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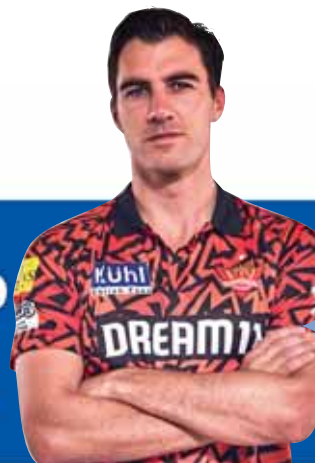
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Congress taxed on inheritance as Modi rips into Sam Pitroda remark

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ AMBIKAPUR/NEW DELHI

Yet another 'foul' play by a Congress leader gave an opportunity to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP to mount attack on the grand old party over the ongoing controversial remarks related to wealth and tax. This time its Sam Pitroda and the BJP-led by PM seized on his remarks on inheritance tax saying "zindagi ke saath bhi, zindagi ke baad bhi" as the Opposition party's mantra to "loot" people.

As Pitroda's comments provided fresh fodder to the BJP, its leaders latched onto them to target the Congress ahead of the second phase of Lok Sabha elections on Friday. Congress also marshalled a counter-offensive as its functionaries shared past comments of BJP leaders, including former Union Minister and MP in the outgoing Lok Sabha Jayant Sinha, in "favour" of such a tax.

In his poll rallies, Modi framed Pitroda's comments in his wider onslaught against the Congress, asserting that they have exposed its hidden agenda and that the party has become so removed from the country's social and family values that it wants to legally rob people of their assets and lifelong savings they want to bequeath to their children. Pitroda had spoken about inheritance tax in the US while delving into the issue of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting for the Lok Sabha elections, in Surguja district, Chhattisgarh, on Wednesday

PTI

redistribution of wealth. Pitroda, himself, sought to clear the air saying it is unfortunate that what he said as an individual on inheritance tax in the US is twisted by "godi media" to divert attention from the "lies" Modi is spreading about the Congress manifesto. Modi's comments on Mangal Sutra and gold snatching are simply unreal, he added. Congress, however, swung into damage control, distancing itself

from the comments of the US-based president of party's overseas wing and asserting that it has no plan to introduce such a tax. "Sensationalising his comments now and tearing them out of context are deliberate and desperate attempts at diverting attention away from Modi's malicious and mischievous election campaign; that is anchored only in lies and more

lies," Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said on a statement. At an election rally in Chhattisgarh's Ambikapur, Modi said the dangerous intentions of the Congress are coming to the fore one by one and now "it says it will impose inheritance tax". "The advisor of 'shehzada' of the 'shahi parivar', who was also the advisor to the shehzada's father, said

that more tax should be imposed on the middle class and those who earn by toiling hard," Modi said, apparently referring to Rahul Gandhi and Pitroda. "The Congress will impose a tax on the assets inherited by people from their parents and the "panja" (Congress' poll symbol) will snatch the assets from their children. Congress ka mantra hei Congress ki loot 'zindagi ke saath bhi, zindagi ke baad bhi' (Congress' mantra is looting people when they are alive and afterwards too)," Modi said taking a cue from LIC tagline. "Till you are alive, the Congress will impose more tax and after your life ends, it will impose the burden of inheritance tax on you. They (Congress) want to snatch your assets and rights of your children," the prime minister alleged. He spoke on similar lines in his rallies in Madhya Pradesh.

Amid the fierce attack from the BJP, the Congress has been insisting that its manifesto does not talk about "redistribution" and that it favours a "comprehensive socio-economic caste census".

"I mentioned US inheritance tax in my normal conversation on TV. Can I not mention facts? I said these are the kinds of issues people will have to discuss and debate. This has nothing to do with the policy of any party including Congress," Pitroda said on social media.

LOK SABHA ELECTION PHASE 2 SEATS

2024 LS voting concludes for States marked in red

| STATES | NO. OF SEATS | CONSTITUENCY |
|------------------|--------------|---|
| KERALA | 20 | Kasaragod, Kannur, Vatakara, Wayanad, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Ponnani, Palakkad, Alathur, Thrissur, Chalakudy, Ernakulam, Idukki, Kottayam, Alappuzha, Mavelikkara, Pathanamthitta, Kollam, Attingal, Thiruvananthapuram |
| Karnataka | 14 | Udupi Chikmagalur, Hassan, Dakshina Kannada, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Mandya, Mysore, Chamarajanagar, Bangalore Rural, Bangalore North, Bangalore Central, Bangalore South, Chikballapur, Kolar |
| RAJASTHAN | 13 | Tonk-Sawai Madhopur, Ajmer, Pali, Jodhpur, Barmer, Jalore, Udaipur, Banswara, Chittorgarh, Rajsamand, Bhilwara, Kota, Jhalawar-Baran |
| Maharashtra | 8 | Buldhana, Akola, Amravati (SC), Wardha, Yavatmal-Washim, Hingoli, Nanded, Parbhani |
| Uttar Pradesh | 8 | Amroha, Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, Aligarh, Mathura, Bulandshahar |
| Madhya Pradesh | 7 | Tikamgarh, Damoh, Khajuraho, Satna, Rewa, Hoshangabad, Betul |
| Assam | 5 | Karimganj, Silchar, Mangaldoi, Nawgong, Kaliaor |
| Bihar | 5 | Kishanganj, Katihar, Purnia, Bhagalpur, Banka |
| West Bengal | 3 | Darjeeling, Raiganj, Balurghat |
| Chhattisgarh | 3 | Rajnandgaon, Mahasamund, Kanker |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 1 | Jammu |
| Manipur | 1 | Outer Manipur |
| TRIPURA | 1 | Tripura East |

Campaign for Phase II LS poll ends

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After whirlwind roadshows, political tit-for-tats, and a fresh cycle of controversies on redistribution of wealth, inheritance tax and reducing the quota for SCs, STs and OBCs to favour Muslims, the curtains came down on Wednesday evening on a high-voltage campaigning for the second phase of Lok Sabha polls in 89 seats across 13 States on April 26.

The upcoming second phase polls will cover several important constituencies such as Wayanad (Kerala), from where Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is seeking re-election and Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), which will witness a high-profile showdown between Shashi Tharoor and Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Meerut where Arun Govil who played Ram in the hit Ramayan TV series of the 1980s,



Mathura where Hema Malini is seeking reelection, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's brother DK Suresh from Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha constituency and former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy (JDS) from Mandya. Polling is scheduled in all 20 seats of Kerala, 14 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 13 seats in Rajasthan, 8 seats each in Maharashtra and Uttar

Pradesh, 7 seats in Madhya Pradesh, 5 seats each in Assam and Bihar, 3 seats each in Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, and 1 seat each in Manipur, Tripura and Jammu and Kashmir.

Amid heat wave conditions, the poll body on Wednesday extended the poll timings by two hours in some Assembly segments — Banka, Madhepura, Khagaria and Munger Lok Sabha constituencies was from 7 am to 6 pm to ensure enhanced voter participation. In other polling stations in Bihar, under these constituencies, the poll timings remain 7 am to 4 pm. Staggered over seven stages, the first phase of the elections held last Friday for 102 seats across 21 states and Union territories saw a voter turnout of around 65.5 per cent. After Friday's phase, polling will be over in Kerala, Rajasthan and Tripura.



From left to right: Mahesh Sharma, Rajendra Singh, Mahendra Singh Nagar

Noida readies for triangular contest

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Despite being associated with the 'jinx', which many considered to have ended the careers of Chief Ministers in Uttar Pradesh, including Mayawati, Yogi Adityanath has held his fort despite having made visits to Noida, soon after he assumed the CM's chair in 2017.

He became the first CM of the State to return after completing a five years term and breaking the 'Noida jinx' in the 2022 Assembly polls. The popular NCR city, which falls under the Gautam Buddha Nagar seat, will go to elections on Friday in the second phase of Lok Sabha elections 2024.

Previously under Khurja Lok Sabha, the Gautam Buddha Nagar Lok Sabha constituency was established in 2008 on the recommendation of the Delimitation Commission of India, is set to witness a three way contest between BJP, SP and BSP for the upcoming elections on April 26. In the upcoming 2024 Lok

Sabha elections, the electoral contest will primarily feature the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the Samajwadi Party (SP)-led INDIA Bloc and the BSP. As many as 15 candidates are in the fray to secure the seat with BJP MP Mahesh Sharma, a two-time winner from this seat in Uttar Pradesh, in the battle for the third time. This new constituency covers Bulandshahar and Gautam Buddha Nagar districts and comprises five Vidhan Sabha constituencies: Noida, Jewar, Dadri, Sikandrabad, and Khurja. The SP, which is part of the Opposition INDIA Bloc, has fielded Mahendra Singh Nagar, a seasoned politician who served as the Congress district president from 1999 to 2016 before joining the SP in 2022. On the other hand, representing the BSP is Rajendra Singh Solanki, who recently joined the party.

Ghaziabad: BJP eyes 4th straight win in Gateway to UP

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

One of the 80 Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttar Pradesh, Ghaziabad Lok Sabha constituency, considered as one of the most VIP constituencies and a gateway of the State is all set to witness a three-cornered fight between BJP, Congress and BSP for April 26 polls. The Ghaziabad Lok Sabha seat has gained a reputation for being a stronghold of the BJP with the party's candidates consistently winning by significant margins in the three elections held in this constituency, and the BJP's vote share increasing with each successive election, further solidifying their position in this constituency.

The Ghaziabad Lok Sabha seat will witness a triangular contest in the general elections. The BJP has fielded Atul Garg, replacing sitting MP General (retired) VK Singh. The Congress has given ticket to Dolly Sharma and BSP has pitted Nand Kishor Pundir against the other two. The constituency has been a BJP stronghold and the party will be hoping to repeat its show in the previous two elections. Though the BJP has retained the seat since 2009 and is eyeing win for the fourth consecutive time.



Garg is currently a Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) in Uttar Pradesh from Ghaziabad seat in the district. The party has fielded him on the seat, hoping to hand over the seat once again to the party. The BJP is banking on Modi's charisma. Notably, the Rajput Jat community also held a series of maha panchayats across western Uttar Pradesh, calling for a boycott of BJP candidates. Members of the Jat community — considered a traditional voter base of BJP ally Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) — held two meetings, one in Indirapuram on Sunday and the other near Bamheta on April 18, to discuss their stand during these elections. Their leaders said their list of grievances against the ruling party was a long one.

IED explosion damages bridge on NH 2 in Manipur

PTI ■ IMPHAL

A bridge on the National Highway 2 in ethnic violence-hit Manipur's Kangpokpi district was partially damaged in an IED explosion early on Wednesday, disrupting traffic movement in the area, police said. The blast occurred on the bridge between Sapermeina and Koubru Leikha areas around 12.45 am, an officer said. No casualties were reported so far in the improvised explosive device (IED) blast, he said.

Three craters and cracks on both ends of the bridge were noticed, the officer said. Movement of heavy vehicles has been stopped on the bridge connecting Manipur's capital Imphal with Nagaland's Dimapur.

Minutes after the explosion, police personnel rushed to the spot and cordoned off the bridge, he said, adding that an investigation into the IED blast has been initiated. Some two-wheelers, however, were seen plying on the bridge this morning. The IED explosion occurred hours after gunfights broke out between village volunteers of the two warring communities in Imphal West district.

SC tells EVM critics it cannot pass directions on basis of suspicion

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court said on Wednesday it cannot "control the elections" or issue directions simply because doubts have been raised about the efficacy of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), as it reserved its judgement on a clutch of petitions claiming the polling devices can be tinkered with to manipulate the results. The court said it cannot change the thought process of those doubting the



advantages of polling machines and advocating going back to ballot papers. A bench of Justices Sanjiv

Khanna and Dipankar Datta reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas seeking complete cross-verification of votes cast using EVMs with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), after taking note of the answers to queries it had posed to the Election Commission. It sought answers from an official of the poll panel to five questions related to the functioning of EVMs including whether the microcontrollers fitted in them are reprogrammable.

RBI bars Kotak Mahindra Bank from onboarding customers online

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Cracking down on repeated non-compliance of IT norms, the RBI on Wednesday barred Kotak Mahindra Bank from onboarding new customers through its online and mobile banking channels and issuing fresh credit cards with immediate effect after the regulator found "serious deficiencies" in the lender's IT risk management. These actions, the RBI said, are

necessitated based on significant concerns arising out of Reserve Bank's IT examination of the bank for the years 2022 and 2023 and the continued failure on part of the bank to address these concerns in a comprehensive and timely manner. Meanwhile, Kotak Mahindra Bank said in a statement that it has taken measures for adoption of new technologies to strengthen its IT systems.

Churn in Congress over Delhi candidates

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Disrespect on part of the party high command representative who used 'Get Out' on a three time Minister and biggest Dalit leader, Raj Kumar Chauhan, resigned from the Congress after serving the party for nearly three decades. Brewing dissatisfaction in Delhi Congress over distribution of tickets to 'outsiders', for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in the national capital next month, prominent Dalit leader and three time former minister in the Sheila

Dikshit cabinet, Chauhan, resigned from the grand old party accusing those appointed to oversee the Lok Sabha elections in the city of disrespecting him publicly, a day after the meeting of Delhi Congress' disciplinary committee. Chauhan was under fire for allegedly mobilising a section of Congress workers against its North West Delhi candidate, Udit Raj.

On Monday, when its Delhi unit was officially introducing its three Lok Sabha candidates to the media, the protesters raised slogans of "Bahari ummeedwar nahi chalega (an outsider candidate will not be allowed)", criticising Raj for his affiliation with the BJP till 2019.



Talking to The Pioneer, Chauhan said he has resigned from the party. Chauhan said he had no plan to join any other party including BJP. "AICC incharge for Delhi Deepak Babaria called a meeting at his house. When I started speaking in the meeting, Babria asked me to 'get out' and he repeated it four to five times. I was trying to tell him that the candidate, who has been given the ticket (Udit Raj), has been abusing every caste. I am a four-time MLA and a three-time minister (in Delhi government). We have done so

much development work for Delhi. An outsider was telling me to get out. That's why I was angry and sent my resignation to DPCC chief Arvinder Singh Lovely," Chauhan said. "I have resigned because a meeting was called...to discuss the election candidates...some 20 to 25 main leaders from North East Delhi, including Arvinder Singh Lovely, were a part of that meeting. During the meeting, we were trying to put our side forward but we were not allowed to," Chauhan alleged.

'Jailed' under NSA, pro-Khalistan ideologue, Amritpal, eyes Punjab electoral arena

Amritpal's counsel confirms development; Mother denies

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Exactly a year after he was arrested from Moga, the incarcerated pro-Khalistan ideologue Amritpal Singh, the self-styled head of 'Waris Punjab De' outfit, currently serving time in Assam's Dibrugarh jail under the National Security Act (NSA), is reportedly eyeing a political foray in Punjab. Sources suggest that he is contemplating contesting the upcoming Lok Sabha elections from the panthic seat of Khadoor Sahib as an Independent candidate. Confirming this development, a former MP and legal counsel for Amritpal Singh Advocate Rajdev Singh Khalsa revealed that his client has expressed a firm intention to contest from the Khadoor Sahib seat. Khalsa, who recently met Amritpal Singh in

Dibrugarh, affirmed the latter's resolve to enter the political arena despite his ongoing legal battles.

This potential move has sparked significant interest and debate, given Amritpal Singh's controversial background and past involvement in violent incidents. Notably, his former associate had filed a complaint accusing Amritpal of orchestrating the abduction and assault of an individual named Barinder Singh from Ajnala. Subsequently, in February 2023, he and his supporters allegedly attacked a police station in Ajnala, resulting in injuries to six police officers.

However, amidst these developments, Amritpal Singh's mother, Balwinder Kaur, has refuted the reports of her son's electoral aspirations. She emphasized that no decision has been made regarding his candidacy, despite pressure from the supporters urging him to contest.

Kaur revealed that Amritpal Singh's father is currently in Dibrugarh, and any

decision regarding the election would be made after careful consideration and deliberation.

As the political landscape in Punjab continues to evolve, Amritpal's potential entry into electoral politics is expected to add a layer of complexity and intrigue. From once advocating for Khalistan — a separate

Ballot Battle

land for Khalsa or Sikhs, and challenging the Indian state, Amritpal now seemed poised to navigate the democratic process within the bounds of the Indian Constitution.

Moreover, his candidacy has raised questions about the support he might garner and the implications for Punjab's political dynamics. While some view his bid as a bold assertion of democratic rights, others express concerns about his impact on Punjab's stability.

In light of these developments, stakeholders across the

political spectrum are closely monitoring Amritpal's next steps. The possibility of a mainstream party extending support to his candidature further underscored the significance of his entry into electoral politics.

As of now, only Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the BJP have declared their candidacies for the Khadoor Sahib segment — currently represented by Congress' Jasbir Singh Dimpal Gill. While the Congress is considering not to re-nominate Dimpal from the panthic seat of Khadoor Sahib, Shiromani Akali Dal is in search of a suitable face even as it has declared its candidates for the 12 seats.

AAP has nominated Cabinet Minister Laljit Singh Bhullar from the seat, while the BJP has fielded former SAD MLA Manjeet Singh Manna Mianwind.

On April 23, 2023, the Punjab Police managed to arrest Amritpal Singh ending a 35-day dramatic chase. Amritpal was arrested from Moga district's Rode village —

the ancestral village of slain Khalistani militant 'Sant' Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale. Revered as Bhindrawale 2.0 by his followers, Amritpal had strategically chosen Rode village's Gurdwara Janam Asthan Sant Khalsa — erected nearly 38 years after Bhindranwale died in Operation Blue Star in 1984 — to surrender. It was the same Gurdwara where the ceremony of Amritpal's dastarbandi (installation), as the head of Waris Punjab De, was held on September 29, 2022, amidst the slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad".

Born in 1993 in Jalandhar's Jallapur Kheda village, Amritpal initially pursued business ventures in Dubai after completing his high school education. However, upon returning to India, he became associated with the farmer agitation in Delhi and later founded the 'Waris Punjab De' organization. Initially aimed at engaging youth in Sikhism and awakening Punjab, the organization later faced accusations of radicalizing youth.

Congress, AAP chalk out joint strategy for Chandigarh Lok Sabha election

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH



The Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the two main constituent partners of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) on Wednesday chalked out a joint strategy for the Chandigarh parliamentary constituency. The meeting was attended by the INDIA Bloc candidate Manish Tewari, AAP in-charge for Chandigarh and Delhi MLA Jarnail Singh, Chandigarh Congress president HS Lucky, Chandigarh AAP president Sunny Ahluwalia, Mohali MLA Kulwant Singh, Chandigarh Mayor Kuldeep Kumar, AAP leader Chandermukhi Sharma, the councilors of the Congress and AAP and all those who had contested the elections.

In the meeting, the INDIA leaders said that there was total unanimity and consensus between the two parties that this election was very important not just from the local reasons, but from the national per-

spective also. They said that each and every vote and every seat will count and that is why the INDIA bloc was not leaving anything to chance.

Speaking on the occasion, Jarnail Singh assured full support of the AAP for Manish Tewari, saying each and every AAP worker and leader in the union territory was committed to ensure his victory. He said, it is not Tewari's personal or individual election, but that of the alliance together. Tewari expressed his gratitude to the workers and leaders of the Congress and the AAP for their support. He said he was

feeling overwhelmed with the support he was getting from the cadres of the two parties in the city.

The Congress leader appreciated the mutual understanding between the leaders and workers of the two parties, which was being reflected in the tireless hard work everyone was putting in to ensure victory of the INDIA candidate in the election. He said that everybody had realized how important this election was going to be, not just for the two parties or their leaders, but also for the common man across the country.

Congress suspends Phillaur MLA Vikramjit Chaudhary for anti-party activities

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Congress on Wednesday suspended Phillaur MLA Vikramjit Singh Chaudhary from the party for allegedly indulging in anti-party activities. The suspension came after his statements against the party's Jalandhar candidate and former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi.

The Phillaur MLA had been opposing Channi's candidature from Jalandhar. His mother Karamjit Kaur Chaudhary, who had unsuccessfully contested from the Jalandhar Lok Sabha seat last year, joined the BJP on April 20.

"The unrestrained statements made by you that devi-

ate from the party guidelines are not in keeping with the dignity of your post. Due to which the image of the party organization is being tarnished and a wrong message is being sent among the public and Congress workers," Congress in-charge Punjab affairs, Devender Yadav, said in the communication to Chaudhary. "Despite several warnings given to you personally, your conduct of indulging in anti-party activities continues. Therefore, until further action is taken in the matter, you are henceforth removed from all party positions held by you and suspended from the party till further orders," he added.

Chaudhary had called Channi 'Shakuni'. He said that

just as 'Lord Krishna' punished 'Shakuni' and his coterie, the voters of Jalandhar will teach Channi a lesson for his "treachery" by throwing him out of the constituency. Channi had earlier said that he was going to Jalandhar by being 'Sudama' and had urged the people of Doaba region to take care of him like 'Lord Krishna'.

Chaudhary had even pointed towards the former chief minister's electoral defeats from Chamkaur Sahib and Bhadaur segments during the 2022 Punjab assembly polls. Chaudhary, who is the son of late Congress MP Santokh Chaudhary, had earlier tendered his resignation as chief whip of the party in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha.

Punjab ADGP GS Dhillon opts or VRS, non-committal on political endeavours

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

After a career spanning over three decades, senior IPS officer Gurinder Singh Dhillon has bid adieu to the Punjab Police force by opting for voluntary retirement on Wednesday. Dhillon, who was serving as the Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order), decided to step down from his post, citing health reasons. He was set to retire in May this year. Dhillon's decision to embrace voluntary retirement has left many pondering about his future endeavours. Speculation has been rife about the possibility of Dhillon venturing into politics, given his experience and reputation in Punjab's administrative circles. However, the seasoned officer remained tight-lipped about any potential foray into the political

arena, asserting that he had not contemplated such a move thus far.

"I have not thought of anything like that or discussed it yet," said Dhillon when asked about his inclination towards a political career, leaving observers intrigued by the uncertainty surrounding his post-retirement plans.

In a statement reflecting on his decision to embrace voluntary retirement, Dhillon expressed a sense of liberation, likening his departure to being "uncaged", and open to the winds of destiny. "I have taken VRS. I am feeling uncaged. Let's see where the wind of destiny pollinates me," he wrote in a post on X. Dhillon said that he would utilize the experience he has gained over 34 years, for himself and others. He maintained that the question of entering the political field is quite a difficult one, and everything depends

on whether his family gives him permission for this work or not.

"I have not made this kind of decision. I don't know where my experience will be used," said Dhillon, who claims to have read more than 300 history books.

Not the first instance of VRS

This is not the first instance of senior officials taking VRS. Prior to this, IAS officer Parampal Kaur Sidhu also took the VRS, following which she joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and is not contesting from Bathinda Lok Sabha seat. Similarly, in 2015-batch IAS officer Karnail Singh had also submitted his resignation to the Government recently. He had served as the Deputy Commissioner of Kapurthala, but was upset for not receiving a new posting for many days. His resignation came close to his superannuation.

President Murmu to go on 5-day Himachal visit beginning May 4

PNS ■ SHIMLA

President Droupadi Murmu will arrive in Shimla on May 4 for a five-day visit of Himachal Pradesh and will stay at the Rashtrapati Nivas, a presidential retreat, near Chharabra, about 14 km from the state capital.

District Magistrate Anupam Kashyap, who held a meeting with police and civil officers concerned regarding arrangements for the president's visit here on Wednesday, said that she would arrive at Shimla on May 4 and leave for Delhi on May 8. Her itinerary includes visit to the catchment area of Shimla on May 5 and Kangra on May 6. On May 7, she will perform puja (worship) at the Sankat Mochan and Tara Devi temples, take a stroll on the famous Mall Road, enjoy cultural evening at the Gaiety

Theatre and join dinner in her honour at the Raj Bhawan.

Kashyap directed the Public Works Department to take up repairs of roads from the airport to the retreat and the Sankat Mochan and Tara Devi temples and instructed Shimla Municipal Corporation and SAD A (Special Area Development Authority) and the Forest Department to launch a cleanliness campaign in the surrounding areas. DSP Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi said that adequate police deployment would be made to ensure smooth traffic and CCTV cameras would be installed for surveillance and security purposes. The retreat, which was officially declared open for the general public on April 20 last year, will remain closed to the public till the president is in Shimla, officials said.

Former Cong MLA Jassi Khangura now resigns from AAP after ticket denial

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Two years after he shifted loyalties to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Jasveer Singh Jassi Khangura — a former Congress MLA from Ludhiana — on Wednesday tendered his resignation from the ruling party amidst speculation of a potential return to the Congress fold.

Khangura, a prominent hotelier and AAP's senior leader had crossed over to

AAP ahead of the 2022 assembly polls. However, his tenure with AAP has come to an abrupt end over alleged dissatisfaction stemming from the denial of a ticket to contest from Ludhiana Lok Sabha constituency.

The decision to resign came hot on the heels of AAP's announcement of Ludhiana Central MLA Ashok Parashar Pappi as their candidate for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Ludhiana. Sources close to Khangura revealed

that he was deeply disheartened by the party's decision to overlook him for the ticket, prompting his departure.

In his resignation letter addressed to AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Khangura refrained from elaborating on the reasons behind his exit. However, he clarified that his decision was driven by personal factors and expressed no immediate intentions of joining another political outfit. "I have quit due to personal

reasons...As of now, I am not thinking about joining another party," he said.

Khangura's political journey has been marked by twists and turns, notably his successful stint as the MLA representing the erstwhile Kila Raipur constituency from 2007 to 2012. His victory broke the Congress stronghold in the predominantly rural constituency, earning him recognition as a formidable leader. Later, the Kila Raipur constituency was disbanded in

the delimitation process and most of its area came under Dakha assembly segment, and some parts under Gill.

Despite his electoral prowess, Khangura's hopes for securing the AAP ticket from Ludhiana were dashed, fueling speculation about his next move.

At present, Khangura remained tight-lipped about his future political course, leaving observers intrigued by the unfolding developments.

POLL BUZZ

Lok Sabha elections in Punjab to witness BJP surge: Party leader Subhash Sharma

Chandigarh: The Lok Sabha polls will mark the rise of the BJP in Punjab where the ruling AAP's "downfall" has begun, a senior BJP leader claimed on Wednesday. Punjab BJP general secretary Subhash Sharma said his party is getting immense support from people in the state for the elections polling for which will be held in the last phase on June 1. The BJP is contesting the Lok Sabha polls on its own for the first time since 1996. The Shiromani Akali Dal had walked out of the NDA in 2020 over the now-repealed farm laws. Addressing the media here, Punjab BJP leader Sharma said the party leadership will announce the candidates for remaining seats -- Ferozepur, Sangrur, Anandpur Sahib and Fatehgarh Sahib -- this week. The BJP has already announced its candidates for nine Lok Sabha constituencies in Punjab. Replying to a question on farmers protesting against BJP candidates in the state, Sharma dubbed it as

"politically motivated". "Some people and some organisations are holding protests," he said. The BJP is campaigning in a big way in villages and the party is getting immense support, he said.

Association of Sec 53 and 54 organised an event in which Tandon was weighed against laddoos.

55 Model Polling Stations set up for Lok Sabha



Sanjay Tandon visit furniture market

Elections in Chandigarh

Chandigarh: As the General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 approaches, the Chandigarh Election Department on Wednesday said that as many as 614 Polling Stations have been set up across the city to enable smooth casting of votes for voters. Each Polling Station is

equipped with essential facilities, including drinking water, ramps for accessibility, toilets, shaded areas, wheelchairs, and voter assistance booths, the official spokesperson said. Among 617 Polling Stations, 55 Model Polling Stations have been designated to offer premium amenities such as red carpet entry and waiting halls. In a bid to foster inclusivity, special attention has been given to ensuring representation from various segments of society. Five polling stations each will be fully managed by women, persons with disabilities (PWD), and youth. Additionally, five theme-based polling stations reflecting popular Chandigarh themes will be set up, adding a unique touch to the voting experience, he added.

Punjab Congress chief Warring starts campaign from Faridkot

Gidderbaha: Asserting that the party gives everyone opportunities, Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee President Amarinder Singh Raju Warring on Wednesday inaugurated the electoral campaign of Congress MP candidate from

Faridkot (reserved), Amarjit Kaur Sahoke. Addressing a gathering, he said, "The support of the people of Gidderbaha has been instrumental in my journey, propelling me to the position of President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. My involvement starting from poster campaigns, participation in rallies for fellow leaders, and grassroots party activism, has been witnessed by the people. "The Congress party gives everyone opportunities, especially those who work hard. Meritorious efforts are duly acknowledged, and with perseverance, one can surely rise within the party ranks." Emphasising the robust presence of the party, the PPCC chief said the strength of the party in Punjab "is a testament to the dedication of our workers and office-bearers. These stalwarts will ensure an emphatic victory for our party in the forthcoming elections by working at the grassroots, nurturing their own leadership trajectories in the process." Sahoke quit the Akali Dal and joined the Congress when she was denied a ticket in the 2022 assembly polls.

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Electoral Officer Anurag Agarwal on Wednesday said that through the C-Vigil mobile app, people are keeping a close eye on election violations in the ongoing Lok Sabha election in the State. So far 2423 complaints have been received in Haryana, of which the highest number, 502 complaints, are from Sirsa. As soon as complaints about violations of the Model Code of Conduct are reported, it is being sent to the Election Commission. These complaints are resolved within 100 minutes, he added.

The Chief Electoral Officer said that the general public is ensuring their participation in the system through the "C-Vigil" mobile app, which is a matter of pride. Citizens are cooperating with the Election Commission as election observers to conduct elections impartially and transparently.

Providing district-wise details, he said that 455 complaints have been received from Ambala, 64 from Bhiwani, 264 from Faridabad, 71 from Fatehabad, 140 from Gurugram, 164 from Hisar. Similarly, 30 complaints have been received from Jhajjar, 50 from Jind, 54 from Kaithal, 22 from Karnal, 54 from Kurukshetra, 6 from Mahendragarh, 44 from

Mewat, 69 from Palwal, 108 from Panchkula, 13 from Panipat, 28 from Rewari, 89 from Rohtak, 134 from Sonapat, and 62 complaints from Yamunanagar have been received. Among these, 2079 complaints were found to be valid and action was taken accordingly.

Appealing to the people to support in making the elections fair and transparent, Agarwal said that citizens can take photos or record two-minute videos and upload them on this app. The photo or video will be uploaded on the app along with the GPS location. Complaints will be resolved within 100 minutes of registration.

He mentioned that flying squads and static surveillance teams have real-time information and teams will immediately reach the location from where the complaint is received on the C-Vigil app, informed Agarwal.

Emphasizing the significance of voter awareness campaigns, he highlighted their pivotal role in encouraging voter turnout. These campaigns serve as catalysts, fostering a culture of proactive citizenship and democratic engagement among the people. To enhance voter participation in the 18th Lok Sabha General Election, all districts of the state are fervently involved in driving voter awareness initiatives. Notably, various departments, including

educational institutions, are actively contributing to these campaigns, thereby playing a crucial role in ensuring voter awareness and engagement.

Agarwal said that this initiative reflects people's dedication to fostering values such as equality, justice, and freedom, while emphasizing the significance of every citizen's right to vote. Through the Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative, the administration endeavours to connect with every voter, emphasizing the crucial role of citizen responsibility and active participation in the democratic process.

He said that the administration is actively and efficiently fulfilling its responsibility on social media platforms to promote voter awareness and stimulate participation in the electoral process. The significance of every single vote is being elucidated to voters through diverse SVEEP campaigns. Those who may underestimate the impact of their individual vote fail to recognize its crucial role in ensuring the fair and accurate election of public representatives; indeed, each vote holds immense importance. With this perspective in mind, citizens of the state are encouraged to actively engage in the grand festival of democracy on the polling day, May 25, the CEO added.

Himachal Excise Department seizes a major haul of over 1 lakh liters of illicit liquor

PNS ■ SHIMLA

The Himachal State Taxes and Excise Department officials on Wednesday conducted an operation led by Excise Commissioner Dr. Yunus in the Gagwal, Ullahrian and Tyora of Mand area of Tehsil Indora, within the revenue district of Nurpur seized over one lakh and one thousand liters of illicit liquor (lahan).

In a statement, Dr. Yunus informed that the seized liquor, valued at approximately Rs. one crore, was spilled thereafter. The operation also resulted in

the confiscation of 50 thousand liters of country liquor from Gagwal area, 41 thousand liters from Ullahrian, and 10 thousand liters from Tyora. Excise Commissioner said that this evening the team has commenced another search operation in a residence located in the Mand area of Indora in which 2044 litre of liquor (lahan) was seized. He emphasized that stringent legal action was taken against all individuals implicated in the illicit liquor trade.

The Excise Department has initiated a massive campaign to crack down on illicit liquor businesses and freebies, with a

focus on tightening the grip on offenders. Working closely with the community, the department is maintaining vigilant surveillance, with Dr. Yunus personally overseeing search operations.

The Excise Commissioner emphasized the department's commitment to ensuring free and fair elections in Himachal Pradesh. He said that since the Model Code of Conduct came into effect, 59 teams were constituted by the department was actively working to seize those engaged in illegal liquor trade, both within the state and along the bordering areas of Himachal Pradesh.

PUNJAB & SIND BANK
(A GOVT. OF INDIA UNDERTAKING)
ZONAL OFFICE, FARIDKOT, RED CROSS BHAWAN,
SADIK CHOWK, FARIDKOT-151203,
INTERIOR FURNISHING, ELECTRICAL WORK & DATA CABLING WORK
AT PUNJAB & SIND BANK, BRANCH NATHUWALA WEST (n0401),
DISTRICT MOGA, PUNJAB
Punjab and Sind Bank invites application through open tender under
two bid system (Technical Bid & Financial Bid) for Interior Furnishing
& Allied Electrical works at Branch Nathuwala West (N0401)
District Moga, through e-tendering means.
Last date of submission of application is 13.05.2024 For further
details visit our website www.punjabandsindbank.co.in or
<https://psb.eproc.in>
Zonal Manager

Keshav College of Education VPO Matani Teh. Siwani Distt. Bhiwani Haryana
Approved By N.C.T.E. Affiliated to C.B.L.U. Bhiwani
Required Staff for B.Ed. Course.
Teaching Faculty for B.Ed. Assistant Professor Perspective in Education-03
Posts: Assistant Professor in Pedagogical Subjects-07 Posts: (Language Hindi
& English -02, Social Science - 01, Science - 01, Mathematics - 01, Commerce -
01, Economics - 01, Inself finance scheme on regular basis. Assistant
Professor/Instructor - 03 Posts (Health & Physical Education-01, Fine Arts-01,
Performing Art (Music/Dance Theater-01)).
Administrative and professional Staff
Librarian (B.Lib. with 55%) 01, Lab Assistant-01 (BCA with 55%), Supdt.- 01,
Storekeeper 01, Technical Assistant-01, Chowkidar-01, Sweeper-01, Peon-01
Helper-01, Office Assistant cum Computer operator-01, Accountant-01, Mail-
01, SafaiKaramchari-01. Salary/Qual. as per NCTE/CBLU & Govt. Norms
Application maybe apply within 21 days to the President of the College keshav
Educational Societyfor B.Ed. with all documents. Xerox Copy (One copy of
application must be sent to Dean of College CBLU, Bhiwani) to Dean, Colleges
C.B.L.U. Bhiwani keshav Educational Society.
Contact No: 9518207343, E-Mail:- Director.kims@gmail.com

बेदखली सूचना
मैं, महेंद्र सिंह पुत्र श्री कर्ण सिंह निवासी गांव
बालन्दू तह. च जिला रोहतक अपने हल्फ से ब्यान
करता हूँ कि मेरा पुत्र सनील उर्फ सुपडा मेरे व मेरे
परिवार के कहने-सुनने से बाहर है, इसलिए मैं
इसको अपनी चल-अचल सम्पत्ति से बेदखल
करता हूँ। भविष्य में इसके द्वारा किए गए अच्चे-चुरे
कार्यों, लोन देन व किसी प्रकार के कानूनी व गैर
कानूनी कार्य के लिए वह स्वयं जिम्मेवार होगा। मेरी
व मेरे परिवार को कोई जिम्मेदारी नहीं होगी।

AFFIDAVIT
I Satya Pal S/o Sh. Hari Ram R/o 1434/2,
Gali No.3, Sukhchain Colony, Vill. Shah
Satnam Pura, Distt. Sirsa do hereby
solemnly affirm and declare as under.
That my name is mentioned in Aadhar
Card, Pan Card as Satyapal which is
incorrect. That in my Passport my name is
mentioned as Satya Pal. That now I
known by name as Satya Pal and
Satyapal. That Satya Pal and Satyapal is one
and same person i.e. the same. Deponent

कार्यालय नगर पालिका ताड़वा
पुंजि २०/०५/२०२४ आई टी पी०२११३०१०२०१ को खार्ड नम्बर-१३
लाइवा रहसिल लाइवा किल कुरुक्षेत्र में स्थित है। नगर पालिका
लाइवा के पोर्टल टेक्स रिपोर्ट में सर्व अमर नाथ पुत्र श्री राम चन्द
के नाम दली सलन मूल प्रमाण पर अमर नाथ को मृत
दिनांक ०३/०१/२०२३ को ही चुकी है। इस सम्पत्ति के कानूनी
कार्यन सर्व अमर नाथ पुत्र श्री राम चन्द द्वारा संभाला जायत
रिपोर्ट के अमर नाथ पुत्र के पोर्टल टेक्स रिपोर्ट में अपना नाम इन्ट्रान करने
बारे अवेदन किया है। अतः यदि किसी व्यक्ति को उपरोक्तनगर
पोर्टल टेक्स रिपोर्ट में इन्ट्रान करने बारे कोई एवारा हो तो इस
प्रकरण को त्रिंथि से ३० दिन के अन्दर-२ नगर पालिका कार्यालय में
अवेदन अपने पत्र में संक्षेपित दस्तावेज सहित कर सकता है। इस
अवेदन के पराकार कोई कर्ष मदन नहीं होगा।

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Sunita Devi R/o H. No. 21, Tagore
Garden, Yamuna Nagar declare that Sale
Deed no. 13843 dated 08/02/2022 has
been lost at 21, Tagore Garden on dated
24.04.2024. It has not been mortgage
with any Person / Bank / Financial
Institution. If anybody found this sale
deed kindly contact at above address.

Format C-7

(for political parties to publish in the newspapers, social media platforms & website of the party)

Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates. along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'b1e Supreme Court in contempt petition C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) no. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: Shiromani Akali Dal
Name of the Election: Lok Sabha Election 2024
Name of State/UT: Punjab
(I) Name of the Constituency: 02-Amritsar
Name of the candidate: Sh. Anil Joshi

| Sr. No. | | |
|---------|---|---|
| 1. | Criminal antecedents | |
| | a. Nature of the offences | 1. U/s 188 IPC 2. U/s 188 IPC 3. U/s 188 of IPC |
| | b. Case no. | 1. FIR No 206 dated 31.08.2021PS Sadar Amritsar 2. FIR No 206 dated.2021PS Sadar Amritsar 3. FIR No 150/2020 PS Sect. 17, Chd (PCH/5128/2021) |
| | c. Name of the Court | 1. Ilaqa Magistrate,(PS Sadar Amritsar) under investigation and challan yet be filed 2. Punjab & Haryana High Court. (Proceeding Stayed) 3. CJM Chandigarh |
| | d. Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No) | No |
| | e. Date of conviction, if any | Not Applicable |
| | f. Details of punishment undergone, if any | 3. Sentenced with fine Rs 1000/- in FIR No 150/2020 PS Sect. 17, Chd (PCH/5128/2021) |
| | g. Any other information required to be given | Not Applicable |
| 2. | The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words) | The candidates are democratically selected in the existing framework of the party. Factors such as intelligence, following Party ideology and loyalty towards party, Honesty, Educational qualification, knowledge about issues relating to the constituency and his work towards the betterment of society. It is further thoroughly checked that the candidate is accountable to Public at large even before and after being elected. That the present candidate has vast experience being former Cabinet Minister. |
| 3. | Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words) | Though the party has been keeping close watch on all the prospective candidates but however the best one out of them has been selected. The Party has moral responsibility towards the Citizens of India and need to rise upto their expectations and no better candidate than the present candidate was available. |

Name of Political Party: Shiromani Akali Dal
Name of the Election: Lok Sabha Election 2024
Name of State/UT: Punjab
(I) Name of the Constituency: 13-Patiala
Name of the candidate: Sh. Nariender Kumar Sharma

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Criminal antecedents | |
| | a. Nature of the offences | 1. U/s 188,186,353,332, 34 of IPC 2. U/s 283,341,188 of IPC & 8 - B National Highway Act 1956 3. U/s 186,323,341,511 of IPC, 1860 |
| | b. Case no. | 1. FIR No 087 Dt. 06.11.2021 PS North Chandigarh 2. FIR No. 90 Dt. 08.12.2017 PS Chandigarh 3. FIR No 26 Dt 10.03.2021 PS Chandigarh |
| | c. Name of the Court | 1. CJM Chandigarh |
| | d. Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No) | No |
| | e. Date of conviction, if any | Not Applicable |
| | f. Details of punishment undergone, if any | Not Applicable |
| | g. Any other information required to be given | Not Applicable |
| 2. | The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words) | The candidates are democratically selected in the existing framework of the party. Factors such as intelligence, following Party ideology and loyalty towards party, Honesty, Educational qualification, knowledge about issues relating to the constituency and his work towards the betterment of society. It is further thoroughly checked that the candidate is accountable to Public at large even before and after being elected. That the present candidate has vast experience being two times MLA. |
| 3. | Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words) | Though the party has been keeping close watch on all the prospective candidates but however the best one out of them has been selected. The Party has moral responsibility towards the Citizens of India and need to rise upto their expectations and no better candidate than the present candidate was available. |

(Dr. Daljit Singh Cheema)
Secretary & Spokesman
Shiromani Akali Dal

SBI STATE BANK OF INDIA
Administrative office, Rohtak

PUBLIC NOTICE
INVITING TENDERS FOR HIRING OF TAXI (FOUR-WHEELER)
Admin Office Rohtak needs two taxis (four-wheeler) and for the same, we invite the open tender to hire four-wheeler vehicles (one of which will be Honda City and other will be Honda Amaze/Tyota Etios/Maruti Swift Dezire) to be used at Admin Office Rohtak for branches visits from 01.06.2024 to 31.05.2025. Interested parties may submit their tender up to 15.05.2024. The Full details and format for submission of tender forms are available at our website www.sbi.co.in under procurement news, which can be downloaded from the said website. Bank reserves its right to accept / reject any / all proposal without assigning any reason thereof.

CHIEF MANAGER

PUBLIC NOTICE
I Kanav Khanna S/o Late. Sh. Tenny Khanna, R/o House Number 220, Sector 21 A, Chandigarh-160022 declares that:
1) That the local government of Punjab had issued one CLU through PB/CLU/SAS/ZIRAK/2850, Dated:- 22-11-2022 through Khasra No. 694 (4-0), 695(4-0), 696 (4-0), 697 (3-1-2), 698 (1-16), 1077/693 (3-10), Village Nabha, Sub Tehsil Zirakpur, District S.A.S Mohali Punjab.
2) That the said CLU has been issued in the name of Tenny Khanna S/o Sh. Joginder Raj Khanna.
3) That late Sh. Tenny Khanna died on 19-01-2023.
4) That the above mentioned land of Sh. Tenny Khanna is registered in my name in the property records.
5) That the said CLU on the name of Tenny Khanna should be transferred to my name, if anyone has any objection in this then he should raise his objection within 15 days itself or through advocate at Room No.: 401, Fourth Floor District Administrative Complex, SAS Nagar. The objections received thereafter will not be acceptable.

PUBLIC NOTICE (PROPERTY)
Notice is given to the public that the industrial plot described in the schedule hereunder written is being transferred by HSIDC KUNDLI (SONIPAT) 131028 in the name of 1) Mrs. Komal Mittal and 2) Master Svojas Mittal, legal heirs of Late Mr. Anuj Mittal (Original Allottee), all residents of A-44 Derawal Nagar, Delhi-110009.
All persons having any claim in respect thereof by way of sale, exchange, gift, mortgage, charge, trust, inheritance, possession, lease, lien or otherwise, whosever are requested to inform the same in writing to the undersigned at address: A-44 Derawal Nagar, Delhi-110009 and Estate Manager, HSIDC Kundli-131028 within 14 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and the transfer shall be completed.
Schedule above referred to
Plot no. 543, Sector-56, Phase-V Kundli-131028 allotted by HSIDC, in favour of Mr. Anuj Mittal vide RLA dated 16.03.2020.
Date: 23.04.2024
Place: Delhi
Komal Mittal

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby informed that House No. 30-TYPE-II Housing Board Colony Mediada Panipat stands in the name of Sh. Prem Chand Gupta S/o Sh. Banarsi Das Gupta as per record of this office. Due to death of allottee/purchaser on dated 09/02/2023. Now the legal heir of the deceased Sh. Rajesh Gupta S/o Sh. Prem Chand Gupta has submitted the documents to get the allotment/ownership transfer in his/her favour with this office. An opportunity is given through this notice to file any objection regarding the transfer of allotment/ownership of the house with strict documentary proof with this office within 15 days from the publication of this notice other wise this house will be transferred in favour of Sh. Rajesh Gupta S/o Sh. Prem Chand Gupta legal heir of the deceased.
Estate Manager
Housing Board Haryana, Panipat

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is notified for the information of the General Public and all concerned with the House No. 2069-C, Sector- 4, Housing Board Colony, Kurukshetra which stand in the name of Smt. Kaleshi Devi W/o Sh. Abha Ram R/o Village Jhirbari Tehsil Thanesar Kurukshetra vide Estate Manager letter No. 2042 dated 24-06-2005 as per record of this office. It has been reported by the applicant Smt. Kateshi Devi who was the owner of this property has expired on 28-11-2018 and now Sh. Pardeep Kumar S/o Sh. Mahender Singh, R/o Village Jhirbari Tehsil Thanesar Kurukshetra has applied for the transfer of the said property in his name on the basis of Will No. 04 dtd. 04.04.2018 regd. with Sub Registrar. If anybody has any objection for the transfer of the said property in favour of the applicant they may furnish their objection in writing in the office of the undersigned within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which this property shall be transferred accordingly and no further claim whatsoever shall be entertained later on.
Estate Manager,
Housing Board Haryana, Kurukshetra

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Hemant Bansal S/o Suresh Chand Bansal R/o House No. 645 Sector - 16, Panchkula Haryana declare that the land is name of Shaffy w/o Hemant Bansal original Regd sale DEED NO. 1209/1 Dated 27/6/2007 and, 632/1 Dated 30/5/2008 has been lost at sector 16 Panchkula. DDR Has been Lodged at sector -14 Panchkula DDR No is 132350642400517. I Shaffy have not taken any loan on this property from government or private bank. If any loan is taken, I will be responsible for it. If anybody found Kindly contact state bank India Nariangarh branch.

PUBLIC NOTICE
(In case of title deeds is lost/misplaced) NOTICE is hereby given that Smt. Nirmaljit W/o Sh. G.S Oberai is going to mortgage the Booth no. 344, Sector-37-D, Chandigarh, CPL No. 3190, Measuring 29.63 Sq. Yards with LICHLF, Sector 22, Chandigarh. Smt. Nirmaljit W/o Sh. G.S Oberai has lost the Lease deed dated 27.3.1981, executed by Chandigarh Administration in favour of Joginder Singh s/o ram Singh and gurdev Kaur w/o Joginder Singh, Whosoever have any interest, hereby requested to notify the same within 15 days in writing to me/us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned herein below of publication hereof failing which the claim of such person (s) will be deemed to have been waived and abandoned.
MOHINDER SINGH, advocate
House no. 1115, J.L.P.L, Sector 91, Mohali

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is notified for the information of the General Public and all concerned with the property No. 2250, Housing Board Colony, Sector- 3, Kurukshetra which stand in the name of Smt. Kailasho Devi W/o Sh. Shyam Lal Leaving intestate property as per Sale deed No. 4943/1 dated 06/12/2017. It has been reported by the applicant that, Smt. Kailasho Devi W/o Sh. Shyam Lal who was the owner of this property has been expired on 20/01/2024 and now Sh. Vinod Kumar S/o Sh. Shyam Lal, R/o Near Government School, Tangaur, Kurukshetra has applied for the transfer of the said property in his/her name on the basis of intestate death Smt. Kailasho Devi W/o Sh. Shyam Lal, R/o Village-Tangaur, Shahabad, Kurukshetra. If anybody has any objection for the transfer of the said property in favour of the applicants, they may furnish their objection in the office of the undersigned within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which this property shall be transferred accordingly and no further claim whatsoever shall be entertained later on.
Estate Manager,
Housing Board Haryana, Kurukshetra

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is notified for the information of the General Public and all concerned with the property No. 195, Housing Board Colony, Sector- 13, Kurukshetra which stand in the name of Smt. Kulwant Kaur W/o Sh. Dalip Singh, R/o H.No. 195, Housing Board Colony, Sector-13, Kurukshetra as per record of this office. It has been reported by the applicant Smt. Kulwant Kaur W/o Sh. Dalip Singh who was the owner of this property has been expired on 28.07.2023 and now Sh. Harcharanjit Singh S/o Late Sh. Dalip Singh, R/o H.No. 195, Housing Board Colony, Sector-13, Kurukshetra has applied for the transfer of the said property in his name on the basis of intestate death of Smt. Kulwant Kaur W/o Sh. Dalip Singh. If anybody has any objection for the transfer of the said property in favour of the applicant they may furnish their objection in writing in the office of the undersigned within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which this property shall be transferred accordingly and no further claim whatsoever shall be entertained later on.
Estate Manager,
Housing Board Haryana, Kurukshetra

LOST & FOUND
I LOST MY ORIGINAL REGISTRY (SALE DEED NO 2372 DT. 23.05.2013) # 102 PARVATI ENCLAVE BALTANA MOHALI IN THE NAME OF SHAMBHU GAUR AND RAHUL GAUR COMPLAINT FILE (L. A. R. No. : 2024/011991) IF ANYONE FOUND PLEASE RETURN WITHIN 7 DAYS CONTACT ME ON BHAGWATI DEVI W/O RAGHUBIR SINGH R/O 74 PARVATI ENCLAVE, BALTANA, MOHALI +919815598304.

सार्वजनिक सूचना
मैं गुरमुख सिंह पुत्र निरजन सिंह साकन वार्ड नम्बर 17 रतिया जिला फतेहाबाद निम्न ब्यान करता हूँ कि Property ID 3 EDU4FPO old Property ID MCF/B22/2111, 2024-2025 total area 123.010 Sq.yard Industrial Area near Anaj Mandi Municipal council Fatehabad मेरी पत्नी श्रीमति लखविन्द कौर के नाम पर है। मेरी पत्नी श्रीमति लखविन्द कौर की 04-08-2013 को मृत्यु हो चुकी है। जिसके वारसान 1-गुरमुख सिंह (पति) 2-अनन्दीप सिंह व 3- रमनदीप सिंह भुलरपुत्रान गुरमुख सिंह पुत्र निरजन सिंह साकन वार्ड नम्बर 17 रतिया हरे तीन सम भाग है। उपरोक्त वारसान के अलावा मुक्त का अन्त कोई वारिस नहीं है। उपरोक्त property वारसान ने अपने नाम ट्रांसफर करवाना है जिसमे किसी को कोई इतराज नहीं है।

Format C-7

(for political parties to publish in the newspapers, social media platforms & website of the party)

Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates. along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'b1e Supreme Court in contempt petition C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) no. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: Shiromani Akali Dal
Name of the Election: Parliament Election 2024
Name of State/UT: Punjab
(I) Name of the Constituency: 10-Ferozepur
Name of the candidate: S. Nardev Singh

| Sr. No | | |
|--------|---|---|
| 1. | Criminal antecedents | |
| | a. Nature of the offences | 1. U/s 406 of IPC, 1860 |
| | b. Case no. | 1. FIR No 128/2015 PS Muktsar Sahib Sadar |
| | c. Name of the Court | NA |
| | d. Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No) | No |
| | e. Date of conviction, if any | Not Applicable |
| | f. Details of punishment undergone, if any | Not Applicable |
| | g. Any other information required to be given | Not Applicable |
| 2. | The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words) | The candidates are democratically selected in the existing framework of the party. Factors such as intelligence, following Party ideology and loyalty towards party, Honesty, Educational qualification, knowledge about issues relating to the constituency and his work towards the betterment of society. It is further thoroughly checked that the candidate is accountable to Public at large even before and after being elected. That the present candidate has vast experience being Former Cabinet Minister. |
| 3. | Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words) | Though the party has been keeping close watch on all the prospective candidates but however the best one out of them has been selected. The Party has moral responsibility towards the Citizens of India and need to rise upto their expectations and no better candidate than the present candidate was avai lable. |

Name of Political Party: Shiromani Akali Dal
Name of the Election: Parliament Election 2024
Name of State/UT: Punjab
(I) Name of the Constituency: 07-Ludhiana
Name of the candidate: S. Ranjit Singh Dhillon

| Sr. No | | |
|--------|---|--|
| 1. | Criminal antecedents | |
| | a. Nature of the offences | 1. U/s 188 of IPC, |
| | b. Case no. | 1. FIR No 36 Dt. 11.02.2020 PS Division No - 1 Ludhiana |
| | c. Name of the Court | NA |
| | d. Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No) | No |
| | e. Date of conviction, if any | Not Applicable |
| | f. Details of punishment undergone, if any | Not Applicable |
| | g. Any other information required to be given | Not Applicable |
| 2. | There as ons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100words) | The candidates are democratically selected in the existing framework of the party. Factors such as intelligence, following Party ideology and loy alty towards party, Honesty, Educational qualification, knowledge about issues relating to the constituency and his work towards the betterment of society. It is further thoroughly checked that the candidate is accountable to Public at large even before an d after being elected. That the present candidate has vast experience being Former Cabinet Minister & Member of Parliament. |
| 3. | Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100words) | Though the party has been keeping close watch on all the prospective candidates but however the best one out of them has been selected. The Party has moral responsibility towards the Citizens of India and need to rise upto their expectations and no better candidate than the present candidate was available. |

(Dr. Daljit Singh Cheema)
Secretary & Spokesman
Shiromani Akali Dal



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Turncoats

Former Veep Venkaiah Naidu flags party-hopping, calls for strengthening anti-defection law

The pervasive trend of politicians of all hues switching parties, for better career prospects or in pursuit of election tickets especially ahead of Assembly or Lok Sabha polls, is nothing new. This phenomenon, commonly known as party-hopping, has now been flagged by former Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu as particularly damaging to our democracy. It also raises questions about the efficiency of the anti-defection law in curbing such practices. The law, enshrined in the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, was introduced to deter elected representatives from switching allegiance to other political parties after being elected. The law aims to maintain stability and integrity within the political system by penalising defections and preserving the sanctity of electoral mandates. However, despite its existence, party-hopping remains a disturbing trend in Indian politics. Politicians often defect from their original party to join another for a ticket, ministerial position or personal ambitions. Additionally, the anti-defection law is limited in its scope and does not address the broader issues of political morality and ethics. Politicians often exploit legal loopholes and engage in prolonged legal battles to circumvent disqualification, thereby escaping accountability for their actions. This not only undermines the democratic process but also erodes public trust in the political system. However, the toothlessness of the anti-defection law and the failure to effectively address this issue reflect deeper systemic challenges within the political system.



So, why is the anti-defection law still toothless in addressing this issue? One of the primary reasons is the loophole in the law that allows for defection without disqualification under certain circumstances. The law permits defection if one-third or more of the members of a legislative party together decide to join another party, effectively legitimising mass defections. This provision has been exploited by political parties to engineer defections and destabilise rival Governments. Moreover, the anti-defection law lacks stringent enforcement mechanisms and timely interventions. While the law penalises individual defections, it does little to address the systemic factors that incentivise party-hopping, such as the allure of power, patronage politics and lack of internal democracy within parties. Furthermore, the anti-defection law is subject to political manipulation and selective application by ruling parties. To strengthen the anti-defection law and address the scourge of party-hopping, comprehensive reforms are necessary. This includes closing loopholes, imposing stricter penalties for defections, enhancing oversight mechanisms and promoting internal democracy within parties. There needs to be a concerted effort to foster a political culture based on principles of integrity, accountability and ethical conduct. Urgent reforms are needed to strengthen the law, uphold democratic principles and restore public trust in the integrity of the political process.

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PICTALK



Devotees carrying holy water from Ganga river wait in queues to perform 'puja' at Vindhyachal Dham, in Mirzapur

Graft dominates election discourse

Mounting concerns over corruption and economic uncertainties are shaping the contours of the political contest



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Innocuous developments are unfolding amidst the growing fervour of the impending elections. Despite concerns of the RBI regarding inflation, escalating toll rates, and transportation costs, the nation finds itself amidst a politically charged atmosphere. Nonetheless, certain court rulings are adding intrigue to the evolving scenario.

In addition to the impact of electoral bonds, which have added colour to the political landscape and influenced prices, three other judgments are exerting significant influence. These include the Supreme Court's hearings on the Voters Verifiable Print Audit Trail (VVPAT), commonly known as the voting slip; a judgment regarding the denial of payment to Reliance Infra for the Delhi Airport Metro EPL; and the severe criticism of Patanjali's owners, who are contemners of court orders regarding their advertising. These developments are intensifying the dynamics of the electoral contest.

Not less interesting is the ED mounting fresh money laundering probe into the Chhattisgarh liquor scam and the ED linking Kerala CPM leaders to bank fraud. Could there be more arrests even after Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and Kavita of BRS? Will prices take a backseat to politics and court rulings, or will they remain pressing concerns alongside these factors? Voters, though reticent, are far from oblivious. Whether attending rallies of prominent leaders or not, they are keenly aware of every development that influences their lifestyle. Conversations range from questioning why individuals with questionable backgrounds align themselves with the BJP to analysing defections from BJP to Congress factions. Both voters and party members evaluate the potential implications of each unfolding event, particularly returning officers of Chandigarh municipal polls and Himachal defections.

Corruption is not a non-issue. Arrests of select opposition State leaders on corruption charges by central investigative agencies such as CBI, ED, and income-tax department are unlikely to change



the general public perception that corruption pervades all political parties. Many view the pre-election arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal as a strategic move aimed at thwarting the popular politician's participation in the election campaign, rather than a genuine effort to address corruption.

It leads them to think that possibly price surges of many medicines and commodities or galloping rises in tolls have electoral bond connections. Former Vice President Venkaiah Naidu's recent remark on corruption involving all parties has given it a new dimension for the voters to rethink the extent of the impact of corruption. Amidst the dropping of corruption charges against former Union Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel, allegedly implicated in an Rs 25,000-crore aircraft purchase scandal, questions arise as to why Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal faces arrest for his alleged involvement in a Rs 100 crore State liquor policy issue. People ponder whether the Air India sell-off was conducted transparently or mired in controversy. The action against Kejriwal has spurred opposition unity, evident from the overflowing rally at Delhi's Ramlila Ground.

The recent Supreme Court decision concerning Reliance Infra's Delhi Airport Metro's EPL has prompted questions



THE COURT'S REJECTION OF PATANJALI'S APOLOGY IN A CONTEMPT CASE STEMMING FROM MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENTS CONTRAVENING ITS ORDER SERVES AS A STARK EXAMPLE OF HOW THE RULE OF LAW CAN RECTIFY CORRUPT PRACTICES

about corporate exploitation of public sector Delhi Metro. The Court overturned its own 2021 order directing Delhi Metro to pay Reliance Infra Rs 2782 crore, which had ballooned to Rs 7686 crore with accrued interest. Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, along with Justices R Gavai and Surya Kant, justified this drastic action, citing a 'miscarriage of justice' resulting in an 'undeserved windfall' for Reliance Infra. This ruling, following closely after the electoral bond controversy, has heightened voter scepticism. Had Delhi Metro been forced to pay, it could have burdened commuters with significantly higher fares.

Likewise, the court's rejection of Patanjali's apology in a contempt case, stemming from misleading advertisements contravening its order, serves as a stark example of how the rule of law can rectify corrupt practices, unveil false brand images, and maintain price stability. The court's warning to be prepared for consequences, along with its criticism of the Uttarakhand Government, underscores the power of legal intervention. Erratic power bills and arbitrary demands in UP and many States are also potential issues. Each of these cases, people realise, are instances of political linkages affecting price rises and profiteering. The glaring lapses on the part

of the executive and administration add to the woes of the people and the breakdown of the law-and-order machinery. The judiciary is uncovering corrupt practices that impact economic and administrative systems, consequently rising cost of living. Dainik Bhaskar has done a study on prices in Rajasthan. It finds that compared to 2019, prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas increased by 42 per cent; food items cost 34 per cent more; medicine prices for diabetes and heart diseases rose by 54 per cent and people's dining outside has been reduced by 40 per cent. Pulses have become costlier by 20 per cent, vegetables by 233 per cent; taxi fares by 67 per cent, edible oil 100 per cent, and FMCG rose by 60 per cent. Salaries during the period for different classes have risen by 11 per cent to 26 per cent. Price concerns persist, with numerous unnecessary infra, road airport and metro projects shocking even political workers. However, this doesn't diminish the significance of religious fervour surrounding the Ram temple and Modi's assurances, which remain potent issues in certain regions, albeit overshadowed by economic factors and caste considerations. Amethi and Raebareli, however, remain in focus, more than Varanasi. (The author is a senior journalist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EMBRACING NANO INFLUENCE

Madam — Apropos the news article, "The rising power of nano influencers", published on April 24, this is my response. The rise of nano influencers marks a shift towards authenticity in social media marketing. These individuals, with modest followings of 1,000 to 10,000, offer brands a refreshing avenue to connect with consumers. Unlike macro and celebrity influencers, nano influencers embody relatability and community-driven engagement. Their appeal lies in their resemblance to ordinary individuals—friends, family and colleagues—eschewing the polished facades of traditional influencer marketing. This authenticity fosters genuine rapport and trust, essential commodities in an era inundated with impersonal ads.

Brands increasingly gravitate towards nano influencers for their cost-effectiveness and heightened engagement rates. Moreover, their endorsements carry the weight of peer recommendations, bolstering consumer confidence and purchase decisions. Yet, challenges persist. Identifying influencers aligned with brand values and managing logistics pose hurdles. Nonetheless, the allure of genuine connections propels brands towards embracing nano influence, fostering deeper, more meaningful consumer relationships amidst the din of commercialism.

Meera Iyer | Bhopal

PHULE'S PROGRESSIVE LEGACY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "A timeless inspiration for India's reform agenda", published on April 24, this is my response. Jyotirao Phule's legacy as a pioneering social reformer resonates strongly in modern India. His relentless efforts to uplift marginalised communities, particularly women and Dalits, laid the groundwork for a more inclusive society. Phule's advocacy for education, gender equality and social justice remains as relevant today as it was in the 19th century. His establishment of the Satyashodhak

Unveiling historical wounds



Apropos the news article, "Historic legal battle unfolds over Gyanvapi", published on April 24, this is my response. The ongoing legal battles concerning worship rights at Gyan Vapi, from Varanasi courts to the Supreme Court, resonate with ethical implications. Both sides' legal prowess seems even-

ly matched, yet the essence of the dispute is far from symmetric. One side defends worship rights, while the other asserts property ownership, blurring the lines of justice. The roots of this conflict delve deep into history, where Aurangzeb's divisive legacy still casts its shadow.

Reverend Sherring's accounts vividly depict the systematic desecration of Hindu temples under Mughal rule, highlighting a painful chapter often overlooked. The struggle over Gyan Vapi transcends legalities; it's a battle to reclaim dignity and heritage. As the judiciary delves into this sensitive matter, it must recognise the injustice endured, ensuring that this trial isn't merely legalistic but a reaffirmation of justice for a wounded community. History's scars must not dictate the present; it's time for healing and restoration.

Divya Menon | Chennai

Samaj provided a platform for empowerment and caste equality, echoing the need for grassroots movements in contemporary times. Moreover, Phule's forward-thinking educational reforms, such as vocational training and multilingual education, mirror present-day policies like the New Education Policy, of 2020. Embracing Phule's vision means prioritising the inclusion of marginalised groups in all spheres of society, from politics to education. As we commemorate Phule's legacy, it's imperative to mainstream the periphery, ensuring every citizen's voice is heard and valued. By doing so, we honour Phule's spirit and move closer to realising his dream of a truly egalitarian society.

Kavita Mehra | Jaipur

ETERNAL QUEST FOR LIBERATION

Madam — Apropos the news article, "The Mysteries of Afterlife", published on April 24, this is my response. The Upanishads, with their timeless wisdom, unravel the intricacies of existence

and the journey of the soul beyond mortal realms. Central to their discourse is the juxtaposition of the transient with the eternal, delineating the essence of the self (Atman) from the cycles of birth and death.

Karma, the architect of destiny, weaves the fabric of our lives, transcending the boundaries of time and space and shaping our journey through successive rebirths. Yet, amidst the karmic tapestry, lies the ultimate pursuit — moksha, liberation from the shackles of samsara, a merging with the divine essence. Through contemplation of these profound concepts, the Upanishads beckon us to introspect, to seek beyond the veneer of mortality, towards the realisation of our true nature and the attainment of eternal bliss. In embracing their teachings, we embark on a voyage of self-discovery, navigating the depths of consciousness towards the shores of enlightenment.

Naina Kapoor | Chandigarh

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Nurture workplace safety and inclusivity

Effective workplace safety and inclusivity initiatives demand a holistic approach, addressing fundamental needs while nurturing higher aspirations

In the ever-changing landscape of workplace safety and inclusivity, this journey is quite often likened to Maslow's theory where foundational components set the stage for higher aspirations. Like Maslow's hierarchy that progresses from physiological needs to self-actualisation, our modern-day approach must deal with basic requirements before going up to more ambitious aspirations. The demand of today goes further than what organisations aspire for but rather addresses what is most urgent at the particular moment. Statistics indicate a diverse workforce composition inclusive of X-Gens, Millennials, Gen Zs and soon Generation Alpha. As this demographic shift occurs, are we ready? What kind of policies and practices should be considered for this new era?



Safe Workplaces: Organisations are increasingly investing in creating both physically and psychologically safe environments. Initiatives encompass Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies, which not only ensure workplace safety but also serve as a magnet for high-performing employees. ESG's emphasis on societal contributions resonates with individuals seeking purpose beyond monetary benefits.

Respectful Workplaces: Establishing psychologically safe environments mandates clear policies, including Codes of Business Conduct, Grievance Redressal protocols and Workplace Harassment guidelines (including Prevention of Sexual Harassment). Additionally,

dedicated committees should address issues promptly while proactively working on prevention initiatives.

Diversity and Inclusion: To remain relevant, organisations must adopt equal employment policies, refine communication practices, foster employee resource groups and establish Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) councils. Failure to prioritise these initiatives could deter potential candidates and partners, underscoring their importance in today's landscape.

Flexibility: Sensitivity toward employees' diverse needs is paramount. Accommodations for special circumstances, accessibility for differently-abled individuals, gender-neutral facilities and amenities such as nursing spaces are essential. **Appreciation:** Cultivating a culture of appreciation is pivotal for fostering a sense of belonging among employees. Initiatives such as team bonding activities and addressing unconscious biases contribute significantly to creating supportive environments. This culture of appreciation propels individuals

toward self-actualisation, the pinnacle of Maslow's theory, counteracting toxicity and promoting inclusivity.

Training and Development: Prioritising continuous training and development programs is essential to cultivate a culture of growth and inclusivity within organisations. By equipping employees with the necessary tools and resources to excel, companies demonstrate their unwavering commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace environment.

Accessibility and Accommodation: Guaranteeing accessibility for all employees, irrespective of their physical capabilities, is imperative to foster inclusivity. This involves implementing measures such as installing wheelchair ramps, providing ergonomic workstations and offering assistive technologies to facilitate equal participation in the workplace. Additionally, organisations need to establish policies that address accommodation requests promptly and with utmost respect for employees' needs and preferences.

(The writer is founder Kelp; views are personal)



SMITA SHETTY KAPOOR



FIRST COLUMN

NAVIGATING
WORKPLACE ANXIETY

The pressure to consistently perform and deliver causes stress and anxiety



SAKSHI SETHI

In today's fast-paced and competitive work environments, it is not uncommon for employees to experience feelings of stress, worry and anxiety. While it is commonly associated with professional settings, at the same time it is important to recognise that similar dynamics even occur in educational environments, particularly at the school level. One of the primary contributors to workplace anxiety is the pressure to perform at a high level consistently. Employees often face demanding deadlines, complex projects and performance expectations that can create a sense of overwhelm and inadequacy.

Workplace anxiety can manifest in various forms, ranging from mild nervousness before a presentation to debilitating panic attacks triggered by overwhelming workloads or toxic office dynamics. Left unaddressed, it can have detrimental effects on both individual well-being as well as organisational productivity. Various studies and researchers have found a negative correlation between workplace anxiety and job performance that indicates that higher levels of anxiety are associated with lower performance ratings across various job tasks and responsibilities which brings in a dire need for employers to understand the root causes of workplace anxiety and implement strategies to mitigate its impact. By understanding the root causes of anxiety and implementing strategies to address them, not only the schools but also the organisations can create supportive environments where all members of the community can thrive. The recent concept of 'Unhappy leaves' which isn't even a standard term in employment or HR terminology, could soon refer to situations where employees take leave from work due to dissatisfaction, stress or burnout caused by their job or work environment. Employees might take such leave to address their mental health, seek new opportunities or simply take a break from the stresses of their current job.



Addressing workplace anxiety requires a multi-faceted approach that involves both the individual experiencing the anxiety and the organisation. Today, an increasing number of employers are becoming aware of the adverse effects that stress can have on an employee's performance and are offering different programs to help employees manage stress in their lives. This approach is an initiative that will prove to increase workplace performance as well as employee loyalty and retention in the long run.

Employers must work to improve employee satisfaction through measures such as providing support for mental health, fostering a positive work environment, offering opportunities for professional development and addressing any concerns or grievances that their employees may have.

On an individual level, employees can take proactive steps to manage workplace anxiety and safeguard their well-being which may include practicing self-care activities such as regular exercise, mindfulness meditation and relaxation techniques to reduce stress levels. Setting boundaries, prioritising tasks and seeking social support from colleagues or professional networks can help alleviate feelings of anxiety and promote resilience in the face of workplace challenges. Organisations and schools can implement policies and practices that promote work-life balance, stress management and mental health awareness. Providing access to resources such as counselling services, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and wellness initiatives can equip employees with tools and strategies to cope with workplace anxiety proactively and foster positive working relationships for creating a psychologically healthy workplace.

Remember that overcoming workplace anxiety is a journey and it may take time to find what works best for you.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

The democratic status
of India under scannerUTTAM
CHAKRABORTY

The latest report from the V-Dem Institute categorises India as one of the 'worst autocracies' globally, significantly undermining its democratic reputation

The Gothenburg-based V-Dem Institute's report on Democracy Report 2024 claims that India has been reduced to the status of an "electoral autocracy" in 2018 and has further downgraded to "one of the worst autocracies". The report categorically found that almost all elements of democracy have worsened in more countries than improved and the report also singled out freedom of expression, fair elections and freedom of association/civil society as the three most affected elements of autocracy. There is ostensibly a clarion call for India to take on this global index based on arbitrary methods. The time has come to decolonise the democracy index and frame a domestic democracy index in the global area.

Suffice it to say, that this report based on faulty methods has shaken India's sentiment. The dichotomy is quite apparent that India has been measured in a biased manner in the scale. The flawed methodology and nonchalant attitude of people who helm the global index have put India on a declining global index. The global criticism has allegedly hurt India's sovereign ratings. The Indian Government publicly rejected this global democracy index, arguing that Delhi did not need the sermons. India has accused the rank and file of hypocrisy, calling them self-appointed guardians of the world who find it very difficult to stomach the fact that no one in India seeks their approval.

Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) gives an overview of the State of democracy in 165 independent countries and two territories. This includes almost the entire world population and most of the world's States (micro States are not counted). Rated on a scale of 0-10, the democracy index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism, Government activity, political participation, political culture and civil liberties. Based on the results of various indicators in these categories, each country is classified into one of four regime types- "full democracy", "flawed democracy", "hybrid regime" or "authoritarian regime". Note that since 2015, the EIU has observed a decline in democratic standards in India. While democracy can be subjective, the EIU Democracy Index is based on five key indicators - the electoral process and pluralism, the functioning of Government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties. It is criticised that this democracy index sent out faulty information to the entire world.

According to the EIU Democracy Index, India's civil liberties score was lower than in 2014. Civil liberties are assessed by freedom of expression, freedom of speech, restrictions on the Internet, the independence of the judiciary of the State and the ability of citizens to address their complaints to citizens. The perceptions of human rights, perceptions of religious discrimination and whether the Government uses new risks and threats as an excuse to limit civil liberties. Since 2017, civil liberties scores have been in free fall. It was 7.35 in 2017 and 2018, then dropped to 6.76 in 2019 and bottomed out in 2020 at 5.59.

In 2021 and 2022, India's civil liberties score was 6.18 and by 2023 it had fallen again to 5.88, the score of Ghana, Thailand, Ecuador and Guatemala, all of which have lower Democracy index scores than India. While the civil liberties scores of developed countries have not improved over this peri-



THE LATEST REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS (RSF) REPORT SAYS INDIA'S RANKING IN THE 2023 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM INDEX HAS FALLEN TO 161 OUT OF 180 COUNTRIES. IN COMPARISON, PAKISTAN FARED BETTER IN TERMS OF MEDIA FREEDOM, RANKING 150TH, AN IMPROVEMENT FROM 157TH LAST YEAR

od, India's deterioration has meant that India no longer ranks above them in this parameter. Precisely, according to the report declining civil liberties have affected India's democracy scores. As a result, the Indian Government decided to create its framework for democracy ratings after it was downgraded by international groups and indices. It contacted the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), one of India's largest think tanks, which has partnered with the Government on several projects and initiatives.

According to the EIU Democracy Index, national elections will be held in 2024 in eight of the world's ten most populous countries - Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia and the United States. There are no choices in half of them for free and there is no lack of justice and many other prerequisites of democracy, such as freedom of speech and association. Not surprisingly, elections in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Russia - where opposition forces are subject to State repression - do not lead to regime change or democracy. Elections in the United States, Brazil, India and Indonesia - all classified as "flawed democracies" - at least offer the possibility of change, although they are also likely to see incumbents or anointed followers win. The EIU Democracy Index's position on India's elections is problematic in terms of the methodology used in the study.

The World Happiness Report is a publication that contains articles based on respondents' ratings of their own lives and national happiness ratings, which the report also correlates with various life (quality of) factors. In March 2024, Finland was declared the happiest country in the world seven times in a row. However, India is currently ranked 126 out of 146 countries with a happiness score of 4,054. India is lower in the happiness index than its neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and China. The decline in happiness levels is closely linked to India's deepening mental health crisis, exacerbated by the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pan-

dem. However, one can understand the situation in China. Then China can be ahead of India in terms of the happiness index.

In the report, experts from fields such as economics, psychology, survey analysis and national statistics discuss how well-being measures can effectively measure national progress and address other related topics. Each report is structured into chapters that address the issue, delving deeper into topics related to happiness such as mental health, the tangible benefits of happiness, the role of ethics, political implications and links to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) approach to measuring subjective well-being and other international and national initiatives.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) publishes a World Press Freedom Index every year. RSF is an international non-Governmental organisation whose mission is to protect and promote media freedom. It is headquartered in Paris and has consultative status with the United Nations. This annual World Press Freedom Index aims to "compare the level of press freedom for journalists and the media in 180 countries and territories" with the previous calendar year. The latest Reporters Without Borders (RSF) report says India's ranking in the 2023 World Press Freedom Index has fallen to 161 out of 180 countries. In comparison, Pakistan fared better in terms of media freedom, ranking 150th, an improvement from 157th last year. In 2022, India was ranked 150th on the scale. However, the press freedom index of India seems manufactured or could be based on flawed methodology. The history of Pakistani journalism has been turbulent, with periods of relative openness interspersed with severe restrictions on press freedom, especially during the military dictatorship.

Similarly, press freedom in Afghanistan has been dismal for years. Even two years after the fall of Kabul, we hear almost every day from Afghan journalists, both

domestic and in exile, about the hostile environment they face.

The Committee to Protect Journalists' attempt is to provide support and assistance to journalists in exile. Since 2021, Afghan journalists have become one of the largest groups of journalists in exile receiving annual grants from CPJ, contributing to a 227 per cent jump in the CPJ grants to journalists in exile over the three years 2020-2022. It received increasing reports of Afghan journalists in exile who were targeted in immigration-related incidents. Afghan journalists seeking asylum in Pakistan told us they have been arrested and blackmailed for overstaying their visas and many are living in hiding and in fear. Then how India can be put below Pakistan and Afghanistan's press freedom index on the scale of press freedom? The importance of methodology in any study remains vital. Research methodology is a way of explaining how the researcher intends to conduct his research. It is a logical, systematic plan for solving a research problem.

It provides researchers with a road map to ensure that their research is systematic, rigorous and objective. Without a well-defined research methodology, it is difficult to obtain accurate and reliable results, draw meaningful conclusions and contribute to the data set. Research methodology lends legitimacy to the research and provides scientifically sound results. It also includes a detailed plan to help keep researchers on track, making the process smooth, efficient and manageable. The methodology of the researcher allows the reader to understand the approach and methods of concluding. However, the methodology used in the democracy index has invited numerous issues. At this juncture, when the entire world is conspiring against India in terms of the democracy index, India must decolonise the index.

(The writer is an associate professor at the School of Management, Presidency University Bengaluru; views are personal)

Determining the limits of corruption, the Indian way

The recent raids on public functionaries and private individuals speak volumes about the deep roots of corruption still existing in Indian society

Whether it is the issue of electoral bonds or the liquor policy of Delhi or many others involving politicians, bureaucrats and even private individuals, perhaps after some hiatus, the ghost of corruption is back haunting the national discourse at present. People may have different perceptions and views on the prevalence of corruption in India depending upon their experiences, knowledge or even interests. Some may think that corruption is highly prevalent within the Government functionaries and in the political class, whereas others may opine that corruption of some form or the other exists in every sphere including in the private sector, even in small businesses. While there may



SIDDHARTH MISHRA

be some others who may justify corruption and yet others who vehemently criticize it. Does it mean that it is how one looks at the scenario that shapes the societal perspectives in this regard and if it is treated as true, does it require looking at the whole issue from different perspectives? Speaking honestly, corruption seems to be prevalent in all walks of life irrespective of whether it is the public or pri-

ate sector. There is some other form of corruption visible everywhere in this country. However, the form of corruption that usually becomes the talk of the town is the Governmental or the political class corruption. By that account, for that matter, should even a rickshaw puller or a vegetable or fruit vendor asking for more than the genuine price or overcharging not amount to corruption? Should not the boss, in a private enterprise, dominating, harassing or seeking undue favours from subordinates as a condition of promotion, be seen as corrupt? Ironically, the law does not seem to be treating such attitudes as, falling in the purview of, and, requiring to be prohibited by corruption law, though perhaps, the law

might be providing some other type of remedy in such cases. It is not just that the corruption is not confined to the Government sector, rather monetary is also not the only type of corruption that exists. Other forms of corruption do exist in this country that usually go unnoticed or unchecked. Arrogance in people in power, delaying even genuine work and harassing, or humiliating ordinary people unnecessarily should amount to corruption. Public functionaries take oaths before assuming office and vow to remain honest in their duties, they hold public offices as the trustees for people, who have faith in them and it is their primary duty to serve the common people

and refrain from breaching people's faith. Scores of people throughout the country face tremendous challenges, harassment and humiliation in getting work done in the Government departments at every level but public memory is short-lived and people easily forget such issues as time passes. There is no doubt that corruption is not in the interest of the society or the State. Therefore, to curb the menace of corruption, the subsequent Governments have adopted numerous legal measures including the enactment of laws and the establishment of enforcement machinery. However, as is evident from the recent incidents of corruption, all such measures do not seem to deter people from

involving in acts of corruption. Does it mean that the laws have failed to curb corruption or is it that the laws per se cannot provide a solution to this problem? Does one need to look beyond the legal measures to get rid of this menace that is eating into the vitals of this country? Can this country do away with the menace of corruption through law and its enforcement? If that was true, then this country would have become corruption-free long back. Does it mean that corruption inherently exists in ourselves and has acquired the status of an accepted norm and it is not possible to get rid of corruption in this country? The question that arises is whether corruption has become a way of life in this

country and whether should people now stop criticising corruption or people involved in it. Moreover, another disturbing aspect is whether involvement in corruption attaches any stigma or invites social backlash to the accused any longer. Doubts do exist about whether considerations of a person's involvement in corrupt practices weigh on people's psyche while making choices, especially political ones. Does this all not call for revisiting the whole gamut of social, educational and cultural moorings. The recent raids upon public functionaries and private individuals speak volumes of the deep roots of corruption still existing in Indian society. The author recalls a high-ranked IT officer, who was

once involved in the anti-corruption raids, telling him that one of the former bureaucrats who was raided for unaccounted assets, had illegally acquired numerous properties, most of which were not even ever seen or visited by him. That officer sadly quipped, 'how much corruption would or should one do and that there has to be a limit to corruption'. This Statement unfortunately and ironically seems to resonate with the general sentiment of the masses who seem to have painfully accepted administrative or political corruption as fait accompli, but wish that at least 'they must do it in limits'.

(The author is a Sr Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, the University of Delhi; views are personal)

DIRECTORATE OF PUNJAB STATE LOTTERIES
DRAW TIME: 06:00 PM ONWARDS DRAW DATE: 24/04/2024
RESULT OF PUNJAB STATE DEAR 10 SILVER WEDNESDAY WEEKLY LOTTERY

MRP Rs 10/- Per Ticket

1st Prize Amount (10)Rs.10,000/-, Common to all series (On last 4 digits)
(Seller Prize Amount Rs.500/-, Total Prize Amount Rs.10500/- each)
9382

2nd Prize Amount (10)Rs.2000/-, Common to all series (On last 4 digits)
(Seller Prize Amount Rs.200/-, Total Prize Amount Rs.2200/- each)
7293

3rd Prize Amount (100)Rs.500/-, Common to all series (On last 4 digits)
(Seller Prize Amount Rs.50/-, Total Prize Amount Rs.550/- each)
0031 0071 1237 4605 4609 5578 6896 8292 9084 9240

4th Prize Amount (100)Rs.200/-, Common to all series (On last 4 digits)
(Seller Prize Amount Rs.20/-, Total Prize Amount Rs.220/- each)
0278 1024 1512 1888 2057 2076 2151 4290 4467 8881

5th Prize Amount (2000)Rs.100/-, Common to all series (On last 4 digits)
(Seller Prize Amount Rs.10/-, Total Prize Amount Rs.110/- each)
**0003 0011 0124 0164 0233 0243 0300 0309 0322 0333
0398 0514 0525 0575 0583 0635 0636 0655 0693 0766
0789 0789 0805 0842 0880 0940 0951 0986 1036 1114
1121 1214 1226 1227 1231 1325 1404 1406 1529 1548
1564 1621 1692 1721 1735 1804 1832 1857 1878 1887
1912 1941 1953 2005 2170 2303 2320 2322 2325 2341
2360 2655 2803 2862 2866 2900 2905 2979 3072 3103
3145 3160 3353 3421 3493 3563 3610 3679 3719 3733
3796 3876 3903 3978 4141 4173 4188 4225 4276 4325
4326 4421 4423 4447 4462 4498 4513 4599 4744 4768
4852 4873 4925 4944 4949 4964 5059 5131 5161 5248
5279 5388 5430 5459 5472 5549 5572 5575 5658 5659
5730 5753 5818 5875 5910 5968 6029 6191 6253 6292
6362 6420 6526 6565 6602 6643 6648 6651 6763 6770
6780 6806 6845 6857 6900 6956 7021 7026 7037 7076
7257 7279 7332 7333 7437 7496 7519 7526 7548 7624
7644 7730 7955 7970 8074 8127 8140 8144 8307 8406
8414 8540 8632 8665 8920 8980 9005 9060 9085 9194
9251 9253 9333 9369 9370 9422 9425 9439 9494 9531
9535 9587 9601 9721 9754 9807 9815 9886 9887 9917**

Issued by Directorate of PUNJAB STATE LOTTERIES
Kindly Check The Final Result With Official Gazette Notification

PUBLIC NOTICE
The General Public is hereby informed that I, Mr. Vikramjeet S/o Pritam Dass R/o Village Kaimbwala Chandigarh is intending to purchase the property from Deepak S/o Late Mr. Satpal R/o Village Kansal, District Mohali who is the sole and absolute owners of approximately 44 marla at village Kansal as per jamabandi year 2018-2019 being 67/240 share of khewat/Khatoni No 259/251 260 khasra no 134//14 (8-0).
If anybody is having any objection, claim, interest, dispute for the above sale transaction, he/she/they may contact the undersigned with documentary proof substantiating his/her/their objections/claims/details of dispute/s within thirty (30)days from the date of this publication, failing which, I will proceed to complete the sale transaction with above owner as if there are no third party claims/objections/disputes in respect of the property and thereafter no claims/objections/disputes will be entertained. If you have any concerned regarding this property, kindly contact me on below mentioned details :-
Mr. Vikramjeet S/o Pritam Dass
R/o Village Kaimbwala Chandigarh | M: +91-988882525

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE
ICICI Bank | Branch Office- ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number | Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession | Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.) | Name of Branch |
|---------|---|--|--|----------------|
| 1. | G.s. Infra/ Sunita Verma/ Riya / Sikha/ Vashu/ Ajay Verma/ 024705500602/ 024755000014 | Residential Property C-6/49, Guru Arjun Nagar, Jagadhri, Tehsil Jagadhri, District Yamuna Nagar, Haryana/ April 22, 2024 | December 27, 2023 Rs. 64,08,664.00/- | Yamuna Nagar |

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: April 25, 2024
Place: Yamunanagar
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

Format C-7

(for political parties to publish in the newspapers, social media platforms & website of the party)
Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates. along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates
(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'b1e Supreme Court in contempt petition C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) no. 536 of 2011)

Name of Political Party: **Shiromani Akali Dal**
Name of the Election: **Lok Sabha Election 2024**
Name of State/UT: **Punjab**
(I) Name of the Constituency: **01-Gurdaspur**
Name of the candidate: **Dr. Daljit Singh Cheema**

| Sr. No. | | |
|---------|---|---|
| 1. | Criminal antecedents | |
| | a. Nature of the offences | 1. U/s 188,186,353,332,34 of IPC |
| | b. Case no. | 1. FIR No 87 Dt. 06.11.2021 (PS North Chandigarh) |
| | c. Name of the Court | CJM Chandigarh |
| | d. Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No) | No |
| | e. Date of conviction, if any | Not Applicable |
| | f. Details of punishment undergone, if any | Not Applicable |
| | g. Any other information required to be given | Not Applicable |
| 2. | The reasons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100 words) | The candidates are democratically selected in the existing framework of the party. Factors such as intelligence, following Party ideology and loyalty towards party, Honesty, Educational qualification, knowledge about issues relating to the constituency and his work towards the betterment of society. It is further thoroughly checked that the candidate is accountable to Public at large even before and after being elected. That the present candidate has vast experience being Former Cabinet Minister. |
| 3. | Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100 words) | Though the party has been keeping close watch on all the prospective candidates but however the best one out of them has been selected. The Party has moral responsibility towards the Citizens of India and need to rise upto their expectations and no better candidate than the present candidate was available. |

Name of Political Party: **Shiromani Akali Dal**
Name of the Election: **Lok Sabha Election 2024**
Name of State/UT: **Punjab**
(I) Name of the Constituency: **06-Anandpur Sahib**
Name of the candidate: **Prof. Prem Singh Chandumajra**

| Sr. No. | | |
|---------|---|--|
| 1. | Criminal antecedents | |
| | a. Nature of the offences | 1. U/s 188,186,353, 332,34 of IPC 2. U/s 186,323,341,511 IPC |
| | b. Case no. | 1. FIR No 087 Dt. 06.11.2021) PS North Chandigarh 2. FIR No 74 Dt. 08 .08.2020) PS North Chandigarh |
| | c. Name of the Court | CJM Chandigarh CJM Chandigarh |
| | d. Whether charges have been framed or not (Yes/No) | No |
| | e. Date of conviction, if any | Not Applicable |
| | f. Details of punishment undergone, if any | Not Applicable |
| | g. Any other information required to be given | Not Applicable |
| 2. | There as ons for the selection of the candidate. Selection shall be with reference to the qualifications, achievements and merit of the candidate, and not mere "winnability" at the polls (not more than 100words) | The candidates are democratically selected in the existing framework of the party. Factors such as intelligence, following Party ideology and loyalty towards party, Honesty, Educational qualification, knowledge about issues relating to the constituency and his work towards the betterment of society. It is further thoroughly checked that the candidate is accountable to Public at large even before and after being elected. That the present candidate has vast experience being Former Cabinet Minister & Member of Parliament. |
| 3. | Reasons as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates (not more than 100words) | Though the party has been keeping close watch on all the prospective candidates but however the best one out of them has been selected. The Party has moral responsibility towards the Citizens of India and need to rise upto their expectations and no better candidate than the present candidate was available. |

(Dr. Daljit Singh Cheema)
Secretary & Spokesman
Shiromani Akali Dal

Blinken begins key China visit

Tensions rise over new US foreign aid bill

AP ■ SHANGHAI

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has begun a critical trip to China armed with a strengthened diplomatic hand following Senate approval of a foreign aid package that will provide billions of dollars in assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan as well as force TikTok's China-based parent company to sell the social media platform - all areas of contention between Washington and Beijing.

Still, the fact that Blinken is making the trip - shortly after a conversation between Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping, a similar visit to China by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and a call between the U.S. and Chinese defense chiefs - is a sign the two sides are at least willing to discuss their differences.

Of primary interest to China, the bill sets aside \$8 billion to counter Chinese threats in Taiwan and the broader Indo-Pacific and gives China's ByteDance nine months to sell TikTok with a possible three-month extension if a sale is in progress. China has railed against U.S. assistance to Taiwan, which it regards as a renegade province, and immediately condemned the move as a dangerous provocation. It also strongly opposes efforts to force TikTok's sale.

The bill also allots \$26 billion in wartime assistance to Israel and humanitarian relief to Palestinians in Gaza, and \$61 billion for Ukraine to defend itself from Russia's invasion. The Biden administration has been disappointed in China's response to the war in Gaza and has complained loudly that Chinese support for Russia's military-industrial sector has allowed Moscow to subvert Western sanctions and ramp up attacks on Ukraine.

Even before Blinken landed in Shanghai - where he will have meetings on Thursday before traveling to Beijing - China's Taiwan Affairs Office slammed the assistance to Taipei, saying it "seriously violates" U.S. commitments to China, "sends a wrong signal to the Taiwan independence separatist forces" and pushes the self-governing island republic into a "dangerous situation."

N Korea sends delegation to Iran

AP ■ SEOUL

A high-level North Korean economic delegation was on its way to Iran, the North's state media said Wednesday, for what would be the two countries' first known talks since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Embracing the idea of a "new Cold War," North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is pushing to build up cooperation with countries confronting the United States, as his intensified weapons tests prompted the US and South Korea to expand their military drills.

The last known time North Korea sent senior officials to Iran was in August 2019, when a group led by Pak Chol Min, vice chair of Pyongyang's rubber-stamp parliament, made a weeklong visit. The two countries had active diplomatic exchanges until North Korea sealed its borders in an effort to stave off the pandemic, before a cautious reopening in 2023. South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles affairs with the North, did not immediately comment on the visit to Iran.

North Korea has made efforts for months to boost the visibility of its ties with Russia and China as Kim attempts to break out of diplomatic isolation and join a united front against the US. In 2023, Kim visited Russia's Far East for a rare summit with Putin, which highlighted the countries' expanding military cooperation, including the North's alleged transfers of artillery shells, missiles, and other munitions to Russia.

Ukrainian officials thank US for its latest military aid

AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian officials on Wednesday expressed thanks for a fresh batch of US military aid that threw Kyiv's armed forces a lifeline in their more than two-year war with Russia, even though the vital new supplies aren't expected to have an immediate impact on the battlefield.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked the US Senate for approving the \$61 billion aid package late Tuesday. "Ukraine's long-range capabilities, artillery and air defence are extremely important tools for the quick restoration of a just peace," Zelenskyy said on the social platform X, referring to the aid Kyiv expects to receive in the coming weeks and months. Two Russian S-300 missiles struck Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city near the northeastern border with Russia, during the night, and another two hit the Kharkiv region town of Zolochiv, local officials said.

Nepal Pres seeks Qatar Emir's aid for student held by Hamas

AP ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal President Ram Chandra Poudel has sought the help of Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to secure the safe release of a Nepali student held hostage since October by the Hamas in the Gaza Strip, an official said on Wednesday.

The emir on Tuesday called on President Poudel at the Shital Niwas where the two leaders discussed matters related to bilateral interests and diplomatic relations, according to a statement issued by the President's Office. On the occasion, President Poudel requested the emir to help secure the release of Bipin Joshi, who was taken hostage by Hamas during an attack against Israel in October last year, said Kiran Pokharel, press advisor to the president.



Qatar hosts about 400,000 Nepali workers, mostly in construction and manual labour. Concerns about working in extreme heat in Qatar - that could reach over 40 degrees Celsius (104 F) - inadequate living facilities and abuse have risen in recent years. "Both leaders expressed happiness over the cordial relations subsisting between the two countries and agreed to further enhancing bilateral relations and cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two countries and peoples," according to a press release issued by the Foreign Ministry.

relations between the two countries. On his part, the emir expressed his thanks to Nepal, its leaders and its people for the warm reception and hospitality. He said he discussed with President Poudel and Prime Minister Prachanda about developing bilateral economic relations and strengthening them with various partnerships that raise bilateral cooperation to the desired level.

"The signing of these documents has paved the way for further enhancing cooperation and collaboration between the two countries on important areas," according to the Foreign Ministry. The deals include a MoU for cooperation in the field of education, higher education and scientific research, an MoU for cooperation between the Public Prosecution in Qatar and the Office of the Attorney General in Nepal, and an MoU for cooperation in the field of youth and sports.

Pak docs advise 'gastroenterology review' to Imran's wife Bushra Bibi

Islamabad (PTI):

A three-member medical team from a top institute has advised incarcerated former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi to get a "gastroenterology review" done to assess any underlying medical conditions related to her health issues, according to a media report. The advice from the doctors of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) came following their visit to the former first lady's home for a medical examination after she complained of acidity and chest pain, Geo News reported on Wednesday.



Foreign Secretary Lord David Cameron visits the National Carpet Museum in Ashgabat in Turkmenistan during his five day visit to Central Asia, on Wednesday.

Indonesia declares Subianto president-elect after court rejects rivals' appeal

AP ■ JAKARTA

Indonesia's electoral commission formally declared Prabowo Subianto president-elect in a ceremony on Wednesday, after the country's highest court rejected challenges to his landslide victory lodged by two losing presidential candidates.



Subianto, who is currently defense minister, won the election with 58.6 per cent of the votes, or more than 96 million ballots, more than twice the amount received by either of the other two candidates. But his rivals alleged that his victory had depended on large-scale fraud and widespread state interference. Authorities blocked streets leading to the General Election Commission compound, where more than 4,200 police and soldiers were deployed.

white shirts, Subianto and vice president elect Gibran Rakabuming Raka waved to their supporters as they arrived at the building. "The race has finished ... the tough contest, with sometimes heated debates, is over," Subianto said during the ceremony, attended by the country's political elite, including rival candidate Anies Baswedan and his running mate Muhaimin Iskandar.

"And now our people demand that political leaders must work together and collaborate for the people's welfare and to eliminate poverty and corruption in Indonesia," Subianto said. Subianto will take office in October, succeeding the popular Joko Widodo, the country's first president from outside the Jakarta elite.

Muizzu further consolidates position after six independents join his party

PTI ■ MALE

President Mohamed Muizzu and his People's National Congress on Wednesday further consolidated their position in Parliament with six independent candidates, elected in Sunday's polls, joining the ruling party. The pro-China Maldivian president led the People's National Congress (PNC) to win a landslide 66 out of 93 seats in parliament and its coalition partners Maldives National Party (MNP) and Maldives Development Alliance (MDA) won one and two seats, respectively.



The six independent members joined the PNC at a function attended by President Muizzu, who is also the President of the party. With the addition of the strong endorsement of his pro-Beijing foreign policy, as both India and China closely watched the outcome of the polls in the strategically-located archipelago nation in the Indian Ocean.

According to the news portal Sun.mv, a spokesperson from the PNC confirmed on Wednesday that six independent candidates joined the PNC on Tuesday. The MP-elects, who signed with PNC on Tuesday include former party members who lost the PNC primaries held in January. They later ran in the elections as independent candidates, with the government backing their candidacy over that of the ruling party's own candidates, the report said.

Meanwhile, Hassan Zareer, the incumbent Mathiveri MP, won the 2019 elections on a ticket from the main opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP). But he, along with 13 other lawmakers from MDP, defected to PNC after MDP's Ibrahim Mohamed Solih lost re-election, the portal said. In this year's polls, Zareer ran for re-election as an independent candidate, but with the government's backing.

Russian priest who held Navalny's memorial service suspended by Moscow church

AP ■ MOSCOW

A priest who oversaw a memorial for late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been suspended for three years by the head of the country's Orthodox Church. Dmitry Sazonov held a memorial service by Navalny's grave in Moscow on March 26 to mark 40 days since the politician's death, an important ritual within Russian Orthodox tradition.

signed by Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church and a key ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Navalny died suddenly on Feb 16 in the remote Arctic penal colony where he had been serving a 19-year sentence on extremism charges widely seen as politically motivated. The cause of Navalny's death remains unexplained, although the politician's allies have blamed the Kremlin for his demise.

signed a public letter calling for Navalny's remains to be returned to his family. During his more than two decades in power, Putin has massively boosted the Russian Orthodox Church's standing, increasing its prestige after decades of oppression or indifference under Soviet leaders.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
SHORT E-TENDER CALL NOTICE
TD/TM/GEN-225 (Vol-V)/2024/721,
dttd.23.04.2024
Name of the work: "Allotment of 06 (Six) nos. of Manual Iron Ore plots." License Fees : Rs.1,18,502/- . Wharfage Fees : Rs.7,18,435/- . Last date & time of Submission of bid : 29.04.2024 up to 15:00 hrs. Date and time of opening (technical bid): 29.04.2024 up to 15:00 hrs.
Refer our website for details
https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app& http://paradipport.gov.in/
Sd/- Traffic Manager
Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/02/2024-2025 dttd.23.04.2024



Rampant Sunrisers Hyderabad eye another run fest against bottom placed RCB

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad will look to unleash their brute batting power on struggling Royal Challengers Bengaluru when the two teams face off in their return-leg fixture of the IPL here on Thursday.

Having breached the 250-run mark thrice in this IPL edition itself, Sunrisers Hyderabad are pushing the boundaries of T20 batting with their no holds barred approach.

While Mumbai Indians were the first victim of SRH's new-found batting strength this season, RCB bore the maximum brunt when the Travis Head-led batting lineup powered the 2016 winners to IPL's highest-ever total of 287/3 in Bengaluru.

If this was not enough, SRH's carnage against Delhi Capitals - which included a record 125/0 being scored in the powerplay - brought forth the possibility of the 300-run mark being breached for the first time ever in the IPL.

And it won't be surprising if

SRH manage to do the unthinkable and that too against a bowling attack as frail as RCB's, whose struggles with in the bowling department could be gauged with the fact that their best bowler, Yash Dayal, is at 24th spot in the overall list with seven wickets. Placed at the bottom of the pool, RCB have conceded at least 180 in their last five matches. In the last two games, the opponents have raked up totals in excess of 200.

RCB batters have worked hard to make up for their severe shortcomings in bowling, but for such a lopsided squad in terms of balance, the task to produce an all-round performance looks nearly impossible.

To their credit, RCB fought incredibly hard with the bat but were unfortunate to have lost to Kolkata Knight Riders by a mere one run after conceding 222/6. Moreover, a collective batting effort must have pleased the RCB management to a large extent. He was a victim of a contentious call but Virat Kohli



remains RCB's best batter in the tournament so far, having scored 379 runs to keep the Orange Cap in possession. But hot on his heels are a few others including SRH's Head, who is making most of his purple patch.

Head's game is designed not only on aggressiveness and ability to cash in on every opportunity, his ability to find gaps at will makes him a compulsory watch.

Abhishek Sharma has flourished in Head's company and Heinrich Klaasen too has made merry with the bat this season. Overall, SRH's compelling shows with the bat have made the job of their bowlers and skipper Pat Cummins easier.

SRH are placed comfortably at the third position in the table with 10 points from seven matches. While the journey so far has been fuelled by the batters' fire, SRH would know their bowling would be tested along the way and Cummins' men could do well to watch out against a hurting RCB side.

TEAMS (FROM):
Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Faf du Plessis (c), Glenn Maxwell, Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar, Anuj Rawat (wk), Dinesh Karthik (wk), Suyash Prabhudessai, Will Jacks, Mahipal Lomror, Karn Sharma, Manoj Bhandage, Mayank Dagar, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Akash Deep, Mohammed Siraj, Reece Topley, Himanshu Sharma, Rajan Kumar, Cameron Green, Alzarri Joseph, Yash Dayal, Tom Curran, Lockie Ferguson, Swapnil, Saurav Chauhan.
Sunrisers Hyderabad: Pat Cummins (c), Abdul Samad, Abhishek Sharma, Aiden Markram, Marco Jansen, Rahul Tripathi, Washington Sundar, Glenn Phillips, Sanvir Singh, Heinrich Klaasen (wk), Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mayank Agarwal, T. Natarajan, Anmolpreet Singh, Mayank Markande, Upendra Singh Yadav (wk), Umran Malik, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Fazalhaq Ferooqi, Shahbaz Ahmed, Travis Head, Jaydev Unadkat, Akash Singh, Jhathavedh Subramanyan.

Stoinis eager to play for Australia despite missing CA central contract



PTI ■ CHENNAI

Despite missing out on Cricket Australia's central contract for the 2024-25 season, all-rounder Marcus Stoinis wants to use the impact hundred against Chennai Super Kings as a leverage to extend his white ball career beyond the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Stoinis, who was not included in the 23-player central contract list, made an unbeaten 124 off 63 balls for Lucknow Super Giants here on Tuesday.

However, Stoinis didn't read much into him missing the CA contract which was announced on March 28.

"I've got a great relationship with the (Australia) coach (Andrew McDonald). Me not getting a contract, I knew that a while ago.

"I think it is great to give younger kids a crack and let them take my spot. I'm absolutely fine with that on the contract list," Stoinis said after guiding LSG to a six-wicket

win over CSK.

But the 34-year-old was firm in thoughts about his career with the national team.

"But on the playing front, obviously, I want to make sure that I'm there and that's also why it's so lucky for us and for me particularly to have this competition (IPL), that's why I love it so much," he said.

The Perth-born player was omitted from Australia's ODIs against the West Indies in January, but he is set to be part of the country's T20I World Cup campaign in the West Indies and the USA in June.

Stoinis is most likely to be slotted into No. 5 in the Australian line-up during the marquee event.

Stoinis is eligible for Australian selection for the tournament because his current contract for the 2023-24 season will run its course only on June 30.

However, Stoinis was clear that he wanted to play for Australia in the white ball series against England (away) in September and against Pakistan at home in November.

Impact player rule: Entertaining cricket but takes all rounders out of game, says Voges

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Joining the raging debate around Impact Players in the IPL, Lucknow Super Giants consultant Adam Voges said he prefers something like the 'Power Surge' rule in the Australian Big Bash League where the batting team gets to decide a two-over phase of fielding restrictions.

The Impact Player substitution rule, introduced last season, has been a heavy topic of debate this season with lot of players, including India captain Rohit Sharma calling it detrimental to the growth of all-rounders.

Voges agreed and said while the rule makes for entertaining cricket, it hurts all-rounders.

"The scores have been going up, and the teams have got genuine batters coming in at number seven or eight, while the batters have gone hard right from the start," the Australian said after the six-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings here on Tuesday night.

"Certainly makes for entertaining cricket, but it takes the all-rounders out of the game for a little bit and

their effectiveness. The all-rounder always balances the side and perhaps it is not as important with the Impact Sub," he explained.

Asked if the rule is comparable to Power Surge in Australia's Big Bash League, Voges said the latter adds to the contest, and he is a fan of it. Unlike the IPL, which has a six-over power play at the start of the innings, the BBL features a four-over power play.

Power Surge is then a two-over phase of only two fielders outside the circle, sought by the batting team at any point following the 11th over of its innings.

"I like the Power Surge back at home. It just adds another element to the game.

"While chasing, you never feel like you are out of the game. But we have also seen multiple wickets fall during that period," he said.

STOINIS GRABBED CHANCE WITH BOTH HANDS: Marcus Stoinis' unbeaten 124 ensured that Lucknow Super Giants pulled off a double over defending champion



Chennai Super Kings in the ongoing edition. Stoinis, who has been promising with the bat, was promoted to number three in this clash.

Voges said the decision was easy given his successful outing as a top-order batter for Melbourne Stars in the Big Bash League.

"In the first half of the tournament, the number three batting position is something that did not work for us. We gave Marcus the opportunity since he has performed well in the top order in Big Bash," he told reporters here.

"He has certainly made the most of it.

He has been hitting the ball well the whole tournament and has always been threatening."

LSG's victory was heavily aided by the dew settling in at Chepauk on Tuesday, and Voges felt it was a good toss to win.

"At the halfway stage, we could feel the dew on the outfield, and it played a part in the back end of the game. In the end, it was a good toss to win," he added.

Voges lauded the hosts for keeping his team under pressure until the final over.

"It was a tremendous game of cricket. The batting from both sides was outstanding," he continued.

"CSK did put us under pressure with the ball, but it was our best night execution-wise. We needed someone to stand up, and Stoinis played an outstanding innings," he said.

The CSK batters did a great job by setting a challenging total of 210 for four, thanks to skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's unbeaten 108, which was also aided by a 27-ball 66 from the in-form Shivam Dube.

OTHER SPORTS

Nadal says he is not 100 per cent fit ahead of Madrid debut

AP ■ MADRID

Rafael Nadal will play in the Madrid Open despite not being fully fit and didn't seem too optimistic about his chances of being ready for the French Open later this month.

Nadal said Wednesday he would not play in Paris if he arrives there feeling the same way that he is feeling ahead of his debut in Madrid this week.

"The sensations haven't been perfect this week. If it wasn't Madrid, maybe I wouldn't play. But there are a lot of emotions involved," Nadal said. "I don't

know what's going to happen in the following three weeks. I'll keep fighting and doing the things that I think I need to do to play in Paris. And if it's possible, then it's possible. If not, then not. I'm not going to play in Paris the way I'm feeling today. It was Paris, I wouldn't be playing."

The 37-year-old Nadal has said this is likely his farewell year on tour, and is hoping to be competitive one last time at Roland Garros, where he is a 14-time champion.

The 22-time Grand Slam winner is a record five-time champion in Madrid, with his last title in the



Spanish capital coming in 2017. He is scheduled to debut on Thursday against 16-year-old American Darwin Blanch.

"Hopefully I can play without many limitations," Nadal said. "Then we'll see what happens. If I play without limitations, even if I lose, that will be positive."

Nadal, who had hip surgery last summer, lost to Alex de Minaur in the second round in Barcelona in what was his first tournament in more than three months.

"The goal is be on court. Enjoy as long as possible," he said. "I mean, that's the thing. Try to finish the tournament alive in terms of body

issues, and enjoy the fact that I will be able to compete one more time in the professional tour and here at home in Madrid, a place that give me everything, no, in terms of support."

He said he is giving himself "a chance" and hopes to "find better feelings" in his body going forward.

"I don't lose hope. I just accept the situation that I have today," he said. "I mean, I am not playing bad. It's about more body limitations." He said the "body feelings are not enough good to feel myself playing with free enough in terms of body issues.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings are not looking for a "quick fix" to their issues in the batting department and head coach Stephen Fleming is ready to give the likes of Daryl Mitchell time to get settled in top-three after their fourth loss in eight games.

CSK have been juggling batters in the top three through the season. On Tuesday against Lucknow Super Giants, Ajinkya Rahane and Ruturaj Gaikwad came to open while Mitchell was promoted to number three from five.

In the previous game, Gaikwad pushed himself down to number three to accommodate Rahane and Rachin Ravindra. Following their dramatic loss to LSG at home, Fleming said they need to get their batting combinations right.

"It's a mixture of trying to find that (combination) and also form. We're a little bit uncomfortable with some areas, so we're trying to find not a quick fix, but the right combination where players are going to contribute for the back end of this tournament," said Fleming after first loss of the season at home.

Trying to find batting combination that does well for us at back end of IPL: Fleming

Mitchell, who was bought for Rs 14 crore at the auction, has totalled 146 runs in seven innings.

Fleming insisted that number three is the ideal spot for the fellow New Zealander.

"There's a lot of pressure, obviously. Getting up the order is more comfortable for him. Me putting him down the order in the hitting role wasn't his best position.

"So, we've looked to rectify that and get him up the order where he has had his best performances internationally. That might take a little time, but the top three need to contribute the majority of runs. Ruturaj did that today, so hopefully, he can continue his form, and the others can pick that up... We're not firing on all cylinders by any means, but we're in each game asking teams to play well to beat us. We just got to get a little bit better," he said referring to skipper's unbeaten hundred in a losing cause.



While Mitchell's promotion did not yield the desired result, LSG sending Marcus Stoinis to

number three proved to be a game changer as he singlehandedly pulled off a

memorable win for his team with an unbeaten 124 off 63 balls. Fleming, who has

worked alongside the Aussie all-rounder in the Big Bash League for Melbourne Stars,

recalled how impactful he had been at the top, especially as an opener.

"He's got power, but he's also got good batsmanship. For Stars, we got him to open the batting, and he was quite prolific," he remembered.

"Today, we saw the quality of his work. His 50 came up in about mid-20 balls (26), and then he just controlled the innings.

"What more could you ask from your top three? They needed someone to answer for what Ruturaj did, and Stoinis did that beautifully."

BEEN LUCKY TO EXPERIENCE DHONI MANIA FOR PAST 16-17 YEARS: Though it has been close to four years since the great M S Dhoni retired from international cricket, the unconditional love he gets from his legion of fans remain undiminished.

The World Cup winning captain is batting like the Dhoni of old this season,

finding sixes and fours at will. Fleming considers himself among the lucky ones to witness fans' unparalleled admiration for Dhoni across venues.

"It's an experience you like to have in the stadium every time he plays. It's been lucky for me to have this magical experience for 16-17 years.

"The love for him throughout the world is a testimony to the way he has played the game. People talk about MS as a person, but he is also a great player, and he has done some great things for India and Chennai (Super Kings).

"People take time to appreciate it, and we do that every day. We are lucky to have him in our side for so long. So, it's not lost on us, and we enjoy every moment."

The CSK-LSG clash witnessed a huge amount of dew coming and Fleming and his team had anticipated it.

"(Apart from Gaikwad) We saw another great hundred from Marcus Stoinis, and they (GT) answered pretty well. It was a good game of cricket, and we felt we played well given the conditions in the backend, but we did some little things wrong under pressure."