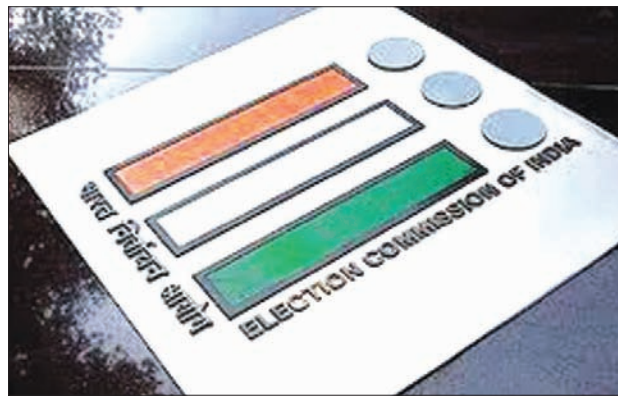


6 WORLD 8 NATION US, Japan, Australia and Philippines to stage military drills Russian missile strikes on the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv kill 6 Taking name of Ram, BJP spreading agenda of Nathuram: Kanhaiya BJP India's preferred party, people will elect it again: PM

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Poll fever yet to grip Manipur Himanta seeks vote to strengthen Modi's hand No political rallies, posters in strife-torn NE state

IMPHAL, April 6: Posters of political parties, mega rallies and visible movement of leaders -- the traditional elements of campaigning -- are conspicuously missing in violence-hit Manipur where polling for Lok Sabha elections is due in less than two weeks.



Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and other key leaders.

The only visible hint of the impending election is the hoardings put up by local election authorities, urging citizens to exercise their franchise.

Amid the muted election fervour, major party figures have refrained from visiting the conflict-ridden state to canvass for votes or make electoral pledges.

Pradeep Jha told PTI. To tackle the tricky situation, the candidates -- BJP's Thounaojam Basanta Kumar Singh, Congress' Angomcha Bimol Akoijam, Republican Party of India's Maheshwar Thounaojam and Rajmukar Somendro Singh who are backed by the Manipur Peoples' Party (MPP) -- have come up with a unique solution. They are reaching out to the voters in a non-conventional way which includes holding meetings at their residence or party offices and their supporters indulging in door-to-door campaigns.

door-to-door campaigning, said. "The voters know the importance of their vote in the current situation and will make an informed choice," he added. Basanta Kumar Singh, the sitting education and law minister of the state, who is contesting the Lok Sabha polls this time, is holding small meetings at his residence and the party office.

Similarly, Akoijam, a professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, mostly meets people at his residence. Posters of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra and those seeking voters for Akoijam have also been put up at the Congress office in Imphal. "Elections are important for us but we cannot rub salt in people's wounds by doing pomp and show." (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Addressing election rallies at Titabar and Mariani Assembly segments, Sarma emphasised the need to continue the nation's journey of massive transformation under Modi's leadership. Expressing his aspirations for accelerated development. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

State govt's poll sops: 50,000 more jobs, more benefits for ration card holders



JORHAT, April 6: Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma rallied supporters in Jorhat, calling upon them to strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi by voting for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

HT Correspondent

HT BRIEFS Arms recovered

IMPHAL: Manipur police on Saturday recovered a war-like store of arms and explosives in a joint operation with the central security forces in Bishnupur district of strife-hit Manipur. The recovered items were one stengun carbine with two magazines, one 9 mm pistol, one modified 303 rifle, nine HE hand grenade, three smoke bombs, five 51 mm mortar shells, one 2-inch mortar shell, one detonator, four walkie talkie (WT set) of different company along with two chargers, two mobile phones, two smoke shells, eight 7.62 mm ammunition, two 5.56 INSAS ammunition, two AK ammunition, one tube launcher, one helmet, three pairs of jungle boots, three bullet proof vests, one rucksack bag and one sleeping bag, the police said. The items were found in three different gunny bags and recovered from the front side of the Maibam Lotpa Ching under Nambol police station of Bishnupur district on Saturday morning.

Himanta's dance moves major draw at poll rallies

GUWAHATI, April 6: If his fiery speeches draw crowds to meetings, it's the 'dancing' skills of Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma that literally get the public on their feet.

With electioneering heating up in this Northeastern state where polling for the 14 Lok Sabha seats is scheduled in the first three phases on April 19, 26 and May 7, the BJP's star campaigner is out with his dancing moves to attract voters.

As Sarma campaigned across Jorhat constituency on Saturday, he ended his meetings by dancing to the BJP's theme song 'Akou ebar Modi sorkar' (Modi's government, once more), inviting enthusiastic participation from the audience.

Be it at the end of the rally in Sivsagar or in Mariani, the CM sang and danced, while urging the public

to join, who readily obliged and joined their leader from the stands. Accompanied by clapping and occasional jumps with fists in the air, Sarma's trademark moves added energy to his campaign.

In his speeches, Sarma outlined the various welfare measures of the BJP-led governments both at the Centre and the state, and exhorted the public to vote for Modi for a third successive term.

Sharing a video of his lively campaign dance on X on Friday with the public joining him from the stands, he wrote: "We are #ModiKaParivaar. Of course we sing and dance in our rallies." Sarma's dance moves had garnered much attention during the 2019 parliamentary elections, when he had swung along the tunes of 'Akou ebar Modi Sorkar' and other (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Congress manifesto completely bears imprint of Muslim League: PM Modi

SAHARANPUR (UP), April 6: Virtually equating the Congress with the Muslim League, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the grand old party's election manifesto reflects the same thought as that of the Muslim League at the time of the freedom movement.

Prime Minister Modi said the Congress, which existed at the time of the freedom movement, has "ended decades ago".

"A number of great personalities were associated with the Congress. The name of Mahatma Gandhi was associated with the Congress. The Congress, which is left today, neither has policies in the interest of the nation nor vision for the nation's development," Prime Minister Modi said.

"Yesterday, the kind of election manifesto was released, it has



proved that today's Congress is completely cut off from the hopes and aspirations of today's India," he added addressing an election rally in Saharanpur.

Sharpening his attack further, he said the Congress is not visible even remotely.

Prime Minister Modi also took a jibe at the Samajwadi Party, which is a member of the INDIA bloc and an election partner of the Congress

in Uttar Pradesh. "The situation of SP (Samajwadi Party) in Uttar Pradesh is such that here they have to change their candidates every hour, whereas the situation of Congress is even more strange. The Congress is not getting candidates at all," Prime Minister Modi said.

"Even on the seats, which the Congress considered as its stronghold, it is not able to muster the courage to field candidates," he added apparently referring to the Congress strongholds of Amethi and Rae Bareilly.

Prime Minister Modi said the "INDI alliance has become another name for instability and uncertainty". "That's why today the country is not taking seriously even a single thing said by them," he added. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Lurinjyoti Gogoi visits rival Sonowal's family home

DIBRUGARH, April 6: Lurinjyoti Gogoi, the candidate backed by the United Opposition Forum, Assam (UOFA) for Assam's Dibrugarh Lok Sabha constituency, visited the family of his BJP rival Sarbananda Sonowal at his residence in Muluk Gaon on Saturday.

Gogoi paid his respects to the Union minister's elder brother Dipak Sonowal and other family members, including the widow of his eldest sibling Girish Sonowal.

He sought their blessings and conveyed his regards, emphasising that his visit was not for seeking votes.

"I have not come here to seek votes but the blessings of the elders whom I have known since long", Gogoi said.

Dipak Sonowal said it is the "people who will vote and decide the fate of a candidate but all our good wishes and blessings are with Gogoi".

Sonowal's elder brother's widow also wished Gogoi success and blessed him by saying 'Jai hok' (may you win) and may 'all your wishes be fulfilled'.

Gogoi greeted the family members with the traditional Assamese 'gamosa', and Sonowal's wife presented him with a yellow-green 'gamosa' characteristic of the Sonowal-Kachari tribe.

Earlier, both Gogoi and the Union minister had met at Haldighari Nagar Than, a place of worship in Dibrugarh, where they shared pleasantries over tea.

Both the candidates have their roots in the All Assam Students Union (AASU) with Sonowal having served as the president from 1992 to 1999 and Gogoi as the general secretary much later during the later part of the last decade.

The Dibrugarh constituency is going to polls in the first phase on April 19 with three candidates in fray, including Aam Aadmi Party's Monoj Dhanowar. (PTI)

Will win by over 2 lakh votes against Gaurav Gogoi in Jorhat: BJP MP

JORHAT, April 6: Sitting BJP MP from Jorhat Lok Sabha seat, Topon Kumar Gogoi, on Saturday exuded confidence of retaining the constituency by trouncing his rival Gaurav Gogoi of the Congress by a margin of over two lakh votes.

In an interview to PTI, the BJP leader asserted that people of his constituency and the entire country want Narendra Modi elected as prime minister for the third consecutive term so that the "development journey continues".

He also claimed that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, which the opposition is "trying to make an election issue", is not at all a concern among voters.

"My campaigning is going on very well. Political meetings are being held in every panchayat of all the legislative assembly constituencies of Jorhat, and I am getting spontaneous reactions of people ir-

pective of religion, caste and creed," the BJP MP said.

Jorhat will vote in the first phase on April 19 along with four other seats in Upper Assam.

"We have done enough work in the tea gardens. Earlier, no initiatives were taken for the garden areas. While I was the power minister in the Assam government, I provided new connections to 24 lakh people. I gave individual electric meters to tea garden quarters instead of cluster meters. Ambulance service has also been started in the tea garden areas," Gogoi said.

Asserting that people have full faith in the BJP, he said there is no anti-incumbency in Jorhat as his "performance speaks about it", and there is a "hell and heaven difference" between pre and post 2016 Assam. The BJP assumed power in Assam for the first time in 2016 with alliance (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

TRANQUIL TRANSIT



A ferry crossing the Brahmaputra river at Nimatighat. HT Photo

'The British Asian civil rights movement is a forgotten piece of history'

New UK documentary examines racist attacks on British Indians

LONDON, April 6: Driving around with hockey sticks in the boot of the car and stockpiling petrol bombs to defend themselves are among some of the gripping accounts that make up a new UK documentary chronicling racist attacks faced by British Indians in the 1970s and 80s.

"Defiance: Fighting the Far Right", a three-part series aired on Channel 4 from Monday, uses a cache of archive footage and compelling new testimony from the people who were there to tell the story of the fightback of Britain's South Asian community against a wave of brutal racist attacks and murders between 1976 and 1981.

The film highlights how the community stood in the face of a rising tide of anti-immigrant feelings and a campaign of violence and intimidation unleashed by notorious far-right and racist groups such as the



National Front. "Back then, my Ludhiana-born father would drive around with hockey sticks in the boot of his car in case we ever ran into far-right thugs as we went about our daily business," said Rajesh Thind, the British Punjabi director of one of the three episodes who grew up amid some of the up-

heaval in west London.

"Ever since I was a child witnessing those events of the late 1970s and early 1980s, I have wanted to tell these stories of how we British Asians fought back against the National Front and other racist and fascist organisations," he said.

"I have had a burning desire to

show the world that far from being meek and mild, as some Western stereotypes would portray South Asians, our communities were courageous, resilient and resourceful, drawing on decades of experience of anti-colonial struggles both in India and Africa," he said.

The series, created by BAFTA-winning Rogan Productions, Left Handed Films and GroupM Motion Entertainment, investigates seminal events in British South Asian history referred to as the Southall protests, the Battle for Brick Lane and the Bradford 12 -- events often overlooked by the press, the police and the government of the day.

"At a moment when we have a British Asian Prime Minister [Rishi Sunak] and an Asian First Minister in Scotland [Humza Yousaf], it is incredibly powerful to be able to tell the stories of everyday British Asians (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

CPI releases Lok Sabha election manifesto, promises to scrap CAA

NEW DELHI, April 6: The Communist Party of India (CPI) released its manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections on Saturday, promising to scrap the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, remove the 50 per cent cap on reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs, and enhance the daily wage under MGNREGA to ₹ 700.

The Left party called for the defeat of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to save secular democracy. It said the 10-year BJP rule has proven to be a disaster for the country. If elected to power, the CPI promised to scrap the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, remove the 50 per cent cap on reservations, conduct a caste census, introduce taxation measures such as wealth tax and inheritance tax, increase corporate tax, introduce reservation in the private sector, and raise the daily wage under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) ₹ 700.

"General elections for the 18th Lok Sabha are going to be very crucial and critical for our secular democratic republic, its future and to our constitutional ethos," the CPI manifesto stated.

After releasing the manifesto, CPI general secretary D Raja said, "The elections are very critical for the country and its future. (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi's rule has been disastrous for the country."

"The Constitution is under attack. BJP being political



army of RSS is trying to change the Constitution and ultimately replace it," he alleged.

The Left party said if voted to power, it will introduce measures to address the growing inequality.

The CPI also said it aims to bring central investigative agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) under the purview of Parliament, and added it will "intensify its struggle for the abolition of Governor's Office to strengthen federalism by removing Union's interference." "Elected governments in states should be empowered to take major policy decisions..." the manifesto stated. The CPI said it will continue to fight politically and legally to remove the "arbitrary" cap of 50 per cent on reservations (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Netflix unveils first look of Fardeen Khan from Sanjay Leela Bhansali's OTT series 'Heeramandi'



NEW DELHI, April 6: Streaming service Netflix on Saturday shared the first look of actor Fardeen Khan from "Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar", the upcoming period drama series that marks filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali's OTT debut.

The streamer also unveiled the character posters of senior actor Shekhar Suman and his son Adhyayan Suman as well as Taha Shah from the show, set during the freedom struggle movement in India.

With "Heeramandi", Khan is making a return to acting after a gap of nearly 15 years. He was last seen in 2010's "Dulha Mil Gaya".

The 50-year-old actor, known for movies such as "Jungle", "Pyaar Tune Kya

Kiya", "Bhoot", "Dev" and "No Entry", plays the character of Wali Mohammed in the show.

"Caught in a whirlwind struggle of love and duty, Wali Mohammed attempts to reconcile his heart's desire with his royal responsibilities. Fardeen Khan makes his spectacular return to the screen as Wali Mohammed," Netflix India posted on its social media handles along with Khan's character poster.

Billed as an epic saga of love, power, revenge and freedom, the series explores the cultural reality of 'Heeramandi', a dazzling district, through the stories of courtisans and their patrons set against the tumultuous backdrop of the Indian freedom

struggle of the 1940s.

Set to be released on the streamer's platform on May 1, "Heeramandi" stars Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, Richa Chadha, Sharmin Segal, Aditi Rao Hydari, and Sanjeeda Shaikh in the lead roles.

Suman, who has appeared in movies such as "Utsav" and "Sansar" as well as cult classic comedy series "Dekh Bhai Dekh", is essaying the role of Zulfikar.

"Laying his allegiance at Mallikajaan's (Koirala) feet, only one thing stands between Zulfikar and his shimmering ambition- Heeramandi," Netflix said while sharing his character poster.

His actor-son Adhyayan plays Zoravar. The actor has previously featured in movies

like "Raaz - The Mystery Continues", "Jashn" and most recently "Chup: Revenge of the Artist". "Zoravar's affection for Lajjo (Chadha) is a scorching embrace where passion burns bright- but when love calls, will he be able to answer?" the streamer said in the character description.

Shah, best known for starring in "Baar Baar Dekho" and "Luv Ka The End", is playing the role of Tajdar in "Heeramandi". "A nawab's son torn between tradition and love, Tajdar seeks purpose through liberation," Netflix said.

"Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar" is based on the concept by Moin Beg. The series is created and directed by Bhansali. He also serves as a producer on the show. (PTI)

Prithviraj Sukumaran-starrer 'The Goat Life' crosses ₹ 100 crore mark globally



NEW DELHI, April 6: Survival drama "The Goat Life", starring Prithviraj Sukumaran, has collected over Rs 100 crore in worldwide gross collection, the makers announced on Saturday. Directed by Blessy, the movie is based on the 2008 bestselling novel "Aadujeevitham" by Benyamin. It was released in theatres on March 29.

"Achieving a great milestone, 'The Goat Life' has crossed the Rs 100 crore mark at the worldwide box office within nine days of its release," the makers said in a press note.

The Malayalam film follows the real-life story of Najeeb (Sukumaran), a Malayali immigrant labourer who finds himself forced into slavery as a goatherd in the secluded farm of Saudi Arabia. Blessy said the film's team is ecstatic and grateful for the response to the movie, and they now hope that it continues to cross borders and reach as many people as possible.

"The entire team of the film has put in over a decade of their hard work and blood, sweat, and tears into making this dream a reality. The film has stayed with me for over sixteen years and it is a blessing to see it finally being out in the world and being accepted so wholeheartedly by audiences worldwide," he added.

Sukumaran, who has distributed "The Goat Life" in Malayalam through Prithviraj Productions, also celebrated the film's milestone moment in a post on Instagram.

"(Rs) 100 Cr and counting at the Global Box Office! Thank you for this unprecedented success," the 41-year-old actor posted.

Produced by Visual Romance, "The Goat Life" also features Amala Paul, K.R. Gokul, as well as Hollywood actor Jimmy Jean-Louis and Arab actors Talib al Balushi and RikAby in pivotal roles. Academy Award winners A R Rahman and Resul Pookutty have given music and sound design, respectively. (PTI)

ADVANCE BOOKINGS OPEN FOR AKSHAY AND TIGER'S 'BADE MIYAN CHOTE MIYAN'

NEW DELHI, April 6: The advance booking for "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan", starring Akshay Kumar and directed by Siddharth Anand, is now open, the makers announced on Wednesday. The action film, directed by Ali Abbas Zafar of "Sultan" and "Bharat" fame, will be released in theatres on the occasion of Eid on April 10. It is produced by Pooja Entertainment in association with AAZ.

"Our #BadeMiyanChoteMiyan are all geared up to double your dose of entertainment and action. Bade Miyan Chote Miyan advance bookings open now... Experience it in 3D and IMAX IN CINEMAS this Wednesday," read a post by Pooja Entertainment.

"Bade Miyan Chote Miyan" will see Akshay and Tiger perform death-defying stunts as they play two elite soldiers who embark on a mission to recover a stolen AI weapon.

Actor Prithviraj Sukumaran plays the role of the antagonist Kabir in the movie. The film also features Manushi Chhillar and Alaya F.

At the box office, "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan" will have a clash with "Maidaan", a period sports drama headlined by Ajay Devgn. The film, also releasing on April 10, is directed by Amit Sharma and produced by Boney Kapoor. (PTI)



Book profiles famous practitioners of cinematic art



NEW DELHI, April 6: Dilip Kumar along with Amitabh Bachchan formed the twin peaks of Hindi cinema and though he did not have a "Chini Kum" or a "Black" to his credit, he created a space which was ably exploited by the Big B, says a new book that profiles some famous practitioners of cinematic art.

Author Dhiraj Singh says his book "Modern Masters of Cinema" is an ode to one of his enduring passion - cinema.

He credits Dilip Kumar with laying down the grammar of Hindi film acting, saying the actor rescued Hindi film acting from the hyperbolic style of earlier times.

Dilip Kumar's contribution was more far reaching than the others, he asserts.

"He went on to become a complete actor by adding comedy, action, romance and even dance to his performances. Some of the most hilarious moments of the

Indian screen are created by this 'tragedy king' and if you hold a poll on the most romantic moment in a Hindi film, the so-called 'feather scene' from 'Mughal-e-Azam' will figure very high," Singh writes.

"While he does not have a 'Chini Kum' or 'Black' to his credit, he created a space which was ably exploited by Amitabh Bachchan, perhaps the only complete actor that can be compared to the senior thespian," the book says. The author says Bachchan can be credited with "creating a rest superstar system in the Hindi film scenario".

The Dilip-Ray-Dev triumvirate was great, but Bachchan's mega popularity resulted in a very focused dependence on one factor or art of filmmaking - the star, he says.

The book also profiles non-Indian actors Al Pacino, Marcello Mastroianni, Kevin Spacey, Marlon Brando, Clint Eastwood, and

Michael Douglas, and filmmakers Martin Scorsese, Quentin Tarantino, Federico Fellini, Bernardo Bertolucci, Alfred Hitchcock and Woody Allen among others.

Singh also argues that selection of a creative universe does not give a free pass to the filmmaker. He cites the recent uproar over the film "Animal" for its misogyny.

He says he too found it a problematic movie but not due to its choice of taking up a subject that involved a sick protagonist, many alpha male types of situations and a contrived effort to portray inner strength of some female character which fell short.

"This choice firmly stays in the ambit of the creative universe of the filmmaker. He chose to focus on these pathologies and no one can say that these pathologies do not exist in real life," Singh says.

He adds that "Animal" can be blamed for having an eye that

glorifies all these negativities.

"A movie can be about bravado and fetishistic devotion to male swagger but there is a fine line beyond which the camera becomes unintentionally voyeuristic and sensationalist," he writes.

Singh also claims that cow-belt sensibilities were not adequately represented earlier but this has changed as a new breed of directors and cinema personality has emerged from the Hindi heartland bringing a lived-in experience.

"Anurag Kashyap has given a very realistic Bihar in 'Gangs of Wasseypur' and Delhi and Punjab in 'DevD'. Tigmanshu Dhulia is true to the local cultural connotations in 'Haasil' and 'Paan Singh Tomar'. He displayed his grasp over the atmospherics in the 'Sahib Bibi and Gangster' series too. Dibakar Bannerjee talked of very authentic Delhi in 'Khosla Ka Ghosla' and 'Lucky oye Lucky'..." he writes. (PTI)

