

असम के सीएम बोले-कांग्रेस बताए सोनिया हिंदू है या क्रिश्चियन सीवान में हिमंता बिस्वा ने कहा-इंडी गठबंधन की सरकार आई तो राममंदिर का शुद्धिकरण किया जाएगा

सीवान। सीवान में जनसभा को संबोधित करते हुए असम के मुख्यमंत्री हिमंता बिस्वा सरमा ने दावा किया कि देश में अगर इंडी गठबंधन की सरकार आई तो राम मंदिर का शुद्धिकरण किया जाएगा। असम के सीएम ने कहा कि कांग्रेस पार्टी और लालू यादव अभी भी राम मंदिर के पीछे पड़े हुए हैं। ये लोग सरकार में आएंगे तो दोबारा रामलला को टेढ़ में ले आएंगे।

सभा को संबोधित करते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि नाना पटोले कहते हैं कि अगर कांग्रेस की सरकार आएगी तो हम राम मंदिर का दोबारा शुद्धिकरण करेंगे। मैं उनसे पूछना चाहता हूँ कि वे शुद्धिकरण कैसे करेंगे। क्योंकि, पहले उन्हें ये



बताना चाहिए कि सोनिया गांधी हिंदू हैं या ईसाई। उन्होंने कहा, राहुल गांधी सत्ता में आने के बाद चाहते हैं कि राम जी को दोबारा टेढ़ में रखें। लेकिन, जब तक सूरज

कुशवाहा के पक्ष में सभा को संबोधित कर रहे थे। गांधी मैदान में अपने संबोधन में उन्होंने कहा कि विरोधी पूछते हैं कि 400 सीटें ही क्यों चाहिए। जबकि, 399 पर वह खुश हो जाते हैं। वहीं, जब 400 की बात करते हैं तो वह गुस्सा करने लगते हैं। 399 पर नाराजगी नहीं तो 400 पर फिर वरू नाराजगी है।

400 सीटें आने पर बनारस में ज्ञानवापी मंदिर भी बनाएंगे, जनता से अपील करते हुए हिमंता ने कहा कि 400 सीटें पीएम मोदी को दीजिए। हम बनारस में ज्ञानवापी मंदिर बनाएंगे और भगवान श्री कृष्ण के जन्म भूमि में भी मंदिर बनाएंगे।

देश में हिंदू-मुस्लिम सभी एक ही शादी करेंगे

लालू यादव के मुसलमानों को आरक्षण देने वाले बयान को लेकर उन्होंने कहा, हम देश में ऐसा नियम लाएंगे कि हिंदू और मुसलमान सभी एक ही शादी करेंगे। हिंदुओं की एक पत्नी, मुसलमानों की एक पत्नी। हिंदुओं का जो कानून होगा, वही मुसलमानों का भी होगा। 400 सीटें दीजिए ये कानून लागू होगा।

उन्होंने असम को लेकर कहा, हमने मुसलमानों से पूछा कि बच्चों को डॉक्टर-इंजीनियर बनाना है या मुल्ला बनाना है। मुसलमान ने कहा कि डॉक्टर और इंजीनियर बनाना है। उसके बाद हमने एक दिन में ही 700 मंदरों को बंद कर दिया।

मुजफ्फरपुर में बोले हिमंता- लालू

बेटों के साथ जाएं पाकिस्तान शनिवार को मुजफ्फरपुर में चुनावी जनसभा को संबोधित करते हुए असम के मुख्यमंत्री हिमंता बिस्वा सरमा ने कहा, लालू अपने दो बेटों के साथ पाकिस्तान चले जाएं। वहीं पर मुसलमानों को आरक्षण दिलवाने का काम करें। हमारी सरकार बनते ही सात शादी करने वाली दुकान बंद हो जाएगी। वहीं, रघुनाथपुर में मीडिया से बात करते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि सोनिया गांधी राहुल को अब तक 150-200 बार लॉच कर चुकी हैं। उनको कोई लेने को तैयार ही नहीं है।

संक्षिप्त डायरी

बिहार में 5वें चरण में कुल 95,72,186 वोट
80 उम्मीदवारों की किस्मत का होगा फैसला



बिहार में लोकसभा चुनाव के पांचवें चरण में सारण, हाजीपुर, मधुबनी मुजफ्फरपुर और सीतामढ़ी में वोटिंग होगी। कड़ी सुरक्षा के बीच 20 मई को वोट डाले जाएंगे। वोटिंग सुबह 7 बजे से शाम 6 बजे तक होगी। मतदान की सारी तैयारियां पूरी कर ली गई हैं। कुल 80 उम्मीदवार चुनावी मैदान में हैं, जिनमें से 5 महिला हैं।

मतदान केंद्रों पर हथियारबंद जवान तैनात रहेंगे

बिहार के मुख्य निर्वाचन पदाधिकारी एच आर श्रीनिवास ने बताया है कि प्रशासन मुस्तैद है। मतदान केंद्रों पर हथियारबंद जवान तैनात रहेंगे। सेंट्रल फोर्स के जवान की भी तैनाती की जाएगी। मतदान केंद्रों पर गहन निगरानी रखी जाएगी। शांतिपूर्ण और भयमुक्त वातावरण में मतदान को लेकर आयोग पूरी तरह से तैयार है।

9 हजार 433 मतदान केंद्रों पर वोट डाले जाएंगे। तीन सहायक पोलिंग बूथ बनाए गए हैं। शहरी क्षेत्रों में 1214 और ग्रामीण इलाकों में 8219 पोलिंग केंद्र स्थापित किए गए हैं। कुल 11 हजार 323 ईवीएम का प्रयोग किया जाएगा।

पांचवें चरण में कुल 95 लाख 72 हजार 186 वोट

पांचवें चरण में कुल 95 लाख 72 हजार 186 मतदाता अपने मतधिकार का प्रयोग करेंगे। जिसमें से 49 लाख 99 हजार 627 पुरुष, 45 लाख 11 हजार 259 महिला और 300 थर्ड जेंडर वोट अपने मतधिकार का प्रयोग करेंगे। इस चरण में हाजीपुर सुरक्षित सीट पर सबसे अधिक 19 लाख 72 हजार 915 वोट अपने मतधिकार का प्रयोग करेंगे। वहीं, सारण सीट पर सबसे कम 18 लाख 790 मतदाता वोटिंग में हिस्सा लेंगे।

कहां कितने वोट

- सीतामढ़ी में कुल 19 लाख 47996 वोट हैं। जिसमें से 10 लाख 27 हजार 976 पुरुष और 9 लाख 19 हजार 945 महिला हैं। थर्ड जेंडर की आबादी 75 है।
- मधुबनी में 19 लाख 34 हजार 980 वोट हैं। थर्ड जेंडर की संख्या 91 है। महिला वोटों की संख्या 9 लाख 20 हजार 478 और पुरुष मतदाता 10 लाख 14 हजार 411 हैं।
- सारण लोकसभा सीट पर 17 लाख 95 हजार 10 वोट हैं। थर्ड जेंडर की संख्या मात्र 9 है। 9 लाख 40 हजार 771 पुरुष और महिलाओं की आबादी 8 लाख 54 हजार 230 है।
- मुजफ्फरपुर संसदीय क्षेत्र में कुल 18 लाख 66 हजार 106 वोट हैं। थर्ड जेंडर की संख्या 54 है। महिला वोटों की संख्या 8 लाख 81 हजार 562 है, जबकि 9 लाख 84 हजार 490 पुरुष वोट हैं।
- हाजीपुर सुरक्षित सीट पर वोटों की संख्या 19 लाख 67 हजार 94 है। महिलाओं की संख्या 9 लाख 35 हजार 44 और पुरुष वोटर्स 10 लाख 31 हजार 979 हैं। थर्ड जेंडर की संख्या 71 है।

कुल 80 उम्मीदवारों की किस्मत ईवीएम में कैद होगी

सारण, हाजीपुर, मधुबनी मुजफ्फरपुर और सीतामढ़ी में कुल 80 उम्मीदवार चुनावी मैदान में हैं। इनमें से 6 महिला प्रत्याशी हैं।

- मुजफ्फरपुर में सबसे ज्यादा 26 उम्मीदवार हैं। 3 महिला उम्मीदवार भी यहां से अपनी किस्मत आजमा रही हैं।
 - हाजीपुर सुरक्षित सीट से कुल 14 प्रत्याशी चुनावी मैदान में ताल ठोक रहे हैं। यहां महिला उम्मीदवार एक भी नहीं है।
 - सीतामढ़ी से 13 पुरुष और 1 महिला उम्मीदवार अपनी किस्मत आजमा रहे हैं। यहां से कुल 14 उम्मीदवार हैं।
 - मधुबनी लोकसभा सीट से सबसे कम 12 उम्मीदवार हैं। यहां से सिर्फ पुरुष प्रत्याशी ही चुनाव लड़ रहे हैं।
 - सारण से भी 14 उम्मीदवार चुनावी दंगल में डटे हुए हैं। 14 में से दो महिला प्रत्याशी हैं।
- पटना लोकसभा चुनाव की ताजा खबरें पढ़ने के लिए दैनिक भास्कर ऐप डाउनलोड करें। इस लोकसभा सीट पर क्या हैं जनता के मुद्दे और क्या है चुनावी हवा। चुनाव का सबसे सटीक और डीटेल एनालिसिस।

लोकसभा चुनाव को लेकर फतुहा में महागठबंधन की बैठक

कांग्रेस प्रत्याशी बोले- सभी लोगों को एकजुट रहने की आवश्यकता है, कार्यकर्ता अलर्ट मोड में रहें



पटना। पटना साहिब संसदीय क्षेत्र के फतुहा में लोकसभा चुनाव को लेकर महागठबंधन की बैठक हुई। इस मौके पर कांग्रेस प्रत्याशी अंशुल अभिजीत भी मौजूद रहे। कार्यकर्ताओं और समर्थकों ने आंग वस्त्र और खुके देकर उनका भव्य स्वागत किया। मीटिंग का संचालन आरजेडी के नगर अध्यक्ष दयानंद प्रसाद ने किया।

अभियान चलाया। आम जनता से अपने पक्ष में मतदान करने की अपील की। मीटिंग में दर्जनों कार्यकर्ता मौजूद रहे

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10 दिन में फंड भेजें..वरना रुकेगी केके पाठक की सैलरी

पटना लड़का शिक्षा विभाग को निर्देश; यूनिवर्सिटी के खाते फ्रिज करने के आदेश पर रोक

पटना। पटना हाई कोर्ट ने शिक्षा विभाग को राज्य के विश्वविद्यालयों के लिए वित्तीय वर्ष 2023-24 के स्वीकृत बजट का पैसा दस दिनों के भीतर जारी करने का आदेश दिया है। साथ ही कहा कि पैसा नहीं दिए जाने पर शिक्षा विभाग के आला अधिकारियों के वेतन पर रोक लगा दी जाएगी। कोर्ट ने तीन विश्वविद्यालयों के खाता संचालन पर पाबंदी के शिक्षा विभाग के आदेश पर भी रोक लगा दी है। पटना हाई कोर्ट ने सभी विश्वविद्यालयों के खातों के



संचालन पर रोक लगाने और कुलपतियों के बैठक में भाग नहीं लेने के मामले पर सुनवाई करते हुए ये आदेश दिए हैं। जस्टिस अंजनी कुमार शरण की सिंगल बेंच ने मामले की सुनवाई की। अगली सुनवाई 25 जून को की जाएगी। बता दें कि एसीएस केके पाठक के निर्देश पर शिक्षा विभाग ने

विश्वविद्यालयों के बजट की समीक्षा के लिए बैठक बुलाई थी। इसमें भाग नहीं लिए जाने पर विश्वविद्यालय के सभी खातों के संचालन पर अगले आदेश तक रोक लगा दी थी। कोर्ट को बताया गया कि मौलाना मजरहल हक अरबी-फारसी विश्वविद्यालय, पूर्णिया विश्वविद्यालय एवं मुंगेर विश्वविद्यालय के खातों को सीज किया गया है। शिक्षा विभाग ने तीनों विश्वविद्यालयों के कुलपतियों से शो कांज किया है। विभाग ने यह पूछा है कि क्यों नहीं उन्हें पदच्युत करने की कार्यवाही प्रारंभ की जाए।

समीक्षा के लिए बैठक बुलाई थी। इसमें भाग नहीं लिए जाने पर विश्वविद्यालय के सभी खातों के संचालन पर अगले आदेश तक रोक लगा दी थी। कोर्ट को बताया गया कि मौलाना मजरहल हक अरबी-फारसी विश्वविद्यालय, पूर्णिया विश्वविद्यालय एवं मुंगेर विश्वविद्यालय के खातों को सीज किया गया है। शिक्षा विभाग ने तीनों विश्वविद्यालयों के कुलपतियों से शो कांज किया है। विभाग ने यह पूछा है कि क्यों नहीं उन्हें पदच्युत करने की कार्यवाही प्रारंभ की जाए।

दानापुर में जेडीयू कार्यकर्ताओं की हुई बैठक



पटना। पाटलिपुत्र संसदीय क्षेत्र से एनडीए प्रत्याशी रामकृष्ण यादव पर जेडीयू के कार्यकर्ताओं ने चुनाव कार्य से दूर रखने का आरोप लगाया है। इस संबंध में दानपुर में नगर अध्यक्ष अरविंद कुमार की अध्यक्षता में अहम बैठक हुई। जिसमें दानपुर विधानसभा क्षेत्र के सैकड़ों कार्यकर्ता शामिल हुए। इस मौके पर पूर्व राज्य परिषद जय प्रकाश सिंह ने कहा कि एनडीए प्रत्याशी की ओर से नामांकन और जनसंपर्क अभियान समेत अन्य चुनाव कार्य को लिए कोई सूचना तक नहीं दिया जा रहा है। जेडीयू कार्यकर्ताओं को कोई

जिम्मेदारी नहीं दी गई है। वहीं, पटना महानगर उपाध्यक्ष संजय कुमार सिंह ने कहा कि जेडीयू कार्यकर्ताओं को चुनाव कार्य से अलग रखा जा रहा है। किसी भी जेडीयू के कार्यकर्ताओं को कोई जिम्मेदारी नहीं दी गई है और ना ही इसको लेकर कोई बात की गई है। नामिनेशन में चलने के लिए बोला तो गया लेकिन कैसे चलना और और कब चलना है यह नहीं बताया गया। जैसे दूसरे विधानसभा क्षेत्रों में चुनाव को लेकर कमेटी बनाई गई है। इसी तरह यहां भी एनडीए की कमेटी बनाना चाहिए।

अररिया में एक तरफा प्यार में युवती की हत्या परिजन बोले-टहलने निकली थी, मर्डर कर फंदे से लटकाया;10 जून को होनी थी शादी

अररिया। अररिया में एक तरफा प्यार में युवती की हत्या कर दी गई। उसका शव घर से कुछ दूरी पर पेड़ से लटका मिला। शव को देखने के बाद इलाके में सनसनी फैल गई। जिसके बाद स्थानीय लोगों इसकी जानकारी भरगामा थाना पुलिस को दी। घटना भरगामा प्रखंड क्षेत्र के मनुल्लाहपट्टी पंचायत के वार्ड संख्या 6 की है। मृतका की पहचान संजय पासवान की बेटी गुडिया कुमारी (18) के रूप में हुई है। 10 जून को उसकी शादी होनी थी। परिजनों का कहना है कि शुकुवार सुबह हमेशा की तरह टहलने निकली थी। इसी दौरान पड़ोस के ही एक युवक ने उसका अपहरण कर लिया और



गला दबाकर हत्या कर दी। इसके बाद उसी के दुपट्टे से शव को पेड़ से लटका दिया। पहले भी वो शादी

के बाद शव परिजनों को सौंप दिया गया है। घर से टहलने निकली थी मृतका के चाचा विजय पासवान ने बताया कि उनकी भतीजी गुडिया कुमारी शुकुवार की सुबह करीब चार बजे घर से बाहर टहलने निकली थी। इसी दौरान पहले से घात लगाए पड़ोसी रामदेव पासवान का पुत्र किशन कुमार ने उसके मुंह में कपड़ा डालकर अपहरण कर लिया। फिर गले में दुपट्टा लगाकर हत्या कर उसके शव को एक पेड़ पर टांग दिया। शादी के कार्ड भी छप चुके थे गुडिया के पिता संजय पासवान के मुताबिक, गुडिया इंटर की छात्रा थी और उसकी शादी रानीगंज थाना

क्षेत्र के हांसा पंचायत में आगामी दस जून को होनी थी। उसकी शादी का कार्ड भी छप चुका था। रिश्ता तोड़ने का भी किया प्रयास संजय पासवान ने बताया कि एक महीने पहले उसका फलदान हुआ था। इस बात की जानकारी किशन कुमार को भी थी। इसी बीच किशन ने अपने सहयोगी के साथ मिलकर उसका रिश्ता भी बिगाड़ने का प्रयास किया था। जिस पर मेरे संबंधी सुभाष पासवान ने हम लोगों को इसकी जानकारी भी दी थी। उन्होंने बताया कि शगुन का कपड़ा फनीचर और जरकरत का सामान भी लड़के पक्ष को दे दिया गया था। घर में उसकी शादी की तैयारी शुरू हो चुकी थी, लेकिन गुरुवार रात

इस घटना ने पूरे परिवार को मर्माहत कर दिया। रिपोर्ट आने के बाद होगी कार्यवाही थानाध्यक्ष मनीष कुमार ने बताया कि एक महीने पहले उसका फलदान हुआ था। इस बात की जानकारी किशन कुमार को भी थी। इसी बीच किशन ने अपने सहयोगी के साथ मिलकर उसका रिश्ता भी बिगाड़ने का प्रयास किया था। जिस पर मेरे संबंधी सुभाष पासवान ने हम लोगों को इसकी जानकारी भी दी थी। उन्होंने बताया कि शगुन का कपड़ा फनीचर और जरकरत का सामान भी लड़के पक्ष को दे दिया गया था। घर में उसकी शादी की तैयारी शुरू हो चुकी थी, लेकिन गुरुवार रात

All is not bright on the BJP front

THE Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the more recently established National Stock Exchange (NSE) have spoken. The BSE's Sensex, which began teetering after the first round of the Lok Sabha elections, fell with a bang by a thousand points after the third phase! Sensex and the BSE's Nifty are fairly reliable guides to political situations. In 2014, the market was anxiously awaiting the arrival of a right-wing government. Speculators had predicted a victory for the BJP. The party's performance in the polls was even better than what the optimists had visualised. Sensex took off at a very fast clip initially and then settled down to a steadier pace till it reached astronomical heights recently when Modi declared that he was aiming for 400 Lok Sabha seats. The share market is the biggest single gambling den in my city. Of course, gambling on stocks is perfectly legal, though very risky all the same. The operators are not going to venture in without their dollop of khabar. Since their money is at stake, the gems of information that Dalal Street operators collect are more authentic than what normal rumour mills produce.

The steep drop in the prices of shares like those of Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, L&T and TCS, all market leaders, is nothing but ominous. The market feels that the Modi-Shah duo is in trouble. I suspect (kindly note that my suspicion is just that — a suspicion) that the voting trends must have been garnered from the foot soldiers serving the army of 'exit' pollsters. They have been debarred by the Election Commission of India (ECI) from publicising their findings till the last vote is punched in on the last day of the month-and-a-half-long battle. The BJP's inability to enthrone voters this time has been doing the rounds on the streets of our cities and towns. That there is no 'wave' is also apparent. The use of unfair, ungentlemanly tactics like imprisoning a leader of a national party at election time is another clear indication of the nervousness that has taken hold. Even the spectacular inauguration of the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya did not help, as we now note with the benefit of hindsight.

To add what we desis call masala to the narrative, one of the first accusations Arvind Kejriwal made on being released on bail to canvas for INDIA candidates was that Narendra Modi would step down at the age of 75 in September next year and that he would be succeeded by Amit Shah as the Prime Minister. This possibility, which incidentally the common man had already predicted, ruffled the feathers of BJP bigwigs. Four of them — Shah himself, Rajnath Singh, Nirmala Sitharaman and JP Nadda — protested vociferously. They asserted that Modi would serve his full term of five years.

By doing so, they confirmed two hypotheses that would often be debated in parlours and marketplaces and set our doubts at rest. The first was that Modi's diktat that leaders should retire at 75 applies only to his colleagues, not to him. The second, more relevant to us citizens, is that Shah is not the people's choice or even the BJP's rank and file's choice for the top job. The very mention of that possibility by a sworn enemy (Kejriwal) set the alarm bells ringing. Kejriwal is set to return to Tihar jail on June 2. Before that date, he should draw some more rabbits out of his AAP hat in order to elicit some more truths from the BJP's top brass. When Kejriwal was released on bail by the Supreme Court, a BJP leader even suggested that the honourable judges were taking sides in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. That inference was in very poor taste. The judges explained in detail why they had decided as they did. What the judges refrained from saying, but was probably on their minds, was that it was the Enforcement Directorate (ED) which was taking sides in the elections by waiting for nearly two years to arrest the leader of an up-and-coming party like AAP. The ED had issued summons to Kejriwal nine times before the arrest. It could have applied the guillotine after the third summons was dishonoured. But, no, the ED obviously had a grander design. By releasing Kejriwal for the period of the elections, the judges have righted a wrong that the ED had perpetrated and provided a level playing field for the electoral game. The decision restored the people's faith in the impartiality of the judiciary which, unfortunately, was under question at times of late.

This election is a litmus test of our collective wisdom

The war was a result of then Pak army chief Gen Musharraf's wish to change the status quo along the LoC.

WITH the conclusion of the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha elections on May 13, the electoral fate of contestants from 379 of the 543 seats seeking election to the highest forum of Indian democracy is sealed in ballot boxes. The election, seen as transformative of the nation's political landscape, is witnessing a spirited pushback to the Modi regime from the INDIA bloc, even as the ruling dispensation led by the PM has had a clear head start in scripting its campaign theme.

The Opposition's counter narrative, focused on the defence of constitutional democracy and its concomitant values, is premised on the authoritarian impulses of a muscular state that negate the first principles of liberal democracy and accountability of power encased in the nation's republican charter. The unprecedented arrests across India of the ruling regime's key political adversaries, a demonstrable decline of constitutional institutions, a captive bureaucracy and a generally obsequious media, are cited in support. Ensuring a national resonance for its inspirational narrative is the principal challenge for the Opposition. Regrettably, the diminishing and debilitating tone of a cacophonous campaign on both sides seems to have drowned out the real issues, with abuse and calumny substituting for reason and contestation. The perversion of democratic discourse helmed by leaders unable to rise above themselves attests to a flailing democracy. The pursuit of power for its appellations alone, with scant regard for its ends and a cynical deriding of political idealism as a utopian dream to be argued out of consciousness, presents the electoral exercise as clothing the pursuit of personal ambitions with a semblance of democratic legitimacy. If indeed the BJP and the Opposition consider this election a watershed moment that will determine the future of the country, they must continue to focus public attention on core national issues. The INDIA bloc, speaking in multiple voices, cannot forget "the plain lesson of history, that the wants of men will only

secure recognition to the point that they are forcibly articulate..." as Harold Laski put it. The power of a clear statement is critical for the success of the Opposition's campaign. Apart from an unrelenting focus on its core campaign theme, communicated and made intelligible to each voter, the alliance

exceptional tenacity of purpose and will to prevail against the combined opposition of 26 parties. He has strategically anchored his party's campaign in an appealing sense of national glory, hope for the people in their future and emotional sensitivities, and he may well win a third consecutive term in office. But he would, in his wisdom, know that the ideas of justice, dignity and freedom outlive the seduction of power. As the leader of a nation defined by its diversity, he must accept that his primary obligation is to nurture a unifying politics to sustain national unity and bridge the myriad socio-political divides. Electoral victory must mean more than an arithmetical majority. Irrespective of who forms the government, victory must belong to those whose politics and votes sustain and strengthen a democracy founded on justice and human dignity, in which all of us can hold our heads high as empowered citizens of an enlightened nation that aspires to be the vishwaguru.

In this aspirational view of our common future, there is no scope for narrowness of mind, wilfulness or

transient responses to political exigencies at the cost of the nation's foundational principles. In this moment of test, those who stand on the side of freedom will find themselves on the right side of history. This election, seen as a historic milestone in the life of the nation, will test our collective wisdom on how we establish justice as the first virtue of social and political institutions and the basis of a just state. The election is about reinforcing the liberties of equal citizenship and ensuring that the power sought in the name of the people is used in furtherance of their inherent rights. It will define the land and its people, who alone must mediate their future, remembering that the inviolability of freedom depends on the moral courage, fearlessness and magnanimity of its defenders. This election cannot be about one's victimhood. It must instead heal the deepening fissures in our social fabric so that we can claim that Indian democracy is not a beguiling dream.



cannot shirk the critical question of an alternative leadership of the nation. The Congress, as the principal Opposition party, has advisedly chosen not to formally present its chief campaigner, Rahul Gandhi, as the prime ministerial candidate. Whatever the limitations and logic of the situation, the question of leadership will be critical to the outcome of the campaign, flawed comparisons with the past notwithstanding. As a necessary condition of revitalising itself to serve as the fulcrum of Opposition unity, the grand old party must recognise the distinction between servility and loyalty of its members. Only then can it reclaim the willing allegiance of its alienated cadres. In its internal functioning, it must listen magnanimously to 'the hidden silences'.

Evidently, self-effacing humility and generosity of heart to heal the erasure of conscience are critical attributes of leadership needed for national renewal. The PM, as the chief campaigner and torchbearer of his party's ideology, has demonstrated an

Deadly oversight

Billboard collapse calls for liability, reform

THE collapse of a massive illegal billboard following a storm in Mumbai that claimed the lives of 16 people and injured 75 — all passersby — has exposed a troubling nexus between negligence, corruption and regulatory failure. The disaster underscores the human cost of systemic oversight and dereliction of duty.

The billboard, weighing 250 tonnes and far exceeding permitted dimensions, was erected in blatant violation of civic guidelines. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had raised concerns about the hoarding two years ago, yet no substantial action was taken to address the hazard. The failure to enforce regulations or dismantle the illegal structure exemplifies the dangerous complacency and possible corruption in municipal circles. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. Last June, a huge hoarding on a highway near Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu collapsed, killing three workers on the spot. The police said it had been installed without



authorisation by the civic body. In 2019, a young woman died in Chennai when an illegal banner fell on her. Such

incidents point to a pattern of negligence and regulatory lapses that put lives at risk.

Culpability extends beyond the advertising agency behind the billboard. The BMC, which allowed this violation to persist despite knowledge and prior warnings, bears significant responsibility. The filing of a culpable homicide case against the advertising agency owner, Bhavesh Bhide, is a necessary but insufficient step. Accountability must be comprehensive, holding all parties responsible for this preventable tragedy. The announcement of compensation by CM Ekath Shinde does not suffice to address the underlying regulatory rot. This mishap should prompt an overhaul of regulations governing outdoor advertising and other hazardous structures. Robust safety audits, stringent enforcement of guidelines and zero tolerance to violations are needed to ensure citizens' safety across the

country.

Stringent laws have made prolonged detention norm

Why aren't district courts and high courts doing their job of providing legal redress in cases of personal liberty

IN the film world, we are used to the phenomenon of delayed releases. It seems to be so in the judicial world as well. Arvind Kejriwal has been released after 50 days in captivity, all during peak election campaigning. And now the Supreme Court has set at liberty Prabir Purkayastha after he has been inside a prison for about 225 days. While there is relief at the release, one must question why it takes so long, and what kind of laws keep men behind bars so easily.

Purkayastha is the head of NewsClick, an online journalistic platform known for its sharp reporting, independent views and for not being particularly respectful of the powers that be. People like him are irritants to excessively strong governments, which like media outlets to be supportive by nature or bought out otherwise. How dare he focus on the farmers' agitation, Covid failures and the like! He was charged with a rather unusual offence — of accepting funds from Chinese sources to influence the political narrative in India. A bit surprising, since one doesn't remember any pro-Chinese narrative from NewsClick. While one should be wary of China, one would have thought that would extend to preventing border incursions and curbing excessive dependence on imports. But no, Purkayastha is the problem, it seems. An associate turned approver — not much to wonder about that since this is happening pretty regularly now, as witnessed in the Kejriwal case. The flaw in the case was a gaping one. Purkayastha and his lawyer were not informed about the grounds for his arrest and the remand order was passed before the lawyer had received the remand application. Now this kind of non-conformity with the law is what lawyers and judges call "going to the root of the matter"; it vitiates the entire proceedings. Notice that this flaw happened on day one. Yet, and this is what should disturb us, it has taken the judicial

system more than half a year to release him. We need to focus on why it is that invariably the accused has to travel all the way to the apex court to obtain release. Why aren't district courts and high courts doing their job of providing legal redress in cases of personal liberty? While the members of the former may not feel sufficiently protected, HC judges have as much constitutional protection for their independence as the judges of the Supreme Court have. What prevents them from stepping up to the plate, especially when the facts are stark enough? The system works well when each level of the judiciary plays its part, and an overdependence on the highest court is not healthy. Even there, we have seen the unusual phenomenon of withdrawal of personal liberty cases of prominent individuals after a noticeable change of the roster. One cannot blame our judges overmuch, however. The chief problem is the monstrous nature of the laws under which these detentions are made. These are the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), 1967, and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. Purkayastha, Sudha Bharadwaj, Gautam Navlakha, the late Father Stan Swamy and other Bhima Koregaon accused were held under the first, and Kejriwal, Hemant Soren, K Kavitha, Manish Sisodia and other politicians under the latter. These Acts and later amendments — and here both the BJP and Congress governments are to blame — make it virtually impossible to get bail, mandating that the judge first find that the accused is prima facie innocent; this is an inversion of the time-honoured principle of presumption of innocence. This principle is the first rule of civilised societies, and any departure from it, unless justified by extreme risk to society, is an indication that the rule of law has

become a casualty to politics. There are other damaging provisions — the authorities can arrest without much cause; the normal criminal law restrictions on the police are absent; confessions obtained in custody are valid. Above all, there is the

public damage that was done in that infamous judgment (ADM Jabalpur vs Shivkant Shukla, 1976) where it was held four to one (the great Justice HR Khanna dissented) that with the proclamation of the Emergency and suspension of fundamental rights, citizens were at the mercy of the State. The SC has admitted a review of the Choudhary judgment, but this is another priority case languishing without a hearing. Of cheer today, however, is the judgment of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan, curbing the ED's power to arrest after the special court takes cognisance of a complaint. Purkayastha's long detention is particularly disturbing because courts worldwide are usually quick to examine cases of journalists being held in preventive custody. The judiciary and a free press are pillars of democracy, and the courts must be more vigilant in checking overbearing governments of whichever hue which threaten their members. But recent detentions have lasted long — journalist Siddique Kappan, for example. In contrast, Arnab Goswami (albeit not arrested under these laws) got double-quick release; these are not good messages to send out.

he record of the authorities in proving guilt and securing convictions under these laws is abysmal — as low as 3 per cent. This means that citizens were being held despite being innocent, and often without reasonable cause. When will our laws and courts start thinking about compensation for unjust imprisonment and deprivation of liberty? And when will we teach officers of such agencies and their political masters that they do not have immunity for mala fide and wantonly wrongful acts? Is the arm of the law sufficiently long?



application of this draconian statute to ordinary offences. Even the dreaded Maintenance of Internal Secudrity Act (MISA), 1976, had an advisory board of high court judges to review detentions during the Emergency; it is noteworthy that the laws in question have no such provision in free India. The sad part of the story is that the SC has upheld the validity of these laws — lock, stock and barrel — for the State and against citizens. A blot on our judicial landscape is the judgment of Justice AM Khanwilkar in the VM Choudhary case, equalling the constitutional and

An INDIA alliance victory will lead to de-rating of markets: Brokerage report

NEW DELHI. If Congress-led INDIA alliance comes to power, it will lead to de-rating in markets and in specific sectors such as defence, capital goods, tourism, PSU's (including banks), drones, AMC, wires and cables, plastic pipes and EMS, said brokerage firm Prabhudas Lilladher in its 'India Strategy Report - Mandate 2024, Brace of Volatility' report on Friday.

The report comes as India completes the 4th phase of what it calls the most 'hotly contested Lok Sabha elections in its history'. It added that the narrative of NDA falling short of a majority or INDIA alliance coming to power is raising their head, at least in social media and global press. Most brokerages and opinion polls, however, still feel a win for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP. Markets have been nervous for the past couple of weeks and sustained volatility in the run-up to June 4 seems likely. Fear around a repeat of UPA victory in 2004 is making markets nervous as the unexpected event had resulted in a 15% decline in Sensex in a single day. Owing to low voter turnout, the market experienced a major correction last week with the benchmarks (BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty) plummeting 2% each. The bloodbath was more visible in the midcap and small-cap stocks.

The market, however, made a quick recovery this week as low inflation data in the US raised chances of at least two rate cuts by the Federal Reserve in 2024, a big positive for the market. Sensex gained 2.7% this week to close the Friday session at 73,917 while Nifty settled 2.3% higher at 22,466.

TechM former vice chairman Vineet Nayar dies

BENGALURU. Former Tech Mahindra vice chairman Vineet Nayar, 85, passed away on Thursday. A civil servant turned corporate professional; he was one of the doyens of the Indian tech industry. He worked with the World Bank and then went on to serve state-owned energy corporation GAIL as its inaugural chairman and MD. He later joined HCL Corporation as its MD and became vice chairman of HCL Technologies. Anand Mahindra, chairman of Mahindra Group, wrote on X, "Vineet was a larger than life figure in Indian business landscape. A distinguished IAS officer, who served with the World Bank, became the first Chairman of GAIL. He made a successful transition to the private sector becoming MD of HCL and the Vice Chairman of HCL Technologies."

GAIL net profit triples on gas biz turnaround

NEW DELHI. State-owned gas utility GAIL (India) on Thursday reported more than tripling of its fourth quarter net profit as its natural gas transmission and petrochemical business saw a turnaround.

Its standalone net profit of Rs 2,176.97 crore in the fourth quarter of 2023-24 - was 261% more than Rs 603.52 crore net profit in the same period last year, according to stock exchange filing by the company.

The net profit was, however, 26 per cent lower than Rs 2,842.62 crore earning in the preceding quarter of October-December. The year-on-year rise in profit was aided by a turnaround in the natural gas transmission



and petrochemicals business and an uptick in gas marketing. Against a loss of Rs 16.41 crore in the gas transmission business in January-March 2023, India's largest gas transportation and marketing firm booked a pre-tax profit of Rs 980 crore.

Stock Market Holiday on Monday, May 20: BSE Sensex, NSE Nifty To Remain Closed Due To Lok Sabha Elections

NEW DELHI. Benchmark Indian equity markets, both BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty, will remain closed on Monday, May 20, on account of Lok Sabha general elections. According to the BSE's website, equity, equity derivatives, and SLB and currency segments will remain closed on Monday. The market will now be opened on Tuesday, May 21.

This stock market holiday on May 20 is in line with the Section 25 of the Negotiable Instruments Act 1881, which recognises the importance of citizens' participation in the electoral process. On May 20, voting in Maharashtra will be held in the Lok Sabha seats of Dhule, Dindori, Nashik, Bhiwandi, Kalyan, Thane, Mumbai North, Mumbai North West, Mumbai North East, Mumbai South, Mumbai South Central, Mumbai North Central and Palghar. According to the Election Commission's announcements last week, the Lok Sabha polls in Maharashtra were scheduled to be held in five phases on April 19, April 26, May 7, May 13 and May 20. After this General Elections holiday, the next stock market holiday will be on 'Bakri Id' on June 17, 2024 (Monday). In the remaining calendar year 2024, there will be 7 more holidays after the Lok Sabha election holiday (15 holidays in total this year). The next holiday after Ram Navami is on Maharashtra Day on May 1. However, for the currency derivatives segments, there are 20 holidays in the current calendar year 2024. Apart from the Lok Sabha Elections holiday, 9 more holidays are left. The next holiday will be on Buddha Pournima on May 23 (Thursday).

'India to corner 18% of global GDP'

FM says country is poised to become the world's fastest-growing economy in the years ahead

NEW DELHI. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has projected India's share in global growth for the next five years to be at 18%. She conveyed optimism that the BJP government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi will secure victory in the Lok Sabha poll 2024 on June 4.

"We are confident that PM Modi is coming back with a good majority... We are looking at an India, which is going to be dynamic, contributing 18% to the global growth," Sitharaman said while addressing the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) Annual Business Summit 2024 on Friday. Currently, India's share in world GDP is around 10% in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms. India is ranked third in terms of GDP in PPP terms after China (whose share in global GDP is 19%) and the US (13%). She said with a burgeoning consumer market projected to



double by 2031, coupled with an increase in consumption expenditure and a consistent uptrend in financial services spending, India is positioned to maintain its status as the world's fastest-growing economy in the years ahead. She stressed that India looks at the private sector as a partner in the development of India. Meanwhile she also said the full budget for FY25 will be announced in July 2024 when the new government will be formed. As per Sitharaman, the

opportunity provided by India's demographic dividend spans the next 30 years. India's shift towards green energy and a sustainable economy is poised to create a fresh market and global demand. Referring to a 2021 World Economic Forum report, she highlighted projections of 50 million net new economy jobs emerging in India, along with a \$1 trillion economic impact by 2030. In addition, Arvind Panagariya, Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission, said if India

sustains the growth trend seen over the past two decades, it can rank as the world's third-largest economy by 2027-28. He highlighted that in the period starting from 2003-04, India eradicated extreme poverty, which now affects less than 3% of the population. He further added that a large part of the workforce in agriculture has to move to industrial or services economy, and that is the pathway to transformation.

BJP will win in LS poll: FM

Sitharaman conveyed optimism that the BJP government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi will secure victory in the Lok Sabha poll 2024 on June 4. Currently, India's share in world GDP is around 10% in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms. India is ranked third in terms of GDP in PPP terms after China

Renewables to create jobs

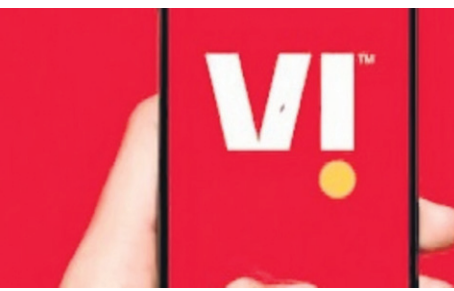
As per FM, the opportunity provided by India's demographic dividend spans next 30 years. India's shift towards green energy and a sustainable economy is poised to create a fresh market and global demand. Referring to a 2021 WEF report, she said projections of 50 mn net new economy jobs emerging in India

Vodafone to prioritise 4G network growth over 5G; to spend Rs 55,000 crore

NEW DELHI. Even as other telecom service providers have been rolling out 5G, Vodafone Idea Limited (Vi), the country's third-largest telecom operator, is still prioritising expanding its 4G networks.

The telco on Friday announced that it will spend Rs 55,000 crore in the next three years in capex, and focus on 4G expansion. "The capex will be spent on — expansion of 4G coverage by rolling out more sites, capacity growth in 4G where sites have been deployed already. The third will be 5G where rollout must be started afresh and then there will be enterprise... Our topmost priority is expanding 4G coverage, which is the only reason why we continue to lose customers, that capex will be fairly accelerated. The rest will

happen as traffic grows," said Akshaya Moondra, Vodafone Idea CEO in its fourth quarter FY24 investor call.



The telco has been losing its subscribers to the competitors for not investing in its network and improving 4G services. As per TRAI data, Vi has lost 16.25 million subscribers in the first 11

months of FY24. However, it earlier said the subscriber depletion is not due to not launching its commercial 5G services but not having a proper 4G network. Vi is the only private telco, other than Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio that is yet to come up with commercial 5G launches. The telco has only launched 5G networks in the country to meet Minimum Rollout Obligation to avoid penalties from the Department of Telecommunication (DoT). It has so far launched 5G in 4 circles - Maharashtra (Pune), Delhi, Chennai and Punjab to meet minimum rollout obligation. It will soon launch its 5G services in Bihar and Mumbai but not commercially.

Recommendations on OTT communication apps soon

NEW DELHI. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is in the process of finalising its recommendations on whether over-the-top (OTT) communication apps like WhatsApp, Telegram, and Signal need to be regulated.

The regulatory body announced an open house discussion in next two to three months over the regulation of OTT communication apps. TRAI chairman Anil Kumar Lahoti, on the sidelines of an event on Friday, dismissed that current OTT paper has become infructuous in the wake of notification of the Telecom Act. The Telecommunication Act 2023 removed the provision of regulation of OTT communication from its final version. "I know, we have an ongoing consultation on OTT communications. It is just that in last few months we are burning the midnight oil, clearing the number of references pending with us, and OTT communication is also in the line," said Lahoti.

In July 2023, TRAI had come up with a consultation paper on the regulatory mechanism for OTT communication services, after the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) asked the agency to reconsider its 2020 recommendations. In its 2020 recommendation, TRAI had proposed no regulation OTT services. In December 2023, telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said OTT players or applications won't be covered under the new telecom bill and will



continue to be regulated by the IT Act of 2000. When asked if the consultation paper was infructuous after enacting the Telecom Act, Lahoti answered in the negative. He said the OTT consultation was initiated after the recommendation of a Parliamentary panel so this consultation will be completed. "The OTT consultation was initiated after the recommendation of a Parliamentary panel so this consultation will be completed, and we will give our recommendation... which Act it becomes a part of and which ministry, or which regulator deals with it, is a separate matter," he said. He also mentioned that TRAI is dealing with OTT communication as a subject. Open house discussion Regulatory body TRAI announced an open house discussion in next two to three months over the regulation of OTT communication apps.

SpiceJet gets relief from paying Rs 270 cr to Maran

NEW DELHI. Low-cost carrier SpiceJet received a major relief on Friday as a division bench of the Delhi High Court overturned its previous ruling that directed the airline to refund over Rs 270 crore to its former promoter Kalanithi Maran of the Sun Group.

A bench of Justices Yashwant Varma and Ravinder Dudeja allowed the appeals filed by SpiceJet and its managing director Ajay Singh challenging the single judge's July 31, 2023 order. "The appeals stand allowed. Consequently, the July 31, 2023 order (of the single judge) is set aside," the bench said. Following this development, shares of SpiceJet rose as much as 6.5% and closed 5.5% higher at Rs 63 apiece.

The bench had earlier refused to stay the single judge's order and had asked Maran and his company Kal Airways to respond to the appeal. SpiceJet and



Singh's counsel had earlier argued that the challenge was on the issue of 18% interest, which the tribunal had directed SpiceJet to pay.

On July 31, 2023, the single judge had upheld the award announced by the arbitral tribunal on July 20, 2018, in favour of Maran and his Kal Airways. It had said the court was barred from entering into the merits of an award unless there was an error that was apparent on the face of the record or an illegality that goes to the root of the matter. Singh had approached the

Following this development, shares of SpiceJet rose as much as 6.5% and closed 5.5% higher at Rs 63 apiece.

single-judge bench of the high court challenging the arbitral award.

C bench allows SpiceJet appeals

A Delhi high court bench of Justices Yashwant Varma and Ravinder Dudeja allowed the appeals filed by SpiceJet and its managing director Ajay Singh challenging the single judge's July 31, 2023 order. Shares of SpiceJet rose as much as 6.5% and closed 5.5% higher at '63 apiece.

JSW Steel profit falls 62%, total income declines 2% in Q4FY24

Total income during the quarter also fell 2% to Rs 46,511. Operating EBITDA of the company during the quarter was Rs 6,124 crore.

NEW DELHI. JSW Steel has reported a 62% drop in consolidated net profit in the quarter ended March 2024. The consolidated net profit fell from Rs 3,446 crore in the fourth quarter of FY23 to Rs 1,322 crore in the same quarter in FY24. Total income during the quarter also fell 2% to Rs 46,511. Operating EBITDA of the company during the quarter was Rs 6,124 crore. The company in a press statement said that crude steel production during the quarter was 6.79 million tonne, and recorded the highest-ever sale of saleable steel at 6.73 million tonne. In FY24, the company, however, posted a



116% growth in net profit at Rs 8,793 crore compared to Rs 4,139 crore in FY23. The company also posted the highest ever revenue from operations

during FY24 at Rs 1.75 lakh crore. During the previous financial year (FY24), the company produced highest ever crude steel at 26.43 million tonne,

and sold highest-ever saleable steel at 24.78 million tonne.

The company's net debt to equity stood at 0.93x at the end of the March 2024 quarter, as against 1.02x at the end of Q3 FY24. Net debt as of March 31, 2024, stood at Rs 73,916 crore, lower by Rs 5,305 crore than in December 2023 quarter due to healthy cash generation, release of working capital and calibrated capex. Meanwhile, the company on Friday announced that the board has approved acquisition of Minas de Revuboe Limitada (MDR), which owns a high quality and large scale pre-development stage premium hard coking coal mine project in the Moatize Basin of Tete Province in Mozambique. It is one of the largest pre-development stage premium hard coking coal projects globally and has mineral reserves in excess of 800 million tonnes. The consideration for the acquisition has not been disclosed.

Indian students in Kyrgyzstan asked to stay indoors after mob violence

New Delhi: India, as well as Pakistan, on Saturday advised students in Bishkek "to stay indoors" amid mob violence targeting international students erupted in Kyrgyzstan's capital city. While the Embassy of India in Kyrgyzstan said the "situation is presently calm", Pakistan's mission said a few hostels of medical universities in Bishkek, where students from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan reside, have been attacked amid the violence.

"We are in touch with our students. The situation is presently calm, but students are advised to stay indoors for the moment and get in touch with the Embassy in case of any issue. Our 24—7 contact number is 0555710041," the Indian mission in Bishkek tweeted. According to data from the Ministry of External Affairs, some 14,500 Indian students reside in Kyrgyzstan. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar retweeted the Embassy post, and said, "Monitoring the welfare of Indian students in Bishkek. Situation is reportedly calm now."

In its advisory posted on social media, Pakistan's Embassy in Bishkek said that the matter escalated after videos of a fight between Kyrgyz and Egyptian students on May 13 went viral online on Friday. "A few hostels of medical universities in Bishkek and private residences of international students, including Pakistanis, have been attacked. The hostels are inhabited by students from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh," it said. "There have been reports of light injuries to a number of students from Pakistan. Despite social media posts about the alleged death and rape of Pakistani students, so far, we have not received any confirmed reports." The Embassy further said that Pakistani students have been asked to "stay indoors until the situation returns to normal", adding that the violence appeared to be directed against all foreign students, and not just Pakistanis. There are about 10,000 Pakistani students in the Central Asian nation currently. Meanwhile, Pakistan's Ambassador to



Kyrgyzstan, Hasan Zaigham said authorities were liaising with local law enforcement in Bishkek to ensure the safety of students.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has also expressed "deep concerns" over the situation in Bishkek, saying he has directed

the country's envoy in Bishkek to "provide all necessary help and assistance" to the students. Also taking to social media, the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party posted several videos, in which a mob was seen walking and running on a road at night. "Extremely disturbing reports coming in from Kyrgyzstan, where thousands of Pakistani students are under attack, with reports of violence and deaths," the party tweeted on Saturday and asked the Pakistan Foreign Office, the Embassy in Bishkek and the Foreign Ministry in Kyrgyzstan to "take immediate and effective measures to ensure safety of all Pakistani students". Another video doing the rounds on social media shows a corridor inside a building which has been vandalised. The footage shows broken doors and glass shards on the floor. Additional footage has emerged where a mob is seen dragging a person by the leg and then physically assaulting the individual. However, there was no official confirmation on the identity of the person being attacked.

Indian students, hiding in a Bishkek cafe, seek embassy's help

New Delhi: As a mob went on a rampage in Kyrgyzstan, attacking international students, a video went viral on X showing a group of Indian students contacting presumably an Indian Embassy employee, seeking help. In the video, the student says he, along with other youngsters, were hiding in a cafe in Bishkek. He could be heard asking the staffer about the steps being taken by the government to protect the Indian students. To this, the alleged staffer says "nothing can be done in the middle of the night."

Reportedly, there have been several incidents of mob violence against foreign students in Bishkek since last evening, the Pakistan Embassy in Kyrgyzstan said in a social media post. The Pakistani Embassy also said a few hostels of medical universities in Bishkek and private residences of international students, including Pakistanis, were attacked.

In a post on X, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday said the situation was reportedly calm now, and that they were monitoring the welfare of Indian students in Bishkek. On Saturday morning, the Embassy of India in Kyrgyzstan said it was in touch with the students and also issued a helpline number.

"The situation is presently calm, but students are advised to stay indoors for the moment and get in touch with the Embassy in case of any issue. Our 24x7 contact number is 0555710041," the Indian mission in Bishkek tweeted.

Swati Maliwal's medical report after 'assault' reveals bruises on face, leg

New Delhi: A medical report of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Swati Maliwal has revealed bruises on her face and leg after she was allegedly assaulted by Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar at the Chief Minister's residence on May 13. As per the report by the Jai Prakash Narayan Apex Trauma Centre at AIIMS, Delhi, Maliwal sustained injuries to four parts of her body, including her left leg and below the right eye. The test was Maliwal was conducted on Thursday and the report was published the following day. According to her medico-legal certificate (MLC), the AAP MP has "bruises over proximal left leg dorsal aspect of approx size 3x2 cm and right cheek elbow below right eye of approx size 2x2 cm". It also stated that according to the "history provided by the patient" of being assaulted by Bibhav Kumar at the Chief Minister's residence, she was "slapped multiple times", and "hit her head on a sharp object after she was pushed" by the accused.

She fell on the floor and after that, she was hit multiple times by legs on her chest, abdomen and pelvis. (The patient at present is complaining of pain over thighs, pelvis, neck stiffness and headache," it added. However, the report did not state the nature of the injury. In her complaint to the Delhi Police against Bibhav Kumar, Maliwal claimed that Chief Minister's aide slapped her, beat her with sticks, hit her in the stomach, and physically assaulted her.

Based on the complaint, the police registered an FIR against Kumar on Thursday. No formal complaint was filed when the former head of the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) had first alleged on Monday that Bibhav Kumar assaulted her at the Chief Minister's official residence. A day after the charges, AAP confirmed the allegations and stated that Kejriwal has directed stern action to be taken in the matter. In the early hours of Saturday, a Delhi Police team left Kejriwal's residence after Earlier on Friday, Maliwal was taken to the residence to recreate the crime scene. She was accompanied by a team from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), as well as Delhi Police officers.

Meanwhile, Bibhav Kumar has filed a counter-complaint against Maliwal, saying that she was "trying to falsely implicate" him in an effort to "create undue pressure". He claimed that she tried to "create a ruckus and assault" him as she "forcefully and unauthorisedly" entered the Delhi Chief Minister's residence. Asking the police to take strict action as per law, he alleged that "all of this may have been done at the behest of the BJP" as the Lok Sabha polls are ongoing. "It is therefore requested that her call records, chats and interactions with BJP leaders should also be investigated."

In 10 Years, India Adds 31,000-Km Rail Network - Equal To All Of Germany

New Delhi: Union Minister for Railways, Communications and IT Ashwini Vaishnav has reeled out data to showcase transformative changes in the Indian Railways in the past 10 years of the Modi government while also highlighting its neglect during Congress-led regimes.

Addressing the Viksit Bharat Ambassador event in Mumbai, the Union Minister gave a detailed account of how the Railways, seen and treated as 'milk cow' in previous regimes witnessed all-round development under the Modi government. In his detailed presentation, leaving the audience mesmerised, the Minister informed how the Railways added a huge tranche of networks and underwent wide-scale electrification and modernisation, so much so, that the developed economies are finding it tough to match steps with India. Today,



a 4 km rail track per day is being built in the country. In the last financial year alone, we built a 5,300 km rail network, which is equal to Switzerland's entire train network. In the past 10 years, 31,000 km railway track was added, which is equal to Germany's entire network," the Union Minister told the Viksit Bharat Ambassadors. Giving a low-down on the electrification and modernisation of Railways under the Modi government, Mr Vaishnav said that 44,000 km of railway networks were

electrified in the past 10 years, as compared to 20,000 km in the past 60 years of Congress governance. "Today, we are heading towards 100 per cent electrification in the Indian Railways," he added. Ashwini Vaishnav said that the Railways despite being the biggest public carrier remained in despair because of the previous govern. "Conversion from Meter gauge to broad gauge networks should have been initiated during 1950-60s but that was taken up during NDA government," he said. The Minister also elaborated on the renovation of railway stations and the manufacturing of home-grown modern trains under the Modi government. Redevelopment of more than 300 railway stations across the country is under progress, with 120 stations alone in Maharashtra. Shivaji Maharaj railway station is one such state-of-the-art model.

"DK Shivakumar Offered Me 100 Crore To Defame PM": Karnataka BJP Leader

Hassan, Karnataka: Arrested BJP leader G Devaraje Gowda alleged on Friday that Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar offered him ? 100 crore to malign the names of former Chief Minister and JDS state President HD Kumaraswamy and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Speaking to reporters from the police vehicle after being sent to judicial custody on Friday, Devaraje Gowda claimed that Mr Shivakumar even sent him ? 5 crore as advance. "After I refused the offer, police cases were lodged against me and I was arrested. I am ready to expose him (DK Shivakumar) once I am released. The Congress government is going to collapse in Karnataka," he claimed.

Devaraje Gowda added, "I was told to make a statement that it was HD Kumaraswamy who circulated the pen drives containing sex videos (involving Kumaraswamy's nephew

Prajwal Revanna, the grandson of ex-PM HD Deve Gowda). But it was DK Shivakumar who obtained the pen drive from Karthik Gowda, who worked as a driver for Prajwal Revanna, and planned the entire episode." A team of four ministers, including N Cheluvarayaswamy, Krishna Byre Gowda, and Priyank Kharge, was formed to handle the developments relating to the sex video scandal," Devaraje Gowda claimed. "They had planned in a big way to bring disrepute to Prime Minister Modi, HD Kumaraswamy, and the BJP. They offered me ? 100 crore and sent ? 5 crore as advance to Room No. 110 at Bowling Club. A local leader from Channarayapattana, Gopalaswamy, was sent to negotiate the deal," Devaraje Gowda claimed.

"DK Shivakumar made the ? 100 crore offer to malign the name of Prime Minister Modi by linking him to the

sex scandal. Shivakumar's main objective is to finish Kumaraswamy politically," he added. "When I refused to be a part of their plans, they first fixed me in an atrocity case, but couldn't find any evidence. Later, they fixed me in a sexual harassment case. When this ploy also failed, they lodged a rape case against me. I was interrogated for four days, but they couldn't get anything," he claimed. "I have the audio recordings of Shivakumar's conversations. I will release them and the Congress government will collapse once I am out of prison," Devaraje Gowda claimed as the police vehicle drove off.

On May 6, Devaraje Gowda claimed that Shivakumar was behind the release of the pen drive containing videos of sexual assault. He also said that Prime Minister Modi was Congress' main target.

At 47.4°C, Delhi's Najafgarh hottest place in country, heatwave in other states

Delhi on Friday recorded its hottest day of the year at 47.4 degrees Celsius in Najafgarh, prompting an orange alert for heatwave conditions. Similar conditions were expected across several northern and central Indian states in the coming days.

New Delhi: Delhi on Friday recorded the hottest day of the year so far, with the mercury soaring to 47.4 degrees Celsius in the Najafgarh area. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Najafgarh was the hottest place in the country on Friday. The maximum temperature at the Safdarjung weather station, which provides a marker for the city, recorded the mercury soaring over three notches above the normal at 43.6 degrees Celsius.

As many as eight stations in Delhi breached the 45 degrees Celsius mark, leaving the residents sweltering. The weather department issued an orange alert in the national capital, saying that heatwave conditions were expected in some parts in the next two days. Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions were also likely in many pockets of Punjab, Haryana-Chandigarh-Delhi and a few pockets of Rajasthan. Similar weather conditions were likely in isolated pockets of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gangetic West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Saurashtra, and Kutch on May 20.

WEATHER CONDITIONS IN OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY

According to the weather department, thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds were expected in parts of Andhra Pradesh for four days from May 17. Parts of north coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema were also expected to receive rainfall, with gusty winds up to

speeds of 50 km per hour (kmph). Further, the weather department said the southwest monsoon will likely advance into the South Andaman Sea, parts of the southeast



Bay of Bengal and the Nicobar Islands around May 19.

CHANDIGARH, HARYANA UNDER HEATWAVE

The maximum temperature in Chandigarh on Friday reached 44.5 degrees Celsius as hot weather conditions continued unabated in Haryana and Punjab, the weather office said on Friday. The common capital of the two states was

hotter by six notches above the season's normal limits, it said. Rohtak and Sirsa in Haryana recorded identical maximums of 45.8 degrees Celsius, while heatwave also swept Hisar, Karnal and Ambala, which recorded temperatures of 45.5, 43.4 and 43.4 degrees Celsius, respectively, it said.

Bhiwani recorded a maximum temperature of 43.2 degrees Celsius, the MeT department said. In Punjab, the maximum temperature in Amritsar reached 44.3 degrees Celsius, while in Faridkot it was 43 degrees Celsius, it said. According to the weather office, the mercury settled at 44.4 degrees Celsius in Patiala and Pathankot, and 43.8 degrees Celsius in Ludhiana. Gurdaspur recorded a high of 43 degrees Celsius while Mohali registered a maximum of 43.2 degrees Celsius, it said.

RAJASTHAN'S BARMER HOTTEST SO FAR

The scorching heat continued in Rajasthan, where the highest temperature was recorded in Barmer at 46.5 degrees Celsius on Friday.

NEWS BOX

Kamala Harris agrees to debate Donald Trump's vice presidential pick

Washington. Vice President Kamala Harris has accepted an invitation from CBS News to debate former President Donald Trump's vice presidential pick this summer, the Biden campaign said on Thursday, as the Republican said he might wait until his party's convention in July to announce his selection. Harris's team told the network she would debate in-studio on Tuesday, July 23, or Tuesday, August 13, and encouraged the Trump campaign to agree to one of the dates for his eventual vice presidential pick. The Trump campaign didn't immediately comment on the debate invite. Trump, in an interview with TMJ4 taped from New York, said there was "a pretty good chance" he would announce his vice presidential pick at the GOP convention in Milwaukee, which begins on July 15, rather than before. "I don't say anything is 100%, but you're getting pretty close," he was quoted saying. "I'll be doing it in Milwaukee. We're going to have a great time."

The announcement comes after President Joe Biden and Trump agreed to two debates this summer to be hosted by CNN on June 27 and ABC on September 10.

The debates are not expected to take place before live audiences - a key demand of the Biden campaign that contributed to its decision to ditch the debates organised by the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates, which had organised every presidential and vice presidential general election debate since 1988.

US teen dies of heart attack after eating ultra-spicy chip in a challenge

World A 14-year-old boy in Massachusetts died of a heart attack after he ate a tortilla chip containing a high concentration of a chemical compound found in chilli peppers. The incident happened last September. However, the cause of the boy's death was determined only on Thursday. According to a report with CNN, the boy, identified as Harris Wolobah, was suffering from a congenital heart defect. In September last year, he attempted Paqui's ultra-spicy "One Chip Challenge" when he ingested the tortilla chip seasoned with both the Carolina Reaper pepper and the Naga Viper pepper. In a statement to CNN, the chief medical examiner's office on Thursday confirmed that Wolobah died of cardiopulmonary arrest after eating a food substance "with (a) high capsaicin concentration." A Paqui spokesperson also told the publication that the challenge was intended only for adults. "Paqui's One Chip Challenge was intended for adults only, with clear and prominent labelling highlighting that the product was not for children or anyone sensitive to spicy foods or with underlying health conditions," he said.

Capsaicin is the spicy, naturally occurring chemical in chilli peppers. The Carolina Reaper Pepper ranks just under pepper spray on the Scoville scale, which measures the pungency of peppers and chillies.

The Naga Viper is a bit less pungent, coming in at around 1.2 million heat units on the scale, which is far spicier than a jalapeno pepper, which comes in at about 5,000 heat units, the report said.

British Sikh peer faces Parliament ban for 'bullying, harassment' while drunk

London The UK Parliament's Conduct Committee on Friday released its report into the conduct of British Sikh peer Lord Kulveer Ranger and found him in breach of the Code of Conduct on bullying and harassment following a drunken incident in the House of Lords.

The 49-year-old Parliamentarian, who has apologised for his conduct, will be suspended for three weeks and also be banned from access to the bars in Parliament for a period of 12 months after the committee said it was "struck by the seriousness of the incident". The report entitled 'The conduct of Lord Ranger of Northwood' goes on to detail how two complainants, both members of the Parliamentary community, were accosted with inappropriate comments and invasion of their personal space in a way they found threatening. Their report will now be tabled before the Lords to agree its findings of the sanction after the House reconvenes early next month. "We recommend that Lord Ranger of Northwood be suspended from the service of the House for three weeks," concludes the report by the cross-party Conduct Committee. "We further recommend that Lord Ranger of Northwood be denied access to bars in the House of Lords for a period of 12 months, and that in other Lords catering venues that serve both alcohol and food, he be denied service of alcohol for the same period. We invite the Commons authorities to consider whether a similar response would be appropriate with regard to the facilities administered by that House," it notes. The committee's report follows findings by the House of Lords Commissioner for Standards, Martin Jelley, who concluded Ranger had breached paragraph 19 of the Code of Conduct applying to bullying and harassment.

He, however, recommended a shorter one-week suspension taking Lord Ranger's apology and "out of character" nature of the conduct into account, which the committee felt was not sufficient given the "aggravating factors" of Ranger's alcohol intake and the power imbalance between him and the complainants. "I am deeply mortified at the descriptions of my behaviour. I must say I have little recollection of the incident but that is in no way to diminish how you both have described my actions or how they made you feel," reads Ranger's letter of "sincere" apology to the complainants, also published alongside the committee's report. "Throughout my life I have never seen it fit to behave in an aggressive or rude manner. I can only add that I have had a variety of very concerning health issues for both my children and wife during December and January that have been very stressful and taken a significant toll on my physical capacity and mental health, and may have had some bearing on my wholly uncharacteristic outburst and responses to your questions, for which again I am extremely sorry," he adds. The committee said Ranger did not appeal against either the commissioner's findings or the recommended sanction and instead wrote a further letter of apology to the Conduct Committee, enclosing two character references.

Israel makes advances in Gaza's Jabalia, Hamas attacks tanks in Rafah

Cairo Israeli forces battled Hamas fighters in the narrow alleyways of Jabalia in northern Gaza on Friday in some of the fiercest engagements since they returned to the area a week ago, while in the south militants attacked tanks massing around Rafah. Residents said Israeli armour had thrust as far as the market at the heart of Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps, and that bulldozers were demolishing homes and shops in the path of the advance. "Tanks and planes are wiping out residential districts and markets, shops, restaurants, everything. It is all happening before the one-eyed world," Ayman Rajab, a resident of western Jabalia, said via a chat app. Israel had said its forces cleared Jabalia months earlier in the Gaza war, triggered by the deadly Hamas-led attacks on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, but said last week it was returning to prevent Islamist militants re-grouping there. In southern Gaza bordering Egypt, thick smoke rose over Rafah, where an escalating Israeli assault has sent hundreds of thousands of people fleeing from what was one of the few remaining places of refuge. "People are terrified, and they're trying to get

away," Jens Laerke, UN humanitarian office spokesperson, said in Geneva, adding that most were following orders to move north towards the coast but that there were no safe routes or destinations. As the fighting raged, the US military said trucks started moving aid ashore from a temporary pier, the first to reach the besieged enclave by sea in a week. The World Food Programme, which expects food, water, shelter and medical supplies to arrive through the floating dock, said the aid was transported to its warehouses in Deir Al Balah in central Gaza and told partners it was ready for distribution. The UN earlier reiterated that truck convoys by land -- disrupted this month by the assault on Rafah -- were still the most efficient way of getting aid in. "To stave off the horrors of famine, we must use the fastest and most obvious route to reach the people of Gaza, and for that, we need access by land now," deputy UN spokesperson Farhan Haq said.

US aid was arriving in Cyprus for delivery to Gaza via the new pier, Washington said. Hamas demanded an end to Israel's siege and accused Washington of complicity



with an Israeli policy of "starvation and blockade". The White House said US national security adviser Jake Sullivan would visit Israel on Sunday and stress the need for a targeted offensive against Hamas militants rather than a full-scale assault on Rafah. A group of US medical workers left the Gaza Strip after getting stuck at the hospital where they were providing care, the White House said.

HUMANITARIAN FEARS

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said troops killed more than 60 militants in Jabalia in recent days and located a weapons warehouse in a "divisional-level offensive". A divisional operation would typically involve several brigades of

thousands of troops each, making it one of the biggest of the war. "The 7th Brigade's fire control centre directed dozens of airstrikes, eliminated terrorists and destroyed terrorist infrastructure," the IDF said. At least 35,303 Palestinians have now been killed, according to figures from the enclave's health ministry, while aid agencies have warned repeatedly of widespread hunger and dire shortages of fuel and medical supplies. Israel says it must capture Rafah to destroy Hamas and ensure the country's safety. In the Hamas attack on October 7, 1,200 people died in Israel and 253 were taken hostage, according to Israeli tallies. About 128 hostages are still being held in Gaza.

Israel said on Friday that its forces retrieved the bodies of three people killed at the Nova music festival in Israel on October 7 and taken into Gaza. In response, Hamas said negotiations were the only way for Israel to retrieve hostages alive. "The enemy will not get its prisoners except as lifeless corpses or through an honourable exchange deal for our people and our resistance." Talks on a ceasefire have been at an impasse.

4 Indians among 6 indicted for staging robberies in US to obtain U-visas

Washington Six individuals, including four Indian nationals, were on Friday indicted by a federal court for staging armed robberies in Chicago and the suburbs so that the victims could apply for immigration visas reserved for certain crime victims in the United States.

According to an indictment unsealed in federal court in Chicago, the four individuals Bhikhabhai Patel, Nilesh Patel, Ravinaben Patel and Rajni Kumar Patel, arranged with Parth Nayi and Kewong Young to be "victims" of the staged robberies so that they could submit applications for U non-immigrant status ("U-visa").

U-Visa is set aside for victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse and is helpful to law enforcement or government officials in an investigation or prosecution. The indictment alleges that the four



individuals paid Nayi thousands of dollars to participate in the scam.

During the staged robberies, individuals acting as robbers brandished what appeared to be firearms, approached the purported victims and demanded money and property, the indictment states. Afterwards, some of the purported victims submitted forms to local law enforcement to obtain certification that they were victims of a qualifying crime and had been or

would be helpful in the investigation, the indictment states. Upon receiving certification, some of the purported victims then submitted fraudulent U-visa applications to US Citizenship and Immigration Services predicated upon their alleged status as a robbery victim, the Department of Justice said in a statement. Nayi, 26, Young, 31, Bhikhabhai Patel, 51, Nilesh Patel, 32, Ravinaben Patel, 23, and Rajnikumar Patel, 32, are charged with conspiracy to commit visa fraud.

Ravinaben Patel is also charged with an individual count of making a false statement in a visa application.

The conspiracy charge is punishable by a maximum sentence of five years in federal prison, while the false statement charge against Ravinaben Patel is punishable by up to ten years, the media release said.

Boeing whistleblower John Barnett died by suicide, note read 'I'm at peace'

Boeing whistleblower John Barnett took his own life, police said on Friday, after concluding their investigation into the case. Barnett, who worked as a former manager at the aerospace manufacturing firm, was found dead in his truck in March following several days of depositions in South Carolina.

The 62-year-old's death was discovered after he failed to appear for his second day of depositions in a lawsuit against Boeing. His lawyers called for a wellness check, and Barnett was found with a gunshot wound to his left temple. He had a pistol in his right hand, and police said that the injuries were self-inflicted. Investigators also found a single shell casing in the truck and a suicide note on the passenger seat. The coroner's report, which has been released, has confirmed suicide. "All findings were consistent with a self-inflicted gunshot wound," Fox News reported, quoting the report from Charleston County Coroner Bobbi Jo O'Neal. Furthermore, the contents of the suicide note have been revealed, in which John Barnett wrote, "I can't do this any longer. Enough."

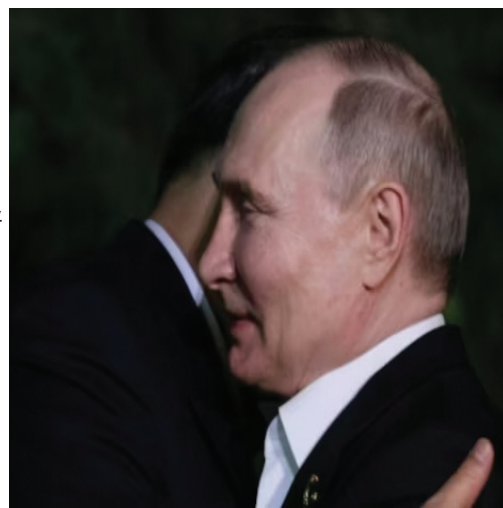
He also wrote, "F*** Boeing" and a "I love you all"



to his family and friends, The New York Post reported. "I found my purpose. I am at peace," the suicide note read. Authorities said they have authenticated the handwriting as that of John Barnett's because only his fingerprints were found on the notebook. Police also said that the Boeing whistleblower was locked inside his truck alone when they found him, along with the key fob. They didn't find any sign of unusual travel patterns or communications in his phone records, and hotel surveillance video also showed Barnett leaving the place alone before reversing into a car park shortly after. No one came or went from his vehicle until he was discovered dead, Fox News reported. Additionally, police said records showed John Barnett bought the handgun legally in 2000. John Barnett was a longtime Boeing employee and worked as a quality-control manager before he retired in 2017. Later, he shared his concerns with journalists, saying he noticed discarded metal shavings near wiring for the flight controls of Boeing planes that could've cut the wiring and caused a catastrophe.

Nice for them': White House jokes about Putin, Xi Jinping exchanging hug

Speaking about Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping's meeting that saw the two exchange a hug, US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby joked and said, "Well, that's nice for them."



The White House said Friday that it had not seen any surprising advance in relations between China and Russia despite Vladimir Putin exchanging a hug with Xi Jinping on a visit to Beijing. "Exchanging hugs? Well, that's nice for them," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told a briefing when asked about the significance of photos showing the two

US adversaries locked in an embrace. "I'm not good at talking about personal human bodily affection one way or the other. I think I'll leave it to these two gents to talk about why they thought it was good to hug one another," said Kirby, a naval admiral

known for his dry remarks from the podium. The United States has repeatedly voiced concerns about Chinese companies supplying Russia with technology for its invasion of Ukraine. But Kirby said Putin's visit did not seem to have secured any major advances in this regard and Washington had not seen Xi "rush" to assist Moscow's armed forces. "We didn't see anything coming out of this meeting that we were necessarily surprised by," he said. But he added that "I wouldn't go so far as to say we weren't concerned about this relationship and where

it's going. "We're watching." Putin arrived Thursday on his first trip abroad since his March re-election, meeting Xi for talks in which the leaders framed their nations' ties as a stabilising force in a chaotic world.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy expects Russia to intensify offensive in northeast Ukraine

Kyiv, UPDATED. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in an exclusive interview with AFP on Friday he expects Russia to step up its offensive in the northeast and warned Kyiv only has a quarter of the air defences it needs to hold the front line. Russian forces, which have made only moderate advances in recent months, launched a surprise assault in Kharkiv region on May 10 that has resulted in their biggest territorial gains in a year-and-a-half. Zelenskyy said Russian troops managed to advance between five and 10 km along the northeastern border before being stopped by Ukrainian forces, but added that the region could be the "first wave" in a wider offensive. "I won't say it's a great success (for Russia) but we have to be sober and understand that they are going deeper into our territory," he said, speaking from Kyiv in his first interview with foreign media since the offensive began. Zelenskyy said the situation in Kharkiv region has been "controlled" but "not stabilised". He doubled down on pleas to allies to send more air defence and fighter jets to combat Russia's air superiority as the war grinds through its third year. "Today, we have about 25 per cent of what we need to



defend Ukraine. I'm talking about air defence," he said. Ukraine needs "120 to 130" F-16 fighter jets or other advanced aircraft to achieve air "parity" with Russia, Zelenskyy said. Kharkiv offensive Russian President Vladimir Putin said during a trip to China this week the northeastern offensive was in retaliation for Ukraine's shelling of border regions and that Moscow was trying to create a "security zone". Russian

forces have taken 278 square km between May 9 and 15, their biggest gains since the end of 2022, AFP calculated using data from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). Both countries said Russian troops are still advancing, while Moscow's defence ministry said its forces have captured 12 villages in the Kharkiv region so far. Ukraine has evacuated almost 9,000 people from the northeast border area since Russia launched the

assault.

Putin said there was no intention at this stage to take Kharkiv, Ukraine's second city, about 30 km from the border. More than one million people still live there. The Ukrainian governor of the Kharkiv region, Oleg Syngubov, warned, however, that Russia was gaining ground near Lukyantsi, a village around 20 km northeast of Kharkiv city. Kyiv pulled its troops back from that area this week amid heavy fire and has rushed in reinforcements. Military analysts say the northeastern offensive could aim to further stretch Ukrainian troops and resources, with Russia pressing its manpower and ammunition advantage.

Ukraine army chief Oleksandr Syrsky said Russia was trying to force Ukraine to pull up even more troops from its reserves. "We realise that there will be heavy fighting ahead and the enemy is preparing for it," he said.

Mobilisation law

As he anticipates a widening Russian offensive, Zelenskyy acknowledged issues with staffing and "morale" within Ukraine's often outgunned and outmanned ranks. "We need to staff the reserves..."

NEWS BOX

IPL 2024: Will Jacks and his intent will be missed against CSK, admits RCB coach

New Delhi Assistant coach Malolan Rangarajan said that RCB will miss their star batter Will Jacks in the crucial IPL 2024 clash on Saturday against CSK at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. The 25-year-old Jacks came late into the RCB playing XI, but made an impact right away. In 8 games, the English batter racked up 230 runs at an average of 32.85 and a strike-rate of 175.57. However, he won't be a part of the RCB team anymore as he has joined the England national team with the T20 World Cup preparations in mind. Jacks is also a part of the Brits for their 4-match T20I series against Pakistan, starting May 22 at the Headingley in Leeds. Will Jacks will be missed and the intent with which he played will be missed more. There's no denying how impactful he was," Rangarajan said in the pre-match press conference.

Not worried about losing wickets'

The RCB coach also heaped praise on Jacks for his 41-ball hundred against GT last month at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. He also mentioned that an aggressive brand of cricket has helped RCB change their fortunes in the tournament. "Everybody speaks about the hundred he got against Gujarat, but also what you have to notice and appreciate is the brand of cricket we played last time when we were two wickets down. We aren't worried about losing wickets, we are looking to put back pressure on the opposition," Rangarajan said.

Although he did not name Jacks' replacement directly, Rangarajan hinted that Glenn Maxwell might make a return to the playing XI. "About who comes in, you don't need to be a rocket scientist to figure it out. I am not going to name him, it's not my place to say it. But we are happy that we have very good options and very experienced options out there; people who have won multiple tournaments around the globe," Rangarajan added. Currently placed seventh in the table, RCB need to beat CSK by 18 runs or chase down a target in 18.1 overs to finish in the top 4 and make their way through to the playoffs.

Nicolas Jarry stuns Tommy Paul to set up Italian Open final against Alexander Zverev

New Delhi Chilean 21st seed Nicolas Jarry outclassed American Tommy Paul 6-3, 6-7(3), 6-3 to reach the Italian Open on Friday as former champion Alexander Zverev recovered from a slow start to beat Chilean Alejandro Tabilo 1-6, 7-6(4), 6-2. Jarry produced relentless power from the baseline, hitting 13 aces and 35 winners to reach his first ATP Masters 1000 final in two hours and 44 minutes. Jarry took a 5-3 lead in the opener, relying on his service before closing out the set with a brilliant ace. Paul, the 14th seed, refused to go quietly in the second, pegging back the Chilean's 4-2 lead to force a tiebreak, which the American won to take the match to a decider.

'Never easy to finish'

"I think I played my best tennis. I gave it everything and went for it. I did that the whole match. It's hard to keep that level of concentration, but now I'm in the final," Jarry said. "It was hard to enjoy it. I tried anyway. The important thing is that I came back with my best tennis in the third set and was aggressive. It's never easy to finish, but I did it and it's amazing the feeling I have now." Jarry added. Jarry started the third strongly and opened a 5-2 lead, winning 13 points at the net before securing victory when a Paul backhand went wide. Earlier on Friday, Zverev, who won the title in 2017 and reached the final the following year, looked in real danger when 29th seed Tabilo raced away with the opening set.

The 26-year-old, who beat world number one Novak Djokovic in the third round, was playing in his first ATP Masters 1000 semi-final, but did not look fazed as he broke Zverev twice in the first set. Tabilo won five games in a row in taking the opener, but the second was much closer. The Chilean did force the only break point of the set, but Zverev held and went on to win the tiebreak.

German Zverev raised his game in the deciding set, breaking twice, and was never threatened again en route to his first final of the year.

Hardik Pandya deal from GT to MI: How the move flopped for all 3 parties involved

New Delhi. Hardik Pandya's IPL 2024 season started early as he was involved in a mega deal that saw him move from GT to back to MI. Mumbai was the side which groomed Hardik to be the premium all-rounder for India in white-ball cricket and it was a surprise when he was let go before the 2022 auction. Hardik was quickly taken up by the newly-formed GT at that time, and he delivered instant success in the form of the IPL 2022 title and reaching the final last year. MI were quick to make amends and got him onboard and went one step ahead to hand him the captaincy from legendary skipper Rohit Sharma. Many expected it to be a change of guard at the 5-time IPL champions, but what happened was the exact opposite. MI became the first team to be knocked out from the playoffs race, and Hardik's captaincy was criticised at different points in the campaign. The response he got the MI fans was less than impressive, with the all-rounder being booed on multiple occasions.

The MI players would defend him multiple times, with even the likes of Sanjay Manjrekar asking the crowd to 'behave', but the support didn't seem to be coming in for the new skipper. In the end, Hardik and MI's nightmare season came to an end with another loss to LSG and holding the wooden spoon.

Hours of net batting, power hitting irrespective of formats during Andhra camp: Reddy's mantra for success

HYDERABAD. All-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy has been a revelation for the Sunrisers Hyderabad this season. The 20-year-old from Andhra turned out to be a vital cog for the 2016 champions in their resurgence. He has played a couple of brilliant knocks to steer the team to safety after the early fall of the wickets on a few occasions. His 37-ball 64 against Punjab Kings and a quickfire 76 off just 42 balls against Rajasthan Royals helped the Pat Cummins-led side to win the matches despite being in trouble at the early stage.

Reddy might have rescued SRH with the bat when they were in trouble but he himself was in trouble and in dire need of a quick turnaround when the season started. After making his IPL debut in 2023, where he didn't get the opportunity to bat in two matches he played, his performance with the ball was below par as he leaked 54 runs from five overs he bowled across the two outings. He was fortunate that the Hyderabad franchise decided to retain him but needed to prove his worth. Knowing the situation, Reddy started working on his game at the commencement of the 2023-24 domestic season with Andhra head coach N Nirmal Kumar. The fact that he trained under Kumar for three seasons during his under-19 days worked in his favour.

"He has always been a batting all-rounder. In fact, in his first U-19 season with Andhra, he used to open the batting and bowling. I changed that the next season as I knew India U-19 team has so many specialised opening batters and bowlers. Since then, he has picked up both with the willow and ball," coach Kumar told this daily.

Reddy's last domestic season with Andhra can be termed satisfactory if not excellent as he played quite a few good innings in both the Ranji Trophy and limited-overs tournaments. Since the early days, Reddy has been a free-flowing batter but the same was not getting translated on the field. Kumar knew that and he decided to give him a free hand no matter which format he was playing. "I asked him to play his natural game irrespective of the formats. We treated him as a specialised batter when it comes to training in the nets in the last season. He used to bat for at least an hour in the nets alongside our pure batters every day. I made him face all kinds of bowlers to give him that confidence and practice," added Kumar. There were areas where Reddy needed to improve. The incoming deliveries from the left-arm spinners were troubling him. Similarly, his downswing speed of the



bat was just not proving enough for the perfect execution of the shots. Kumar, who has been working with various Andhra teams for the last 25 years, found out the flaws and decided to work on them.

"He was stretching a lot while facing the left-arm spinners. The wide gap between two legs meant it was his pad which was coming first so he was getting trapped in front of the wickets. I asked him to reduce the gap between the legs. This change helped him

bring the bat first while defending. Similarly, we worked on his downswing of the bat with the trainer. To get the requisite speed, we asked him to have a backlift so as to get the speed for downswing to execute the shots perfectly. "These minor changes did wonders for Reddy as he looked like a different batter this season. In nine matches so far, he has scored 239 runs with an average of 47.80 and a strike rate of 152.22. He has scored two half-centuries hitting 12 fours and 17 sixes. Kumar credited the hard work his ward did during the camps for the success. "We focussed completely on power hitting during the camps. While others were given the practice according to the formats, instructions to him were clear. Focus on power hitting and try to be as natural as he can be irrespective of the formats," said the coach. Kumar is happy with Reddy's show so far. "He was quite eager to perform when the IPL started. We spoke on a few occasions but exchange messages quite regularly. After every match, I message him explaining what went well and what areas he needs to improve. For me, it's just the beginning as given his potential, he will only improve from here onwards," signed off the coach.

MI vs LSG: Mumbai captain Hardik Pandya banned for first match in IPL 2025

← IPL 2024: Hardik Pandya has been fined Rs 30 lakhs of his match fees due to slow over rate during the match against LSG on Friday at the Wankhede Stadium.

New Delhi. MI skipper Hardik Pandya has been fined Rs 30 lakhs for maintaining a slow over-rate in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 match against LSG on Friday, May 17 at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. The other players have been fined Rs 12 lakhs or 50 percent of their match fees, whichever is lesser. Since MI's campaign in IPL 2024 is over, Hardik's ban has been carried over to next year. Regardless of the team Hardik plays for next season, his ban will stay. "Hardik



Pandya, the Mumbai Indians captain, has been fined after his team maintained a slow over rate during their IPL 2024 match against Lucknow Super Giants at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai on May 17," a media release state "As it was his team's third offence of the

season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Pandya was fined Rs 30 lakh and banned from playing the team's next match," the release added.

Hardik Pandya's indifferent IPL 2024

After making a move from GT, Hardik did not have the best of times while playing for in IPL 2024. His team finished at the bottom of the table with 8 points and a net run rate of -0.318 thanks to wins in 4 out of 14 matches. MI finished their campaign after losing to LSG by 18 runs. Hardik faltered with the bat as he scored only 216 runs from 14 matches at an average of 18 and a strike-rate of 143.04 with a top score of 46. He accounted for 11 scalps, but at an expensive economy rate of 10.75.

Hardik now has a huge task in hand as he is the vice-captain of the Indian team for the T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and United States of America (USA).

Virat Kohli misses walking on streets in India: Wish no one would bother me

← Senior RCB batter and former India captain Virat Kohli said he really missed walking on the streets in India. Kohli hoped that if given a chance, he would just like to walk around and buy things from the streets with no one bothering him.



New Delhi, Senior RCB batter and former captain Virat Kohli has revealed that he has not walked on the streets in India in the last few years. Speaking ahead of their final group stage game against CSK, Kohli spoke about the banes of popularity in the country and said that he really missed walking on the streets and shopping. Speaking on Star Sports, Kohli said that whenever he would get out on the street, people would recognise him and that's why he had stopped going out altogether. Kohli, one of

the most followed athletes in the world said that given a chance, he would just like to take a walk in the West Delhi markets and roam around without people bothering him.

"If I could, I would not take a car, nor a scooter, I would just walk. I have not walked once in India (in recent times), and that is something that I miss so badly. In West Delhi, our go-to market was Jwala Heri, I

would go there regularly. If I get a chance, I would just walk around without anyone bothering me. I would eat something, buy something, I don't even remember when was the last time I walked on a road in India," Virat Kohli said on Star Sports ahead of the CSK game. The superstar cricketer had recently taken a personal break and had spent time with his family in England during the final months of his wife - Anushka Sharma's pregnancy. Kohli had spoken about the experience and said that it was surreal to feel normal again with his wife and daughter away from the attention.

"We were not in the country. Just to feel normal for two months - for me, my family - it was a surreal experience. Couldn't have been more grateful to God for the opportunity to spend time with the family. It's an amazing experience to just be another person on the road and not be recognised," Kohli had said.

Hardik Pandya would be disappointed with his performance as MI captain: Boucher

← MI head coach Mark Boucher has said that Hardik Pandya would be disappointed with his performance as the captain of the franchise. Boucher fears that the constant criticism affected Pandya's performance in the field.

Mumbai MI finished their season with an 18-run loss against LSG at their home Wankhede on Friday, 17 May. The loss marked a torrid season for Hardik Pandya-led MI, who finished at the bottom spot in the Indian Premier League 2024 table. MI head coach Mark Boucher commented on captain Hardik Pandya after the team's final game and said that the captain would be disappointed with himself. Speaking at the post-match press conference,

Boucher said that it was possible that the outside noise affected Hardik and could have clouded his judgement during the games. Pandya has been slammed throughout the season, not only for his performances but for his captaincy as well. The MI captain, who took over from Rohit Sharma has been booed at several stadiums by the fans, including Wankhede.

"Even Hardik would've been disappointed with his performance. From a captain's perspective, he had some excellent games. There's a lot of stuff going around him that clouds his thoughts now and again, which is also challenging for him as a leader," Boucher said at the post-match press conference. "He certainly had a lot of support within our dressing room, and guys are trying to help him out, but it is tricky to go through as a player. It is what it is, and it will undoubtedly be a learning curve for him with his leadership growth. While times are tough



now, some things will pass, and he'll be a tougher leader. So, some fantastic things are coming for Hardik Pandya as a leader," he further added. Hardik Pandya had been out injured since the ODI World Cup in 2023. Pandya had twisted his ankle against Bangladesh and did not play the majority of

the World Cup. Pandya stayed away from the series against Australia, South Africa and then Afghanistan and did not play any matches in the Ranji Trophy as well. Boucher said that it was always going to be difficult for Pandya with such less cricket behind him in the run-up to the tournament.

"He came into the season with little cricket behind him, so it would always be reasonably tough on him. We understood that as well. His bowling got a lot better as the season went along. Unfortunately, he didn't fire with the bat this season. He showed glimpses of what he can do," Boucher said.

Pandya scored 216 runs at an average of 18 and picked up 11 wickets in the season. It is expected that he will continue to captain MI next season after the mega-auction.

Sara Ali Khan

Clicks Selfies With Fans As She Arrives Back In Bombay, Video Goes Viral

Sara Ali Khan enjoys a massive fan following and is one of the most loved celebs in tinsel town. As she arrived back in Bombay today, the actress received a warm welcome by the paps at the airport. While she was heading out, she also clicked selfies with her fans. Several photos and videos of the actress went viral on social media. Sara looked effortlessly glam in a sleeveless white tee teamed with a pair of blue denims. She donned black sunglasses and donned one of her brightest smiles as the shutterbugs greeted and captured her.

Recently, Sara was spotted distributing meals among the underprivileged ones in Mumbai. She requested the paparazzi not to photograph her. The video gained popularity on social media, and her aunt Saba Ali Khan commented on the clip, showing her support. When Sara noticed the cameras, she became agitated and firmly told the photographers not to shoot her. In the viral videos, Sara was seen stating, "Please mat karo (do not record)." Many people in the comments section supported her, expressing that the paparazzi should respect her refusal and not invade her privacy. Even her aunt Saba Ali Khan stated, "I do the same every



Saturday without calling paps. Don't film it. Takes away from the cause. She is trying to say the same." On the work front, Sara Ali Khan has experienced a few successes recently. The actress was featured in Murder Mubarak, directed by Homi Adajania. Sara is also being lauded for her performance in Ae Watan Mere Watan. Set in the pre-independence era, the film follows 22-year-old Usha, a college girl in Bombay, who works to help India win independence and establishes an underground radio station that fuels the Quit India Movement. She has not announced any new projects till now.

Amruta Khanvilkar's

London Album Is All About Coffee And Bubblewrap Waffle

Amruta Khanvilkar loves going on vacations. She often visits new places and often explores the beauty of nature. The actress also often posts pictures of her trips on Instagram. Unlike other travellers, she prefers exploring unique locations and sharing photos of her adventures. Her enthusiasm for travel shows her adventurous spirit. Currently, the Marathi actress went on a tropical vacation with her family in London. In her latest Instagram post, Amruta Khanvilkar looks stylish. She's wearing a simple white shirt with rolled-up sleeves tucked into a brown satin skirt. Completing her look are middle-parted bangs with flicks, black sunglasses, a brown sling bag, and multi-coloured sneakers, demonstrating her distinct fashion taste.



The actress shared several shots from her photoshoot of her adventures at the city's famous landmarks. In one picture, she poses gracefully in front of the Supermundane Mural, known for its heart-shaped design. Another captivating photo shows her in a stunning outfit with the London Eye in the background. Additionally, she shares a sweet selfie with her mother and strikes a pose at Trafalgar Square. Ending her series of posts is a candid solo shot, displaying her charming expressions. Amruta captured special moments with her parents. What's noteworthy is that her father, Raju Khanvilkar, is seen posing with her daughter in the photos. Throughout their stay

in London, Amruta was amazed by her father's vigour and excitement, despite his age of 68 years. Amruta Khanvilkar is best known for projects including Raazi, 24: India, Damaged, and Chandramukhi. The actor was last seen in the project titled Chacha Vidhayak Hain Humare. The actress has a slew of projects in the pipeline including The Trap (Daav Pech) and 36 Days. Directed by Joe Eshwar, The Trap (Daav Pech) stars Prasad Oak, Amruta Khanvilkar, and Shubhankar Tawde in the leading roles. Another cast of the film entails Neha Khan, Shantanu Ganesh Rode, Siddharth Salvi, Sarah Lockett, Clive Cohen, Imran Shabhanov, Kuriakose Onnitan, and others in pivotal roles.

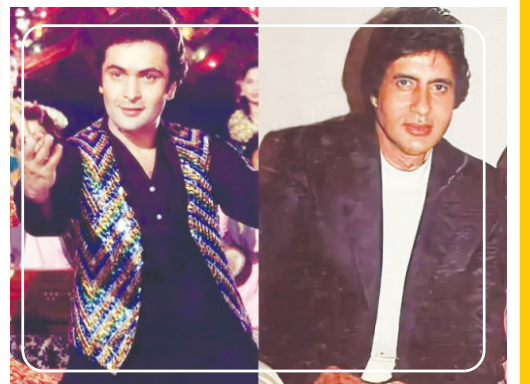


Shekhar Suman Says He Wants To Reconcile With Kangana Ranaut For Good: 'I Am Ready To Let Go'



Earlier this month, actor Shekhar Suman joined the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), sparking widespread interest due to Kangana Ranaut's affiliation with the same party. For those unaware, Shekhar's son, Adhyayan Suman, had a highly publicized and bitter breakup with Kangana. Since then, the families have kept their distance from one another. However, as Shekhar embarks on his political journey, he expresses a willingness to reconcile with Kangana, who recently became a BJP Lok Sabha member from Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. Shekhar emphasizes the importance of moving past old grievances for the greater good of the country. "I am ready to let go of the bitterness for the greater good," the actor continued, "Ideologically, we can work in tandem. We don't have to work together, but yes, there is no ill will, no rancour. Let's be more human other than just holding on to the past. Things happen in the heat of the moment and then people go about doing their jobs. We are hanging too much to the past. Let's forget it," he remarked. Shekhar believes it's time for everyone involved to let go of past grievances and unite for a greater cause, the betterment of the country. He stated, "If the need arises, then friends, enemies and people who once hated each other, do come back together for a common goal. It would be very petty on my part to hold on to any ranker now. Also, with age, there is more wisdom. What has happened has happened; it's a part of life. Life always doesn't move on with a smooth line. I can always circumvent this question by saying, 'no comments'. But, we are all grown up, mature people and we can handle problems." Shekhar Suman, recently starred in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's web series Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar. Currently streaming on Netflix, Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar also stars Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, Richa Chadha, Sanjeeda Shaikh, Aditi Rao Hydari, Sharmin Segal Mehta, Farida Jalal, Fardeen Khan and Adhyayan Suman in key roles.

When Rishi Kapoor Took Dig at Amitabh Bachchan: 'He Has Never Given Due Credit to His Co-actors'



Rishi Kapoor, who died in April 2020 after battling cancer, was one of the most brutally honest celebrities in Bollywood. Apart from entertaining the audience with his versatile acting for several decades, he was known for his no-holds-barred attitude. In his memoir 'Khullam Khulla: Rishi Kapoor Uncensored', Rishi candidly spoke about his personal and professional life, from his relationship with wife Neetu Kapoor to his 'lingering issue' with Amitabh Bachchan. The actor had revealed that back in the days, a lot of actors would not prefer to work with Amitabh because "directors and writers unfailingly reserved their strongest, pivotal roles" for him. In his book, Rishi wrote, "I must confess there is still a lingering issue I have with Amitabh Bachchan. A big disadvantage of working in an all-star movie in those days was that everybody only wanted to make action films, which automatically meant that the star who could carry off action with the most flair would get the meatiest part. That's how, with the exception of Kabhi Kabhie, which was a romantic film, none of the multi-starrers I featured in had an author-backed role for me. Directors and writers unfailingly reserved their strongest, pivotal roles for Amitabh Bachchan. And it wasn't just me. Shashi Kapoor, Shatrughan Sinha, Dharmendra, Vinod Khanna faced it too. He added, "Amitabh is undeniably a superb actor, immensely talented and, at the time, the number one star who ruled the box-office. He was an action hero, the angry young man. So roles were written for him. Although we may have been smaller stars, we were not lesser actors. Yet, the rest of us had to constantly measure up to him. We had to work hard, really exert ourselves to match up. In my time, the musical/romantic hero had no place. Amitabh was an action hero in an era of action films. As such, writers gave him the lion's share and he had the author-backed roles in almost all his films."

