

INDIAN CHRONICLE

11 May, 2024 | Saturday | Volume No:12 | Issue No:77

Pages: 8+8

www.indianchronicle.com

Published from : Ranga Reddy (Telangana State)

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Gold prices surge on Akshaya Tritiya in Hyderabad, setting new highs for May

Hyderabad: Gold prices surged in the city on Friday, marking the day of Akshaya Tritiya with the highest rates witnessed in May thus far. The tradition of buying gold on auspicious occasions like Akshaya Tritiya is deeply rooted in Indian culture, believed to usher in prosperity and good fortune.

On Friday, the price of 24-carat gold soared to over a 10-day high, settling at Rs 73,090 per 10 grams. Similarly, the price of 22-carat gold per 10 grams surged to Rs 67,000. This surge comes after a period since April 23 when prices had been below the Rs 73,000 mark, only to rise sharply on the day of Akshaya Tritiya.

CBI registers case against Hyderabad Postal Department officials for bribery

Hyderabad: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has booked a case against three officials from the Postal Department in Hyderabad, including an Assistant Superintendent and two Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS) members, over allegations of soliciting a bribe of Rs 25 lakh for the appointment of ten Contingent Labourers (CT) as MTS. The suspects were identified as Ch. Madhavi, Assistant Superintendent of Posts, B. Surender Kumar, MTS, and B. Trilok Singh, MTS, all affiliated with the Postmaster General's office in the Hyderabad Sorting Division, Headquarters Region.

Congress hates Hindus and Hindu festivals: PM Modi



GNS News Agency, May 10

Mahabubnagar (Telangana): Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that the Congress party not only "hates Hindus and Hindu festivals", but also wants to make Hindus "second-class citizens" in their own country. Addressing a public meeting at Narayanpet in Mahabubnagar Lok Sabha constituency of Telangana, PM Modi launched a scathing attack on Congress, accusing it of trying to divide the country in the name of religion and caste. "Congress hates Hindus and Hindu festivals so much, this is becoming evident every day. The leader who gave tuition to the 'prince' has also said that the Ram temple should not have been built in Ayodhya. He has announced that building the Ram temple and celebrating Ram Navami is anti-India. It's against the Idea of India," said the PM while addressing the huge gathering. "When I go to the temple, they also call it anti-national. Congress wants to make Hindus second-class citizens in their own country. Do these people want to establish Aurangzeb's rule in India? Is this why they are

talking about vote jihad?" he questioned. The Prime Minister mentioned that Congress' real agenda is to appease certain communities for political gains, without considering the welfare of the nation.

"Congress is trying to give reservations based on religion to Muslims instead of Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and Backward Class (BC). People of Telangana know very well how Congress started playing the game of Muslim reservation in united Andhra Pradesh. Now they want to do the same in the whole country. Will you let Congress snatch reservations from SC, ST, and BC? That's why you need to remember -- 'Vanchit Ka Jo Adhikaar Hai, Modi Uska Chaukidar Hai'," he said. He said that the Congress 'prince' who was talking about 'mohabbat ki dukaan' before the elections is now spreading venom in the society. Stating that ongoing elections will determine the country's future, PM Modi said that the voters are aware of the false promises made by Congress and its allies. He also slammed BRS President and former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and present Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for neglecting the Mahabubnagar constituency. "In the last 10 years, the country has progressed significantly. But where did the money sent to Telangana go? This money has become an ATM for corruption, first filling the pockets of BRS, and now Congress is looting Telangana in the same way." "As much as BRS looted over the years, Congress wants to do the same corruption in a few months. By talking about the industry, Congress has opened a fake video manufacturing shop here. Congress has not been ready to move a pen on the Kaleshwaram scam of BRS since it came. Since Congress came, the RR tax has been imposed separately in Telangana. Talks about the RR tax imposed on you are heard till Delhi," added PM Modi.

After Rahul says six guarantees implemented in Telangana, Kharge says five implemented



GNS News Agency, May 10

Hyderabad: The Congress high command appears to be still in confusion or completely ignorant, or worse, have chosen to blatantly lie about the implementation of the party's six guarantees in Telangana. After Rahul Gandhi said women were getting Rs.2,500 every month, that a caste census was conducted in the State and that Rythu Bharosa money had reached farmers, now AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge has said five out of the six guarantees were implemented here.

"One guarantee is still left. Due to the model code of conduct, we could not implement the guarantee," Kharge said at a press conference here on Friday. The free bus travel facility for women, enhancement of Rajiv Arogyasri

insurance, LPG cylinders at Rs.500, free power of 200 units and Indiramma Indlu schemes were launched he said, adding that two installments of Rythu Bandhu were also paid. What he forgot was that most of the above schemes, except Rythu Bandhu, were different components of the same six guarantees. Regarding the damage suffered by farmers due to rains, the State government would take a decision at the earliest on the compensation to be offered, he said, adding that the Congress government would continue for five years in Telangana. After the three phases of elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah were jittery and continue to speak on issues that are irrelevant to elections. They are not talking about their manifesto or seeking votes on the development achieved. Instead they are confined to criticising the Congress, he said.

"Prime Minister Modiji is fascinated with the alphabet 'M'. Mutton, Muslim, Moghul and Mangal sutra, he keeps talking about them. Modiji says Congress will snatch one buffalo out of the two from a household and handover to Muslims. Likewise, he says one acre will be taken away and given to Muslims," Kharge said. Regarding the uncertainty over the Haryana government, the AICC Chief said the Congress high command would not interfere in the matter. A few independent MLAs had withdrawn support to the State government but the issue was left to the State leadership. If they wished, they could form the government or demand for Governor's rule, he said.

SC releases CM Arvind Kejriwal on interim bail till June 1

GNS News Agency, May 10

New Delhi: In a big relief to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Supreme Court on Friday ordered him to be released on interim bail in the excise policy case till June 1. A bench presided over by Justice Sanjiv Khanna said that the AAP supremo will have to surrender on June 2. The Bench, also comprising Justice Dipankar Datta, said that a detailed order containing reasons for the decision will be uploaded later in the evening. On Thursday, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) opposed the grant of interim relief saying that a politician can claim no "special status" higher than that of an ordinary citizen and is as much liable to be arrested and detained for committing offences as any other citizen.

The affidavit filed by ED's Deputy Director stated that there is no principle that justifies giving differential treatment to a politician for campaigning over a farmer or a businessman who wishes to pursue his vocation. No political leader has been granted interim bail for campaigning even though Kejriwal is not the contesting candidate, said the affidavit, adding that even a contesting candidate is not granted interim bail for his own campaigning if he is in custody. The ED contended that around 123 elections have taken place in the last five years and



if interim bail is to be granted for campaigning, no politician can be arrested or sent to judicial custody since elections are all year-round phenomena. In earlier hearings, the top court indicated that it may consider granting interim bail to the AAP leader in view of the ongoing general elections. It said this is an extraordinary situation and it is not that CM Kejriwal is a habitual offender. Kejriwal had moved the apex court against the Delhi High Court's April 10 judgment, which dismissed his plea challenging the ED arrest.

Regional parties will dictate national politics in future: KCR

GNS News Agency, May 10

Hyderabad: Indicating a change of power dynamics and alliance partnerships after the Lok Sabha elections, Leader of Opposition and BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao declared that the era of regional parties supporting the national parties was a thing of the past. Post the Lok Sabha polls, national parties would have to support the alliance of regional parties to form a government at the Centre. Stating a majority of regional parties shared a good rapport and would sit together after the polls when needed to chalk out their future course, he said latest reports indicated that regional parties were going to outperform national parties in this elections. "We will be able to dictate terms," he said in an interview to vernacular news channel 'Sakshi'.

Chandrashekhara Rao said the bubble of NDA and the Modi mania had burst and people understood the hollowness of the BJP. He reminded that not a single sector or a section of the society in the country benefited from the Modi government except for corporates. He held the Prime Minister responsible for toppling numerous opposition-ruled State governments including an attempt to dethrone the BRS government here which was foiled. He said Modi was all talk and no substance. Neither NDA nor the INDIA bloc were in a position to get a clear majority to form the next government. He ruled out the BRS withdrawing its plans for national politics and said the activities would be resumed soon. "It is a temporary break. If not for the Assembly election defeat, we would have contested and easily won 20 MP seats in Maharashtra. We will reorganise all the party committees starting from the village level within a year," he said. When asked whether the Assembly defeat was due to arrogance and poor performance of MLAs, the BRS chief minced no words in stating that he took complete responsibility for the party's defeat. "There could be some anger towards local MLAs, but victory and defeat of the party is my responsibility as the party president. I will not run away from my responsibilities by blaming my party candidates," he asserted. Chandrashekhara Rao said Chief Minister A



Revanth Reddy could not escape from his arrest and imprisonment in the Vote for Note case where he was caught red-handed. He said if Revanth Reddy, who was trying to cosy up with the BJP by referring Modi as 'Bade Bhai', decides to join the BJP, around 30 Congress MLAs were willing to join hands with the BRS. The former Chief Minister said he was aware of his daughter and MLC K Kavitha's arrest in advance. Hence, he told her to be bold as she had done nothing wrong. "She is a political victim and will come out clean soon. I have complete faith in our judiciary," he reiterated, also rubbishing allegations of phonetapping, pointing out that political functionaries had no role to dictate how officials gather intelligence. On the State government's allegations against Medigadda barrage of Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme, he dubbed it a political stunt for votes. He questioned the State government's inaction to repair the damaged piers despite the National Dam Safety Authority finding fault with it for not taking up the repair works. The Congress would suffer for neglecting the Kaleshwaram project in the Lok Sabha elections, he said.

23 held for creating disturbance during KTR's roadshow in Bhainsa



GNS News Agency, May 10

Nirmal: Twenty-three persons were arrested for creating disturbance during BRS working president KT Rama

Rao's roadshow held in Bhainsa on Thursday night. Briefing details of the arrests to media persons on Friday, Superintendent of Police Dr Janaki Sharmila said 23 persons were apprehended for creating ruckus during Rao's show by pelting tomatoes, onions. Some of the accused were involved in other offences including communal clashes reported in the past, she said. Police said the miscreants were being identified and there would be accused. A case was registered under 307 (Attempt to murder), 120 B (criminal conspiracy to commit an offence), 153A (promoting enmity between two groups), 144 (carrying deadly weapon) and 147 (rioting) against some unidentified persons. Some unidentified devotees of Lord Hanuman pelted tomatoes and onions at the publicity vehicle of Rana Rao for allegedly hurting their sentiments when he criticised the use of Lord Ram's name by the BJP for getting votes a fortnight back, resulting in mild tension.

Case of Model Code violation against BJP leader Navneet Rana



GNS News Agency, May 10

Hyderabad: Authorities have registered a case of Model Code violation against Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Navneet Rana for her reported comments against the Congress during an election rally in

Shadnagar. A flying squad team member S Endabeta Krishna Mohan responsible for overseeing election activities in Farooqnagar and Keshampet mandals in Shadnagar lodged a complaint with the police, sources said. In a roadside meeting on May 8 at Shadnagar Chowrasta the BJP MP candidate from Amravati in Maharashtra, Navneet Rana was allegedly said that voting for the Congress party was akin to voting for Pakistan. "This comment was found to be in violation of the model code of conduct, which is in force during elections to ensure fair and free elections," Krishna said in his complaint. Based on the complaint, the Shadnagar police booked a case under sections 171(C) (undue influence in elections), 171(f) (punishment for undue influence or personation at an election), 171(g) (false statement in connection with an election), and section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by a public servant) under the IPC and took up investigation.

'Will always protect reservation for SC, ST and OBC', assures PM Modi

GNS News Agency, May 10

Nandurbar: Assuring that the rights of SC, ST, and OBC communities would be protected under his leadership, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Friday, slammed Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) for trying to "divide and manipulate" reservation policies for its political gains. "No matter how much effort they make, no matter how many lies they spread with anti-national forces, you have Modi's trust and Modi's guarantee. As long as Modi is alive, no one can touch the reservations for SC, ST, OBC. 'Vanchit Ka Jo Adhikaar Hai, Modi Unka Chaukidar

Hai," said PM Modi during his address at a campaign rally for BJP nominee Dr Heena Gavit in tribal-dominated Nandurbar. Targeting Congress over the recent remarks made by its senior leader Sam Pitroda, PM Modi said: "One of Shehzada's gurus living in America has made an extremely unfortunate and racist remark on Indians... Those having complexion like that of Lord Krishna are considered 'African' by the Congress party. That's why they didn't want to accept Droupadi Murmu as the President of the country." "I am not from a royal family like the Congress. I have grown up in poverty. I know how much you have suffered here," added PM Modi.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

India's dietary crisis

INDIA is facing a health crisis, with 56.4 per cent of the total disease burden attributed to unhealthy dietary practices, according to the latest report of the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN). Unhealthy eating habits, including the consumption of processed foods high in salt, sugar and fats, have become alarmingly prevalent, with the proliferation of fast food chains and the easy availability of packaged snacks enabling a culture of convenience at the expense of health. A sedentary lifestyle, along with excessive mobile phone use, has exacerbated the problem, leading to a rise in obesity, diabetes and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The consequences of these dietary trends are staggering. Obesity rates are soaring, with about 25 per cent of the Indians now classified as overweight or obese; children and adolescents are also increasingly falling victim to unhealthy eating habits. The ICMR-NIN guidelines call for a return to traditional, nutrient-rich foods and emphasise the importance of regular physical activity. Consuming fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains while shunning the intake of processed foods is essential to reshaping dietary behaviour. However, concerted efforts are a must to facilitate access to nutritious foods. Policies that promote food security, regulate food advertising and incentivise the production and consumption of healthy foods are needed. Nutrition literacy programmes should be integrated into school curricula so that children focus on their health from an early age. A collective effort from policymakers, healthcare professionals, educators and communities can help combat the problem. By prioritising the promotion of healthy eating habits and addressing the socioeconomic factors driving poor dietary choices, we can stem the tide of NCDs and build a healthier future for all Indians. The time to act is now.

In relief to Maharashtra govt, Bombay HC dismisses pleas against renaming of Aurangabad, Osmanabad cities and districts



GNS News Agency, May 10

In a major relief to the Maharashtra government, the Bombay High Court on Wednesday dismissed a batch of petitions challenging notifications issued by the government officially renaming Aurangabad and Osmanabad cities and revenue areas, including districts, sub-divisions, talukas and villages, as Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar and Dharashiv. A division bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Arif S held that impugned notifications issued by the state government "do not suffer from any illegality" and petitions were dismissed as "bereft of merit". On the night of September 15, 2023, the two districts and revenue areas were officially renamed. The Maharashtra government issued a notification through the revenue department, stating that it had considered suggestions and objections for the renaming of districts and had decided to change the names of sub-divisions, villages, taluka and district levels.

On February 24, 2023, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued a no-objection letter to change the names of Aurangabad and Osmanabad cities, and thereafter, the state government issued a gazette notification to rename them. The petitioners, through senior advocates Yusuf Muchhala, Anil Anturkar, and advocates S S Kazi Satish B Talekar, Madhavi Ayyappan, claimed that re-

spondent government authorities only created/made a show or invited objections and suggestions. In reality, the respondents wanted to consider the objections and suggestions from the people at large and foist their decision on the people, they said. The lawyers argued that the government did not call for objections before issuing the notification regarding the renaming of cities, which was against the procedure. The pleas added that the Constitution had given the nation a secular fabric, and respondents' conduct in renaming the cities, districts, divisions, subdivisions, talukas, and villages having Muslim names is arbitrary and uncalled for. The pleas sought quashing and setting aside the notifications and a stay on their implementation. However, advocate General Birendra Saraf, representing the state government, had submitted that renaming Osmanabad as Dharashiv was celebrated by the "majority people from the city", adding that the move neither undermined the spirit of secularism nor caused any communal rift. The state government, through affidavits in reply, had also denied allegations by the petitioners that the change of names was a politically motivated move aimed at hate-mongering towards a certain community and undermining the spirit of secularism. In June 2022, during the last cabinet meeting of the previous Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, former chief minister Uddhav Thackeray approved the long-pending demand to rename Aurangabad Sambhajanagar and Osmanabad city Dharashiv. After coming to power, the Eknath Shinde-led government had said the Thackeray-led dispensation's decision to rename these places was illegal as it was taken after the governor had asked the coalition government to prove its majority in the state Assembly.

The new government then approved the renaming of the two cities. During the MVA government's last cabinet meeting, Aurangabad was renamed Sambhajanagar only, but the Shinde-Devendra Fadnavis government added the prefix 'Chhatrapati'.

Delhi HC denies nod to 20-year-old to terminate pregnancy, says 'foetus normal...no danger' to woman



GNS News Agency, May 10

The high court said it is open for the woman to approach the AIIMS, New Delhi, for delivery and future course of action, if she wishes to. (File Photo) The high court said it is open for the woman to approach the AIIMS, New Delhi, for delivery and future course of action, if she wishes to. The Delhi High Court has denied permission to a 20-year-old unmarried woman to terminate her pregnancy which is over 27 weeks while observing that the foetus is "normal" and there is "no danger" to the woman to "carry on with the pregnancy".

A single-judge bench of Justice Subramonium Prasad perused an April 25 report by the All India Institute Of Medical Science (AIIMS) medical board constituted to ascertain the condition of the foetus and the woman. "A perusal of the report shows that there is no congenital abnormality in the foetus nor is there any danger to the mother to carry on with the pregnancy which will mandate termination of the foetus. Since the foetus is viable and normal, and there is no danger to the petitioner to carry on with the pregnancy, foeticide would neither be ethical nor legally permissible," the high court said in its May 3 order. "The petitioner would have to be induced for delivering the child and such delivery could be detrimental to the mental and physical health of the newborn since it would be a pre-term delivery. It could also be detrimental to the mother for her future pregnancies," the high court added. It further said that the woman's case also does not fall under the 2018 guidelines as per which medical termination of pregnancy beyond 24 weeks is permitted "only in cases of minor girls who are rape victims or when there are congenital abnormalities in the foetus". The high court said that since the woman's case does not fall under any of the categories, the court is not inclined to accept the woman's prayer of foeticide.

"The petitioner is already seven months pregnant with a healthy and viable foetus. The prayer sought for by the petitioner for a direction for premature termination of pregnancy/delivery of the child cannot be acceded to by this court since the case of the petitioner does not fall within the four corners of the MTP [Medical Termination of Pregnancy] Act and the rules framed thereunder which hold the field," the high court underscored. The high court said it is open for the woman to approach the AIIMS, New Delhi, for delivery and future course of action, if she wishes to, adding that it is sure that the premier institute would render all facilities and advise her regarding her pregnancy. The high court also said if the woman is inclined to put the baby up for adoption, she is at liberty to approach the central government which shall ensure that the process of adoption takes place at the earliest and in a smooth fashion. The high court was hearing a plea by a woman who had said that she was preparing for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and had sought to abort her foetus under the provisions of the MTP Act. She said that on April 16, she felt discomfort in her abdomen and got an ultrasound scan done and it showed she was 27 weeks pregnant, which was beyond the legally permissible limit of 24 weeks. Her counsel argued that carrying the pregnancy would cause grave injury to her "physical and mental health" as she is a student and is "unmarried with no source of income".

Amid low turnout in Baramati, Parth Pawar confident of win, Sule camp not worried

GNS News Agency, May 10

BELYING expectations of a higher turn out in the backdrop of a bitter tug-of-war in the Pawar family, the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency registered a low turnout of 54.58 per cent compared to the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha selections. While NCP led by Ajit Pawar claimed that turnout was heavily loaded in their favour, the NCP led by Sharad Pawar argued that the voters of Baramati have rejected the "guarantees" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and also rejected the Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's attempts to run down his own family members.

In 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Baramati Lok Sabha seat had registered 58 per cent turnout. In the 2019 elections, the seat had registered 61 per cent voting. This time since the battle — between NCP candidate Sunetra Pawar and NCP (S-P) candidate Supriya Sule, both close relatives — had generated a lot of heat and drawn national attention as it involved the prestige of Sharad Pawar and his nephew Ajit Pawar, it was widely anticipated that Baramatikars would come out in droves to choose the leader of their choice. However, it turned out to be an anti-climax as the voting per centage in 2024 polls tailed the ones registered in 2014 and 2019.

"Baramati Lok Sabha seat has registered a voting percentage of which was less than past elections. Except for minor problems with EVMs at a few polling stations, the polling process was peaceful and smooth," Baramati Returning Officer Kavita Dwivedi told this paper. Though the polling started at 7 am and ended at 6 pm, there were long queues outside the polling station even after 6 pm. This forced the polling station to allow those who had reached the polling station to cast their votes till late evening.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar was among the first voters along with his wife Sunetra Pawar and mother Asha Pawar to reach the Katewadi school polling station right at 7 am. By 7.15 am, they had cast their vote. In no time, Ajit Pawar was mobbed by the frenzied media and he also obliged them by giving bytes in his trademark style. There was near stampede situation inside and outside the polling station with the police finding it hard to control the media personnel. NCP (SP) national president Sharad Pawar and Supriya Sule later voted at different pollings stations in Baramati city. While Sule had a tough time fending off the media — which even ignored her pleas to go to the washroom — Sharad Pawar left the polling station without speaking to the media. Pawar who was unwell had taken a day's rest and emerged today to cast his vote in Baramati after many years. He had been voting in Mumbai otherwise.

In the morning session, voting was slow both in city areas of Baramati and even in rural areas. In the first four hours, only 14 per cent voting was registered. In 6 hours, only 27 per cent voting was registered. By 5 pm, 45 per cent voting was registered. The voting actually picked up in the afternoon session despite sweltering heat conditions as the mercury had touched 40 degree Celsius mark. After 4 pm, there were longer queues in city areas as there was sudden rush of voters.

Like the campaigning period, the polling day also witnessed war of words between the two camps. Rohit Pawar, MLA who belongs to Sharad Pawar-led NCP, alleging that money was distributed by NCP to influence voters. He also alleged that money was distributed through PDCC bank till late in the night. Ajit Pawar dismissed all the allegations, saying Rohit Pawar should first get his fact. "He is quite an expert in social media, he can manipulate anything and spread false information. These days, he has no other work, then indulge in such tactics," said the Deputy Chief Minister. The two rival camps had their own take on the low voter turnout in Baramati, each one claimed that it would turn out to be in their favour. Parth Pawar, who planned and executed his mother's campaign but remained away from the media, exuded confidence that the NCP candidate will win. "In five assembly constituencies except Baramati, the voter turn out was very good. Each assembly segment had different polling per centage. Of the 5 Khadakvasla stood out which was as per our expectations." "Stating that it was a 'superb day' for them, Parth said, "We managed our polling booths very well. We had a strong force in place at each polling booths. However, our rivals did not even have the required number of polling agents for the booths." "Disappointed by the turnout in Baramati, Parth said,

Dushyant Chautala announces support to Congress: 'For them to think if it wants to topple BJP govt in Haryana'



GNS News Agency, May 10

A day after three Independent MLAs withdrew support from the Nayab Saini-led BJP government in Haryana and extended support to the Congress, former deputy chief minister and Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) leader Dushyant Chautala said on Wednesday that he would "support Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda" if the latter initiates a move to topple the state government. "The BJP is talking of winning all 10 Lok Sabha seats and one seat of Karnal bypoll. But three MLAs withdrawing support shows how weak the BJP has become. I would also like to tell Leader of Opposition that according to the mathematics of numbers today, if a step is taken to topple this government during elections, I would thoroughly consider supporting him [Hooda] from outside. It is now for Congress to think if it will take a step to topple the BJP government," Chautala said, days before Haryana is set to vote in the Lok Sabha elections on May 25.

"Three MLAs have withdrawn support and two MLAs,

At 20 pc, Sukhbir Badal had poor attendance in Lok Sabha

GNS News Agency, May 10

Sukhbir Singh Badal is the president of Shiromani Akali Dal and son of five-time former Punjab CM late Parkash Singh Badal. He won from Ferozepur parliamentary constituency in 2019 by over 1.98 lakh votes defeating Congress's Sher Singh Ghubaya. The latter was in Akali Dal earlier and had switched to Congress ahead of 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Sukhbir entered politics through Faridkot parliamentary constituency elections in 1998 and subsequently he even became the minister of state of industry for one year in Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. However in 1999 he lost to Congress's Jagmeet Singh Brar from Faridkot despite the fact that SAD-BJP alliance had a government in Punjab. However he remained Rajya Sabha member from 2001-2004 and later he won Faridkot parliamentary elections yet again in 2004. However in 2009, Faridkot constituency was converted into reserved seat and he didn't contest Lok Sabha polls that year and instead made then SAD MLA from Jalalabad, Sher Singh Ghubaya contest from Ferozepur Lok Sabha, as Ghubaya won with a thumping majority, his Jalalabad seat was vacated and this is how Sukhbir entered state politics. He won Jalalabad bypoll in August, 2009 and announced as deputy CM of Punjab. A year before in 2008 he was made the president of the party. Sukhbir won from Jalalabad in 2012 and 2017 as well but in 2019 he again contested Lok Sabha thus leaving his Jalalabad seat. In 2019, SAD won only 2 out of 10 contested seats which were of Sukhbir and his wife Harsimrat Kaur Badal. His party lost the Jalalabad bypoll afterwards in the same year (2019). In 2017, Sukhbir Badal had defeated then AAP president Bhagwant Mann from Jalalabad while in 2022 he himself lost to AAP leader Jagdeep Singh Goldy Kamboj. This time the SAD president hasn't contested Lok Sabha polls and rather is busy campaigning in the state.

The MP was regularly visible in the constituency.

including Manohar Lal Khattar (Lok Sabha candidate from Karnal) and Ranjit Singh (candidate from Hisar), have resigned from the Vidhan Sabha. This makes it five MLAs out of the Vidhan Sabha. It proves that the BJP government has failed to have a simple majority. I demand that the chief minister resign on moral grounds. The three Independents have sent their withdrawal of support to the governor. We shall also urge the governor and even send it in writing to him seeking directions to the state government to prove majority," Chautala added. With MLAs Dharampal Gondher (Nilokheri), Randhir Golan (Pundri) and Sombir Sangwan (Dadri) withdrawing support, the BJP, with 40 MLAs, is tentatively placed in the 88-member Assembly — the majority mark is 45.

In the 2019 Assembly polls, the JJP had won 10 seats and the BJP, 40 seats. Both parties entered into a post-poll alliance and formed a coalition government in Haryana. Two months ago, the BJP broke off ties with the JJP. Talking about his own MLAs deserting the party, Chautala said, "The whip has lots of power. Till the whip is in place, all the party MLAs will have to vote accordingly. We have already issued notice to those who are attending other party events. There is a procedure. We have issued notice to three of our MLAs. None of the three have replied to the notices issued to them by JJP. If their reply is not found satisfactory, we shall write to the Speaker seeking their disqualification." In response to the BJP's assertion that a no-confidence motion cannot be brought in the House within six months, Chautala said, "The no-confidence motion that was moved in the House was against the previous government that ended with the previous government's tenure itself. Now, there is a new government in place. Thus, a new no-confidence motion can be moved."



During floods, he could be seen going on boat to meet the affected villagers in Ferozepur and Fazilka. He held public meetings regularly and many people visit his Badal village house. Ferozepur constituency is close to the international border and seven out of nine assembly constituencies of this Lok Sabha border Pakistan. This constituency has the historic National Martyrs memorial at Hussainiwalla where Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were cremated on the banks of Sutlej river. Hussainiwalla Indo-Pak border in Ferozepur assembly constituency and Sadki indo-pak border in Fazilka assembly constituency are located in this Lok Sabha constituency. Retreat ceremony happens at both the locations on daily basis. Sutlej river passes through this constituency and a network of canals as well. This constituency has remained an Akali bastion since 1998. Rai Sikh community (SC) and Kamboj community (OBC) voters matter a lot in this constituency as together they are close to 6 lakhs. The constituency had 9 assembly constituencies which are Muksar, Malaut, Ferozepur city, Ferozepur rural, Guru-Har-Sahai, Balluana, Abohar, Jalalabad, Fazilka As of now except for Abohar on the rest seats AAP MLAs had won election with a thumping majority in 2022 Vidhan Sabha polls.

Why has AstraZeneca recalled Covid-19 vaccine



GNS News Agency, May 10

New Delhi: In a significant move, pharma giant AstraZeneca has recalled its Covid-19 vaccine, made in collaboration with Oxford University, worldwide, months after admitting in the UK court about its potential rare blood clot side effect. The company voluntarily withdrew its "marketing authorisation" of its Covid vaccine, sold as Covishield in India and Vaxzevria in Europe. It can now no longer be used in the European Union, the Telegraph reported. While the company made the application to withdraw the vaccine on March 5, it came into effect on Tuesday. Credited for saving more than six million lives, AstraZeneca "accepted, in a legal document submitted to the High Court in February, that its Covid vaccine 'can, in very rare cases, cause TTS'," the report said.

Thrombotic Thrombocytopenic Syndrome (TTS) is a rare side effect that can cause people to have blood clots and a low blood platelet count, linked to at least 81 deaths in the UK as well as hundreds of serious injuries. The British-Swedish multinational pharmaceutical is also being sued by more than 50 alleged victims and grieving relatives in a High Court case in the UK. However, AstraZeneca noted that the vaccine is being withdrawn for "commercial reasons" and is "not linked to the court case", and that "the timing was pure coincidence". Because of multiple Covid variants and related-vaccines, "there is a surplus of available updated vaccines. This has led to a decline in demand for Vaxzevria, which is no longer being manufactured or supplied. AstraZeneca has therefore decided to initiate withdrawal of the marketing authorisations for Vaxzevria within Europe," the company said in a statement.

23 districts, 117 assembly constituencies, 13 Lok Sabha seats: The A to Z of Punjab



GNS News Agency, May 10

The nomination process for Punjab's 13 Lok Sabha seats for the elections to be held on June 1 began Tuesday, with 15 candidates filing their papers, including two who have filed their nomination twice. The nomination process will continue till May 14 and the scrutiny of papers will take place on May 15 with the last date for the withdrawal of nominations being May 17. Of the 15 nominations, one each has been filed from Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Khadoor Sahib, Hoshiarpur, Anandpur Sahib, Faridkot and Sangrur Lok Sabha seats, Chief Electoral Officer Sibin C said, adding no candidate has filed nomination papers for the Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Fatehgarh Sahib and Bathinda Lok Sabha seats. The highest number of five nominations have been filed from Ferozepur where two candidates have filled two forms each. Three nominations have been filed from Patiala. Those who filed the nominations include six Independents. As the election juggernaut has set rolling, The Indian Express takes a look at how the 117 Assembly segments and 23 districts of Punjab are divided among the 13 Lok Sabha Seats

A small district Muktsar has four Assembly constituencies - Muktsar, Malaut, Gidderbaha and Lambi. But these four are again divided into three Lok Sabha constituencies. While Muktsar and Malaut are part of Ferozepur parliamentary constituency, Gidderbaha falls in Faridkot Lok Sabha seat and Lambi is part of Bathinda parliamentary constituency. Malerkotla district was formed in June 2020. It has two Assembly constituencies - Malerkotla and Amargarh. But when it comes to general elections, Malerkotla forms a part of Sangrur Lok Sabha constituency, while Amargarh comes under Fatehgarh Sahib Lok Sabha constituency. Sahibzada Ajit Singh (SAS) Nagar district, also more popular as Mohali district, has three Assembly constituencies - Derabassi, SAS Nagar, and Kharar - and they form a part of two Lok Sabha constituencies. While Derabassi falls under Patiala parliamentary constituency, SAS Nagar and Kharar come under Anandpur Sahib Lok Sabha seat.

Altogether Punjab has 23 districts, 117 Assembly seats and 13 Lok Sabha constituencies. Many districts form a part of multiple Lok Sabha constituencies as per the last delimitation (redrawing of boundaries of an Assembly or Lok Sabha constituency based on last census) exercise done in 2002, although it (delimitation) became applicable only from 2009 Lok Sabha polls. This delimitation of constituencies was done on the basis of 2001 Census under the provisions of Delimitation Act,

2002. Ludhiana, Amritsar, and Jalandhar Lok Sabha constituencies have their nine Assembly segments from a single district only, while the rest have either been spread over across two or more districts. While Khadoor Sahib LS constituency's nine Assembly segments are spread out across four Punjab districts (Tarn Taran, Amritsar, Kapurthala, and Ferozepur), similar is the case for Anandpur Sahib (Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr, Rupnagar, and SAS Nagar) and Faridkot (Faridkot, Moga, Bathinda, and Muktsar). The Assembly segments falling under Bathinda parliamentary constituency have been spread out across three districts (Bathinda, Mansa, and Muktsar), so is the case of Hoshiarpur (Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala, and Gurdaspur), Fatehgarh Sahib (Fatehgarh Sahib, Ludhiana, and Malerkotla), Sangrur (Sangrur, Malerkotla, and Barnala), and Ferozepur (Ferozepur, Fazilka, and Muktsar). In 2004, each parliamentary constituency in Punjab had nine Assembly segments, but the Assembly constituencies were subsequently restructured in many districts based on population, area and other parameters.

Interestingly, Khadoor Sahib and Anandpur Sahib are the two Lok Sabha constituencies in Punjab which are not districts per se and so they haven't been named after any districts, unlike the other parliamentary constituencies in the state. Khadoor Sahib is an Assembly constituency in Tarn Taran district of Punjab. This Lok Sabha constituency has nine Assembly segments which are Tarn Taran, Khadoor Sahib, Patti, Khemkaran (all in Tarn Taran district), Baba Bakala, Jandiala (in Amritsar district), Kapurthala, Sultanpur Lodhi (in Kapurthala district), and Zira (in Ferozepur district). So, this Lok Sabha constituency is spread out across four districts of Punjab. In 2004, the total number of Lok Sabha constituencies was 13, but three parliamentary constituencies Tarn Taran, Phillaur, and Ropar were replaced by Khadoor Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib, and Anandpur Sahib, respectively, in 2009 general elections. Speaking to The Indian Express, Muktsar Deputy Commissioner Harpreet Singh Sudan said, "We are rather at an advantage as our district has literally three MPs (from Bathinda, Faridkot, and Ferozepur), so there are more resources for various development works in each constituency." Lambi Assembly segment falls in Muktsar district, but it forms a part of Bathinda parliamentary constituency. Similarly, Gidderbaha Assembly segment comes under Muktsar district, but it forms a part of Faridkot Lok Sabha constituency (SC). Also, two Assembly segments - Muktsar and Malaut - fall under Muktsar district, but they form a part of Ferozepur parliamentary constituency. Patiala Deputy Commissioner Showkat Ahmad Parray said, "Normally, an MP operates through one deputy commissioner when it comes to transfer of funds from one Assembly constituency to another. But when more than one district is part of a Lok Sabha constituency, for instance, take the case of Patiala parliamentary seat wherein SAS Nagar district is also involved because Derabassi Assembly segment (in SAS Nagar district) forms a part of Patiala Lok Sabha constituency - in such a scenario the fund transfer is done from our DC office to another based on the work which has been sanctioned in that area (as per the recommendation of the MP concerned). Otherwise, there are not any major administrative issues because of multiple districts forming a part of one Lok Sabha seat."

Pepper spray can be a deadly weapon, can't be used for self-defence: Karnataka High Court

GNS News Agency, May 10

The Karnataka High Court recently refused to quash a criminal case against the director of a private company and his wife accused of using pepper spray on a man who allegedly attempted to interfere with the petitioners' property. The order was passed on April 22 by a single judge bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna in a petition to quash criminal proceedings against a director of C Krishnaiah Chetty and Company Private Limited and his wife. It came in a case where an injunction was obtained to prevent the director from making changes to restrict movement around the walls and partitions of a disputed property. It was alleged that when the employees of the person who obtained that injunction went to seal the gate of the property with a wall, the director and his wife entered into an altercation with them and used pepper spray against them.

The counsel representing the director and his wife argued the pepper spray was used for self-defence and that a knee injury was sustained for which they registered a criminal complaint. The next day, the complaint alleging the use of pepper spray was registered. The counsel argued that a mala fide complaint should not be investigated. The opposing counsel countered that quashing a case should be done only sparingly, whereas the right of self-defence had been misused by using pepper



spray to injure others. He also argued that pepper spray was within the definition of a deadly weapon under the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The bench said pepper spray would indeed be a dangerous weapon under the IPC. Observing that no prior case had laid down the law about pepper spray being a dangerous weapon in India, the bench noted there was a precedent in America where noxious chemical weapons, including pepper spray, would be considered harmful. The Karnataka High Court bench stated, "(She) could not have used pepper spray as private defence, as prima facie there was no imminent threat or danger caused to her life. Therefore, the case at hand would require investigation in the least".

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Teenage boy places mobile phone in women's toilet of Karnataka's Kasturba Medical College, apprehended



According to the police, the teenager came to the college pretending to be a patient and kept his cell phone in the women's washroom. The minor was apprehended and produced before the Juvenile Justice Board in Mangaluru as per the procedure, said an officer.

GNS News Agency, May 10

The minor was apprehended and produced before the Juvenile Justice Board in Mangaluru as per the procedure, said an officer. (File Photo) The minor was apprehended and produced before the Juvenile Justice Board

in Mangaluru as per the procedure, said an officer. A 17-year-old teenage boy has been apprehended by the police after he allegedly placed a mobile phone in the women's washroom at Kasturba Medical College in Mangaluru on Tuesday, the police said. The security guard of the college discovered the mobile after it started ringing when no one was in the toilet, they added.

According to the police, the teenager came to the college pretending to be a patient and kept his cell phone in the women's washroom. The minor was apprehended and produced before the Juvenile Justice Board in Mangaluru as per the procedure, said an officer. Last year, three students were caught allegedly filming a girl in the toilet at Udipi's Netra Jyothi Institute of Allied Health Sciences. The incident triggered outrage and right-wing Hindu groups and BJP leaders termed it as a ploy by the Muslim students "to trap Hindu girls". However, the CID officials ruled out any communal angle and have filed a charge sheet before an Udupi local court.

The three students were charged with secretly destroying any electronic record, intending to insult the modesty of any woman and criminal conspiracy under various sections of the Indian Penal Code as well as Information Technology Act Section 66E (intentionally or knowingly captures, publishes, or transmits the image of a private area of any person without consent).

'So many without posting, how is there a shortage?': Punjab IAS officer questions govt VRS notice



GNS News Agency, May 10

A day after the Punjab government issued a notice instructing her to resume duty or face disciplinary action, Parampal Kaur Sidhu, a Punjab-cadre IAS officer who joined the BJP in April, said on Wednesday that the notice was a means to "divert attention" and "waste the time of the candidate" ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Sidhu is the BJP candidate from Bathinda. "Ever since the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government has come into power, every month, a few IAS officers remain without postings... even now there are officers (without postings). So how can they justify that there is a shortage of officers? I will send an appropriate reply to the notice... it has been issued to waste the time of the candidate who is busy campaigning and has to file nominations," Sidhu told The Indian Express. A 2011 batch officer, Sidhu, 59, has been involved in a run-in with the AAP government in Punjab since she resigned and sought Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) on April 3, nearly seven months before her retirement. She subsequently joined the BJP

on April 11 and was declared the party candidate from Bathinda on April 16.

However, the Punjab government has refused to accept her resignation. In a post on X after she joined the BJP, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann reminded Sidhu that there was "a procedure to resign" and how her "lifelong earnings could be jeopardised". Sidhu said she had clearly stated her reasons for applying for VRS. "I had mentioned that my mother is unwell and I want to shift to Bathinda to spend time with her. I have already shifted to Bathinda. In addition, I had mentioned that I have some other plans in my life. I did not consider it important to explain each and every thing to them," she said. In April, the Centre intervened with a letter stating that the Government of India, as the recruitment authority, had accepted her resignation. The Punjab government, however, said that it had not waived the three-month notice period and cited a staff shortage problem.

In April, an IAS officer resigned as he was not given any posting for months together. There are so many officers who do not have a posting even now... for reasons best known to the government. Such a trend has started in this AAP government only. So the staff shortage reason sounds strange to me," Sidhu said. Karnail Singh, a 2015 batch IAS officer, had resigned a week after Sidhu. He had not received a posting for months. His resignation is yet to be accepted. IAS officers Rahul Bhandari and Rajeev Gupta, from the 1997 and 2014 batches, respectively, are also awaiting postings. Sidhu is the daughter-in-law of senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Sikander Singh Maluka. When she resigned, Sidhu was the managing director of the Punjab State Industrial and Development Corporation.

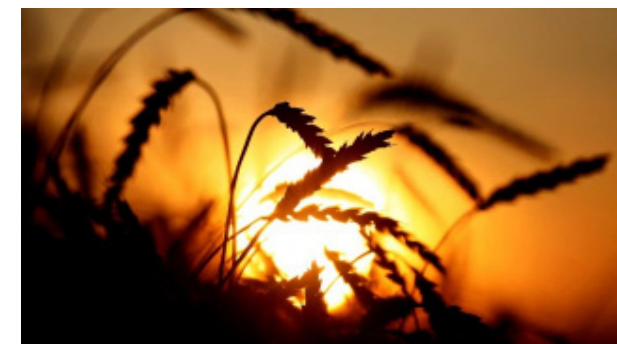
Despite bad weather during harvesting Punjab set to harvest bumper wheat crop

GNS News Agency, May 10

Despite facing rains, hail storms and strong winds before and during harvesting, Punjab is poised to reap a bumper wheat crop this Rabi Marketing season. Taking into account the result of 83 per cent of completed crop-cutting experiments (CCEs), the Punjab Agriculture Department said the state has achieved one of its highest-ever wheat productivity per hectare. Of the total 2,360 proposed CCEs, 1,967 have been completed, while 97.5 per cent harvesting, including 100 per cent in 11 districts, has been completed, the department said.

Punjab has witnessed a notable 9.55 per cent increase in overall productivity compared to the last year. All districts, except Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, have shown a productivity gain, ranging from 3.72 per cent to 18.83 per cent. Productivity ranges from 40.59 quintals per hectare to 57.79 quintals per hectare across districts in the state. Though Barnala district has recorded the highest per hectare yield at 57.59 quintals (23.31 quintals per acre), compared to 50.63 quintals last year, followed by Sangrur, Mansa, Malerkotla, Muktsar and Moga, where yields were 56.78 quintals (52.69 quintals last year), 56.73 quintals (50.01 quintals last year), 56.21 quintals (49.62 quintals last year), 55.78 quintals (46.94 quintals last year) and 55.02 quintals (47.52 quintals last year), respectively, per hectare as per the CCEs.

If productivity percentages are compared, the highest increase has been recorded in Muktsar Sahib, with an 18.83 per cent increase in the yield, amounting to 8.84 quintals more per hectare compared to last year. This is followed by Moga with a 15.78 per cent increase, resulting in 6.72 quintals more yield per hectare. Other notable increases include Barnala 13.75 per cent increase, Faridkot 13.46 per cent, Mansa 13.44 per cent, Malerkotla 13.28 per cent, Kapurthala 12.56 per cent,



Jalandhar 11.93 per cent, Ludhiana 11.72 per cent, Rupnagar 11.17 per cent, Mohali 9.6 per cent, Fazilka 9.15 per cent, Sangrur 7.76 per cent, Ferozepur 7.66 per cent, Tarn Taran 7.24 per cent, Amritsar 6.89 per cent, Gurdaspur 6.04 per cent, Fatehgarh Sahib 3.97 per cent, Hoshiarpur 3.72 per cent, Bathinda 3.63 per cent, Patiala 3.1 per cent, and Pathankot 1.55 per cent more. However, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar was the only district where yield decreased by -9.28 per cent. If the productivity remains consistent, Punjab's wheat production is estimated to reach 181 lakh metric tonnes, the department said. Government agencies are expected to procure around 132 lakh tonnes of wheat for the central pool, with 125.39 lakh tonnes already received in state mandis to date. Last year, the total procurement from the state was 126.86 lakh tonnes. Experts said this year, the weather remained highly favourable barring for a few days before and during the harvesting which led to proper formation of grain and its maturity. Both cold and cool weather are required for weather crops during different phases of the crop sown in November and harvested in April.

The case of the missing voters: Citizens fume over not getting to vote despite voter ID in hand

GNS News Agency, May 10

Chaos and confusion pervaded at the polling booths set up for residents of Bhusari Colony in Baramati as many of them could not cast their vote on Tuesday as their names were missing from the voters' list, despite them having voter cards or them having exercised their franchise in previous elections. Vikram More, a resident of Bhusari Colony, was in for a rude shock as neither his or any of his family members' name featured in the voter list. "We have voted in so many elections. Since the last 25 years, my family has been living here and voting from here, we didn't even change houses. Everyone else in our building could find their names but not us," said More.

It's not just More and his family who faced this inconvenience. Dilip Shah, a retired government officer from Undri, has exercised his franchise for many elections from here. When he went to cast his vote on Tuesday, he found out of the four people in his family, one person's name featured in the voters list. "I have handled many elections during my service life and I know this much that names can't be deleted without proper procedure... I was made to run from pillar-to-post by officials but I still could not vote. Infact, due to the heat, I fell ill when I returned home," said Shah adding that he wasn't served any notice about the deletion of his name from the voter list. A man, who did not wish to be known, said, this year, neither his nor his family members' names could be found in the voter list. "I have voted in 2019, 2014 and even other elections in between. When I went to the polling station today morning, I realised this has happened with a lot of people. I waited for an hour at the polling station... there were so many people who had documents, have voted before and still their name didn't feature in the voter list."

"I tried a lot of things. I visited the corporation office, my wife called up the Khadakwasla constituency office, I got contacts of some people who I thought could help, but it didn't come through. I am going to write a letter to the PMO office about this," said the man. Shivaji Choudhary, another resident of right Bhusari was not allowed in the polling booth. "Last election I voted, but I don't know how my name is missing this year. Everyone else in my family could vote, but I missed my chance," said Choudhary. People from Bhusari Colony are also confused because names of some family members have featured in Pune constituency whereas names of others have come up in Baramati constituency.

At the enquiry desk at Eklavya Chowk, a frustrated mother-son duo from Bavdhan who voted in 2019, were trying to figure out how their names are missing. "As much as we know, we are supposed to vote for Baramati constituency. I live in Bavdhan, but I also have a residence in Bhusari colony. A lot of people who are coming here to vote are not able to find their names." A help desk was set up by volunteers of Prabodhan Manch who were helping citizens with their queries. Pavan Kanojia, Abhijeet Ghumre and Manish Nande were making note of names missing from voters list, name and address change in right Bhusari colony and registered around 40 complaints till 1pm. "Since the last few months, I have registered around 900 names.

A lot of people, who couldn't go back to their hometown, were happy they got to vote. There were a lot of new voters also, around 300 from the ones I registered. But the names of a lot of people were missing. People who have lived here for many years and voted here, those who had their voter ID card in their hands... still couldn't vote... The government needs to take cognisance of this issue," said Pavan Kanojia.

But missing names weren't the only mayhem in the Bhusari area. Three polling booths were set-up a few metres away from Eklavya Chowk, which resulted in heavy traffic and vehicles brushing past each other. Amid the confusion of missing names, the scorching sun, traffic jams and lack of facilities such as chairs and wheelchairs for senior citizens added to the woes.

"People who have voted for nagarsevak, people who have voted three to four times, their names have been deleted. In some cases, the names of entire family are missing. They have concentrated all polling booths in the same area. They could have set up polling booths at other places such as Savarkar Maidan so people from right Bhusari colony could have voted there. Senior citizens were waiting for two hours, a lot of senior citizens are coming and only one wheelchair is there," said Prashant Kanojia, a member of Prabodhini Manch. When contacted, assistant returning officer for Khadakwasla constituency Sanjay Asawle said, "Pune district has recorded the highest voter registration. Our helpline numbers have been working for the last eight days to solve voter ID queries. Maybe, citizens were not able to find their names due to change of residence. Another reason could be delimitation, which is not in our hands."

Congress's Sam Pitroda's latest howler: 'People in east look like Chinese...'



GNS News Agency, May 10
Congress leader Sam Pitroda stirred a major controversy after commenting that Indians in the East resemble the Chinese while those in the South look like Africans. The BJP attacked Pitroda, calling his remarks 'racist'.

cans. It doesn't matter. We are all brothers and sisters," Pitroda said during the interview. He added, "We all respect different languages, different religions, customs and food. That's the India that I believe in, where everybody has a place and everybody compromises a little bit."

Trouble mounts for HD Revanna, son as rape charges added to kidnapping case

GNS News Agency, May 10
Trouble mounted for arrested JD(S) leader HD Revanna and his MP son Prajwal Revanna after the woman who was allegedly kidnapped by the Karnataka MLA claimed that she was raped. Rape charges have been added to the FIR in the kidnapping case following the statement of the rescued woman who worked as a domestic help at a farmhouse of HD Revanna.



booked for sexual harassment based on the complaint of another woman who worked in their house. Meanwhile, there was no sign of Prajwal Revanna's return from abroad as the seven days' time sought by him to appear before the Special Investigation Team ended on Tuesday.

Jharkhand minister absent from Rahul Gandhi's rallies after cash haul from aide



GNS News Agency, May 10
Congress leader Rahul Gandhi kept his distance from Jharkhand Rural Development Minister Alamgir Alam during his election rallies on Tuesday after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) recovered Rs 34 crore of 'unaccounted cash' from the premises of a house help of the personal secretary of Alam.

where near him? We want to know where he is hiding," Bauri told the media. Amid the controversy, Rahul Gandhi campaigned for JMM candidate Joba Majhi, targeting the BJP and the Narendra Modi government on various issues.

Congress seeks cancellation of 'Run for Viksit Bharat', cites poll code violation

GNS News Agency, May 10
Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee President, Devender Yadav, has written to the Election Commission, seeking cancellation of 'Run for Viksit Bharat,' which he claims is a violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

students from different colleges are expected to participate in the run, as "Viksit Bharat 2027" is a flagship campaign of the ruling BJP-led Centre.

First session nearly complete, why are textbooks being distributed so late? Delhi HC to govt



GNS News Agency, May 10
While hearing a petition over the lack of infrastructure and other facilities in government schools in the Northeast district, the Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the reason behind the delay in distribution of textbooks to students, even as the first session is almost over.

in the process of being changed. They (Delhi government) should tell the correct position. From classes 1-8, syllabus books have not come. They aren't telling the truth to the court, about the problems they are facing.

The Delhi government, meanwhile, submitted an action report in the matter, indicating a timeline to address different issues. According to the report, procurement of dual desks would be completed by July 2024, textbook distribution started on April 22 (this year) and is to be completed by May 10.

The official said that the students are being taught, however, new books have not been given, adding that those have "gone for printing". Listing the matter on May 15, the bench said: "Give us an affidavit. By that time, you tell us if you have distributed the books till Class 10."

Control over Baramati: Will it be Sharad Pawar or Ajit Pawar? Turnout keeps everyone guessing

GNS News Agency, May 10
The fiercely fought battle in Baramati Lok Sabha constituency might have been over for now but the voting turnout has kept everyone guessing on who among Sharad Pawar or Ajit Pawar will prove himself supreme to hold control over the constituency.



The Indapur assembly segment with second highest voter turnout percentage is expected to have edge for Sunetra Pawar as sitting legislator is of Ajit Pawar faction and BJP leader Harshvrdhan Patil extended support to the ally candidate.

With assets worth Rs 1,230 crore, Naveen Jindal the richest BJP candidate in Haryana

GNS News Agency, May 10
Jindal got involved in the Coalgate scam in 2012, and has currently six cases, according to his election affidavit. He has been accused of getting undue preferences in coal mine allocations to his companies.



Lok Dal's candidate Ashok Arora. However, his vote share reduced to 25.33 per cent in 2014 when he finished a distant third and BJP's Raj Kumar Saini won, securing 36.81 per cent votes.

April 2024 warmest ever due to record-breaking heat: European climate agency



GNS News Agency, May 10

April 2024 was also the 11th consecutive month of record-high temperatures, a result of the combined effect of the now weakening El Nino and human-caused climate change, the European Union's climate agency said. The world experienced the warmest April ever, with record heat, rain, and flooding crippling normal life in many countries, according to new data released on Wednesday. It was also the 11th consecutive month of record-high temperatures, a result of the combined effect of now weakening El Nino and human-caused climate change, the European Union's climate agency Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said.

The average temperature of 15.03 degrees Celsius in April was 1.58 degrees Celsius higher than the month's average for 1850-1900, the designated pre-industrial reference period. It was 0.67 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average for April and 0.14 degrees Celsius above the previous high set in April 2016. "El Nino peaked at the beginning of the year, and the sea surface temperatures in the eastern tropical Pacific are now going back towards neutral conditions. However, while temperature variations associated with natural cycles like El Nino come and go, the extra energy trapped in the ocean and the atmosphere by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases will keep pushing the global temperature towards new records," Carlo Buontempo, Director of C3S, said.

The global average temperature for the past 12 months (May 2023-April 2024) is the highest recorded, at 0.73 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average and 1.61 degrees Celsius above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average, the climate agency said. According to C3S, the global average temperature breached the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold for an entire year for the first time in January. A permanent breach of the 1.5 degrees Celsius limit specified in the Paris Agreement, however, refers to long-term warming over many years. According to climate scientists, countries need to limit the global aver-

age temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Earth's global surface temperature has already increased by around 1.15 degrees Celsius compared to the average in 1850-1900 due to the rapidly increasing concentration of greenhouse gases -- primarily carbon dioxide and methane -- in the atmosphere. This warming is considered the reason behind record droughts, wildfires, and floods worldwide. According to a recent study by scientists at Germany's Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the impact of climate events could cost the global economy around \$38 trillion a year by 2049, with countries least responsible for the problem and having minimal resources to adapt to the impacts suffering the most. Globally, 2023 was the warmest year in the 174-year observational record, with the global average temperature at 1.45 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial baseline (1850-1900). The warming may set a new record in 2024 as scientists say El Nino -- periodic warming of the ocean surface in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean -- typically has the greatest impact on global climate in the second year of its development. El Nino continued to weaken towards neutral conditions, but marine air temperatures in general remained at an unusually high level in April, C3S scientists said.

The world is witnessing weather extremes under the combined effect of the 2023-24 El Nino and human-caused climate change. A brutal heat wave in Asia prompted the temporary closure of schools in the Philippines and broke temperature records in India, which is in the middle of a 44-day general election, apart from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Myanmar. The month also saw the heaviest rain in the UAE in 75 years. C3S scientists also said April was the 13th consecutive month of record-high ocean temperatures. Global weather agencies, including the India Meteorological Department (IMD), are expecting La Nina conditions by August-September. While El Nino conditions are associated with weaker monsoon winds and drier conditions in India, La Nina conditions -- the antithesis of El Nino -- lead to plentiful rainfall during the monsoon season. In a mid-April update, the IMD said India would experience above-normal cumulative rainfall in the 2024 monsoon season with La Nina conditions being the dominant factor. El Nino occurs every two to seven years on average and typically lasts nine to 12 months. The current El Nino event, which developed in June 2023, was at its strongest between November and January. It is associated with increased rainfall in the Horn of Africa and the southern US, and unusually dry and warm conditions in Southeast Asia, Australia, and southern Africa.

US paused weapons shipment to Israel to head off Rafah offensive: Report

GNS News Agency, May 10

The United States last week temporarily halted a planned weapons shipment to Israel due to concerns that the Israeli military was preparing for a major ground operation in Rafah, the southern Gaza enclave housing over a million Palestinians. The White House administration official told news agency Reuters that as Israeli leaders appeared to be moving toward a decision on a Rafah incursion, the US began a thorough review of proposed weapons transfers to Israel. The situation in Rafah has escalated, with hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians seeking refuge from combat in other parts of Gaza. US President Joe Biden's administration has been actively working to prevent a full-scale assault by Israeli forces in Rafah, the official said.

"The US position has been that Israel should not launch a major ground operation in Rafah, where more than a million people are sheltering with nowhere else to go," the official stated. According to CBS News, the shipment in question included 1,800 2,000-pound (907-kg) bombs and 1,700 500-pound bombs. Reuters, citing sources, reported that the delayed shipments involved Boeing-made Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs), which can transform conventional "dumb" bombs into precision-guided munitions. Additionally, Small Diameter Bombs were part of the shipment. "We are especially focused on the end-use of the 2,000-lb bombs and the impact they could have in dense urban settings as we have seen in other parts of Gaza. We have not made a final determination on how to proceed with this shipment," the official added.



The delay coincides with public pressure from Washington on Israel to hold off in its offensive in Rafah until measures are taken to minimize civilian casualties. The US has expressed concerns about the humanitarian needs of civilians in the city. However, the Pentagon stated on Monday that there has been no official policy decision to withhold arms from Israel. Notably, in April, Washington approved a \$15 billion military aid package for Israel, which Biden termed as "vital support". Meanwhile, Israel launched a major military offensive against Hamas forces in Rafah, seizing control of a key border crossing and cutting off most aid into the territory. It came after Israel on Monday declared that a three-phase ceasefire proposal approved by Hamas was unacceptable because terms had been softened. The US said it believes the remaining differences between Israel and Hamas can be bridged in negotiations over the Palestinian militant group's latest ceasefire proposal, as talks were scheduled to resume in Cairo.

Putin begins his fifth term as president, more in control of Russia than ever

GNS News Agency, May 10

Moscow: President Vladimir Putin began his fifth term at a glittering Kremlin inauguration Tuesday, embarking on another six years as leader of Russia after destroying his political opponents, launching a devastating war in Ukraine and concentrating all power in his hands. At the ceremony in the gilded Grand Kremlin Palace, Putin placed his hand on the Russian Constitution and vowed to defend it as a crowd of hand-picked dignitaries looked on. "We are a united and great people and together we will overcome all obstacles, realise all our plans, together we will win," Putin said after being sworn in. Since succeeding President Boris Yeltsin in the waning hours of 1999, Putin has transformed Russia from a country emerging from economic collapse to a pariah state that threatens global security. Following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine that has become Europe's biggest conflict since World War II, Russia has been heavily sanctioned by the West and is turning to other regimes like China, Iran and North Korea for support. Already in office for nearly a quarter-century and the longest-serving Kremlin leader since Josef Stalin, Putin's new term doesn't expire until 2030, when he will be constitutionally eligible to run again. In a heavily choreographed performance, Putin was pictured in his office looking at his papers before walking along the Kremlin's long corridors, pausing at one point to look at a painting, on the way to his inauguration. His guard of honour waited in the sleet and rain for hours, in temperatures hovering just above freezing, while Putin made the brief journey to the Grand Kremlin Palace in his Auroras limousine. Putin used the first moments of his fifth term to thank the "heroes" of his war in Ukraine and to rail

against the West. Russia "does not refuse dialogue with Western states," he said. Rather, he said, "the choice is theirs: do they intend to continue trying to contain Russia, continue the policy of aggression, continuous pressure on our country for years, or look for a path to cooperation and peace." He was greeted with applause when he entered the hall with more than 2,500 invited guests. They included senior members of the Russian government as well as celebrities including American actor Steven Seagal. Neither the US, UK nor German ambassadors attended. The US Embassy said Ambassador Lynne Tracy was out of the country on "prescheduled, personal travel". A handful of European Union envoys attended even though top EU diplomat Josep Borrell said he told them "the right thing to do is not to attend this inauguration," because Putin is the subject of an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court for war crimes, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine. Among those present was the French ambassador, according to a French diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly. A 30-gun salute followed Putin's remarks. He reviewed the presidential regiment in the Kremlin's Cathedral Square in a light drizzle and then walked into nearby Annunciation Cathedral for a blessing from Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church. During the brief service, Kirill compared Putin to Prince Alexander Nevsky, the medieval ruler who "courageously defended their people on the battlefield". He reminded Putin that the head of state sometimes "has to take fateful and formidable decisions" that can lead to victims, an apparent reference to the many casualties in Ukraine -- a conflict the church has endorsed.

Stormy Daniels recounts sex with Trump: Old Spice, satin pajamas, no condom



GNS News Agency, May 10

Donald Trump is facing 34 felony charges related to his purported efforts to conceal claims of extramarital affairs with adult star Stormy Daniels, claims that emerged during his 2016 presidential campaign. Adult star Stormy Daniels took the witness stand on Tuesday in the hush money case against former US President Donald Trump, who looked on as she detailed their alleged sexual encounter at a hotel suite in Lake Tahoe, US, in 2006, and the payment she got to keep it quiet. During the testimony, Daniels recounted her evening with Trump, and said she looked through his toiletry bag while she went to use the bathroom, finding Old Spice and Pert Plus items lying alongside "gold tweezers".

While Trump denies having sex with Daniels, his lawyers unsuccessfully pushed for a mistrial midway through her testimony. Meanwhile, prosecutors alleged Trump paid Daniels to keep quiet about the claims as he ran for President in 2016. Donald Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, is seeking to win the White House again. In the court, Daniels testified she first met and chatted with Trump at a 2006 Lake Tahoe celebrity golf outing where her studio was a sponsor. She said Trump had invited her to dinner inside his palatial hotel suite and referred to her as "the smart one". Daniels testified that she accepted Trump's invitation because she wanted to avoid dinner with her co-workers. Trump had his bodyguard get her number, she said. Daniels said Trump was wearing "silk or satin pyjamas" when she first saw him, as he answered the door, prompting her to make a joke about Hugh Hefner, the founder of Playboy magazine. Daniels said she asked Trump to change, and "he obliged, very politely". At one point, Daniels also said she playfully spanked him with a rolled-up magazine. When they met up later in his penthouse, she appreciated that he seemed interested in the business aspects of the industry. He also suggested putting her on his TV show, 'The Apprentice', a possibility she hoped could help



establish her as a writer and director. Daniels said Trump grilled her on her time in the adult industry, asking her if she had been tested for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Daniels also said there was a very brief discussion about Melania, Trump's wife, during which he said they slept in separate rooms.

The adult star said Trump came into the bedroom area of the suite as Daniels went to use the restroom. She said Trump was on the bed in his boxers and a T-shirt. While in the washroom, Daniels said she looked through Trump's toiletry bag, finding Old Spice and Pert Plus items lying alongside "gold tweezers". Daniels said she was sober at the time and did not feel particularly threatened by Trump's presence, while his bodyguard was also present nearby. As she saw Trump in boxers, she said she tried to make a joke and leave, but he stood up between her and the door. Recalling her sexual encounter with Trump, the adult star testified her clothes and shoes were off as they lay "in a missionary position." She said she continued to look at the ceiling. Daniels also testified Trump was not wearing a condom, but she did not ask him to stop. Daniels maintained that there was consent, but said the encounter had left her disoriented. Upon her departure, Trump called her "honeybunch," she testified, adding that he bade her goodbye with a suggestion to meet up again soon. After it ended, Daniels said, "It was really hard to get my shoes because my hands were shaking so hard." She said she told Trump she just wanted to leave. Daniels also said Trump told her she reminded him of "his daughter", who he described as "smart, blond, and consistently underestimated". Though she did not say which daughter, the reference calls to mind Ivanka Trump. Daniels also testified about a handful of other run-ins she had with Trump, largely in the presence of other people. During a more intimate meeting with Trump in Los Angeles in the summer of 2007, Daniels said that Trump tried to proposition her for sex again, but she told him she was menstruating.

Donald Trump's classified documents trial start indefinitely delayed, says court

GNS News Agency, May 10

The latest order by US District Judge Aileen Cannon delaying the start of the trial means that Donald Trump is highly unlikely to face the jury in either of the two federal cases against him before the November 5 US election. Donald Trump's trial in Florida on charges of illegally keeping classified documents after leaving office has been indefinitely postponed, a judge decided on Tuesday, greatly reducing the odds he will face a jury in either of the two federal criminal cases against him before the November 5 US election. Trump, seeking to regain the presidency, previously had been scheduled to go to trial on May 20 in the documents case brought by Special Counsel Jack Smith, but the prosecution and defence had both acknowledged that date would need to be delayed. US District Judge Aileen Cannon, who was appointed to the bench by Trump in 2020, said on Tuesday the trial would no longer begin May 20 but did not set a new date. Cannon scheduled pre-trial hearings to run through July 22. Trump has pleaded not guilty to 40 federal counts accusing him of retaining sensitive national security documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida after leaving office in 2021 and obstructing US government efforts to retrieve them. Trump is the Republican candidate challenging Democratic President Joe Biden, who defeated him four years ago.

Smith faces significant obstacles to getting either federal case against Trump to trial before the election. Cannon is yet to rule on several legal issues crucial to the documents case and has signalled support for Trump's defence on some matters. In a separate case brought by Smith involving Trump's efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss, the US Supreme Court seems poised to recognise that former presidents have at least some immunity from prosecution over official actions. That outcome, mostly likely, would further delay Trump's election-related case as lower courts determine which allegations against him are covered by that legal shield. Trump's lawyers had said a trial in the documents case should not start until after the election, but also suggested an August 12 date in response to an order from Cannon to propose a timeline for the case. Smith proposed a July start date. Trump's lawyers have worked to delay all four criminal cases he faces.

"We're in this absolutely unprecedented situation where a defendant is potentially going to have the power to shut down his own prosecution," George Washington University law professor Randall Eliason, an expert in white-collar criminal cases, said. "That's an argument for getting the case to trial before the election", he added. Trump has been on trial in New York state court since April 15 on charges he unlawfully sought to conceal hush money paid to porn star Stormy Daniels before the 2016 election. He has also been charged in state court in Georgia over his attempts to overturn the 2020 election.

Trump has sought to portray all the legal cases against him as politically motivated. The charges in the Florida case include violations of the Espionage Act, which criminalises the unauthorised possession of na-



The latest order by US District Judge Aileen Cannon delaying the start of the trial means that Donald Trump is highly unlikely to face the jury in either of the two federal cases against him before the November 5 US election.

tional defence information, as well as conspiracy to obstruct justice and making false statements to investigators. In an April Reuters/Ipsos poll, nearly a quarter of Republican respondents and more than half of independents indicated they would not vote for Trump if a jury convicts him of a felony. If either federal case reaches a jury before the election, it would likely be in the weeks immediately before November 5, an outcome sure to draw accusations of election interference from Trump's legal team. "Any judge would take pause with the idea of trying a presidential candidate a month before the presidential election," said attorney Kel McClanahan, who specialises in national security issues and has represented members of the intelligence community. But a Trump win in November may mean that neither case ever reaches a jury. As president, Trump could direct the Justice Department to drop the federal charges or seek to pardon himself. Smith's team has pushed aggressive deadlines in the Florida case, arguing that the public has a right to a speedy trial. Prosecutor Jay Bratt told Cannon during a hearing that an autumn trial would not violate Justice Department guidelines that prohibit taking investigative steps close to an election that could impact the outcome of the vote. Cannon has denied two bids by Trump to dismiss the charges, but several remain pending. She also has signalled that Trump's claims that the documents were personal records may be relevant to how she instructs the jury at a future trial, a decision that could lead to an appeal by prosecutors and more delays.

Health policy premium jumps by up to 50% in a year, 'set to rise further'



After the 25-50 per cent rise in the health insurance premium in the past one year, insurance companies are likely to hike health premiums by another 10-15 per cent in the coming months. According to a survey conducted by LocalCircles, 52 per cent personal health insurance policy owners said their premium has increased by over 25 per cent in the last 12 months. Out of the 11,000 health insurance policy owners who responded, 21 per cent of health insurance policy owners indicated that the increase in premium was 50 per cent or more in the last 12 months while 31 per cent indicated that it has risen by 25-50 per cent, it said.

Of the remaining respondents, 31 per cent indicated an increase of 10-25 per cent, while 2 per cent indicated 0-10 per cent increase in premium rates and 15 per cent denied any increase in premium as it "was same as last year". In essence, 52 per cent of health insurance policy owners surveyed say their premium has increased by over 25 per cent in the last 12 months, the survey said. LocalCircles said insurance regulator has updated the definitions of the pre-existing condition and moratorium period (MP) in health insurance policies from April 1, 2024. While the waiting period for pre-existing disease (PED) coverage in health insurance policies has been reduced from four years to a compulsory three years, the moratorium period of PED has been shortened from 96 to 60 months. Insurance companies enforce a "no look back" policy during this period. The move comes at a time when consumers are struggling to get their health claims processed.

While the Irdai is yet to come out with a proposal to check the ballooning health policy premiums, policy holders are deeply concerned with a significant rise in premium in 2024 after already experiencing high double digit increases in the last 2 years. The health insurance sector recorded a premium of close to Rs 1,00,000 crore in FY24, reflecting a robust compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20 per cent. A comparative study with the survey results of 2022 shows that the personal health insurance policy owners who had seen an increase in

their premium by over 25 per cent has dipped from 62 per cent in 2022 to 52 per cent this year," the survey said. The year 2022 was marked by heavy increases in health insurance premiums as many insurance companies were projecting another wave of COVID in 2022-23 and had increased premiums in anticipation.

"While on the premium front, the insurance companies want a hefty increase each year, the claims processing continues to be inefficient with one in two who files a health insurance claim struggling. It is time Irdai steps in to rationalise the increase in premiums along with processing of claims so health insurance becomes citizen centric," LocalCircles said. Almost one-third or 1.6 lakh cases out of total 5.5 lakh pending consumer complaints received by the Department of Consumer Affairs are of the insurance sector. In the latest LocalCircles survey released last week, 43 per cent citizens who filed a health insurance claim in the last three years explicitly indicated that they had difficulty in getting it processed. Complaints ranged from outright rejection to exclusions to deduction and most commonly, delays, it said. The survey received over 11,000 responses from personal health insurance policy holders located in 324 districts of India. 67 per cent respondents were men while 33 per cent respondents were women. 39 per cent of respondents were from tier 1 locations, 30 per cent were from tier 2 locations while 31 per cent were from tier 3, 4 and rural locations, it said.

MUMBAI: The general insurance industry settled health policy claims of around Rs 75,000 crore involving over 2.5 crore cases in 2022-23, according to the General Insurance Council (GI Council), the apex body of general insurers. "This figure is expected to rise significantly in 2023-24 as efforts to streamline processes continue even further. Today more than 60 per cent of claims are settled on a cashless basis, with this only expected to go up over time, especially with 'Cashless Everywhere'," GI Council said. The GI Council said it has constantly engaged with providers (hospitals) as well as TPA over the issue of streamlining experience for customers and making claims a friction-free process, through joint dialogue and collaborative solutions. Currently, policyholders can avail themselves of cashless treatment at over 40,000 hospitals across various insurance networks, the council said. "Furthermore, policy renewals are now guaranteed, and individual premium loading based on health status is no longer permitted," it said. "A lot has already been achieved and we firmly believe we are on the right path to completely revolutionize the way health insurance is perceived. The aim is to alleviate concerns and simplify the lives of people, ensuring that they have the confidence and support they need to secure their health needs," said Tapan Singhel, Chairman of the General Insurance Council.

Does 24-hour fasting between meals help stop inflammation, illness?



What happens during the fasting state?

Fasting for a day can have various effects on the body, such as affecting the way the body uses energy. Whether a person is fasting or not, the body still needs energy. "Its primary energy source is a sugar called glucose, which usually comes from carbohydrates, including grains, dairy products, fruits, certain vegetables, beans, and even sweets," said Dr Ranga Santosh Kumar, consultant general physician and diabetologist, Yashoda Hospitals, Hyderabad. When glucose in the blood sufficiently meets the energy demands of the body, the liver and muscles will store some of the extra glucose in the form of glycogen and release it into the bloodstream whenever the body needs it. However, during fasting, this process changes. "The liver will use the last of its glycogen reserves around 18 to 24 hours. At this point, the body enters into a state called gluconeogenesis, marking the body's transition into fasting mode," said Dr Santosh Kumar.

With no carbohydrates coming in, the body creates its glucose using mainly fat. Eventually, the body runs out of these energy sources as well. According to Dr Santosh Kumar, fasting mode then becomes the more serious starvation mode. "At this point, a person's metabolism slows down, and their body begins burning muscle tissue for energy," he said. Although it is a well-known term in dieting culture, Dr Santosh Kumar explained that true starvation mode occurs only after several consecutive days or weeks without food. "So, for those breaking their fast after 24 hours, it is generally safe to go without eating for a day unless other health conditions are present," said Dr Santosh Kumar.

Consumption of a high-calorie diet is associated with a chronic metabolic inflammatory syndrome (metaflammation), which is believed to be the root cause of many non-communicable diseases, "including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease", according to neurologist Dr Sudhir Kumar, Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad. Against this backdrop, researchers from Cambridge University recently conducted an interesting experiment, whereby they collected blood samples from volunteers who were made to consume a baseline meal of 500 Kcal, then fast for 24 hours, and then re-fed with 500 Kcal meals. The study noted that during fasting, levels of interleukin 1 beta were reduced and levels of arachidonic acid (AA) were elevated. In simple terms, these two biochemical changes are known to be responsible for reducing metabolic inflammation during the fasting state. Dr Kumar concurred that fasting leads to suppression of metabolic inflammation, and is associated with a drop in serum proinflammatory cytokines such as interleukin 1-beta.

Trainer is impressed with Kareena Kapoor Khan's backbend; know how to ace the yoga practice

Flexibility and yoga go hand-in-hand. Demonstrating a glimpse of her flexibility, actor Kareena Kapoor Khan was seen acing Chakrasana or wheel pose, also called Urdhva Dhanurasana. The Jaane Jaan actor's yoga trainer Anshuka Parwani shared a glimpse of Kareena's yoga practice. "Backbends with Bebo @kareenakapoorkhan. Bebo, your discipline, your Yoga journey, the ease with which you gracefully slide into an asana - it's inspiring," said Parwani.



What makes backbends so powerful and crucial in one's journey?

Backbends hold a significant place in the realm of yoga, not only for their physical benefits but also for their profound impact on the mind and spirit. "These dynamic postures, characterised by an extension of the spine, have been revered for centuries in various yogic traditions," said fitness expert Garima Goyal. Backbending postures extend the spine in ways that counteract the forward flexion that dominates many modern lifestyles, where prolonged sitting and hunching over electronic devices contribute to poor posture and limited spinal mobility. Goyal described that through consistent practice of backbends, individuals can enhance the flexibility of the spinal column, promoting a healthier range of motion. "This increased flexibility extends to the intervertebral discs, muscles, and ligaments surrounding the spine. As the spine becomes more supple, practitioners may experience relief from stiffness and discomfort associated with sedentary activities," said Goyal.

backbends and progress gradually to deeper poses. This approach allows your body to adapt and become more flexible over time. Avoid forcing your body into extreme positions, especially if you're a beginner, stressed Goyal.

4. Alignment - Focus on proper alignment to avoid strain on the spine and other joints. In poses like Urdhva Dhanurasana, ensure your hands are placed shoulder-width apart, and the fingers point toward the shoulders. Keep the feet parallel and hip-width apart, distributing the weight evenly, mentioned Goyal.

5. Shoulder mobility - Open the shoulders by stretching and strengthening them. This is crucial for poses like wheel pose. "Practice shoulder stretches and exercises to improve flexibility and prevent excessive tension," said Goyal.

6. Hip flexor stretching - Many backbends require hip flexibility. Incorporate hip flexor stretches to create openness in the front of the hips. Lunges and Pigeon Pose can be beneficial for releasing tension in the hip flexors.

7. Back strength - Strengthen the muscles along the spine, including the erector spinae, through targeted exercises. Poses like Locust Pose can help build strength in the muscles of the lower back.

8. Breath awareness - Maintain steady and conscious breathing throughout the practice. Deep, controlled breaths help release tension and support the body in challenging backbends.

9. Props - Use props like blocks or a bolster to support your practice, especially if you're working on more advanced backbends. Props can provide additional stability and make the poses more accessible.

10. Listen to your body - Pay attention to how your body feels during and after each backbend. If you experience pain beyond the sensation of stretching, modify the pose or seek guidance from a qualified yoga instructor.

11. Cool down - Include a cool-down sequence with gentle forward folds and twists to balance the spine after back bending.

Additionally, improved spinal flexibility can have a positive impact on nerve function, promoting better communication between the brain and various parts of the body. In addition, the practice of backbends encourages practitioners to cultivate mindfulness and presence on the mat. "The deep concentration required to execute these poses demands a focused awareness of the breath, alignment, and sensations in the body," Goyal mentioned.

How to do them properly?

Performing backbends properly requires attention to alignment, engagement of specific muscles, and a gradual approach to avoid injury. Here are general guidelines for practicing backbends safely and under guidance

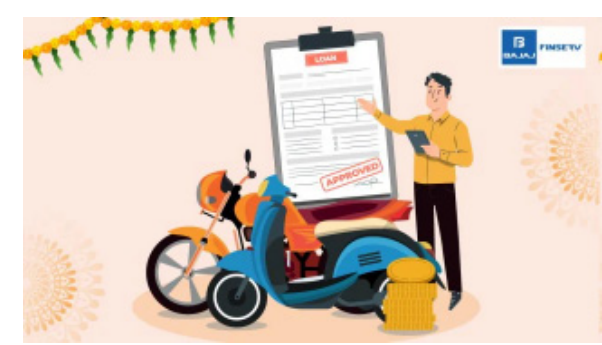
1. Warm-up - Start with a gentle warm-up to prepare your body. Focus on dynamic movements, such as cat-cow stretches and gentle twists, to awaken the spine. Gradually progress to more targeted warm-up poses like Cobra or Bridge Pose, said Goyal.

2. Core engagement - Strengthen your core muscles to provide stability and support for the spine during backbends. Engage the abdominal muscles to protect the lower back and prevent excessive compression in that area.

3. Gradual progression - Begin with milder

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All you need to know about FLiRT, the new Covid-19 variant detected in the US

There's a new group of Covid-19 variants within the Omicron JN.1 lineage "which have demonstrated increased transmissibility and immune resistance". Detected in the United States, this variant group has been named Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) FLiRT variant KP.2, and is a spinoff of JN.1.11.1. Reports suggest that it is rapidly spreading in the US. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this FLiRT variant accounted for around 25 per cent of new sequenced cases for the two weeks ending April 27, 2024. "The rapid emergence and diversification of the JN.1 variant and its descendant, KP.2, which shows significant alterations in spike (S) protein structure and increased resistance to existing vaccines, underscore the necessity for further research to understand the implications for public health and vaccine development," read a medical.net news report. Here's what to know about the variant's symptoms, transmissibility, and precautionary measures you need to take. The symptoms are similar to Omicron, said Dr Manjusha Agarwal, senior consultant, internal medicine, Gleneagles Hospitals Parel Mumbai. "One will experience sore throat, cough, congestion, tiredness, headache, muscle or body aches, runny nose, fever or chills, loss of smell and taste, or even breathlessness in extreme cases," said Dr Agarwal. This variant is highly transmissible and can impact immunity and overall health, emphasised Dr Agarwal. "This variant spreads via respiratory droplets of the per-

son to others, or touching infected surfaces such as faucets, furniture, elevator buttons, kitchen countertops, or coming in close contact with the person who is sick with this variant," said Dr Agarwal. It is essential to prevent the infection of this variant, by following Covid-appropriate steps of practicing social distancing, masking, hand sanitising, avoiding public places, limiting visitors at home, not coming in close contact with sick people, staying isolated when one has symptoms such as high fever, sore throat and loss of smell and taste. "Getting vaccinated is the need of the hour to protect yourself and the community from these potentially life-threatening infections. However, people shouldn't panic and take utmost care of themselves," said Dr Agarwal.

Who needs to be extra careful?

Children, pregnant women, those with comorbidities such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancer, and the elderly population should be extra vigilant when it comes to their well-being, urged Dr Agarwal. Is there a cause for concern? With the onset of summer, we do get an increase in viral infections like Covid-19 variants, urged Dr Agarwal. "There is no cause for concern because now we are seeing that the Covid-19 variants are relatively getting milder and there is no serious illness that is associated with Covid. So, no cause for concern. Just follow basic precautions and consult your doctor when you get any cold, cough, or fever for more than three days," said Dr Agarwal.

Arijit Singh and wife Koel Roy ride a Scooty to cast vote in West Bengal, proudly displays his inked finger.



Despite his success and popularity, celebrated play-back singer Arijit Singh, leads a simple life. Recently, the "Tum Hi Ho" singer, along with his wife Koel Roy, took a break from the limelight to cast their votes at a polling booth in Jiaganj, his humble hometown in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. Dressed in casual attire, the award-winning artist chose to ride a scooter to the GSPF School where the voting took place, with Koel riding pillion in her understated salwar-kameez.

Arijit Singh, the number one Indian male singer of this present generation has casted his vote in Murshidabad, West Bengal today. pic.twitter.com/4JHk7J1cAs the "Vida Karo" hitmaker strolled through

the narrow alley leading to the polling booth, local fans eagerly followed and documented the couple's every move. After casting his vote, Arijit proudly displayed his inked finger to the crowd. Arijit's journey began in the very same town of Jiaganj, where he pursued his education at the local Sripat Singh College. Discovered through the reality show Fame Gurukul in 2005, the now 37-year-old singer, made his Hindi film debut in 2011 with the song "Phir Mohabbat" for the film Murder 2. The same year, he sang hit songs such as "Raabta" from Agent Vinod, "Uska Hi Banana" from '1920: Evil Returns', and 'Duaa' from Shanghai. Currently, he is basking in the success of his song, "Vida Karo" from Amar Singh Chamkila, featuring Diljit Dosanjh in the titular role of the slain Punjabi singer.

Bridgerton changed landscape of what is and isn't allowed: Nicola Coughlan

Audiences are crying out for representation and Bridgerton has done just that by changing the landscape of what is and isn't allowed on screen, says actor Nicola Coughlan, who is leading the third season of the Regency era series after staying in the shadows as Penelope Featherington. Coughlan's co-lead Luke Newton, who plays Colin Bridgerton, agreed that the hit Netflix period romance has made huge strides in inclusion, its colour blind casting a much discussed topic of conversation for viewers across the globe. "The success of the show is proof that it's what people wanted and that's a really nice place to sit in and know each season that the choices that are made behind the show are going to be supported by the majority of people," Newton told PTI in an interview.

Coughlan, whose crush on the third Bridgerton sibling Colin will be explored in this season, said she is proud of the way the show has become a cultural phenomenon. "The show has genuinely changed the landscape of what is and isn't allowed in period dramas and what should be on screen. I feel there is a post-Bridgerton period drama world and a pre-Bridgerton period drama world." And also this is what the audience clearly wanted. I think there are people that can sit in offices and go, "No, they just want a white person to do this, this and this". You're like, "No, they don't". Audiences are crying out for representation and joy and just to be included," Coughlan told PTI in an interview. The fictitious romance drama from production house Shondaland is credited with popularising colour blind casting, be it in the first season, led by Regé-Jean Page and Phoebe Dynevor, or the second season, fronted by Jonathan Bailey and Simone Ashley. Now that "Bridgerton" is in its third season, Coughlan said, audiences are used to the idea of it being an "invented world" with colourful costumes and its "over-the-top" setting. "We, thankfully, don't need to explain it anymore. And, look at the joy it's brought people. It's so wonderful," she added. The eight-episode drama will return for its third season in two parts: with part one premiering on May 16 and part two arriving on June 13 on Netflix. The first season, which premiered mid pandemic on Christmas Day in 2020, became a runaway sensation, and the second season in March 2022 further established its popularity by becoming one of the most watched shows on the streamer.

According to Coughlan, "Bridgerton" released at a time the world needed something that "celebrates love and joy and a lack of cynicism in a way that very few things do". "There's a lot of darkness going on in the world now, and it just needs something that just takes you out of that and is a complete escape," she said. In the new season, Penelope decides to let go of her longtime crush for friend Colin just when he starts to see her in a different light. Will they, won't they is what the show, which trains its focus on one Bridgerton sibling each season, explores this time around. For a show that combines period opulence with a certain raciness, friendship and trust are the elements that help actors navigate intimate scenes and the attention that come with the popularity of the se-



ries, based on the book series by Julia Quinn. Newton, who admitted that he is not "prepared at all" for all the attention that's bound to come his way as the new romantic interest of the show, said he also believes it was all "well planned" that he and Coughlan got to "build a foundation of friendship" for years before getting to lead the season. "It felt so rewarding to get to the point of climax, for want of a better word, of their relationship. We've been lucky in being able to have a good friendship in the lead up to it," he said.

Coughlan added that being friends with Newton before the new season made a "huge difference". "I'm a sensitive soul and I hope Luke will not mind me saying he is as well. We like to feel our feelings very much. I would have struggled to do it with someone that wasn't Luke, to be totally honest. He was such a great support. He's so kind and has no ego and is always supportive. Also (he) just has a nice, gentle energy." She said it's very intimidating to shoot, especially when one is fronting a show as popular as "Bridgerton". "It's terrifying and then to shoot these intimate scenes is another layer terrifying. So having a teammate with you for that whole thing, it made it just like one of the best experiences I've ever had on a job ever," she added. Newton and Coughlan have their fingers crossed "their" season is as successful as the first two. "In the lead up to release, we're getting teasers and things being put out. It's amazing to see the support for season three already. It's very cool," Newton said. "What's been out there, it's such a tiny amount and we keep saying, 'If they like this, they're going to lose their minds when they actually see the show'. You've only seen this much," added Coughlan. For the third season, Jess Brownell, known for shows such as "Scandal" and "Inventing Anna", has stepped in as the new showrunner after the departure of Chris Van Dusen. Shonda Rhimes, Betsy Beers, Tom Verica and Van Dusen executive produce "Bridgerton 3". Besides Coughlan and Newton, Claudia Jessie, Luke Thompson, Golda Rosheuvel, Adjoa Andoh, Ruth Gemmell, Hannah Dodd, Ashley and Bailey are reprising their roles. Acting legend Julie Andrews will continue to be the voice of Lady Whistledown, Penelope's pseudonym as the writer of the gossip pamphlet.

Silambarasan's first look from Kamal Haasan's Thug Life unveiled: Kaalai is back, say fans

It is finally confirmed — Silambarasan is part of Mani Ratnam-Kamal Haasan's upcoming film Thug Life. After photos of the actor from the shoot of the film in Delhi were leaked, Madras Talkies and Raaj Kamal Films International, which are jointly producing the project, came up with an official poster and a teaser from the film to reveal the look of Simbu. Silambarasan is reportedly playing Kamal Haasan's son in the movie. He is sporting long hair and his look is reminiscent of his role in the film Kaalai. The caption of the poster reads, "In the Realms of Dust, a New Thug Arises! STR". It suggests Simbu is also playing a gangster in the movie. However, in the promo, the actor is seen driving a SUV of 'Border Defence Force'. The desert and the number plate of the car suggest that the sequence is set in Rajasthan. Typical of Mani Ratnam's projects, the plot and other details of the film remain a mystery. Only recently Simbu was seen as an old gangster in Pathu Thala, which had Gautham Karthick

playing the role of his confidant. With Thug Life, Simbu seems to be playing a similar role to Gautham's from Pathu Thala. Earlier, Dulquer Salmaan was roped in to play the role but the actor backed out of the project due to unknown reasons. This marks the second collaboration of Simbu and Mani Ratnam, who earlier teamed up for Chekka Sivantha Vaanam, which was also a gangster drama. It also marks Kamal's second project with Simbu. The two have joined hands for an untitled project, which has Simbu in the lead and Kamal Haasan as the producer. With the addition of Silambarasan to Thug Life, the star power of the film has increased by several folds. Other than the two stars, the film also stars Abhirami, Nasser, Trisha, Gautham Karthik, Aishwarya Lekshmi, and Joju George in important roles. AR Rahman is composing the music for the film. In a recent interview, Kamal revealed that they have already composed a song for the film in a matter of five hours.

Deepika Padukone misses Irrfan Khan as she shares Piku throwback, jokes Amitabh Bachchan 'loves' telling people 'how much I eat'

It was an unlikely trio but also an unforgettable one. Megastar Amitabh Bachchan, actors Irrfan Khan and Deepika Padukone collaborated on their acclaimed 2015 slice of life drama comedy Piku and on the film's ninth anniversary on Wednesday, the Fighter star shared an amusing throwback picture from the sets.

The film, penned by Juhi Chaturvedi and directed by Shoojit Sircar, followed the story of a daughter and her aging father, whose eccentricities drive everyone crazy. The film featured Deepika as the headstrong ambitious woman Piku Banerjee, while Bachchan played her father. Deepika Padukone took to Instagram and shared the special image, where Bachchan was seen talking, while Irrfan and Deepika look at each other, smiling. A spot boy is seen holding a fruit plate in front of Bachchan.

Piku remains a fan favourite film and is ranked as one of the best performances of Deepika, Irrfan and Amitabh Bachchan. The film was a major commercial hit, earning rave reviews upon its release for its script, performances, music and humour. It was also the only film where Irrfan and Deepika shared screen space. The two



were supposed to re-unite for a Vishal Bhardwaj film, Sapna Didi, which could not materialise as Irrfan was diagnosed with cancer. The actor passed away in 2020. Deepika was also supposed to collaborate with Bachchan on the Hindi remake of The Intern, which has now been put on the backburner. Deepika Padukone will be next seen in Prabhas-led actioner Kaki 2898 AD, followed by a special appearance in Singham Again, headlined by Ajay Devgn and also starring Ranveer Singh.

Janhvi Kapoor cheekily shuts down rumours of marriage with Shikhar Pahariya at Tirupati: 'Kuch bhi...'



Bollywood star Janhvi Kapoor isn't about to let rumours dictate the narrative of her personal life, especially when it comes to her relationship with Shikhar Pahariya. When an Instagram paparazzi account recently speculated that Janhvi would tie the knot with Shikhar in a traditional ceremony at Tirupati Temple, the Dhadak actor wasted no time shutting down the gossip with a cheeky response.

Commenting on the post, Janhvi quipped, "Kuch bhi (What event)," prompting fans to react with a flurry of laughing emojis. A user wrote, "@janhvikapoor aapko pata bhi nhi (You don't even know)," and added a laughing emoji. Another chimed in, "@janhvikapoor jabardasti karwayenge ye log Shikhar, the grandson of former Maharashtra Chief Minister Sushilkumar Shinde, has a long-standing connection with Janhvi, though the couple reportedly split at one point for undisclosed reasons. The duo has been spotted together on several occasions, signaling a reconciliation. While Janhvi has remained

tight-lipped about her love life, she did let her guard down during an appearance on Koffee with Karan. When Karan inquired about the three most important people in her life, Janhvi named her father, Khushi, and then hesitated before mentioning Shikhar, whom she lovingly calls 'Shikhu' revealing her affectionate nickname for him in the process.

Earlier this year, Janhvi and Shikhar were seen offering prayers at Tirupati Temple. In another public display of affection, Janhvi attended the premiere of Madaan last month in Mumbai, wearing a white suit and a necklace bearing the name "Shikhu" — a clear nod to her beau. Janhvi's father and producer, Boney Kapoor, during an interview with Zoom, expressed his fondness for Shikhar. "I love Shikhar," and further explained, "In fact, a couple of years back, Janhvi was not seeing him, but I was still friendly to him (sic)." He added that during the time the rumoured couple was not seeing each other, Boney was convinced, "Shikhar could never be an ex."

Shabana Azmi says heroes need to be ready to 'play second fiddle' to women to end pay disparity, compliments Alia Bhatt, Deepika Padukone



Veteran actor Shabana Azmi, who completes 50 years in the industry in 2024, says it is a good time to be in commercial cinema, where varied parts are being written for women and age is no longer a barrier. The actor, who won acclaim last year with her act in Karan Johar's Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani, said stars like Deepika Padukone and Alia Bhatt are today headlining important parts in mainstream cinema, which was unthinkable earlier.

In an interview with MidDay, Shabana said ten years ago, substantial parts for senior artistes "were inconceivable" and noted how in the past two years, she has done "an array of roles." "The scenario has improved vastly. Earlier, it was only left to parallel cinema to give women substantial roles. Today, look at the roles Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone are doing in mainstream films. I believe if change has to happen, it should reflect in main-

stream cinema, or you are preaching to the converted.

"That there are so many women on the set today in positions of authority is a good sign. Since there are so many female writers now, I hope it will lead to more women-centred content," she was quoted. When asked about the issue of pay disparity, which several female stars have consistently spoken about in the past, the 73-year-old actor said, "It will (change) when women-centric films start making money at the box office. Heroes need to be ready to play second fiddle like women did all these years." According to the report, the UK Asian Film Festival (UKAFF) will mark her 50 years in the film industry with a special programme to celebrate her career. On May 10, Azmi will also be honoured with the Freedom of City of London Award by the City of London Corporation, in recognition of her contribution to Indian cinema and as a "champion of women's rights."

Neeraj Chopra to compete in India for first time since Tokyo Olympics gold as he charts glory at Paris 2024



GNS News Agency, May 10

Neeraj Chopra will be competing in India after a long time as the reigning Olympic champion gears up to defend his Tokyo Olympics title at the Paris Olympics, which will be held from July 26 to August 11 this year. Neeraj will be in action at the 27th National Federation Cup athletics championships in Odisha, which will be held from May 12 to May 15 at the Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar. Before the Federation Cup, the World Championships, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games champion will be taking part at the Doha Diamond League meet, which happens on May 10. Neeraj

will be competing in the men's javelin throw event in Doha along with compatriot Kishore Jena. "I want to be in best possible shape before Paris Olympics. My training sessions have gone off really well so far. I always lay stress on fitness along with strength and technique. This is the best I have felt in a long time but I must add that training and competition are not the same. When you wear the India jersey, the feeling is different, the josh (energy) is unbelievable," Neeraj had said to SAI Media.

Talking about the elusive 90-metre mark, the 26-year-old Neeraj said again that 'distance doesn't matter to him.' "What matters to me is staying 100 per cent fit, being consistent during the season and delivering on the day that matters. I think there are mistakes to fix and looking at the increasing competition all around, one has to keep improving. The road will close if you think you have done it all," he said. Talking about how his performance in Tokyo indicated that his preparation for global tournaments was going in the right direction, Neeraj said, "I have won medals in two World Championships, threw my personal best (89.94 metres at Stockholm), won a dream Diamond League title and even defended my gold at the Asian Games. All in all, I have been in great space and want to carry forward that momentum from May onwards."

Shakib Al Hasan grabs selfie-seeking fan by his neck

GNS News Agency, May 10

Shakib al Hasan grabs a Bangladesh cricket fan by his neck after the latter pestered him for a selfie. Shakib al Hasan grabs a Bangladesh cricket fan by his neck after the latter pestered him for a selfie. (Screengrabs via X) Shakib Al Hasan is one of the biggest stars in Bangladesh cricket at the moment. So it's natural that fans will want a piece of him. But one fan's quest to get a selfie with Shakib turned ugly when Shakib lost his cool.

In a clip that surfaced on social media, Shakib is seen in conversation with other members of his team when a fan approaches the cricketer and asks for a selfie. Shakib initially politely refuses. But the fan keeps insisting, trying to click Shakib from a distance. That's when things got ugly. In the clip, the Bangladeshi cricket star can be seen attempting to snatch the phone away. When the fan moves the phone away from Shakib's grasp, the cricketer grabs him behind the neck and directs him out of the ground in an ugly scene. According to media report in local media back in Bangladesh, the incident purportedly



happened on the sidelines of a Dhaka Premier League match. Shakib has earned a reputation for being involved in ugly scenes in the past. The all-rounder has been part of the Bangladesh national team cricket for a long time, having played 67 Tests, 247 ODIs and 117 T20Is from 2006 till now. Shakib is a legend in the country. He is currently the top-ranked all-rounder for Bangladesh in T20Is.

David Warner says IPL helped raise his game to another level: 'Luxury you have here... love, love, love it!'



GNS News Agency, May 10

Delhi Capitals batter David Warner plays a shot during the IPL match between Rajasthan Royals and Delhi Capitals, at Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on March 28, 2024. (PTI Photo) Delhi Capitals batter David Warner plays a shot during the IPL match between Rajasthan Royals and Delhi Capitals, at Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on March 28, 2024. David Warner has rapidly become a fan favourite in Indian stadiums and on social media with his clips imitating famous scenes from movies and showing off dance steps. But the Australian cricketer has also fallen in love with what he calls the "organised chaos" of India, so much so that he was looking to buy a house in India. In a recent chat with Ravichandran Ashwin for the Indian spinner's YouTube channel, Warner spoke of why he loves the IPL and how it helped him raise his own level.

"One thing I noticed was that when you were here (in IPL), you had so many net bowlers. In Australia, we basically only face our bowlers. Now, we've started getting net bowlers coming in. But on weekends, those guys have to play grade cricket. So we don't have the luxury of having people (net bowlers) in Australia all the time: Friday, Saturday, Sunday, we probably have no net bowlers," revealed Warner before adding, "But when I was in IPL, I was like, whoa, who do you want? Do you want left-arm spin? Right-arm leg spin? Off spin? Fast bowler? You had so many options. You got so many bowlers. So that was important because you could bat for a long period of time," Warner told Ashwin in a recent interview. "The number one thing that I love, love, love, love when I'm here in India is that you could practice on the center square. Because then you get a great scope of dimensions (of the stadiums). When I was in Hyderabad, that's all I did was I'd bat in the net, go out there and just face spin the whole time. Fast bowling, we're used to it. But spin was hitting pockets of the ground, trying to get the dimensions right, playing different shots. And I would have had probably six, seven, all different kinds of spin bowling," revealed Warner before adding, "I loved it. Absolutely loved it. And that's where I think my game went to another level, through the middle phase of T20 cricket. And then I batted number four as well because we had to mix and match with the way that our team was built. So I even went to four. And that was why I practiced a lot of spin bowling during that time. But that's the luxury that you have here. Look, I think you spoke about how you had to shift between number four and open the batting and find the pockets in Hyderabad," Warner said.

"India is definitely a second home. I recall us speak-

ing about it before the World Cup final that the venue had only been played a couple of times by both teams. So you're almost playing on an even playing field, minus the 100,000 sea of blue in the stands. I think when you've played for a long time and you've got a big group of players who've played for a long time, you sort of negate all that. You don't really have that sense of the crowd being there. It's like when we play against India and Australia. There's hardly any Australians in the crowd. It's all Indians. So we're used to it when we play against you," said Warner before adding, "I think we just embrace the fact that we don't have anything to lose. We are fortunate that since 2009, I've understood the wickets. I've understood the venues. But Ahmedabad was the one where the boundaries were similar to Australia. They're bigger. Our game plan was structured around the MCG. Hit the pockets, run the twos. If we're bowling, bowl into the chest and target the big boundaries. So for us, it was like Australian game plan inside India. And that's how we sort of thought about and that's how we tried to attack that situation. "It definitely helps being part of the IPL, practicing on the wickets. Practicing the wickets over here, whether it's test, it's white ball cricket. You understand the ground. You understand the pitches. You know different red soil, brown soil. Is it going to turn first innings? Where is it going to turn second innings? You sort of get that great understanding. And we've got a lot of experience in that team. And I think it wasn't just by chance that we played the way that we did. It was more the understanding that we had of reading the wickets," Warner added.

The Future Kids School secure twin basketball titles



GNS News Agency, May 10

Hyderabad: The Future Kids School (FKS) Under-14 girls and boys teams secured titles in the League cum Knock Out Basketball Tournament at Apollo Ground Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad on Monday.

In the girls final, they defeated Pushpan Sports Academy (PSA) 24-18 to clinch the title. FKS' Riddhina and PSA's Vedaya emerged as top performers with scores of 10 and 8 respectively. In the boys category, FKS edged past PSA 17-16 to win the trophy.

Delhi weather Sanju Samson storm to keep playoff hopes alive



GNS News Agency, May 10

SYNOPSIS: Samson on song gives Delhi a scare after another Fraser-McGurk blitz and some good hitting from Porel and Stubbs power them to 221 Sanju Samson looked unstoppable like he does when he mingles everything with that sweet timing of his. Calm, unflappable and holding his shape while hitting some glorious sixes, the Rajasthan Royals captain looked good to score his first hundred of the season and take his team home. The target was daunting, even on this batting-friendly wicket in Delhi, but as long as Samson was tonking the ball around, against spin and pace, that match result seemed to be heading just one way.

With 60 needed off 27 balls, Samson, batting on 86, hit Mukesh Kumar straight down the ground. Shai Hope held on to the catch along on the edge of the boundary line and tip-toed thereafter to stop himself from stepping over. Samson was on the way back to the dugout but stopped after seeing the replay on the giant screen. The third umpire had given him 'out' but the Rajasthan captain wasn't satisfied after seeing the replays. Samson had an animated discussion with the on-field umpires and then even signalled for a review. But it was futile to review an on-field umpire's review. From here on the match slipped away from Rajasthan's grasp as they lost the momentum. Samson is having one of his best IPL seasons ever and his knock, days after being selected for the T20 World Cup, was an exhibition of his ability to find boundaries, almost at will. His 46-ball knock was studied with eight boundaries and six sixes. Sanju didn't get much support from the other end — the other proven-match winners Jos Buttler (19 off 17 balls) and Riyan Parag (27 off 22 balls) failed to convert their starts. Shubham Dubey (25 off 12 balls) played a good hand but succumbed under the scoreboard pressure.

On the eve of the match, Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting had said he wanted Jake Fraser-McGurk to open with Travis Head in the T20 World Cup and expressed his displeasure at the youngster not getting

picked for Australia. "I was a little bit surprised that he wasn't included in the Australia squad. If you think of what Travis Head has done in this tournament and then what Jake's has done, if those two were able to walk out together in a T20 game, I think it could have been pretty entertaining." Ponting has hinted that Fraser-McGurk should replace David Warner at the top for Australia, just like he has done at Delhi Capitals. On Tuesday, Fraser-McGurk once again displayed his hitting power with his 20-ball 50, showing that George Bailey (chief selector) and Mitchell Marsh might have missed a trick.

After winning the battle against Jasprit Bumrah the other day, Fraser-McGurk's next big challenge was against Trent Boult, always a tricky prospect with the new ball. The tussle started with a couple of wild heaves from Fraser-McGurk. There were three attempted pull shots and one of these deliveries hit him on the box. When he was back on his feet, he finally connected one over mid-off to get going. In Boult's second over, he cleared his front leg and in Sunil Narine-style slammed the ball over the bowler's head for a six. The big shot forced Boult to change his angle and he switched to over the wicket. Boult found an edge but it flew past the first slip region. Then Boult came round the wicket and was welcomed with a forehand slap for a boundary. Fifteen runs came from Boult's second over. The best was saved for Avesh Khan, who started off with beauty — the inside edge went for a boundary. Thereafter Jake plundered 28 runs from Avesh's over, including four boundaries and two sixes. He completed his fourth fifty in just 19 balls.

Ravichandran Ashwin put an end to the Fraser-McGurk show. The off-spinner was a touch lucky as he dismissed Fraser-McGurk with a full toss. The kind of touch Fraser-McGurk was in, he could have easily hit that full toss into the Feroz Shah Kotla nearby. But he ended up chipping it straight to Donovan Ferreira at cover. Fraser-McGurk couldn't believe his luck and neither did Ashwin. Samson might have missed a trick by not giving Ashwin another over with two left-handed batters Abhishek Porel and Axar Patel at the crease. Porel, who played second fiddle to Fraser-McGurk, changed gears by hitting a six and a four against spinner Yuzvendra Chahal. Ashwin was brought back and this time he got the better of Axar Patel. At the other end, Porel kept going for his shots and completed his maiden fifty off just 28 balls. Ashwin had the last laugh as he got the prized wicket of Porel. The southpaw, who has replaced Prithvi Shaw in the playing XI scored a 36-ball 65, a knock studded with seven boundaries and three maximums. A late flourish from Tristan Stubbs — 20-ball 41 — helped Delhi reach 221 for 8. For Rajasthan Royals, R Ashwin (3/22) was the pick of the bowlers.

RR vs DC Emotional Rollercoaster: Fraser-McGurk cops a blow, then strikes many blows, Yuzi goes off the boil and Axar snares another big hitter in Buttler



There was plenty of drama in the end when Sanju Samson was caught by Shai Hope at long-on. As the umpires sent it to the third umpire to check if Hope's foot touched the boundary ropes or not.

GNS News Agency, May 10

There was plenty of drama in the end when Sanju Samson was caught by Shai Hope at long-on. As the umpires sent it to the third umpire to check if Hope's foot touched the boundary ropes or not. And in one of the camera angles, shown briefly, it appeared as if his foot just brushed the boundary cushions. But the third umpire soon got another camera angle, which suggested otherwise and eventually Samson was given out. But having seen the previous angle, Samson came back to have a word with the on-field umpires. The RR captain even checked if he could use DRS. But there was no way back. Jake Fraser-McGurk has inflicted a lot of pain on bowlers in his yet-short IPL stint, but the young Australian felt some himself in the opening over against Rajasthan Royals. Trent Boult is often deadly in his opening spell from over the wicket, but had done his homework before the game against Delhi Capitals. The Kiwi left-arm pacer came round the wicket, denying Jake room to have a free swing of the arms. And the fourth ball beat an attempted pull to hit him in the groin, as the batsman hit the turf for the count. It was a long time before he returned to his feet, not before being attended to for a long time by the team physio. All this while, Boult was waiting impatiently at the top of his run-up. But when he took strike next, Fraser smashed the Kiwi veteran over mid-off for a four to show that he was up for the fight. He then went on to give another turbo-charged start to Delhi Capitals, smashing Avesh Khan in particular, to reach 50 in just 19 balls inside four overs.

The spinner going to the T20 World Cup had a forgettable outing, while the one considered surplus to requirement proved that he always makes a difference, re-

gardless of the format. Yuzvendra Chahal is one among the four tweakers selected in the Indian squad, but figures of 1/48 in four overs don't make for good reading, regardless of the flat wicket, small ground and the devil-may-care attitude of batsmen this IPL. His spell began and ended with sixes, but despite the flurry of boundaries, there was a period when he kept the batsmen's intentions in check. Chahal got the key wicket of Rishabh Pant and it was only in his final over, the 18th of the innings, that Gulbadin Naib and Tristan Stubbs combined to hit him for 21 runs, the South African hitting him for two fours and a six in four balls. Ravichandran Ashwin, on the other hand, was one bowler who kept the batsmen honest while the others went on a leather hunt. He got the unstoppable Jake Fraser-McGurk as well as left-handers Abhishek Porel and Axar Patel, going for only 24 in four overs and conceding only one boundary in his spell.

The most relieved man at the Kotla when the ball made contact with Jos Buttler's leg-stump, via an inside edge, would have been Tristan Stubbs. The South African had dropped a skier offered by the England captain off Mukesh Kumar's first delivery on the night and Buttler has a habit of punishing such errors. He had already hit two centuries this season, and Delhi Capitals would have been desperate to see his back. Buttler had only hit one four till then but after the reprieve, hit a boundary and a six in Axar Patel's first over, still inside the Powerplay. But the fifth ball of the sixth over brought great joy for the hosts, who were playing to keep their inconsistent campaign relevant. Axar continued to be reliable and hold his own against the biggest hitters in the game.