



# FIRST INDIA

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Rajasthan's Own English Newspaper



## GOVINDA JOINS SHIV SENA, MAY CONTEST FROM MUMBAI N-W

Actor Govinda on Thursday joined Shiv Sena in presence of Maha CM Eknath Shinde in Mumbai. He may contest the LS polls from Mumbai North-West. P6



## AFTER SON NAVEEN, INDIA'S RICHEST WOMAN JOINS BJP

India's richest woman Savitri Jindal joins BJP, a day after resigning from the membership of Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, on Thursday.



## KANGANA REMARKS ROW: CONG DENIES LS TICKET TO SHRINATE

Congress leader Supriya Shrinate has been denied ticket from Maharajganj in UP in backdrop of her controversial remarks against actor Kangana Ranaut.



## NEED INDIA TO RESTORE LASTING PEACE IN UKRAINE: FOREIGN MIN

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba arrives Delhi, he said India has an important global voice, can ask other nations join peace initiative.



Lawyers, including Salve, write to Chandrachud over group trying to "pressurise judiciary"



CLICK TO READ THE LETTER FOR THE CJI

## THREAT TO JUDICIARY: 600 LAWYERS WRITE TO CJI

# RAISING ALARM TO DEFEND JUSTICE!

Moni Sharma  
New Delhi

Over 600 lawyers, including senior advocate Harish Salve and Bar Council of India chairperson Manan Kumar Mishra, has written to the CJI, alleging that a "vested interest group" is trying to put pressure on the judiciary and defame courts "on the basis of frivolous logic and stale political agendas". "Their pressure tactics are most obvious in political cases, particularly those involving political figures accused of corruption. These tactics are damaging to our courts and threaten our democratic fabric," their letter, dated March 26, addressed to CJI D Y Chandrachud said.

The lawyers claimed that this 'vested interest group' was employing pressure tactics to influence judicial outcomes. "These actions pose a significant threat to the democratic fabric and the trust placed in judicial processes," the lawyers said.



### WHAT'S HAPPENING...

**POLITICAL FLIP-FLOPPING**  
It is strange to see politicians accuse someone of corruption and then defend them in court. If the court's decision doesn't go their way, they quickly criticise the courts inside the court as well as through media.

### PROBLEMS FACED...

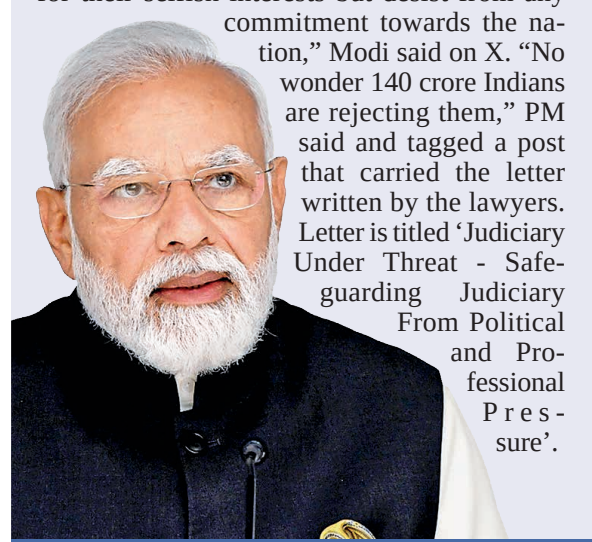
Duplicity within our legal system undermines public trust and respect, eroding confidence in its fairness and integrity. Transparency and ethical conduct are crucial to restoring faith.

**UNDERHAND TACTICS AND FALSE INFORMATION**  
Some elements are trying to influence who the judges are in their cases and spread lies on social media to put pressure on the judges to decide in a particular way.

Such actions jeopardize impartiality of our courts, undermining foundation of justice. Upholding integrity and adherence to legal principles is imperative to safeguarding judiciary.

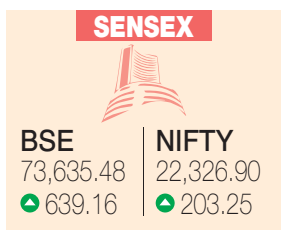
## 'Concerned' Modi attacks Cong over lawyers' letter

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said it is a "vintage Congress culture" to browbeat and bully others, remarks that came in reaction to over 600 lawyers writing to the CJI, alleging that a "vested interest group" is trying to put pressure on the judiciary and defame courts. "To browbeat and bully others is vintage Congress culture. 5 decades ago itself they had called for a "committed judiciary" - they shamelessly want commitment from others for their selfish interests but desist from any commitment towards the nation," Modi said on X. "No wonder 140 crore Indians are rejecting them," PM said and tagged a post that carried the letter written by the lawyers. Letter is titled 'Judiciary Under Threat - Safeguarding Judiciary From Political and Professional Pressure'.



### LAWYERS REQUEST TOP COURT

More than 600 lawyers request the Supreme Court of India to stand strong and take steps to protect our courts from these attacks. Staying silent or doing nothing could accidentally give more power to those who mean to do harm. This is not the time to maintain dignified silence as such efforts are happening since few years and too frequently.



### IN SHORT

- In its first breakthrough in Bengaluru's Rameshwaram Cafe blast case, NIA nabs key conspirator following raids in 3 states
- India and China agreed to hold talks through diplomatic and military channels to resolve LAC issue
- About 80,000 leaders, workers from different parties join BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha Elections
- Former Dera Kar Seva Pramukh of Nanakmatta Gurdwara in Uttarakhand was shot dead by two men
- 3 workers died after being caught under debris when a concrete ceiling at Sekhmet Club in Chennai fell on them

## TENSION LOOMS LARGE FOR KEJRIWAL

# Delhi court extends ED custody of Arvind Kejriwal till April 1

Delhi HC dismisses PIL to remove Kejriwal from CM post after arrest

First India Bureau  
New Delhi

The ED was granted a 4-day extended custody (April 1) of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal by Rouse Avenue Court on Thursday. Meanwhile, HC dismissed a PIL which sought removal of Kejriwal and prevention of issuing orders while being in ED custody, saying that it is the violation of legal framework as well as against principle of fair probe. AAP, however, claimed that the federal agency had no reply to questions raised by Delhi CM's lawyers in the HC over his arrest.



Arvind Kejriwal being produced by the ED in Delhi Excise Policy case at the Rouse Avenue Court, in New Delhi on Thursday.

## US remarks on Kejri, unacceptable: MEA

Underlining that legal processes in the country are only driven by the rule of law, India on Thursday rejected the latest comments made by the US State Department as "completely unacceptable" and added that fellow democracies should respect the sovereignty and internal affairs of others. "India is proud of its robust and democratic institutions. Mutual respect and understanding form the basis of int'l relations, and states are expected to respect the sovereignty and internal affairs of others," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Thursday.

## RR triumph in nail-biting finish

Rajasthan Royals (185/5) clinch victory in a last-over thriller against Delhi Capitals (173/5) by 12 runs



(L) Sanju Samson and teammate Nandre Burger celebrate dismissal of DC's Ricky Bhui. RR's Riyan Parag during the match at SMS Stadium in Jaipur on Thursday. SANTOSH SHARMA

## 'False news' on Sidda: Channel owner booked

First India Bureau  
New Delhi/Bengaluru

Renowned TV channel owner and editor were on Thursday booked in Karnataka for allegedly airing false news about CM Siddaramaiah. The case was registered at Bengaluru's SJ Park police station after Cong leader Ravindra filed a complaint stating that at 7.15 pm on Wednesday, channel had broadcasted news claiming that traffic was halted on MG Road to make way for Sidda's vehicle and that an ambulance got stuck in traffic.



Mukesh Ambani

First India Bureau  
Mumbai

In the first collaboration between rival billionaires, Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries has picked up a 26 per cent stake in a Madhya Pradesh power project of Gautam Adani, and signed a pact to use the plants' 500 MW of electricity for captive use. Reliance will pick up 5 crore equity shares in Mahan Energen Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Adani Power Ltd, of

**Reliance will pick up 5 crore equity shares in Mahan Energen Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Adani Power Ltd, of face value ₹10 at par (₹50 crore)**

face value ₹10 at par (₹50 crore) and will use 500 MW of generation capacity for captive use, 2 firms said in separate stock exchange filings. The two businessmen hailing from Gujarat have often been pitted by media and commentators against each other but

they have for years tipped around each other to reach the top two rungs of Asia's wealth ladder. With Ambani's interests spanning oil and gas to retail and telecom and Adani's focus on infrastructure spanning sea ports to airports, coal and mining, they rarely crossed each other's path except in the clean energy business where the 2 have announced multi-billion investments. Adani was also present at pre-wedding celebrations of Ambani's youngest son, Anant, at Jamnagar.



Gautam Adani

## RIL ACQUIRES 26% STAKE IN ADANI'S POWER PROJECT

# IN A FIRST, AMBANI-ADANI COLLABORATE

## Jailed don Ansari dies in hosp after heart attack

First India Bureau  
Lucknow

Jailed gangster-politician **Mukhtar Ansari** died on Thursday night, after his health deteriorated. He was rushed to the Banda Medical College earlier this evening, and died there during treatment. Doctors were first called inside the jail to treat him but he was rushed to the hospital after medics suspected a heart-attack like condition, sources said. He was fasting all day and fell ill after breaking his fast in the evening, according to sources. On Tuesday, Ansari was hospitalised for around 14 hours in Banda after he complained of abdominal pain. Earlier, his brother and Ghazipur MP Afzal alleged that he was given poison in jail.



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FIRST INDIA

## Ballot Beat

INDIAN  
GENERAL ELECTIONS  
2024

02

## QUOTE-UNQUOTE



I see Kashi in it, I see Ram temple being built in it. Ram temple could be built because you voted for it. Every vote is valuable. Every vote should go to Kailash.

Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, Cabinet Minister



Casteism, regionalism & terrorism are in Cong's DNA. They only gave slogans. They gave an affidavit in SC calling Lord Ram imaginary & insulted Lord by rejecting invite for consecration ceremony on Jan 22.

CP Joshi, BJP State Prez



There is no substance in BJP's slogan of crossing 400. They are giving tickets to Cong leaders and are indulging in horse-trading. Congress will perform better this time in Rajasthan.

SS Randhawa, AICC Incharge for Raj



The undercurrent is against BJP. Congress will give a result which will shock everyone this time. Public has become very intelligent. We will issue a public manifesto among the public.

Ashok Gehlot, Former Chief Minister

## Jaipur: Cong to launch LS poll manifesto on April 6

Kharge, Sonia and Rahul Gandhi will release it during a public meeting

Dinesh Dangi

Jaipur

Congress will release the manifesto for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections on April 6 here in Jaipur.

Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi will release the party's manifesto on April 6 at a public meeting in Jaipur. The manifesto is ready and a proposal to release it in a public meeting in Jaipur was also passed in the last CWC meeting.

Congress will also show its strength through the manifesto launching program.

The party has set the target of gathering a huge crowd in the meeting.

A meeting was also held in the PCC war room



GS Dotasra addresses party workers at PCC War Room in Jaipur on Thursday, ahead of Sonia Gandhi's proposed public meeting to be held in Jaipur on April 6. SS Randhawa, Ashok Gehlot and Dr CP Joshi were present.

NAIM KHAN

## TOURS OF PM MODI, HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH BEING PLANNED IN RAJASTHAN



As Rajasthan gears up for political activity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are set to embark on tours to the state. Speaking about the leaders' visits, spokesperson Kuldeep Dhankhar stated, "The tours of these leaders will commence in Rajasthan soon." He while sharing about the leaders' visit, mentioned that the schedules for the public meetings of PM Modi and the Union Home Minister Shah are being finalised.

garding this on Thursday in which it was decided that crowds should be mobilized from Jaipur district and nearby areas.

The party has also set a target to bring crowd from districts like Sikar, Tonk, Ajmer, Dausa and Alwar to Jaipur.

## 68K elderly, disabled choose home voting

## LS POLLS 2024

First India Bureau

Jaipur

Nearly 68,000 elderly and disabled people have so far chosen the option of voting from home (home voting) in LS polls in Rajasthan. Voting process under home voting will start from April 5.

A total of 68,965 voters, including 51,230 senior citizens and 16,735 disabled voters, have so far opted to vote



from home for all 25 LS seats in Raj, CEO Praveen Gupta said.

He said that senior citizens & disabled voters are actively registering for home voting. There is more zeal towards home voting than Assembly polls-2023, wherein, 61,628 eligible voters had registered.

## Is Baar 400 Paar: Birla urges people

Bhanwar S Charan

Bundi

Kota-Bundi MP and BJP candidate Om Birla on while addressing people during campaigning in Bundi, said that PM Modi has become the ambassador of the new revolution of progress in the country.

He said that everyone needs to participate in the



Om Birla greets people during a public meeting in Bundi district on Thursday.

journey of development through voting.

Birla said that the slo-

Boost LS victory margin:Raje to workers in Baran

Hanspal Yadav

Baran

Ex-Rajasthan CM Vasundhara Raje met party leaders in Baran. In her address, she urged workers to boost LS victory margin.



Welcomed by MP Dushyant Singh, MLAs Singhvi, Meena, Berwa, BJP's Suman. Stresses on ensuring 5 lakh+ votes for candidate Dushyant Singh's fifth win.



## CONG CANDIDATES AWAIT PARTY FUNDING FOR LS ELECTIONS

Congress candidates are eagerly waiting for funding from the party. Several candidates raised this issue regarding the funds management. Crores of rupees are spent in LS elections. Congress had given Rs 70 lakh to every candidate in the Assembly elections. Now, for LS elections they are waiting for funds.

## KOTA SOUTH MAYOR TO JOIN BJP IN FIRST WEEK OF APRIL

In a shock to Congress in Kota, Mayor Rajeev Aggarwal may quit. Aggarwal is the Mayor of Kota South Municipal Corporation. If all goes well, he will take membership of BJP in the first week of April. There has been a discussion between both the parties and an agreement has also been reached.

## Monitoring electoral freebies: CEO Gupta

First India Bureau

Jaipur

Various enforcement agencies in Rajasthan have seized drugs, liquor, precious metals, freebies and illegal cash worth approximately Rs 314 crore since March after the implementation of the MCC in view of LS polls 2024.

The value of the items seized by the agencies since March 16 is more than Rs 215 cr. "Since March 1, over Rs 10 cr in items and cash recovered in 12 Raj dists," he said. The ECI has imposed a

## CANDIDATES &amp; LS CONSTITUENCIES

Lok Sabha constituency	Valid candidates
Ganganagar	9
Bikaner	9
Churu	14
Jhunjhunu	8
Sikar	16
Jaipur Rural	17
Jaipur	14
Alwar	10
Bharatpur	6
Karauli-Dholpur	4
Dausa	7
Nagaur	10

ban on exit polls from 7 a.m. on April 19 until 6:30 p.m. on June 1.

LS polls: Cong unveils list of 40 star campaigners

First India Bureau

Jaipur

After the BJP released its list of star campaigners, now the Congress party has unveiled its list of 40 star campaigners, comprising prominent leaders including Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, Kharge, and in charge Randhawa.

PCC Chief Govind Singh Dotasra, former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Former Assembly Speaker Dr CP Joshi, LoP Tikaram Jolly & Sachin Pilot have been included in the list.

## Cong not in race, BJP will win all 25 seats in Raj: Diya



Diya Kumari during the inauguration of the Central election office of BJP candidate Bhagirath Chaudhary in Ajmer district on Thursday. Other local leaders were also present.

Shubham Jain

Ajmer

Launching a scathing attack on Congress, Deputy CM Diya Kumari said that Congress is a disease which has eaten the country for years. "Now

the nation has got a PM like Narendra Modi who is serving the nation and has taken a pledge to protect India's self-respect and develop the nation," she said. "Cong isn't in race in LS polls & BJP is set to win all 25 seats."

Nomination process for 13 seats in 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of Raj LS polls commences

First India Bureau

Jaipur

Nomination process for 13 seats in 2nd phase of LS polls in Raj started on Thursday. On first day, BJP candidate Kailash Choudhary filed his papers from Barmer. Nomination rally at Adarsh Stadium with Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, KK Vishnoi. In Udaipur, BJP's Manlal Rawat; In Ajmer, BJP's Bhagirath Choudhary and Cong's Ramchandra Chaudhary took the forms.



Kailash Choudhary files nomination papers for the LS elections from the Barmer-Jaisalmer parliamentary constituency at the Election Office in Barmer on Thursday. Priyanka Chaudhary and others were present.

## GS SHEKHAWAT TO FILE NOMINATION FOR JODHPUR LOK SABHA SEAT ON MARCH 30

Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat will file his nomination as BJP candidate from Jodhpur LS constituency on March 30. After filing his nomination, he will address a gathering at Polo Ground & invited masses for the same.

## CHITTORGARH LOK SABHA SEAT

## Chittorgarh: A historic saga of Cong-BJP rivalry unfolds

Abhishek Tiwari

Jaipur

The Chittorgarh Lok Sabha constituency in Rajasthan has been witnessing a fierce political battle between the Congress and the BJP since independence. Notably, this constituency has been represented by prominent figures such as former Union Minister Dr. Girija Vyas and Maharana Mahendra Singh of Udaipur's royal family. The electoral history of this constituency dates

back to its inaugural elections, where the Bharatiya Jan Sangh made its mark with Umashankar Trivedi emerging victorious. However, the subsequent elections in 1957 and 1962 saw the seat swinging in favour of the Congress, with Manikyalal Varma elected as the MP. The Congress continued its streak in 1967 with another victory.

In 1971, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh's Vishwanath Jhunjhunwala clinched the seat, followed by the Janata Party's Shyam Sundar Somani in 1977. The seat reverted to Con-

gress in 1980 and 1984, with Nirmala Kumari Shaktawat serving as the MP. The BJP entered the fray in 1989, and Mahendra Singh Mehta won the elections, retaining the

seat in 1991 and 1996. Chittorgarh has also been associated with Jaswant Singh, who served as MP in 1991 and 1996, carving a niche for himself in the political land-

scape. Before Singh's tenure, the Congress had secured victories in three out of six Lok Sabha elections. However, the BJP's Sri Chand Kriplani won in 1999 and 2004.

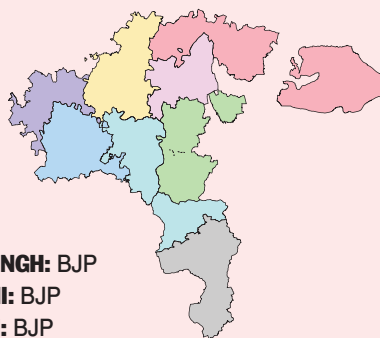
In 2009, Congress's Girija Vyas reclaimed the seat, only to see the BJP regain control from 2014 onwards. Currently, CP Joshi leads the constituency under the BJP banner.

The Chittorgarh constituency remains significant for its historical and political significance, with each election witnessing intense competition between the Con-

gress and the BJP. As the electoral battle heats up once again, the voters await the outcome, which will shape the political landscape of the region for years to come.

## LIST OF MPs OF CHITTORGARH SO FAR

- 1952 UMASHANKAR TRIVEDI: Bharatiya Jana Sangh
- 1957 & 1962 MANIKYA LAL VERMA: INC
- 1967 ONKAR LAL BOHRA: INC
- 1971 BISHWANATH JHUNJHUNWALA: Bharatiya Jana Sangh
- 1977 SHYAM SUNDER SOMANI: Janata Party
- 1980 & 1984 NIRMALA KUMARI SHAKTAWAT: INC
- 1989 MAHENDRA SINGH MEWAR: BJP ● 1991 & 1996 JASWANT SINGH: BJP
- 1998 UDAI LAL ANJANA: INC ● 1999 & 2004 SHRICHAND KRIPLANI: BJP
- 2009 GIRIJA VYAS: INC ● 2014 & 2019 CHANDRA PRAKASH JOSHI: BJP



## ASSEMBLY SEAT-WISE POSITION OF CHITTORGARH

- (154) MAVLI: Pushkar Lal Dangi (INC)
- (155) VALLABHNAGAR: Udaialal Dangi (BJP)
- (167) KAPASAN: Arjun Lal Jingar (BJP)
- (168) BEGUN: Suresh Dhakar (BJP)
- (169) CHITTORGARH: Chandrabhan Singh Aakya (IND)
- (170) NIMBAHERA: Shrichand Kriplani (BJP)
- (171) BARI SADRI: Gautam Kumar (BJP)
- (172) PRATAPGARH: Hemant Meena (BJP)



Surprise inspection

CS orders proper dress code enforcement for staff

Pant miffed over working of transport dept officials

Shivendra Singh Parmar  
Jaipur

Chief Secretary Sudhansh Pant today conducted a surprise inspection of the transport department's headquarters in less than 2 months.

The chief secretary, in his visit of about 1 hr, inspected every section of headquarters and took information about files.

He found files pending in most of the sections, on which he expressed strong displeasure and ordered the Transport Commissioner to suspend ARTO Ravindra Joshi and Accounts Service Officer Jalendra.

CS has expressed displeasure several times regarding shortcomings



and pendency of files. During his inspection on 14th February also, Pant had expressed his displeasure regarding the pendency of the files, but even after this the situation in the Transport HQs has not changed.

Pant said that there is continuous negative

feedback from the transport department.

He also expressed strong displeasure over the dress code. He directed some personnel seen in jeans and t-shirts to go home and change their clothes. He also directed to give charge sheets to such personnel. He said

T RAVIKANTH INSPECTS RAJ HOUSING BOARD

Principal secretary of UDH T. Ravikanth conducted an inspection of Rajasthan Housing Board on Thursday. Following the footsteps of the Chief Secretary, Sudhansh Pant, who previously inspected the Housing Board, on Wednesday Ravikanth conducted the inspection.

that senior officers do not even check and if they close their eyes then how will the arrangements be improved?

Pant also got angry after seeing the dirty toilets. He told the officials that there is so much dirt here that one cannot stand even for a while.

Barmer youth kidnapped in broad daylight, video goes viral

Ashok Shera  
Jaipur

A video of a young man being kidnapped by miscreants in broad daylight has surfaced from Barmer city. The incident took place on Thursday. The video shows miscreants in a black SUV kidnapping a man from under the over-bridge in front of the city's Government District Hospital.

Around six miscreants are seen forcibly pushing the man in the car. However, the most surprising thing is that local people had gathered but no one could muster enough courage to intervene. Later, people informed the administration. On receiving information, police reached the spot. The SP has instructed to put up blockades in entire district. Police are trying to identify the youth.

QR code based cleaning must from April 1 in hospitals



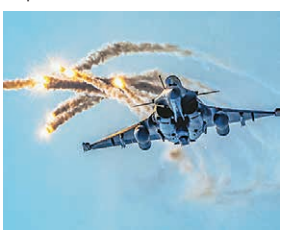
Vikas Sharma  
Jaipur

QR code based cleaning system will be mandatory from April 1 in all the hospitals affiliated to medical colleges of the state. Additional Chief Secretary, Medical and Health Dept Shubhra Singh, issued guidelines in this regard.

Compliance report to be submitted by April 5 Medical Education Com-

missioner Iqbal Khan said that to implement this, guidelines have been given to Principal & Controller of Medical Colleges in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Kota, Ajmer, Barmer, Dungarpur, Bharatpur, Bhilwara, Sikar, Pali, Churu, Jhalawar and RUHS Jaipur. They will have to submit the compliance report by April 5. Nodal officers will be appointed in all the affiliated hospitals.

Airforce's 'Gagan Shakti' exercise to commence from Apr 1 in Jaisalmer



Suryaveer Singh Tanwar  
Jaisalmer

Indian Air Force's 'Gagan Shakti' mega exercise is slated to be held over 10 days starting April 1, encompassing both western and northern fronts. Fighter planes and helicopters from different parts of country will "engage pseudo targets" at Pokhran Field Firing Ranges during the massive exercise held every five years, sources said. Ahead of 'Gagan Shakti 2024', Indian Army has been involved in providing logistical support to the IAF in the spirit of achieving synergy.

FI journalist bereaved

Pushpa Devi, mother of senior journalist at First India, Rashpal Singh Bharadwaj, passed away in Pathankot (Punjab) on Thursday morning after a prolonged illness. First India family extends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

Mahesh Joshi in hospital due to ill health, skips ED summon

First India Bureau  
Jaipur

Former PHED minister Mahesh Joshi did not appear before the Enforcement Directorate on Thursday. The

ED had on Wednesday issued a notice to Joshi and called him for questioning on Thursday in connection with alleged irregularities in the tenders of JJM. Joshi did not go to the ED office due to ill health. He had gone to Delhi where suddenly his health deteriorated.

Sarpanch, son in ACB net for bribe

Navin Sharma  
Jhalawar

The Jhalawar unit of ACB has arrested the Sarpanch of Gram Pan-chayat Sarda and his brother son red handed while taking a bribe amount of Rs 25,000 on Thursday. They sought bribe for passing the Muster roll of



Radheshyam & Ravi Meha.

MGNREGA works. Jhalawar ACB's Addl SP Jagram Meena said

that in lieu of getting the Muster roll passed by the complainant, Sarpanch Radheshyam Mehar sought Rs 56,000 as commission. Addl SP Jagram Meena informed that after verification, the ACB laid a trap and arrested the two. A case has been registered against them under various sections.

Sanitation workers can amend recruitment forms till April 4

Bharat Dixit  
Jaipur

Candidates who have applied for recruitment for more than 24,000 sanitation workers released by the Local Self Governance Department will be able to get applications amended till April 4.

Besides this, it has been made mandatory for the candidates to attach a certificate of one-year experience of cleaning sewerage and public roads from the contractor of the urban body under the new orders along with their application forms.

Holi Milan by men in Khaki



1. DGP Utkal Ranjan Sahoo sharing a light moment with Inspector General of ATS, Anshuman Bhomiya during the Holi Milan celebration event at his residence in Jaipur.  
2. ADG police welfare, Govind Gupta and ADG RAC, Anand Shrivastava during the event on Thursday.  
3. UR Sahoo speaking with ADG ACB, Hemant Priyadarshi on Thursday.

NAIM KHAN

Transport dept to replace e-RC, e-licence smart cards from Apr 1

First India Bureau  
Jaipur

Starting April 1, the transport department will issue e-RC and e-licence in place of smart cards. These will be available in PDF format on the applicants' mobile phones. The public can take its printout from the e-Mitra kiosks in offices.

However, applicants who have paid online fees for driving licence smart cards will get a refund.

The dept is collecting data of applicants who have made online payments as no applicant will get an RC from April 1.

DOP HANDS OUT ADDITIONAL CHARGES

RAJ IAS off to handle LS elections

Rajendra Chhabra  
Jaipur

The Election Commission has shortlisted 54 IAS officers from Rajasthan to fulfill the responsibilities of Election Observers, and their first-phase training has already been conducted. They will now be assigned duties phase-wise throughout the election period. For the first phase of polling on April 19, 11 IAS officers will be tasked.

These officers include Dinesh Kumar - Tamil Nadu, P. Ramesh - Nagaland, Himanshu Gup-

ta - Tamil Nadu, Naveen Mahajan - Arunachal Pradesh, Rajendra Verma - Tamil Nadu, MP Meena - Tamil Nadu, Ravi Jain - Uttar Pradesh, Ravi Kumar Surpur - West Bengal, Kunji Lal Meena - Uttarakhand, Mukul Sharma - Meghalaya, and Piyush Samaria - Uttarakhand.

All these officials will have to remain at their duty stations from the last day of filing nominations until repolling, covering a period of 27 days. This means they will be on election duty from March 26 to April 21. Similarly, when officials are called for

election duty for the 2nd phase until the 7th phase, they will have to be out of the state for approximately one month. Afterward, they will have to return for counting on June 4, which will last for 3-4 days, to their respective areas of duty.

Kunji Lal Meena's charge has been given to Abhay Kumar, Dinesh Kumar's charge to Aparna Arora, Naveen Mahajan's to Bhaskar Sawant, Ravi Jain's to AT Pednekar, Ravi Surpur's to KK Pathak, P. Ramesh's to T. Ravikanth, Himanshu Gupta's to Sunil Sharma, MP Meena's to Ramawtar

Meena, Mukul Sharma's to PR Dhanuka, Peeyush Samariya's to Mahesh Chand Sharma, & Rajendra Verma's to Aslam Sher Khan.

Among these, the bureaucracy is abuzz with Sunil Sharma being given the additional charge of Commissioner, Industries, and Mahesh Chandra Sharma being given the additional charge of IG - Stamps and Registration. Ravi Kumar Surpur had a major responsibility of CCT, and this responsibility has been handed to KK Pathak, who has been grappling with the challenges of Secretary, Finance.

JKCement

JK SUPER CEMENT

BUILD SAFE

#काम से नंबर 1

JK SUPER STRONG

JK SUPER CEMENT

JK SUPER PROTECT

JK SUPER STRONG

JK SUPER CEMENT

JK SUPER PROTECT

डीलरशिप के लिए कॉल करें।

हेल्पलाइन नं. 1800 266 4606

नाम से तो कई काम से एक ही नं. 1

#YehPuccaHai



REMEMBERING SWAMI SMARANANANDA MAHARAJ

## SALUTING INDIA'S SPIRITUAL LUMINARY



**Narendra Modi**

The writer is Prime Minister of India

Amidst the hustle and bustle of the grand festival of Lok Sabha elections, the news of the demise of Srimat Swami Smaranananda Ji Maharaj brought my mind to a standstill for a few moments. Srimat Swami Smaranananda Ji Maharaj was a pioneer of India's spiritual consciousness and his demise is like a personal loss. A few years ago, the demise of Swami Atmasthananda Ji and now the departure of Swami Smaranananda Ji on his eternal journey has left many people bereaved. My heart, like that of crores of devotees, saints and followers of Ramakrishna Math and Mission, is deeply saddened.

During my visit to Kolkata earlier this month, I had gone to the hospital to enquire about Swami Smaranananda Ji's health. Just like Swami Atmasthananda Ji, Swami Smaranananda Ji too dedicated his entire life for spreading the ideas of Acharya Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Mata Sharada Devi and Swami Vivekananda across the world. While writing this article, the memories of meetings and conversations with him are getting refreshed in my mind.

In January 2020, during my stay at Belur Math, I meditated in the room of Swami Vivekananda. During that visit, I had a long conversation about Swami Atmasthananda Ji with Swami Smaranananda Ji.

It is widely known that I had a close relationship with Ramakrishna Mission and Belur Math. As a seeker of spirituality, I have met different saints and mahatmas and been to many places over the period of more than five decades. Even in Ramakrishna Math, I got to know about the saints who dedicated their lives to spirituality, among whom personalities like Swami Atmasthananda Ji and Swami Smaranananda Ji were prominent. Their sacred thoughts and knowledge provided contentment to my mind. In the most important period of my life, such saints taught me the true principle of "Jan Seva hi Prabhu Seva".

The lives of Swami Atmasthananda Ji and Swami Smaranananda Ji are an indelible example of the motto of Ramakrishna Mission 'Atmano Mokshaartham Jagaddhitaaya Cha'.

We all are



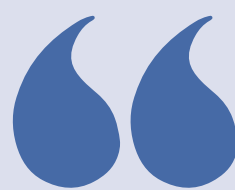
inspired by the work being done by Ramakrishna Mission for the promotion of education and rural development. Ramakrishna Mission is working on India's spiritual enlightenment,



PM Narendra Modi

educational empowerment and humanitarian service. In 1978, when the disastrous flood struck Bengal, Ramakrishna Mission won the hearts of everyone with its selfless service. I remember, when an earthquake ravaged Kutch in 2001, Swami Atmasthananda Ji was among the first people to call me and offer all possible assistance for disaster management on behalf of the Ramakrishna Mission. Under his direction, Ramakrishna Mission helped many people who were affected by the earthquake.

Over the past years, while holding various positions, Swami Atmasthananda Ji and Swami Smaranananda Ji laid great emphasis on social empowerment. Those who know the lives of these great personalities will definitely remember how serious these saints were towards modern education, skill-



The lives of Swami Atmasthananda Ji and Swami Smaranananda Ji are an indelible example of the motto of Ramakrishna Mission 'Atmano Mokshaartham Jagaddhitaaya Cha'

Ramakrishna Mission is working on India's spiritual enlightenment, educational empowerment and humanitarian service. In 1978, when the disastrous flood struck Bengal, Ramakrishna Mission won the hearts of everyone with its selfless service

Among his many inspiring traits, one thing that impressed me the most was Swami Atmasthananda Ji's love and respect for every culture and every tradition. The reason for this was that he used to travel continuously and had spent a long time in different parts of India

At different points in India's development journey, our motherland has been blessed by many saints and seers like Swami Atmasthananda Ji, Swami Smaranananda Ji who have ignited the spark of societal change

My heart, like that of crores of devotees, saints and followers of Ramakrishna Math and Mission, is deeply saddened

ing and women empowerment.

Among his many inspiring traits, one thing that impressed me the most was Swami Atmasthananda Ji's love and respect for every culture and every tradition. The reason for

this was that he used to travel continuously and had spent a long time in different parts of India. He learned to speak Gujarati while living in Gujarat. He used to even speak with me in the language and I loved lis-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted picture on his X account expressing condolences on the demise of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission President Swami Smaranananda Ji Maharaj, who passed away at the age of 95 due to age-related ailments.

tening to his Gujarati!

At different points in India's development journey, our motherland has been blessed by many saints and seers like Swami Atmasthananda Ji, Swami Smaranananda Ji who have ignited the spark of societal change. They have motivated us to work with a collective spirit and address all the challenges our society faces. These principles are eternal and will act as our source of strength as we embark on developing a Viksit Bharat during the Amrit Kaal.

Once again, on behalf of the entire nation, I pay homage to such saintly souls. I am confident that all the people associated with the Ramakrishna Mission will further move ahead on the path shown by them.

OM SHANTI.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE AUTHOR ARE PERSONAL





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## 2ND PHASE OF LOK SABHA ELECTION

## Filing of nominations for 88 LS seats begins

First India Bureau  
New Delhi

The second phase of the Lok Sabha elections will take place on April 26, when 89 constituencies from 13 states will go to the polls.

The process of filing nominations for 88 of these began on Thursday. The last date of nominations in the second phase of the Lok Sabha elections is April 4. For the sole seat in Jammu and Kashmir polling in this phase, the scrutiny will be held on April 6.

The 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, which are set to commence from April 19, will see the country vote in seven phases. The counting of votes will be held on June 4.



A man prepares kites featuring symbols of different political parties ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, in Kolkata, on Thursday. PTI

## BJP's star campaigners for Arunachal Pradesh

PTI  
Itanagar

Union Home Minister Amit Shah along with cabinet colleagues Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Sarbananda Sonowal, Piyush Goyal and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma would be star campaigners for the BJP in the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Arunachal Pradesh, a senior BJP leader said on Thursday. Arunachal Pradesh will go to simultaneous polls in the first phase on April 19 for the two Lok Sabha seats and 60 as-

sembly constituencies.

Home Minister Amit Shah is likely to address a rally at Aalo in West Siang district on April 6, party's senior vice president Tarh Tarak told PTI.

Besides Shah, other Central ministers who would campaign for the party include Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Ports, Sarbananda Sonowal and Piyush Goyal.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Assam Housing & Urban Affairs and Irrigation Minister Ashok Singhal will also join the campaigning trail in the state.

## 5 BJP LEADERS TO GET ELECTED UNOPPOSED IN ARUNACHAL

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu and four other BJP candidates are set to get elected as MLAs unopposed as no other candidate has filed nomination from their assembly seats on the last day of filing papers on Wednesday. Assembly elections in Arunachal Pradesh will be held along with Lok Sabha polls. Voting for the 60-member assembly and two Lok Sabha seats – Arunachal West and Arunachal East – will be held on April 19. Fifteen candidates will also try their luck for two LS seats in the state.



## PARTNER..

## GOVINDA JOINS EKNATH SHINDE'S SHIV SENA

Mumbai: Veteran Bollywood actor Govinda joined the Shiv Sena on Thursday in the presence of Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde in Mumbai. Govinda had earlier met Krishna Hegde, who is a spokesperson for Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, at his residence. Govinda was born on December 21, 1963. He has acted in over 120 films since his debut in 1986. In 2004, Govind successfully contested the Mumbai North Lok Sabha seat on a Congress ticket.

## I.N.D.I. ALLIANCE HAS FAILED TO HONOUR CHAUDHARY CHARAN SINGH: YOGI ADITYANATH



Muzaffargarh: UP CM Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said that the I.N.D.I. alliance overlooked Chaudhary Saheb from 2004-2014. Lauding the awarding of Bharat Ratna to Chaudhary Charan Singh posthumously, he described him as the champion of farmers' rights, asserting that this recognition was long overdue. He was speaking on the second day of the Prabudha Sammelan held at Lala Jagdish Prasad Saraswati Vidya Mandir Inter College in Muzaffargarh.

## PILIBHIT LOK SABHA MP VARUN GANDHI PENS DOWN EMOTIONAL LETTER AFTER BEING DENIED TICKET BY BJP FROM THIS CONSTITUENCY AGAIN

New Delhi: After being denied a ticket from Pilibhit for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, BJP MP Varun Gandhi on Thursday wrote an emotional letter to the people of his constituency and shared his memories of his childhood. "My term as Pilibhit MP may be ending, but my relationship with Pilibhit will not end till my last breath. I seek your blessings to continue to raise the voice of the common man, no matter what price I have to pay for it," he wrote in the letter. "I remem-



ber that 3 year old little boy who came to Pilibhit for the first time in 1983 holding his mother's finger. How did he know that one day this land would become his work-

place and the people here would become his family?" Gandhi said. "I consider myself fortunate that I got the opportunity to serve the great people of Pilibhit for years," he added. "I came into politics to raise the voice of the common man, and today I seek your blessings to always continue doing this work, no matter what the cost. The relationship between me and Pilibhit is one of love and trust, which is far above any political merit. I was, am, and will be yours," Varun concluded.

Delhi HC junks Congress pleas against IT re-assessment

Agencies  
New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Thursday turned down pleas of Congress challenging the initiation of income tax re-assessment proceedings for the fiscals 2017-18 to 2020-21.

A division bench of Justice Yashwant Varma and Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav upheld their stance consistent with a previous judgement that dismissed similar petitions concerning reassessment for the years 2014-15 to 2016-17.

The decision comes after it noted on March 25 that the Congress had delayed its legal challenge until the brink of the deadline for assessment completion, hinting at a strategic postponement.

## HAL conducts first flight of LCA Tejas Mk1A in Bengaluru

PTI  
Bengaluru

The first aircraft LA5033 of the Tejas Mk1A series successfully soared in the sky after taking off from the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) facility in Bengaluru on Thursday, the public sector aerospace and defence company said.

According to HAL, the Tejas Mk1A aircraft did a successful sortie with a flying time of 18 minutes. The plane was piloted by Chief Test Pilot Group Captain KK Venu-gopal (Retired).

HAL achieved this significant production milestone with concurrent design and development amid major supply chain challenges in the global



geopolitical environment, subsequent to the contract signature in February 2021, HAL Chief Managing Director CB Ananthakrishnan said.

Extending its gratitude to the Defence Ministry, Indian Air Force, Defence Research and Development Organisation and associated private firms for contributing to the success of this programme, HAL said the country can look forward to early induction of the Tejas Mk1A by the IAF.

## Kejriwal should quit if he has scant regard for people: BJP

PTI  
New Delhi

The Delhi unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in the excise policy case, alleging the city is facing a constitutional crisis. Addressing a press conference here, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva and party MP Manoj Tiwari said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) could have made anyone from the party chief minister after Arvind Kejriwal was taken into custody.

"Delhi is under a huge constitutional crisis. If you have even scant regard for the people of Delhi who elected you,



BJP Lok Sabha candidate from North East Delhi seat Manoj Tiwari addresses media.

you could have made anyone (from AAP) chief minister," Tiwari said.

Taking a dig at the Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party, Delhi BJP chief Sachdeva said there is an internal tussle going on in the AAP for the chief minister's chair. He questioned the constitutional validity of running a government from the custody of a probe agency.

## OPERATION LOTUS ON IN PUNJAB, CLAIMS BHARADWAJ

New Delhi: "Operation Lotus" has started in Punjab, senior AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj alleged on Thursday, a day after the party's lone Lok Sabha MP Sushil Kumar Rinku joined the BJP. "Operation Lotus" is the term used by opposition parties to describe what they call "poaching" of MLAs by the BJP to topple governments. Addressing a presser here, Bharadwaj said AAP MLAs in Punjab had said on Wednesday that the majority of them were getting calls and being offered money, Y category security and tickets for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls to join the BJP.

## AFSPA extended in parts of Arunachal, Nagaland for 6 mnths

Agencies  
New Delhi

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in certain districts of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh for another six months with effect from April 1, officials said on Thursday.

A Nagaland government official, quoting the MHA notification, said that the AFSPA was extended in 8 districts – Dimapur, Nuland, Chumoukedima, Mon, Kiphire, Noklak, Phek, and Peren – and 21 police station areas in five other districts of Nagaland, which has 16 districts.

Another MHA notification said that the AFS-



PA has been extended for another six months in Tirap, Changlang, and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh as well as areas under the jurisdiction of Namsai, Mahadevpur, and Chowkham police stations in Namsai district, bordering Assam.

The official said that the Centre took the step following a review of the law and order situation in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

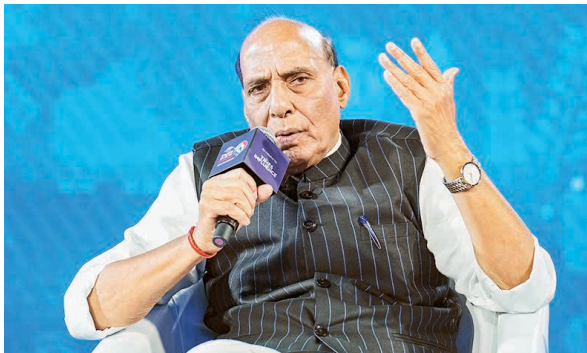
## DEFENCE DIALOGUE

## India's borders totally secure: Rajnath Singh

PTI  
New Delhi

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said India and its borders are "totally secure" and the people of the country should have full faith in the armed forces.

During a fireside chat on the concluding day of a media summit here, while responding to a question on the criticism of the Agniveer scheme, the Minister said such questions have "no standing" and underlined that



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh speaks at a Media Summit, in New Delhi, on Thursday. PTI

everyone will accept that the armed forces should have a young profile.

During the event, the Union Minister also

shared anecdotes from his nearly 50-year-long political journey.

Asked how he reacted to questions raised by

Having been the Defence Minister for five years and home minister before that, I want to assure the people of the country based on what I have seen, understood and assessed that our borders and our country are totally secure.

RAJNATH SINGH,  
DEFENCE MINISTER

many, including members of the opposition, on the India-China border issue, Rajnath Singh said they never made

him uncomfortable.

"In keeping with the country's interests, I tell them (Opposition) whatever I can. But in defence, there are many things which have strategic importance and we cannot tell them publicly. We try to steer clear of telling those things, whether it is (about) northern, western or eastern sector," he said.

"I want to assure the people of the country... they should have full faith in our Army and security personnel," the Union Minister said.

## Adani starts US\$ 1.2 bn copper plant; to boost metal production

PTI  
New Delhi

Billionaire Gautam Adani-led group on Thursday announced the start of the first phase of the world's largest single-location copper manufacturing plant at Mundra in Gujarat, which will help cut India's dependence on imports and aid energy transition.

Kutch Copper, a subsidiary of group's Adani Enterprises Ltd, "commissioned the first phase" of USD 1.2 billion "greenfield copper refinery by dispatching the



Gautam Adani. FILE

maiden batch of cathodes to customers", the company said in a statement.

The first phase of the facility that will produce 0.5 million tonnes a year of refined copper has started operations and full-scale 1 million tonnes

capacity is expected by FY29 (March 2029).

India joins China and other nations that are rapidly expanding production of copper, a metal crucial for transition away from fossil fuels.

"On completion of the second phase, Kutch Copper, with 1 million tonnes per annum, will be the world's largest single-location custom smelter, benchmarking ESG performance standards while leveraging state-of-the-art technology and digitalisation," the company further said in the statement.





## Royals register second win

First India Bureau  
Jaipur

Rajasthan Royals defeated Delhi Capitals by 12 runs to win their second consecutive game in the Indian Premier League 2024.

Chasing 186 runs for their maiden win, the Capitals were restricted to 173/5 in 20 overs.

Rajasthan Royals after losing the toss and batting first, have scored 185/5 in 20 overs in Jaipur on 28 March.

Now Capitals will have to score 186 runs to win. Riyan Parag scored an unbeaten 84 runs in 45 deliveries.

All the Delhi Capital bowlers – Khaleel Ahmed, Khaleel Ahmed, Anrich Nortje, Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav – clinched one wicket each.

Delhi Capitals once again proved a weak



Rajasthan Royals bowler Nandre Burger with teammates celebrate the wicket of DC batter Mitchell Marsh during the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 T20 cricket match between Rajasthan Royals (RR) and Delhi Capitals (DC), at Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur, Thursday.

batting unit despite a good start from Warner and Marsh.

After this start, Stubbs fought a battle to reach the target for his team, but Delhi never really looked into the game and kept losing wickets at regular intervals.



Ravichandran Ashwin and Riyan Parag run between the wickets.

### JAIPURITES CHEER FOR RR DURING THE IPL MATCH 2024



Gajendra Singh Khimsar

Minister Avinash Gehlot and his family enjoying match. KK Bishnoi is also seen here



Mayor of JMC-Greater Dr Somya (R), Fire Officer Sarita (L).



Rajasthan Royals fans during the IPL match against Delhi Capitals



Rajasthan Royals fans during the match against Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League 2024, at Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on Thursday.



SANTOSH SHARMA

## “EAM’s Malaysia visit provided opportunity to develop strong ties”

PTI

Kuala Lumpur

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar’s visit to Malaysia and his meetings with the country’s top leadership presented an opportunity to reiterate commitment to further develop the bilateral Enhanced Strategic Partnership, an official statement said on Thursday.

Jaishankar was in Kuala Lumpur from March 27 to 28 as part of the last leg of his three-nation tour to Singapore, the Philippines & Malaysia.

He called on Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Bin Ibrahim and thanked him for his support in deepening bilateral ties under the India-Malaysia Enhanced Strategic Partnership, India’s Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

Jaishankar’s visit to Malaysia provided an opportunity to reiterate commitment to further develop the Enhanced Strategic Partnership, it said.



S Jaishankar in a meeting with Digital Minister of Malaysia, Gobind Singh Deo. PTI

### 3-NATION SOUTHEAST ASIA TOUR CONCLUDES

New Delhi: EAM S. Jaishankar on Thursday concluded his three-nation Southeast Asia tour, beginning March 23, to strengthen bilateral relations and engage on regional issues of mutual concern. During his official visit from March 27-28, he paid a courtesy call to Malaysian PM Anwar Bin Ibrahim and conveyed his greetings on behalf of PM Modi. EAM met the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Utama Haji Mohamad Bin Haji Hasan, and the two leaders held wide-ranging discussions on bilateral cooperation including political, trade and economic, defence, digital, culture, and education.

## Ukraine foreign minister arrives in New Delhi

Agencies  
New Delhi

Ukraine’s foreign minister arrived in New Delhi on Thursday for a two-day visit to boost bilateral ties and cooperation with India, which considers Russia a time-tested ally from the Cold War-era.

Dmytro Kuleba will meet with his Indian counterpart Subrahman-



Dmytro Kuleba

yam Jaishankar on Friday, as well as the deputy national security advisor, according to India’s For-

eign Ministry. On Thursday, Kuleba will pay his respects to Indian independence leader Mahatma Gandhi at the Rajghat memorial site.

His visit comes a week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom India has so far avoided criti-

cizing over the war in Ukraine. Instead, New Delhi has stressed the need for diplomacy and dialogue on ending the war and has expressed its willingness to contribute to peace efforts.

Under Modi, India has promoted itself as a rising global player who can mediate between the West and Russia on the war in Ukraine.

### Ex-IPS Bhatt gets 20 years in prison

Agencies  
Ahmedabad

A special Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) court in Gujarat’s Banaskantha district on Thursday sentenced former Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Sanjiv Bhatt to 20 years imprisonment in a 1996 drug planting case. Second additional sessions judge Jatin Thakker, who had convicted Bhatt in this case, declared the sentence on Thursday. He stated that Bhatt will now face an additional twenty years behind bars.

### Bankman-Fried sentenced to 25 years in prison

Agencies  
Washington

Sam Bankman-Fried was sentenced to 25 years in prison by a judge on Thursday for stealing \$8 billion from customers of the now-bankrupt FTX cryptocurrency exchange he founded, the last step in the former billionaire wunderkind’s dramatic downfall.

U.S. District Judge Lewis Kaplan handed down the sentence at a Manhattan court hearing after rejecting Bankman-Fried’s claim that FTX customers did not actually



Sam Bankman-Fried

lose money and finding that he lied during his trial testimony. A jury found Bankman-Fried, 32, guilty on Nov. 2 on seven fraud and conspiracy counts stemming from FTX’s 2022 collapse in what prosecutors have called one of the biggest financial frauds in U.S. history.

### Fake degree case: Mewar University under SOG radar

First India Bureau  
Chittorgarh

In a significant development, Special Operations Group (SOG) teams have made their way into Mewar University, Chittorgarh meticulously scrutinizing the university’s documents.

This action comes in response to complaints filed regarding the distribution of fake degrees by Mewar University.

Recently, during an operation conducted by the SOG, startling revelations unfolded regarding the malpractices within Mewar University. Now, the SOG is poised to delve deeper into the university’s wrongdoings.

Questions are arising whether the investigation by SOG will encompass the university’s administration. Notably, Dr. Ashok Kumar Gadia, the Chairman of the university, has previously faced allegations of involvement in fraudulent activities and has served time in jail.



## CBDT: 11 senior income tax officials promoted

Vimal Kothari  
Jaipur

In the final week of the fiscal year, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) issued two separate orders on Thursday, promoting 4 senior income tax officials to the position of Principal Chief Commissioner and 7 officials to the position of Chief Commissioner.

The promotions, effective from April 1, 2024, include IRS officers Narendra Kumar Balodia, Raj Tandon, Jehanzeb Akhtar, & Prabodh Seth among those appointed to the position of Principal Chief Commissioner. All promoted officials belong to

the 1989 batch of IRS officers. Notably, Raj Tandon is currently serving as the Director General of Income Tax (Investigation) in the state. Sources suggest that following the retirement of the state’s Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, Irina Garg, on March 31, orders for Raj Tandon’s appointment to the position might be issued.

IRS officers Mahesh Kumar, Sanjay Prasad, Sheikh Mohammad Javed Abidi, Shantam Bose, Vismitha Tej, Reema Hota Singh, & Manoj Pal Singh, belonging to the 1990 batch, have been promoted to the position of Chief Commissioner.

### CRUCIAL READ

#### No leases to be issued under PSKS while Model Code of Conduct is in place

Jaipur: Leases will not be issued under the Prashasan Shehron Ke Sang (PSKS) campaign while the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is in place. The state government has issued clarification to the Development Authority, Housing Board and city improvement trusts in this regard. In case, if the amount has been deposited by the applicants before the implementation of the MCC, the lease will be issued after the MCC is over. The amount will not be taken after the Model Code of Conduct expires. Civic bodies will not demand additional amounts from the applicants. Apart from the lease, this clarification will also be applicable in other pending cases. However, disposal can be done without discount or concessional rate and common matters can be resolved in civic bodies.

#### Jai Narayan Vyas University Pensioners’ Committee continues its stir on 10th day

Jaipur: Jai Narayan Vyas University Pensioners’ Committee continued to protest for the tenth day on Thursday over non-payment of pension for the month of February. They protested when the Vice-Chancellor was about to arrive as the chief guest at the seminar of the Rajasthan Department. However, he did not come to the office. Independent candidate from Jodhpur Lok Sabha constituency, Sunil Pareek also joined the protest and said that he would write to the Governor and the Chief Minister of the state about the problem.



### AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

## UN secy-general appoints top NDMA official

Agencies  
New Delhi

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres Wednesday announced the appointment of Kamal Kishore of India as Assistant Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).

He will succeed Mami Mizutori of Japan, who will continue to serve in



Kamal Kishore (55) has been appointed as assistant secretary-general and special representative of the secretary-general for disaster risk reduction, United Nations Office.

the role until Kishore takes over. Kishore has nearly three decades of experience in disaster risk reduction, climate action, and sustainable develop-

ment at various levels. He has held important positions in the government, UN, and civil society organizations. Kishore’s experience in disaster

Kishore has worked on disaster risk reduction and recovery issues for over 22 years at local, national, regional & global levels

risk reduction includes being the Head of the Department of the National Disaster Management Authority, which he has been responsible for since 2015. As part of the G20, Kishore has led the G20 Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction, and also contributed to

the creation of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, which was launched by the Prime Minister of India during the Climate Action Summit in 2019.

The United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction Office (UNDRR) is the UN agency mandated to lead and coordinate disaster risk reduction efforts. The UNDRR Director, Paola Albritto, has been appointed by the Secretary-General to continue in the role of Special Representative until Kishore takes over.



# FIRST INDIA 2ND FRONT

## THOUGHT OF THE DAY

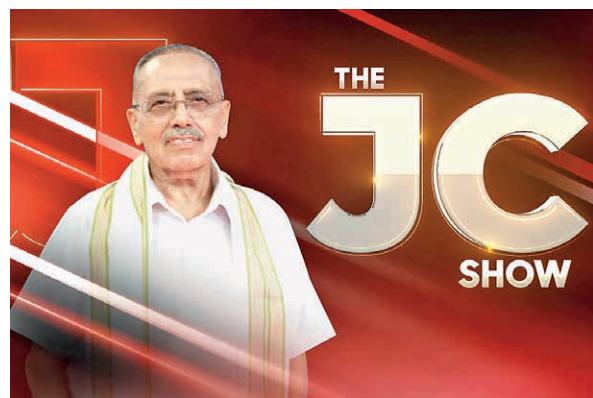
It takes far more intelligence and depth of character to understand and give in, than to argue and fight.

Dr Jagdeesh Chandra, CMD & Editor-in-Chief



08

# Entire electoral bond controversy may prove to be a flop show!: Dr Chandra



Taking a look back at the recent developments regarding electoral bonds and the Supreme Court's decision on it, **Dr Jagdeesh Chandra** stresses that although it is not known who or what acted as a catalyst to speed up the hearing on the matter, the outcome is for the greater good of the public. Dr Chandra also explains how political parties tried to create a narrative against BJP for getting the most funds but failed miserably, how the new government will have to come up with a new plan in place of electoral bonds, and how black money could again come back in play. Excerpts... (Part I)



Dr Jagdeesh Chandra in conversation with (L-R) Ranjana Rawat, Palak Sharma, Pooja Yadav, Sakshi Mishra and Poornima Mishra, during The JC Show.

### What does it mean when we say that electoral bonds are an inexplicable puzzle?

**Dr Jagdeesh Chandra:** In his budget speech in the Parliament, late Arun Jaitley had said that till the time electioneering is made independent and neutral, democracy will not work. And it will become independent and neutral only when the funding of political parties is made transparent. Taking this thought forward a law was brought in 2017 and was notified in 2018. At that time, a few individuals had told Jaitley that secrecy should be maintained in it. They feared that if someday the government went out of power, then what would happen to their fate since if they funded one party, the other party that came to power might trouble them. Jaitley understood their issues and said their secrecy would be maintained. The payment mode will be cheques, but it will be kept secret. Suddenly a writ was filed and for 4-5 years, nothing was done on it. But then, in October last year hearing was held on that writ and the court reserved its judgement in November and in March this year, the decision was given. So the first puzzle in this issue is that nothing happened on the matter for five years but what happened now all of a sudden that the case moved ahead? Elections are around the corner and you cannot question the Court's resolve since the matter was ongoing for the last few years. So why

was it accelerated all of a sudden by the people who were pleading in the matter? This is a puzzle. So the overall gist that came out was that the idea with which this was brought forward, to keep the funding transparent and secret, could not be maintained since the secrecy is no more, with all due regard to the Supreme Court they gave the decision which was correct. But the other aspect was that the secrecy was no more and that might have several ramifications in future therefore the electoral bonds are an inexplicable puzzle.



### It is being said this entire controversy turned out to be a flop show. What is your take on it?

It is not a flop show as yet but could be in the near future because the court's intention is obviously good and now the details are before the public. So there is no controversy as far as these two aspects are concerned, nor is there any issue of a review. When the numbers of the electoral bond scheme were announced, a bid was initiated to cre-

ate a perception among the people that BJP is the only beneficiary and the party took money from the companies that were in controversies and the propaganda was started as if BJP's election fund has been unearthed. However, they forgot that it was the entire nation's election fund that is the fund that all the parties had, which came to light since fifteen political parties benefited from electoral bonds. So they were not successful in creating the perception and putting the BJP in grey. So now what has happened is that all political parties are feeling guilty since they were unsuccessful and could not create a perception against the BJP. Perhaps this is why Amit Shah had said in Parliament that his silence is better otherwise it will create disturbances for other political parties and that is what happened. Additionally, several political parties have received more money than the BJP and now each of them would want to bury this issue and that is why people have termed it to be a flop show.

### Now that this arrangement has been termed unconstitutional, what other choices are the parties left with?

See, the biggest thing is that there should be a consensus on whatever is to be done. Former Chief Election Commissioner of India Sunil Arora recently said in a live discussion on electoral bonds that the Supreme Court did not show any

way out. But the SC is there to interpret and review and this work is of the executive and it should come out with a new plan which then they can forward to the Supreme Court. So consensus and transparency are two things that are required and if there is no consensus, then the old idea of state funding could be pursued wherein the government gives money to political parties. So a consensus is important and the new government should bring that for the next elections.

### Do you agree that use of black money in election funding will gain momentum now?

That is a natural process. Amit Shah had asked everyone how they used to get election funds. It was in cash as everyone knows. Demonitisation was brought to bring an end to the black money circulating everywhere and it was after this move, that digital transactions and transactions through cheques, increased. Now suppose today I want to give one lakh rupees as an election fund donation to any political party, what option do I have? The electoral bond scheme has been termed illegal. So now donations would have to be made in cash. That is

why it was said that we are soon entering the cash era if we do not bring an effective solution to this conundrum.

### Supreme Court has said that citizens have a right to know about funds of political parties. Do you think people are eager to know about it?

See, SC's view is crystal clear in this aspect i.e. the voter has a right to know who gave which political party how much money and what benefit was derived out of it. The counter view of the government is that people do not have a right to know about their funds, which the Supreme Court overruled and later the government also accepted SC's decision. As far as peo-

ple being eager to know about it is concerned, obviously, people would be, but not to a great extent. People in general are least concerned whether Adani, Reliance or some other companies have given money to a certain political party. In fact, there was a survey done a few years back which gave shocking results and it came to light that about twelve per cent of voters took money to cast a vote.

### Few people believe SC moved way past what the applicants had demanded through their appli-

### cation on the issue. Do you agree?

Oh, that is very interesting. It may be in the larger interest of justice done by the Supreme Court. The application was to make the scheme unquestionable but SC went one step ahead and realised that even the people must be curious to learn about which party has received how much in electoral bond funds and then this decision was given. So the applicant must have been extremely happy because his application sought something but the SC gave more than what he had asked for.

### Lok Sabha election process has started and some people are questioning the timing of this decision. What is your take on it?

See, the SC and its benches have a very high degree of credibility, dignity, and integrity and it is absolutely non-political. When we read about CJI, we can observe that he is absolutely non-political and is a dignified person. So you can't level any hidden motive or agenda charge on the bench that heard this matter. But what happens is that sometimes people indulge in loose talk and believe that there is some judicial activism going on. The reason for this was because some decisions caused inconvenience to the government. Take, for instance, the case of the Chandigarh Mayor or the protection of press freedom, where the Supreme Court rightfully questioned how democracy

could thrive otherwise. So, you may cite timing but see this is a democracy and you can't stop people from saying what they want and even if people may be saying it, I don't buy this theory. The law follows a process which goes on and does not get bothered with who says what.

### Why is it that the political parties and companies donating money to these parties are shying from giving details?

They are shying because they have realised that this would open a Pandora's box so the political parties said what has come in public knowledge is alright and now no information is to be given. As far as corporates and industrialists not willing to share the information is concerned, is because they realised that they might get stuck in some litigation somewhere and they brought Mukul Rohatgi, I think, to present their case in SC, but the SC refused to hear. So now both parties want the matter should die down and come to an end.

TO BE CONTINUED...



Click to watch The JC Show

During the show #JConElectoralBonds trended top All-India on X



Dr Jagdeesh Chandra during The JC Show.



## HOLLYWOOD THRILLER

**C**hristine Quinn, known for her captivating performances on the big screen, has found herself at the centre of a real-life drama that's straight out of a Hollywood thriller. **P11**

# Dancing Through Dreams!

Meet Urvashi Soni, a towering figure from Rajasthan with dreams as high as her stature. As she celebrates her birthday today, City First delves into her journey, aspirations and unwavering determination!



**Mitali Dusad**

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**A**midst the serene landscapes of Jhalrapatan, Rajasthan, emerged a passionate figure destined for the limelight. Standing tall at 5'11", Urvashi Soni, hailing from this quaint town, has captured hearts with her grace and talent.

From a tender age, Urvashi harbored dreams of dancing, acting and modelling, inspired by the illustrious Deepika Padukone. Despite parental insistence on completing her studies first, she pursued her passion alongside academic endeavours, attaining a master's degree in commerce. However, her heart yearned for the glitz and glamour of the fashion world. With steely resolve, Urvashi persuaded her family to support her dreams, eventually making her way to Jaipur. There, she embarked on a dual journey, navigating the corporate world while fervently pursuing her modelling aspirations. Her perseverance bore fruit when she clinched the title of Miss Talented in Elite Miss Rajasthan, under the mentorship of Director Gaurav Gaur, propelling her into the coveted top 10 finalists.

Urvashi's journey is a testament to her resilience and unwavering dedication. She acknowledges the fierce competition but remains steadfast in her belief that one's greatest adversary is oneself. Every day presents an opportunity for self-improvement, a philosophy she embodies through a holistic approach to a healthy lifestyle, comprising nutritious diet, regular exercise, mental tranquility and intellectual nourishment.

As she continues to grace runways and captivate audiences, Urvashi Soni stands as an epitome of aspiration and tenacity. With her sights set on representing India on the global stage, her journey is poised to inspire countless souls, reminding us that with unwavering determination and a sprinkle of dreams, the sky is indeed the limit.





# The City of Lakes,

## a canvas of colour, culture, & heritage

### SNEAK PEEK!

You can watch these beautiful views of Udaipur on First India plus Entertainment OTT. First India News is the first news channel which has launched its own OTT. The special thing is that this platform is focused on Rajasthan and Rajasthan. That is why Pawan Arora, CEO and Managing Editor of First India News, has designed this travel show showcasing the beauty of Rajasthan. To watch this episode, scan this QR code.



Lake Pichola

Udaipur', is a beautiful city situated amidst the lush green hills of Aravali. This beautiful and peaceful city is also called the City of Lakes and "Venice of the East". Its beauty is famous all over the world. In this beautiful city, the morning starts with a relaxing atmosphere on the banks of Fatehsagar Lake. After coming here, I realized that it would not be an exaggeration to call Udaipur a tourist city, magnificent lakes and gardens add to the glory of this city. Pichola Lake is the heartbeat of Udaipur. Its beauty makes Udaipur special. Jagmandir is also situated in Lake Pichola and Jag Niwas Palace, which has been built as a five-star hotel, is also situated in Lake Pichola, which is now famous by the name of Lake Palace Hotel. Along with this, hotels are abundant on every budget for tourists around Lake Pichola. Meaning, you can easily find a hotel as per your budget here.

Udaipur's pride City Palace is built on the banks of Lake Pichola, a symbol of power and grandeur. City Palace is a group of magnificent palaces on the banks of Lake Pichola which is telling the story of the Rajput dynasty of Mewar. Udaipur was founded by Maharana Udai Singh II in 1553 AD and this magnificent palace was built by Maharana Udai Singh II in 1559. City Palace is a great example of architecture. Although Lake Pichola fascinates from every angle, the most prominent ghat of Lake Pichola is Gangaur Ghat. The fragrance of culture and heritage can be felt at this ghat. This ghat adds to the beauty of the brimming Pichola Lake.

Due to the art culture and folk tradition of Udaipur, tourists are drawn here from far and wide, the old streets of the city look like an artist's canvas. Colourful costumes, majestic camel rides, ancient folk traditions and rich handicrafts are the hallmarks of this place. Hathipol market is the most favourite place for tourists to see and buy all this. I have also bought some souvenirs from here.

It is not possible to talk about Udaipur and not mention Saheli's garden. As the name suggests, Saheliyon Ki Bari was built by the ruler of Mewar, Maharana Sangram Singh II, for the women of the royal family. This entire complex is decorated with very beautiful gardens and different types of flowers.

Talking about religious places, it is natural to mention Jagdish Temple, a grand and excellent example of the architecture of Udaipur. Jagdish Temple is a very beautiful, ancient and famous temple of Udaipur. This temple is located near the Royal Palace in Udaipur. This temple is an excellent form of Indo-Aryan architecture. It was built by Maharana Jagat Singh in 1651.

Udaipur is famous not only in the country but also abroad for its rich culture. This white city is also quite popular for Rajasthani folk songs and dance. Tourists from India and abroad enjoy the art and culture here. The best opportunity to see the colours of Udaipur's folk culture is the Mewar Utsav held here

every year on the occasion of Gangaur. Along with this, the cultural program held every evening in 'Bagor Ki Haveli', the largest mansion of Mewar on the banks of Pichola Lake in Lake City, is very famous among the tourists, which was built by Amarchand Barwa, the Prime Minister of the princely state of Mewar. Tourists are attracted every day to this gathering decorated with folk artists in Haveli Chowk. If you also go to Udaipur, then do not miss this program of Bagor Ki Haveli.

Shilpgram of Udaipur is also famous for lakes and palaces, as soon as you come here, the smell of folk culture takes you to the rural world, the world-famous Shilpgram Mahotsav is organized here every year. This festival,



Rakhi Jain  
Journalist/Media person

held in December, remains the centre of attraction for tourists. In this 10-day festival, famous folk artists from all over the country showcase their art. This place is also unmatched for purchasing unique examples of handicrafts. I was lucky that I got a chance to be a part of this event.

Udaipur becomes even more beautiful in the evening. The lights falling on the

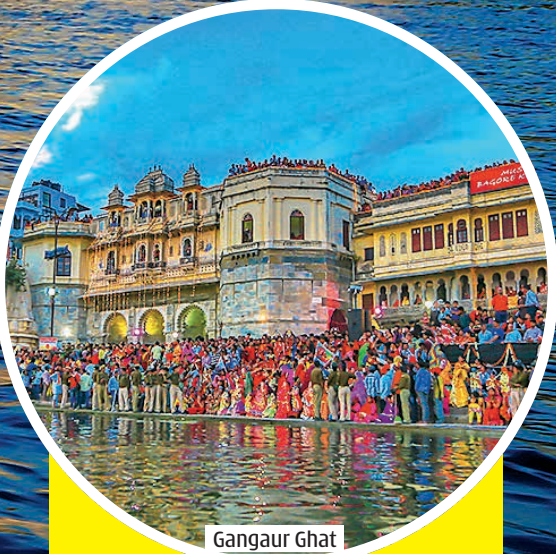
lake at night fill the atmosphere with romanticism. The best spot to enjoy the evening and night in Udaipur is Sukhadia Circle. Apart from sightseeing, the Chowpatty here is also a favourite place for tourists; in the evening, the Chowpatty becomes buzzing with food lovers. It is very difficult, to sum up the beauty of Udaipur in a few words, yet my effort is to tell you everything about Udaipur sitting at home so that after seeing and hearing you go out on a tour, this is all for now, see you in the next presentation, some of Udaipur and its surroundings. And with historical and beautiful places.



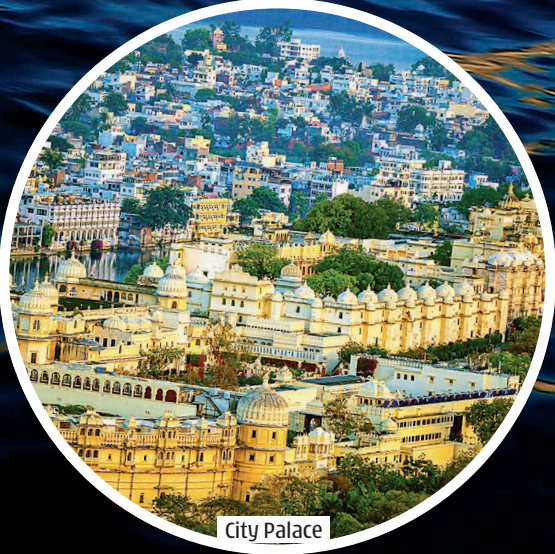
YOGESH SHARMA



Shilpgram



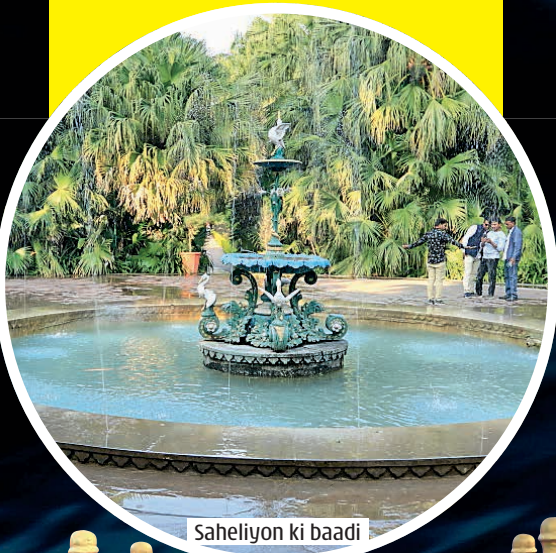
Gangaur Ghat



City Palace



City Palace Udaipur, Blue Lobby



Saheliyon ki baadi

### THE TAGLINE OF RAJASTHAN TOURISM

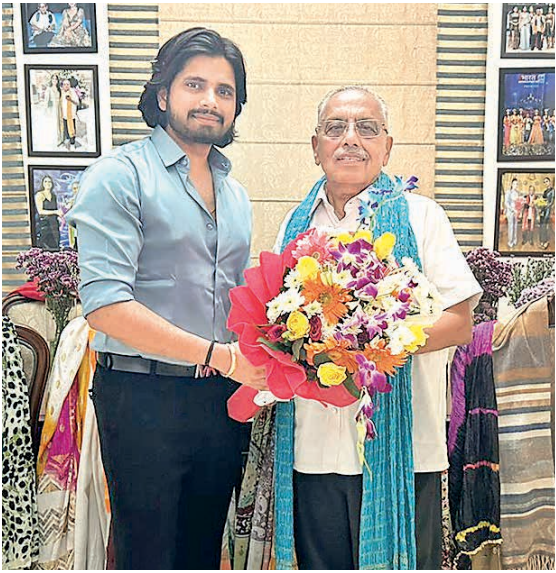
Experienced Padharo Mhare Desh for the first time and now sharing it with you. I have been in Rajasthan for more than two decades, but being a field journalist, I have not seen more than how many districts, how many Lok Sabha seats and how many assembly seats in Rajasthan. Every year lakhs of tourists from all over the world come to see the precious heritage of Rajasthan and I regret that I have not been able to see it from this perspective till now, but I am thankful to Pawan Arora, CEO and Managing Editor of First India News for his vision. To make it a reality, I have also had the opportunity to take a wonderful tour of Rajasthan along with the team of Yogesh Sharma who is travelling from city to city of Rajasthan. In this travel diary, first, take a tour of Udaipur through my eyes.







# GREETINGS!



Dr Jagdeesh Chandra was greeted by Ashish Sharma, Managing Director of Lounge Pint House during a courtesy visit at the former's residence, on Wednesday.

## EVENTS!



Malviya Nagar MLA Kalicharan Saraf was blessed by Acharya Shri 108 Sunil Sagar Ji Maharaj during the Panchkalyan Mahotsav at Kundalpur Janaki Paradise in Vaishali Nagar, on Thursday. The event witnessed the presence of notable figures including Councilor Himanshu Jain, General Secretary Rajesh Jain, Coordinator Vishal Jain, Partha Saraf and Natwar Kumawat.

Jaipur Foot USA and Rana Divyang commemorated Shai Ram's birthday with enthusiasm, exchanging warm Holi wishes, on Wednesday. Prem Bhandari, Chairman of Jaipur Foot USA, extended heartfelt greetings on behalf of the organization and Rana Divyang. The celebration was marked by a sense of joy as they came together to honour the occasion and embrace the spirit of unity and festivity.



 **NAIM KHAN**



The 41 Gunijaan Sangeet and Samman Samaroh, held to honour music guru Gokul Chand Rao, witnessed a spectacular showcase of talent on Wednesday. Dr Shyam Sundar Sharma mesmerized by Dhrupad singing, while Dr Shweta Garg enthralled with Kathak dance. Journalist Vijay Singh was honoured with the Gokul Chand Rao Art Writing Award and Dr Shweta Garg received the Gokul Chand Rao Art Award for her Kathak prowess. Notable personalities from music, dance, and painting were also recognised, adding prestige to the event.

# CRAFTING TRADITION!



**‘OPERATION MOONLIGHT’  
SHEDS LIGHT ON TAX EVASION TACTICS!**

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***Thrilling Premiere***

**VIMAL KOTHARI**  
cityfirst@firstindia.co.in

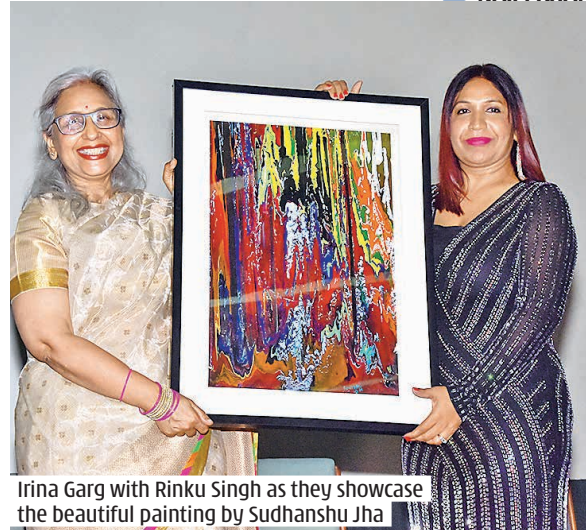
**J**aipur witnessed the premiere of the much-awaited thriller film 'Operation Moonlight', shedding light on the astuteness of Income Tax Department officials in tackling tax evasion. The film, unveiled on Thursday, at Raj Mandir Cinema Hall, mesmerized audiences with its portrayal of real-life events, showcasing the meticulous planning and execution of income tax raids.

Directed and written by Principal Income Tax Director of Investigation Sudhanshu Shekhar Jha, the film delves into the challenges faced by officers as they navigate through leaked information prior to raids, adding layers of suspense and intrigue. With a runtime of approximately an hour, the film captivate viewers with its tight script and compelling performances, receiving accolades from attendees, including Income Tax Department employees, officers, and tax consultants. Jha, encapsulated the film's message, stating, "No criminal can be skillful, and no crime can be committed skillfully."

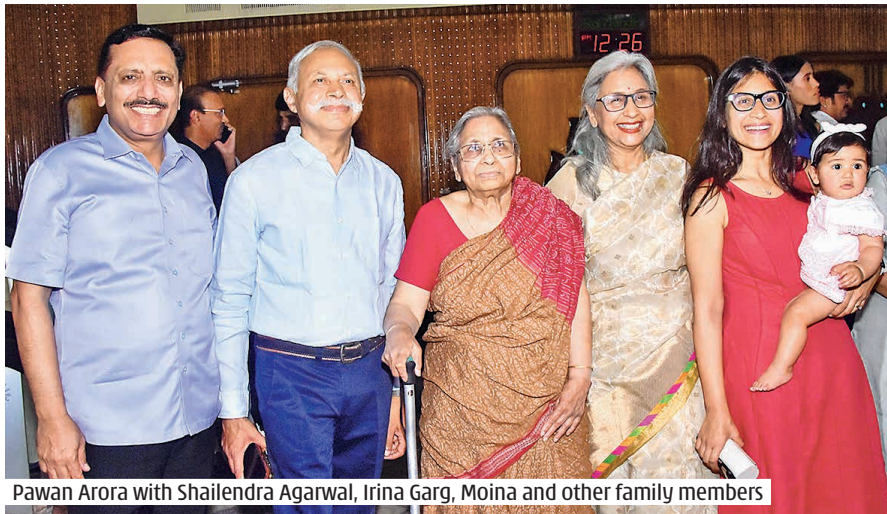
Pawan Arora, CEO and Managing Editor of First India News Channel, First India English Newspaper and First India Plus Entertainment (Events) appreciating Jha, eloquently remarked, "In unveiling the intricacies of tax investigations, 'Operation Moonlight' not only captivates audiences but also underscores the pivotal role of diligence and in-



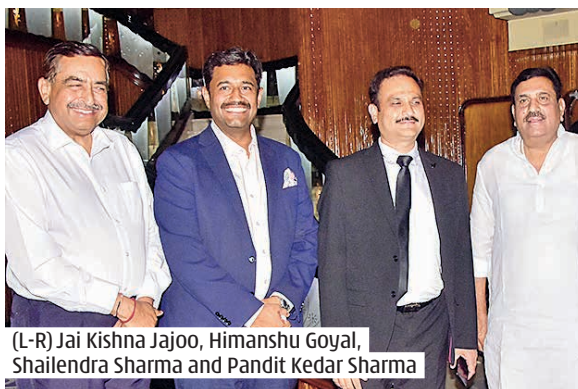
Sudhanshu Shekhar Jha



Irina Garg with Rinku Singh as they showcase the beautiful painting by Sudhanshu Jha



Pawan Arora with Shailendra Agarwal, Irina Garg, Moina and other family members



(L-R) Jai Kishna Jajoo, Himanshu Goyal, Shailendra Sharma and Pandit Kedar Sharma

tegrity in upholding financial regulations. Congratulations to Sudhanshu Shekhar Jha and his team for bringing this gripping tale to life."

'Operation Moonlight' not only entertains but also educates, offering insight into the workings

while advocating for compliance with tax regulations.

The portrayal of Jaipur's scenic beauty adds to the film's allure, serving as a backdrop to the gripping storyline. As audiences immersed themselves in the drama unfolding on screen, they gained a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by tax authorities and the importance of timely tax payments. Moreover, the film serves as a fitting tribute to Irina Garg, Principal Chief Income Tax Commissioner of the state, who showcased her acting prowess alongside professional actors.

## MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA!



city recently. Artists like Parmish Verma, Gajendra Verma, Riar Saab, & Mame Khan graced the stage, enthralling the audience with their performances. Ishwinder Singh, Marketing at Pernod Ricard India, hailed the event's success, while Pooja Gulati, EVP & National Director IP Solutions - ENIL, praised the magical ambience. The event showcased music's unifying power, leaving attendees eagerly awaiting future editions.

Jaipur witnessed a spectacular musical extravaganza as Imperial Blue Superhit Nights, in collaboration with Mirchi, dazzled the Gajendra Verma, Riar thralling the audience , Marketing at Pernod while Pooja Gulati, EVP raised the magical unifying power, leaving ns.

**WORLD THEATRE DAY SPECIAL!**



### During the play

Celebrating World Theater Day, Jawahar Kala Kendra's Rangayan Auditorium hosted the captivating play 'Chitralkha' on Wednesday. Adapted and directed by senior drama director Dheeraj Bhatnagar, the production is based on the literary work of Padma Bhushan awardee Bhagwati Charan Verma. The performance, blending acting, music, and dance, mesmerized the audience. The stage transformed into medieval India, featuring a wooden set depicting palaces and yogi huts adorned with captivating paintings. The storyline delves into themes of knowledge, virtue, and renunciation, beautifully portrayed by a talented cast including Sargam Bhatnagar, Deepak Gurjar, and Anmol Tyagi. Technical expertise by Dinesh Pradhan and musical enchantment by Pt. Dipanshu Sharma enhanced the theatrical experience, making it a memorable tribute to the art of theatre.

## CEREMONY!



Dundlod Safari and Baisa Adventures recently concluded a thrilling horse-riding safari across Rajasthan. They organised a 350 km expedition through the desert. Seventeen riders from various countries embarked on the journey from Gajner, traversing dunes and hamlets, and culminating in Nagaur. The riders experienced authentic rides Mallika Singh Dundlod, by the India Book of Records of

 **NAIM KHAN**



literacy from Pre-primary to Higher Secondary levels. Padmanabh Singh praised the initiative, emphasizing its potential to enlighten young minds and contribute to economic development.

The Jaipur History Festival, renowned for its blend of heritage and contemporary education, achieved a milestone with an orientation on "Financial Literacy Expressed through Folk Arts." Principals and educators from 35 schools participated enthusiastically on Thursday. Aligned with NEP 2020, the event at The Palace School, introduced a syllabus integrating financial