Hostage families call for a cease-fire deal pushed by Biden

Hezbollah fighters shoot down an Israeli drone in southern Lebanon

Widespread violence in Sandeshkhali in final phase of LS polls in Bengal Excise policy case: Court reserves for

June 5 order on Kejriwal's interim bail plea

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GUWAHATI, SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 2024

The Jan Ki Baat poll gave 362-392

seats to the ruling NDA and 141-161

seats, while the NDA tally was 353.

The Congress had bagged 53 seats

PAGES 12 PRICE ₹8

INDIA leaders meet

EXIT POLLS: PM Modi all set for hat-trick

Exit polls predict big win for NDA with upto 359-401 seats ● INDIA Bloc given 141-161 seats

BJP to get minimum 11 seats in state, Congress 3-4 seats

GUWAHATI, June 1: Majority of exit polls on Saturday have predicted that the BJP will perform well in the state with the ruling party winning around 11 seats.

The India Today—My Axis survey predicted 9-11 seats for the BJP in the state while Congress may win 3—4 seats. AIUDF may not be able to win any single seat this time. Almost all other exit polls have given BJP a minimum of 11 seats in the state. Some regional agencies also predicted a similar result for the BJP and Congress.

If AIUDF fails to open its account in the state, it means Badruddin Ajmal is set to lose the Dhubri seat after he managed to win it for three consecutive times. The winning probability of Congress is high in three minority-dominated seats-Dhubri, Karimganj and Nagaon. Some exit polls also predicted that Gaurav Gogoi may defeat BJP's (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



NEW DELHI, June 1: Several exit polls on Saturday predicted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will retain power for a third straight term, with the BJP-led NDA expected to win a big majority in the Lok Sabha polls.

may see a fall in its tally in states like Bihar, Rajasthan and Haryana, ac-

cording to these pollsters. The Republic TV-P Marq poll claimed that the ruling alliance will

will open its account in Tamil Nadu

and Kerala and sweep Karnataka but

and its allies 38. The 'INDIA' bloc was formed by opposition parties to take on the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Kharge says grouping to get over 295 seats win up to 359 seats and the opposition INDIA bloc will bag 154 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha. The Repub-

NEW DELHI, June 1: Leaders of Party, CPI(M), CPI, DMK, JMM, several INDIA bloc parties met on AAP, RJD, Shiv Sena (UBT) and Saturday to take stock of the opposition's preparations leading up to the June 4 counting of votes polled in the Lok Sabha elections, and claimed they will get more than 295 seats, enough for them to form the next government.

Addressing the media after a News Nation was 342-378 and 153-169. A few other exit polls, including two-and-a-half-hour confabulations here, Congress president those from Axis My India and Today's Chanakya, were yet to fore-Mallikarjun Kharge asserted the INDIA bloc has arrived at the figure after feedback from people. In the 2019 polls, the BJP won 303

Kharge said the leaders of the alliance met at his residence and dwelled upon a host of issues, including the precautions to be taken on the counting day on June 4. He said they have instructed their party workers to not leave the counting halls till all formalities are completed. He said the opposition parties have sought time from the Election Commission on Sunday to raise their concerns and urge the poll body to address them.

The meeting began at Kharge's residence this afternoon as voting in the last phase of the seven-phase general elections were underway for 57 seats. The counting for all the phases will be held on June 4.

'The INDIA bloc will get more than 295 seats. We have arrived at this figure after speaking with all our leaders," Kharge told reporters. 'This is a survey of people. People

have given this information to our leaders. The government surveys are there and their media friends also inflate figures and put it out. Therefore, we want to tell you about the reality." Targeting the BJP, he said, "They are trying to give a narrative through government exit polls and we want to tell

the people the truth." Apart from Kharge, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, K C Venugopal and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were also present at the meeting. Samajwadi

the NCP (Sharad Pawar) were

present at the meeting.
TMC supremo and West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee had already said they would not attend the meeting as polling was to take place in some Lok Sabha seats in the state. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti did not attend the meeting due to personal reasons.

Opposition leaders who attended the meeting included Sharad Pawar, Akhilesh Yadav, Tejashwi Yadav, Anil Desai, Sitaram Yechury, Arvind Kejriwal, Bhagwant Mann, Sanjay Singh, Raghav Chadha, Champai Soren, Kalpana Soren, T R Baalu, Farooq Abdullah, D Raja, Dipankar Bhattacharya, Jitendra Awhad and Mukesh Sahani. Kharge said the leaders of INDIA parties met informally to take stock of the preparations leading up to the counting day. He said they discussed and analysed the feedback received from different sources.

The INDIA bloc parties have also given instructions to their workers about Form 17 C -- which contains the details of votes polled at booths -- and not to leave the counting hall until he or she gets the certificate of election, he said. "The fight is still not over, and the leaders and workers of all the parties are extremely alert. I thank each one of them for their esteemed presence," he said. "We have fought the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 with all our might and are confident of a positive outcome, as the people of India have supported us," he said in a post on X. Later, in a post in Hindi on X, Kharge said, "This fight is on public issues. It is a struggle to protect democracy and the Constitution. Today in the INDIA Alliance meeting we discussed important issues and considered our future strategy. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Murmu expresses concern over cyclone Remal

caused destruction in state

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 1: President of India Draupadi Murmu expressed her condolences for loss of lives in the state and a few other states due to cyclone 'Remal' that has ravaged the eastern region of the country for the last few days.

Taking to X handle, Murmu wrote, "Cyclone Remal has caused massive destruction in West Bengal, Assam, parts of the Northeast and also in Telangana. Reports of the loss of lives and property as well as of large-scale displacement are distressing. The nation stands with those affected by this natural

"I pray for the success of rescue and relief efforts and hope the situation returns to normal at the ear-

Sarma lauded Murmu's statement and asserted that the government has been working to provide relief to the cyclone-hit people in the

Sarma posted on X, "Thank you for your support Adarniya Rashtrapati ji. With your support and active help from the Govt of India, we are working overtime to ensure relief and rehabilitation measures reach the affected at the earliest."

Assam and other states in the northeast have received heavy downpours due to the cyclonic storm 'Remal'. Many districts of the state have been inundated by floods that occurred as the post-effect of the cyclone.

More than 3 lakhs people have been affected by the pre-monsoon floods and at least eight people

State Election Commission issues

Flood situation remains grim in state, over 3.5 lakh people affected Dibrugarh, Nagaon, Hailakandi,



GUWAHATI, June 1: The flood situation in Assam remains grim, with over 3.5 lakh people affected across 11 districts, officials said on

Road and rail communication in several parts of the state remained disrupted following incessant rain in the aftermath of cyclone 'Remal', they said. In worst-hit

Cachar district, all educational institutions were closed on Saturday due to the prevailing weather conditions, an official release said, adding that scheduled semester and compartmental exams will be held

as planned. Nearly 3.5 lakh people remained affected in Karbi Anglong, Dhe-

Golaghat, West Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts, Assam State Disaster Management Authority stated in a release.

Close to 30,000 people have sought refuge in relief camps, with various rescue agencies evacuating those in vulnerable areas.

Cachar district is the worst hit with 1,19,997 people affected, followed by Nagaon (78,756), Hojai (77,030) and Karimganj (52,684). The death toll due to floods, rain and storms in the state since May

28 has touched 12.

Incessant rains have disrupted rail and road communications in Barak Valley and Dima Hasao. Vehicles remain stranded as part of the national highway in Meghalaya was washed away, severing road communication in Barak Valley with the rest of the state and region.

Lok Sabha polls phase 7: show-cause to ENPO on ULB polls Over 58 % voting recorded



HT Correspondent DIMAPUR, June 1: The State

Election Commission, Nagaland directed Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) president Tsapikyu Sangtam to show cause without delay why action should not be initiated as per subsection (1) of Section 171 C of the IPC for repeated public declaration of the organisation's stand of col-

lective abstention from participation in the upcoming urban local

body (ULB) elections. The ULB elections are scheduled to be held in the state on June 26. In a notice to the ENPO president dated May 31, state election commissioner TJ Longkumer said the repeated public declaration made through the instrument of the organisation, which is essentially a constitutional privilege of an electorate or an elector, is deemed to be an attempt to interfere with and to infringe on the individual rights of the electorate to freely and without fear or undue pressure participate in the electoral process on the basis of adult franchise. It is also deemed to be an interference with the superintendence, direction and control of the conduct of all municipality elections vested in the State Election Commission.

The commission referred to subsection (1) of Section 171 C of the IPC, 1860, which states "whoever voluntarily interferes or attempts to interfere with the free exercise of any electoral right commits the offence of undue influence at an election". The ENPO areas cover six districts of eastern Nagaland. The organisation boycotted the recently held Lok Sabha elections in the state (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

pressure group and unrelated to the **NEW DELHI, June 1:** A voter turnout of 58.34 per cent was recorded till 5 pm on Saturday in the seventh and final phase of the Lok Sabha polls with incidents of violence between TMC and BJP supporters reported Sandeshkhali region of West Bengal, and complaints of EVM glitches and rigging at some booths lodged.

Voting was held amid a severe heatwave in all 13 seats of Punjab and four of Himachal Pradesh, 13 constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, nine in West Bengal, eight in Bihar, six in Odisha and three in Jharkhand, besides Chandigarh. Polling for the remaining 42 assembly constituencies in Odisha and bypolls to six assembly seats in Himachal Pradesh are also taking place simultaneously.

Saturday's voting marked the end of the marathon polling process that began on April 19. The



assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim also went to polls. The BJP-led NDA is seeking a rare consecutive third term in office. The Opposition INDIA bloc is trying to upset the NDA applecart by putting up a joint fight in some states.

The counting of votes will be taken up on June 4. In Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, the counting

Silchar Hill Section.

for the Assembly polls will be held on June 2.

Till 5 pm, the estimated polling percentage was 58.34, according to the EC's voter-turnout app. A voter turnout of nearly 67.95 per cent was recorded in Jharkhand. Uttar Pradesh logged a polling percentage of 54, West Bengal 69.89, Bihar 48.86 and Himachal Pradesh 66.56. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Death toll in Mizoram landslides rises to 29

AIZWAL, June 1: The death toll in landslides in Mizoram climbed to 29 after the body of a 34-yearold woman was found in Tlawng River in Kolasib district, officials said. The woman, identified as Vanlalruali, and her husband had been missing after being hit by a landslide in Aibawk village in Aizawl district on Tuesday.

The woman's body was found in the river in Hortoki village in Kolasib district, which borders Assam, on Friday, they said.

Her body was taken to Kawnpui after being fished out of the river and her family members confirmed her identity.

Search for five other missing persons - four of whom are from Melthum, including a six-monthold, besides Vanlalruali's husband - is underway. The deaths were reported in multiple landslides in Aizawl district on Tuesday. Of the deceased, 21 were locals while eight were migrants from Jharkhand and Assam. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

ATDC chairman, Rituparna Baruah flags off 450-km expedition titled 'Plastic Free Brahmaputra' from Bogibeel ghat

Dibrugarh youth embarks on plastic bottle of the Lumding – Badarpur Hill section boat expedition on Brahmaputra

HT Correspondent DIBRUGARH, June 1: With the aim of creating awareness about the dangers of environmental pollution caused by plastics, Dhiraj Bikash Gogoi, a youth from Dibrugarh along with a three member team embarked on a 13-day expedition on the Brahmaputra river on Saturday.

Their boat, built entirely from plastic water bottles, aims to raise awareness about the dangers of plastic pollution. The 450-km expedition titled 'Plastic Free Brahmaputra," was flagged off by Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) chairman, Rituparna Baruah from the Bogibeel ghat in Dibrugarh.

The boat used for the expedition,



measuring 28 feet long and 5 feet were collected by Gogoi from the wide, was constructed using 3,300 Brahmaputra river bank in Dibruplastic water bottles. These bottles garh, where they had been dis-

carded by people. The process of building the boat took a total of 90 days. Gogoi revealed that their mission was to collect water bottles and plastic wastes from the Brahmaputra and its banks during the expedition. They plan to halt at the sandbars (chaporis) during the night before resuming their journey early the next morning. During the journey, he and his team will document the impact of plastic waste on the river's ecosystem, conduct clean-up drives and interact with local communities to educate them about the importance of responsible waste management. "I want to raise awareness about plastic pollution. I have always been concerned about the increasing pollution (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

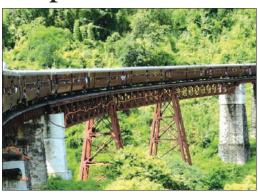
NFR to conduct Airborne Lidar Survey

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 1: The Northeast Frontier Railway is all set to conduct airborne electromagnetic Lidar Survey at the critical locations of Lumding -

The survey will be conducted during and after monsoon, which will analyse the critical location in detail for the type of soil strata, stability of slope, presence of natural or formed fault tending any movement of hill, water accumulation beneath the soil strata, formation of slip circle and stability of hill toe.

The survey will be conducted between Lumding -Badarpur section at KM – 45 to KM – 125. Tender for the survey has already been finalised and awarded to a Noida based company, Garudauav Soft Solutions Private Limited.

Airborne ground surface survey and sub-surface Electromagnetic Survey based on robust digital twin based artificial intelligence powered one point monitoring system will be conducted. This will monitor the dynamic geophysical landscape and subterranean environment, which will help in identifying and analysing failure as well as critical areas for preventive maintenance of the track environment without substantive human interventions along weak and vul-



nerable location prone to land slide/slip. This will be done by using non-invasive sensors i.e. LiDAR, optical photogrammetry, infrared mapping and ground penetrating radar and airborne electromagnetic.

The result or output will be analysed by artificial intelligence software for better comparing of thousands of data generated by survey and remedial measures will be provided for such critical location. LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology is used to obtain highly detailed and (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

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Passenger vehicle wholesales in slow lane in May due to high base effect, elections

nessed a marginal growth in May on account of high base effect and muted demand due to general elec-

The overall passenger vehicle dispatches from companies to dealers stood at 3,50,257 lakh units last month as compared to 3,35,436 in the same month a year ago, registering a growth of 4 per

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said its total domestic passenger vehicle sales rose marginally to 1,44,002 units last month from 1,43,708 units in the year-ago period. The company saw year-onyear dip in sales of entry level and compact cars last month as against May 2023.

Utility vehicle sales, including that of Brezza, Grand Vitara, Ertiga, S-Cross and XL6, however, rose to 54,204 units last month as against 46,243 units a year earlier.

"It has been discussed that growth this year will not be very high. It will be in single digit because of the high base effect. Secondly, there were elections and the scorching temperatures also had an impact on the overall sales in May." MSI Senior Executive Officer (Marketing & Sales) Partho Banerjee told reporters.

He further said: "We are very hopeful that we will start seeing

749.25 per kl) increase on May 1.

per cylinder and by ₹ 30.5 on April 1.

national oil prices.

25.5 on March 1.

ATF price cut 6.5%,

commercial LPG by ₹69

NEW DELHI, June 1: Jet fuel or ATF price on

Saturday was reduced by a steep 6.5 per cent and

that of commercial LPG used by hotels and restau-

rants by ₹ 69 per 19-kg cylinder on declining inter-

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was cut by ₹

6,673.87 per kilolitre, or 6.5 per cent, to ₹ 94,969.01 per kl in the national capital, according

to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

The reduction follows a marginal 0.7 per cent (₹

The ATF rate in Mumbai was slashed to

₹88,834.27 per kl from ₹ 95,173.70. Prices differ

from state to state depending on the incidence of

local taxes. Alongside, oil firms also cut the price of commercial LPG by ₹ 69 to ₹ 1,676 per 19-kg

cylinder. This is the third straight monthly reduction

in rates. The price was on May 1 reduced by ₹ 19

Rate of cooking gas used in domestic house-

holds, however, remained unchanged at ₹803 per

14.2-kg cylinder. April 1 saw the first reduction in

commercial LPG prices since January. The rate had

gone up by ₹ 14 per cylinder on February 1 and ₹

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC),

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) re-

vise prices of ATF and cooking gas on 1st of every

month based on the average price of benchmark in-

ternational fuel and foreign exchange rate. (PTI)

the green shoots coming with the election results coming in. I think

things will turn around Banerjee noted that the company is going to introduce a limited edition trims of its entry level cars -- Alto K10, S-Presso and Celerio -- in order to rejuvenate the small car segment.

The Dream Series edition trims of the three models will be launched at a price point of ₹4.99 lakh (ex-showroom), he said.

"Based on the feedback of our target customers we have come up with an edition in which we are mostly focusing on the utilities and convenience features," Banerjee said. Sales of Maruti Suzuki's mini segment cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, declined to 9,902 units

last month from 12,236 units in May 2023.

Rival Hyundai Motor India reported a 1 per cent year-on-year increase in domestic dispatch of vehicles to dealers last month.

The company's wholesales rose to 49,151 units in May as compared to 48,601 units in May 2023.

Hyundai Motor India COO Tarun Garg said that the sales growth this financial year is anticipated to remain in low single digit range. "In April also the industry grew by around 1.5 per cent ...so April plus May the industry growth should be around 2-2.5 per cent over same period last year," he noted.

Tata Motors said its passenger vehicle sales, including electric ve-

were up 2 per cent at 47,075 units as compared to 45,984 units in the year-ago month.

Business

Mahindra & Mahindra on the other hand reported a robust 31 per cent year-on- year increase in passenger vehicle dispatches last month at 43,218 units. It had sold 32,886 units in May 2023.

Tovota Kirloskar Motor reported a 24 per cent year-on-year increase in total wholesales in May at 25,273 units as compared to that of same month last year.

Kia India said its total wholesales increased 4 per cent year-onyear to 19,500 units in May. The automaker had dispatched 18,766 units to dealers in May 2023.

"So far in this year, we have been aggressive in introducing new competitive variants of our models, which has contributed significantly to our sales," Kia India Senior VP and Head Sales & Marketing Hardeep Singh Brar said.

With a robust network expansion strategy in place, the company shall continue to grow in the rest of the year and cross 1 million domestic sales milestone soon, he

MG Motor India reported a 5 per cent dip in wholesales at 4,769 units in May compared to the same month last year. The company had dispatched 5,006 units to dealers in May 2023. (PTI)

PhonePe expands loan distribution services

GUWAHATI, June 1: PhonePe has announced a significant expansion of its loan distribution offerings, now covering six major categories: Bike Loans, Car Loans, Home Loans, Gold Loans, Education Loans, and Mutual Fund Loans. This move is in collaboration with a network of reputable banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), and fintechs, aiming to enhance user experience in the secured loans sector. With an extensive user base of over 535 million registered users, PhonePe seeks to streamline the loan application process. Users can access the loan facility via the existing 'Loan' section on the PhonePe app, select their preferred loan category, and choose from a list of partnered lenders. This integrated approach eliminates the need for multiple applications, simplifying the process for customers. PhonePe has partnered with a carefully curated selection of top lenders, including Tata Capital, L&T Finance, Hero FinCorp, MuthootFincorp, DMI Housing Finance, Home First Finance, rupyy, Volt Money, and Gradright, with more lenders to be added soon. Currently, the platform boasts 15 active partners, with plans to scale up to 25 by the next quarter.

Senco Gold & Diamonds launches 'GATHBANDHAN 2024' bridal jewellery collection

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 1: Renowned jewellery retailer Senco Gold & Diamonds, with an 80year legacy and 159+ stores across India, has unveiled its latest bridal jewellery collection, 'Pyaar ka GATHBANDHAN 2024'. Celebrated as India's 2nd most trusted jewellery brand according to TRA's Brand Trust Report 2024 for the fourth consecutive year, Senco Gold & Diamonds continues to be a hallmark of excellence in the jewellery industry. The GATHBANDHAN collection embodies the essence of eternal love, encapsulating the sen-

timent of "Forever Together" in each exquisitely designed piece. GATHBANDHAN, a significant marriage ritual, symbolizes a lifelong commitment, representing the promise to traverse life's journey hand in hand. The collection celebrates this profound bond through intricate and diverse designs. Joita Sen. Director & Head of Marketing & Design. Senco Gold & Diamonds, commented on the launch, stating, "Senco Gold & Diamonds celebrates the timeless promise of love with its beautifully handcrafted, pan-India bridal iewellery collection.'

Dabur Glucose launches 'Energize India' campaign

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 1: Dabur Glucose, a leading instant energy drink from Dabur, has launched a mega campaign titled 'Energize India' to promote young sporting talent and highlight the importance of energy and stamina among athletes in major sports academies across India. As part of the campaign, Dabur Glucose held an awareness session on energy and stamina management at the City Cricket Coaching Centre in Dispur, Guwahati.

The session featured insights and strategies from Tauhid Ali Talukdar, a Strength and Conditioning Coach with credentials from the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru and the Australian Strength and Conditioning Association. The event was attended by Gautam Hazarika, former Ranji player and Founder best," Anand added.

President of the City Cricket

Coaching Centre. Byas Anand, Head of CSR & Communications, Corporate Dabur India Limited, expressed delight over the campaign's launch. "Dabur Glucose is a perfect fit for athletes, sports enthusiand active individuals, providing an instant energy boost essential for physical activities," he said. The session emphasized the significance of proper nutrition and hydration for optimal athletic performance and included tips to enhance stamina and endurance. Dabur also honoured three top junior athletes from the academy. "Dabur Glucose is committed to promoting a healthy and active lifestyle among youth. This partnership with young athletes helps achieve that goal, ensuring they stay energized and perform at their

Axis Bank Collaborates with Mastercard to launch NFC Soundbox

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, June 1: Axis

Bank, one of India's leading private sector banks, has launched an industry-first NFC Soundbox in collaboration with Mastercard. This innovative device offers a comprehensive solution for merchants, enabling them to accept Bharat QR, UPI, Tap & Pay, and Tap + Pin payments. Notably, Axis Bank becomes the first bank in India to introduce a Soundbox that supports Tap + Pin transactions, allowing merchants to accept payments exceeding ₹5000 via card instruments. The Soundbox features dual confirmation with audio cues and visual feedback in over seven languages, ensuring a smooth transaction experience for both merchants and consumers. Equipped with 4G and Wi-Fi capabilities, it guarantees superior connectivity and seamless processing.

The device also supports dynamic QR codes, automatically populating the amount when scanned, and allows deep integration with thirdparty applications. This collaboration between Axis Bank and Mastercard aims to enhance card payment acceptance among small merchants, offering an innovative and cost-effective solution that ensures quick, secure, and contactless transactions. Compatible with all major payment networks, including Visa, RuPay, and American Express, the Soundbox promises to drive cardholder satisfaction. Sanjeev Moghe, President & Head of Cards & Payments, Axis Bank, highlighted the bank's commitment to innovation and merchant onboarding digitization. He emphasized the NFC Soundbox's role in providing stateof-the-art payment solutions, prioritizing speed, security, and

IIFL Samasta Finance to raise up to ₹1,000 crore through public bond issue

AFFIDAVIT

I, Rafiqul Islam, S/O. Salim Uddin Ahmed, resident of village No.1 Dolabari, P.O. Kaliabhomora, P. S. Tezpur, Dist. Sonitpur, Assam hereby declare vide affidavit dtd 30-05- 2024 before Notary, Tezpur, Sonitpur that my mother's actual and correct name is Rahil Khatun and my actual and correct name is Rafigul Islam which have been written as Rakia Khatoon instead of Rahil Khatun Mohammed Rafiqul Islam instead of Rafiqul Islam respectively in my Passport, Republic of India being No.J4089857. Both the names are same and of

one person having single

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, June 1: IIFL Samasta Finance, one of

India's largest non-banking microfinance companies (NBFC-MFI), has announced plans to raise up to ₹ 1,000 crore through a public issue of secured bonds. The initiative aims to enhance capital and support business growth, offering bonds with up to 10.50% interest and a high degree of safety. The bond issue opens on Monday, June 3, 2024, and closes on Friday, June 14, 2024, with an option for early closure. The company will initially issue bonds aggregating ₹ 200 crore, with a green-shoe option to retain oversubscription of up to ₹800 crore, totalling ₹1,000 crore.

The bonds offer a maximum coupon rate of 10.50% per annum for a 60-month tenor and are available in tenors of 24, 36, and 60 months. Interest payment options include monthly and annual frequencies for each series. The bonds, issued at a face value of ₹ 1,000, have a minimum application size of ₹ 10,000 across all categories and will be listed on the BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) to provide liquidity to investors.

The allotment will be made on a first-come, firstserved basis. In April 2024, IIFL Samasta Finance strengthened its leadership by appointing Dr. Govinda Rajulu Chintala, former Chairman of NABARD, as

Chairman of the Board. Additionally, Kalengada Mandanna Nanaiah, former Managing Director of Equifax Credit Information Services, and R. Venkataraman, Co-promoter of IIFL Group, joined the Board as Additional Directors (non-executive and Independent). Venkataraman joined as an Additional Director (non-executive). The Board now comprises

"We are thrilled to have such esteemed professionals join our board, enhancing our governance and strategic direction," said Venkatesh N, MD and CEO, IIFL Samasta Finance. "With a robust physical presence of approximately 1,500 branches across India, we cater to the credit needs of underserved populations, primarily women entrepreneurs from underprivileged backgrounds. The funds raised will help us meet the credit demand from more customers and bolster business growth." The lead managers for the issue are Trust Investment Advisors Private Limited. Nuvama Wealth Management Limited, and IIFL Securities Limited. IIFL Samasta Finance specializes in offering innovative and affordable financial products to women organized in Joint Liability Groups, serving a wide array of sectors including agriculture, trade, and craftsmanship across rural, semi-urban, and urban areas in India.

Contd. from Page 1...

BJP to get minimum 11 seats

Tapan Gogoi in the Jorhat Lok Sabha seat. BJP has been looking unstoppable in the rest of the seats. The ruling party will sweep the Upper Assam region, according to exit polls. Except Jorhat Lok Sabha seat, the saffron camp will dominate in other parliamentary constituencies.

Meanwhile, lower Assam areas will bring some relief to the Congress party with Dhubri and Nagaon seats may go to their fold. In Barak valley, exit polls predicted a huge win for the BJP in the Silchar seat. Congress will oust BJP in the Karimganj parliamentary constituency.

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had claimed that the BJP would win at least 11 seats in the state. The tally may go up to 13 seats as well.

Exit Polls: PM Modi all

After the seventh and last phase of voting ended on Saturday, Modi exuded confidence that people have voted in record numbers to re-elect the NDA government and said the "opportunistic INDI Alliance" failed to strike a chord with the voters who rejected their "regressive politics". Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge told reporters after a meeting of the opposition INDIA bloc that the alliance will win more than 295 seats.

"We have arrived at this figure after speaking with all our leaders. This is a survey of people. People have given this information to our leaders. The government surveys are there and their media friends also inflate figures and put it out. Therefore, we want to tell you about the reality," he said.

BJP president J P Nadda, however, asserted that people have voted for a capable, powerful, developed and self-reliant India and to put aside appearement, nepotism and corruption, exuding confidence that his party will win more than 370 Lok Sabha seats and the NDA over 400. The counting of votes will take place on June

Kharge says grouping to get

The real poll of the people will win, BJP's fake Exit Poll will lose." Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that after taking feedback from everywhere "we believe that the INDIA bloc will win more than 295 seats, while the BJP will get around 220 seats. The NDA, meanwhile, will get around 235 seats. The INDIA bloc is moving forward to form a strong government."

Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav said, "The INDIA bloc is going to form the government. He (PM) has gone to see the sea and he has his back towards the people, who are now against him". Jharkhand CM Champai Soren said, "We (INDIA bloc) will do very well in Jharkhand and win more than 10 seats. The INDIA bloc is winning 295 seats.3

"The people are winning, and INDIA will win. We have been saying that we will get 295-plus seats," said RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav.

Asked about who would be their PM candidate, he said, "We will decide about the rest together after June 4". CPI-M's Sitaram Yechury said a common minimum programme will be chalked out once the numbers come and that will be the basis of the new government.

Meanwhile, the INDIA bloc parties also announced they will participate in the exit poll debates on TV this evening after the grouping's top leaders met and deliberated on the issue. The development came a day after the Congress said it has decided not to participate in any Lok Sabha exit poll debates on television channels. The party does not want to indulge in speculation and slugfest for TRP, it had said.

"After considering factors for and against participating in the exit polls, it has been decided by consensus that all the INDIA (bloc) parties will participate in the exit poll debates on television this evening," Congress's media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said in a post on X. In another development, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh alleged that Home Minister Amit Shah has been calling up district magistrates and collectors and indulging in "blatant and brazen" intimidation. (PTI)

Flood situation remains grim

trains have been canceled or short-terminated, according to a Northeast Frontier Railway spokesperson.

Meanwhile, the southwest monsoon has entered Assam and other northeastern states ahead of its scheduled time due to the effect of Cyclone Remal, according to the Indian Meteorological Department. Heavy rainfall and thunderstorm has been forecast in different districts of the state. Meanwhile, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) will conduct a survey at critical locations of the Lumding-Silchar section, which is often affected by

The survey will be conducted during and after the monsoon, analysing critical locations in detail for the type of soil strata, stability of slope, presence of natural or formed fault tending any movement of hill, water accumulation beneath the soil strata and formation of slip circle, a statement said. (PTI)

State Election Commission issues

over its demand for creation of Frontier Nagaland Territory comprising these districts. Longkumer said the ENPO president has superintendence over its organisation and the eastern Nagaland public emergency control room with its headquarters at Tuensang.

The notice pointed out that the ENPO in a press statement that appeared in local papers on May 16, made public its stand to collectively abstain from participating in the ULB elections, with a letter addressed to the state election commissioner on May 16.

Longkumer said the commission vide a press release dated May 17, with a copy endorsed to the ENPO president, had stated the vital facets of the conduct of such elections as the municipal and town council elections and why the decision to vote or not to vote should be left to the conscience and freedom of the individual voter concerned without being subject to some collective stance. He also referred to the notice of contempt served to several entities in the state by the Supreme Court with potential legal ramifications entailing the action of such collective abstention under the umbrella and influence of any organisation. Despite this, Longkumer said, the ENPO had, through a press statement that appeared in local papers on

May 31, again publicly declared its stand of collective abstention from participation in the ULB elections.

"The public declaration of abstention en bloc made through an organisation not only goes against the basic tenets of universal adult franchise and the constitutional and inviolable rights of absolute freedom of conscience and choice in electoral participation that every eligible citizen is entitled to, but it also amounts to exerting undue influence that should otherwise not be used either directly or indirectly in connection with the free exercise of electoral participation," the notice said.

It said as per the IA No. 69269 of 2023 in Civil Appeal No. 3607 of 2016 consequent upon the notice of contempt served to the ENPO president, among others, by the Supreme Court, Sangtam, as the president of the ENPO, and as a respondent to the notice of contempt, is under legal obligation to comply with the orders of the court in ensuring a free, fair and undisturbed electoral environment and to refrain from any action that influences or tends to influence, that interferes or tends to interfere with the free exercise of franchise and of electoral participation of eligible citizens residing in the eastern Nagaland region.

Lok Sabha polls phase 7

Punjab recorded a voter turnout of 55.20 per cent till 5 pm while Chandigarh registered a voting percentage of 62.80. Odisha recorded around 62.46 per cent voting. The turnout in the first six phases of the general election was 66.14 per cent, 66.71 per cent, 65.68 per cent, 69.16 per cent, 62.2 per cent and 63.36 per cent respectively. The poll panel had called upon voters to turn out in greater numbers and vote with responsibility and pride.

In Bengal's Sandeshkhali, clashes broke out between TMC and BJP supporters over allegations of electoral malpractices. BJP candidate Rekha Patra alleged that TMC goons stopped voters from casting their votes. The TMC made counter allegations and accused Patra and BJP goons of trying to vitiate the poll atmosphere. As both the groups came to blows on Basanti express highway, police resorted to baton charge and tear gas shelling to disperse the mob. Basirhat SP Hossain Mehedi Rahaman said three persons were injured during the clash between TMC and BJP supporters at Bayramari in Sandeshkhali, adding that one person was arrested in this connection. TMC and BJP workers also clashed in some parts of Jadavpur and Diamond Harbour constituen-

Clashes broke out between supporters of the TMC, Indian Secular Front (ISF) and BJP in Jadavpur as the parties alleged that their polling agents were stopped from entering booths. A confrontation crupted in Bhangar within the Jadavpur constituency between TMC and ISF supporters, with allegations of crude bombs being hurled from both sides. Police intervention ensued, triggering protests as both factions accused each other. To quell the situation, security personnel resorted to a lathicharge and seized several crude bombs.

Prime Minister Modi appealed to people to exercise their franchise. "Together, let's make our democracy more vibrant and participative," the Prime Minister said on X. Other prominent candidates among the 904 in the fray are Union minister Anurag Thakur, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee, RJD supremo Lalu Prasad's daughter Misa Bharti and actor Kangana Ranaut.

The Dumka, Rajmahal and Godda seats in Jharkhand are going to polls in this phase. All eyes are on Dumka, where the BJP's Sita Soren, the sister-in-law of jailed former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren, is contesting against the INDIA bloc's Nalin Soren. Sita Soren, a three-term former Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) legislator, joined the BJP just ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. Polling is being held for six Lok Sabha and 42 Assembly seats in Odisha. (PTI)

Death toll in Mizoram landslides

Chief Minister Lalduhoma announced an ex-gratia amount of Rs 4 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased. He said the government has earmarked Rs 15 crore to tackle disasters triggered by rain caused by Cyclone Remal. (PTI)

Dibrugarh youth embarks on

levels, especially the impact of plastic waste on our rivers and ecosystems. I wanted to do something innovative to draw people's attention to the pressing issue and inspire them to make a change." ATDC Chairman Rituparna Baruah congratulated Gogoi and his team, recognising the potential of their venture to promote river tourism and raise environmental consciousness.

"Plastic pollution has been a growing concern worldwide, causing detrimental effects to ecosystems and ultimately affecting human and wildlife. It is crucial for every citizen to understand the importance of reducing plastic waste," Baruah said. He further added, "The river Brahmaputra is a life line for the people of the state

and we should take pledge not to pollute the river." NFR to conduct Airborne

precise elevation data. A LiDAR survey is conducted using airborne or terrestrial LiDAR scanners to capture the topography of the project area, including the existing railway tracks, nearby terrain, and any relevant structures. Railway surveying projects involve a range of surveying activities and techniques to support the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of railways. This survey plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety, efficiency and effectiveness of railway transportation systems.

Kopili and Borpani river have submerged over 100 villages under Kampur and Raha revenue circles

Flood scene in Nagaon remains grim

NAGAON, June 1: The flood situation in Nagaon district is still grim on Saturday as well. Although the water level of the Kopili river has been slightly reduced, the water level of Nishari river at Kampur areas increased and the overflowing water of Nishari river inundated over fifty villages including Niz Kathiatoli, Tetelisara, Naambor Lalunggaon, Majorati, Bhalbhalia and the flood victims have been already shifted to the temporary shelter or relief camps set up by the district administration here.

It is reported that after the overflowing water of Kopili and Borpani river have submerged over 100 villages under Kampur and Raha revenue circles, the overflowing water of Nishari river has inundated another 50 villages

HT Correspondent

DONGKAMUKAM, June 1: Satgaon

Catholic Parish, West Karbi Anglong on Satur-

day distributed relief materials to 61 flood af-

fected families of Lalmati, New Bithung and

Deramukh village. The materials include 5 kgs

rice, 2 kgs potatoes, 2kgs lentils, 2kgs sugar, 1

Thyrniang and Fr Charles Sangma and lay per-

son Nitendra Sangma and India Catholic Youth

Fr Albert Thyrniang speaking before the dis-

tribution informed that the relief materials and

rations were acquired with small donations re-

The rations were distributed by Fr Albert

kg onion, 1/2 kg salt and 1 litre edible oil.

Movement, president, Evarius Sangma.



ceived from the Parish collected over last two

years after the flood that occurred in June 2022.

He urged the parishioners to contribute more

Fr Charles Sangma also appreciated the con-

tribution made by generous parishioners and

the items can be given to those in need during

natural calamities. Before the distribution

began Nitendra Sangma conducted the mass

Meanwhile, the flood water is receding.

However flood affected villagers sheltering in

temporary camps could not return to their homes

vet. Communication between Tumpreng of West

to face any eventuality in the future.

under Kampur revenue circle on Saturday till the time of filing this report here. As per a report, the Kampur - Kathiatoli connecting PWD road has been inundated by flood water for which the road

Relief material distributed

connection between Kampur -Kathiatoli has been disrupted on

The district administration and district disaster management authority has already set up several

relief camps at the flood hit areas under Kampur as well as Raha revenue circles and also deployed special rescue and SDRF teams. Besides, the administration immediately initiated the distribution of water bottles, food items like rice, pulses and medicine among the flood victims. Simultaneously, the administration also distributed animal-food among the people for feeding their domestic animals

District Commissioner, Nagaon Narendra Kr Shah along with a special team from district administration rushed to a relief camp setup at Rangolu HS School on Saturday and reviewed the situation as well as inspected all the facilities ensured by the line departments concerned. Shah also interacted with the inmates of the relief camp, sources added.



Organisations announce fresh stir against ONGC in Sivasagar

HT Correspondent SIVASAGAR, June 1: Several organisations including ATASU, Yuva Parishad, Sangrami AKRASU, Asom Yuva Chatta Parishad, SC Students Union, Jatiya Sangrami Sena Asom, Asomiya Yuva Mancha, Ahom Sena, Maria Students Union, announced fresh stir against ONGC Assam Asset for several reasons they consider harmful to the people of the district through a press meet here on Saturday.

Among other things, the organizations demand termination of all ONGC privatization moves.

Secondly, they demand all efforts to transfer departments and wings of the hydrocarbon exploration and production giant from Sivasagar. Thirdly, the organisation leaders want ONGC to stop overlooking the interest of the local contractors and award contracts to companies outside the state at the behest of an alleged section of the anti-Assamese lobby of executives. They claim that it is the reason behind the closure of tender processes for light vehicles for eight months. On June 6, the organizations called for a mass demonstration before ONGC Assam Asset HQ in Nazira. In the second phase, the organisations' workers will barricade the main entrance to the ONGC HQ in Nazira and Sivasagar.

Finally, the student and youth organisations will close down all exploration and production installations in the entire area of operations. While addressing the media,



Debajit Dutta, president, Asom Yuva Chatra Parishad, said that ONGC has been operating in three upper Assam districts, Sivasagar, Charaideo, and Jorhat, and has been contributing Crires of rupees to the Central and State government coffers. But of late, a powerful lobby of industrialists and bureaucrats outside the state has been working clandestinely to shift ONGC Assam Asset out of the state. To deprive the local contractors and entrepreneurs, the ONGC management has begun floating tenders for works above one crore.

Chitu Barua, president, of Jativa Sangrami Sena Asom, alleged that the ONGC is very tactfully shifting one important department after another from Sivasagar to Delhi, Kolkata, and other places. Recently, the Geological Core laboratory was shifted to Jorhat.

He said that ONGC has been in

the field of hydrocarbon exploration and production for over six decades in Sivasagar and the people of the district have donated their lands and resources to the corporation. But now, it is indulging in anti-Sivasagar policies and activities detrimental to the local peoples' interest.

Parashjyoti Das, secretary of SC Students'Union, said that the Sivasagar District Administration is also to be blamed in this connection as it had been facilitating such anti-local activities of the ONGC for long as middlemen. Jintu Mech, of Assam Yuva Chatra Sanmilan, said that ONGC adopted a drastic employee retrenchment policy and reduced its permanent employee strength from over 11 thousand a decade back to over 3300 now by resorting to the Men Management Contract system for employee recruitment.

Overnight rain inundates



Poster making

HT Correspon

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clean the drain where the water was clogged due to garbage. "The Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya School road and Mancotta road was affected and came under water due to the overnight rain. Due to garh waterlogging can be seen in

streets in Dibrugarh

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Overnight rain has inundated many areas of Dibrugarh and the most affected places are Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya school road and Mancotta road. Most of the roads were waterlogged because of the poor drainage system. Due to the low laying area, the waterlogging has been witnessed in the particular road for last several years but the district administration could not find solution to solve the perennial problem. The busy Mancotta road was also badly affected by the flash flood in several stretches. The 300-metre stretch of road just before the newly constructed flyover from the Chowkidinghee side resembled a rivulet with the water level reaching up to the knee-height. The Dibrugarh Municipal Corporation Mayor Dr Saikat Patra has been seen instructed the workers to

the poor drainage system of Dibruparticular road," alleged a citizen.

Potholes on busy road harass citizens in Demow

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, June 1: The Potholes have come up on Hari Pora road which connects Demow Chariali. According to Sources, the Hari Pora Road houses government offices, schools, college and a police station. Residents have to travel through the Hari Pora Road to reach their respective offices for their work. Students have to travel through the Hari Pora Road to reach their respective educational institutions every day. On the other hand, Nitai Road faces the same situation. The road as well houses government offices, educational institutions, Demow Model Hospital CUM CHC. Raichai Rural Stadium Demow.

NAAC awards B grade to Udali Mahavidyalaya

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, June 1: Udali Mahavidyalaya, a pioneer institution of higher education in greater area of Lanka in Hojai district, has been awarded B grade by National Council for Assessment and Accreditation (NAAC) recently. The college scored 2.1 points on the seven grade point scale as declared by NAAC office on Friday morning, assessing the grade for the college for next five years. Dr Arun Bora, principal and Dr Abdul Wadud, coordinator to internal quality assurance cell of the college appreciated and also expressed their gratitude to the teachers, students, other non teaching staff and wellwishers of the college for their dedication as well as sacrifices to achieve the covetous accreditation outreach, asserted in a press note here.

Panchakarma Therapy at Margherita Civil Hospital a boon for patients People from far flung areas benefited by therapy

People from Nalbari, Gohpur, Sipajahar Mangaldoi, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Teok, Janji, Jorhat, Moran, Golaghat, Kakopather, Borpathar, Naharkatiya, Duliajan, Namrup, Sadiya, Tinsukia district and from our neighbouring state Arunachal Pradesh flock the hos-

Dr Sashindra Barman Sub divisional Medical officer (SDMO) and incharge of Panchakarma Therapy of Margherita FRU said that on March 8, 2019 he started

Margherita civil hospital where than Margherita sub divisional officers Preeti Kumari (IAS) and Pabitra Kumar Das, than Margherita civil hospital Deputy Superintendent Dr Kumud Chandra Das, Tinsukia district deputy commissioner Swapneel Paul, Tinsukia District joint health directors G S Gogoi and Jayanta Bhattacharya helped him to launch the

More than 700 patients have been cured who have been suffering from various major diseases such as Neurological problem, lumber spondylitis, surgical spondylitis, slip disc, hydronephrocis, small renal calculi, pancreatitis, fatty liver, deep jaundice, deep injury and varicose vein

Panchakarma Therapy



have been cured through Panchakarma Therapy at Margherita

bedded hospital for Panchakarma Therapy at Margherita so that patients who comes far flung areas may get better treatment, said Dr Sashindra Barman.

"Already a group of meeting has been held with the management of North Eastern coalfields Coal India ltd Margherita where they have assured to provide ₹ 5 crore funds through CSR scheme," he added.

When this correspondent talked with the patients who are getting treatment through Panchakarma Therapy at Margherita civil hospital said that in the year 2025 Dr Sashindra Barman's tenure would end so we request Assam Government for continuation of Barman's service because of his efficiency and dedication.

Karbi Anglong and Hojai is still cut off. Orphan trampled to death by wild elephants

HT Correspondent NAGAON, June 1: Ravi Deori, an orphan hailing from Morigaon district was trampled to death in Kondali area under Kathiatoli forest range by a herd of wild elephants last night.

The orphan has been staying at Rangolu based Water Fly orphanage, ran by Gram Vikas Parishad, a leading NGO of the district for long. The body of the deceased orphan was recovered by local police as well as forest personnel from Kathiatoli forest range on Saturday and sent to Nagaon BP Civil Hospital for autopsy, sources added.

Sources claimed that the deceased orphan along with another orphan identified as Biki Nagvanshi fled from the orphanage last evening. Later at night, Biki Nagvanshi was rescued by some locals and handed him over to local police and the information regarding the death of Ravi Deori came into light, sources said, adding that police along with forest personnel rushed to the spot this morning and recovered the mortal remains of the victim orphan.

Mother kills infant in Sootea

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, June 1: Sensation prevailed in and out of the greater Sootea on Saturday when the news of alleged killing of an infant girl child by her own mother spread like wildfire.

According to information, one Masida Khatoon (26), a resident of No 1 Adabheti under Sootea PS allegedly killed her 50 days old girl child Adinur Islam this morning by pressing her neck at her residence. The incident took place this morning. The family members and local residents came to know about the tragic incident at a later stage. The local residents spotted a blood stained body of the infant and immediately informed Sootea police. A team of Sootea police headed by Shyamal Jyoti Saikia officer in-charge reached the site and forwarded the alleged accused to the court and sent the body for autopsy. The accused mother has been sent to the jail, informed the police officer.

Appeal to plant trees

NAGAON, June 1: Assam Forest Employees' Association urged all the forest personnel including officials of the department concerned as well as other household to plant minimum a sapling at their respective home on the upcoming World Environment Day as the rapid global warming and climate change poses a threat to all living beings on the

Humen Pegu and Rahul Bora, the president and secretary of the association respectively asserted in a press note here that the rapid industrialization, deforestation, mining and other activities of human being hit the balance of the world environment and poses a fatal threat to the existence of all the living beings on the planet.

Hence, the association initiated a statewide plantation drive to sustain the balance of environment of the state around, said in the same

FIR lodged against teacher at Sootea PS

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, June 1: One Hemanta Bhuyan, father of one Chiranjib Bhuyan, a student of class one of Borpam ME School has lodged an FIR at Sootea PS recently against one school teacher on the charges of incorporating physical assult on his son on road.

According to information, Chiranjib was playing marbles with playmates on the road at Sapekati Village after school on Thursday. Incidentally, a marble hit on the leg of one Pranjit Bora, head teacher of Pub Samguri LPS while he was on his way back to home after school. On getting hit by a marble, school teacher Pranjit became furious and brutally assaulted Chiranjib instantly. The father of the student lodged an FIR at Sootea PS against the teacher.

Emerging writer awarded

BISWANATH CHARIALI, June 1: Biswajit Sut, son of Bakul Sut and Premlata Bora, residents of Diplonga Balijan has been awarded with 'Assam Udayaditya Subhasha Bota 2024' by Assam Udayaditya Gosthi for his consistent contribution towards art, culture, social service and in the field of Sankari Culture. The title carries a memento, a citation, a gamosa, a packet of books. Organizations and individuals congratulated him for his achievement.

Banned Thai Mackerel seized at Jagiroad

JAGIROAD, June 1: The Jagiroad police and the fishery department, Morigaon in a joint operation on Saturday seized about one quintal of banned Thailand Mackerel from Jagibhakat gaon.

The banned fish was carrying in a mini truck bearing registration number AS 02 DC 3251. The fish was later buried under the supervision of the Morigaon District fisheries development officer Bhaskarjyoti Nath and Jagiroad police atation officer-in-charge Bhadreshwar Pegu and the accused was fined ₹ 30000. It is worth mentioning that the production and rearing of the Thai Mackerel, Japanese carp/tilapia and bighead carp fry is punishable by law.

Vaccination drive for goats found suitable for vaccination then PPR vaccination was HT Correspondent **HOJAI, June 1:** A mass vaccination programme for done. Total 60 goats were vaccinated on the day and for 100 goats ear tag was issued for online registration to receive further service provision under the dept.

PPR (Peste Des Petits Ruminants) disease in goats and its prevention was organised at Hira Basti Village under Dimpurpar Panchayat in

Hojai Assam by RAHC Hojai, animal husbandry & veterinary department in collaboration with Family Strengthening Programme of SOS Children's Village Hojai The programme was led by Dr

Roshni Rai, VO, Hojai with her team . The vaccination programme started early in the morn-

ing from 8 am and continued till 12 noon. In the program the health condition, pregnancy sta-

tus, age of the goat were verified first by the team and if



The Village level Pashu Sakhi, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Department volunteers and Animators of FS Programme of SOS CV Hojai present for smooth management of the programme. The community people were so happy to get the free vaccination for the PPR diseases with diagnosis and prescription for present diseases and free Vitamins supplement for their goats. The village lead-

ers appreciated the initiative of FS Program of SOS CV, Hojai and RAHC Hojai, animal husbandry & veterinary department, govt of Assam.

passes away

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR. June 1: A sense of deep sorrow enveloped the entire greater Tezpur area as the noted social worker and pious lady of Murhateteli area here Anu Lahkar breathed her last on Thursday following her old age ailments. She was 85.

During her lifetime, Lahkar wife of late Lakshmi Kanta Lahkar and mother of distinguished social figure and prominent physician Dr Pradip Lahkar was closely associated with several socio-culture and religious organisations of her vicinity.

After receiving the news of her death various organizations and individuals including MLA, Tezpur Prithviraj Rabha, MLA, Rangapara Krishna Kamal Tanti, noted physician Dr PK Sarma, assistant labour commissioner Jiban Dutta, artist Jaan Talukdar of Assam Repertory , Namcare and Orthocare hospital families, officials and staff of the office of the assistant labour commissioner and the people of the locality have deeply mourned at the death of the pious lady and expressing their condolences to the bereaved families.

Among many disciples she leaves behind her only son prominent social figure of Tezpur Dr Pradip Lahkar. daughter-in-laws, son-in-laws and grandchildren and a score of grieving relatives. The last rite of the pious lady was held at the Hajarapar public cemetery here on Thursday night in the presence of many dignitaries.

Noted social worker Leadership training concludes in Baksa

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, June 1: A two-day residential programme on the topic of leading Bodoland: strategic vision and collaborative leadership was concluded on Saturday being held at The Sikhiri Cottage, Manas National Park in Baksa.

A total twenty participants representing officials, OSDs (officers on special duty), government of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), media consultants, youth leaders participated in the event which was organised by the department of education. Govt of BTR and Disom-The Leadership School.

Biren Bhuta, the founder director of the Disom graced as chief resource person, and imparted training on the leadership capacity

The training has been aimed to impart training on leadership capacity building up, social integration, strengthening of the communication, smart and better governance.

"The leadership training programme was impressive and excellent for gaining knowledge and gathering information. The programme gained it's attraction amongst the participants which had gathered discussion on various developmental aspects, social uplift orientation, integration amongst the communities besides highlighting the vision building up in Bodoland region", a participant said.

HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, June 1: Pan-

chakarma Therapy at Margherita civil hospital has given relief to thousands of people becoming a boon for the critical patients who come for treatment from other parts of Assam.

pital in times of need.



civil hospital said Dr Sashindra

I have requested Assam Government to construct a separate 30

THE HILLS TIMES

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Editor's pick

Turning a bold new leaf in foreign policy

By: Kumardeep Banarjee

In a week from now, a new central Government would be in place, picking up from where the last Government had left. If the BJP comes back to power for a third time, India's foreign policy push would be towards enhancing its stature globally. In a couple of interviews with various media, PM Modi has stressed a confident India now actually mediating on critical global affairs, than the earlier practise of being an observer. In most of the interviews, he mentions the role India played or continues to play, behind the scenes in the Ukraine situation. a sensitive topic. India has a historical relationship with Russia, which has never attempted to alter the relationship, however, Russia has of late started getting into a tighter embrace with China, cooperating on several critical projects including hydrocarbons and technology part-

Meanwhile, India has grown closer to the US and has been rightly projected as a key ally for the Indo-Pacific region. PM Modi has also highlighted that his third term would ensure, that the Indian PM would be the senior most among democratically elected leaders, serving as he would post a decade of tectonic shifts in geo-political affairs. He hinted that a more confident India has to act more responsibly with its allies while expanding the network, especially with an aggressive China in the neighbourhood. It was no coincidence that external affairs minister S Jaishankar while delivering a key note on the Nikkei Future of Asia forum mentioned "The world is undergoing a flux - driven by geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-technological developments. In the last four decades, economic and political rebalancing accelerated by globalisation has been driving us towards multipolarity.

Today, the global order is visibly under stress, with Asia and the Indo-Pacific very much part of this transformation. But it is not just change we are seeing; there is also much greater risk-taking. It is visible in the conflict in Ukraine, in violence in the Middle East and the disregard for international law and agreements in Asia and the Indo-Pacific. This has economic facets, perhaps even more concerning. The supply chain challenge, over-concentrations stemming from globalisation and the use of economic coercion by States have put a premium on resilience and redundancy. Equally important is the technology challenge that has created a new level of inter-penetration and inter-dependence." Jaishankar underscored India's future foreign policy roadmap with a firm focus on neighbours in the East, West and the Indian Ocean. He also highlighted the centrality of the Indo-Pacific in India's progress. Cross-border road infrastructure and integrated port facilities have found traction in India's external policy in the recent past.

The Iran-based Chabahar port, whose long-term maintenance contract India secured a few weeks back, providing access to crucial land-locked Central Asian countries and beyond is a recent example. External Affairs minister highlighted in his speech the pace at which road and rail networks are getting built in India, even when one of the largest democratic exercises in the world, India elections are underway. He said "The transformation of India is critical to strengthening multipolarity in Asia itself, a pre-requisite for a multipolar world. India's growing weight will ensure that the overall balance in the world order remains in favour of freedom, openness, transparency and a rules-based order. Equally, its greater sense of responsibility and more contributions are also making a difference. Indian naval ships are currently operating in the Red Sea to protect maritime shipping. India has been a First Responder for natural disasters across the Indian Ocean, sometimes even beyond." Without speculating for next week, it would be safe to assume a huge diplomatic outreach, awaits the new Government. (Courtesy: The Pio-

India's leading PSE BHEL sees big resurgence in its operations

By: Raju Kumar

turnover after a period of stagnation in orders and productivity. BHEL had been facing challenges in recent years, has reported notable improvements in its financial performance for the financial year 2023-24.

In the financial year 2022-23. BHEL Corporation generated an income of ₹ 22,136 crores from operations. This figure rose by 3.5% to ₹ 22,921 crores in 2023-24. Additionally, the company recorded a profit after tax of ₹ 260 crores. The most remarkable aspect of BHEL's recent performance is the dramatic increase in orders. Compared to ₹ 23,548 crores worth of orders in 2022-23, BHEL secured orders amounting to ₹77,907 crores in 2023-24, representing a 231% surge, clearly indicating a strengthening financial position for the company.

Among the various units of BHEL, the Bhopal unit has made significant strides. For the first time, BHEL Bhopal has achieved the top position in performance at the corporate level. This is a noteworthy accomplishment considering that the Trichy unit has historically held this title. The Executive Director of BHEL Bhopal, SM Ramanathan, expressed enthusiasm about these achievements. The Bhopal unit, often referred to as the Mother Unit, recorded a turnover of ₹ 2,968 crores in the financial year 2022-23. This turnover increased by approximately 15% to ₹3,403 crores in 2023-24. In terms of profit before tax, the Bhopal unit saw an increase from ₹ 69 crores in 2022-23 to ₹ 98 crores in 2023-24, marking a 42% rise.

The Bhopal unit also experienced a significant increase in orders. In 2022-23, the unit received orders worth ₹ 3,320 crores. This figure surged by 87% to ₹ 6,213 crores in 2023-24. Based on the substantial orders received last year, BHEL Bhopal has set an ambitious turnover target of ₹ 4,275 crores for the financial year 2024-25. BHEL has a rich history in heavy electrical production, which continues to be a source of pride. After India's in-

dependence, there was an urgent harat Heavy Electricals
Limited (BHEL) has experior and tagent need for self-reliance in energy production to support the country's industrial devolutions. need for self-reliance in energy Limited (BHEL) has ex- try's industrial development. To ienced a significant address this, BHEL was established in Bhopal in 1956, initially as a result of a partnership with the UK's Associated Electrical Industries. This entity later evolved into Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, widely known as BHEL. Over the years, BHEL has played a crucial role in setting up power plants and supplying equipments not only within India but also globally, especially in several

countries across Asia and Africa. As times have changed and according to market needs, BHEL has adapted by continuously improving the quality and design of its products. This adaptability has enabled the company to work towards making India self-reliant (Atmanirbhar) in energy and industry, while also striving to become a global leader in this field. In addition to traditional energy equipments, BHEL is making significant advancements in nuclear energy and environmentally

friendly energy equipment. The company's commitment to innovation and quality has been a key driver of its recent success. BHEL has focused on enhancing the efficiency and reliability of its products, which has helped it secure large orders and maintain a competitive edge in the market. The company's efforts to diversify its energy portfolio, including investments in renewable energy sources, have also positioned it well for future growth.

However, considering the com-

pany's current performance and favourable market trends, it appears that BHEL's future is secure. BHEL's resurgence in the past financial year is a testament to its robust strategic planning and execution. The significant increase in orders and improved financial performance of its Bhopal unit underscore the company's strengthened position. As BHEL continues to innovate and adapt to market needs, it is poised to achieve greater heights in the coming years. The company's focus on enhancing product quality, expanding its energy portfolio, and maintaining financial stability will be key to sustaining its growth and achieving its ambitious targets. (IPA Service)

Political campaigns: From negative tactics to the call for positive change

s democratic processes take place across 64 natake place across committees the tions, including major powers like India, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union, there has been a noticeable surge in political campaigning and advertising efforts. It is a common strategy for political parties and candidates to employ negative campaigning tactics, which involve critigizing or portraying their opponents in an unfavorable light. with the aim of enhancing their own perceived strengths and appeal. This approach, while controversial, is often utilized as a means to sway public opinion and gain an advantage in the electoral process.

Negative campaigning tactics have been employed in American presidential elections since their inception, with the 1828 contest between John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson widely regarded by historians as the most vitriolic. This phenomenon reached new heights in the 1964 election cycle, wherein incumbent President Lyndon B. Johnson effectively discredited his Republican challenger, Barry Goldwater, through a series of impactful radio advertisements. Chief among these was the infamous "Daisy ad," which sought to portray Goldwater as a dangerous extremist whose election could potentially culminate in nuclear warfare.

During the 2016 United States presidential election cycle, Donald Trump's campaign aired a television advertisement featuring footage of his opponent, Hillary Clinton, appearing to stumble at a public event. The ad was seen as a negative attack on Clinton's health and stamina. In the subsequent 2020 election, both Trump and his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, engaged

in negative campaigning tactics. Trump frequently questioned Biden's cognitive abilities, while Biden criticized Trump's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and his personal character. This trend of negative political

advertising has persisted into the current 2024 election season, with candidates from both major parties continuing to air attack

ads against their opponents. During the 2019 United Kingdom General Election campaign, the Conservative Party sought to characterize the Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, as posing a substantial threat to national security. Similarly, in the run-up to the 2021 German Federal Election, the Social Democratic Party employed a negative campaigning tactic, disseminating images that depicted Armin Laschet, the Christian Democratic Union candidate, laughing inappropriately while surveying an area ravaged by flooding.

exemplify the deployment of **Dipak Kurmi** attack advertisements and fear-mongering narratives by major political parties, which aimed to undermine the credibility and public perception

of their respective opponents.

The advent of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi on India's political landscape in 2014 ushered in an era of unprecedented technological integration and soaring advertising expenditures during election campaigns. Contemporary political leaders undergo rigorous training to cultivate a commanding presence, hone their communication skills, and deliver impactful speeches. The Bahujan Samaj Party's supremo. Mayawati, received guidance on her sartorial choices. Regional party leaders have not shied away from seeking assistance from foreign agencies, exemplified by the advice given to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to don jeans and t-shirts to resonate with the electorate.

In a stark contrast, the late Congress stalwart Rajiv Gandhi's downfall in the 1989 elections was precipitated by hostile campaign slogans vilifying him as a "thief," with chants like "Galli Galli me shor hai, Rahul Gandhi chor hai" (There's an uproar in every street, Rahul Gandhi is a thief) echoing across the nation. The Bofors scandal proved to be his undoing, ultimately costing him the prime ministerial chair.

Leaders, who adhere to a strategy of aggressive confrontation, resorting to personal assaults and instilling fear, perpetuate a divisive atmosphere. Despite a decade in office, Prime Minister Narendra Modi continues to attribute all of the nation's challenges to the Congress party.

While the Election Commission imposes restrictions on campaign expenditures, numerous political entities and contenders surpass these limitations. They resort to enticing tactics, including offering bribes such as These instances exemplify the DEGREE OF THOUGHT phones, cash, and unattainable unattainable

> of securing voter allegiance. One independent candidate in Tamil Nadu even went as far as pledging lunar voyages and robots for every household, albeit without electoral success.

pledges, in hopes

Estimates suggest that advertising expenditures for India's 2024 elections could range from Rs 2,000 crore to Rs 13,000 crore. Projections indicate that political parties and candidates might allocate over \$14.4 billion (1.2 trillion rupees) to advertising, marking a twofold increase from the expenditure observed during the 2019 elections.

Campaign funding for political candidates often originates from various sources. Wealthy candidates may opt to finance their own campaigns, while others rely on financial support from their respective parties. Unlike candidates, political parties are not subject to spending limits, allowing them greater flexibility in financing campaign activities. However, the influx of illicit funds, commonly referred to as black money, has increasingly become a concerning factor in the electoral process over

The India Supreme Court has recently outlawed election

bonds, citing concerns over their lack of transparency. Statistics reveal that the BJP secured a substantial portion, 57 percent, of the distributed bonds, totaling \$1.1 billion, whereas the Congress party received only 10 percent, amounting to \$188 million. In the relentless pursuit of power, political parties deploy various strategies, resulting in varying degrees of success. The impact of negative campaign advertisements hinges on factors such as their content, context, and the audience's demographics. A notable case in point is the ill-fated "India Shining" campaign spearheaded by Prime Minister Vajpayee in 2004, which despite its hefty investment, failed to resonate with the electorate. In the 2019 elections, the Congress party's campaign slogan "Chowkidar chor hai" failed to gain traction, along with Rahul Gandhi's criticism of Modi regarding the Rafale scandal. However, amidst these setbacks, the party's "Aam Admi" (common man) campaign emerged victorious, resonating effectively with voters. In 2014, Narendra Modi underwent a remarkable transformation, assuming the persona of a formidable nationalist leader and position-

views, and widespread campaign Platforms like YouTube played a pivotal role, facilitating political parties to disseminate their message through concise TV advertisements and longerform online videos. Ultimately, Modi's adeptness at criticizing the Congress effectively resonated with voters, contributing significantly to his electoral suc-

ing himself as a symbol of the

nation. Leveraging cutting-edge

technology, he orchestrated ex-

tensive mass mobilization ef-

forts, employing innovative methods such as 3D rallies, the

"Chai Pe Charcha" (conversa-

tions over tea) initiative, inter-

During the 2013 Delhi Assembly elections, the Aam Admi dable force through innovative campaigning methods such as mohalla campaigns, extensive use of social media, and a memorable radio advertisement featuring AAP chief Kejriwal. Today, the AAP holds power in both Punjab and Delhi, marking significant political evolution.

Despite all parties resorting to negative tactics during the 2019 political campaign, the BJP managed to secure a renewed mandate, despite criticism from the opposition regarding its Hindutva-inspired initiatives. Prime Minister Modi aims for a landslide victory with a target of over 400 seats in the upcoming 2024 polls. Notably, the BJP recently introduced an AI-generated campaign video featuring Modi, which drew mockery from the Congress party. The video, portraying a scenario where a business magnate endeavors to seize resources, has garnered widespread attention, amassing over 1.5 million views.

In the upcoming 2024 elections, despite the Election Commission's guidelines, there's a looming probability of heightened employment of negative campaign strategies. It is imperative for political parties and candidates to pivot towards crafting positive advertisements rather than resorting to smear campaigns. This proactive approach is crucial not only to safeguard the integrity of democracy but also to prevent the undue tarnishing of individuals' characters. One viable solution is to advocate for state-funded elections, a recommendation echoed by numerous Electoral Commissions world-

Moreover, upholding standards of decency and decorum throughout campaigns is essential. This commitment fosters an atmosphere of fairness and respect, ensuring an equitable platform for all candidates to participate in the democratic process. (The writer can be reached dipakkurmiglpltd@gmail.com)

Narendra Modi in meditation mode is a last ditch effort

By: Sushil Kutty

The surround sound around Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Meditation' at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanyakumari during the 'silence period' in force before the last and seventh phase of the 2024 election is at its crescendo. Modi recently astounded people with "nobody knew Mahatma Gandhi before the 1982 Gandhi film." Rival politicians including Congress rival Rahul Gandhi had a good laugh, saying this "guy Modi is the limit". Now, it is like "nobody knew Narendra Modi before the '2024 Modi meditation' at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial". Such is the decibel level. Either Modi wants to make a last pitch to avoid defeat or he is desperate that the BJP/NDA doesn't fall short of the brag 'abki baar 370/400'.

A Congress delegation led by AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal's lawyer Abhishek Manu Singhvi met Election Commission officials and submitted a representation against Modi's meditation mode. News of the Modi meditation 'gimmick" had become the talk of the 24 Akbar Road Congress headquarters, catapulting it to the top of the news cycle. The Modi meditation had become the most reported event as the Congress railed against it. Its loud demands that silence reigns in the last 48 hours before voting for the seventh phase sounded like an oxymoron.

The Vivekananda Rock Memorial monument is a tribute to Swami Vivekananda and has great significance for Hindus worldwide. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been juxtaposing Hindu and Muslim throughout the previous six phases of these elections and he is not ready to stop. One more phase left and Modi is going on silent meditation to make himself heard loud and clear countrywide, "abki baar 400 paar". Of course, the Opposition had every reason to make a hullabaloo, the loudest in the realm.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi cannot take advantage of the habitually lax Election Commission of India and the mockery made of the Model Code of Conduct. At this point in time, the Opposition considers itself the sole guardian of democracy in India that is Bharat. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's master acts are known to all and sundry. In 2019, Modi had committed a similar act, meditating in the Kedarnath Cave, his image and pictures splattered all over the broadcast media and the print Press, the 'Silence Period' be damned.

What happened? The BJP won the 2019 elections hands down and Narendra Modi became a second-time Prime Minister. Now, he is aiming for a third straight term and this time it's with the

connivance Vivekananda. On the evening of May 30, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on two days of meditation at the Vivekananda Rock. The Kanyakumari district administration is under tremendous strain and pressure and the locals will not be denied a glimpse of the Vishwaguru in action. It will be criminal if the media misses such a "god-given" oppor-

The thick security blanket that wraps the vicinity of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial in itself calls for saturation coverage of the event. For that is what it is, another of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mega events. It is not for nothing that Modi is considered the world-leader in Event Management and during these elections, also media interview management. The Prime Minister has so far allowed himself to be interviewed 80 times. Don't be surprised if a favourite gets to interview Modi in Meditation Mode also. Anything can happen.

Modi will spend 45 hours meditating. Constant meditation. Of course, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is God Almighty's 'pick', the one to serve Maa Bharati and take her to great heights, what's a 45-hour long meditation for the 'Chosen One'? Will Modi sleep, get a shut-eye, when he is meditating with both eves closed for all those uneventful hours? What about toilet breaks? The mid-sea memorial is but a rock

with a Vivekananda statue, the revered Hindu saint. Is Modi also aiming for sainthood, too? For the time being, at least, Modi is aiming for a third term and with whatever it takes to.

Without doubt the meditation is a ploy. It will be impossible for the media to ignore Modi in meditation mode as this happens only once in five years. Photo and video journalists will climb up other rocks and crab-walk up coconut treetrunks dotting the coastline. The SPG cannot compete with the latest in camera and videography. Are the SPG even capable of scaling palm trees which the locals are adept at? The Modi meditation will, like it or not, get saturation media coverage and the Election Commission of India will be complicit.

It is the last ditch before Prime Minister Narendra gets his wish of getting for himself a third straight term. INDI-Alliance can make all the noise it can, the voices of the alliance parties will drown in the silence of the Election Commission of India as Prime Minister Narendra Modi sits monk-like and dreams of another term at India's helm while in deep meditation. The Opposition cannot even pray because that is what Modi would be doing, the prodigal son of the 'Paramatma'. (IPA Service)

2025 presidential candidate issue divides ruling MAS party of Bolivia

By: Satyaki Chakraborty

he bitter personality clash between the present President of Bolivia Luis Arce and the former President of the country Evo Morales has led to the split of the Latin American nation's ruling party Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) posing a big danger to the sustenance of the Left wing government. The developments have got the left wing parties of the continent worried as the vertical split has given a big opportunity to the rightist elements and the US multinational companies to fish in troubled waters.

The main issue is that one of the founders of MAS Evo Morales who was the President of Bolivia for long years till 2019 when he was ousted due to the machinations of the right encouraged by the U.S. Morales is willing to be the Presidential candidate in the coming 2025 elections. But incumbent President Luis Arce is not agreeable. More importantly, Morales expected that he will be functioning as the adviser of the new Arce government in view of his position in MAS and seniority.

MAS candidate in 2020 presidential elections governed in his own way without caring for his senior leader. He also openly disagreed to the hints given by his senior MAS leader that the party should nominate him as the next presidential candidate in 2025 elections. As a result, the ruling MAS was split into two factions one led by the current President and the other led by the former president Evo Morales.

Early this month, President Luis Arce held the 19th congress of the ruling party MAS with the participation of the delegates loval to him. The congress elected Grover Garcia, a senior leader of the farmers union as the new head of MAS replacing Evo Morales. Morales faction also has announced a convention on June 10 in Cochabamba to decide their programme and elect their own leaders.

President Luis Arce secured a 55% majority vote on October 19, 2020 elections to restore the MAS Party to power is also worrisome to Washington officials. His government in October 2022 mobilized popular support to defeat an opposition uprising led

Luis Arce after winning as the by reactionary politicians in factions. If TSE gives any ad-Santa Cruz and other eastern departments. The victory elevated Arce's appeal to government officials and MAS activists alike.

The division between the Party's two wings, widening over two years, is highly visible. Highway blockades, strikes, and demonstrations carried out by "radical factions of the MAS movement led by former President Evo Morales" played out between January and March. Rising inflation, reduced gas and oil production, falling currency reserves, and shortages of fuel and food add to MAS's vulnera-

bility. One goal of the 10th MAS Party Congress was to meet constitutional requirements of orderly party function. Observers were on hand whose reports to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE in Spanish) would allow the Tribunal to certify the "resolutions of the Arcista conclave." But an adverse ruling now and two more in the future would deprive the MAS Party of its "judicial personhood," and rule out future election participation.

This development has posed a big problem for both the MAS

verse ruling now and two more in future, MAS cannot participate in presidential elections. This means that the elections will be open to the anti-Left parties and continuous pro-people work by the MAS governments

will be of no value. The TSE has already issued an adverse ruling on May 23 nullifying Arce organized convention's decision on electing Garcia as MAS head. Two more such ruling will rule out MAS from electoral participation.

President Luis Arce on May 18 warned that "the right is sharpening up for next year's elections." He denounced as "economic blockade" the Bolivian Senate's recent refusal to authorize foreign loans. Meeting recently in the United States, extreme right-wing opposition politicians were "unifying against MAS," he claims.

This is shared by Morales also but he at the same time took a dig at his rival Luis Arce by saying that TSE recognition of the Arce organized MAS congress would signify genocide against indigenous movement. Significantly Evo Morales belongs to Bolivia

The US intelligence agencies are very active to take advantage of the split. According to an alleged media report, US embassy has prepared a report on destabilization of the Arce government. Both the MAS factions have reacted to that. Rallies are being organized by the MAS factions in support of both Arce and Morales. It seems that both factions understand that this split will only be of advantage to the right and the U.S. companies engaged in mineral resources.

In fact an encouraging development is that Garcia, the nominated MAS head of Arce group is in favour of unity of two factions taking into account the threat from the right. He has urged Morales to join hands. On the other hand, Morales has said that he wants the June 10 convention of his s supporters as the 'unity congress'. There is still time for a reconciliation. It is to seen whether the two leaders Arce and Morales stick to their respective egos or offer hands of cooperation in the interests of the Latin American Left. (IPA Service)



The power of positive Lahore's Heera Mandi has a unique history of more than four centuries

ver the years I have learned one thing for sure good attracts good and bad attracts bad. Whatever is in our mind, the way we think, ultimately our life turns in that way. In a world often filled with uncertainty and challenges, maintaining a positive outlook can be a tough thing for any of us. Many times we feel low, depressed, got hurt by our near and dear ones.

Still, the way we keep ourselves strong and motivated is itself a plus point. Positive manifestation, rooted in the belief that our thoughts and intentions shape our reality, offers a powerful tool for achieving our goals, attracting abundance, and creating the life of our dreams.

Since the time I read the book "The Secret" by Rhonda Byrne, I started admiring positive thinking. Challenges. are part of life, when one problem goes, another tends to arise. This process goes on and we can't get rid of uncertainty. Positive manifestation is based on the principle of the law of attraction-the idea that like attracts like.

According to this principle, the thoughts and beliefs we hold in our minds

and opportunities that are in alignment with our dominant thoughts and beliefs. By consciously directing our thoughts, intentions, and energy towards positive outcomes, we can harness the power of the law of attraction to manifest our desires or dreams into reality. In simple words, think and believe what you want to be and what you want.

It feels strange how exactly positive manifestation works, and how can we feel its result in our own lives? Actually, our mind is everything. We can shape our thoughts in any direction whether constructive or destructive. Positive manifestation involves setting clear intentions, visualizing those outcomes, and taking action towards our goals which is the most important part. Setting clear in-

> tentions involves identifying what we want to manifest in our lives-whether it's a new job, a steady relationship, financial stability, or improved health-and shaping our desires

with clarity and conviction. Once we've set our dreams or intenions, the next step is to visualize our outcomes as if they have already come to execution, as if we are feeling them. Visualization is a powerful tool for commanding our subconscious minds with positive beliefs and expectations, thereby aligning our energy with the frequencies of our desires. By strongly imagining ourselves experiencing our desired

that attracts those outcomes into our lives. Suppose, for example. I always want to be in a good health. I want to look good and fit and I dream of it. So. my continuous focus will be on my health whether it's on my eating habit, sleeping habit, or maintaining an exercise routine. This consciousness ultimately helps in reach our desired goals.

SUNDAY SPECIAL

Positive manifestation is more than just wishful thinking. Our thoughts, beliefs, and actions need to align with our desires in a way that activates the creative power of the universe to bring those desires into fruitful results. This requires us to cultivate a mindset of firm faith, belief, and expectation in the positive outcomes we seek to manifest. We need to cultivate a sense of gratitude for what we have and in the same way need to keep faith to manifest our dreams. It definitely opens the limitless potential for us. We become more open to new opportunities, we try to take risk, we face challenges strongly, and more compassionate towards ourselves and others. By being positive, we instruct our mind for optimism. Our attitude becomes more harmonious, our lives more fulfilling, and our overall sense of wellbeing more profound. With a positive mindset, we can train our brains for optimism. By maintaining a positive mindset, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth, and having faith in our ability to achieve our desires, we can create a life filled with joy, fulfillment, and abundance beyond our wildest dreams. Dare to dream big, believe in yourself, and manifest the life you envision. (The author can be reached at sarmadimple@gmail.com)

By: Girish Linganna

eera Mandi - the Diamond Bazaar - Sanjay Leela Bhansali's latest Netflix production film has created waves globally among the viewers of the sub continent. The focus has shifted to this particular place, now in Pakistan which has been in existence for more than four centuries.

Heera Mandi in Lahore, Pakistan, is an old area with a rich history. Located in the city's old part, it is known as the country's oldest red-light district. When you walk through its narrow streets, you might hear the soft sound of ankle bells jingling to a Bollywood song coming from one of the old, crumbling houses. This echoes the area's past, where traditional dance performances were once popu-

Heera Mandi changes its face every day. During the day, it looks like any other market. But at night, sex workers make their living in small rooms above the grain shops. Although it's hard to tell now, this area used to be a symbol of royalty in Lahore.

To understand this contrast, we need to go back to the 16th century and the history of this area. During that time, the Mughal Empire was strengthening its rule over North India, including Lahore. From 1584 to 1598, Lahore served as the capital of the Mughal Empire under Emperor Akbar. During this time, the city's old citadel (or strong fortress) originally built in 1267 by Sultan Chiyas-ud-din Balban of the Delhi Sultanate, was strengthened. This set the stage for the revival of the Lahore Fort, and many other monuments were built throughout

An area south of the Lahore Fort was developed as a residential neighbourhood for the attendants and servants of the royal court and the Emperor. Because it was close to the fort, it was called 'Shahi Mohalla' or 'Royal Neighbourhood.'

Soon, the area became home to tawaifs, who were professional entertainers linked to the royal court. During the Mughal era, the tawaif culture thrived and featured skilled artists who performed mujra, a sensual dance popular in the medieval or the ancient Indian court. These entertainers were highly successful and made significant contributions to classical music

and theatre. The tawaifs were trained in music, etiquette, and dance by the best masters of their time. The women of Shahi Mohalla were seen as social symbols for the elite; having them at events was a sign of class and sophistication. Although professional entertainers often also worked as sex workers, the tawaifs of Shahi Mohalla were different. Nobles would even send their children to them to learn proper manners and worldly knowl-

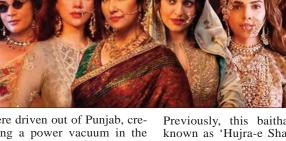
The tawaifs of Lahore even made their way into fiction and popular stories. One famous tale is about Anarkali, a tawaif in the Mughal court in Lahore. According to the story, she had a secret relationship with Prince Salim (who later became Emperor Jahangir), the son of Emperor Akbar. The story tells how the old emperor was enraged that his son, the royal heir, had fallen in love with a woman of

low status. As a result, on the emperor's orders, Anarkali was entombed within a wall in the Lahore Fort. where she died. Even though there is no historical proof that Anarkali existed, her story has made the tawaifs of Lahore popular in movies, books, and fictional tales since this culture started in the city.

By the early 18th century, Lahore faced several invasions, first by Nader Shah from Iran and then by Ahmad Shah Abdali from Afghanistan. These attacks weakened Mughal rule in Punjab and ended royal support for the tawaifs. Many tawaifs moved to other cities.

Brothels first appeared in Lahore during the Afghan invasions. The invading army took many women from the towns they attacked in the subcontinent between 1748 and 1767. Abdali's troops established two brothels, one in what is now Dhobi Mandi and the other in Mohalla Dara Shikoh.

The frequent invasions caused turmoil in the city. However, when the Afghan army destroyed the Sikhs' holiest shrine, the Sri Harmandir Sahib, in 1762, it brought the community together. The Afghan forces



were driven out of Punjab, creating a power vacuum in the area. This gap was filled by various Sikh principalities known as misls. During this period, the brothels established by the Afghans in Lahore were shut down.

In 1799, a young chief of the Sukerchakia Misl named Ranjit Singh took control of Lahore from the Bhangi Misl. By 1801, he declared himself Maharaja of Punjab and promised to unite the entire region.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh brought back several royal customs of the Mughals in Lahore, including the tradition of tawaifs (courtesans) performing in the court. Although his court was not as grand as the Mughal courts, the tawaifs of Shahi Mohalla once again received patronage from the court.

In 1802, the 22-year-old Maharaja Ranjit Singh fell in love with a Muslim tawaif named Moran. She was from Kashmir and lived in a village called Makhanpur near Amritsar. The idea of a Sikh Maharaja marrying a tawaif from the entertainer community known as Kanjars caused a lot of anger among his nobles and religious leaders. But Ranjit Singh, already deeply in love, ignored the disapproval and married her anyway. He built a separate mansion for her in what is now the Papad Mandi neighbourhood of Lahore. It was close to Shahi Mohalla, where the court's tawaifs lived. Unlike the tragic love story of Salim and Anarkali, this story did not end

in tragedy. A few decades later, Hira Singh Dogra, the General who became Prime Minister of the Sikh Empire, saw that Shahi Mohalla was centrally located in the city. He thought it could serve not only as a place for the tawaifs' houses but also as an economic center like a bazaar. After Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death in 1839, Hira Singh Dogra established a food grains market in the area. This market became known as 'Hira Singh di Mandi' (Hira Singh's Market) or simply 'Heera Mandi'. Interestingly, some people believe that the name "heera" (which means diamond) refers to the tawaifs of the area, who were said to be as beautiful as diamonds

Even after Shahi Mohalla was renamed Heera Mandi, the tawaifs continued to enjoy royal patronage, but this didn't last long. After the two decisive Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845-49), the Sikh Empire fell, and the British East India Company took control of the region. The British were not interested in supporting the tawaifs' courtly music and dance, and the culture of muiras gradually became associated with prostitution.

Many tawaifs, who had lost their means of livelihood, became sex workers for the English soldiers stationed in the cantonment in the Anarkali area of Lahore's Old City. Since this area was close to the Mughalera Shahi Mohalla, now known as Heera Mandi, sex workers

also began operating from there. In the early 1850s, a plague outbreak hit the walled city of Lahore. The British administration moved their cantonment from Anarkali to Dharampura, outside the old city. They also tried to relocate the sex workers, but many chose to stay behind.

Despite the rise of prostitution in the area, Heera Mandi maintained its status as a center for performing arts. The main change was that the tawaifs' patrons were no longer emperors and nobles but wealthy men from the city. This is how Heera Mandi earned the nickname 'Bazaar-e-Husn' (Market of

Beauty). Despite changes in its identity, Shahi Mohalla remained a hub for performing arts. As a result, Heera Mandi produced many outstanding performers, including the famous Noor Jahan, Khurshid Begum, Mumtaz, and Shanti. Interestingly, the home of Sir Ganga Ram, known as the 'father of modern Lahore,' is also located in this

The homes of Ustaad Amir Khan and the baithak of Ustaad Daman were once located here.

Previously, this baithak was known as 'Hujra-e Shah Hussain' because it served as a retreat for the renowned Sufi poet of the same name. Ustaad Sardar Khan Dilli Wale ki Baithak, near Taxali Gate, was one of the most respected baithaks of its time. Ustaad Barkat Ali Khan's baithak in Heera Mandi Chowk was famous for thumri and ghazal singing, while Ustaad Chotey Ashiq Ali Khan was a great exponent of khayal singing.

Heera Mandi also hosted some musical duels known as dangals. These events, organized by music enthusiasts, provided a public platform for musicians to compete. One famous duel took place in the early 1940s between Ustaad Baray Ghulam Ali Khan and Ustaad Umeed Ali Khan in Heera Mandi. During this musical duel, both maestros showcased their exceptional talents. Both musicians kept singing for extended periods, neither willing to accept defeat or show any sign of fatigue. As a result, the event continued until dawn. Finally, Pandit Jeevan Lal Mattoo, an accomplished vocalist himself, intervened and managed to separate the "warring" musicians. The honours were then shared equally between the two musical giants.

Renowned Urdu author Saadat Hasan Manto briefly mentions Heera Mandi in his short story "Naya Qanoon" (New Constitution). The story is set against the backdrop of the Government of India Act 1935 and explores the unfulfilled hopes and expectations of the Indian people under British rule. Manto wrote this story in the late 1930s while living in Bombay (now Mumbai). However, it gained attention in 1993-94 when Pakistan's Sindh Textbook Board revised the Urdu syllabus for Classes 11 and 12 and decided to include it. In the story, the name "Heera Mandi" was edited to just "Mandi" when it was included in the revised Urdu syllabus by Pakistan's Sindh Textbook Board for Classes 11 and 12.

Heera Mandi continued to be both a hub for sex workers and a center of entertainment. Most tawaifs, many of whom had become sex workers, came from the Kanjar community. However, women from other communities, faiths, and regions, including East Pakistan, also moved to Heera Mandi, either due to poverty or because they were illegally trafficked and brought to the area.

During Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's presidency from 1978 to 1988, there was a strong effort to eliminate the culture of mujras and sex work in Heera Mandi. This effort was not successful, and many brothels relocated to other parts of Lahore to avoid the crackdown. In the age of the Internet, Heera Mandi's sex workers adapted by using social media and various apps to offer escort services.

The grain market established during the Sikh Empire has since moved from Heera Mandi. However, Heera Mandi has more to its identity than just prostitution. It is also known as the busiest eating hub in the walled city. The area is filled with street food stalls, vintage restaurants, and sweet shops that are popular for their delicious offerings.

If you climb to the top floor of one of the restaurants, you can enjoy a stunning view of the grand, Mughal-era Badshahi Mosque of Lahore. The development of Azadi Chowk and Greater Igbal Park, with added green spaces and improved aeshetics, has increased the area's importance. Now, it attracts more attention due to the growing tourism opportunities it of-

Over time, neighbourhoods change, and Heera Mandi is no exception. Unfortunately, this Mughal-era center for performing arts has nearly lost its essence, as the culture of mujras and music is fading away. The former Shahi Mohalla, once a royal symbol of the city, now sits under the shadow of a dark business. (IPA Service)

Albanian anthology ORFEU: Dibran Fylli, Angela Kosta and Irma Kurti made translation an art

By: Dr. Ratan **Bhattacharjee**

Translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter of making intelligible a whole culture." In the poems rendered into Albanian by poets Angela Kosta and Irma Kurti in Orfeu edited by Dibran Fylli, translation is that which transforms everything so

that nothing changes. Orfeu is the only magazine in Kosovo that publishes the poems and creativity of authors from all over the world, including literary, cultural and artistic creations of foreign authors in any foreign language in the appropriate section 'International Poets". After reading poems in Orfeu we remember what Robert Frost said about poetry," Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words."

In Orfeu poems are selected from the literary, cultural, artistic magazine Orfeu-Kosovo and 35 authors are included, including 23 authors from all over the Albanian space and diaspora, as well as 12 foreign authors all translated into Albanian, Editor Dibran Fylli was born in Açarevë in Skënderaj, Kosovo, in 1956. Dibran graduated from the Academy for Theatre, Radio, Film and Television (AGRFT) in Ljubljana as a direc-

tor film. Dibran was one of the first members of the (UCK - KLA) army and participated in many battles in which he was seriously wounded in the Battle of Llapushnik on 8 May 1998. Dibran is the founder of the UCK - KLA's Hamëz Jashari Military Art Company, screenwriter and organizer of the commemorative event.

"He is Alive" (1999), "The Days of Enlightenment" (2000) now "The Era of KLA" (March 5, 6 and 7, known as "THE NIGHT OF FIRES"), Head of the "Hamëz Jashari" Military Artistic Corps of the KLA and TMK (1998-2002).

He was also the creator, screenwriter and Director of the National Traditional Festival "Let's Sing to Freedom" (Kline 6, 7 and 8 June), dedicated to the emblematic Commander of the KLA Mujë Krasnici - Kapuçi; author and screenwriter of the artistic program "He is Live" part -I- and - II. So far, Dibran has published 26 literary, historical, scientific, edi-

torial, and chronological works. He is the winner of numerous literary awards, author, screenwriter and director of over 40 documentary films, as well as several

feature films and short films; Dibran has participated in 3 International Film Festivals. He has played many major roles in feature films, comedies, and television series. He is currently a member of the Writers' League of Kosovo (LSHK), a member of the Albanian American Academy of Sciences and Arts in New York (AAA), Founder, Director and Editor-in-Chief of the literary cultural magazine ORFEU and the

Orfeu website. AL (2022). The other translator who helped Angela Kosta in this volume was Irma Kurti an Albanian poet, writer, lyricist, journalist and translator naturalized Italian. She has won numerous awards and recognitions in Italy, the Italianspeaking part of Switzerland, the USA, the Philippines, Lebanon, China, Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia. In 2020 she received the title of Academician and Honorary President of WikiPoesia, the poetic encyclope-

In 2021 she was awarded the "Liria" (Freedom) award by the Italian-Albanian Community in Italy. In 2022 she was awarded the title of Mother Foundress and translated Dame of the Order of Dante and pub-Alighieri of the Republic of Poets. In 2023 she was awarded the "Lifetime Achievement Award" by the Universum Academy Switzerland

She is a jury member of several literary competitions in Italy. She is a translator at the Ithaca Foundation in Spain. She has published 29 books in Albanian, 25 in Italian, 15 in English and 2 in French. She has translated 20 books of poetry and fiction by different authors, as well as all his works published in Italian and English. Her books have been translated and published in 16 countries.

Angela Kosta the inspiring force in the group was born in Elbasan (Albania) and has lived in Italy since 1995. She has published 14 books: novels, poems and fairy tales in Albanian. Italian and English. Angela translates and writes articles and interviews for the newspaper "Calabria Saturno magazine, Live", Alessandria Today Magazine, the international magazine "Orfeu:", the newspaper "Nacional", Gazeta Destinacioni, Perqasje Italo -Shqiptare, the magazine "Atunis", she collaborates with the magazines: "International Literature Language Journal (Michigan), Wordsmith International Editorial (Florida), Raven Cage (Germany), Bangladesh, Pakistan,

She has translated 150 authors into bilingual: Italian - Albanian and vice versa and has promoted over 500 poets in various national and international literary magazines as well as translating the books of poems by 3 Albanian and Kosovar authors. He has also translated the poems of important italian classics, nobelists and many other famous authors.

Angela Kosta is Vice President of the South Korea Writers' Association, Vice President of the Tamikio Dooley Writers Choach Organization, Ambassador for Culture and Peace in the Organization no profit in: Bangladesh, Poland, Morocco, Canada, Algeria, Egypt, Mexico, Romania, India, etc. She is also a member of the Writers' League (LSHASH) and BSHBSH - Italy, AAA (America), Greece, Poland, Hun-

gary. Mexico, Romania, Croatia, India. An-Kosta has lished in foreign languages and fore i g n

countries In 2024 alone, it has been

published in 98 national and international newspapers and magazines, with: poems, articles, interviews, books, reviews, etc. She has received numerous awards from various magazines and newspapers.

Angela Kosta has been the Person of the Month on the covers of the following magazines: International Literature Language Journal, (Michigan), Saturno Magazine (Italy), Wordsmith International Editorial (Florida) and Literary Magazine (Barcelona), Elitè Magazine (Liban). She started writing from an earlyage. so at the age of 6, this child prodigy wrote her first poem dedicated to her mother. She had a fairly peaceful childhood and adolescence. She was a voracious reader and finshed reading a lot of books.

The love for each other and the love especially for the homeland inspired her time and agian to take her pen either in joy or in sorrow

in ecstasy or in protest. In June 2003 she published her first book in Albania "Forgive Me" in which she recorded her dreams and visions that she nourished since her childhood. Angela is an author and contributor to The Daily Global Nation edited by Mahbubur Rahmanfrom Dhaka Bangladesh).

She is closely associated with the magazine Frenndship Of Peo-- Published from Tajikistan.and the Pen Craft Magazine, published by Sadikur Rahman Rumen from Bangladesh. The poems included in the first volume of this anthology have been published in Orfeu Magazine and the website Orfeu. AL from the first issue of its uninterrupted publication until the recent

The selected poems were read by Orfeu's regular readers, based



added up to 750 readers eigners are not only authors and winners of many prestigious awards they are also publishers of

magazines and newspapers, so Orfeu is now recognized by many foreign media in every corner of the globe. All readers will take in their hands the First Volume of poems in which they will find wonderful verses about: patriotism, women and their rights, love for everything that surrounds us, the expression of true and pure feelings towards the person we love, the beautiful flowers of nature, nostalgia for the homeland, unexpected aspects of life and much more. "Open wide the doors and windows of life, to achieve your goals in the work and social sector," says Angela Kosta who wants to motivate her readers with more hope for a better world and make her dreams and plans come true. (The author is an affiliate faculty of English Virginia Commonwealth University Richmond, USA and a multilingual writer. He can be reached at bhattacharjr@vcu.edu)

POETRY Prevent Tobacco

By: Maharshi Dubey

Prevent Tobacco, It causes cancer, It is so harmful, It is so danger.

Tobacco is the door of hell, Stop it's consumption, purchase and Avoid it and don't play with health,

Leave it because health is wealth,

Tobacco is a poison, it destroys life, Prevent it and make life healthy, happy and bright.

The Summer Diary By: Mowsam Hazarika

The summer days are coming. Find the clean air, breathe in calmly. Stay by my side at night; we'll see the moon together. In Nameri or Majuli, in the fields or the mountains, we'll spend the day together. The summer days are coming. We'll sweat together, we'll swim together. We'll sleep until midnight, then stay awake until morning. We'll hear the church bells together. The summer days are coming.

Let's play our favorite songs, let's feel the wildflowers. The summer days are coming. Turning off all other sounds. listen to the roar of the waves. The summer days are coming. Let's shake off our thoughts, let's take off our clothes. The summer days are coming.

We'll go to the forest together, we'll get wet in the rain together. The summer days are coming. Following the Bordoisila, the monsoon will come too. The summer days are coming. We'll go to the fields together, we'll farm together.

The deal would involve the return of Israeli hostages from Gaza and the reconstruction of civilian areas

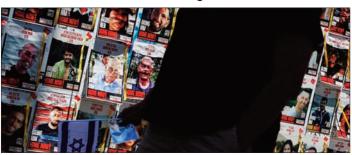
Hostage families call for a cease-fire deal pushed by Biden; Israel says conditions must be met

raeli hostages held by Hamas called for all parties to immediately accept a proposal detailed by US President Joe Biden to end the nearly 8month-long war and bring their relatives home, but Israel's government said conditions for a cease-fire still must be met.

Biden outlined a three-phase deal on Friday proposed by Israel to Hamas, saying the militant group is "no longer capable" of carrying out another large-scale attack on Israel. He urged the Israelis and Hamas to come to an agreement to release some 100 remaining hostages, along with the bodies of around 30 more, for an extended cease-fire.

Cease-fire talks ground to a halt last month after a major push by the US and other mediators to secure a deal in hopes of averting a full Israeli invasion of Gaza's southern city of Rafah. Israel says the Rafah operation is vital to uprooting Hamas fighters responsible for the October 7 attack on southern Israel that triggered the war.

Israel on Friday confirmed its troops were operating in central parts of the city. The ground assault has led to an exodus of around 1 million Palestinians out of the city and has thrown UN humanitarian operations based in the area into turmoil. Following Biden's speech, hostage families said Saturday time was running out with the onus on both Israel and Hamas to accept the deal. "We want to see people com-



ing back from Gaza alive and soon," Gili Roman told The Associated Press. His sister, Yarden Roman-Gat, was taken hostage and freed during a weeklong ceasefire in November, but Yarden's sister-in-law, Carmel, is still being held.

"This might be the last chance to save lives. Therefore, the current state must be changed and we expect all to adhere to Biden's call for accepting the deal on the table, immediately. There is no other way towards a better situation for all. Our leadership must not disappoint us. But mostly, all eyes should be on Hamas," he said. The proposal came after what hostage families said was an aggressive meeting Thursday with Israel's national security adviser, Tzachi Hanegbi, who told them that the government wasn't ready to sign a deal to bring all of the hostages home and that there was no plan B.

Hanegbi said this week he expects the war to drag on for another seven months, in order to destroy the military and governing capabil-

ities of Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad militant group. Netanyahu has promised a "total victory" that would remove Hamas from power, dismantle its military structure and return the hostages, and on Saturday, the government said its conditions for ending the war had not changed. Putting a permanent cease-fire in place before

the conditions are fulfilled is a

"non-starter," it said. Many hostage families blame the government's lack of will to secure a deal for the deaths of many of the hostages in captivity. "We know that the government of Israel has done an awful lot to delay reaching a deal and that has cost the lives of many people who survived in captivity for weeks and weeks and months and months. Our hearts are broken by the amount of people we will receive that are no longer alive," Sharone Lipschitz told AP. Her mother Yocheved was freed in the November cease-fire, and her father Oded is still in captivity. The first phase of the deal announced by

weeks and include a "full and complete cease-fire," a withdrawal of Israeli forces from all densely populated areas of Gaza and the release of a number of hostages, including women, the elderly and the wounded, in exchange for the release of hundreds of Palestinian

World

The second phase would include the release of all remaining living hostages, including male soldiers, and Israeli forces would withdraw from Gaza. The third phase calls for the start of a major reconstruction of Gaza, which faces decades of rebuilding from devastation caused by Biden acknowledged that keep-

ing the Israeli proposal on track would be difficult, saying there were a number of "details to negotiate" to move from the first phase to the second. The proposal says that if the negotiations take longer than six weeks for phase one, the cease-fire will still continue as long as there are negotiations.

Israel will always have the right to defend itself against the threat of security. Biden said that if Hamas fails to fulfil its commitment under the deal, Israel can resume military operations. Hamas said in a statement Friday it viewed the proposal presented by Biden "positively" and called on the Israelis to declare explicit commitment to an agreement that includes a permanent ceaseraeli troops from Gaza, a prisoner exchange and other conditions. While the proposal is similar to previous ones, the main difference is the readiness to stop the war for an undefined period, according to analysts. It still leaves Israel the option the renew the war and diminish Hamas' ability to govern, but over time, said Michael Milshtein, head of the Palestinian Studies Forum in Dayan Center at Tel Aviv Univer-

Still, experts say Biden's speech was one of the first times in the war that provided hope that it might end and bring the hostages home. "It was a very good speech ... it seems that Biden is trying to force it on the Israeli government, he was clearly speaking directly to the Israeli people," said Gershon Baskin, director for the Middle East at the International Communities Organization. Israelis must take to the streets to demand that the government of Israel accept it, he said. Meanwhile fighting continued in Gaza.

On Saturday, Israel's army said it killed a Hamas fighter responsible for directing attacks in Israel and the West Bank and earlier this week, it said its aircraft killed a Hamas fighter in central Gaza who was head of the technology department for its internal security forces. More than 36,170 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza by Israel's campaign of bombardment and offensives over the past eight months, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. (AP)

At least 19 injured as Russia hits Ukraine's power grid with fresh barrage

KYIV, June 1: Russia pummelled Ukraine's energy infrastructure with a large-scale drone and missile attack ON Saturday, injuring at least 19 people, local officials said.

The Ukrainian military reported that it had downed 35 out of the 53 missiles launched at targets across the country overnight on June 1, as well as 46 out of 47 attack drones.

Injuries were reported by officials across the country, including in Ukraine's western Lviv and the central Dnipropetrovsk region.

Twelve people, including eight children, were hospitalised after a strike close to two houses where they were sheltering in the Kharkiv region, said Governor Oleh Syniehubov.

The strikes were part of a series of sustained attacks by Russia against Ukraine's power grid, which has been ongoing since

Ukraine's largest private energy firm, DTEK said that two of its power plants had been seriously damaged in what it said was the sixth attack on the company's plants in two and a half

Meanwhile, Ukraine's Energy Minister, Herman Halushchenko, said in a statement on social media that energy infrastructure Dnipropetrovsk,

regions had also been targeted.

Damage to Ukraine's energy infrastructure in recent weeks has forced leaders of the war-ravaged country to institute nationwide rolling blackouts. Without adequate air defences to counter assaults and allow for repairs, the shortages could still worsen as need spikes in late summer and the bitter-cold winter.

In response to the strikes, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reiterated Kyiv's need for additional air defense systems from its Western allies.

"Civilians, infrastructure and energy facilities. This is what Russia is constantly at war with," he said in a post Saturday on X, formerly Twitter.

"Our partners know exactly what is needed for this. Additional Patriot and other modern air defence systems for Ukraine. Accelerating and expanding the delivery of F-16s to Ukraine. Providing our warriors with all the necessary capabilities."

Elsewhere, five civilians died amid Ukrainian shelling in the Russian-occupied Donetsk region, said the area's Moscow-installed leader Denis Pushilin. Another three people were injured, he said.

The Russian Defence Ministry also said that it had shot down two Ukrainian drones on Saturday morning over Russia's Belgorod region. No casualties were

US defense secretary says war with China neither imminent nor unavoidable, stressing need for talks

SINGAPORE, June 1: United States Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin told a gathering of top security officials Saturday that war with China was neither imminent nor unavoidable, despite rapidly escalating tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, stressing the importance of renewed dialogue between him and his Chinese counterpart in avoiding "miscalculations and misunderstandings.'

Austin's comments at the Shangri-La defense forum in Singapore came the day after he met for more than an hour on the sidelines with Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun, the first in-person meeting between the top defense officials since contacts between the American and Chinese militaries broke down in 2022 after then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, infuriating

Neither side budged from their longstanding positions on Taiwan — which China claims as its own and has not ruled out using force to take — and on China's sweeping claims in the South China Sea, which has led to direct confrontations between China



the Philippines.

While declining to detail the specifics of their conversation, Austin said the most important thing was that the two were again

"As long as we're talking, we're able to identify those issues that are troublesome and that we want to make sure that we have placed guardrails to ensure there are no misperceptions and no miscalculations ... that can spiral out of control," he said.

'You can only do that kind of thing if you

Addressing the same forum on Friday

cos Jr bluntly outlined what could be at stake, saying that if a Filipino were killed as China confronts his country's coast guard and merchant fleet to press its claims in the South China Sea, it would be "very, very close to what we define as an act of war and therefore we will respond accordingly.'

Marcos added that he assumed the Philippines' treaty partners, which include the US, "hold the same standard."

In his own speech, Austin lauded how Marcos "spoke so powerfully last night about how the Philippines is standing up for its sovereign rights under international law." But when pressed later, he would not say how the US might react if a Filipino were killed in a confrontation with China, calling it hypothetical.

He did say the US commitment to the Philippines as a treaty partner is "ironclad," while again stressing the importance of dialogue with China.

There are a number of things that can happen at sea or in the air, we recognize that," he said. "But our goal is to make sure that we don't allow things to spiral out of

Hezbollah fighters shoot down an Israeli drone in southern Lebanon

BEIRUT, June 1: The militant Hezbollah group said it shot down an Israeli drone over southern Lebanon on Saturday, after hours Israeli drone strikes killed at least one person and wounded others.

Hezbollah said in a statement that its fighters struck the Hermes 900 Kochav drone, saying such aircraft have been targeting militants and civilian homes. The exchange of fire along the Lebanon-Israel border has been intensifying over the past weeks with Israel's military push Gaza's southern city of Rafah.

The Israeli military said a surface-to-air missile was fired toward a drone operating in Lebanese airspace, adding that it was hit and fell in Lebanese territory. "The incident is under review," the military said.

The Hermes 900 Kochav is a medium altitude and long endurance drone that can carry four anti-tank guided missiles.

Earlier Saturday, an Israeli drone

southern Lebanese village of Khirbet Selm wounded two people, state-run National News Agency said. The agency reported another drone strike Saturday afternoon in a village near the southern city of Nabativeh.

An Israeli airstrike on a house in the coastal village of Adloun killed one woman and wounded several others on Friday evening, the agency reported.

Hezbollah began attacking Israeli military posts along the Lebanon-Israel border a day after the Israel-Hamas war broke out on Oct 7. Since then, tens of thousands of people have been displaced on both sides of the border.

Over the past seven months, more than 400 people have been killed in Lebanon most of them fighters but they also include more than 70 civilians and non-combatants. In Israel, 15 soldiers and 10 civilians have been killed since Oc-

"We are willing to negotiate

with the ANC, but not the

ANC of Cyril Ramaphosa,"

MK Party spokesperson Nhla-

More than 50 parties con-

tested the national election, but

given how far off a majority

the ANC appears to be, it is

likely that it will have to ap-

proach one of the three main

MK and the far-left Eco-

nomic Freedom Fighters have

called for parts of the economy

mulo Ndlela said.

opposition parties.

Tin Oo, a close ally of Suu Kyi and co-founder of her pro-democracy party, dies BANGKOK, June 1: Tin Oo, one of the

closest associates of Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi as well as a co-founder of her National League for Democracy party, has died. He was 97.

Tin Oo died on Saturday morning at Yangon General Hospital, said Moh Khan, a charity worker, citing a member of his family. Charity workers in Myanmar handle funeral arrangements.

Moh Khan said Tin Oo had been hospitalised at Yangon General Hospital on Wednesday due to difficulty urinating and other health problems, including weakness. His cause of death was not immediately an-

Tin Oo was respected by many of his party's members for his outspokenness and courage as he shared many of Suu Kyi's tra-

In 1988, Tin Oo helped found the National League for Democracy with Suu Kyi after a failed revolt against military rule. He became vice chairman, then chairman of the new

But when the military cracked down the following year, he was put under house arrest, as was Suu Kyi. Similar to her, he spent 14 of the next 21 years under house arrest or in prison before he was released ahead of the

2010 general election. The party had won a 1990 election, but the results were annulled by the ruling military. which launched a crackdown on its oppo-

In 2003, in one of the intermittent periods when he and Suu Kyi were at liberty before their 2010 release, they had the harrowing experience of being ambushed on a country road in upper Myanmar by a mob widely believed to have been assembled by an element of the military.

The incident occurred as the party leaders were making a political tour and attracting large crowds of supporters.

The two leaders managed an escape, though dozens in their entourage were apparently killed in the attack, details of which remain murky. Despite being the targets, Suu Kyi and Tin Oo were detained in prison and then house arrest again after the incident.

Philippine president warns ANC party that freed SAfrica from apartheid loses its 30-year majority China against 'acts of war' amidst JOHANNESBURG, June

1: The African National Con-

gress party lost its parliamen-

tary majority in a historic

election result on Saturday that

puts South Africa on a new po-

litical path for the first time

since the end of the apartheid

system of white minority rule

counted, the once-dominant

ANC had received just over

40% in the election on

Wednesday, well short of the

majority it had held since the

famed all-race vote of 1994

that ended apartheid and

brought it to power under Nel-

son Mandela. The final results

are still to be formally de-

clared by the independent

electoral commission that ran

SEOUL, June 1: North Korea

launched more trash-carrying bal-

loons toward the South after a similar

campaign earlier in the week, accord-

ing to South Korea's military, in what

Pyongyang calls retaliation for ac-

tivists flying anti-North Korean

not immediately comment on the

number of balloons it had detected or

how many have landed in South

Korea. The military advised people to

beware of falling objects and not to

touch objects suspected to be from

North Korea, but report them to mili-

ernment sent text alerts saying that

unidentified objects suspected to be

flown from North Korea were being

detected in skies near the city and that

the military was responding to them.

to a recent series of provocative steps,

which include its failed spy satellite

The North's balloon launches added

In Seoul, the capital, the city gov-

tary or police offices instead.

South Korea's Defence Ministry did

leaflets across the border.

With nearly 99% of votes

30 years ago.

South China Sea standoff SINGAPORE, June 1: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr has warned China not to cross a red line in the South China Sea, saying If any Filipino died as a result of Beijing's wilful actions. Manila would consider it as

close to "an act of war" and respond ac-Addressing the defence-and-security focused Shangri La Dialogue here on Friday night, Marcos sought to deepen defence cooperation with the US as he stands up to the Chinese military's aggressive actions in the South China Sea.

"We shall strengthen our alliances with the United States and our strategic partnerships with Australia, Japan, Viet-

nam, Brunei, and all the other member states of ASEAN. We will also pursue more robust collaborations with countries such as the Republic of Korea, India amongst others," Marcos said. China claims

nearly all of the South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei,

Malaysia and Vietnam claim parts of it. Marcos said the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries had a vision for "peace, stability, and prosperity" in the South China Sea, but that this was being undermined by other actors.

"Unfortunately, this vision remains for now a distant reality. Illegal, coercive, aggressive, and deceptive actions continue to violate our sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction," Marcos

"If a Filipino citizen was killed by a wilful act, that is very close to what we define as an act of war," he said.

"We would have crossed the Rubicon. Is that a red line? Almost certainly," he asserted. China's determining influence over the security situation and the economic evolution of this region is a permanent fact, he said.

"At the same time, the stabilising presence of the United States is crucial to regional peace. It's never a choice. Both countries are important," he under-

Marcos pointed out that security in the South China Sea, through which a huge volume of trade passes, is a global

Marcos said tensions between the US and China were destabilising for Southeast Asia, calling on Washington and Beijing to work harder to resolve dis-

"Their rivalry is constraining the strategic choices of regional Their contest is exacerbating flashpoints and has created new security dilemmas," Marcos

> "The continued stability of this region requires China and the United States to manage

their rivalry in a responsible manner," he

Manila and Beijing have a long history of maritime territorial disputes, but tensions have worsened under Marcos, who has insisted the Philippines will not give up a "square inch of our territory".

In recent months the simmering dispute between China and the Philippines over territory in the South China Sea has sharpened into aggressive clashes. Manila has denounced Chinese patrol ships firing water cannons at Philippine boats and supply vessels, injuring some

Marcos said on Friday that the South China Sea dispute is an issue that goes

beyond the Asia-Pacific region. The peace and stability of the South China Sea and the freedom of navigation

While opposition parties hailed it as a momentous breakthrough for a country

struggling with deep poverty and inequality, the ANC remained the biggest party by some way but will now need to look for a coalition partner or partners to remain in the government and reelect President Cyril Ramaphosa for a second and final term. Parliament elects the South African president after national elections.

The result ended the ANC's dominance three-decade dominance of South Africa's young democracy, but the way forward promises to be complicated for Africa's most advanced economy, and there's no coalition on the table yet.

launch and test-firings of about 10

suspected short-range missiles this

week. South Korea's military dis-

patched chemical rapid response and

explosive clearance teams to recover

the debris from some 260 North Ko-

rean balloons that were found in vari-

ous parts of the country from Tuesday

night to Wednesday. The military said

the balloons carried various types of

trash and manure but no dangerous

substances like chemical, biological

In a statement on Wednesday, Kim

Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North

Korean leader Kim Jong Un, con-

or radioactive materials.

the Democratic Alliance, was on around 21%. The new MK Party of former President Jacob Zuma, who has turned against the ANC he once led, came third with just over 14% of the vote in the first election

it has contested. Which parties the ANC might approach to co-govern with is the urgent focus now, given Parliament needs to sit and elect a president within 14 days of the final election results being officially declared. A flurry of negotiations were set to take place and they will

likely be complicated. The MK Party said one of their conditions for any agreement was that Ramaphosa is removed as ANC leader and

to be nationalised. The centrist Democratic Alliance is viewed as a business-friendly party and analysts say an ANC-DA coalition would be more welcomed by foreign investors.

North Korea is sending more trash-carrying balloons to South Korea firmed that the North sent the balloons to make good on her country's recent threat to "scatter mounds of wastepa-

per and filth" in South Korea in re-

sponse to leafleting campaigns by

South Korean activists. She hinted that balloons could become the North's standard response to leafletting moving forward, saying that the North would respond by "scattering rubbish dozens of times more than those being scattered to us". North Korea is extremely sensitive about any outside attempt to undermine Kim Jong Un's absolute control over the country's 26 million people, most of whom have little access to foreign news. In 2020, North Korea blew up an empty South Korean-built liaison office on its territory after a furious response to South Korean civilian leafleting campaigns. In 2014, North Korea fired at propaganda balloons flying toward its territory and South Korea returned fire, though there were no casualties. (AP)

SLanka police arrests wanted handler of 4 ISIS suspects detained in India

COLOMBO, June 1: Sri Lankan Police have arrested the suspected handler of the four of its nationals who were arrested at Ahmedabad airport in India for their alleged links with the banned Islamic State (ISIS) outfit.

The Criminal Investigation Department arrested Pushparaja Osman, 46, on Friday in Colombo.

Sri Lanka Police recently announced a cash award of Rs. 2 million for any credible information on his whereabouts. Police had issued a wanted notice and a video of him seek-

ing information from the public. The CID arrested him and

he was believed to have made telephone contact with the four people arrested at the Ahmedabad airport, the police said. The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad arrested four Sri Lankans with links to ISIS at the airport in Ahmedabad. The four men took an Indigo flight from Colombo to Chennai on May 19. Commenting on the investigations so far the police

spokesman Nihal Thalduwa said that police were unable yet to verify that the four are linked to ISIS. "If they had promoted the ISIS ideology in Sri Lanka is yet

to be established." he said. Last month, the Sri Lankan authorities launched a highpowered operation to investigate the four Sri Lankans arrested

The authorities say they would take no chances with possible ISIS activities on the island after the 2019 Easter Sunday attack which killed over 270 people. (PTI)

NORTHEAST

Heroin worth ₹ 9.7 crore seized in Mizoram, 3 held

SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 2024

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AIZAWL, June 1: Three persons were arrested after heroin worth ₹ 9.7 crore was seized from their possession in three separate operations in Mizoram's Champhai district, Assam Rifles said in a statement on Saturday.

During the operations by Assam Rifles and the state police on May 30 night, heroin weighing 146 grams was recovered from Melbuk village, 22 grams from Zote and 1.2 kilograms in an area on Champhai-Aizawl road, it said.

Three drug peddlers were arrested in the three seizure cases, the statement said.

The seized heroin and the three accused handed over to the state police for further legal proceedings, it added. (PTI)

Students from Delhi visits Sainik School, Punglwa



GUWAHATI, June 1: Altogether 15 students from Nirmal Bhartia School, Delhi, with three staff members, visited Sainik School, Punglwa, as part of their Cultural Exchange and National Integration Tour of Nagaland. The tour is organized under the aegis of HQ IGAR (North).

During the visit, students were shown the school's infrastructure and facilities, including the NDA Motivational Hall, academic block, cadets' mess, and the sports area. To commemorate their visit, the students planted a saplings.

The visit fostered a spirit of national integration and cultural exchange, offering the students from Delhi a unique insight into the educational environment and ethos of the Sainik School, the pride of Na-

Sikkim assembly polls counting today

SKM, SDF candidates keep fingers crossed

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) hopes for a second consecutive term and the opposition SDF to unseat it from power as votes polled in 32 assembly constituencies in the Himalayan state will be counted on Sunday, officials said.

Also in the fray are nominees of the BJP, Congress and Citizen Action Party-Sikkim (CAP-S) as counting will be held at six locations in as many districts amid tight security arrangements from 6 am on Sunday.

Preparations have been made for counting votes for nine seats in Gangtok district, seven in Namchi, five in Pakyong, four each in Soreng and Gyalshing and three in Mangan, they said.

Elaborate security arrangements have been made under the supervision of the observers deputed by the Election Commission of India to carry out the process in a free and fair manner, the officials said.

An estimated 80 per cent of the 4.64 lakh voters exercised their franchise in 32 assembly constituencies and one Lok Sabha seat in the first phase on April 19. Votes



polled in the lone Lok Sabha seat will be counted with the rest of the country on June 4.

An additional four per cent votes were cast through postal ballot by government employees, the CEO

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang, his wife Krishna Kumari Rai, former chief minister Pawan Kumar Chamling and the

Heavy downpour to lash Assam and Northeast states till June 5

former Indian footballer Bhaichung Bhutia are the prominent candidates among the 146 contestants in the

The SKM and SDF put up candidates on all 32 assembly seats, followed by BJP (31), CAP-Sikkim (30) and Congress (12).

Spearheading the ruling SKM's bid for a second successive term, Tamang is in the fray from Rhenock

and Meghalaya, could experience

even heavier downpours for the

An orange alert, urging people

to be prepared, has been issued for

Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal

Pradesh, Sikkim, and parts of West

While the heavy rains pose a

danger, they might also alleviate

the region's dry spell. Northeast

India faced a significant rainfall

deficit (18%) from March to May,

with Arunachal Pradesh experienc-

parts of East India, offering some

relief from the scorching heat

waves currently scorching the re-

gion. Odisha and West Bengal can

expect heavy rains with thunder-

storms, while Jharkhand, Bihar,

and Odisha might see thunder-

storms and lightning for the next

The wet weather could extend to

ing a 25% shortfall.

next five days.

constituencies where he is locked in a multi-cornered contest.

The 56-year-old chief minister has exuded confidence that Sikkim's electorate will give another term to the party. His wife Krishna Kumari Rai is contesting from Namchi-Singhithang assembly constituency.

Chamling too is confident that the people of Sikkim have voted for the return of his party, which ruled Sikkim for 25 years, to power.

The 73-year-old five-term former chief minister is locked in a multicornered contest in two assembly constituencies -- Namcheybung and Poklok Kamrang -- and is seeking a record ninth term as an MLA.

Bhutia, the SDF vice-president, is in the fray from Barfung assembly constituency. State BJP president D R Thapa is seeking re-election from Upper Burtuk.

A nail-biting finish was witnessed in 2019 as SKM ended the 25-year rule of the SDF by winning 17 seats against 15 of the Chamling-led party. The SDF was ousted from power despite polling more votes than the SKM. (PTI)

Over 200 patients attend health camp at Marngar

GUWAHATI, June 1: Assam Club of Lahat ban, Shillong in collaboration with Srimanta Sankardev School of Purangang, Marngar, Ri Bhoi district and Magar Social and Cultural Organisation Klang organised a tree heath camp at Shrimanta Sankardev Secandary School of Purangang, Mamgar on May 26

Noted doctors from Shillong and Guwahati attended the heath camp prior to the start of the heath camp, the participating doctors took part in the plantation drive. Over 200 people turned up in the camp and medicines were distributed among needy patients free of cost. The organisers distributed 400 saplings among 200 patients.

The CEO said he, along with the chief secretary and the director general of police, had recently convened a coordination meeting with all the district electoral officers (DEOs) and superintendents of police (SPs) to review the law and order situation and the SPs were

THE HILLS TIMES 7

Votes to be counted on

Sunday, 133 candidates

wait anxiously

Arunachal assembly polls

asked to ensure peaceful counting. "The DEOs have been instructed to ensure that counting agents of various political parties enter the centres without cellphones," Sain

Counting of votes for the two Lok Sabha seats in the state would be conducted on June 4 from 8 am at 25 centres.

Altogether 14 candidates con-

Counting of votes polled in 50 assembly seats would be held at 24 centers that would be managed by 2,000 officials, the CEO said. candidates who contested from Arunachal East Lok Sabha seat. "Three-tier security arrangements have been made in all counting centres. All preparations for

completed," he said. "Media centers will be set up in all counting centers to provide real-time updates," Sain said.

counting, including the final round

of training for officials, have been

ITANAGAR, June 1: The fate of

133 candidates sealed in EVMs

will be decided on Sunday when

votes polled in elections to 50 as-

sembly seats in Arunachal Pradesh

The ruling BJP has already won

10 seats unopposed in the 60-

member assembly. The saffron

The counting of votes will begin

at 6 am on Sunday amid tight se-

curity and the final results are ex-

pected to be out by noon, state

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)

Assembly and Lok Sabha elec-

An estimated 82.71 per cent of

tions were held simultaneously in

Arunachal Pradesh in the first

voters exercised their franchise in

the assembly polls while the

turnout for the two Lok Sabha

seats in the state was recorded at

Pawan Kumar Sain said.

phase on April 19.

77.51 per cent.

party had won 41 seats in 2019.

will be counted, officials said.

tested in the parliamentary elections in the state. In the Arunachal West parliamentary seat, eight candidates, including Union minister Kiren Rijiju and state Congress president Nabam Tuki, contested the elections. Sitting BJP MP Tapir Gao and state Congress vice-president Bosiram Siram are among the six

The BJP had won both the Lok Sabha seats and 41 assembly constituencies in the 2019 polls. The JD (U) had won seven assembly seats, the NPP five, Congress four and the PPA one. Two Independent candidates had also emerged victo-

rains and strong winds have lashed uous onslaught for the next week. The India Meteorological Depart-Northeast India after Cyclone Remal pushed the monsoon season ment (IMD) predicts widespread five days earlier than usual. The relight to moderate rain with thunlentless downpours have caused derstorms and strong winds across the region for the next seven days.



along with their mentor faculty have secured the first prize for their start-up idea, 'Formulation of a Chewable Dentifrice,' at INNO-VATE-A-THON 1.0.

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 1: Heavy

Atal Incubation Centre, NIPER-Guwahati Foundation, and supported by the Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Government of India. The team will receive annual funding support from

Gouranga Baruah, Lobsang Tashi, and Riya Salam, all B Pharm final year students, under the guidance of Dr Sudarshana Borah Khanikor, associate professor and vice-principal, School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, USTM have created a chewable dentifrice product which is a gummy, chewing gum like material which would

help in the deep cleansing of our

The situation remains grim.

Weather experts warn of a contin-

Some areas, particularly in Assam

In this regard, Dr Sudarshana Borah Khanikor stated that the development of a chewable gummy dentifrice from an ethnomedicinal plant in North East India will be user-friendly as well as ecofriendly.

Dr Khanikor said, "These are sugarless products that contain materials that are highly beneficial for our teeth and for cleaning purposes and do not contain any toxins. Application of these would be convenient over the regular toothpaste and mouthwashes because of being toxin-free, user friendly, and at the same time, there will be economic use of water. This would also induce teeth whitening properties and can help to get rid of halitosis

3 layer security cordon in all counting centres in Manipur on June 4

IMPHAL, June 1: Manipur chief electoral officer Pradeep Kumar Jha on Saturday said preparations for counting of votes for the two Lok Sabha constituencies in the state are in full swing.

The counting of votes will commence at 8 am at 24 counting halls on June 4, he said.

A three-layer security cordon will be enforced at the counting centres on the counting day, the CEO said in

All necessary arrangements as prescribed by the Election Commission are well in place.

"Counting of votes will be taken up at 24 counting centres in 11 district headquarters..., " Jha said. The CEO said five counting halls have been ear-

marked for postal ballots. "Twenty-five counting observers have been appointed by ECI and will be arriving before the fixed date of counting. One ECIL engineer for each counting hall has been assigned where EVM counting will be done," the CEO said.

elections the BJP had won the Inner Manipur seat while the NPF had won the outer Manipur con-Manipur has two Lok Sabha constituencies Inner



Manipur and Outer Manipur. In the 2019 Lok Sabha

Some relief from flood in Imphal HT Bureau 1: Daily

life in Imphal - the capital of Manipur – is slowly returning to normal as water levels receded n areas that endured severe flooding and waterlogging over the past four days.

Residents in several parts of Imphal have begun resuming their daily activities, with shops reopening and people stepping out in large numbers to purchase essential commodities.

Auto and private vehicle services, previously disrupted by the flooding, have started operating again.

Fresh vegetables are now available in key areas such as Thong Nambolbi, Keishampat Junction, and Ima Keithel of Im-

Odisha's Women and Child development department officials visit M'Iaya Meghalaya's Collaborative efforts for ECD receives appreciation

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, June 1: A team of

three talented students from the

School of Pharmaceutical Sci-

ences. University of Science and

Technology Meghalaya (USTM)

GUWAHATI, June 1: In a bid to facilitate knowledge exchange and strengthen collaborative governance with respect to the ongoing Early Childhood Development (ECD) mission in the state, a delegation from the Government of Odisha's Women and Child Development Department concluded their three-day exposure visit to Meghalaya on Friday.

The visit was aimed at gathering insight into Meghalaya's best practices in terms of Mobilizing collective actions to improve nutrition status of SAM children through Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) Approach, to observe and derive key takeaways from Meghalaya's interventions in Early Childhood Development (ECD) and practices adopted under Poshan Abhiyan. It may be mentioned that between 2020-21, through collaborative cross departmental efforts, the State was able to achieve 91.3% reduction in SAM and 94% reduction in MAM cases in just 12 months.

The officials from the Odisha team consisted of - Madhusudan Behera, Joint Secretary, ECCE; N.C Jyoti Ranjan Nayak, Additional Secretary, POSHAN; Bhumika Rath, Section Officer, ECCE; Priyadarsini Mohanty, Consultant, ECCE; Deepali Das, Consultant CB&BCC- POSHAN; Punyabati Helen Xess, DSW)-Jharsuguda; Sabita Sahoo, CDPO-Gaislet; Surajit Patnaik, Consultant, Health & Nutrition, POSHAN; Selly

Buda, ICDS Project-Barkot; Sagarika Swain, AI, SIWC, Barpali; Akshaya Kumar Limal, Sr. Consultant, UNICEF; Aishwairya Rani Biswal, Accountant, POSHAN; Suchismita Swain, ASO and Tabassum Azad, Consultant OMBADC. At a time when Odisha and Meghalaya are joining forces to share knowledge, experiences, skills and best practices in ECD, the visit exemplifies the importance of horizontal collaboration between States. By fostering this partnership, both states aim to enhance child well-being and nutrition through innovative approaches.

During their three day visit to Meghalaya, the Odisha team along with the ECD programme managers, officials from the State's Directorate of Social Welfare, CDPO and Lady supervisors visited Bhoirymbong (Lummawria and Umeit B) and Umrynjah Anganwadi Centre to observe preschool activities. They also visited the Amlarem block to observe the collaboration between MSRLS and ICDS for egg distribution in Thadlaskein through SHGs, where the SHG suppliers and egg beneficiaries were also present.

During the visit, Priyadarsini Mohanty, Technical Lead & Consultant (ECCE), Women & Child Health Department, Government of Odisha, expressed satisfaction with the activities in Meghalaya, particularly highlighting the distribution of eggs through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) at pilot centers, which she said



of appreciation.

A meeting and sensitization program for the community and Faith based leaders was observed at Jarain Village in Amlarem Block where the team from Odisha met with the Faith- based organizations in Amlarem and observed how the process of social and behavioral change in basic ECD and nutrition practices is being carried out in the state through collaboration with faith based leaders. The team expressed appreciation of the State's collaboration with faith based leaders and community institutions to strengthen their role in educating communities on the importance of Early Childhood Development, thereby bringing together Faith and Science towards the ECD mission fulfillment.

The Odisha team particularly commended Meghalaya's inter-departmental convergence model under the ECD mission where 4 departments- Health, Social Welfare, Education and C&RD are working together towards attainment of ECD goals. They believe it could be a key takeaway for their state. Priyadarsini applauded the coordination among the Health, ICDS, Education, and Community and Rural Development departments, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach, which she deemed as a unique initiative from Meghalaya.

"We appreciate the coordination among the health, ICDS, education, and community and rural development departments for the ECD mission. It is a

from Meghalaya." She said, "We are eager to support the ECD mission in the future and hope for great outcomes. Upgrading AWCs to provide parenting opportunities is crucial. We must take a nolistic approach.' While visiting an ICDS uncovered vil-

holistic approach and a unique initiative

lage at Laitkroh along with the Program Managers-ECD Mission, ICDS Supervisors and MSRLS Cluster coordinator in charge of the uncovered village, the Odisha team lauded the efforts of Community Gender and Health Activists (CGHAs) in distributing Take Home Rations (THR) in villages not covered under ICDS and stated that this was a State innovation worthy of recognition. The POSHAN team from Odisha also visited recovered SAM cases in Laitkroh to learn how the ICDS officials and community members managed the cases through inter-departmental collaborative efforts. Later, the Odisha team also had a debriefing session with the Principal Secretary & Development Commissioner, Sampath Kumar, IAS and Director, Social Welfare Department, C.D

The State Political leadership's commitment to allocating resources for the launch and implementation of holistic one of a kind ECD Mission aimed at unleashing the full potential of children in Meghalaya was greatly appreciated by Odisha WCD team.

It may be mentioned that in December

2022 and May 2024, Meghalaya's ECD team members along with State officials from the Directorate of Social Welfare also conducted learning visits to Odisha. The strategy adopted by Odisha that stood out the most was the decentralized system of processing Take Home Ration (THR) under the ICDS Supplementary Nutrition Programme. The THR processing units are run by women self-help groups/SHG federations and the ration is supplied directly to the AWCs by the SHGs. The insights gained were invaluable and has facilitated continuous exposure visits for officials from various departments to learn from the State of Odisha and vice versa.

The Odisha team highlighted the importance of partnering with technical experts globally to strengthen nutritional aspects and utilize best practices through collaboration, while also emphasizing the necessity of research and publication in the field of nutrition and ECD, expressing support for ongoing initiatives in Meghalaya. The Odisha-Meghalaya partnership exemplifies the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and shared commitment to nurturing the full potential of every child. Through cross-learning and adaptation, both states are collectively working towards securing a strong social capital and unleashing the full potential for children. The officials stated that this initiative will pave the way for future collaborations and mutual understanding between both States.



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Court reserves for June

5 order on Kejriwal's

interim bail plea NEW DELHI, June 1: A court here on Saturday reserved for June 5 its order on an application moved by

Chief Minster and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal seeking interim bail in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam.

The case being probed by the En-

forcement Directorate (ED) relates to

alleged corruption and money laun-

dering in the formulation and execu-

tion of the Delhi government's

now-scrapped excise policy for 2021-

22. Special Judge Kaveri Baweja re-

served the order, observing that the

application was for grant of interim

bail on medical grounds and not for

the extension of the interim bail

The top court had on May 10

granted 21-day interim bail to the

chief minister to enable him to cam-

paign during the Lok Sabha polls. It

had directed him to surrender on June

2, a day after the last phase of the

Kejriwal campaigned in Uttar

Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi and Maha-

rashtra after being released from the

Tihar jail. After the judge reserved the

order, Kejriwal's counsel urged the

court to pass the order on Saturday itself, considering that he has to surren-

der on Sunday. The judge, however,

declined the request, saying the argu-

ments and the documents submitted

by the advocates of the accused as

well as the prosecution was volumi-

nous. During the proceedings, Solici-

tor General Tushar Mehta, appearing

for the ED, told the court that Kejri-

wal made misleading claims at a press

conference on Friday that he would

surrender on June 2 on his own.

seven-phase poll gets over.

granted by the Supreme Court.

Widespread violence in Sandeshkhali in final phase of LS polls in Bengal

TMC supporters have accused the ISF of orchestrating the violence to intimidate voters

violence between TMC and BJP supporters over alleged electoral malpractices was reported during polling in strife-torn Sandeshkhali region of Basirhat Lok Sabha constituency on Saturday, resulting in numerous injuries. Police resorted to lathicharge and tear gas shelling to control the situation.

In the remaining eight parliamentary constituencies of West Bengal, which went to the polls in the seventh and final phase, sporadic incidents of violence were reported.

Although the poll panel claimed that voting has been peaceful so far, it said it has received 1,899 complaints until 2 pm from different political parties alleging EVM malfunctions and agents being stopped from entering booths.

Around 58.46 per cent of over 1.63 crore voters exercised their franchise till 3 pm of polling to the nine Lok Sabha seats, an Election Commission official said.

Clashes broke out between supporters of the TMC, ISF and the BJP in different pockets of the state as the parties clashed over stopping polling agents from entering

In Sandeshkhali, clashes broke out between TMC and BJP supporters over allegations of electoral

BJP candidate Rekha Patra alleged that TMC goons stopped voters from casting their votes.

The TMC made counter allegations and accused Patra and BJP goons of trying to vitiate the poll atmosphere.

As both the groups came to blows on Basanti express highway, police resorted to baton charge and tear gas shelling to disperse the

Basirhat SP Hossain Mehedi Rahaman said three persons were injured during the clash between TMC and BJP supporters at Bayramari in Sandeshkhali, adding that one person was arrested in this

The riverine area has been on the boil since Friday night in Bermajur area as the BJP made allegations that TMC workers, accompanied by policemen, intimidated its polling agents by visiting their homes on Friday

A confrontation erupted in Bhangar within Jadavpur constituency between backers of Trinamool Congress and the Indian Secular Front (ISF), with allegations of crude bombs being hurled from both sides. Police intervention ensued, triggering protests as both factions accused each other.

To quell the situation, security personnel resorted to a lathicharge



to disperse the mob, recovering several crude bombs.

Angry voters of Kultuli within Joynagar constituency dumped electronic voting machines (EVMs) and Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VV-PAT) machines into nearby waterbodies alleging electoral misconduct.

"Today morning at 6.40 am Reserve EVMs & papers of Sector Officer near Benimadhavpur FP school, at 129-Kultali AC of 19-Jaynagar (SC) PC has been looted by local mob and 1 CU, 1 BU, on X, "Democracy is up in flames

there have been allegations of nominations of

many other candidates being rejected by the

Election Commission. If he is so confident about

am contesting, the BJP, CPI(M), SUCI all are

contenders along with TMC. If you have people's

support, you should not be scared of opponents,"

prospects, stating that the party is expected to im-

prove its performance compared to the 2019

Banerjee criticised BJP's overconfident pre-

dictions of winning over 30 seats in West Bengal,

elections, both in terms of seats and vote share.

He expressed confidence in TMC's electoral

"In Diamond Harbour constituency where I

victory, then why such a move?"

2VVPAT machines have been thrown inside a pond," the office of CEO West Bengal posted on X.

"Sector Police was a little behind. FIR has been lodged by the Sector Officer and necessary action has been initiated. The poll process in all six booths under the Sector is running uninterrupted. Fresh EVM and papers have been provided to the Sector Officer," it further said

Senior BJP leader and Bengal co-incharge Amit Malviya posted

in West Bengal. Bombs have been hurled in Jadavpur's Bhangar, and irate villagers in Joynagar's Kultali have thrown an EVM and VVPAT machine in a pond because TMC goons won't let them vote."

"But the worse affected is Diamond Harbour, where Mamata Banerjee's nephew and heir apparent is contesting from. BJP workers are being intimidated, not allowed to sit in the booths, their polling documents destroyed. WB Police is acting like Abhishek Banerjee's henchmen. Even the Muslims have not been spared because a large number of them are voting for CPI(M) candidate Pratikur Rahman. TMC's 'secularism' dies the moment Muslims start voting against it," he posted

Following this, Kolkata Police claimed the incident happened in the morning before the poll process

This incident happened in the morning around 6 am much before the polling process in Bengal. Police and CAPF immediately intervened and have taken steps against miscreants. Legal action initiated. Polling in Bhangar started without any interruption and is going on peacefully," Kolkata Police posted

the ISF of orchestrating the vio-

action from local law enforcement led to lathicharges and the arrest of suspects in Polerhat area of

Another incident occurred where the vehicle of an ISF worker was vandalised in Baghaiatin area. Accusations have been levelled against Trinamool Congress supporters for the alleged incident.

BJP candidate Abhijit Das accused the ruling party of malpractices, which the TMC denied. As Das approached a polling booth, TMC activists staged protests and shouted "Go back" slogans. In response, Das got out of his car and houted counter slogans. Similarly, CPI(M) candidate

Patikur Rehman faced "go back" slogans from TMC workers when he attempted to visit a booth in the Canning area.

In Jadavpur area's Ganguly Bagan, CPI(M) workers were allegedly beaten by the TMC activists and their camp offices were ransacked. The TMC, however, denied the allegations.

In Baranagar assembly seat, where a by-poll is on, CPI(M) candidate Tanmay Bhattacharya was allegedly physically assaulted when he was standing outside a booth as TMC workers accused TMC supporters have accused him of trying to influence the vot-

At a press conference here on Friday, Kejriwal said he will be surren-Abhishek terms Modi's meditation as dering on June 2. "I will leave my house around 3 pm (on Sunday) to surrender. It is possible that this time 'media spectacle' using tax payers' money they will torture me more, but I will not bow down," he said.

Kejriwal had also alleged, "They tried to break me. They stopped my medicines while I was in jail. My weight reduced by six kg after being arrested. My weight was 70 kg when I was arrested. I have not gained weight after coming out of jail

Doctors have advised several tests and "they feel this could be a sign of some underlying medical condition", he had claimed.

The ED's counsel said in court, 'Kejriwal campaigned throughout his interim bail period and, now, he suddenly claims he is ill. Kejriwal suppressed facts and made false statements, including about his health." Kejriwal's counsel told the court that he was ill and needed treatment. The ED said the interim bail is not maintainable as the trial court cannot modify the order of the Supreme Court mandating Kejriwal to surrender on June 2.

"The Supreme Court order says he will surrender. That order has not been modified till date. He has to surrender. He is not on interim bail because of this court's order. He is on interim bail because SC order. He is asking for extension of the Supreme Court order, which is not permissible," the probe agency's counsel

Break silence, assure justice to victims: Cong to PM after Revanna's arrest



NEW DELHI, June: 1 With sexual-abuse accused Prajwal Revanna's arrest, the Congress on Party (BJP) leaders. Saturday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "silence" on the matter and claimed that he has "failed" to provide justice to women in the last 10 years.

Suspended Janata Dal (Secular) MP Revanna, facing sexual-abuse allegations, was remanded in police custody on Friday, hours after he was arrested by a Bengaluru Police team on his return from Germany.

A special court in Bengaluru remanded him in police custody till

Revanna was arrested in the wee hours of Friday by a Special Investigation Team (SIT), minutes after he landed in Bengaluru past midnight from Germany. He had left the country on April 27.

Hitting out at Modi for "allowing" Revanna to flee in the first place, All India Mahila Congress president Alka Lamba said letting a "mass rapist" escape is "Modi ki Guarantee³

Revanna, the member of Parliament from Karnataka's Hassan, has been arrested by the SIT constituted by the state government, she said, adding that this was done by a women police team formed

"We congratulate the Karnataka government," Lamba said.

"Narendra Modi kept raising the 'Beti Bachao' slogan, but did not break his silence on Prajwal Revanna," she told a press conference at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters

Lamba said Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah wrote to Modi on the matter for help from the Centre but did not get a reply.

The chief minister had to write to Modi again after 21 days, asking him to bring Revanna back to

"This shows how serious Modi was about the Prajwal Revanna case." Lamba said.

She said the possibility of pressure being put on victims and witnesses still exists and "we urge the prime minister to break his silence and assure that there would be no tampering with evidence and justice will be ensured to our daugh-

The Congress leader also cited the case of a Dalit girl being "raped" in Madhya Pradesh and the perpetrators of the crime allegedly being Bharatiya Janata

"In this case, first the victim's brother, then the victim's uncle were killed. Finally, the victim also died by falling off an ambulance while bringing back her uncle's mortal remains," she said about the incidents that have taken place in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar.

"In the last five months, 12,000 cases of rape and sexual harassment of women, including 1,644 girls, have come to light in Rajasthan," Lamba said, hitting out at the BJP.

More than 25 tribal women and students have been raped in Sidhi in Madhya Pradesh, she claimed.

"It is unfortunate that in the last 10 years, Narendra Modi has failed to provide justice to our daughters," Lamba alleged.

"Break your silence as it encourages the perpetrators of such crimes," she said.

After evading summonses and staying out of the country for a little more than a month, Revanna (33), the grandson of JD(S) supremo and former prime minister H D Deve Gowda, landed in Bengaluru from Germany's Munich on Friday, only to be arrested by the SIT minutes later and whisked away for questioning.

Revanna had issued a video statement earlier, stating he would appear before the SIT on Friday.

He was subsequently produced before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate K N Shivakumar, who heard the remand application and objection arguments from Revanna's lawyer and remanded the JD(S) leader in police custody.

The NDA's Lok Sabha poll candidate from Hassan, facing allegations of sexually abusing several women, was arrested after the completion of the due process, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said.

In the first case registered against him at the Holenarasipura Town police station in Hassan on April 28, Prajwal Revanna has been accused of sexually harassing a 47-year-old former maid. He is listed as the accused number two in the case, while his father and local MLA H D Revanna is

the primary accused. Prajwal Revanna has so far been booked in three cases of sexual assault. There are also charges of rape against him. (PTI)



spectacle, don't sit for meditation in full glare of camera," Banerjee told reporters after casting his reminding them of their previous performance. On Modi's decision to contest from Varanasi, "In the last six phases of Lok Sabha elections, he said, "He can contest from anywhere. But TMC has already surpassed 22 seats out of the

35 seats in West Bengal where voting has been conducted," he said. "Wait for another three days to find out," he added when asked if the party was confident of winning all the nine seats that have gone into

polls in the seventh phase. He accused Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah of threatening to topple democratically elected state governments, denouncing their

disregard for democratic principles. "First, let us wait for the June 4 results and see how many seats you (BJP) actually manage to win. Second, this is the Lok Sabha polls and the TMC had been elected to power by the people of Bengal in 2021 assembly polls. How come you

(BJP heavyweights) issue such statement about toppling a state government? This shows BJP has no respect for democracy," he added.

Banerjee accused the BJP of controlling the

Election Commission and manipulating state institutions for political gain, expressing confidence in the electorate to respond appropriately.

He emphasised TMC's commitment to social welfare projects and its continuous engagement with the people, contrasting it with BJP's reliance on media, enforcement agencies, and cen-

"BJP's politics is centred round the media, ED and the CBI. TMC is with people for 365 days of year," he added

Regarding his own electoral prospects in Diamond Harbour, Banerjee expressed optimism about achieving a significant victory margin. "I have set a target of over 4 lakh votes," he added. After casting his vote, Baneriee wrote on X,

Today, I exercised my right to vote, fulfilling the most important civic duty we all share. I urge you to cast your vote and make your voices heard. For all the deprivation, empty promises, falsehoods, pain, and hate, today is your day to

actor-turned-BJP leader Mithun On Chakraborty allegedly facing TMC protests in north Kolkata, Banerjee said, "How can I say what happened. I have no information. But if some people shout 'chor chor' at a BJP leader, what can be done about that?" (PTI)

Villagers in Himachal's Chamba boycott LS elections



SHIMLA, June 1: Demanding a road connectivity to their villages, the residents of villages of Makhan, Chachul and Juri in Churah subdivision of Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district boycotted the Lok Sabha elections on Saturday.

The residents of the twin remote villages of Makhan and Chachul falling under Sanval gram panchayat and Juri in Charda Gram panchayat said that they would not vote until the district administration listens to their grievances.

'We will not vote until the district administration comes here and listens to our grievances," said Ravi, a local. The villagers also alleged that although the administration was apprised of the issues, nothing has changed.

"We are still waiting for internet connectivity, road and electricity and the situation is so pathetic that if someone falls ill, we have to carry the patients on foot for 4-5 km to reach the health centre and several people have died as they could not get treatment on time," Mukesh Kumar, a resident of Makhan village, told PTI over the phone.

Kumar said it has been 76 years since Independence but still our village awaits basic facilities like roads. He added that there are about 900 voters in the booth catering to the

The villagers, including men and women, gathered in huge numbers outside polling booth No. 25 in Makhan village but refused to vote.

"We have decided not to vote as our demands have gone unheard," he said, adding that students are not able to study as there is no internet connectivity and several students dropped out of school during lockdown due to Covid pandemic. "Besides basic facilities, we de-

mand the building of government schools be repaired and the teachers be deployed in these schools. At present, there is one teacher for 100 students," he rued.

The villagers said that they would start an agitation in future in case their demands are not fulfilled.

Similarly, the villagers of Juri said that they had decided to boycott the polls in the last election as well but voted on the assurance of officials that work for construction of the road would be started in ten days. However, the promise is yet to be

In a viral video from Juri village, the villagers said that our village is located on the hill top with water bodies around and we have to trek around 10 km to reach the nearest health centre. They lamented that a link road was sanctioned from Charda to Juri in 2006 but it has not yet been constructed. (PTI)

deployed to relay polling data to the headquarters'

Braving icy heights: Election at world's highest polling station

'Team will get a satellite phone and runners will be



TASHIGANG (HP), June 1: Lal arrived early at the sub-divisional magistrate's office on Thursday, the icy cold and crisp morning air hinting at the challenges ahead.

As one of the 29 booth-level officers deployed from Kaza to polling stations in Lahaul-Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, Lal knew that the next few days would be demanding

Wearing sunglasses to shield his eyes from the glaring sun, the trained graduate teacher joined others in a semi-circle. The SDM, carrying a bunch of papers clipped together, called out the names of the poll-booth officers and their assign-

It is Tashigang for Lal and his team of five others. Tashigang is a tiny village perched high in the icy Himalayas at a staggering altitude of 15,256 feet. The village holds the distinction of hosting the highest polling station in the world.

Located near the India-China border, the Spiti valley is part of the Mandi Lok Sabha seat, one of the four parliamentary constituencies in Himachal Pradesh and the second largest in India. Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is up against the Congress's Vikramaditya Singh from the seat. The polling station at Tashigang, serving 62 voters from Tashigang and Gete, has been made a model polling booth.

The hour-and-a-half-long journey to Tashigang, located on the other side of a mountain facing the SDM's office in Kaza, is as formidable as the landscape itself -rugged terrain, narrow winding dirt roads and unpredictable weather.

Yet, for Lal and his team, the assignment carries a sense of purpose. In a place where the harsh environment shapes every aspect of life, facilitating the democratic process is both a "duty and an honour".

some difficulties)," acknowledging the challenges ahead, especially for those unaccustomed to such a difficult terrain with no mobile connectivity and limited power supply. But the polling preparations are "The team will get a satellite phone and runners will be deployed to relay polling data to the head-

conducted elections at Hikkim (also in the Spiti valley), the second-

highest polling station in the country, in the past. So I have some

experience," Lal said, laughing as

he walked to board a white Bolero

After a brief pause, he added,

"Thoda dikkat to hoga (there will be

car with an electronic voting ma-

chine (EVM) in his hands.

quarters," Additional District Commissioner Rahul Jain told PTI. "The terrain is tough, but our teams are committed and we have made all the preparations," he added. As the journey commenced, the paved road quickly gave way to a narrow and uneven dirt path. The brown hills on either side were dotted with white pools of snow, slowly melting in the sun. At some places, water from the melting snow accumulated on the dirt road, making it dangerous to drive through.

The landscape was breathtaking but completely desolate -- a few houses were visible only because of their bright colours against the brown hills. There is nothing for miles in between, and with no or very limited mobile connectivity, tourists frequently lose their way. (PTI)

two villages.

Telangana: Decade of triumphs and teething problems

HYDERABAD, June 1: Exponential increase in Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), per capita income and agriculture output, sings the growth story of Telangana's decade-long journey since its separation from Andhra Pradesh on June 2, 2014 while overall mounting debt

Telangana would be completing 10 years tomorrow and the state government has proposed to celebrate the occasion on a grand scale.

Despite ten long years after separation, several issues such as bifurcation of assets, power bills dues, are still unresolved between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

During the past decade, the state has emerged as a favourite destination for investments from across various sectors. Mobile giant Apple, IT major Microsoft, Korean electronics firm Foxconn, e-commerce giant Amazon, domestic battery maker Amara Raja Group are some of the companies that stand testament to the investor-friendly environment

According to provisional estimates, Telangana's GSDP (at current prices), one of the kev economic health indicators of a state, in 2022-23 grew to ₹ 13,13,391 crore, with a growth of 16.3 per cent, from ₹ 5,05,849 crore

In 2014-15, Telangana's GSDP contributed approximately four per cent to the GDP of the nation while in 2022-23, it grew to 4.8 per cent, an increase of almost 1 percentage point since state formation, as per official figures.

Per Capita Income (PCI) of Telangana at current prices in 2022-23 was ₹ 3.12 lakh which is ₹ 1.40 lakh higher than the National average (1,72,276).



"Based on the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of PCI at current prices for Telangana and India from 2014-15 to 2022-23, the average citizen in Telangana can expect his/her income to double in 5 to 6 years, whereas the average citizen in the country as a whole would have to wait for about 8 years for their income to double," a recent government

Telangana ranked third in PCI in 2022-23, according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

The total area under cultivation in Telangana increased from 1.31 crore (in 2014) to 2.20 crore acres (in 2023), while paddy production rose from 68 lakh metric tonnes to 2.7 crore metric tonnes during the last nine years of last

The Telangana government has sealed MoUs worth over ₹ 36,500 crore at the World Economic Forum held at Davos in January with corporate biggies such as Adani Group and JSW, among the other investors signing MoUs with the state.

On the flip side, according to a Telangana State Finances-White Paper tabled by the government in the Legislative Assembly in December last year, the state would have an ing non-guaranteed loans of corporations or institutions by the end of FY 24 against ₹ 72,658

As per budget estimates for FY 2023-24, the debt under FRBM (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003) was estimated to increase to ₹ 3.90 lakh crore.

Political analyst S Nagesh Kumar said Telangana during the past decade has achieved its goal of self-rule and self-respect.

He also said all the resources of Telangana including its capital Hyderabad now belong to According to the Andhra Pradesh State Re-

organisation Act, Hyderabad was joint capital of AP and Telangana until June 2, 2014. Pointing out the controversial Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation, Kumar also opined that one has

to retrospect how well the resources were invested during the past ten years. The division of various institutions and corporations, listed in Schedule 9 and Schedule 10 of the Act, between the two states, has not

been completed as there was no consensus

over several issues, officials sources said. AP Reorganisation Act mentioned as many as 89 government companies and corporations are listed in the Ninth Schedule while the 10th Schedule of the Act includes 107 training institutions/centres like AP State Co-operative Union, Environment Protection Training and Research Institute, AP Forest Academy, Centre for Good Governance and Andhra Pradesh Po-

The Centre had held a meeting with senior officials from both the states in the National Capital in March on bifurcation issues. (PTI)

Prime Minister Modi concludes meditation in Kanyakumari

KANYAKUMARI (TAMIL stituents including Tamil Nadu's NADU), June 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday concluded his 45-hour-long meditation at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial here and paid floral tributes to Tamil saint poet Thiruval-

On conclusion of his dhyana session, Modi, clad in white, visited the 133-ft statue of Thiruvalluvar, located next to the rock memorial and placed a huge garland there marking his tribute. He arrived at the statue complex by a ferry service and later reached the shore using the service.

The Prime Minister left by a helicopter for Thiruvananthapuram and from there, he left for Delhi. On his arrival here on May 30, the PM prayed at the Bhagavathy Amman temple and later arrived at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial.

During his stay at the memorial, the PM did meditation and also performed 'Surya Arghya' at the time of sunrise, a ritual associated with spiritual practice. Modi was clad in saffron while he was engaged in meditation at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial.

The PM's visit to Kanyakumari to perform meditation evoked opposition from INDIA bloc conruling DMK. The opposition was to the broadcast of meditation in view of last phase of polling on June 1.

In view of the PM's stay, senior DMK leader and Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan on May 31 alleged that tourists were not allowed in that area which had seriously affected the local businesses and 'we have pointed out that this is not good.'

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president K Selvaperunthagai on Saturday told reporters that those doing meditation do it peacefully without any hindrance and all alone. "How can a person do Dhyana with 14 cameras in front of him? Is this meditation? This is dhyana eyeing electoral politics," the Congress leader alleged. He accused Modi of trying to sully Swami Vivekananda's reputation by acting against the spiritual leader's legacy and hence, condemnable.

At the Vivekananda Rock Memorial, the PM embarked on his 45-hour long meditation on the evening of May 30 and completed it on Saturday. Kanyakumari is famous for its sunrise and sunset and the memorial is located on a tiny

Mungeshpur temperature reading due to malfunctioning sensor: IMD

NEW DELHI, June 1: The India Meteorological Department on Saturday said the temperature reading of 52.9 degrees Celsius by an automatic weather station (AWS) at Mungeshpur in northwest Delhi was due to a "malfunctioning sensor" and said that such devices deployed for weather observations will be examined.

The weather office had dispatched a team of experts to Mungeshpur after an AWS deployed there recorded a maximum temperature of 52.9 degrees Celsius on May 29 to examine the device for errors, if any.

'The temperature sensor of AWS Mungeshpur is found to report about three degrees Celsius higher maximum temperature than the maximum temperature reported by the standard instrument," the IMD said and attributed the readings to "malfunctioning of the sensor" of

"We will examine AWS, course corrections, if any, will be carried out on an individual basis," said IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, adding that the faulty sensor of the Mungeshpur AWS would be replaced in a few days.

Earth Sciences Minister Kiren Rijiju shared a draft report on the Mungeshpur incident, which said the maximum temperature recorded by the AWS was three degrees higher than the standard instru-

ments. The report recommended that the surface instrument division at IMD Pune may examine and calibrate the AWS temperature sensors at periodic intervals of all the AWS. It also recommended that a Factory Acceptance Test should be carried out in different temperatures before the installation of an AWS and called for routine maintenance of such devices installed across the country in a planned manner. (PTI)

they infiltrated Bishnoi gang's social media groups

MUMBAI, June 1: The Navi Mumbai police infiltrated the social media groups, including WhatsApp, of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang before arresting four of its members for allegedly plotting to attack actor Salman Khan, an official said on Sat-

The action comes months after the police made arrests in connection with a firing outside the actor's Bandra home in Mumbai.

Vivek Pansare, Deputy Commissioner of Police Zone II (Panvel), told the media that Panvel police station senior inspector Nitin Thackeray got inputs in September-October last year about a conspiracy to harm the

A few Navi Mumbai police officers and informers then infiltrated WhatsApp and other social media groups of the Bishnoi gang and began tracking the chatter on those

The police said they learnt that the four arrested gang members had recced Salman's farmhouse in Panvel, the area around his home at Bandra in Mumbai and places he visited for film shooting.

Plot to harm Salman Khan: Navi Mumbai cops say

There were even attempts to get weapons from abroad, he said. After gathering inputs, cops in

April registered a case against 17 persons, including Lawrence Bishnoi and his younger brother Anmol Bishnoi, police said.

Accused Dhananjay Tapesingh, alias Ajay Kashyap (28) was arrested from Panvel on April 28. The same day, Gaurav Bhatia, alias Sandeep Bishnoi, was taken into custody from Gujarat, the official said.

While the third person Vaspi Khan, alias Waseem Chikna, was picked from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Rizwan Khan, alias Javed

Khan, was arrested from Bangalore,

lice Academy.

They have been booked under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections, including 120-B (Conspiracy) and 506 (criminal intimidation), the official said. Lawrence Bishnoi is currently lodged in the Sabarmati central prison in Gujarat's Ahmedabad, while Anmol Bishnoi is believed to be in the US or Canada.

On April 14, two bike-borne men fired multiple rounds outside Khan's home - Galaxy Apartments - in Mumbai's Bandra. The shooters, Vicky Gupta and Sagar Pal, were arrested from Gujarat.

Sonu Bishnoi and Anuj Thapan, who allegedly delivered weapons to the shooters, were nabbed later from Punjab. Thapan allegedly hanged himself in a police lock-up here on May 1. Mumbai police subsequently made more arrests in the case. (PTI)

SC to hear tomorrow Delhi govt plea seeking direction to Haryana to release surplus water

NEW DELHI, June 1: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a Delhi government plea seeking a direction to Haryana to release surplus water provided by Himachal Pradesh to the national capital to mitigate its ongoing water crisis. According to the cause list of the apex court, a vacation bench of justices P K Mishra and K V Viswanathan is likely to hear the matter.

The plea filed by Delhi's Water Minister Atishi has made the Centre, the BJP-governed Haryana and the Congress-ruled Himachal Pradesh parties to the petition, saying that access to water is essential for survival and is one of the basic human

"Access to water is one of the basic human rights of an individual. Not only is water essential for sustenance, but access to water also forms an essential component of the guarantee of dignity and a quality of life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution," the plea said.

"The current water crisis, which may only get worse given peak summers and ongoing water shortage, violates the right to a dignified and quality life of the people of the NCT of Delhi, who are unable to access even adequate clean drinking water," it added.

The plea has sought a direction to the Haryana government for immediate and continuous release of water at the Wazirabad barrage, including but not limited to the full surplus water provided by the Respondent No. 2 (Himachal Pradesh) for the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, in order to mitigate the water crisis in the NCT of Delhi. The city government said it was conage of water being faced by the citizens due to the said. (PTI)

ongoing severe heat conditions in north India, particularly Delhi.

"The record-high temperatures and heat wave in Delhi, which have resulted in maximum temperature rising up to around 50 degrees Celsius at some places, have caused an extraordinary and ex-

cessive surge in water demand in the city. "As a result, the national capital is dealing with a water shortage which has led to frequent supply cuts in many parts of the NCT, and has disrupted the daily life of the ordinary residents, the plea said. The AAP government said it has taken all measures to ensure optimisation, rationing and targeted supply of water, yet the shortage remains acute and it is clear by all indicators that the NCT of Delhi is in dire need of additional water.

It said all treatment plants in the national capital are treating and supplying the water being sent. It is necessary to augment the water supply to address the present crisis, it added.

The city government said it has sought the direction as a one-time measure and not filed the plea for resolving any outstanding inter-state water dispute.

"The Petitioner is praying for the said relief of release of surplus water only as a stop-gap arrangement to remedy the current crisis till such time the monsoon season arrives and the temperature of the city goes down... thereby reverting the situation to normal, "it said.

"Without prejudice to the inter-federal rights of Delhi, especially as a lower riparian state to shared water resources, the plea is filed only because of the unprecedented surge in temperature, which strained to file the plea on account of acute short- has triggered a surge in the demand for water," it

Shri Somnath a symbol of pride in Sanatan culture: Shah

AHMEDABAD, June 1: Union ping Baba Somnath, I wished Home Minister Amit Shah on for everyone's welfare and con Saturday said Lord Somnath is the symbol of pride in the indelible Sanatan culture.

Shah said he wished for everyone's prosperity while offering prayers at the jyotirlinga temple of Lord Shiv in Gujarat on Friday.

One of the trustees of the Shree Somnath Trust which manages the temple, Shah performed 'dhwaj puja' on Friday evening. The dhwaj (flag) was hoisted atop the temple dome after conducting rituals.

"Jai Shri Somnath. The first Jyotirlinga Shri Somnath Mahadev is the symbol of pride in continuous, indelible and abiding Sanatan culture. They inspire us to persevere even after many struggles.

"After visiting and worship-

tinued prosperity of India." Shah posted on X on Saturday.

During his brief halt at the Rajkot International Airport on Friday evening before heading for Somnath, Shah took stock of the action taken following the devastating fire at TRP Game Zone which claimed 27 lives last Sat-

The Gandhinagar MP instructed the district collector to take necessary preventative measures to check the spread of cholera in Gandhinagar area, stated a BJP release.

"Shah also gave necessary directions for taking precautionary measures in the cholera-affected areas of Gandhinagar to control the epidemic and ensure the affected people receive proper treatment," it said. (PTI)

Visually impaired nonagenarian votes for first time

SAHIBGANJ (JHARKHAND), June 1: Ninety-two-year-old Khalil Ansari, who is visually impaired, cast his vote for the first time on Saturday during the Lok Sabha elections in Jharkhand's Sahibganj district, an official said. Ansari, from Badkhori village in Rajmahal

parliamentary constituency, voted at booth number 10 of the Upgraded Government Middle School in Mandro, the official added. Ansari's name was initially missing from the electoral rolls, a fact discovered by Jharkhand

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) K Ravi Kumar

during inspections of Mandro polling stations on April 5. When Kumar asked Ansari if he was a registered voter, the 92-year-old replied that he had never voted because his name was not on the voter list. Kumar then directed officials to

immediately add Ansari's name in the list. After casting his vote, Ansari said, "I cast my vote for the first time and I am happy.'

Maharashtra CM has assured thorough probe in Porsche crash case, says deceased's father



JABALPUR, June 1: Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde has expressed grief over the May 19 Pune Porsche crash and promised the guilty will not be spared, the father of IT professional Ashwini Koshta, who was killed in the incident, said here on Saturday.

An officer on special duty sent by the Maharashtra government to Jabalpur facilitated the talk over phone with CM Shinde, Ashwini's father Suresh Koshta told PTI. Ashwini Koshta and Anish Awadhiya, both 24-year-old IT professionals hailing from Madhya Pradesh, died on May 19 after a speeding Porsche, allegedly driven by a 17-yearold drunk boy, hit their motorcycle in Kalyani Nagar in Pune.

The subsequent revelations of a massive cover-up to ensure the minor gets off the hook allegedly involving his kin as well as doctors from a state-run hospital in Maharashtra's second largest city provoked national outrage. "CM Shinde expressed grief over the incident. He assured us of a thorough investigation in the case. He asserted the the culprits will not be spared. The Maharashtra CM told me he will monitor the case and review it daily," Suresh Koshta informed. Expressing shock at the alleged involvement of the mother of the juvenile in the conspiracy to change the blood samples collected to test alcohol consumption, Suresh Koshta said he was extremely pained to see so many departments indulge in corrupt practices to cover up the matter. "It is unimaginable. No one can be trusted these days," rued Ashwini's distraught mother Mamta Koshta.

Suresh Koshta said he had sought the intervention of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav to ensure the probe into the case in the neighbouring state is carried out in a fair and transparent manner. On Saturday, the juvenile's mother was arrested after the Pune police's probe confirmed that his blood samples were replaced with hers. During the day, the Pune police spoke to the minor for about an hour in their presence of his mother in the observation home where he is lodged till June 5. Pune police have so far arrested the minor's father, grandfather, two doctors and a staffer of governmentrun Sassoon Hospital for alleged involvement in various aspects of the case, ranging from swapping of blood samples to confining and threatening a driver to take blame for the crash. (PTI)

killed in police encounter in Mathura LUCKNOW/MATHURA (UP),

History-sheeter

June 1: A history-sheeter carrying a reward of Rs 50,000 died on Saturday after an encounter with the police, officials said. According to a statement issued,

Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police Prashant Kumar said that Manoj alias Uttam had multiple rape and robbery cases registered against him. On the intervening night of May

30 and May 31, in a joint operation between the Special Operations Group and the police, Manoj was arrested following an encounter during which he sustained a bullet injury on his leg, police said.

He was rushed to a district hospital in Mathura for treatment. However, around 11 am when Manoj was being taken for an Xray, he managed to escape from police custody, Senior Superintendent of Police Mathura Shailesh Pandey

Subsequently, a case under sections 223 (escape from confinement or custody negligently suffered by public servant) and 224 (resistance or obstruction by a person to his lawful apprehension) of the Indian Penal Code were registered against him, the SSP said.

Meanwhile, Inspector General Agra Range Deepak Kumar announced a reward of ₹ 50,000 for Manoi's arrest.

Police teams were formed and around 3.20 pm, Manoj was found near Lauhlari Mata Mandir Tiraha. Upon seeing the police, he began firing at them. The officials retaliated in self-defence and he suffered another injury

He was rushed to a Community Health Centre in Chhata where the doctors declared him dead on arrival, the DGP said.

A country-made pistol, ammunition and a motorcycle has been recovered from him, police said. (PTI)

Landslides, waterlogging in Kerala as Southwest monsoon intensifies; IMD sounds red alert

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, June 1: With Southwest monsoon intensifying in Kerala two days after its onset, heavy downpours lashed several parts of the state, especially in south and central districts triggering landslides, uprooting trees and waterlogging.

Continuous rains for hours caused widespread destruction in the high-range areas of Kottayam and Idukki districts, while intense rains caused severe waterlogging and traffic snarls in the low-lying areas of Thrissur district. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) up-

dated its weather warning, placing the central district of Thrissur and northern districts of Malappuram and Kozhikode under red alert on Saturday. An orange alert was sounded in Idukki, Palakkad and Wayanad and a yellow alert was issued in six dis-

A red alert indicates heavy to extremely heavy rain of over 20 cm in 24 hours, while an orange alert means very heavy rain of 11 cm to 20 cm, and a yellow alert means heavy rainfall between 6 cm and 11 cm.

Landslides and trees getting uprooted were reported at Poochapra and Kolappra areas, located in the interior of the hill district Idukki on Friday night.

Some houses and vehicles were damaged in the landslip, but no casualties were reported, locals said. Crops were destroyed and interior roads, used by

local families, were damaged as huge granite boulders

fell down from the hill and blocked the pathways. 'We faced such a horror... Following the continuous heavy rains, a landslide happened. Granite boulders, huge stones and sand gushed down...We felt as if the



trees were coming down by flying," a villager recalled

his horrendous experience A family, who had been living in the hilly area, had a narrow escape as rocks fell upon their house. They were later shifted to a safer place, local people added. Traffic restrictions were put in place along Thodupuzha-Puliyanmala state highway due to the

possible threat of mudslides. As five shutters of the Malankara Dam in Idukki were raised, district authorities advised those living on the banks of Thodupuzha and Muvattupuzha rivers to exercise caution.

With various parts of the neighbouring Kottayam district receiving downpour, people living close to Meenachal and Manimala rivers were also urged to remain vigilant.

Incessant rains that battered several parts of Kottayam for hours since Friday evening caused waterlogging and traffic snarls. While Vadavathoor region received 100 mm rainfall on Friday night, the urban areas of Kottayam got 99 mm, authorities said. Though the port city of Kochi received moderate

rains, Aluva region of Ernakulam experienced intense rains since May 31 night. The central district of Thrissur has been experienc-

ing intense downpours since this morning, leaving peo-

ple stranded at bus stops and railway stations in large numbers. Waterlogging and traffic snarls were also reported in various parts of the city. As per the latest radar imagery, a thunderstorm accompanied by moderate to intense spell of rainfall with winds gusting upto 40 kmph is expected in Thrissur,

the met department said. Authorities have urged people to be alert as inundation on major roads and poor visibility of vehicles may lead to traffic congestion. They also warned about flooding in many parts of low-lying areas and river banks. Non-essential movements may be restricted and people should remain at safe places, they added.

Southwest monsoon made an early onset over Kerala and northeastern region on May 30, setting the stage for the four-month rainy season crucial for India's agriculture-based economy.

According to weather scientists, cyclone Remal, which ripped through West Bengal and Bangladesh on Sunday, had pulled the monsoonal flow to the Bay of Bengal, which could be one of the reasons for the early onset over the northeast and Kerala. (PTI)

Would like to do something like 'Darlings', 'Badhaai Ho': Actorproducer Khushbu Sundar

MUMBAI, June 1: Actor-politician Khushbu Sundar, who has produced Tamil horror comedy "Aranmanai 4", wants to explore stories like "Darlings", "Badhaai Ho" and "Crew" as a producer.

"Aranmanai 4", starring Tamannah Bhatia and Raashii Khanna in the lead, has earned around ₹100 crore at the box office. Sundar believes such movies still lack the multiplex audience in south but those are the stories she wants to explore in future. "I am not the kind of a producer who would say that I am making only women centric films. I would love to do something like 'Darlings', 'Badhaai Ho', 'Crew'. But unfortunately, we still don't have that kind of a multiplex audience in south India as yet.

"That's going to take some time. When 'Badhaai Ho' was made in Tamil, it bombed. It didn't do well," Sundar told

PTI in an interview.

"Aranmanai 4" is directed by her filmmaker husband Sunder C, a noted name in Tamil cinema, who also directed the previous installments of the film.

Sunder, who debuted as a child artist with Hindi film "The Burning Train" and featured in movies such as "Meri Jung" and "Deewana Mujhsa Nahi", shifted base to south and found widespread fame by starring in "Dharmathin Thalaivan", "Vettri Vizhaa", "Chinna Thambi", "Pandithurai" and "Annaatthe"

As a producer, she said, her sensibilities are "very commercial" but she is careful about the way women are represented in these stories

"You don't have to show a woman in a bad light. You don't need to do something on screen which says, 'Okay, it's fine for a woman to be in an abusive relationship and say it's part of your life'. No, I'm not going to advocate that. But otherwise, I love making commercial films. I'm not here to make a very preachy film," she said. Having spent close to four decades in the film industry, Sunder is happy to note the shift that's taking place when it comes to women coming forward and backing commercially viable projects.

"There is a huge shift in the kind of films being made. Yes, we still do have heroes where you think that the films are being sold only on a hero's name and heroine can play a very miniscule role in the film. "But it's brilliant to see that women can carry the film entirely on their shoulders and still give a hit. You don't need to depend on a male counterpart to have a successful film. The content is the basic hero of the film. And I think that shift is brilliant," she added. (PTI)



Gulshan Devaiah, Anurag Kashyap starring in Disney+ Hotstar's new action drama series 'Bad Cop'

MUMBAI, June 1: Streaming service Disney+ Hotstar on Friday announced Bad Cop, an action drama series headlined by actor Gulshan Devaiah and filmmaker Anurag Kashyap.

Described as a classic cop vs villain story with a lot of twists and turns, the show is the first fictional series from Fremantle India, known for producing reality shows such as India's Got Talent and Indian Idol. Bad Cop is directed by Aditya Datt and stars Devaiah as Karan, a fierce cop, trying to chase down Kazbe (Kashyap), a villain more powerful and deadly than him and simultaneously managing his personal relationships. "I have created a lot of characters that are gore, quirky, dark and many more things but believe it or not it was difficult for me to be one. Kazbe is someone who doesn't think too much before doing anything, he just does it. He is a dreadful, eccentric, nefarious and a quintessential villain." "I had to bite into the intricacies of this character and make it my own. Being directed by Aditya Datt was a great experience and collaborating with partners like Disney+ Hotstar and Fremantle India was incredible," Kashyap said in a statement. Devaiah said the new show is an "out-and-out entertainer" that gave him a chance to play a "massy-entertaining kind of cop". "The action was a bit tough, particularly the running, which challenged me because I'm not used to doing action and I'm not physically built for it. Overall it was fun working with Fremantle India and Disney+ Hotstar. Moreover, it was enjoyable to perform with Anurag, who had only directed and produced my films earlier, but it was fun to do scenes and action with him." (PTI)



Chris circling upcoming 'Transformers' and 'G.I. Joe' crossover movie

LOS ANGELES, June 1: Hollywood actor Chris Hemsworth is in talks to topline the upcoming crossover movie between blockbuster franchises "Transformers" and "G.I.

Hemsworth, 40, will join the yet untitled movie, which will mark his second outing in the "Transformers" series. He has lent his voice to the character of Optimus Prime for the upcoming animated movie "Transformers One', which will come out in September thus year.

The latest movie will be a follow-up to the franchise's seventh installment 'Transformers: Rise of the Beasts' (2023), starring Anthony Ramos and Dominique Fishback in lead roles.

The movie had ended with a post-credit scene in which Ramos' Noah Diaz meets a shady government operative named Agent Burke, who is revealed to be working for the G.I. Joes, a special team of commandos.

This would be the first time when the two action franchises will come together on the big screen.

The new movie will be produced by Lorenzo Di Bonaventura, Mark Vahradian, Michael Bay, Tom DeSanto & Don Murphy with Steven Spielberg and Hasbro Entertainment as executive producers.

Hemsworth currently stars in George Miller's 'Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga' alongside Anya Taylor-Joy and Tom Burke. (PTI)

Sargun Mehta credits Ekta Kapoor for opening doors for women producers in TV

MUMBAI, June 1: Actor Sargun Mehta says producer Ekta Kapoor paved the way for more women filmmakers to come up in the Indian television industry and back content which resonates with them.

Mehta, who has made a name for herself as an actor in TV and Punjabi movie industry, has a host of projects lined up as a producer including TV show, "Badal Pe Paon Hai". "In TV, Ekta Kapoor

"In TV, Ekta Kapoor cleared the way for everyone. She left no stone unturned to make sure that we didn't have that hassle of being told, 'How will you do it (produce a show)?'. She already did it so much that nobody could question (a woman producer).

"In Punjabi movies, they were not used to the idea of us producing, not that they mocked me, they underestimated me. They didn't think that I'll pull it (films) off the way I did," the actor told PTI in an interview.

After producing Punjabi films and TV shows like "Kala Shah Kala", "Jhalle", "Udaariyaan", and "Junooniyat", among others, Mehta said she has realised acting is a far easier job than producing.

"I realised now that production is a thankless job. As an artist when I come on set, I feel, 'I've a lot of work to do', but there are others like the unit (crew), the producer and creative team who have been working on it for months or years.

"Sometimes when artists crib, I'm like, 'You've a fun job to do, do not crib'. I'm not saying it is an easy job, it's difficult to be an artist but the other job can override your perception of what one is doing. I do it (producing) because I like to have control over what I'm making."

Mehta said she is happy to have started her acting journey in the Punjabi movie industry, which has grown by leaps and bounds over the years.

film debut in 2015 with Punjabi romantic-comedy, "Angrej", which emerged as one of the highest grossing films of the year. Some of her other notable work includes "Love Punjab", "Lahoriye", "Qismat", "Moh", and "Jatt Nuu Chudail Takri". (PTI)

She made her feature

Pratik Gandhi decodes creating 'the lion' tick for his 'Madgaon Express' character with Kunal Kemmu

NEW DELHI, June 1: Actor Pratik Gandhi says writer-director Kunal Kemmu had a clear idea about how he wanted to shape "Madgaon Express", in which he plays a meek mama's boy who transforms into a confident person and starts behaving like a lion after accidentally consuming

The road trip drama marks Kemmu's directorial debut and was a box office and critical success. Also starring Divyenndu and Avinash Tiwari, the story revolves around three childhood friends whose long-planned Goa trip goes awry when they cross paths with drug lords and gun-toting goons.

Gandhi, a Gujarati theatre and film star who shot to national fame with "Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story", said Kemmu added the lion's roar in the post-production stage to enhance the impact.

"Kunal had a crystal clear idea in his mind that 'Let's approach it this way'... The lion thing was already there in the lines (dialogues), 'I feel like a lion, I feel like a man!' Kunal added the entire roar of the lion in post production. I'm sure in post also, he must have tried multiple things and then decided that this one works best," Gandhi told PTI in an interview.

The 44-year-old actor said every time he turned into his 'lion-like persona', the cast and crew would go crazy on the sets.

But that alarmed Gandhi as he was worried

"...It has to translate well in a bigger scheme of things. You have to immediately become objective and think that even if I have to do it 10 times, it (the joke) must land," said Gandhi, who has roots

whether the jokes would have a similar impact in

in theatre

Next up for the actor is an intense drama in "Dedh Bigha Zameen", which will stream on JioCinema Premium from Friday. In the north India-set film, Gandhi plays Anil Singh, a com-

mon man who is trying to sell his father's land to rrange dowry for his oon-to-be-married sister "I have loved the layers of this character and the simplicity of the story. The kinds of situations he faces, there are so many parallels in life and the people we see around us.' The film, written and directed by Pulkit, was supposed to be released before Madgaon

Express", he

Accord-

ing to the

actor,

guage

and dic-

lan-

added.

played a huge role in creating Anil Singh.

"He comes from the Hindi heartland. Apart from that, the kind of emotions, the life he leads, the difficult situations he is facing, is all somewhere telling us about the region and story. Creating Anil Singh in flesh and blood, from paper to screen,
was an interesting journey

od, from paper to screen,
was an interesting journey
for me as an actor."

The actor had back to
back success in "Madgaon
Express" and "Do Aur Do
Pyaar", where he was paired
opposite Vidya Balan. The
urban relationship comedy
revolved around a
cheating
couple
that rediscovers
love
in

Gandhi said he is currently in a happy space thanks

way his

charac-

ters

have been received by the audiences.

"This is something I always wanted, which is to explore different genres, styles of storytelling and characters. I'm happy I'm getting to do this. That's the reason I could put myself out there for the audience to judge and to even experiment... I'm happy it has been received well, translated well. "I would love to continue this way. I don't want to put myself in one particular zone or box where

people can feel that 'If this has Pratik, then it would be this way'. I'd rather want to be in a space where people feel 'We don't know what to expect when it's him'. That's a happy place, the most comfortable place for an actor to be in," he

added.

Gandhi said he caught the acting bug quite early.

"I stepped on stage when I was

in Class 4... As far as I remember, there was no particular day when I decided to be an actor. It has become a second nature. Growing up, I loved creating characters, telling stories and having a lot of fun with different aspects and mediums of storytelling and I still want to keep exploring these formats."

Asked if there are any projects in the works in the south film industry, the actor said nothing as yet but hopefully in future.

yet but hopefully in future.

"I am really fascinated by the grammar of performance in different languages and regions. India is a diverse country. Being an Indian, if I don't do this here, then what's the point?" he said. (PTI)

Ronaldo in tears after his Al-Nassr lose Saudi King's Cup final on penalties

JEDDAH, June 1: Cristiano Ronaldo left the field in tears after his Al-Nassr team lost the King's Cup final to Al-Hilal and ended a second successive season in Saudi Arabia without any major silverware on Friday.

Al-Hilal won a penalty shootout 5-4 to decide a final that finished 1-1 after extra time in Jeddah. Ronaldo, who signed for Al-Nassr in December 2022, fell to the ground in despair and was consoled by teammates at King Abdullah Sports City.

The loss came just four days after the end of a Saudi Pro League season in which Al-Nassr finished second, 14 points behind Al-Hilal. There was some consolation then as Ronaldo scored twice to set a new league record of 35 goals in a season. There was no such comfort this time at the end of a tempestuous encounter that saw two goals and three red cards.

Aleksandar Mitrovic headed Al-Hilal ahead after seven minutes. It got worse for Al-Nassr early in the second half when goalkeeper David Ospina, formerly of Arsenal and Napoli, was sent off for handling the ball outside the area.

Al-Hilal was also reduced to 10 men after 86 minutes when Ali Al-Bulaihi was red-carded for an apparent headbutt on Sami Al-Najei.

Seconds later, Ayman Yahya headed Al-Nassr level.

Al-Hilal had another defender sent off in the 91st minute after Kalidou Koulibaly, signed from Chelsea last summer, received a second yellow card.



shootout. Ruben Neves missed Hilal's first attempt as did for-There were no goals in extra mer Manchester United de-

Ronaldo, who earlier hit the post with a spectacular overhead

hero of Morocco's march to the semifinals of the 2022 World kick, converted his penalty but Cup, saved twice, the first from

Nemer. The saves gave Hilal an 11th King's Cup triumph while Ronaldo and his team will have

Norway Chess: Vaishali to take on Tingjie Lei

STAVANGER (NORWAY), time control can change the stand-June 1: In sole lead with a comfortable advantage of 2.5 points, Indian Grandmaster R Vaishali will take on Tingjie Lei of China in the fifth round of the Norway chess tournament here.

Having amassed 8.5 points from the first four rounds, Vaishali is ahead of women's world champion Wenjun Ju of China and Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine in the USD 1,61,000 prize money tour-

With each win under Classical time control worth three points

here, Vaishali has largely benefitted victories over compatriot Koneru Humpy and veteran Pia

Her first-round loss, under the Armageddon time control, to Ju did not hamper spirits as Vaishali bounced

back quite easily. Ju has scored four victories under Armageddon after drawing four games under Classical time control. Each win under Armageddon is worth 1.5 points and the Chinese as of now seems invincible. Humpy has not been at her best and her high point so far has been a win over Teingjie

The loss against Vaishali was quite demoralising and against Muzychuk also a similar result did not do much good.

Yet, knowing her comeback skills, Humpy cannot be ruled out

ings upside down.

In the men's section, Praggnanadhaa was the star pick after his first ever victory over world number one Magnus Carlsen of Norway in the third round but a subsequent loss to American Hikaru Nakamura left him fourth in the six-player list.

A loss and a win under Armageddon and a loss and a win under Classical has been the report card of the Indian talent thus far and he will need to be better in order to have a chance to win this

> leads the men's section with seven points and is half a point ahead of Frenchman Firouzja Alireza. Carlsen is on six

event. Nakamura

points, half a point ahead of Praggnanandhaa who in turn enjoys a half point lead over his next-round op-

ponent Fabiano Caruana. Surprisingly bottom-placed here is reigning world champion Ding Liren of China who is clearly not in his best form here.

Pairings round 5: Men: R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 5.5) vs Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 5); Ding Liren (Chn, 2.5) vs Hikaru Nakamura (Usa, 7); Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 6) vs Firouzja Alireza (Fra, 6.5).

Women: R Vaishali (Ind, 8.5) vs Tingjie Lei (Chn, 5); Wenjun Ju (Chn, 6) vs Koneru Humpy (Ind, 3); Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 6) vs

revealed at toss, boundaries should be bigger: Ganguly

India captain and Delhi Capitals director of cricket Sourav Ganguly is in favour of continuing with the impact-player rule in IPL, but wants teams to decide their picks at the toss.

The impact-player rule has become a hot topic of debate following the recently-concluded edition of IPL where scores in excess of 250 runs were notched up

Ganguly added he wants the boundaries to be pushed further back in upcoming IPL editions.

"I like the impact player rule. My only thing with IPL is that I just want the grounds to be a bit bigger. The fences should go a little behind," Ganguly told the media on the sidelines of the International Procurement and Supply Chain Conference organised by the Blue Ocean Corporation.

"It is a great tournament. The only thing you can do with the impact player is decide before the toss, so it's a bit of skill there.

"So, have the impact player re-

plan. But, I am all for the impact player," the former India skipper

Ganguly defended Prithvi Shaw, who had a below-par IPL season this year, saying he is still young and learning the tricks of the shortest format.

"He (Prithvi Shaw) is a young kid. He is just 23. He is still learning how to play T20 cricket. He is a very fine talent and he will get better. Sometimes, we expect too much too early from everyone and I am sure Prithvi, with the skills he has, he will do

well," he added. Ganguly said wicketkeeperbatter Rishabh Pant had started playing like the cricketer he was before the car crash in 2022.

"He was superb for us (DC) in the IPL. I was so happy to see the way he came back, because I have always said that he is a special player," Ganguly said.

"Even earlier, I have said that he is exceptional. You don't want such talent to be lost for such disastrous reasons (accident)." (PTI)

IPL's impact player must be I've learned you can't cling on to safety of your contracts: Agar

tralian left-arm spinner Ashton Agar feels it's time for him to look beyond the safety net of playing for the country and explore new opportunities in the ever-evolving world of franchise cricket, quite like his country-mates who have made it big in leagues across the

Agar, 30, is a member of the Australian squad for the T20 World Cup in the Americas and is in the mix to don the green and yellow jersey as the tournament progresses.

Agar's more than decadelong career has seen him play five Tests and nearly 70 limited-over games, with the most memorable being an amazing 98 by a No. 11 player during the 2013 Ashes series.

But the cricketer has never ventured out of the Australian cricketing setup even as the likes of David Warner, Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and Glen Maxewll, among others, have become household names in franchise cricket, especially the IPL.

you can't cling on to safety in vour skills and then your contracts," Agar said in Unplayable Podcast cricket.com.au.

"I've made that mistake before and your cricket skills fall away, if you're clinging on to safety and security," Agar, who played the T20 World Cup warm-up game against Namibia earlier this week,

Agar has played only three international games across formats over the past one-and-ahalf-years, none of them a

T20I.

He has declined deals with Western Australia or Australia for the first time since he moved from Melbourne to Perth in 2012, making it clear he is looking for greener pastures elsewhere.

"I think a lot of people are

in the coming years. We'll see it a lot more next year, more the year after -- and that's just going to be the way cricket works.

"Because there's so much T20 cricket around the world, guys aren't going to want to take contracts that lock them into certain things," he added.

Agar, who was part of the Australian squads in the 2021 and 2022 T20 World Cups held in the UAE and Australia respectively but played just one match in each tournament, hopes to be a part of playing XI in the T20 World Cup and bowl alongside good friend Adam Zampa.

"It had been really positive (messaging from national selectors) the whole time that if we were going to take two spinners I was going to go,"

"So I was preparing for most of the summer with this in the back of my mind. That's nice because you can wrap your head around it mentally a little earlier and prepare," added Agar. (PTI)

Delhi joins Chennai and Singapore in race to host chess World Championship

NEW DELHI, June 1: Delhi pore in the race to host the World Championship match between D. Gukesh and China's Ding Liren after the All India Chess Federation backed the national capital's bid while accusing the Tamil Nadu government of acting unilaterally by pushing the southern city's name.

The International Chess Federation (FIDE) CEO Emil Sutovsky on Saturday said all three cities have submitted their bids and they "meet the crite-

Sutovsky added Chennai was the first to bid for the much-anticipated match in November-December this year, while the New Delhi bid came in last.

"Three bids to host the FIDE World Championship Match-2024. Chennai, Singapore, New Delhi (in order of submission). All meet the criteria," Sutovsky wrote on 'X'.

The international chess body's council will discuss the issue and announce the winner later

'Next week FIDE Council to discuss it -- representatives of the bidders invited to share details and take questions. Final decision in June," Sutovsky added. The Chennai bid was made by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu while the All Indian Chess Federation bid for New Delhi.

While FIDE doesn't stop any government from bidding for the prestigious event, it is unusual for two entities from the same country to bid for the tournament. AICF president Nitin Narang told PTI that the national chess federation has bid for New Delhi as the venue for the title showdown and that a no-objection certificate (NOC) had been taken from the Indian government. He, however, said that the Tamil Nadu government had not consulted the AICF before sending its bid to FIDE.

"The Tamil Nadu government never consulted the AICF or had any conversation with us about it (Chennai as venue), nor do they have the NOC (from the Government of India) for it," said Narang. (PTI)

Simone Biles, looking perhaps better than ever, surges to early lead at US C'ships

FORT WORTH (TEXAS), around her at ease in a way that June 1: It's not the skills, otherworldly though they may be, that Simone Biles has displayed so regularly for so long that stand out so much anymore, at least not to the ones who know her best.

The question with the gymnastics superstar — the only question really with a third trip to the Olympics in the offing — isn't about talent or ability but desire.

She answered that one as best she could over four peerless routines at the U.S. Championships on Friday night, combining staggering difficulty with breathtaking execution to open up a massive lead and put herself on the cusp of a ninth national title.

Biles posted an all-around total 60.450 — the highest in the world during the current Olympic quad — and in some ways looked as good as ever during a reign atop the sport that's essentially at 11 vears and counting.

Yet just as important as what Biles is doing is the way she is doing it. There is a sort of professional lightness to her at the moment, and that has put those was hard to find ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. "I really feel like she is happy

to be here," said Biles' longtime coach, Cecile Landi. "I know she is ready to be done but I think she's really enjoying it and appreciating every meet she gets to do.' It certainly looks like it.

At 27, married, with a seemingly bottomless supply of medals stashed somewhere in her Houston-area home, Biles could have chosen to get on with the rest of her life. Instead, she thrusted herself into the sometimes unyielding crucible that being in the Olympic spotlight provides. She seems ready for what lies ahead after registering the top score in every event, even on the uneven bars, long her least favorite.

"She needs to feel confident and this time she feels confident," Landi said. "Competing well, it builds (the confidence) up for her." The seven-time Olympic medalist and six-time world champion began her night with her Yurchenko Double Pike vault, clasping her hands to her knees as somersaulted backward — twice - before landing with so much force her momentum carried her back a step.

No matter, her score of 15.8 included a 9.4 for execution, a massive number for a vault so difficult no woman other than Biles has ever attempted in a major competition and only a select number of men have even tried it. Yet Biles has mastered it to the point that it's become just part of the show, a show that remains — when she is at her best — unparalleled in the sport, and arguably the Olympic movement.

Barring injury, she's all but assured of a room in the Olympic Village in late July. The question of which other four women will join her, however, likely won't be sorted out until the waning moments of the Olympic Trials in Minneapolis at the end of June.

Shilese Jones, the second-best all-around gymnast in the U.S. behind Biles, pulled out of the championships Friday afternoon, citing a shoulder injury. Jones plans to petition into Olympic Trials, a petition that will almost certainly be

If healthy, Jones is as close to a lock as there is. After her, however, plenty of intrigue abounds in arguably the deepest field in at least a generation.

Blakely was just 16 when she unexpectedly became eligible for pandemic-delayed 2020 Olympics. That run ended with a ruptured elbow at the Olympic Trials. The 19-year-old believes she's in a better place now and it showed. She capped her night with a 15.000 on vault, a score that left her "shocked and excited." It also boosted Blakely's total to 57.050, well above the goal of 56 that she typed into the notes section of her phone before-

Kayla DiCello, who left the University of Florida to return to Maryland and convinced elite coach Kelli Hill to come out of retirement in the process in pursuit of the Olympics, rebounded from a shaky performance at the U.S. Classic two weeks ago is at 56.850 to put herself in position to reach the podium at the end of Sunday's finals. (AP)





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If he has applied, Gambhir would be good coach for India: Ganguly

MUMBAI, June 1: Former India captain Sourav Ganguly on Saturday said Gautam Gambhir would be a "good coach" for the national cricket team if he has applied for the job as his "hunger and passion" was evident in the recently-concluded IPL.

Speaking at the inauguration of the International Procurement and Supply Chain Conference organised by the Blue Ocean Corporation, Ganguly also gave his views on India's chances in the upcoming T20

The former BCCI President said he is in favour of the national team having an Indian coach since there is enough talent in the country.

"I am in favour of an Indian coach because we have enormous talent in our country, enormously high-skilled players who have done wonders for Indian cricket and very rightfully they should be a part of the system," Ganguly said.

On whether the widely perceived frontrunner Gambhir would be suitable for the position, Ganguly had a query of his own

...has he applied? I really don't know because first he has to apply and then only he will get the job...I think (May) 27th was the last date of application," Ganguly said.

"Obviously, BCCI has the right to extend it (the deadline) as well. If he applies and if he wants it, and I say if he applies and if he wants it, he will be a very good candidate,"

The 51-year-old said Gambhir's winning attitude as IPL champion Kolkata Knight Riders' mentor was there for all to see this

"If Gambhir applies — you can see it on



TV — he worked for KKR this year. I was with Delhi (Capitals), you can see the hunger, the passion and the want to win and I will be happy if he applies and if the board decides to give him the job, I think he is a good candidate," Ganguly said.

India's head coach position will fall vacant after Rahul Dravid steps down at the end of the team's T20 World Cup campaign in the Americas.

A few days ago, BCCI secretary Jay Shah also hinted that an Indian coach would be preferred.

"We are focused on identifying individuals who possess a deep understanding of the Indian cricket structure and have risen through the ranks," Shah had said. Ganguly also said India's chances are

"very good" in the T20 World Cup but the team should play with "freedom". The

event, to be jointly hosted by the USA and the West Indies, gets underway on Satur-

..play without fear and just keep hitting. There is enormous talent, (this is) a team which has (Virat) Kohli, Rohit (Sharma), Surya (Suryakumar Yadav), (Rishabh) Pant, (Shivam) Dubey, (Hardik) Pandya, (Ravindra) Jadeja, Axar (Patel), (Jasprit) Bumrah, Sanju (Samson)," he said when asked about India's chances.

"That's why I say everyone is capable of winning it for India and the only way they will do it is (if they) just play with freedom.

"Play with that extra batsman and hit from the first ball, hit till you have to defend (and) play like the last ball," he added. Ganguly backed the pair of Rohit and

Kohli to open for India. "It is Virat and Rohit, both should open. IPL, he is a great player," he said.

The former opener said the drop-in pitches brought from Adelaide in the USA leg of the World Cup should be batting-

"I am very keen to see how the conditions are in the US. (The Nassau County Cricket Stadium is a) new ground, new stadium. I know there have been drop in pitches from Adelaide.

"The ICC has spent a lot of money to bring in the drop-in pitches to America," he

"(The) drop-in pitches are normally very good, very batting friendly. And they don't change much over a period of time because they are different from natural pitches. So we are expecting the pitches to be very good," he added.

Ganguly said India are superior to Pakistan but the arch-rivals will pose a tough challenge in the T20 format when the two sides clash on June 9.

"Our record against Pakistan has been very, very good over a long period of time. In the T20 format, probably Pakistan is more dangerous compared to 50-overs (format). We beat them in Ahmedabad when they came to India and we beat them eas-

"India is superior and if they play well, if they play freely and I keep saying the word 'freely' all the time because (in) the last World Cup in Australia, I don't think we played freely," he said.

"Just put all the cobwebs behind. Don't worry about winning or losing. Don't think about winning the World Cup. Just go and play every game," he added. (PTI)

T20 WC: WI aims for solid start against

young players who have been in all the big leagues for a number of years now," he said.

Nepal, however, have suffered a big blow ahead of the

Gilchrist backs Nepal, Netherlands to upset big teams in T20 WC



BARBADOS, June 1: Legendary Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist believes Nepal and the Netherlands could surprise teams like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Nepal and the Netherlands are clubbed with Bangladesh, South Africa and Sri Lanka in Group D. Gilchrist believes that international exposure gained by the youngsters in Rohit Paudel-led Nepalese team has made them a formidable

As for the Netherlands, Gilchrist observed that they have been always tough customers in ICC events and would like to make the most of the limited opportunities they get to play against big teams.

"I think Nepal would be a team that might be able to fire a shot," Gilchrist told SEN Radio on Saturday.

"They've got a couple of

World Cup as their ace leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane has been ruled out after his US visa application was rejected for a second time.

With the Dutch having upset the Proteas in the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia, Gilchrist felt they definitely would be a tough proposition.

"The Dutch always seem to ruffle a few feathers, they always seem to get under the skin, and they're drawn in the same pool as South Africa again. They nailed them in the T20 World Cup last time in Australia in Adelaide. So, it might be the Dutch," he said.

Citing the example of the USA upsetting Bangladesh 2-1 in a three-match T20 series late last month, Gilchrist said lesserknown cricket-playing nations are always looking at opportunities to beat bigger teams.

"That's in a financial component where they get a little bit of a lick of the ice cream... but also just the experience. With the T20 format, that's the opportunity for these nations to come in and start trying to ruffle a few feathers but also bed down the cricket programs in their countries.

"Have a look at the results of the USA against Bangladesh in the last few weeks, the US have fired a few shots, they've beaten them a few times.

"It's about allowing them to get a platform and a chance to shine. Hopefully that firms up the cricket programs in more nations around the world," felt Gilchrist. Both the teams face each other on Tuesday to begin their campaign in the T20 global showpiece. (PTI)

Karbi Anglong athletes shine in Hyderabad

HT Correspondent
BOKAJAN, June 1: Rumila

Terangpi and Suchen Lekthe, residents of Dillai excelled in the Pan India Masters Games Federation event, held in Hyderabad. Rumila Terangpi competed in 1500 metres race, 800 metres race and 400 metres race and won gold medals in each. Suchen Lekthe competed in Long Jump and 3000 metres walking race events and claimed bronze medals in each. The Pan India Masters Games Federation was held in Hyderabad from May 2 to 24, and five participants from Karbi Anglong won medals.

T20 WC warm-up games: Shanaka grabs 4/23 in Sri Lanka's scrappy win over Ireland

LAUDERHILL (USA), June 1: all-round performance, including bowling figures of 4/23, as former champions Sri Lanka overcame some jittery moments to down Ireland by 41 runs in their T20 World Cup warm-up game here.

Put in to bat at the Central Broward Regional Park Stadium Turf Ground here on Friday, Sri Lanka saw their batting misfire in the initial phases of the game.

They lost half of their side for 82 runs in 11 overs before managing to post a respectable 163/8.

All-rounders Hasaranga (26), Angelo Mathews (32), and Shanaka (23) fired up the proceedings down the order to take them to a competitive total.

In reply, quick-fire knocks from Paul Stirling (21) and George Dockrell (17) were the bright spots in the initial stages of the Irish chase, but former skipper Shanaka swung the momentum with his medium pace bowling as Ireland were bowled out for 122 in 18.2

Sri Lanka will face South Africa in their opening match in New York on Monday, while Ireland will be up against India on Wednesday.

At the Port of Spain in Trinidad, Gulbadin Naib, Rashid Khan and Mujeeb Ur Rahman starred for Afghanistan in a commanding 55run win over Scotland.

Having missed out on batting in the rain-hit warmup game against Oman, Afghanistan made the most of their encounter against Scotland.

Electing to bat, Afghanistan sent all-rounder Naib to open with Rahmanullah Gurbaz and the duo set them off to a blistering start.

Naib struck 20 runs off the second over of the innings, hitting two fours and two sixes against Brandon McMullen and top-scored for the Afghans with a 30-ball 69 (5x4, 6x6) that took the total to 178/8. Azmatullah Omarzai also con-

tributed with a solid 36-ball 48. For Scotland, Chris Sole (3/35) and Bradley Currie (2/26) managed to stem the flow of runs by picking regular wickets. (PTI)

PNG; USA open against Canada GEORGETOWN (GUYANA), June 1: More than eight years after Carlos Brathwaite's four sixes at

Eden Gardens gave them their second T20 world title, a wounded West Indies will look to redeem themselves at home when they begin their campaign in the event's ninth edition by taking on Papua New Guinea, here on Sunday. Brathwaite had slammed Ben

the final over to pull off one of the most astonishing chases that made the West Indies the first team to win the T20 World Cup twice. Their maiden triumph was in 2012. But what followed was years of agony as the team found itself lost

in transition. In 2021, they endured

Stokes for four successive sixes in

four defeats in five games to make a Super 12 exit. Worse was in store in the 2022 edition in Australia when they failed to qualify for the main round after shock defeats to minnows

Scotland and Ireland. It's been 2982 days since the memorable night at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata, something they would be desperate to reclaim especially when the tournament is at

Their two-time T20 World Cup winning skipper Darren Sammy is back as a coach and the Rovman Powell-led side already made its intention clear with a ruthless win over Australia in a warmup match.

But that Australia was a depleted side as only nine players from their squad were available for the match.

Nicolas Pooran will play a pivotal role in the middle-order, but West Indies boast additional firepower with Powell, Andre Russell, Shimron Hetmyer, Sherfane Rutherford, and Romario Shepherd, making them one of the most formidable batting line-ups in the tournament.

Russell has been in exceptional form, both with bat and ball, after aiding Kolkata Knight Riders in clinching their third IPL title re-



West Indies will also be looking to become the first team to win a

T20 World Cup at home. They have replaced the experienced but injured Jason Holder with left-arm fast bowler Obed

McCoy was the leading wickettaker during the West Indies A's recent tour to Nepal, grabbing eight wickets in five matches. Assadollah Vala-led PNG will

make their second appearance after

2021 after sealing their spot via the East Asia-Pacific regional final in Vala is one of 10 players from their 2021 campaign, with that edition's reserve member Jack Gard-

ner picked in the 15-player group this time. Leg-spinning all-rounder CJ Amini will be his deputy. The side boasts no fewer than eight recognised all-rounders, with

both right and left-arm bowling options. Left-arm quick Sema Kamea and Kabua Vagi Morea both enjoyed qualifying action, with the latter taking a hat-trick in the game against the Philippines. Teams:

West Indies: Royman Powell (c), Alzarri Joseph (vc), Johnson Charles, Roston Chase, Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope, Akeal Hosein, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Obed McCoy, Gudakesh Motie, Nicholas Pooran, Andre Russell, Sherfane Rutherford and Romario Shepherd.

Papua New Guinea: Assadollah Vala (c), Alei Nao, Chad Soper, CJ Amini, Hila Vare, Hiri Hiri, Jack Gardner, John Kariko, Kabua Vagi Morea, Kipling Doriga, Lega Siaka, Norman Vanua, Sema Kamea, Sese Bau and Tony Ura.

Match starts: 8pm IST. A team full of expatriates, tournament co-hosts USA, coached by former Australian batter Stuart Law, will promise some surprises when it kicks off the T20 World Cup taking on qualifiers Canada in a battle of debutants.

The USA have proved that they will be no pushovers, having beaten the full-member side Bangladesh 2-1 in the build up to the tournament

They will also have the edge having beaten Canada 4-0 recently. The side will be boosted by former New Zealand player and 2015 World Cup finalist Corey Anderson. The hosts will be led by wicket-keeper batter Monank

Born in Anand, Monank played for his home state at age-group

level before making the US his home in 2016. He was the top-scorer in the

World T20 Americas qualifier 2018 with 208 runs from six innings and made his T20I debut against UAE The team will also feature some

familiar names in former Mumbai and Rajasthan Royals left-arm spinner Harmeet Singh and ex-Delhi and Royal Challengers Bengaluru batter Milind Kumar. They also have Saurabh Ne-

player, Aaron Jones, and opener Steven Taylor, their highest runscorer in international cricket. Tearaway quick Ali Khan is also fit for the tournament, shaking off

a hamstring injury which kept him

travalkar, the most capped USA

out of the Canada series. Batting all-rounder Nitish Kumar, who played 18 T20Is for Canada from 2012 to 2019, has now switched sides and will be seen in the USA jersey. He made his T20I debut for the USA against

Canada in April this year. Left-arm orthodox spinner Saad Bin Zafar brings a wealth of experience to the Canada team, with top-order batter Aaron Johnson and left-arm seamer Kaleem Sana also expected to feature heavily in a side with just four players under the age

Teams: USA: Monank Patel (c), Aaron Jones (vc), Andries Gous, Corey Anderson, Ali Khan, Harmeet Singh, Jessy Singh, Milind Kumar, Nisarg Patel, Nitish Kumar, Noshtush Kenjige, Saurabh Nethralvakar, Shadley Van Schalkwyk, Steven Taylor and Shayan Jahangir.

Canada: Saad Bin Zafar (c), Aaron Johnson, Ravinderpal Singh, Navneet Dhaliwal, Kaleem Sana, Dilon Heyliger, Jeremy Gordon, Nikhil Dutta, Pargat Singh, Nicholas Kirton, Rayyankhan Pathan, Junaid Siddiqui, Dilpreet Bajwa, Shreyas Movva and Rishiv Joshi.

Match starts: 6am IST (June 2).

AFA organises six-day residential football referee exams



HT Bureau

DIPHU, June 1: Assam Football Association (AFA) has organised six days Residential Football Referee Level 6 & 7 Upgrade exams cum seminar at KASA Stadium, Diphu from June 1 to 6. Resource person AIFF Referee Instructor, North East Zone Referee Development Officer, Joychandra Singh; Head of the referee, AFA, Ohiduz Zaman; Referee Instructors Prasand Rabha, Gautam Kalita and Tohid Ullah conducted the referee exams. Assam Footbal Association treasurer cum Instructor Hiren Gogoi; KASA general secretary cum joint secretary, AFA, Dr Pankaj Teron; assistant secretary, AFA, Raju Boro; KASA football secretary, Horen Engti and assistant secretary, Karbi Anglong Sports Association, Prodeep Ronghang were also present during the conduct of referee exams. Altogether 48 referees from districts of Assam participated in the upgrade referee exam.

ONGC donates synthetic court and hydraulic pole to Sivasagar Basketball Association

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, June 1: Attending a felicitation programme organised by the Sivasagar Basketball Association on Tuesday, on the occasion of receipt of the modern synthetic court and hydraulic pole from the ONGC Assam Asset, the Deputy General Manager(CSR) of the Asset and an international basketball player Durgesh Bhatia said, "ONGC is always with the sports organizers, and will continue to support tournaments organized locally or nationally". Amit Kumar Sing, Security Head, ONGC, in his speech said that ONGC has been lending a helping hand with all sports organizations in preparing sports ground ,training players and creating sports environment. Manoj Bhagawati, General Secretary, Sivasagar Sports Association, expressed his gratitude to the ONGC for their contributions to Sivasagar sports.Dr Sabyasachi Mahanta, president, Sivasagar Basketball Association, thanked ONGC Assam Asset for fulfilling a long felt need of the basketball players of the district. The meeting was attended among others by Bedanta Gogoi, Rabin Bora, Madhob Neog and Siladitya Bhattacharjee.

I don't try to over-teach: Bumrah on mentoring India's young pacers

NEW YORK, June 1: Considered a mentor for the new crop of Indian fast bowlers, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah says he never tries to "over-teach" the younger lot and steps in to help only when asked, to avoid burdening them with information.

The 30-year-old Bumrah would be a key player for India in the T20 World Cup, starting here on Saturday and he would also be expected to be a guiding force for India's pace battery, featuring the relatively younger and less experienced Mohammed Siraj and Arshdeep Singh

"You don't try to over-teach. That is something that I have learned." Bumrah told the ICC's official website for the T20 World

"Because whenever people need help, I let them have their own questions... Because you don't want to give too much information," he said.

Bumrah said it is important for youngsters to know their path without being burdened with an overkill of information.

"It's not like they have just been lucky and they land here. So that is what I try to do. I do pass on certain information that I have gained over from my experience,'

"But I don't try to burden them with (over) information. Because that is a part of the journey as well. That you have to find your own ways and solutions," he added.

Bumrah has battled a nagging back injury for the past couple of years and it even kept him out of the 2022 T20 World Cup but he has managed to fight through and enjoyed a brilliant run in the 2023 ODI showpiece.

He snared 20 wickets at an average of 18.65 with an economy of



just about four in that event. The reticent bowler said his focus since coming back has been to simply enjoy his game.

"Because (certain) things will go my way. (Certain) things will not go my way," he said.

"All of these things will be a

realised that I started playing this sport. Because I love this sport. And I will focus on that rather than the end result. "So in that aspect you reduce

your pressure. And you enjoy the

sport. When you focus on those things. Rather than the things you cannot control," he added. Bumrah has 74 T20 International wickets, which puts him third in India's all-time list. He is widely perceived to be the best

tional pacers when it comes to consistently bowling yorkers. Australian great Brett Lee has even gone to the extent of saying that Bumrah is the only pacer in the world who is executing the

among the current lot of interna-

yorker correctly right now. Bumrah said his consistent yorkers are a result of years of

practice "So I played a lot of tennis-ball,

part of my process. So I have just rubber-ball cricket when I was growing up. I used to play a lot with my friends in summer camps," he said.

"... I used to think that this is the

only way to get wickets. Because

I was a fan of fast bowling. I was really fascinated by what I saw on the television. So I tried to replicate that. Is it (tennis-ball cricket) a secret (to bowling yorkers) or not? I don't know," Bumrah won-"But repetition surely is. Be-

cause I have kept this delivery. I still practice it. I keep on practicing it. Because every skill that you develop, you have to practice it and make it stronger. So I think a combination of both would be the answer.'

India are in Group A of the T20 World Cup, along with Pakistan, Ireland, Canada, and the USA. They will begin their campaign against Ireland on June 5. (PTI)

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