Hanh's spiritual odyssey began at the tender age of sixteen when he was ordained as a Buddhist monk. His early years were shaped by the tumultuous backdrop of war-torn Vietnam. Amidst the chaos, he co-founded the An Quang Buddhist Institute, a beacon of Buddhist studies amidst the strife. Embracing the teachings of Gandhi, he spearheaded nonviolent resistance movements, embodying the principles of Engaged Buddhism. In 1967 Martin Luther King Jr won the Nobel peace prize. In the crucible of war, Nhat Hanh faced a profound dilemma – whether to retreat into contemplation or to engage actively in alleviating suffering. Choosing the path of compassionate action, he founded the Engaged Buddhism movement, advocating for inner transformation as a catalyst for societal change. Throughout the 1960s, Nhat Hanh's endeavours blossomed, from founding the Van Hanh Buddhist University to establishing the Order of Interbeing, a testament to his commitment to peace and enlightenment. His tireless advocacy earned him a Nobel Peace Prize nomination in 1967, a recognition of his unwavering dedication to nonviolence. Despite exile from his homeland, Nhat Hanh's message of peace resonated globally. His pilgrimage took him to the far corners of the earth, where he tirelessly advocated for harmony and compassion. It was during this time that Plum Village, a sanctuary of mindfulness, took root in France, blossoming into a vibrant community dedicated to mindful living. Nhat Hanh's teachings transcend boundaries, resonating across cultures and continents. His literary legacy, spanning over a hundred titles, serves as a beacon of enlightenment, guiding readers on the path to inner peace and understanding. Translated into myriad languages, his works continue to inspire and uplift souls worldwide.

In India, the seeds of Nhat Hanh's wisdom find fertile ground, with Ahimsa Trust leading the charge in disseminating his teachings. Publishers like Full Circle, Aleph, and Harper Collins have brought his works to Indian readers, fostering a culture of mindfulness and compassion. As Thich Nhat Hanh's legacy continues to flourish, his message of peace and enlightenment remains as vital as ever.



GURUSPEAK



SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR Spiritual Guru

SHIVA THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ASPECT OF CONSCIOUSNESS



The auspicious night of Shivaratri represents the enlivening of the Shiva tattva (principle) — the most beautiful aspect of Consciousness

LORD Shiva is not a person or a figure. Shiva is the eternal tattva (principle) that is the essence of everything. It is the principle from which everything has come, which sustains everything and in which everything dissolves. How does one capture and express this tattva that is so subtle yet palpable? One of the expressions that encapsulate this most exquisite and unfathomable substratum of existence in its near totality, is the depiction of Shiva as Nataraja or the Cosmic Dancer. Nataraja is a fascinating symbol of the interplay between the material and the spiritual realms of creation. Of the 108 postures of the Nataraja the most adored and beautiful is the Ananda Tandava — the dance of bliss. The beauty, elegance and grace with which the Shiva Tandava is represented here is unparalleled. When one has access to mystical realms through deep sadhana and detachment to the material world, one is able to experience the Ananda Tandava. There are multiple dimensions of existence. One who has gained entry to the subtle realms of creation will find that the dance of Shiva is happening in a ceaseless continuum. This blissful dance of the cosmic rhythm can be enjoyed only after transcending the body, mind, intellect and ego complex. Though it is mistakenly



believed that Shiva took a human form and walked this planet, Shiva is Anadi — birthless, and Ananta — deathless. To limit Shiva to a form confined to time and space would be undermining the omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience of this Eternal Principle. The damaru in the upper right hand of the Dancing Shiva is in the shape of

infinity. It signifies sound and space and symbolizes the expanding and collapsing nature of the Universe. Through finite sound one can behold the infinite. The fire in the upper left hand of Nataraja represents the primordial energy of the cosmos. Ananda upholds energy while pleasure depletes it. The lower right hand, which is in abhaya mudra represents the



protection and assurance of orderliness. The other hand pointing to the feet is indicative of infinite possibilities. Underneath the feet is Apasmara, the demon that symbolizes ignorance and denotes the epileptic state in which there is absolutely no control over the body and the life force. When human consciousness is able to free itself from the shackles of ignorance and gains mastery over the body-mind complex, the dance of ecstasy starts dawning in life. The Ananda Tandava of Nataraja symbolizes the cosmic cycles of creation and destruction. The whole world is nothing but a rhythm of energy, rising and contracting again and again. Devas can only be perceived in the subtle realms or the sukshma jagat. Those who have gone deep in meditation have discovered this phenomenon. It is said that Deva Apraakrata Divya Manusha Rupa meaning the devas have non-material bodies of light which are

perceived in human form by human beings. The different forms of divinity that we see are the outer projections of what the sages observed in deep meditation. These inner experiences of the sages have found beautiful expressions in temples and the artistic landscape of India. The Chidambaram temple in Tamil Nadu is a magnificent representation of the cosmic stage of Nataraja. Chidambaram — 'Chit' meaning Consciousness and 'Ambar' meaning space — refers to the scintillating consciousness. The eternal dance of Shiva never occurred on earth. It is happening perpetually on the stage of consciousness. The central roof of the Chidambaram temple is adorned with 21,600 gold tiles, denoting the number of breaths taken by a human being in a day. The scriptures extol the Shiva Principle as being all-pervasive — Sarvam Shivamayam Jagat — everything in this world is an expression of Shiva. Shivaratri is the most unique time to rise above the mundane and bask in the supreme glory of the infinite, innocent and blissful Shiva tattva. Though the external worship to Shiva seems elaborate with numerous offerings, it is said the finest flowers used in Shiva's worship are knowledge, equanimity, and peace. Celebrating the Shiva tattva in oneself is real Shivaratri.



MANAN DWIVEDI

Immigration takes centre stage in US President primaries

President Biden faces Republican criticism over his policies, especially concerning Mexican migration. The issue gains momentum amid global observations of Trump's immigration clampdown and domestic instability in Mexico. These factors shape crucial debates in the upcoming elections

Elections in any nation tend to be hotly and keenly contested occasions, whether it is the campaign utilising roaring tigers in Pakistan by the PML(N) or the whistle-stop tours of the American Presidential Elections. For a long time in the United States, immigration of aliens has been a theme that has drawn both strategic and political traction. In the contemporary context of the US Presidential primaries, before the elections heat up to a crescendo, President Joe Biden is being attacked by the Republicans for his stance and policies on immigration. Mexico stars in the debates and discussions wherein, once the migration of Mexican settlers increases to 5,000 people per day, then the American checkpoints close down.

Donald Trump and the Republicans do not intend to be seen as weak or soft on the theme of Mexican influx, so they assail President Biden whenever the opportunity arises.

According to one American survey, undocumented aliens account for around 11 million in the American homeland. They enter the nation and dissipate into the realm of unorganised vocations and the resultant economy, which has been a difficult challenge for investigative and law enforcement agencies. If one refers to the Hollywood flick, "Scarface," the entire American nation's mafia emigrated from Italy and other European nations and began to rule the political

and economic roost in the US, consistent with one assessment of the dark economy and societal nature.

The domestic situation in the nation-state of Mexico is also in a state of instability and flux as controversies cast a pall of despondency over the country. Reuters reported in one of its articles: "Huge crowds filled Mexico City's main square on Sunday in support of the nation's electoral authority, accusing President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador of trying to weaken the body ahead of a presidential election in June. The protests, one of several in recent years, meant to 'protect' the National Electoral Institute (INE), come after Lopez Obrador sent a sweeping package of constitutional reforms to Congress, which would include an overhaul of the INE."

One can hark back to the issue of illegal migration into the US from Mexico and South America. The Darien Gap is a stretch of densely forested land that serves as a conduit for illicit migration into the US territory. Depending on what they can pay, people trudge through the Darien swamp and walk for five to ten days at the mercy of criminal gangs who, after demanding a lump sum amount, often maim, mutilate, and rape the migrants in the Darien Gap. These are a few of the issues being debated in the US Presidential Election deliberations for November 2024.

In March 2024, a report



succinctly states that a highly anticipated bipartisan immigration and foreign aid bill was recently defeated by former President Trump, a staunch opponent of a border deal. He actively lobbied Republicans to vote against the bill, despite its inclusion of many provisions they had initially supported. Even Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell succumbed to Trump's influence, voting against the bill despite his role in its development and his prior efforts to garner support

within his party. This action by McConnell has further intensified the electoral confrontation between the two presidential candidates. With some Americans advocating strongly for immigration reforms, President Biden could leverage Republican intransigence on immigration to lay blame on Trump for obstructing progress on immigration policy. The rhetoric surrounding immigration policy remains highly divisive, potentially leading

to further recriminations from both presidential candidates. Further north in the United States of America, Republicans have seized upon illegal immigration as a pivotal issue in the 2024 Presidential primaries. While it might be considered hyperbolic, one cannot ignore the significant role immigration plays as an electoral issue that could sway the outcome of the US Presidential Elections. The notion of aliens posing a threat to national and

homeland security in the US has gained considerable political and popular traction. Republicans have intensified their criticism of President Biden's lenient approach towards the steady and unlawful influx of immigrants from South America through Mexico. This has emerged as a central electoral theme, eliciting considerable criticism and political upheaval. It has been argued that American immigration policies are failing. Recently, it's been contended that the

system is broken and could potentially harm President Biden's re-election prospects. In Latin America, for example, countries like Venezuela are suffering under the grip of kleptocracy, which adversely affects both the nation and its people. So, what is the solution? The pertinent question arises: do people migrate to the United States of America to escape repression and hardships, seeking the promise of a brighter future despite the perceived decline in America's fortunes?

Immigration laws are under scrutiny as Capitol Hill debates intensify. There are concerted efforts to amend immigration laws within the American homeland. Efforts to overhaul the nation's immigration laws, for the first time in decades, have gained sudden momentum. Additionally, the upcoming US Presidential election will likely revolve around the dilemma of whether citizenship or permanent resident status, signified by a green card, will become the prevailing norm, and how much emphasis the twin candidates will place on this issue.

There was a global impact of Trump's immigration clampdown, which was observed by IR experts and the legal fraternity.

The first executive order signed by President Trump disallowed migrants from seven West Asian nations to enter the American homeland.

One of the initial executive orders signed by President Joe Biden revoked these bans on migrants from Islamic

countries. These nations included Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and Sudan. However, one cannot overlook the fact that the agencies responsible for monitoring and tracking terrorist outfits such as Boko Haram, ISIS, the Taliban, and Al-Shabaab are the worst affected when deals occur between political leaders. Trump's bravado, premised upon the theme of immigration, resulted in a plethora of economic costs and was fraught with political risks.

Several European nations, similar to the United States of America, are facing the menace of migration from conflict zones such as Ukraine, Syria, and Iraq, thereby initiating talks of fencing and walling the frontiers and borders, which is exactly what former President Trump also advocated on the global stage, specifically in America. As a telling fact, the cost of managing the Oresund bridge between Denmark and Sweden is a significant amount. Additionally, apart from Mexican human outages, gun running, and drug trafficking pose a perilous threat to the homeland security of the United States of America.

In the Hollywood film "The Mule," released in 2018, Clint Eastwood's character, Earl Stone, indulges in drug trafficking after his flower farming business goes bankrupt.

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PERSPECTIVE

CAA: Why the hullabaloo?



MAKHAN SAIKIA

The CAA is not anti-Muslim; it just prioritises citizenship for persecuted minorities, not others, from three neighbouring countries. Future legislation may address concerns for Tamils and Rohingyas. Recognising historical context, it aims to assist six religious groups seeking refuge in India. Importantly, the CAA doesn't prevent Muslims from these countries from applying for Indian citizenship

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) marks a watershed moment in India's electoral system. The government amended the Citizenship Amendment Act 1955 to facilitate citizenship acquisition for religious minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, reducing the qualification period from 11 years to 5 years under the new law.

The Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) was initially introduced in Parliament in the Lok Sabha in 2016 by amending the existing Citizenship Act 1955. Subsequently, the Bill was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), which submitted its report on January 7, 2019. The Lok Sabha passed the Bill the following day, but with the dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha, the Bill lapsed.

By December 9, the Bill was reintroduced by Home Minister Amit Shah in the 17th Lok Sabha and passed on December 10. The Upper House, Rajya Sabha, also passed the Bill on December 11, 2019. This outlines the journey of the present CAA through both houses of Parliament, culminating in its establishment as a crucial piece of legislation.

The Act is drawing both national and international attention for three main reasons: First, it offers citizenship to six persecuted religious and undocumented groups who arrived in India from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan on or before December 31, 2014. These groups include Hindus, Jains, Parsis, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Christians. Second, it excludes Muslims from these countries from applying for citizenship in India.

Third, the Narendra Modi Government introduced the Act just one month before parliamentary and assembly polls in some states. Now, the critical question arises: why is the Act sparking Opposition ire and protests in some States?

The central point of controversy is its alleged discrimination against Muslims, as it does not offer citizenship to Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. Critics argue that Muslim minorities such as the Baloch, Shia, Ahmadiyya of Pakistan, Hazras from Afghanistan, Rohingyas from Myanmar, and Tamils from Sri Lanka face religious persecution in their homelands, yet they are not covered by the Act. Second, critics contend that the CAA violates Article 14 (Right to Equality), the first Fundamental Right mentioned in Part III of our Constitution, by providing a classification of citizens based on religion, which is prohibited under this Article. Third, it allegedly seriously violates the historic Assam Accord signed between the All Assam Students Association (AASU) and the Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress Government in 1985. This accord set the cutoff date for entry of illegal migrants to Assam as March 24, 1971, whereas the current Act pushes this cutoff date to December 31, 2014. Moreover, there is widespread fear that once these illegal migrants from six religious groups become citizens, they will have access to all other rights and facilities like the locals, thus burdening Assam's limited economic resources.

Meanwhile, the matter has reached the Supreme Court, with nearly 237 petitioners approaching the top court to stall the immediate implementation of the CAA. Under this Act, the Government can fast-track the grant of Indian citizenship to non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. The lead petitioner in the case is the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML). During an oral mention of the case last week by a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, efforts were made to calm the



apprehensions of all petitioners regarding the fast-tracking of the citizenship acquisition process by the Union Government. Again, the Supreme Court has agreed to consider the question of staying the operation of the new Citizenship Amendment Rules of 2024 on April 9. However, so far, there is no official statement from the Government indicating that it would not grant fast-track citizenship to the aforementioned groups of people. Today, the main arguments emerging in the Supreme Court include: the rules governing the CAA are based solely on religious grounds; once citizenship is granted, it cannot be reversed; and the Act has eliminated the scrutiny of new citizenship applications by District Collectors and the recommendations of respective State Governments. Opposition parties and various petitioners are also arguing that if the Government could wait for the last five years, it should be willing to wait for a few more months to implement the CAA.

Now, the irony lies in why countries like America are so concerned about an internal issue of India. India is a democratic country, and its Constitution provides equal rights

and opportunities to all its citizens, including religious minorities, since its independence and the very inception of the Constitution itself. American Senator Ben Cardin is raising the seriousness of the issue by branding this Act as controversial and also questioning the intentions of the Indian Government as it deeply impacts Muslims, especially during their holy month of Ramadan. He speaks about the Indo-US relationship, based on shared values, where we need to be concerned about the protection of human rights for every person regardless of religion. It is true, we need to respect the human rights of all minorities, including Muslims.

But sadly, the people of India in general and the Government of India in particular do not need to learn lessons on human rights from any foreign parliamentarian like Cardin. India's long history and cultural traditions have displayed enough of our tolerance and mutual co-existence, demonstrating how this land has accepted people from various civilisational roots. Instead, Cardin should focus on how his own country is engaged in wars after wars in many Muslim nations, especially in the West Asia, leaving

behind a trail of human rights violations for years now.

By now, the US should have been able to stop its closest ally Israel from carrying out bloodshed against the Palestinians, a war conducted in the name of fighting Hamas militants. Before pointing fingers at Vladimir Putin (for the Ukraine invasion) and Xi Jinping (for the alleged genocide of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang), America should introspect and assess its actions worldwide.

The Ministry of External Affairs has already termed the American statement on the CAA as "misplaced, misinformed, and unwarranted". It has categorically said: "The CAA 2019 is an internal matter of India, showcasing the inclusiveness of Indian society. The CAA is an act of granting citizenship, not of revoking it." For the Opposition parties in the country (INDIA Bloc), their aim is not simply to oppose the NDA Government at the centre, but specifically the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. With the CAA, they have yet another issue to raise concerns about the Muslim minority in the country. Frankly speaking, for decades, the Congress ruled this country and many of the States. The grand old party, with its visionaries on board, should have already addressed the plight of persecuted minorities, including the Tamils from Sri Lanka, in India.

It is clear that the CAA is not against Muslims. This Act is designed to offer expedited citizenship only to persecuted minorities as mentioned in it, not to others. Therefore, a new legislation can be considered by the Government in the future for Tamils and Rohingyas. In fact, this new law acknowledges the historical background of partition and aims to address the plight of these six religious groups who sought refuge in India. The CAA does not prohibit Muslims from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan from applying for

Indian citizenship.

The CAA does not violate Article 14. In the 1997 case of David John Hopkins vs Union of India, the Madras High Court clarified that the Union Government's right to refuse citizenship is absolute and not fettered by equal protection under Article 14.

Similarly, in the 1991 case of Louis De Raedt vs Union of India, the Supreme Court held that the right of a foreigner in India is confined to Article 21, and they cannot seek citizenship as a matter of right. These judgments make it clear that citizenship is not a matter of right for any foreign citizen in this country. It must be emphasised that the Union Government has the final power to decide the acquisition and termination of citizenship and all other matters under Article 11. Additionally, the CAA has been implemented under the Seventh Schedule, which includes citizenship in the Union List, making Parliament the sole authority to decide on this matter. State governments, currently refusing to implement it (such as West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala), have no final say in this matter.

Also, the CAA does not change or dilute the Assam Accord, as it is applicable throughout India. It does not apply to the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura, nor to areas under the Inner Line Permit prescribed by the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation 1873. Lastly, the Opposition and the hundreds of petitioners should have enough faith in the apex court of this country, as the matter has already been brought before it. The court will decide the fate of this Act, determining whether it violates the basic tenets of the Constitution, including secularism, and other pertinent issues raised by the petitioners so far.

(The writer is currently President of the Global Research Foundation.)

I THINK A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY IS NOT SO MUCH A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY. IT'S A JOURNEY OF RECOVERY. IT'S A JOURNEY OF UNCOVERING YOUR OWN INNER NATURE. IT'S ALREADY THERE — BILLY CORGAN



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week heralds a period of significant prosperity, with early indications suggesting a noteworthy improvement in financial standings. The onset of the week might surprise you with an unexpected increase in income, setting the tone for a period of joy and revelry. Celebrations of professional achievements will not only bring personal joy but also familial contentment. This period shines particularly brightly for the influential women in your life, who will exhibit remarkable vitality and ingenuity, becoming pillars of joy and support. The possibility of celebratory events, possibly marking new beginnings or joyous additions to the family, will bring loved ones closer, strengthening bonds through shared joy. As the week concludes, anticipate a shift in perspective, perhaps a newfound understanding or belief, paving the way for a future rich in potential and fulfillment.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Purple
Lucky day Monday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week calls for a measured approach, urging you to temper your enthusiasm and curb any impulsive behavior. Strive for balance, as moments poised to enrich your life may instead become marred by an inflated sense of self or indifference toward others. While it's important to hold your dignity in high regard, maintaining respect for yourself and those around you is equally crucial. You might find yourself on the cusp of developments that could stir envy among competitors. Moreover, be vigilant against potential deceit or harmful intentions directed at you. This period warrants caution—pay close attention to the motivations and actions of those around you, adjusting your interactions to navigate their intentions wisely. Additionally, safeguard your valuable possessions and remain observant of those who work for you or with you.

Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Friday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you are poised to experience a surge of strength and illumination, guiding your endeavors to fruitful outcomes. Your energy finds its way to where it's needed most, empowering you to confront challenges and reach for your dreams with unwavering determination. An occasion for celebration may arise within your home, bringing joy and fulfilling a longstanding desire. This could manifest through moments of happiness linked to family, such as significant achievements by younger members or realizing educational aspirations. Your belief in your abilities, combined with a deep trust in a greater force, cultivates a positive atmosphere that turns aspirations into realities. Moreover, this period might also highlight opportunities in significant property transactions, signaling a time of pivotal changes and progress.

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Coral
Lucky day Thursday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week finds you in a swirl of deep feelings and heightened empathy, placing you in a position of strength when it comes to nurturing those close to you. Your natural inclination to offer support and guidance is prominently highlighted, making you a sought-after source of wisdom. However, there's a gentle reminder to not let these emotive currents distract you from your professional obligations. It's important to stay vigilant and grounded, as there's a chance others might misinterpret your kindness for naivety. Crafting and following through on fresh strategies are key to maintaining both emotional balance and material success. Without proactive efforts and a focus on your ambitions, you risk being caught in a loop of unproductive daydreams. Striving for equilibrium and keeping a close watch on your aspirations are crucial this week.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Thursday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Currently, you might be experiencing a profound sense of solitude and a feeling of being disconnected from daily life. This could stem from challenges in personal relationships, such as difficulties in love or separation. Professionally, obstacles may seem insurmountable, despite your diligent efforts and patience. However, it's crucial to stay alert and recognize your inner strengths, preparing to use them if necessary. This period represents a significant test from adversarial forces, but it's also a precursor to achieving your objectives. Embrace the potential for personal transformation. Assistance may come from an unexpected ally, whose guidance will help you navigate through these challenges. By the week's end, a newfound confidence will emerge, paving the way for accomplishments and fresh starts in various aspects of your life.

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Olive
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, you may find yourself navigating a mix of feelings and detachment in close relationships. Partnerships might face several challenges, with minor issues leading to emotional outbursts, disagreements, and eventual resolutions that align with mutual understanding. In your professional life, your kindness and generosity shine through. An unexpected boost in your financial situation will bring a sense of security, highlighting your adeptness at balancing both personal and financial matters with skill and effectiveness. Your willingness to invest time and effort, coupled with your reliable and trustworthy nature, makes you a dependable figure. Your eagerness to explore new knowledge fuels your ambition and sets a positive example for those around you. Standing firm in your values, you advocate for yourself and your beliefs, embodying integrity and leadership.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Saturday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week, your strength lies not in physical prowess but in the influence you wield. Your ability to lead and inspire is paramount, setting a tone of authority and rigor. However, your focus on discipline and control may overshadow emotional connections, potentially leading to estrangement or misunderstandings in personal relationships. A particular challenge may arise regarding a significant personal choice, facing opposition from a maternal figure, sparking familial debates. Midway through the week, external pressures may leave you feeling constrained, struggling to navigate these personal dilemmas independently. Nevertheless, as the week concludes, you find yourself in a better position both materially and emotionally. A figure of authority, possibly a paternal presence, will extend their support, offering a balanced perspective that paves the way for future accomplishments.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Sunday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

In this phase of your journey, expect shifts that herald positivity. Encounters with estrangement in personal bonds may occur, bringing about profound emotional challenges. The shadow of apprehension over potential setbacks looms; however, embracing these apprehensions as catalysts for personal fortification invites remarkable resilience. The essence of bravery blooms only in the soil of adversity. Should a door to advancement swing open, step through with unwavering resolve, gripping the reins of boldness firmly. The present moment beckons you closer to your aspirations—dismiss hesitations, allowing no barrier to deter your progress. Should self-reflection reveal dissatisfaction with past efforts or outcomes, it's a signal to reassess your strategies and explore fresh avenues. Aligning your actions with your core intentions may steer you towards a fulfilling trajectory.

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Navy Blue
Lucky day Friday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week presents an opportunity for significant personal growth and influence for those who thrive on ambition and integrity. You'll find yourself in a unique position where direct communication with influential figures is not just possible but encouraged. Embrace the surge of energy that propels you to connect deeply with others, serving as a beacon of guidance and stability. Your ability to maintain a harmonious balance in all aspects of life shines through, bolstering your resilience and decision-making prowess. As you navigate this period, your presence commands respect and admiration, fostering a fair and truthful environment. Your unwavering commitment to your principles, coupled with your holistic vision, allows you to lead and inspire. This time is marked by your capacity to influence and enact positive change, setting a standard for leadership and personal accountability.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Monday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week, embrace a period of tranquility and rejuvenation. It's essential to prioritize self-care through activities that nurture both your physical and emotional well-being. Consider engaging in practices that ground you and bring a sense of calm, such as engaging in gentle exercise, experiencing the natural beauty around you, and ensuring you get ample rest. This foundation of self-care will equip you to navigate the energetic pace of life that awaits. Expect a flurry of creative projects, professional endeavors, and opportunities for travel that will require your full engagement. There may be positive developments in your career, perhaps acknowledgments like a raise or a new role. On the home front, prepare for a bustling environment with family obligations, particularly involving children, leading to some financial outlays for their needs.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Teal
Lucky day Tuesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

You possess remarkable strength, bordering on overwhelming, fueled by a dominant force that guides your actions and decisions. Your ability to penetrate the essence of any situation with your sharp insight and perception is unparalleled. This period marks an apex in understanding and cognitive clarity, making the attainment of your objectives seem almost effortless. This is an opportune moment to dispel any confusion that has obscured your view of the truth and to sever the ties with the past that have constrained your progress. Concentrate on what you wish to achieve. This phase also heralds a profound spiritual renewal. You're encouraged to harmonize with the natural world—consider engaging in morning or evening strolls, embracing practices that center your mind and body.

Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Lemon Yellow
Lucky day Tuesday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

You possess boundless capabilities that enable you to change and shape your future as you wish. Although it's not feasible for everyone to unravel every mystery and hidden truth, you stand as a beacon for those eager to explore the depths of their own capabilities and unearth their latent talents. You adhere to a fundamental principle of balance, recognizing that each choice you make sets in motion a chain of events reflective of your intentions. To cultivate positive outcomes, it's essential to make decisions aligned with the outcomes you desire. This awareness and purposeful action pave the way for profound achievements and the resolution of many challenges. Anticipate significant opportunities for growth and exploration that may prompt you to embark on new paths.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Ivory
Lucky day Wednesday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Control the monkey mind



will know no limits. The irony, however, is that invariably human beings are not aware of their own true self. For, they are born with a clouded and pre-conditioned mind. Stuck to the limits circumscribed, they fail to have access to full landscape of mind. One's mind power, thus, remains restricted. It is said that human beings have access to just 5 to 7 percent of their mind-power by default. More than that is subject to our conscious efforts. If, however, even

if they can make optimum use of whatever they have in hand, they could successfully negotiate the usual callings of life with ease and comfort. The irony, however, is that an ordinary mortal, caught up in the thought web of their own making, dissipate a considerable sum of their mind power over inconsequential acts. Attending to carryover effect of negative imprints picked up in the past they often develop sense of insecurity over assumed thoughts and dream perceptions. That in turn, leads to unnecessary stress. Consequently, they are hardly left with enough to do justice to their priority preferences, and with obvious consequences. It will be interesting to note that human beings carry both animalistic instincts and humane virtues. Which of the two drives a being would depend on how one's mind is oriented. The irony of the whole situation is that one's animalistic instincts keep playing their part involuntarily from the front. But one's virtues need to be identified, acknowledged, honed, and then consciously invoked for bringing them to use.

What stands in the way is that human mind is fragile. It keeps randomly flitting around with varied thoughts, something like a monkey unthinkingly jumping from one branch of a tree to the other. It, thus, becomes incumbent upon a being to first control one's monkey-mind, for the indwelling virtues to play out unhindered. And that can be achieved following the two-stage meditation process. Pursuing Dhyana, with focus on Lord Hanuman, would inspire the seeker to imbibe his spirit. Accordingly, one would be tempted to explore, identify, and acknowledge, inlaid virtues, and then hone them, so that they become worth use in contemporary terms. And because Lord Hanuman is identified with valour, reflecting on His imagery may also help get over the sense of fear and insecurity if any. Also, it may grant the will and resolve needed to take on the challenges ahead in life in all strength.

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