

Congress taxed on inheritance as Modi rips into Sam Pitroda remark

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE AMBIKAPUR/NEW DELH

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 counteroffensive 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 an 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

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 tax. а "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. an election rally in At 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 toiling hard," Modi said, apparently referrin Gandhi and Pitroda. referring to Rahul

"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 the US only as an example 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.

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 Chikamagalur, 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, Kaliabor			
Bihar	5	Kishanganj, Katihar, Purnia, Bhagalpur, Banka			
West Bengal	3	Darjeeling, Raiganj, Balurghat			
Chhattisgarh	3	Rajnandgaon, Mahasamund, Ka <mark>nker</mark>			
Jammu & Kashmir	1	Jammu			
Manipur	1	Outer Manipur			
TRIPURA	1	Tripura East			

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 vateway of the State is all set

by



Campaign for Phase II LS poll ends

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

fter whirlwind roadshows, political Attit-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



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 m to 6 nm to ensure enhanced



The upcoming second phase polls will Mathura where Hema Malini is seeking such as Wayanad (Kerala), from

where Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is seeking re-election Thiruvananthapuram and (Kerala), which will witness a high-profile showdown between Shashi Tharoor and Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Meerut where

IED explosion

PTI 📕 IMPHAL

Arun Govil who played Ram in the hit Ramayan TV series of the 1980s,

cover several important constituencies 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

voter participation. In other polling under these stations in Bihar, 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.

Noida readies for triangular contest

the

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

for the third time. State to return after This completing a five years term and breaking the 'Noida jinx' in the 2022 Assembly polls. The popular NCR city, which constituency covers Bulandshahar and Gautam Nagar districts and falls under the Gautam comprises five Vidhan Buddha Nagar seat, will go to Sabha elections on Friday in the second phase of Lok Sabha Noida. Sikandrabad, and Khurja. elections 2024. The SP, which is part of the Opposition INDIA Bloc, has Previously under Khurja Lok fielded Mahendra Singh

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 2022. On the other hand, representing the BSP is Rajendra Singh Solanki, who way contest between BJP, SP and BSP for the upcoming elections on April 26. recently joined the party. In the upcoming 2024 Lok

to witness a three-cornered fight between BJP, Congress and BSP for April 26 polls. The Ghaziabad Lok Sabha Sabha elections, the electoral seat has gained a reputation contest will primarily feature for being a stronghold of the BIP-led National BIP with the candidates Democratic Alliance (NDA). the Samajwadi Party (SP)-led winning INDIA Bloc and the BSP. As margins many as 15 candidates are in elections held the fray to secure the seat with BJP MP Mahesh constituency, and the BJP's vote share increasing with Sharma, a two-time winner each successive election,

new

Buddha

Jewar,

constituencies:

further solidifying their from this seat in Uttar Pradesh, in the battle position constituency.

The Ghaziabad Lok Sabha seat will witness a triangular contest in the general elections. The BJP has fielded

party's

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significant

Atul Garg, replacing sitting MP General (retired) Dadri, VK Singh. The Congress has given ticket to Dolly Sharma and BSP has pitted Nand Kishor Pundir against the Nagar, a seasoned politician other two. The constituency who served as the Congress district president from 1999 to has been a BJP stronghold and the party will be hoping 2016 before joining the SP in 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 Assembly Legislative (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.

SC tells EVM critics it cannot pass damages bridge on directions on basis of suspicion NH 2 in Manipur

PTI 🗖 NEW DELHI

issue

the results.

 $T_{\mathrm{on}}^{\mathrm{he}}$ Supreme Court said Wednesday it cannot

"control the elections" or

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

directions simply

Abridge 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 Imphal capital 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.

change the thought process of those doubting the **RBI bars Kotak Mahindra Bank** from onboarding customers online

PTI MUMBAI

racking down on repeated Unon-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

significant concerns arising out Reserve examination of the bank for the vears 2022 and 2023 and the continued failure on part of the bank to address these concerns in a comprehensive and timely Meanwhile.

necessitated

IT systems.

with immediate effect after the regulator found "serious deficiencies" in the lender's IT risk management. These actions, the RBI said, are



based

Mahindra Bank said in a

statement that it has taken

measures for adoption of new

technologies to strengthen its

Bank's

on

IT

manner.

Kotak

polling advantages of The court said it cannot 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 I including whether EVMs including the microcontrollers fitted in them are reprogrammable.

Churn in Congress over Delhi candidates

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

 $D_{\text{party high command}}^{\text{isrespect on part of the}}$ 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 accusing party 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 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 2019.



ummeedwar nahi chalega (an outsider candidate will not be allowed)", criticising Raj for his affiliation with the BJP till

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 MLÁ 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 called...to meeting was the discuss 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.



GDMC hospital initiates cancer registry programme

The cancer registrations will help in assessing the causes and number of cancer patients

PNS DEHRADUN

The Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) has recently initiated a cancer registry programme on its premises to analyse the underlying causes of cancer in number of cancer patients to patients. Informing this, the medical superintendent, GDMC, Dr Dhananjay Dobhal said that the cancer patients are required to complete a fourpage form provided by the hospital administration. "The form includes details about

their lifestyle, residence, name, age and other relevant information. This initiative aims to gather information from a large number of patients to create research data and conduct mapping for the increasing cases of cancer," he continued.

He further said that the hos-

pital has already completed treatment facilities," he added.

150 cancer registry entries. These cancer registrations will Asked about the dearth of help the hospital administrarequired number of cancer specialists in proportion to the tion assess the causes and number of cancer patients, he said that once the cancer hos-pital expands and relocates to update the cancer treatment facilities at the hospital," he a larger space, more facilities would be provided and doctors would be added to the cancer department. "We are aware of Queried on the status of the cancer treatment at the hospithe fact that the number of cantal, Dobhal said that currently, chemotherapy is being used by cer patients in the city has been surging for some time and

physicians, including gynae-cologists and ENT surgeons, for treating cancer patients. more alarmingly, young adults are being afflicted increasing-"We have decided to introduce radiotherapy at this facility. ly by this dreaded disease. There are multiple reasons But as the installation requires behind this spike and the most important of them are sedenspace, we have submitted a proposal to the authorities contary lifestyles, smoking, concerned to allocate the required sumption of fast food and of space for expanding the cancer course, pollution," he said.

Edu dept seeks EC's permission to resume BRP, CRP recruitment process

PNS DEHRADUN

The education department has requested the Election Commission (EC) of India to give its permission to restart the stalled process of recruitment of the Block Resource Person (BRP) and Cluster Resource Person (CRP). In a letter the project director, Samagra Shiƙsha Abhiyan has asked the EC to give relaxation in the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for resuming the recruitment process of BRP and CRP in the State.

The education minister Dhan Singh Rawat said that the State government is making efforts to improve outsource. Rawat said that educational activities in the State and for this it had decided to fill the vacant these posts but it got affectposts of BRP and CRP in the education department. He the State in view of the Lok



said that 285 BRP and 670 Sabha elections. CRP would be recruited on

He added that apart from BRP and CRP, 2500 vacant the department had started posts of class IV workers in the process of recruitment in the department will also be ed by the MCC imposed in filled by outsourcing agency.

Forest officials release bear back to forest after hourslong rescue operation

PNS DEHRADUN/LALKUAN

quillized and safely rescued a Chandan Singh Adhikari female bear early on reached the spot along with Wednesday which had his rescue team and after

The rescue team of the ting the information about Forest department tran- the incident, forest officer



strayed into a village near Lalkuan of Nainital district reportedly in search of water. The bear had come to the nearby populated area from the forest surrounded by the Terai Eastern Forest Division and Terai Central Forest Division. The deputy divisional forest officer of the Terai Eastern Forest Division, Anil Joshi said that an adult female strayed from the forest and came to the campus of a factory located in a nearby village which manu-factures railway sleepers. The people in the residential campus of the factory were in shock after seeing the bear and people started shouting and running around in panic. The situation became chaotic in the campus but soon, somebody informed the forest department about the bear's presence in the campus. Joshi said that after get-

hard work of several hours, the veterinary officer of the department Dushyant Kumar controlled the bear after tranquilizing it around 4 AM on Wednesday. The doctor subsequently checked its health and was later released to its natural habitat in the reserved forest area of Doli Range, Joshi said. It is pertinent to mention here that several wild animals are coming towards the populated areas in search of water with drinking water crisis in the forests. Earlier, elephants, deer and leopards had also entered the residential areas which also created panic among nearby locals. Now with the bear's entry in the village late on Tuesday, people are also afraid of going on late evening and early morn-ing walks in the area.

Project GROW, launched in January at UPES, concludes

added.

PNS DEHRADUN

A community development Life, Gaurav Mishra. This pro-project- Project GROW- ject was built upon the success ject was built upon the success concluded at UPES recently. of Project Swavalamban which According to the UPES office focused on making 40 women bearers, the project was launched in January as a joint initiative of the School for Life and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) of UPES and it

enhanced English language

housekeeping staff self-reliant through English language training and financial literacy.

Mehra in his address emphawas aimed at helping the sised the importance of perse-administrative staffers with verance and motivation in overcoming language learning



proficiency and communication skills. UPES further said that the project was guided by the CEO - Asia Pacific, GUS and the cluster head, School for ments conducting sessions.

challenges. In all, 22 individuals participated in the project supported by 10 faculty members and staff members from Global Services, Sharad Mehra various schools and depart-

HIMS students share experiences at Alumni Meet 'Milaap 2024'

Two men arrested for firing at teenager over argument

PNS DEHRADUN

PNS DEHRADUN

 $T_{\mathrm{arrested}}^{\mathrm{he}\ \mathrm{police}\ \mathrm{on}\ \mathrm{Wednesday}}$ charges of shooting a teenager in Haldwani over an argument about making an IPL cricket team online on April 20. The officials said that a teenage boy was shot by his friend in Haldwani during an argument when they were consuming alcohol at night on April 20.

A dispute broke out among friends and the matter escalat-

Commuters inconve-

nienced due to route

diversion for Prez visit

Commuters faced prolonged traffic congestion on Wednesday due to the route diversion the police enforced in the wake

of President Droupadi Murmu's two-day Uttarakhand visit. They

said that to avoid getting stuck in serpentine traffic bottlenecks

they had chosen longer and circuitous routes to reach destina-

tions on time. The traffic police advisory listed various city routes

such as Nehru Colony, Dalanwala, Raipur and Premnagar for

rerouting of traffic in view of the VVIP visit. A commuter Sanjay

Anand while venting out his annoyance on suffering the on- the-

road ordeal on a sweltering day said that he had remained stuck

ed to the level that one friend shot the teenager in the chest with a pistol and ran away. The others soon took the victim to the Sushila Tiwari hospital where doctors referred him to a hospital in Bareilly for further treatment. He is still under treatment there. The officials said that the victim is a native of Nepal but was currently living in Dehradun. His friend lived in the Anandpur village of Haldwani's Transport Nagar

area. He had come to his friend's house about two weeks ago to stay there. The officials said that the police started the investigation after the victim's uncle registered a complaint against the accused for firing at his nephew with the intention to kill him. The Nainital senior superintendent of police Prahlad Narayan Meena formed teams to investigate the matter and they finally arrest-ed two absconding accused

Kishan Thakur and Surendra Singh from near Bel Baba temple in Haldwani on Wednesday. Both accused have confessed to shooting at the victim during an argument in rage over mak-ing an IPL cricket team. They claimed that they panicked after shooting at the victim so they escaped from the house. The officials said that the police have arrested them and will present them before the court soon.

MCD commences fogging drive to checkmate mosquito menace

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-AUCTION NOTICE

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PNS DEHRADUN

n view of the recent increase In the mosquito menace in the city, the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) has started a fogging drive to prevent mosquito breeding and check the spread of dengue and other vectorborne diseases. The fogging is being carried out initially only in the vulnerable areas of the

fogging, he said. The corpora-tion will also start raising awareness against dengue spread. The spraying of larvicide will also be commenced in a few weeks as a precautionary measure, Khanna added. The corporation will take steps to identify the factors that

contribute to the spread of dengue in these areas and



regular fogging and spraying of

larvicide once it starts a mas-

sive anti-dengue campaign that

usually commences in June.

Khanna said that the whole

campaign costs around Rs 35

lakh to Rs 40 lakh each month

1228/2024

depending on the intensity of the dengue scare across the city. The MCD will also take all possible measures to prevent the spread of vector-borne diseases and will also impose penalties on those enabling the breeding of mosquitoes due to sheer negligence, he added.

PNS DEHRADUN

in Jolly Grant Dehradun organised the alumni meet 'Milaap-2024' hosted by the department of physical medicine and rehabilitation in Swami Rama Himalayan University (SRHU) during which the former students shared experiences of their alma mater.

Addressing the alumni, the vice-chancellor, SRHU Rajendra Dobhal said that such

Himalayan Institute of events provide students an opportunity for knowledge sharing. He also underscored the importance of the former students staying connected to their university regardless of their current status and urged them to guide the new students.

> On this occasion, students performed dances as part of the cultural activities. Additionally, competitions were organised

for the alumni and prizes were awarded to the winners.

in a nearly bumper to bumper traffic congestion for close to 45 minutes. "Consequently, I arrived at the office late," he said. Echoing the same, another commuter Ragni Chanda expressed her frustration on arriving late at her office in Nehru Colony from Raipur due to diverted routes. "Though I tried other roads than what I take normally, I could not avoid being late for office," she added. Several students heading for schools/ colleges suffered the road woes due to the traffic disruption. A college student Hemant Kurunga blamed inadequate coordination of police authorities in managing traffic flow during route diversion for the traffic mess which led to his missing his semester examination. "I must say that regardless of status, everyone's time is valuable and diverting routes during VVIP visits only inconvenience the locals like me," he said. Many persons heading to hospitals to see their near and dear ones admitted there expressed the same frustration and urged the authorities to strike a balance between the VVIP visits and the common people's right to a smooth commute.

Heavy snowfall lashes Darma-Vyas valley in Pithoragarh PNS PITHORAGARH

When the plains are now experiencing scorching sum-mer heat, heavy snowfall lashed the higher Himalayan reaches in Pithoragarh district on Wednesday. The weather took a quirky turn two days ago in places like Pithoragarh, Dharchula and Munsiyari, signalling snowfall. Aside from the snowfall in the high-altitude hills, the foothills and the plains recorded rain that brought down the temperature by several notches to the relief of the suffering people. The rain will also help in controlling forest fires. Further, snowfall in the Himalayan villages of Vyas and Darma valley has resulted in significant dip in temperature to the glee



of the tourists putting up there. Looking elated with the unexpected snowfall this time, a homestay operator from village Dantu, Hitesh Dataal said that snowfall has been continuing in 14 villages of Darma since noon. "The tourists visiting Panchachuli enjoyed the snowfall a great deal," he added. A Nabi resident Lakhan Nabiyal said that the cold has increased significantly due to snowfall in all the seven villages of Vyas Valley. Snowfall occurred in the high peaks like Munsiyari, Panchachuli, Hansling, Rajrambha and Chiplakedar while rain occurred in the lower areas.

city as a preventive measure under the anti- dengue campaign, the chief municipal health officer Dr Avinash Khanna said. He said that the MCD has a list of the vulnerable areas of every ward which are more prone to get hit badly by dengue. Considering this, sanitation supervisors have been directed to conduct regular fogging in vulnerable

areas of their respective wards along with places like slums, VVIP areas and near water bodies among others. They are carrying out these duties ward-wise The MCD has provided each supervisor with sufficient equipment and fuel to carry out the regular

7⁄5= Azadi _{Ka} Amrit Mahotsav Sr. DCM acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Auction on 09.05.2024 against Installation and Operation of Water Vending Machine On Stand Along Basis at Railway Stations

Over Moradabad Division. Information regarding this E-Auction is available on website via www.ireps.gov.in. All Terms & Condition are Prescribed therein

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Branch Office: Showroom No. 301, 3rd Floor, Shri Ram Arcade, Old Municipal No. 74, Raipur Road, Dehradun Pin: 248009

Whereas

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company 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 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 Home Finance Company Limited

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch	
1.	Wasim Ali (Borrower), Rajiya Parveen (Co-Borrower), LHDEH00001476291.	Khasra No. 764 Mauja Bharuwala Grant Pargana Centraldoon Dehradun Dehradun 1 Dehradun Uttarakhand- 248002 (Ref. LAN No. LHDEH00001476291). Bounded By- North: Land Of S M Jain /30 Ft, South: 40 Ft Wide Road/30 Ft, East: Land of Smt Beena Sachdeva, West: Land of Sri Deepak Narula./ Date of Possession- 22-Apr-24	16-02-2023 Rs. 1,80,452/-	Dehradun -B	
2.	Wasim Ali (Borrower), Rajiya Parveen (Co-Borrower), LHDEH00001476051.	Khasra No 764 Mauja Bharuwala Grant Pargana Centraldoon Dehradun Dehradun 1 Dehradun Utarakhand- 248002 (Ref. LAN No. LHDEH00001476051). Bounded By- North: Land Of S M Jain /30 Ft, South: 40 Ft Wide Road/30 Ft, East: Land of Smt Beena Sachdeva, West: Land of Sri Deepak Narula/ Date of Possession- 22-Apr-24	16-02-2023 Rs. 35,94,728/-	Dehradun -B	
The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, e the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. Date : April 25, 2024 Place: Dehradun ICICI Home Finance Company Limit					

I, SRINKHLA RAWAT holder of Indian Passport No:U0819384 issued at DUBAI take appropriate measures to address them. The on 25/08/2020 and Permanent Resident MCD spends crores of of GAD KI BINA PO POKHRA PAURI rupees every year on the GARHWAL PIN 246001 UTTARAKHAND anti-dengue campaign, INDIA and presently residing at DUBAI UAE do hereby change the name of my which involves regular fogging and spraying of larviminor child REANSH LOCHANI holding Indian Passport No:V5126998 issued at cide throughout the city by DUBAI on 01/04/2022 from REANSH the sanitation team. On LOCHANI to REANSH (Given name) average, MCD spends RAWAT LOCHANI(Surname) immediate effect. about Rs 1.29 lakh daily on



In my Husband Service record my name mistakenly recorded as REKHA where as my correct name is REKHA BIJALWAN as mentioned in other all documents. Army no-14909216P EX SEP DINÉSH CHANDRA BIJALWAN R/O HIG 201 MDDA FLATE TURNER ROAD DEHRADUN UTTARAKHAND. vide IN-UK17415509142971W Affidavit 24.04.2024 before Dehradun.

In my Husband's service records my name is mistakenly recorded as VIMLA whereas my correct name is VIMLADEVI as mentioned in aadhar card. Vimla Devi W/o Kunwar Singh ASI G.D. Address: Vill Rampur, PO- Jajal, Kujni, Tehsil- Narendranagar, District-Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that previous Original Sale Deed which is duly registered in the office Sub-Registrar Dehradun in Book No.1 Vol. 2 Page76, ADFB no.1, Vol.617, pages 17 to 186 at Serial No.3082 and registered on 03.05.2007 regarding All tha property described in Khatuni of Khata no.972 (According to Fasli Year 1428 to 1433) bearing Khasra No.269 Kha Mir naving area measuring 265.12 Sq Mtrs out of which total covered area 303.85 Sq Mtrs Situated at Mauza Kanharwala Pargana Parwa Doon, Tehsil and Distric Dehradun has been actually los somewhere and cannot be located. Its use by any other person in any way sha be illegal. A Complaint dated 06.04.2024 was duly lodged regarding the same a SSP Office, Dehradun. Shri Rakesh Singh S/o Shri Avtar Singh

Disclaimer

The Pioneer does not take responsibility for the content for the advertisement (Display/Classified) carried in this newspaper. The paper does not endorse the same Readers are requested to verify the contents on their own.

For advertisement booking Contact: 9045057787, 8909212518 pioneerdoon@gmail.com

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before esponding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisers

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the IPL has provided a special lege were present on the occa-

platform for the young players sion.

PNS NANITAL

Tndian cricketer Mohammad to perform and showcase their Shami visited the prestigious Sherwood College here on Wednesday. The cricketer was accorded a warm welcome in students, Shami said that fast bowling is an art and the bowlers should understand the techniques of batsmen to succeed in this field. He said that cricket is gaining tremendous

talent. Shami said that the Sherwood college is a prestigious institution and it has all the facilities and the students the school. Interacting with the interested in sports can take advantage of these facilities. The Principal of the college Amandeep Sandhu felicitated Shami by presenting him a memento. College captain Prithviraj Kumar, teachers, stupopularity in the country and dents and employees of the col-



Use tribal knowledge in improving and **PM Modi's speeches reflect** preserving environment: President Murmu his nervousness: Godiyal

PNS DEHRADUN

The President of India Droupadi Murmu has said that it is very important to understand the importance of the knowledge accumulated by tribal society over centuries and use it to improve the environment. She stated that the collective wisdom of tribals can help us move forward on an ecologically sustainable, ethically desirable and socially justifiable path.

The President was addressing the convocation ceremony of the officer trainees of Indian Forest Service (2022 batch) at the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy here on Wednesday. She said the human society should not for-get that the reality that forests have preserved life on earth. Murmu said that the human society is making the mistake of forgetting the importance of forests

The President said in today's period of human-centric development, disastrous results have emerged along with development. Unsustainable exploitation of resources has brought humanity to a point where the standards of development have to be re-evaluated. "We should understand that we are not the owners of the earth's resources, but we are trustees. Our priorities should be ecocentric along with anthropocentric," she said. The President said that in many parts of the world

दीक्षान्त समारोह 2024 CONVOCATIO अपरलीय व

the loss of forest resources has occurred very rapidly. Destruction of forests is in a way - destruction of humanity. She said that human life can be saved from the crisis through conservation and promotion of forests and wildlife. Murmu opined that Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help in identifying suitable areas for afforestation and area specific tree species.

> The President said that today human society is bearing the brunt of many environmental problems and one of the main reasons for this is a

special type of modernity, the root of which is the exploitation of nature. Traditional knowledge is neglected in this The President said that she was confident that the officers of the Indian Forest Service

had become completely free from the colonial mentality and outlook of the former Imperial Forest Service. She stated that IFS officers not only have to conserve and aug-

ment India's natural resources but also use the traditional knowledge in the interest of humanity.

process

"The Indian Forest Service has given many officers to the country who have done unparalleled work for the environment. IFS officers such as P Srinivas, Sanjay Kumar Singh, S Manikandan have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. The officer trainees should make such officers their role models and mentors and move forward on the ideals shown by them," she said.

trainees from Bhutan were The President urged IFS awarded Mohammed Abdul Rawoof officers to spend time among Shaik of Andhra Pradesh the tribal people in the field and earn their affection and cadre was declared the toptrust. She said that they should per of the batch.

PNS DEHRADUN

Former Pradesh Congress learn from the good practices of the tribal society. She also Committee (PCC) urged them to take ownership of their responsibilities and become a role model. president and Congress candidate from Garhwal Lok Addressing the ceremony the governor of Uttarakhand, Lt General (retd) Gurmit Sabha constituency Ganesh Godiyal has said that the despera-Singh said that the environtion of impending ment is an integral part of our defeat is clearly visible economy. He expressed hope that the new officers will ensure active participation of stakeholders and promote diain the election speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Interacting with the logue as well as strive to mediapersons at the empower communities to headquarters of the become nature-dependent

State Congress here on Wednesday, the Congress leader said that in his desperation the PM is making absurd statements such as the Mangalsurtras of the women will be snatched if a Congress government comes to power'.

He said that during the 65 years rule of Congress party the prices of gold never crossed Rs 30,000 per Tola (10 grams) but in the last 10



years the gold prices have increased 2.5 times. The gold prices have now become out of reach of the common man. Godiyal said the PM and BJP are now trying to divert the attention of people from real issues and playing divisive politics.

He said that alarmed by the voting trends in the first phase of Lok Sabha polls, the BJP has fallen back to its strategy of polarisation of votes. The Congress leader

which the candidates of the party in all the five seats played beautifully. He said that in Garhwal where many leaders including Manish Khanduri, the candidate in LS elections of 2019 and incumbent MLA from Badrinath Rajendra Bhandari had left the Congress party, the grass root workers kept the ideology of the party

high in the election.

said that the peo-

ple of Garhwal

were expecting

that the PM will

say something on

Bhandari murder

and Agnipath scheme of recruit-

ment in armed

forces but he

remained silent on

He said that the

workers of the

Congress party

these issues.

had prepared a wonderful

pitch for the LS elections on

Ankita

the

In the ceremony 101 officer trainees consisting 99 Indian Forest Service probationers and two foreign Whereas

Place: Rudrapur

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

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

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	
	Vijay Singh/ Nisha Devi/ LBRUD00005470217/ LBRUD00005470216	Khasra No. 185 Minjumla, Private Plot No. 21, Gram Fulsunga, Tehsil Rudrapur, District Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand- 263153/ April 22, 2024	November 08, 2023 Rs. 34,65,889/-	Rudrapur	

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

Authorized Officer **ICICI Bank Limited**

Cong wants to divide the country & steal people's money: Bansal

PNS DEHRADUN

 $T^{
m he\ Bharatiya\ Janata\ Party}_{
m (BJP)\ in\ Uttarakhand}$ claimed that Congress wants to bypass the constitution and divide the country by bringing Muslim reservations like it did in Karnataka. Congress had allegedly deposited a large part of its assets and earnings through the Compulsory Deposit Scheme Act 1963 in 1963 and 1974. The Modi government aims to strengthen the country by increasing people's earnings but Congress intends to weaken people by confiscating their earnings, the Rajya Sabha MP and senior BJP leader Naresh Bansal said dur-Dehradun on Wednesday. He said that the BJP warned the public about the dangerous intentions of Congress. Bansal alleged that Congress has a hidden agenda to snatch people's property as recently revealed by Congress leader Sam Pitroda himself. He said that privileged Congress leaders have also recently stated that the gov-

The party's mantra is to snatch and loot from people even after their death. People will be paying inheritance taxes after their death. Those, who have given the Congress Party to their children considering it the ancestral property, do not want hardworking people to give their property to their children. Congress and its political alliance are only eyeing people's money," Bansal said. He said scheme for recruitment in armed forces, Ankita Bhandari murder case, Joshimath subthat if Congress comes to power, it will take possession of all properties and distribute Chauhan attacks them to everyone. "Our mothers and sisters have gold which **Rawat for terming** is considered sacred but ing a Press conference in Congress wants to conduct a survey to steal this gold. The **Congress defectors** mangalsutra of our mothers and sisters will no longer be as sinners safe. All of this is clearly written in the Congress mani-PNS DEHRADUN festo," Bansal claimed. He said that Congress has always used appeasement politics as a I remark made by former chief minister weapon to win elections. He Harish Rawat on the leaders who have left the alleged that once again, Congress wants to work on a ernment should impose more plan to give Muslims the first right to the country's resources. As per their plan, Muslims will be included in the list of Scheduled Caste and will be given a separate 15 per cent reservation in government jobs. The reservation for Other Backward Classes will also be divided based on religion and Muslims will get a separate six per cent reservation as per Congress' plan, he added. He clarified that the BJP aims to alert everyone about Congress's contentious policy of looting the public and wants it to publicly accept its hidden agenda or remove this topic from its manifesto.

Local issues dominated polling in LS elections in U'khand: Mahara

PNS DEHRADUN

The Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara has claimed that the Congress candidates will register victory in all the five Lok Sabha constituencies of Uttarakhand. He told The Pioneer that the the party in which he workers of the Congress party were very enthusiastic and toured all parts they worked very hard for the party candidates. He said that of the State local issues such as Agnipath before the elec-

tions created groundwork for the party

He claimed that the voting percentage of BJP has decreased substantially in Uttarakhand; it will be reflected in the defeat of BJP candi-

stewards of resources.

In the ceremony the direc-

tor of the IGNGA Jagmohan

Sharma presented a report about the institute. He said

that the officers are trained in

various aspects of forestry and

governance to meet the expec-

tations of the service. Sharma

advised the young probation-

ers to work with utmost sin-

cerity and devotion and do

their best for securing liveli-

hood of the forest dependent

degrees.

people.



E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 read with provison to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/ physical/symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on" As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentiond in the table herein below, for recovery of dues due to the Bank/Secured creditor from the respective borrower(s) ,and Guarantor (s). The Reserve price and the earnest money deposit

sidence and unemployment candidates in the LS elections. were on the minds of the people during the polls and the BJP candidates will have to pay the price in the elections. Mahara added that the programmes organised by the dates in the State.



tax on middle class people. Congress says that it will also impose a tax on the inheritance received from parents. "Children will not get the wealth their parents accumulated through hard work all their life. Congress has been planning to snatch that away.

Congress party, the media in charge of State BJP Manvir Singh Chauhan said that the former CM should clarify as to how many tainted leaders are there in Congress. Rawat had recently termed the leaders who had left Congress as sinners. Chauhan said that every leader who is leaving Congress is a sinner for Harish Rawat. He claimed that BJP gives respect to everyone due to which leaders from other parties join it. Taking a dig at Rawat, Chauhan said that he considers such leaders who had served the Congress for years as sinners which shows that he is suffering from a problem in his vision. He said policies and corruption of Harish Rawat forced a major rebellion in Congress in 2016. There are many leaders in Congress who have held the high ambitions of Harish Rawat

aking strong exception to the sarcastic

responsible for leaving the Congress party. Chauhan claimed that a champion of dynastic politics, Rawat is running the Congress party in the State with a remote control which generates a lot of discontentment in the party rank and file.

Maharaj campaigns in Chhattisgarh; hails Modi magic in development

PNS DEHRADUN

The State Panchayati Raj Minister Satpal Maharaj, who is also BJP's in Durg parliamentary constituency under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Besides, star campaigner, while canvassing for votes in Durg Lok Sabha constituency in Chhattisgarh on Wednesday, said that the State has been witnessing unprecedented development under the 10 years' tenure of the Narendra Modi government. "The State has been progressing at a good pace under the development vision of the PM and the State's dynamic chief minister," he said.

"Modi government has pulled Chhattisgarh out of the BIMARU list and has been providing free food to the poor since the time of Covid pandemic. The Central Government has provided new water connections to 1,93,321 out of 3,39,471 households

under PM Kisan Yojana, Rs 176.11 crore was paid to 2,90,076 farmers in instalments," he said.

He also hailed the Modi government's initiatives aimed at facilitating economic prosperity of all sections of the society and massive infrastructure connectivity. "The BJP government in the State is working for an inclusive growth of the State by taking along all sections of people, including Sahu, Kurmi and Satnami among others," he added.

Referring to the work being done by the Uttarakhand government for the empowerment of Panchayats, he said that under the guidance of Prime Minister and the leadership of

chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, the panchayati raj institutions were being further empowered through handing over all the 29 subjects mentioned in the panchayati raj institutions act. "We are moving towards transferring funds, personnel and functions of the 29 subjects to the Panchayats to ensure localisation of Sustainable Development Goals and appropriate resolution of local challenges at the local levels," he said.

Further, invoking the Ramayan's connection with Chhattisgarh, Maharaj urged the people of the land that houses Lord Ram's maternal home to vote for the BJP, adding that thanks to the Modi government's initiatives, the flag of sanatan dharma is now fluttering across the world.

v	vill be as mentioned in the table be	Now against the respective properties. SCHEDULE OF THE SECURE	DASSETS			
Lc No		Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged/Owner's Name (Mortgagers of Property (ies))	 (A) Dt. of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI Act 2002 (B) Outstanding Amount as on (C) Possession Date u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act. 2002 (D) Nature of Possession Symbolic /Physical/Constructive 	(A) Reserve Price (B) EMD (C) Last Date of deposit of EMD (D) Bid Increase Amout	DATE & TIME OF AUCTION	Details of The Encumbrances Known To The Secured Creditors
	This notice is also	be treated as 15 days statutory notice to under Ru	le 8(6) Security Intere	st (Enforcement) Rules	5, 2002	
1	Branch: Kanwali Road, Dehradun Borrower/Mortgagor: 1. Shri Mahander Singh S/o Shri Ganga Ram	All that land & superstructure thereon bearing khasra no	(A) 01.12.2023	(A) Rs. 44,63,000/-	16.05.2024 From 11:00 AM	Not Known
			(B) Rs. 27,78,407.74	(B) Rs. 4,47,000/-		
	Singh. 2. Mrs. Doli Singh W/o Shri	butted as under: North: Property of Sh. Bhupendra Singh.	(C) 21.02.2024	(C) 15.05.2024 Up to 05.00 PM	to	
	Mahender Singh (Co-Borrower). Both residents, Address 1. 21 Sangam Vihar, Kanwali, Dehradun, Address 2- 697 Priyadar- shini Enclave, GMS Road, Kanwali, Dehradun.	side measuring 58 ft., South: Property of Sh. Dinesh Chawla, side measuring 58 ft, East: 30 ft.(9 meter) wide road, side measuring 12 ft, West: land of others, side		(D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh	04:00 PM	
2		EQM of property constructed on land bearing khata	(A) 18.11.2023	(A) Rs. 47,60,000/-	16.05.2024	Not Known
	Borrower/Mortgagor: 1. Mrs. Monika Grover Bisht W/o Mr. Anish Bisht		(B) Rs. 13,29,464.67	(B) Rs. 4,76,000/-	From 11:00 AM	
	Co-Borrower: Mr. Anish Bisht S/o	khalsa pargana pachwadoon Dehradun. Bounded and	(C) 01.03.2024	(C) 15.05.2024 Up to 05.00 PM	to	
	Mr. Diwan Singh. Both residents are Address 1. Bisht Cottage, Bank Road, Mohabbewala, Dehradun and Address 2. Chandrabani Khalsa, Mohabbewala, Dehradun.	butted as under: East: 6.10 Mtr wide road, SM 39ft, West: prop of other, SM 36 ft 6 inches, North: 12 Mtr wide road, SM 31ft 4 inches, South: prop of others, SM 29ft 6 inches. Ownership: Mrs. Monika Grover Bisht W/o Mr. Anish Bisht.	(D) Symbolic Possession	(D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh	04:00 PM	
3	Branch: Sahastradhara Road Dehradun	Extension of Charge over EM of residential Apartment No.	(A) 16.06.2021	(A) Rs. 46,00,000/-	16.05.2024 From 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM	Not Known
	Borrower : M/s Somya Communication C/o Prop: Sh. Kamal Nagpal, Add: 6A,	B-103, First Floor, Hill View Apartment, Mauza Chak Danda Lakhound, Pargana Parwadoon, Tehsil & Distt Dehradun	(B) Rs. 52,34,528.37	(B) Rs. 4,60,000/-		
	Chakratta Road, near RGM Plaza	having total area 125. 415 sq. mtrs registered at bahi No. 1	(C) 25.08.2021	(C) 15.05.2024 Up to 05.00 PM		
	Dehradun.	Zild No. 6192 pages 287 to 322 Sr. No. 32 on 07.01.2015 at SRO-1 Dehradun in the name of Mr. Kamal Nagpal S/o Late Sh. Bal Kishan Nagpal & Mrs. Rekha Nagpal W/o Sh. Kamal Nagpal. Bounded and Butted as under: East: Open Space, West: Stairs and thereafter Apartment No. B-101, North: Apartment No. B-104, South: Open Space.	(D) Symbolic Possession	(D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh		
	This notice is also	be treated as 30 days statutory notice to under Ru	le 8(6) Security Intere	st (Enforcement) Rules	s, 2002	
4		All the immovable Property Residential Flat No. 601,	(A) 16.12.2022	(A) Rs. 48.45 Lakh	07.06.2024	Not know
	& Construction Associate Add. 1.	6th Floor, in ""Amarpali Village Phase-II" "FM Biock" situated at Village Makanpur Ghaziabad Super Area	(B) Rs. 1,14,59,424.81	(B) Rs. 4.85 Lakh	From 11:00 AM	
	400/1, Ballupur Road, Sunder Vihar,	1425 square Feet i.e. 132.38 Square Meter, Covered	(As per SARFAESI Notice 13(2) dated	(C) 06.06.2024 Up to 05.00 PM	to	
	Dehradun Uttrakhand. Add.2. Ram Villa c/o Er. R.A.S. Chauhan 4 Kalindi	Area 1140 sq. leet i.e. 105.90 Square Weter, bounded	16.12.2022)	(D) Rs. 0.50 Lakh	04:00 PM	
	Enclave Dehradun. Partner 1. Shri	Call 4 feet wide, North: Other Land, South: Other Land	Less Recovery			
	ram Gopal Gupta S/o Shri Jadho Ram Gupta, Add.1. 400/1, Ballupur Road,	Ownership: Shri Rajesh Singhal S/o Brij Kishore	(C) 03.06.2023			
	Sunder Vihar, Dehradun Uttrakhand. Add.2. Ram Villa c/o Er. R.A.S. Chauhan 4 Kalindi Enclave Dehradun.	Singhal & Smt. Sapna Singhal W/o Shri Rajesh Singhal, Add: FM 601, Amarpali Village 2 Nyay Khand 2, Indrapurm Near Kala Pathar Ghaziabad (UP).	(D) Symbolic Possession			
	Partner 2. Smt. Anita Gupta W/o Shri Vihar, Dehradun Uttrakhand. Add.2. Ra	Ram Gopal Gupta, Add. 1. 400/1, Ballupur Road, Sunder m Villa c/o Er. R.A.S. Chauhan 4 Kalindi Enclave Dehradun.				

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions: 1. The auction sale will be "online through e-auction" portal https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp/ on SI. No. 1. to 3: 16.05.2024 & Sr. No. 4: 07.06.2024 From 11.00 AM to 04.00 PM 2. The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are requested to register on portal (https://www.mstcauction.com) using their mobile number and email-id. Further, they are requested to upload requisite KYC documents. Once the KYC documents are verified by e-auction service provider (may take 2 working days), the intending Bidders/ Purchasers has to transfer the EMD amount using online mode in documents. Once the KYC documents are verified by e-auction service provider (may take 2 working days), the intending Bidders/ Purchasers has to transfer the EMD amount using online mode in his Global EMD Wallet before the e-Auction Date and time in the portal. The registration, verification of KYC documents and transfer of EMD in wallet must be completed well in advance, before auction. **3.** Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) amount as mentioned above shall be paid online through 3 modes i.e. NEFT/ Cash/ Transfer (After generation of Challan from (https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp) in bidders Global EMD Wallet, NEFT transfer can be done from any Scheduled Commercial Bank, however for Cash/ Transfer the bidder has to visit Punjab National Bank Branch. Payment of EMD by any other mode such as Cheques will not be accepted. Bidders, not depositing the required EMD online, will not be any interest. **4.** Platform (https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp) for e-Auction will be provided by e Auction service provider M/S MSTC Limited having its Registered office at 225-C, A.J.C. Bose Road, Kolkata-700020 (contact Phone & Toll free Numbers 07941072412/411/413 or 1800-103-5342). The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are required to participate in the e-Auction process at e-Auction Service Provider's website https://www.mstcecommerce.com/ auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp. This Service Provider will also provide online demonstration/ training on e-Auction on the portal. 5. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule herein above have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation. 6. For Further rules and regulations of the auction either visit these websites or **Contact Auhorised Officer**, Mob: 8193024024 at the address **Punjab National Bank**, **Circle Sastra**, **PNB HOuse**, 1 Paltan Bazar, Dehradun. The bank reserves the right to cancel/suspend the auction process without furnishing any reason. Any type of taxes i.e TDS/ Gst etc. Shall be borne by the successful bidder himself. Any Bid increment will be treated to have increased proportionally on both Land & building and plant & Machinery.7. The successful bidders shall immediately, i.e on the same day or not later than next working day, as the case may be, deposit 25% of the bid/sale amount (which is inclusive of earnest money deposited) to the account mentioned as above or by way of Demand Draft, to the Authorized Officer conducting the sale. In case of default in payment of the bid amount within the prescribed period, the amount deposited will be forfeited and the secured assets shall be resold. 8. The successful bidder shall be required to deposit the balance 75% of the bid amount within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale. In case of default in payment of the remaining 75% of the bid amount within the prescribed period, the amount deposited will be forfeited and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which it may be subsequently sold. In case the date of auction is declared a holiday, then the auction shall be held on the following day. 9. Borrowers/Guarantor are informed that according to the demand notice, deposit all the amount (including interest and other expenses) before the date of the auction. If is not done, the property will be auctioned and remaining amount, If any, will be recovered along with interest and expenses from the Borrower. Note: For more information. Contact Authorised Officer Mobile Number: 8193024024.

Date: 24.04.2024

Place: Dehradun

Authorised Officer

Nations must invest in resilient infrastructure for better tomorrow: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said natural disasters are becoming more frequent and more severe, and their true impact on people, families and communities is beyond just numbers.

In a recorded message played at the 6th edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), the Minister Prime said, "Countries must invest in resilient infrastructure today for a better tomorrow. Resilience needs to be factored into new infrastructure creation and it also needs to be part of post-disaster

rebuilding after disasters." "As we all have witnessed, natural disasters are becoming more frequent and more severe. The damage they cause is usually reported in dollars, but their true impact on people, families and

communities is beyond just numbers.

"Earthquakes destroy houses, making thousands of people homeless. Natural disasters can disrupt water and sewage systems, putting the health of people at risk. Some disasters can impact energy plants, leading to potentially dangerous situations. These things have a human impact," Modi said.

He said nature and disasters have no borders and disasters disruption and cause widespread impact in a highly interconnected world. "The world can be resilient collectively only when each country resilient is

individually. Shared resilience is important because of the shared risks. CDRI and this conference help us come together for this collective mission," the prime minister said.

Citing the high risk of disasters in small island developing States, Modi said countries must support the



most vulnerable to achieve shared resilience. "CDRI has a programme

which is funding projects across 13 such places. Resilient housing in Dominica, resilient transport networks in Papua New Guinea and enhanced

manifesto was

of INDI alliance, says it will

With his remarks triggering a

row, Pitroda said on X that "It

is unfortunate that what I said

twisted by Godi media to

divert attention from what lies

on

ponder over the issue.

as an individual

early burning systems in the Dominican Republic and Fiji are some examples," Modi said. It is heartening that CDRI also has a focus on the global south, he said.

The prime minister said that during India's G20 presidency,

a new disaster risk reduction working group was formed with financing at the heart of the discussions.

Along with the growth of CDRI, such steps will take the world to a resilient future, he

Modi added that the growth of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure has been impressive in the last few Launched in 2019, years. CDRI is now a global coalition of 39 countries and seven organisations.

Investment in infrastructure suffered setbacks during the COVID-19 pandemic years, and the recent rebound has been highly unequal, with developing countries falling behind, P K Mishra, the principal secretary to the Prime Minister at the conference.

He said disaster and climate risks are increasing and countries will be forced to divert more funding to recovery and rebuilding if they do not build resilience in the infrastructure systems.

"During the pandemic years, investment in infrastructure suffered setbacks, and lately, we observe sustained revival. However, this rebound is highly unequal, with developing countries lagging. highly with

We must ask ourselves why? he said.

Mishra said research by CDRI has shown that the annual investment required to address the infrastructure deficit, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reach net zero and strengthen resilience by 2050 amounts to USD 9.2 trillion.

"If we do not design resilience into our project pipelines, it will be increasingly difficult to achieve the high levels of funding needed to close the infrastructure deficit. particularly in the global south," he said.

Mishra said the prime minister has given a clarion call to make India a developed country, and many other countries in the global south are also aiming at becoming developed countries developing faster.

"In all these cases, a lot of infrastructure is going to be built. Therefore, ensuring disaster and climate resilience of infrastructure systems,

particularly in the uncertainties posed by a changing climate, is a shared global challenge," he said.

Mishra said India recognises that closing the infrastructure deficit and doing so in a manner that all new infrastructure is resilient go hand in hand.

He said the investment made in infrastructure in the country over the past two decades has created better livelihood opportunities for millions of citizens, and this progress needs to be sustained. The infrastructure we build today needs to be resilient to present and future disaster

risks for decades," he said. Mishra urged the participants of the conference to focus on creating opportunities for better articulation infrastructure challenges faced by the global south. He sought the conference to find new ways to mobilize finance and incentivize investments in resilient infrastructure in the global south.

Congress manifesto influenced by foreign forces, claims BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday launched an all-out attack on the Congress over Sam Pitroda's "inheritance tax' remarks, alleging he has exposed the party's "nefarious design" of taking away common people's wealth and property. The BJP's accusation came after Pitroda, the president of the Indian Overseas Congress, talked about "inheritance tax in the United States" on the Congress' "redistribution of wealth" issue.

Latching on to his remarks, BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said, "Sam Pitroda has elaborated the nefarious design of the Congress. We are a saving based economy. In India, one generation (of a family) earns by doing hard work. The second generation builds on that and then the third gets generation some

comfort." "And, the Congress wants to snatch away that happiness and peace from the people with Sam Pitroda talking about imposing tax on gold, he charged. "People in India purchase gold



as their savings and even those Congress' who are poor say there should influenced by foreign forces. be gold. And you want to impose 45 per cent tax on them (gold)," Trivedi added. danger is. The Communist party, a prominent constituent The Congress distanced itself from Pitroda's remarks, alleging that sensationalising them are attempts at diverting attention from Prime Minister little 'dhan and anna (wealth Narendra Modi's "malicious" poll campaign. "By doing an X-ray of the Congress' manifesto, their home,' Trivedi charged, exhorting people to seriously

high tech guru Pitroda has made it clear that both the lives and wealth of the people of the country are in danger. You want to take away the wealth of people from them," the BJP spokesperson hit back, saying the Congress can hide its "nefarious intentions" now. He also alleged that the and gold snatching is simply unreal.

"I mentioned US inheritance tax in the US only as an example in my normal conversation on TV. Can I not mention facts ? I said these are the kind of issues people will have to discuss and debate. This has nothing to do with the policy of any party including Congress," he said. "Who said 55 percent will be taken away? Who said something like this should be done in India? Why is BJP and media in panic," Pitroda "Understand how big the asked.

Attacking the Congress over Pitroda's remarks, Modi said at a rally in Chhattisgarh, dismantle India's nuclear "The Congress party's dangerous intentions have weapons and Congress says it come to fore yet again. Now will stanch away from you the these people are saying they and food) that you have at will impose inheritance tax on properties bequeathed to children by their parents." Home Minister Amit Shah also flayed Pitroda's remarks, saying "The appeasement politics of the Congress stand exposed today with Sam inheritance tax in the US is Pitroda's statement on wealth redistribution. He reaffirmed the party's intention to seize the PM is spreading about the the property of the majority Congress manifesto. PM's and distribute it among the comments on Mangal Sutra minority."



Modi greets people on Panchayati Raj Day PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday greeted people on the Panchayati Raj Day, asserting that his government will continue to work to strengthen local body institutions.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj observes April 24 as National Panchayati Raj Day, marking the enactment of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992, which came into force on this day in 1993 and paved the way for empowering of local bodies. Modi said on X, "On

Panchayati Raj Day, greetings to all those working at grassroots to transform rural India and ensure a better quality of life for the people. Government Our will continue to work to strengthen Panchayati Raj institutions and give wings to people's dreams?

Navy official freed from Qatar prison; father thanks Modi

the capital punishment by

Qatar on reportedly espionage

charges which was later

However, India's persistent

intervention ensured their

release in February and they

Vashisht said in his solitary

confinement in a Qatar prison,

he was sustained by the hope

that no stone will be left

unturned to ensure his release

as he observed the prime

minister's major diplomatic

engagements such as being the

State guest of the United States

government, Chief Guest of

Honour at Bastille's Day parade

in France and hosting the G20

He said, "Witnessing your

auspicious inauguration of the

Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, I felt

that our Lord Ram was also

blessing us to attain our

freedom. I remain eternally

indebted to you for restoring

summit, in India.

committed.

returned home.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Cone of the eight imprisoned former Indian Navy personnel released by Qatar following India's diplomatic efforts, and his father have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convey their heartfelt thanks

and laud his leadership. Vashisht said his heart is brimming with appreciation and reverence, as he praised Modi for his unwavering support and tireless efforts during one of the most challenging phases of his life, officials noted on Wednesday. He said in the letter to the prime minister that, "In the of seemingly face insurmountable odds, you emerged as a steadfast beacon of hope and resilience, transcending the realms of politics to embody a guiding of unparalleled force significance."

He added, "Your solemn vow that no Indian would be left behind resonated deeply within our spirits, and time and again, you have demonstrated the profound sincerity of that commitment." All eight officials were given



unwavering advocacy you extended to our plight, and for safeguarding the welfare of our families during our protracted separation."

Modi's resolute commitment to the well-being of every Indian, irrespective of circumstance, evokes profound admiration and reverence, he said, praising him for exemplifying the true essence of leadership and empathy.

Officials said Captain father Ŵing Vashisht's Commander Rajinder Kumar Vashisht (Retired) also praised and thanked Prime Minister Modi for the return of his son. "In this agonising saga spanning over 18 months, you emerged as our rock, our unwavering pillar of hope. At 86 years of age, I find myself extremely overwhelmed with gratitude for your relentless efforts in bringing my son back from the brink of despair," he

said. He said in his decades of life, he has traversed through changing times and eras, witnessed myriad leaders, yet none have radiated the "unwavering compassion, foresightedness, and devotion to our nation and its citizens, as you have".

NEW DELHI



DRDO builds lightest bullet proof jacket

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Defence Research and Development Organisations's (DRDO) Defence Materials and Stores Research and Development Establishment (DMSRDE), Kanpur has successfully developed the lightest bullet proof Jacket in the country for protection against 7.62 x 54 R API (Level 6 of BIS 17051) ammunition, Defence Ministry has said.

Recently, this bullet proof jacket was successfully tested at TBRL, Chandigarh as per BIS 17051-2018. This jacket is based upon new design approach, where novel material along with new processes has been used.

The front Hard Armour Panel (HAP) of this jacket defeats multiple hits (06 shots) of 7.62 x 54 R API (Sniper rounds) in both ICW (In-conjunction with) and Standalone design. The ergonomically designed front HAP is made up of monolithic ceramic plate with polymer backing which enhances the wearability and comfort during the operation. The areal density of ICW

Hard Armour Panel (HAP) and standalone HAP is less than 40 kg/m2 and 43 kg/m2 respectively.

rmy Chief General Manoj APande said here on Wednesday evolution of technology has impacted warfare but technological advantage may just be reduced to a tactical level when it is taken away from the larger strategic context and regarded

as the "sole driver" of success in a war. In his address at a seminar here, he also said technologies are emerging in new unchartered domains, and "revolutionising

perspective, has undergone significant evolution over the centuries, and has "impacted warfare in a profound manner,"

he said General Pande cited the examples of rifles, railroads, telegraphs and ironclad ships in the 19th-century wars; the machine gun, tank, aeroplane, aircraft carriers and atomic and establishing a 'new normal' in different fields". General Pande weapons in the 20th-century wars; to the niche technologies further said technology has that have today permeated into also emerged as the "new strategic arena of competition, the military domain. They "all highlight examples of how driving geo-political power technologies change the face of wars and influence their plays and is being leveraged for

weaponisation of many outcomes", he said. domains, ranging from information to supply chains". History shows that armies that have managed to adopt and The Army chief was addressing a gathering during a seminar on "Year of Technology Absorption: integrate new technologies have gained advantage on the battlefield and achieved success, he underlined. Empowering the Soldier" Infusion of technologies such organised by a defence thinkas computers, radars, codetank at Manekshaw Centre at breaking and aircraft production by the Allies in

Delhi Cantonment. World War II was instrumental Technology from a warfighting

lechnologies emerge as strategic arena of competition: Army Chief

EDIA

in securing victory for them, while in the early years of the War, it was Germany and Japan which leveraged their industrial and technological capacities to "accrue advantages of scale, over the Allies, the Army chief added. 'On the other hand, technological advantage may just be reduced to a tactical level, when it is taken away from the larger strategic context and regarded as the

sole driver of success in war. Vietnam and Afghanistan are examples of the same," he asserted.

"Therefore, understanding of new technologies, harnessing their potential and accruing strategic superiority -- is the essence of leveraging essence technology from a warfighting perspective," the Army chief said. The Indian Army is observing 2024 as the 'Year of cyber, Technology Absorption'. spectrum and information.

The military-technological landscape today is witness to a "manifold increase in the lethality and accuracy of kinetic instruments and increased proliferation of technologies" such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, robotics, 3D printing and nanotechnology, the Army chief said.

He reiterated that emerging technologies are no longer superpower-centric and even non-state actors are gaining access to modern technology, for military use and employing it for "asymmetric leverage in conflict". He cited how recent conflicts have brought to the fore significant insights on how disruptive and dual-use technologies and their proliferation at unprecedented scale — are transforming the character of modern wars. Warfare has transcended into new domains, such as space,

too, has "enhanced" due to technological advancements. Consequent to these developments, the battle space has become "more complex, contested and lethal, and shall remain so in the future," the Army chief said.

The impact of external dependency on critical components, supply chain disruptions and "weaponisation of denial regimes" came to the fore, during the pandemic and also from the lessons of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, he said. "We need to recognise that, even if we were to import some warfighting systems, no country will share the latest, advanced and critical technology. Being importdependent for critical technologies hence entails the

risk of remaining one technological cycle behind, in niche areas," the Army chief said.

Therefore, the need to be selfreliant in warfighting platforms and systems and achieving self-sufficiency in critical technologies through indigenous research and electromagnetic development, "imperative", he added.

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India, Japan discuss developments in nuclear non proliferation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Top officials of India and Japan on Wednesday exchanged views on developments in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation relating to chemical nuclear, and biological domains. The Ministry of External

Affairs (MEA) said the 10th Round of India-Japan Consultations on Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Export Control was held in Tokyo.

The two sides exchanged views on developments in the areas of disarmament and nonproliferation relating to nuclear, chemical and biological domains, outer security, space nonproliferation issues, conventional weapons and export control," the ministry said in a statement.

The Indian delegation was led by Muanpuii Saiawi, Joint Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs, while the Japanese delegation was led by Katsuro Kitagawa, Director General for Non-Disarmament, proliferation and Science Department, it added.

WHO for doubling efforts to beat challenges posed by malaria by malaria and ensure all

enabling us to identify and

address health inequities

both

through

proven

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

On the eve of the World Malaria Day, the World Health Organisation (WHO) or geographical location, have access to prevention, diagnosis and treatment services for the disease. on Wednesday emphasised on the need for heightened focus "Moreover, by leveraging digital technology, we can better understand the diverse on addressing the obstacles to health equity, gender equality and human rights in malaria health needs of populations, responses. collect and analyse data and monitor progress in real-time,

Saima Wazed, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia, stressed on redoubling efforts to overcome challenges posed

interventions and innovation individuals, irrespective of in service delivery," Wazed said. "On World Malaria Day their socio-economic status 2024, we unite under the theme 'Accelerating the fight against malaria for a more equitable world," she said.

This theme, which is in sync with this year's World Health Day theme — "My Health, My Right" — underscores the urgent need to address the stark inequities that persist in access to malaria prevention, detection and treatment services.



Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur campaigning in a road show for the BJP Hyderabad candidate Madhavi Lok Sabha on Wednesday Pioneer Photo

Campaigning ends for Friday Lok Sabha polls in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN 📕 KOCHI

 $P_{a}^{eople\ across\ Kerala\ heaved}$ strenuous campaign for the Lok Sabha election to be held in the State came to an end by

Wednesday evening. The Grand Finale of the campaign concluded by 6 pm on Wednesday and the State goes to the poll on Friday to elect 20 candidates as members of the Lok Sabha. The campaign was by and large peaceful except for bomb blasts in the district of Kannur which claimed the life of a local CPI(M) leader. According to the police, the bomb exploded while it was being assembled by the professional explosive experts under the party leadership. On Tuesday, the police seized a dozen 'steel bombs stored secretly in a property

belonging to a supporter of the party.

The last three days of the campaign saw the CPI(M), Congress and Muslim League unleashing a high pitch propaganda against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his election rally speech delivered at Rajasthan. Starting from Mallikarjun Kharge, the AICC president to M M Mani, the CPI(M) MLA and leaders of the Muslim League termed Modi's speech as hate speech and declared that they would teach the Prime Minister a lesson after June 4.

What stood out in the three weeks long campaign was the claims by the sitting MPs about the number of development programs and measures implemented by



and the BJP's State leadership had a hearty laugh. "There was no allegation that the Centre was showing infrastructure development discrimination to Kerala in allocation of funds for them during the last five years development projects," said P

Suiathan, veteran journalist and political observer. While the Congress leaders like V D Satheesan, M M Hassan, Ramesh Chennithala

the 20 seats at stake, M V Govindan, the CPI(M) state secretary claimed that there was no doubt about the LDF's victory in any of the claimed that the UDF led by constituencies. If Govindan's claim is to be believed, the lawyer and keen follower of the Congress would sweep all

(popularly known as Kerala's Pakistan) would see the two constituencies ditching E T Mohammed Basheer and Abdussamad Samadani, an unlikely proposition.

Though previous Lok Sabha polls were fought between the two fronts led by the CPI(M) and the Congress, what makes the 2024 polls unique is the challenge thrown at both the fronts by the BJP. There is a strong Narendra Modi wave in most constituencies though one may not be able to forecast whether this wave would turn into seats. If public perception is any indication, the BJP has emerged as a force to reckon with in four to five constituencies. Harikiran Muraleedharan, a young

Muslim League stronghold of the State's politics is of the Malappuram and Ponnani view that the 19 April disruption of Thrissur Pooram at the instance of a CPI(M) MLA, a powerful minister in the Pinarayi Vijavan Government have played havoc with the prospectus of both the Congress and the CPI candidates.

"Please remember that this district has two ministers and they failed miserably to ensure the smooth conduct of the Pooram. This has not gone down well with the devotees," said Harikiran. Sujathan, who has no love lost

for the BJP, is of the view that there were seven constituencies which is fight ts. "In witnessing tough between the three fronts. earlier elections, the BJP competed as also rans but not anymore. Don't be surprised

if the Hindutva party wins in two constituencies this time, he told The Pioneer.

What is baffling the electorate in the State is the decision of the trio from New Delhi (Sitaram Yechury, Prakash and Brinda Karat) to call off their campaign meetings within two days and return to Delhi.

"Either they are confident of a 20-0 win by the LDF or a dismal failure in the hustings. No polls in the State were complete without the presence of these three intelligentsia from national capital," said Sujathan.

Mallikarjun Kharge, who was in the State on Wednesday for campaigning refused to repky to queries by reporters that who were the rivals of the Congress. "Better you ask the KPCC leaders," retorted the AICC chief.

Congress wants to rob rights of Dalits, backward classes: Yogi



PTI LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday alleged that Congress wants to rob the rights of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Castes with its caste census.

Addressing press conference at the state BJP headquarters, Adityanath said the Congress and the INDIA bloc will tear the social fabric of the country with its caste census.

Citing a 2006 speech by then prime minister Manmohan Singh, Adityanath said the Congress leader had said that Muslims had the first right on the country's resources.

"Congress will conduct a survey of people's properties implementing and then distribute it. They Ranganath are making the caste census its basis," the chief minister rse co eattend

"Congress's intention has always been to gain power by any means. They want power at the expense of the country. For this, they will bring in Talibani tendencies in India that will cause barbaric atrocities of women," he said. The Congress talks of Muslim implementing Personal Law and Sharia Law after coming back to power, Adityanath said.

'Their (Congress) intentions are not good towards the country. It is trying to work as per the same old DNA which led to the partition of the country in 1947, due to which the country came in the grip of terrorism, extremism and separatism," he added. Adityanath claimed that

the recommendations of Justice Misra commission during the Congress government had

rights of Scheduled Castes. Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes which were given to members of a specific community. commission had The recommended that out of the 27 per cent reservation given to the other backward classes, six per cent be given to the minority community," he said.

> Adityanath also claimed that malicious attempts were made even in the Sachar Committee report "to infiltrate" into the reservation for Dalits and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to forcibly give a part of it to the Muslim community. There was huge opposition to this at that time, he added. The chief minister claimed that in the last 10 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has worked towards allround development on every front with full accountability

come to power "at any cost".

"Rahul Gandhi wants to do a

wealth survey and redistribute the wealth. Does

he think he is a maoist

leader," Deve Gowda said. "Is

189 cases of major election violations booked in Karnataka, says EC

PTI BENGALURU

As Karnataka gears for the first phase of Lok Sabha elections on April 26, the Election Commission on Wednesday said all the polling stations in the Bangalore Rural and Mysore constituencies will be webcast. As of now, a total of 189 cases have been booked against political parties or candidates for major violations under the Model Code of Conduct

(MCC), they said. Addressing Addressing a press conference, Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Kumar Meena said 1.4 lakh polling officials will be on duty at the 30,602 polling stations across the 14 constituencies which are going for polls in the first phase on Friday.

Besides them, 5,000 micro observers, 50,000 civil police personnel, 65 companies of Central Parliamentary Force



and State Armed Police force of other states will also be deployed for security at these polling stations, he said. "All the 2,829 polling stations

Bangalore Rural parliamentary constituency will be 100 percent webcast. This is as per the request of our returning officers and observers; so we have given more than double central parliamentary force for the Bangalore Rural Seven

Constituency. of companies central paramilitary forces have been inducted at the constituency since April 22," he said. The 14 segments facing polls

in the first phase are: Udupi-Hassan, Chikmagalur, Dakshina Kannada, Tumkur, Chitradurga, Mandya, Mysore, Chamarajanagar, Bangalore Rural, Bangalore North, Bangalore Central, Bangalore South, Chikkballapur and Kolar.

There are a total of 2,88,19,342 electors in these constituencies — 1,44,28,099 male, 1,43,88,176 female and 3,067 third gender.

Akhilesh maintains suspense over his candidature from Kannauj seat

PTI ETAWAH (UP)

Two days after the Samajwadi Party declared its candidate for the Kannauj parliamentary seat, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav on stoked Wednesday speculation that he might himself contest from the constituency.

The Samajwadi Party (SP) has already declared Tej Pratap Yadav as its candidate from the seat for which nominations will start from April 25.

When asked whether he will contest from the seat or Tej Pratap will remain the party's cand ate "Under this, efforts began to and today the country was reporters, "See, when there



to know. Maybe you will get to know before nominations also?

When asked whether party workers of Kannauj wanted him to contest from the seat, Yadav said, "The question here is of historic victory from the seat. The BJP will election as people

against the NDA. PDA (picchde, Dalit, alpsankhyak) will defeat the NDA this time?

Tej Pratap, who has been made party candidate from Kannauj, was the SP MP from Mainpuri between 2014-2019. He is also the son-in-law of RJD president Lalu Prasad Yadav and Akhilesh Yadav's nephew.

Akhilesh had won from the Kannauj seat in 2000. Later, he represented the seat in 2004, 2009 and he left the seat after he became chief minister in 2012, and his wife Dimple Yadav won the by-election become history in this unopposed. Later, Dimple ave made rom the seat i won up their mind for INDIA she lost to BJP's Subrat Pathak

BJP veteran Yediyurappa challenges Congress to name PM candidate



claiming Congress has expressed such an intention in its manifesto.

Sampla will continue to support BJP, says Rupani PTI HOSHIARPUR

Senior BJP leader and former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani on Wednesday met former MP Vijay Sampla, who was apparently upset after he was denied the party ticket from the Hoshiarpur (reserve) Lok Sabha constituency.

It was the second visit of a senior party leader days after Punjab BJP chief Sunil Jakhar met Sampla.

Sampla, the former Union minister, was apparently expecting the party ticket from Hoshiarpur but the BJP fielded Anita Som Parkash, the wife of sitting MP and Union Minister Som Parkash, from the constituency.

Rupani, who is the BJP's Punjab in-charge, after the meeting said that he came here to energise the party workers for the Lok Sabha elections. He was accompanied by Jakhar, who had met Sampla on April 20. In response to a question, Rupani said Sampla is a senior and dedicated BJP member who has previously served as the state unit chief. He expressed confidence that Sampla will continue to support the BJP and play a crucial role in securing victory for the party candidate in the Hoshiarpur

Lok Sabha seat. On the farmers opposing the BJP candidates in villages, Rupani stated that he has no such information.

wants to turn this country "upside down" and the promises made by it indicated that it wants to

"wealth Gandhi's redistribution promise", stating that only someone with no practical knowledge

The 90-year-old JD(S) supremo ridiculed the Congress manifesto claiming that only a party that is sure of never coming to power can make as many promises. "The Congress has promised so many things in its manifesto that only a party that is very sure of never coming to power will promise so much," Gowda said at a press conference

here. He claimed the Congress

take away the reservation getting its benefits.

two

market

are nominations, you will get bloc. People are going to vote in 2019.

Deve Gowda slams Rahul over wealth redistribution promise

PTI BENGALURU

Former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda on Wednesday slammed Rahul can speak like that.

he dreaming of a revolution? By talking about wealth redistribution, Rahul Gandhi has insulted and humiliated Congress Prime Ministers who brought reforms and increased the wealth of the nation," he added, recalling the contribution of P V and Narasimha Rao Manmohan Singh in liberalisation. economic

Accusing Gandhi of indirectly trying to say that their economic reforms like he had torn up an ordinance



what the two Congress Prime Ministers did was wrong, Gowda said, "He (Rahul Gandhi) has torn up

(which sought to overturn the rule that disqualifies convicted MPs and MLAs) issued by (the then) Manmohan Singh (government)."

big way in villages and the party is getting immense support, he said.

Notably, to register their protest over their unmet demands, farmers of Punjab

have been holding protests

against the BJP candidates and showing them black flags

when they campaign for the Lok Sabha polls.

Picking up points from the Congress manifesto 'Nyay Patra', Gowda said, "Rahul Gandhi wants to give 30 lakh new central government jobs. I have run this country. There are only 40 lakh sanctioned jobs. How can he add 30 lakh more jobs overnight? How much will he pay these people? Where will he employ them?" He wondered whether Rahul Gandhi would make them lift operators in Government

offices in four shifts. "Only someone with no practical knowledge can like this. speak Chidambaram was the committee manifesto chairman. Does he agree with Rahul Gandhi's

immature economic ideas, Gowda said.

LS polls will mark rise of BJP in Punjab: Party leader Subhash Sharma

PTI 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



2020 over the now-repealed said. farm laws.

Addressing the media here, Punjab BJP leader Sharma said the party leadership will announce the candidates for walked out of the NDA in remaining seats - Ferozepur,

Sangrur, Anandpur Sahib and Fatehgarh Sahib — this week. Replying to a question on farmers protesting against The BJP has already BJP candidates in the state, Sharma dubbed it as "politically motivated". announced its candidates for nine Lok Sabha constituencies in Punjab. Some people and some organisations are holding protests," he said. The BJP is campaigning in a

Sharma said despite propaganda and mudslinging by the rival parties, people of Punjab were supporting the BJP whole-heartedly.

The BJP has emerged as a "big strength" in state politics, he

The 2024 Lok Sabha election will mark the rise of the BJP in Punjab, Sharma said. "It will also show that the Aam Aadmi Party's downfall has begun in the state."

Campaign ends for five Bihar Lok Sabha seats

PTI 📕 PATNA

Campaigning ended on Wednesday for five Lok Sabha seats in Bihar where electors will decide the fate of 50 candidates in the second phase of polling on April 26. Leading the NDA charge, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a rally in Purnea, a seat which is being contested by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U). Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addressed his first Rahul

election meeting in Bihar at Bhagalpur, a seat the party is contesting after more than two decades.

PTI TUMAKURU (KARNATAKA)

Veteran BJP leader B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday challenged the Congress to name its prime ministerial candidate and reveal the names of at least three to four constituencies in Karnataka where they will win in the Lok Sabha elections.

He also asserted that his party along with alliance partner JD(S) will be victorious in all the 28 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state.

Yediyurappa, member of BJP's Parliamentary Board and former Chief Minister, was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the campaign for party candidate from Tumkur V Somanna.

"Everyone knows about the cordial bonding between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and JD(S) patriarch and former PM H D Deve Gowda. As BJP and JD(S) are in alliance, they (Congress) have realised the alliance will win every seat with a huge margin, so Congress leaders are saying whatever they want," he said.

"My question to Congress is - name your prime ministerial candidate, and secondly say the name of three to four constituencies where you will win. They are unable to reveal it so far. Defeat is certain for them. We (BJP-JD(S)) will win all the 28 seats," he added.

A total of 28 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka will go for polls in two phases. While 14 segments in the southern part of the state will vote on April 26, in the second phase covering

remaining constituencies, mostly northern districts, will go for election on May seven.

Rejecting Congress' allegations that BJP on coming to power once again will change the Constitution, Yediyurappa termed it a "foolish statement."

'No one can touch the Constitution written by Ambedkar. It is sacred and it needs to be saved and taken forward for future generations. Modi has also said the same thing. There is no value for such false propaganda," he said.

Responding to a Congress leader's claim that for BJP, Modi is the only PM face, but for Congress that has democracy within -- any one can become the PM, Yediyurappa sarcastically said, "let them do it, we will see?

Noting the situation in the state is "very good", Yediyurappa said, "we (BJP) are getting public support beyond our expectations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's wave is everywhere...Our expectation is to win all the 28 Lok Sabha seats (along with JD(S)) in the state and I'm confident that we will be

successful in it." In the Tumkur seat too, it is certain that Somanna will win and the question is about the victory margin, he said. Asked about current MP Sumalatha Ambareesh, who recently joined the BJP,

not campaigning in favour of JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy in Mandya Lok Sabha segment where he is contesting, the senior party leader said she has said she will campaign if called.

the pioneer

Graft dominates election discourse



SHIVAJI SARKAR

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

nnocuous developments are unfolding amidst the growing fervour of the impending elections. Despite con-cerns 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 contemnors 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?

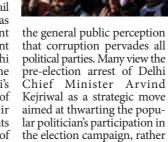
Will prices take a backseat to politics and court rulings, or will they remain pressing concerns alongside these factors? Voters, though reticent, are far from oblivious. Whether attending rallies of prominent leaders or not, they are keenly aware of every development that influences their lifestyle. 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



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

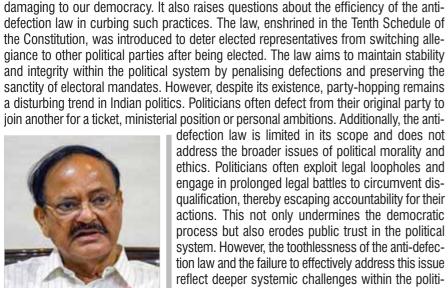


THE COURT'S **REJECTION OF** PATANJALI'S APOLOGY IN A CONTEMPT CASE STEMMING FROM MISLEADING **ADVERTISEMENTS** CONTRAVENING ITS ORDER SERVES AS A STARK EXAMPLE OF HOW THE RULE OF LAW CAN RECTIFY CORRUPT

Erratic power bills and arbi-PRACTICES trary demands in UP and many States are also potential 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



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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Turncoats

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

he 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

> cal 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.



pinion 06

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

Nurture workplace safety and inclusivity



KAPOOR

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

n 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?

Pay Parity: To relate job descriptions with actual roles or potential appointments calls for careful attention to detail. This audit goes beyond mere policy making; it requires discussions around salary negotiations and retention strategies in different scenarios.



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 (including guidelines Prevention of Sexual

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 appre-Harassment). Additionally, ciation 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)

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

the overflowing rally at Delhi's

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 colleagueseschewing 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



propos the news article, "Historic legal Abattle 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-

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 Jpanishads, with their timeless wisdom, unravel the intricacies of existence

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 shad-OW.

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

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

issues. Each of these cases, people realise, are instances of political linkages affecting price rises and profiteering. The glaring lapses on the part

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 bal-looned 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 'unde-served 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 com-

muters with significantly high-

Likewise, the court's rejection

of Patanjali's apology in a con-

tempt 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 sta-

bility. The court's warning to be

prepared for consequences,

along with its criticism of the

Uttarakhand Government,

underscores the power of legal

intervention.

er fares.

Raebareli, however, remain in focus, more than Varanasi. (The author is a senior journalist; views are personal) DEHRADUN | THURSDAY | APRIL 25, 2024

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FIRST COLUMIN NAVIGATING WORKPLACE ANXIETY

The pressure to consistently perform and deliver causes stress and anxiety



SAKSHI SETHI

n 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

The democratic status of India under scanner



analys \$ 07

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

he 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 articipation, political culture and civil lib erties. 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-



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 THE LATEST most populous countries -Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, REPORTERS Mexico, Pakistan, Russia and the WITHOUT United States. There are no choic-BORDERS (RSF) es in half of them for free and there is no lack of justice and many other **REPORT SAYS** prerequisites of democracy, such as freedom of speech and association. INDIA'S RANKING Not surprisingly, elections in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Russia -IN THE 2023 where opposition forces are subject WORLD PRESS to State repression — do not lead to regime change or democracy. Elections in the United States, FREEDOM INDEX Brazil, India and Indonesia - all clas-HAS FALLEN TO sified as "flawed democracies" — at 161 OUT OF 180 least offer the possibility of change although they are also likely to see incumbents or anointed followers win. The EIU Democracy Index's COUNTRIES. IN COMPARISON position on India's elections is prob-PAKISTAN FARED lematic in terms of the methodology used in the study. The World Happiness Report is a **BETTER IN TERMS** publication that contains articles OF MEDIA based on respondents' ratings of FREEDOM. their own lives and national happiness ratings, which the report also RANKING 150TH correlates with various life (quality of) factors. In March 2024, Finland AN IMPROVEMENT was declared the happiest country FROM 157TH in the world seven times in a row. However, India is currently ranked LAST YEAR 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-

demic. 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

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 Cooperation and Development (OECD) approach to measuring subjective well-being and other international and national initiatives.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) publishes a World Press Freedom Îndex 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 immigrationrelated 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.

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 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

hether it is the issue of electoral bonds 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**

asking for more than the genbe some others who may jusuine price or overcharging not tify corruption and yet others amount to corruption? Should who vehemently criticize it. Does it mean that it is how one not the boss, in a private looks at the scenario that enterprise, dominating, harassing or seeking undue shapes the societal perspectives in this regard and if it is favours from subordinates as treated as true, does it require a condition of promotion, be looking at the whole issue seen as corrupt? Ironically, the from different perspectives? law does not seem to be treat-Speaking honestly, corruping such attitudes as, falling in tion seems to be prevalent in the purview of, and, requiring to be prohibited by corruption all walks of life irrespective of whether it is the public or pri- law, though perhaps, the law

vate sector. There is some other form of corruption visible everywhere in this counible sector. There is some other type of remedy in such cases.

It is not just that the corruptry. However, the form of corruption that usually becomes tion is not confined to the the talk of the town is the Government sector, rather Governmental or the political monetary is also not the only class corruption. By that account, for that matter, type of corruption that exists. Óther forms of corruption do should even a rickshaw puller exist in this country that usuor a vegetable or fruit vendor ally 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 ury 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.

whether corruption has The author recalls a high- Law, the become a way of life in this ranked IT officer, who was

once involved in the anticorruption 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)



US Senate passes \$95.3 bn Pakistan & Iran agree to focus package for Ukraine, Israel

PTI WASHINGTON

The US Senate has voted overwhelmingly to provide a USD 95.3 billion aid package to Ukraine and Israel and to strengthen the security of America and its allies in the Indo-Pacific, including Taiwan.

The final approval on Tuesday night by the Senate ends months of uncertainty and delays about whether the US would continue to back Kyiv in its fight against Russian aggres-

sion. The bill was passed in a bipartisan vote of 79-18. The bill passed on Tuesday

by the House of Representatives earlier now heads to the White House for President Joe Biden to sign it into law.

"I will sign this bill into law and address the American people as soon as it reaches my desk tomorrow so we can begin sending weapons and equipment to

Aus police arrest 7

teens for extremism,

stabbing of bishop

linked to recent

AP SYDNEY

police said.

being

Australian police arrested seven teenagers accused

of following a violent extrem-

questioned late

Wednesday by the Joint

Counter-Terrorism Team,

which includes federal and

state police as well as the

Australian Security Intelligence

Organization, the nation's main

domestic spy agency, and the New South Wales Crime

Commission, which specialis-

es in extremists and organised

crime. More than 400 police

officers executed 13 search

warrants at properties across

southwest Sydney because the

suspects were considered an

immediate threat, New South

Ukraine this week," Biden said in a statement.

'The need is urgent: for Ukraine, facing unrelenting bombardment from Russia; for Israel, which just faced unprecedented attacks from Iran; for refugees and those impacted by conflicts and natural disasters around the world, including in Gaza, Sudan, and Haiti; and for our partners seeking security and stability in the Indo-Pacific," he said.

The bill broadly has four parts: First, a USD 60.8 billion Ukraine aid measure, a USD 26.4 billion bill for Israel and humanitarian relief, a USD 8.1 billion package for Taiwan and other Indo-Pacific region allies and a "sidecar" bill dealing with issues ranging from TikTok to frozen

Russian assets. The bill gives USD 23.2 billion to replenish stocks of US weapons and equipment sent to Ukraine through presidential drawdown authority and to

expand defence industrial base

and it allocates USD 13.8 billion in direct support for the Ukrainian military. It directs the president to transfer long-range tactical missiles, known as ATACMS, to the Ukrainian Army, unless the president determines that doing so would be detrimental to US security interests. The bill gives USD 5.4 billion to replenish stocks of US weapons and equipment deliv-

ered to Israel and to expand the defence industrial base, USD 5.2 billion for Iron Dome, David's Sling and Iron Beam defence systems and USD2.4 billion for US Central Command operations in the Middle East. It also allocates USD 9.2 bil-

lion for humanitarian assistance in Gaza, Haiti, Sudan, Ethiopia, Congo and other conflict zones. However, no funds can be transferred to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency; certification is required that no funding is diverted to Hamas

On the Indo-Pacific the bill allocates USD 3.3 billion to develop US submarine infrastructure, including dry dock construction; USD2 billion in assistance for Taiwan, the Philippines and other regional allies to purchase US weapons and equipment.

To replenish US stocks of weapons and equipment sent to the region and expand the defence industrial base USD 2 billion was allocated; USD 542 million for US Indo-Pacific Command operations and USD 250 million for World Bank International Development Association loans and grants. Among other things, the bill requires Chinese-owned ByteDance Ltd. to divest its stake in TikTok within one year of enactment or US app stores and internet hosting services would be barred from carrying the product.

PTI 📕 ISLAMABAD

Pakistan and Iran have recognised the need to focus on combating terrorism and the need to develop a "united front" against the menace, the two countries said on Wednesday as Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi wrapped up his three-day maiden trip to the neighbouring nation.

Raisi's visit to Pakistan was the first by any head of state to Islamabad after the February 8 general election.

"Recognising that terrorism posed a common threat to regional peace and stability and presented a major impediment to the development of the region," the two neighbours agreed to "adopt a collaborative approach to confront this menace ... while fully upholding the principles of the UN Charter," a joint statement issued by the two countries

The Pakistan government has complained regularly to Iran and Afghanistan, with which it shares a border, to rein in the militants belonging to the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other splinter groups who cross the border and carry out strikes in Pakistan.

on ways to combat terrorism

The joint statement said, both sides "reaffirmed their commitment to the development of Afghanistan as a peaceful, united, sovereign and independent state, free from the threats of terrorism and drug traffick-ing." It further added that the two countries reaffirmed their willingness to "enhance cooperation on counter-terrorism and security and to develop a united front against terrorism." Noting the relevance of coordinating regional and international efforts to ensure security and stability in the region, both Pakistan and Iran "recognised that increasing participation of all strata of

Afghans in basic decision-making will lead to the strengthening of peace and stability in this country.

neighbours.

Raisi arrived on Monday with The statement further said a large delegation to promote ties about three months after that both sides "stressed the the relationship suffered a setimportance of peaceful settleback due to tit-for-tat air strikes ment of disputes through diaagainst each other, apparently logue and diplomacy. Tehran and Islamabad also to hit terrorists.

agreed to "expeditiously finalise" a Free Trade In Islamabad, he held detailed talks with Prime Minister Agreement (FTA as the two Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif sides signed eight MoUs while Ali Zardari and Chief of Army vowing to increase trade to USD 10 billion in the coming Staff General Asim Munir focussing on key security and vears. Raisi said Tehran was economic issues. The two sides ready to exchange its prowess in industry, science, and technology with Pakistan while showing his resolve to remove trade barriers between the two According to the Foreign Office, the two sides held pro-

ductive talks during the visit. 'The two sides held productive discussions and agreement to advance bilateral cooperation in multiple domains including Nawaz

agreed to eradicate the threat of terrorism which caused a fissure in ties in January when they resorted to air strikes against alleged militant hideouts on each other's soil. The two countries voiced their support for the people of Palestine as they demanded Israel to halt attacking Gaza. On Tuesday in Lahore, Raisi was received by Punjab chief minister Maryam

Many long tolerated the protests, which largely

demanded that schools con-

demn Israel's assault on Gaza

and divest from companies

Now, universities are doling out

more heavy-handed discipline,

citing safety concerns as some

Jewish students say criticism of Israel has veered into anti-

Protests had been bubbling for

months but kicked into a high-

semitism.

that sell weapons to Israel.

world 08

in trade, connectivity, energy and people-to-people contacts,"

the FO said in a statement.

Columbia University progresses post-Gaza protester arrests

AP NEW YORK

Columbia University said cearly Wednesday that it was making "important progress" with pro-Palestinian student protesters who set up a tent encampment and that it was ortending a doadling to was extending a deadline to clear out, yet standoffs remained tense on the Ivy League campus in upper

Manhattan. Student protesters "have committed to dismantling and removing a significant number of tents," the university said in a statement. A smaller encampment remained on campus Wednesday morning.Across the country, protesters at California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, some 480 kilometers north of San Francisco, started using furniture, tents, chains and zip ties to block the building's entrances Monday evening. Both campuses are part of

intensifying demonstrations over Israel's war with Hamas by university students demanding that schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies that are enabling its

ing people safer online, applied to the court for the temporary global ban. Hoyne, a lawyer for X, told the AP BEIJING judge on Wednesday that the bishop didn't want the video banned. Emmanuel recently signed an affidavit "stating that C the latest package of US milhe is strongly of the view that should be avail the material

rorist act, a crime that carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, following the knife attack in which an Assyrian Orthodox bishop and priest

ist ideology in raids across were injured. Sydney on Wednesday to pro-An Australian Federal Court tect the community from a judge on Wednesday extended potential attack, officials said. an order banning social media platform X from showing The seven, aged 15 to 17, were part of a network that includvideos of Bishop Mar Mari ed a 16-year-old boy accused of Emmanuel being repeatedly the stabbing of a bishop in a stabbed. Justice Geoffrey Sydney church on April 15, Kennett extended the ban which the court put in place on Five other teenagers were still

Monday, until May 10. X, formerly called Twitter, announced last week it would fight in court Australian orders to take down posts relating to the attack. Australia's eSafety Commission, which describes itself as the world's first government agency dedicated to keep

able," Hoyne said.



monthslong conflict. Dozens have been arrested on charges of trespassing or disorderly conduct.

Columbia President Minouche Shafik in a statement Tuesday set a midnight deadline to reach an agreement with students to clear the encampment, or "we will have to consider alternative options." By around 3 a.m., the univer-

structive dialogue" and that it will continue conversations for 48 hours

The statement said student protesters "will ensure that those not affiliated with Columbia will leave. Only Columbia University students will be participating in the protest

comply with city fire depart-ment requirements and "have

taken steps to make the encampment welcome to all and have prohibited discriminatory or harassing language," the statement said.

The university's statement was released hours before US House Speaker Mike Johnson's trip to Columbia to visit with Jewish students and address antisemitism on college campuses.

demanding a permanent cease-Plaza in Brooklyn, near the home of Sen. Chuck Schumer. The protest was organized by Jewish Voice for Peace on the second night of Passover, and circular banner depicting the

At Cal Poly Humboldt, protesters chanted, "We are not afraid of you!" before officers in riot gear pushed into them at the building's entrance, video shows. Student Peyton McKinzie said she was walking on campus Monday when she saw police grabbing one woman by the hair, and another student having their head bandaged for an injury. 'I think a lot of students are in

shock about it," she said. Three students have been arrested, according to a statement from the school, which down the campus until Wednesday, Students had occupied a second campus building Гuesdav.

Another encampment was set up Tuesday at the University of Rochester in upstate New York. Omar Darwesh, a Palestinian senior, said he has lost relatives to the war. "We're not calling for the destruction of Israel, we're never talking about threatening Jews - the focus is on us and what we need, and that's being treated like a human. We have to find a way to coexist," he told TV station WHEC.

University of Rochester officials said in a statement that the protesters must follow ground rules, including presenting university identification if asked. The upwelling of demonstrations has left universities struggling to balance campus safety with free speech rights. er gear after more than 100 pro-Palestinian demonstrators who had camped out at Columbia were arrested Thursday. By late Monday at New York University, police said 133 protesters were taken into custody and all had been released with summonses to appear in court on disorderly conduct charges. In Connecticut, police arrested 60 protesters, including 47 students, at Yale after they refused to leave an encamp-

ment on a plaza at the center of campus. Yale President Peter Salovey said protesters had declined an offer to end the demonstration and meet with trustees.

China blasts US military aid to Taiwan

hina on Wednesday blasted aid package would "strengthen the deterrence against authoritarianism in the West Pacific ally itary assistance to Taiwan on

Lai Ching-te told a visiting US and trainer jets. Next month, it Congressional delegation that the plans to commission its third plans to commission its third and fourth domestically designed and built stealth corvettes to counter the Chinese

Gulf of Aden "The master of

mark new attack by Houthi rebels

Blast near ship off Yemen may

The Houthis have said they

Earlier on Tuesday night, police arrested more than 200 protest-

ers blocking traffic during a non-college demonstration fire in Gaza at Grand Army protesters lay down a large

food on a Seder plate.

sity said that there was "con-

Student protesters also will

Deputy Commissioner David Hudson said

"We will allege that these individuals adhered to a religiously motivated, violent extremist ideology," Hudson told reporters.

"It was considered that the group ... posed an unacceptable risk and threat to the people of New South Wales, and our current purely investigative strategies could not adequately ensure public safety," Hudson added. Australian Federal Police Deputy Commissioner Krissy Barrett said investigators found no evidence of specific targets or timing of an intended "violent act"

She said the police operation was not linked to Anzac Day on Thursday, a public holiday when Australians remember their war dead.

It has been a potential target of extremists in the past.

A 16-year-old was charged on Friday with committing a ter-

Hoyne said the eSafety Commission was attempting to exercise "exorbitant jurisdiction" with "injunctions that effectively operate throughout the whole world".

Hoyne also said a court ordered ban on the video "might be futile"

"It appears that this material is now appearing in lots of different places," Hoyne added. The commission's lawyer Christoher Tran said X had not complied with Monday's order. Hovne said he did not "have instructions about that one way or the other".

X has not responded to The Associated Press's questions on Tuesday about the company's compliance with the order. X's owner, Elon Musk, has accused Australia of stifling free speech, while Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has labeled Musk an "arrogant billionaire".

saving that suc funding was pushing the selfgoverning island republic into a "dangerous situation." The US Senate late Tuesday passed USD 95 billion in war aid to Ukraine.

Israel and Taiwan after months of delays and contentious debate over how involved the United States should be in foreign wars. China claims the entire island of Taiwan as its own territory and has threatened to take it by force if necessary.

The mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office said the aid "seriously violates" US commitments to China and "sends a wrong signal to the Taiwan independence separatist forces." Office spokesperson Zhu Fenglian added that Taiwan's ruling pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, which won a third four-year presidential term in January, is willing to "become a pawn for external forces to use Taiwan to contain China, bringing Taiwan into a dangerous situation." On Tuesday, Taiwan's President-elect and stability across the Taiwan Strait and also boost confidence in the region."

The package has had broad congressional support since Biden first requested the money last summer. But congressional leaders had to navigate strong opposition from a growing number of conservatives who question US involvement in foreign wars and argue that Congress should be focused instead on the surge of migration at the US-Mexico border. The package covers a wide range of parts and services aimed at maintaining and and upgrading Taiwan's military hardware. Separately, Taiwan has signed billions in contracts with the US for latest-generation F-16V fighter jets, M1 Abrams main battle tanks and the HIMARS rocket system, which the US has also supplied to Ukraine. Taiwan has also been expanding its own defense industry, building submarines

asymmetrical warfare, in which

 $A^{\rm ship\,near\,the\,strategic\,Bab}_{\rm el-Mandeb\,\,Strait\,\,saw\,\,an}$ a smaller force counters its larger opponent by using cutting explosion in the distance edge or nonconventional tactics and weaponry. China launches Wednesday, marking what may be a new attack by Yemen's daily incursions into waters Houthi rebels through the cruand airspace around Taiwan by navy ships and warplanes. It has also sought to pick away cial waterway for international trade. The explosion, report-Taiwan's few remaining formal ed by the British military's diplomatic partners. However, United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre, only two People's Liberation Army Air Force planes and comes after a relative lull from the Houthis after they launched seven navy vessels were found dozens of attacks on shipping operating in areas around Taiwan between Tuesday afterin the region over Israel's ongonoon and Wednesday morning, ing war on Hamas in the Gaza possibly as a result of heavy Strip. rainstorms and low visibility overnight along the island's The Houthis did not

immediately claim responsibility for the blast, but suspicion west coast facing China. fell on the group as they've repeatedly targeted ships in At times of heightened tensions, China has launched dozens of the same area. It typically takes such missions over a 24 hour period, many of them crossing the Houthis several hours the center line in the Taiwan before acknowledging their assaults. The explosion hap-Strait dividing the sides or pened some 130 km (80 miles) entering Taiwan's air defense southeast of Djibouti in the identification zone.

a merchant vessel reports an explosion in the water a distance form the vessel," the UKMTO said. "Veseel and crew reported safe. Authorities are investigating." The private maritime security firm Ambrey separately reported the apparent attack.

The Houthis have launched more than 50 attacks on shipping, seized one vessel and sank another since November, according to the US Maritime Administration.

Houthi attacks have dropped in recent weeks as the rebels have been targeted by a US-led airstrike campaign in Yemen and shipping through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has declined because of the threat. American officials have speculated that the rebels may be running out of weapons as a result of the US-led campaign against them and firing off drones and missiles steadily in the last months.

would continue their attacks until Israel ends its war in Gaza which has killed more than 34.000 Palestinians there. The war began after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct 7, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 others

hostage. The ships targeted by the Houthis largely have had little or no direct connection to Israel, the US or other nations involved in the war. The rebels have also fired missiles toward Israel, though they have largely fallen short or been intercepted.

The assaults on shipping have raised the profile of the Houthis, who are members of Islam's minority Shiite Zaydi sect, which ruled Yemen for 1,000 years until 1962. The group seized Sanaa, Yemen's capital, in late 2014. A Saudiled coalition has been battling the group in a stalemated con-flict since 2015.

Smoke seen

as ANA flight

carrying 200

lands safely

Microsoft, Amazon face scrutiny **Ex-Japanese PM Taro Aso meets Trump** from UK competition watchdog **PTI** WASHINGTON

AP LONDON

 $B^{\text{ritish competition regulators}}_{\text{said Wednesday they'll scru-}}$ tinise recent artificial intelligence deals by Microsoft and Amazon over concerns that the moves could thwart competition in the AI industry

The Competition and Markets Authority said it's looking into Microsoft's partnership with France's Mistral AI and the company's hiring of key staff from another startup, Inflection AI. The watchdog also separately announced that it's investigating Amazon's \$4 billion investment in San Francisco-based

Anthropic. Big Tech companies have been pouring money into generative AI startups amid growing public and business interest in the technology, but the investments have also drawn attention from

antitrust authorities.

tion.

Microsoft last month hired Mustafa Suleyman, who co-founded Google's DeepMind The UK watchdog said it was seeking comments from "interested third parties," before AI research lab, to head up its consumer artificial intelligence deciding whether to carry out an in-depth antitrust investiga-

"We will assess, objectively and impartially, whether each of these three deals fall within UK merger rules and, if they do, whether they have any impact on competition in the UK," the watchdog's executive director of mergers, Joel Bamford, said in with ChatGPT maker OpenAI, a statement.

Microsoft said it will provide the watchdog with the information it needs to carry out its inquiries. We remain confident that com-

mon business practices such as the hiring of talent or making a fractional investment in an AI start-up promote competition and are not the same as a merger," the company said.

business, along with the chief scientist and several top engineers and researchers from Inflection, his AI startup. Microsoft also teamed up earlier this year with Mistral, which has become France's AI darling after being founded only last year. That followed Microsoft's previous existing partnership

which is also facing scrutiny from the CMA Amazon, meanwhile, has spent

billions for a minority stake in Anthropic. The two companies are collaborating to develop so-called foundation models which underpin the generative AI systems that have captured global attention.

Ex-Japanese prime minister President Donald Trump and both the leaders discussed the enduring importance of the US-Japan alliance to their physical and economic security in the strategic Indo-Pacific region

Aso, vice president of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, met Trump on Tuesday at the Trump Tower in Manhattan.

Both the leaders discussed the enduring importance of the US-Japan alliance to both countries' physical and economic security and stability in the Indo-Pacific, according to a statement issued by the Trump Campaign on the meeting with the 83-year-old visiting Japanese leader.

"They also discussed chal-lenges posed by China and



North Korea. President Trump praised Japan's increased defence spending," the press release said after the meeting.

Japan and beyond and somebody that I've liked and I've known through our very dear friend Shinzo," Trump, the 77-"He's a highly respected man in year-old presumptive nominee of the Republican Party in the 2024 US presidential race, told reporters in New York.

The Trump-Aso meeting comes after US President Joe Biden hosted Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida earli

er this month at the White House for a state visit, during which the president touted the US-Japan alliance as being "stronger than it's ever been" and announced new plans for military cooperation with the country.

The meeting between Trump and Aso took place after the former president's appearance in court for his hush money trial. Trump has in recent weeks increasingly met with foreign leaders, who have sought to bolster ties as polls continue to show a tight race to the White House between him and President Biden when the elections take place in November.

Tokyo (AP): Smoke was seen coming from an All Nippon Airways plane as it landed safely at Shin Chitose airport in northern Japan on Wednesday, public broadcast-er NHK reported. The ANA flight from Tokyo was carrying about 200 people and no injuries were reported, NHK

said. The smoke, coming from the wing area, subsided when the engines stopped, it said. In January, a Japan Airlines flight and a coast guard plane collided and burst into flames at Tokyo's Haneda Airport. All 379 passengers and crew members were evacuated from the JAL plane and survived.



Blinken begins key China visit N Korea sends delegation to Iran **Tensions rise over new US foreign aid bill**

in wartime assistance to Israel

and humanitarian relief to

AP SHANGHA

TS Secretary of State Antony 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. Blinken arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday just hours after the Senate vote on the longstalled legislation and shortly before President Joe Biden is expected to sign it into law to demonstrate U.S. resolve in defending its allies and partners. Passage of the bill will add further complications to an already complex relationship that has been strained by disagreements over numerous global and

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 sup-plies aren't expected to have

an immediate impact on the

faced acute shortages of

shells and air defense sys-

tems as political quarrels in

Washington held up the aid

for months, allowing the

Kremlin's forces to edge for-ward in some parts of east-ern Ukraine by sheer weight

of troop numbers and fire-

power in what has largely

become a war of attrition. The US decision came as the

Kremlin's army extended its

bombardment of the

Kharkiv region and Ukrainian long-range

Ukrainian troops have

battlefield.

Ukrainian officials

Russia Ukraine

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

thank US for its

Still, the fact that Blinken is

regional disputes.

making the trip — shortly after Palestinians in Gaza, and \$61 bila conversation between Biden lion for Ukraine to defend itself and Chinese President Xi from Russia's invasion. The Jinping, a similar visit to China Biden administration has been by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and a call between the U.S. disappointed in China's response to the war in Gaza and has comand Chinese defense chiefs — is plained loudly that Chinese supa sign the two sides are at least port for Russia's military-indus trial sector has allowed Moscow willing to discuss their differto subvert Western sanctions and ences. Of primary interest to China, the bill sets aside \$8 bil-

ramp up attacks on Ukraine. Even before Blinken landed in Shanghai — where he will have meetings on Thursday lion to counter Chinese threats in Taiwan and the broader Indo-Pacific and gives China's before traveling to Beijing China's Taiwan Affairs Office ByteDance nine months to sell slammed the assistance to Taipei, saying it "seriously violates" U.S. TikTok with a possible threemonth extension if a sale is in commitments to China, "sends progress. China has railed against U.S. assistance to Taiwan, which a wrong signal to the Taiwan it regards as a renegade province, and immediately condemned independence separatist forces" and pushes the self-governing the move as a dangerous provoisland republic into a "dangerous cation. It also strongly opposes efforts to force TikTok's sale. situation

China and the United States The bill also allots \$26 billion are the major players in the Indo-

Pacific and Washington has become increasingly alarmed by Beijing's growing aggressiveness in recent years toward Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries with which it has significant territorial and maritime disputes in the South China

The U.S. has strongly condemned Chinese military exercises threatening Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a renegade province and has vowed to reunify with the mainland by force if necessary. Successive U.S. administrations have steadily boosted military support and sales for Taiwan, much to Chinese anger.

A senior State Department official said last week that Blinken would "underscore, both in private and public, America's abiding interest in maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. We think that is vitally important for the region

and the world.

In the South China Sea, the U.S. and others have become increasingly concerned by provocative Chinese actions in and around disputed areas.

In particular, the U.S. has voiced objections to what it says are Chinese attempts to thwart legitimate maritime activities by others in the sea, notably the Philippines and Vietnam. That was a major topic of con-cern this month when Biden held a three-way summit with the prime minister of Japan and the president of the Philippines.

On Ukraine, which U.S. officials say will be a primary topic of conversation during Blinken's visit, the Biden administration said that Chinese support has allowed Russia to largev reconstitute its defense industrial base, affecting not only the war in Ukraine but posing a threat to broader European security.

AP SEOUL

Ahigh-level North Korean Aeconomic 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. Pyongyang's delegation led by Yun Jung Ho, North Korea's minister of external economic relations, flew out Tuesday for the trip to Iran, official Korean Central News Agency said Wednesday. State media did not immediately provide further details.

Pyongyang and Tehran are among the few governments in the world that support Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, and both have been accused of providing Russia with military equip-

ment. The last known time North Korea sent senior offi-Leii, who heads the ceremonicials 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 pan-demic, before a cautious reopening in 2023. South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles affairs with the North, did not immediately comment Yun's 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. Earlier this month, Kim host-ed top Chinese official Zhao

al parliament and ranks third in the ruling Communist Party hierarchy. It was the highestlevel meeting between the countries in years. On Wednesday, Kim Yo Jong, the North Korean leader's powerful sister, slammed the latest rounds of US-South Korean joint military drills and insisted that the allies will never break the North's determination to build up "our overwhelming and most powerful military muscle." The statement comes a week after US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield called for the international community to be alert to the possibility of military cooperation between North Korea, Iran and Russia. Iran has been accused of providing drones to Russia for use in the

world 09

war against Ukraine. We are concerned about ... the Iranians providing weapons to the Russians and the Russians also supporting efforts to help (North Korea) expand their own research into developing weapons.

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 Paudel at the Shital Niwas where the two leaders discussed matters related to bilateral interests and diplomatic relations, according to a statement issued by the

On the occasion, President Paudel 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.

dents pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture at Sudur Paschim University who had gone to Israel under an 11month learn and earn pro-gramme. During the Hamas attack on southern Israel in October, 10 Nepalese students were killed, and six injured while Joshi was abducted and taken to Gaza.

The two sides also discussed the issue of migrant workers' conditions in the Gulf state, an official said.

On Sunday, New York-based Human Rights Watch called on Qatar, Nepal and Bangladesh to prioritise labour protection for migrant workers during the emir's visit

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 'Prachanda' and discussed the subsisting between the two countries and agreed to further regional and international enhancing bilateral relations issues of common interest as well as ways to enhance bilatand cooperation for the mutu-



al benefit of the two countries and peoples," according to a press release issued by the Foreign Ministry. Deputy Prime Minister and

Sheikh Tamim, who arrived here on a two-day visit to Nepal on Tuesday, met Foreign Minister Narayan Kaji Prachanda at the Soaltee Hotel where the two leaders dis-Shrestha, Minister for Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation cussed the whole gamut of Shakti Bahadur Basnet and bilateral relationships to expand other officials were also present and deepen their cooperation at the delegation-level meeting. for mutual benefit, according to On Wednesday, Sheikh Tamim the prime minister's office. met Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prime Minister Prachanda wel-

comed the emir and the accompanying delegation, highlighting that the emir is the first Arab leader to visit Nepal, which reflects the depth of

white shirts, Subianto and vice

president elect Gibran

Rakabuming Raka waved to

their supporters as they arrived

The race has finished ... the

at the building.

relations between the two countries

tries. 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 coop-eration to the desired level. He also praised the Nepali community residing in Qatar, and its contribution to various development fields in the Gulf

eral cooperation as the two country. During the meeting, the two sides also discussed aspects of sides inked eight agreements. cooperation between the two friendly countries, ways to enhance and develop them and exchanged views on the most prominent regional and international issues of common interest.

Following the talks, both leaders witnessed the signing cere-mony of bilateral agreements and Memorandums of Understanding. Six agreements are at the government level while the other two are related to the private sector.

"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 an MoU for cooperation in the field of edu-

cation, 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.

Later, Prime Minister Prachanda hosted a luncheon in honour of Sheikh Tamim which was attended by his delegation members and dignitaries from

Nepal. The emir left Nepal in the evening after successfully concluding the two-day visit.

Nepal government conferred the highest honour to the Qatar Emir during his less than 24-hour stay in Kathmandu amidst

tight security. The Nepali government declared a public holiday on Tuesday in honour of the emir's visit, the first high-level trip to Nepal from the Gulf nation.

Pak docs advise 'gastroenterology review' to Imran's



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

latest military aid AP KYIV drones struck more fuel and energy facilities inside President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked the US Senate for approving the \$61 billion aid

package late Tuesday. "Ukraine's long-range capa-bilities, artillery and air defence are extremely important tools for the quick President's Office. restoration of a just peace,

near the northeastern border with Russia, during the 'Sheikh Tamim assured the night, and another two hit president that he would take the Kharkiv region town of necessary initiative for the release of the Nepali student," Pokharel told PTI. The emir of Zolochiv, local officials said. They reported no casual-ties. Another missile hit the Qatar said that he had earlier southern city of Odesa, also taken the initiative for the injuring one woman, Mayor Hennadii Trukhanov said. same.

Joshi was among 17 Nepali stu-

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 "gastroen-terology 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.Bushra Bibi's medical check-up was conducted by the doctors at her Bani Gala res idence. The residence has been converted into a sub-jail for the former prime minister's wife.Bushra Bibi, convicted in two different cases, is being held at the Bani Gala home since the couple was sentenced in the 'un-Islamic nikah' case in February Dr Bushra Liaquat, Dr Hira and Dr Sidra — a cardiologist – examined Khan's spouse, suggesting she make changes in her diet and lifestyle, the report

quoted sources as saying. The team of doctors, the sources said, visited Bani Gala Monday night at 11 pm to examine Khan's wife following her health concerns.

They also advised her "gastroen-terology review." The team remained at Bani Gala for at least 75 minutes to conduct the med ical examination.

Last week, a comprehensive medical evaluation of Bushra Bibi was performed under the observation of Khan's family physician, while the doctors at a private hospital declared Bushra Bibi, the former first lady, to be in good health.

The former first lady stayed at a private hospital in Islamabad for six hours for diagnostic tests, including endoscopy, but refused to undergo a blood test and did not provide a blood sample, sources told Geo News



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

AP 📕 JAKARTA

Tndonesia's electoral commis-Lsion formally declared Prabowo Subianto presidentelect 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. Wearing matching long-sleeved

running mate Muhaimin



first president from outside the General Election Commission certified the election results on March 20, but the formal declaration ceremony was put on hold following legal challenges from rival candidates, former Jakarta Gov Anies Baswedan and former Central Java Gov Ganjar Pranowo, who

sought to annual the result and

tough contest, with sometimes demand a revote. heated debates, is over," Subianto They also alleged nepotism, said during the ceremony, attended by the country's politchallenging the candidacy of outgoing President Joko Widodo's eldest son, Raka, as ical elite, including rival candi-Subianto's running mate. date Anies Baswedan and his

Baswedan and Pranowo argued

Muizzu further consolidates position after six independents join his party AP MOSCOW

PTI MALE

Dresident Mohamed Muizzu **P** 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



six independents, the PNC-led coalition now has the "super majority" in parliament with 78 seats, much more than twothirds (63 seats) in the People's Majlis. The PNC's "super majority" in parliamentary elections is being seen as a

strong endorsement of his pro-Beijing foreign policy, as both India and China closely watched the outcome of the polls in the strategically-locat-ed archipelago nation in the Indian Ocean According to the news portal

Sun.my, a spokesperson from the PNC confirmed on Wednesday that six indepen-dent 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. The move by the six indepen-

dent MP-elects to join PNC comes after the MDP-majority Parliament passed an antidefection bill on April 1. The bill, which stipulates that parliamentarians will lose their seat for floor crossing, was signed into law by President Dr Mohamed Muizzu last week, it added

Apriest who oversaw a memorial for late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been suspended for three vears by the head of the country's Orthodox Church.Dmitry Safronov 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. An order published Tuesday on the Moscow diocese website publicly demoted Safronov from his position as priest to that of a psalm-reader and stripped him of the right to give blessings or to wear a cassock for the next three years. He was also transferred to another church within the capital. No reason was given for the decision, which was

signed by Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church and a key ally of Russian Vladimir President 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. Russian authorities initially refused to release Navalny's body, citing the need for further investigations. The politician's

team later said that they had struggled to find a hearse to transport Navalny's body after funeral directors had received threats from unknown individ uals. Safronov was among the clergymen who previously that Raka, 37, should have been disqualified because the minimum age for candidates is 40, and they asked the court to bar him from a revote. Before the election, Raka was granted a controversial exception to that requirement by the Constitutional Court, which was then led by Anwar Usman, Widodo's brother-in-law. Usman was later forced to resign as chief justice for failing to

recuse himself. In a 5-to-3 decision, the Constitutional Court rejected the arguments on Monday, saying the legal teams of the losing candidates had failed to prove allegations that Subianto's victory was the result of widespread fraud. That verdict cannot be appealed. The case was decided by eight justices instead of the full nine-member court because Usman, who is still on the court as an associate justice, was required to recuse himself.

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

SHORT E-TENDER CALL NOTICE TD/TM/GEN-225 (Vol-V)/2024/721, dtd.23.04.2024 lame of the work: **"Allotment of D6 (Six) nos** of Manual Iron Ore plots." License Fees Rs.1,18,10,502/-. Wharfage Fees **Rs.7,78,435/-.** 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 A/PR/02/2024-2025 dtd.24.04.2024

money 10



India pharma exports rise 10 per cent in FY24

The country's drugs and pharmaceuticals exports increased 9.67 per cent year-on-year to USD 27.9 billion in 2023-24, even as the total exports dipped by 3 per cent in the last fiscal.

According to the commerce ministry data, pharma exports in March grew by 12.73 per cent to USD 2.8 billion

In 2022-23, the exports stood at USD 25.4 billion.

The top five export markets, for the sector during the last fiscal, are the US, the UK, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil

The US accounts for over 31 per cent of India's total pharma exports, followed by the UK and Netherlands (about 3 per cent each).

In 2023-24, the outbound shipments also entered new geographies like Montenegro, South Sudan, Chad, Comoros, Brunei, Latvia, Ireland, Chad, Sweden, Haiti and Ethiopia

An industry expert said that



increasing opportunities and healthy demand in countries like the US are helping exports to record healthy growth rates month after month Experts have said that India's pharmaceutical business may exceed USD 130 billion by 2030, supported by expanding market opportunities and

markets.

billion for the 2022-23.

overseas

pharma products worth USD market 2-3 billion every month. pharmaceutical India's industry is the third largest by volume and the 13th largest by value in the world producing more than 60,000 generic drugs across 60

therapeutic categories. The government has rolled out two production-linked heightened demand in the incentive (PLI) schemes to promote The domestic manufacturing business stood at over USD 50 of key pharmaceutical ingredients

On average, India exports and generic medicines.



PTI MUMBAI

The Indian IT services sector is staring at a second consecutive year of muted revenue growth due to modest increase in tech spends in Europe and the US, a domestic rating agency said on Wednesday.

Crisil Ratings said it expects onon ratings said it expects the sector to grow at 5-7 per cent in FY25, after a growth of 6 per cent estimated to have been achieved in FY24. The overall industry size is pegged at USD 250 billion and it creates over 50 billion and it creates over 50 lakh direct jobs. "The slowdown in technology spend will continue this fiscal, weighing on the revenue growth of IT providers," service said Aditya Jhaver, director at Crisil.

The industry is, however, expected to sustain in the key metric of profitability, as the operating profit margins will be stable at 22-23 per cent, the agency said, attributing it to prudent management of employee costs.

Crisil said the sectoral revenues achieved а compounded annual growth rate of 12 per cent for the decade through FY24. High interest rates and



economic slowdown in client markets led to a modest single-digit growth in tech spends by companies in the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI), retail, technology and communications sectors in

FY24, the agency said. It said these four sectors account for nearly two-thirds of the industry's revenues. Jhaver said revenue from BFSI and retail segments will

continue to be a drag with

subdued growth of 4-5 per cent in FY25.

Manufacturing and healthcare, which contribute a tenth of the revenue, were the only bright spots and double-digit continued growth in tech spend given the focus on process automation and research and development-based analytics, especially in healthcare.

economic revival in key As revenue growth remained markets amid ongoing geopolitical conflicts could subdued, IT service companies pulled back on pose downside risks, it added.

"The continuous rise in

M&A deal value surged 60 per cent: PwC India addition of fresh talent, resulting in headcount reductions by 4 per cent in

PTI NEW DELHI

2023 by top 12 companies. This, along with the decline

in attrition to 13 per cent as

of December 2023 from the

high of 20 per cent in FY23

provided a breather by

replacement hiring during

Associate director Joanne

Gonsalves said the ratings

company expects IT service

providers to remain "cautious" on fresh hiring in

maintain employee utilisation at a healthy level of ~85 per

cent. Continued healthy cash

generation, strong balance

sheets and sizeable cash

surplus will keep the credit quality of IT service

providers stable, the rating

Players will continue to eye

acquisitions, especially small

and mid-sized opportunities

that could enhance their

product baskets and increase

An appreciation in the rupee

value or sustained delay in

digital capabilities, it said.

FY25 too, which

higher-cost

will

limiting

FY24, it said

agency said.

Merger and acquisition (M&A) deal value soared by 60 per cent to USD 19.6 billion in January-March 2024, while that of private equity (PE) experienced a slight dip, according to a PwC India report.

With 455 deals amounting to USD 25.6 billion disclosed value, the first quarter of 2024 showcases a 24 per cent rise in deal volume compared to the fourth quarter of calendar year 2023 – marking a notable resurgence, as per PwC India report 'Deals at a glance'. This signals a shift from the

declining trend observed throughout 2023," it added.

As per the report, there were 143 domestic M&A deals, with the largest one touching USD 4.5 billion. The overall deal value for the first quarter of 2024 stands at USD 25.6 billion, a significant increase from the previous quarter and the corresponding period last

vear. traditional Sector-wise, sectors took the lead, drawing significant investments in the deal-making changing

higher but we don't expect

duration,"

'We expect the rupee to trade

with a slight positive bias on

rise in risk appetite in global

markets

markets and easing geopolitical tensions in the

Middle East. However,

hawkish comments from the

Fed may support the dollar at lower levels," said Anuj

said

REITs, InvITs mobilise ₹1.3 lakh crore in four years: RBI data

PTI NEW DELHI

Investment vehicles for realty and infrastructure sectors — REITs and InvITs - have garnered Rs 1.3 lakh crore in the past four years till Marchend, and are expected to facilitate more pooled funds, Reserve Bank said in a report. Experts and stakeholders are of the view that with India growing at a fast pace, REITs and InvITs are emerging as alternative investment instruments, especially for high net-worth individuals.

"India has been a late adopter of real estate investment trusts (REITs) and infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs). However, the market is flourishing - REITs and InvITs have mobilised Rs 1.3 lakh

crore since 2019-20 (up to March 2024)," said an article 'State of Economy' on published in the RBI's April Bulletin.

March witnessed the listing of an InvIT, which raised Rs 2,500 crore through a public issue, attracting substantial interest from foreign investors. The article noted that market SEBI regulator has progressively reduced the minimum investment size and trading lot, enabling greater retail participation in these hybrid instruments.

To further develop this space, the market regulator notified regulations for small and medium REITs on March 8, 2024. "This is expected to facilitate

regulated financial product, thereby facilitating further growth of REITs in India," said he article authored by a team led by RBI deputy governor Michael Debabrata Patra. Rajeshwar Burla, Senior Vice President and Group Head -Corporate Ratings, ICRA, said

the RBI allowed banks to lend to InvITs, which along with security enforcement for lenders under the SARFAESI Act, are some promising steps taken in recent times.

Thanks to a conducive regulatory framework, and a strong pipeline of good operational assets, the industry was able to mobilise over Rs 1.3 lakh crore since FY2020. InvITs and REITs pooled investment in a wider helped unwind capital blocked

range of real estate assets as a in already operational infrastructure assets — which can be re-invested into underprojects and construction support infrastructure development in India," said Burla.

Indian REITs Association said SEBI's progressive regulations, particularly the reduction in lot size to bringing it on par with other listed companies to buy even single units has transformed REITs into an attractive asset class for retail investors.

"This has not only enhanced accessibility but also ensured liquidity, allowing reach to a broader investor base... We are also actively collaborating with SEBI on multiple fronts including global benchmarking of best REIT

standardising practices, financial reporting and disclosures, and addressing other regulatory requirements, amongst others," the said in Association statement.

A REIT is made up of a portfolio of commercial real estate assets, the majority of which are already leased out, and InvITs consist of a portfolio of infrastructure assets like highways.

Co-Founder and CEO of YOURS, a platform for fractional ownership of luxury Sudeep second homes, Chandran said it is true that India was a bit late in allowing REITs, yet in the last couple of it has gathered vears momentum particularly from HNIs.

monthly inflows reflects this momentum. The recent SEBI guidelines on SM REITs provides another option to savvy investors. We anticipate significant investor interest in SM REITs, driving substantial growth in combined REIT and SM REIT investments over the next 3-5 years," Chandran said. Commenting these on investment instruments, Ritesh Kumar Shyam, Partner, M&A Tax & Regulatory Services, BDO India, said REITs and InvITs have picked up quite some traction in the domestic investment market given that these assets offer fixed income with a secured asset base and the returns are generally better than other secured asset investments.

Rupee settles on flat note, up 1 paisa at 83.30 against \$

PTI MUMBAI

prices to sustain USD 85 for a The rupee consolidated in a short I narrow range and settled Mohammed Imran - Research for the day higher by 1 paisa at Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP 83.30 against the US dollar on Paribas. Meanwhile, the dollar index, Wednesday, as the support from positive domestic which gauges the greenback's equities was negated by rising strength against a basket of six currencies, was at 105.84, higher by 0.16 per cent. American currency,

Forex traders said elevated prices foreign crude oil and fund significant outflows in the international market dented investors sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.29 against the greenback. The unit hit an intra-day high of 83.26 and a low of 83.33 against the greenback.

The domestic unit finally settled at 83.30 (provisional) against the dollar, 1 paisa higher from its previous close. rupee close at 83.31 against the American currency

Choudhary Research Analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. However, any fresh aggressions in the Middle East may cap sharp upside. Traders may take cues from durable goods orders data from the Investors may remain cautious ahead of inflation data later this week. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.05 to Rs 83.50, Choudhary added. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex advanced 114.49 points, or 0.16 per cent, to settle at 73,852.94 points. The Nifty rose 34.40 points, or 0.15 per cent, to close at 22,402.40 points.

Sensex, Nifty climb on firm trend in global markets Nippon Life Q4

and trade LNG.

Transporting natural gas in liquefied form via trucks will

ensure a transparent and fair

Speaking at the occasion,

member

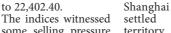
Kumar Tiwari said, "Small-

Anjan

enhanced payment security.

PTI MUMBA

¬auity benchmark indices



Shanghai and Hong Kong The indices witnessed settled in the positive

LSensex and Nifty ticked higher for the fourth straight session on Wednesday, helped by buying in metal and commodity stocks amid a positive trend in global equities.

However, intense selling pressure on telecom, IT and tech counters capped the upside, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 114.49 points or 0.16 per cent to settle at 73,852.94 During the day, it jumped 383.16 points or 0.51 per cent to 74,121.61.

The NSE Nifty advanced 34.40 points or 0.15 per cent



come

PNGRB

towards the fag-end of the session that erased some initial gains. From the Sensex basket, JSW Steel, Tata Power Grid, Steel, Mahindra Kotak UltraTech Bank, Cement, NTPC and Bajaj Finance were the major gainers. Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Maruti, Mahindra, Reliance Industries and Titan were among the laggards. Asian markets,

European markets were trading mostly with gains. Wall Street ended with gains on Tuesday. Global oil benchmark Brent

crude declined 0.35 per cent to USD 88.11 a barrel. Institutional Foreign Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,044.54 crore on Tuesday, according

to exchange data. The BSE benchmark ended 89.83 points or 0.12 per cent higher at 73,738.45 on Tuesday. Trimming most of its early gains, the NSE Nifty ended 31.60 points or 0.14 per cent up at 22,368. Tokyo,

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

₹343 crore

Nippon Life India Asset Management Ltd on Wednesday reported its highest-ever quarterly profit after tax (PAT) at Rs 343 crore for the March quarter, marking a 73 per cent jump from the year-ago period.

profit jumps to

The company had posted a PAT of Rs 198 crore in the year-ago period, the asset management firm said in a stock exchange filing.

Total income rose to Rs 560.57 crore during the fourth quarter of FY24 from Rs 388.03 crore in the year-ago period.

Forex traders said the rupee is expected to trade with a slight positive bias on improved global risk sentiments and easing of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. However, any fresh aggressions in the Middle East may cap gains for the local unit.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.34 per cent to USD 88.12 per barrel. 'Geopolitical risks in the Middle East and talks of fresh energy sanctions on Iran could see some occasional hiccups in prices to move

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Tuesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,044.54 crore, according to exchange data.

VIT AP

University

IGX launches ssLNG contracts, to take gas availability beyond national grid

PTI NEW DELHI

¬lose on the heels of receiving approval from the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), the Indian Gas Exchange (IGX) has launched contracts for small-scale Liquefied Natural Gas Liquefied Natural Gas (ssLNG) on its platform in a bid to address the demand for fuel in areas not connected to

the national gas grid. "The introduction of ssLNG contracts on IGX aims to address the growing gas demand from industries and CGD (City Gas Distribution) companies that do not have access to pipeline networks,' IGX said in a statement. Through ssLNG, they can now

procure liquefied gas through LNG tankers at competitive rates under daily, fortnightly and monthly contracts. Initially, this contract is launched at Dahej and Hazira LNG terminals in Gujarat.

Later, it will be launched at other terminals namelv Dhamra in Odisha, Mundra in Gujarat, Ennore in Tamil



Nadu, Kochi in Kerala, and on-land ssLNG stations at Vijaipur.

Natural gas is primarily supplied through pipelines in the country. As a result, industries and commercial establishments without access to the grid primarily rely on trucks for LNG trucks transportation.

demand for road-The transported LNG is projected to increase to 5 million standard cubic metre per day over the next five years. Small-scale LNG contracts

present a win-win situation for the growth of ssLNG in India both the buyers as well as by providing a comprehensive sellers. It would serve as a regulatory framework," he platform for sellers, who can said

Students take part in engineering entrance exam PNS NEW DELHI

In

Seoul

 $T_{\text{Examinations}}^{\text{he}}$ Joint for Engineering (SRMJEEE) 2024-Phase I for admission to allow larger volumes to be transported, potentially making it economically viable B.Tech and Integrated M.Tech programmes of SRM Institute for buyers not connected to pipelines. Further, it will also of Science and Technology SRMIST (Kattankulathur procurement process with Vadapalani Ramapuram, Ghaziabad, and Tiruchirapalli campuses), SRM University -Sonepat and SRM University – Andhra Pradesh was held scale LNG serves as the from 20th April to 23nd April cornerstone for our gas-based 2024.

economy, enabling us to expand our reach beyond The examination was Remote conducted in traditional pipelines. On the Proctored Online Mode supply side, it can bring gas from remote and difficult fields and on the demand side, (RPOM), where students took part in the examination from their comfort of their homes it can help an industry source through their laptop or desktop. Students from all over gas which is not connected to the gas grid." India and rest of the world took part in SRMJEEE. The "With this vision, we provided approval to IGX for launching examinations was conducted in 3 slots per day on April 20th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd. The slot ssLNG contracts on their platform. PNGRB endeavours booking for the same was held on April 16th, 17th and the to be a facilitator to support mock test was conducted on 18th April to help students familiarise with RPOM.

AIMA sees 20 per cent growth in registrations for MAT entrance exam "There

All India Management Association, a federation Management of Local Associations (LMAs), has witnessed a 20 per cent growth in registration for MAT (management aptitude test) in 2023 compared to the pre-Covid year.

MAT has actively expanded its test centers across the making country, the examination more accessible to aspiring candidates and increasing the number of locations where the test is conducted, eliminating geographical barriers, which allowed students from diverse regions

participate. This strategic expansion has undoubtedly contributed to the significant rise in the applicant count. MAT has seen a significant 20 per cent growth in candidate registrations post-Covid. 'There has been a rise in the of number women candidates registering for



women candidates in 2023, there is a growth of approximately 3 per cent compared to 2019," AIMA Director Daljeet Singh told

There has also been a 3 per cent growth in registration by women candidates for MAT last year compared to 2019. The rise in popularity of MAT has led to an increasing number of registrations in tier II and III cities.

"Providing candidates from Business Administration) and PGDM (Post Graduate tier II and III cities an opportunity to pursue their management dream from B-Schools of choice has also surge in candidate registrations and MAT popularity, he added. played a part in increase in MAT popularity and MAT. With 45 per cent of registrations.



Aurangabad, Balasore Bhilai Darbhanga,

Durg, Durgapur, Ernakulam, Erode, Salem

its score for MBA (Master of

Diploma in Management)

admissions has further contributed significantly for

per cent).

among others," he said. University proudly announces The growth was notable in its receipt of the esteemed CSR Outstanding University in Education Excellence Award southern states like Tamil Nadu (52 per cent) Karnataka (22 per cent), and for the year 2024. This accolade, bestowed by Kerala (20 per cent), as well as in states like West Bengal Competition Success Review (15 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (8 per cent), and Bihar (4 (CSR), a revered publication with a legacy of more than 60 years in India, recognizes VIT-Top B-Schools participation in MAT and acceptance of AP University's relentless

Amaravati:

commitment to academic excellence and holistic development. VIT-AP University's selection

VIT-AF

for the CSR Óutstanding University in Education Excellence Award underscores its dedication to fostering a culture of learning, innovation, and societal impact. PNS

PTI.



Indian golfers Aditi, Diksha set to participate in Paris Olympics

PTI NEW DELHI

Indian golfers Aditi Ashok (46) and Diksha Dagar (138) are set to participate in the Paris Olympics whereas Shubhankar Sharma (197) and Gaganjeet Bhullar (232) also have a strong chance of making it to the Games

While it will be a third appearance for Aditi at the Olympics which is also the most for an Indian, Diksha will be competing for the second time. For Sharma and Bhullar, it would be their maiden appearance at the Olympics

India's best performance at the Olympics came from Aditi who finished fourth in the Tokyo Games 2020. The Olympic entries are sent by the Indian Golf Union.

Qualification for Olympics is determined by rankings, limited to 60 men's and as many women's players through the Official World Golf Rankings (OWGR). The top 15 players in the

OWGR are eligible for the Olympics with a maximum limit of four golfers allowed from a single country. Golf Olympic The

on the PGA Tour, have Rankings (OGR) after the both reached career-high rankings this week. top 15 players consists of Theegala, who logged a up to two top eligible players per country, as long second runner-up finish in 2024 and Bhatia, who won as it does not have at least two golfers in the top 15. his second PGA Tour title

Meanwhile,

Theegala and



Sahith and qualified for the Akshay Masters, are now ranked Bhatia, the two Indian-No 12 and No 33 Americans making waves respectively. However, neither Theegala

nor Bhatia have a possibility of making an Olympic appearance since the top 15 in the world rankings have as many as eight Americans.

been a runner-up at the modest 2024 so far, stays season-opener the Sentry on in top 50. on in top 50. and at the RBC Heritage

and was fifth at WM Phoenix Open and tiedsixth at the Arnold Palmer Bhatia, in his 12 starts, has

won once at the Texas Open and been in top 20 as many as six times. He also missed cut four times.

Invitational

The top four Americans are Scottie Scheffler (1), Wyndham Clark (3), Olympic defending champion Xander Schauffele (5) and Patrick Cantlay (8). Two other Americans, Max Homa (9) and Brian Haran (10), are also ahead of Theegala, who is the seventh best American in the world

rankings While only four players can be entered for the Olympic Games, provided they in world's top 15, only US has four or more in the list. All other countries can send a maximum of two players provided both are in top 60 of the Olympic qualifiers. Meanwhile, in the women's

In 11 starts, Theegala has section, Aditi, despite a

Diksha, who has been solid form, has been in top 10 thrice in five starts on the Ladies European Tour, and also been tied-26 or better in her two starts on the

Epson Tour. Diksha has also touched 138 in the women's world rankings, her best so far.

The next two Indian women are Pranavi Urs, playing her rookie season on LET, at 403 and amateur Avani Prashanth at 531. Among Indian men,

Sharma, the lone Indian in top 200, has a best finish of tied-seventh at the Singapore Classic and tied-16 at Dubai Desert Classic.

Bhullar's best in 2024 has been tied-43 in Oman on Asian Tour, but he also won once at Chandigarh Open on the Indian Tour, for his second win in four months in India

The next best after Sharma and Bhullar are Veer 380 and Ahlawat at Karandeep Kochhar at 434.

Contingent of 33 to represent India in South Asian Triathlon Championship

PTI 📕 NEW DELHI

 $T^{he \; experienced \; duo \; of \; Adarsh}_{Muralidharan \; Sinimol \; and}$ Pragnya Mohan will spearhead a 33-strong Indian challenge at the South Asian Triathlon Championship to be held alongside the Asia Triathlon Cup in Pokhara, Nepal on April 27. Pragnya had won her third straight South Asian title in the last edition while also taking the ninth spot in the women's overall category.

Maharashtra duo of Sanjana Joshi and Mansi Mohite, who bagged silver and bronze respectively behind Gujarat's Pragnya last year, are a part of 13 Indian athletes in the women's field. Services' Muralidharan Sinimol, who finished third last year and was the winner in 2022, will headline a 20-member strong Indian challenge in the men's field that includes the Manipur duo of Telheiba Soram and Kshetrimayum Kabidash Singh. The competition is a sprint race comprising 750m swim, 20km cycling and a 5km run.

Telheiba

Indians in fray:

Men: Kshetrimayum Kabidash Singh, Tushar Deka, Anagh Wankhade, Parth Sankhla, Angad Ingalekar, Abhishek Modanwal, Chahar, Parth Mirage, Krishiv



Patel. Koushik Vinavak Malandkar, Sai Lohitaksh Kd, Dev Ambokar, Raj Kumar Pawar, Puskar Das, Vishwanath Yadav, Muralidharan Adarsh Nair Sinimol, Ankan Bhattacharjee, Bhattacharya, Arnab Safa Musthafa Sheick.

Women: Durvisha Pawar, Dolly Devidas Patil, Dhriti Koujalgi, Rama Sonkar, Heny Zalavadiya, Prerana Sravan Kumar, Riddhi Kadam, Sanjana Joshi, Snehal Joshi, Mansi Mohite, Nafisa Pragnya Mohan, Millwala, Punam Biswas.

this year.



Juventus requires a late goal to beat Lazio **3-2 on aggregate**

Football: Former player Langam Devi set to be national women coach

PTI NEW DELHI

Asian Games.

 $F_{\rm Chaoba\ Devi\ is\ set\ to\ take}^{ormer\ player\ Langam}$ over as the national women's football coach after the I M Vijayan-led AIFF technical committee recommended her name for the position on Wednesday. The 51-year-old Devi, who captained the national side in the 1999 Asian Championships in Philippines, has earlier been an assistant coach of the Indian team. The Manipuri has also represented the country in the 1998 Bangkok

"After extensive deliberations the committee recommended Ms. Langam Chaoba Devi as the head coach of the Indian senior women's national team," the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said in a statement.

Devi is the only female coach from the north-east region to have an AFC 'A' License coaching badge.

The recommendation is as good as an appointment given that the AIFF executive committee will approve it in its next meeting. The technical committee

meet, chaired by Vijayan, was



held virtually and was attended by Pinky Bompal Magar, Shabbir Ali, Victor Amalraj, Santosh Singh, and Climax Lawrence. Syed Sabir Pasha, the Technical Director of AIFF,

Soram,

Ankur

was also present. The committee also recommended Priya PV and Ronibala Chanu as the assistant and goalkeeping coaches respectively for the team. All three coaches bv recommended the Technical Committee did

duty for the team during the

Turkish Women's Cup in Alanya, Turkey, in February

received, the committee recommended the following names: **U16 Men's National Team:** Head Coach: Ishfaq Ahmed, Assistant Coach: Yan Cheng Law, Goalkeeping Coach: Mohammed Zakeer Hussain

The committee also discussed

the appointments of the coaches for the men's U-16

and U-19 teams. After going

through the applications

U19 Men's National Team: Coach: Head Ranian Goalkeeping Chaudhuri, Coach: Sandip Nandy.

Sreeshankar undergoes knee surgery in Doha

PTI NEW DELHI

Star Indian long jumper Murali Sreeshankar has surgery on



ARCHERY WORL Indian men, women compound

teams eye gold in Shanghai



Alate goal that Timothy Arkadiusz Milik earned Juventus a spot in the Italian Cup final - keeping alive the Turin squad's chances of winning its first trophy in three years. While Lazio won the second

leg of their semifinal 2-1, Juventus advanced 3-2 on aggregate.

Weah sent in a cross seven minutes from time that Milik tapped in.

Taty Castellanos scored a goal in each half for Lazio. Juventus won the first leg 2-0 with goals from Federico Chiesa and Dusan Vlahovic. In the May 15 final back in Rome, Juventus will face Atalanta either or Fiorentina. Fiorentina takes a 1-0 advantage into the second leg of the other semifinal on Wednesday. Juventus has won the Italian

its title in 2021 the most recent trophy the Bianconeri

have claimed. By reaching the final, Juventus also qualified for next season's four-team Italian Super Cup. Castellanos is no stranger to coming up big in important matches, having scored four against Real Madrid last April while with Girona. His first goal came 12

minutes in at the Stadio Olimpico when he leapt over Alex Sandro to head in a corner. Then shortly after the break, he muscled off Gleison Bremer to finish off a counterattack

Juventus midfielder and United States international Weston McKennie limped off with an apparent left ankle issue after Castellanos' second goal but then came back on before eventually being substituted in the 81st.

PTI SHANGHAI The Indian men's and women's

compound archery teams assured the country of a podium finish by nailing down final berths in the season-opening Hyundai Archery World Cup here on Wednesday.

The fourth-seeded men's team comprising the experienced Abhishek Verma, newcomer Prathamesh Bhalchandra Fuge and U-21 reigning world champion Priyansh defeated the Philippines and Denmark before displaying ominous form to upset top qualifiers South Korea to book a title showdown against the Netherlands on Saturday.

The Indian women, who are the reigning world champions and seeded No.1 here, set up a title clash with Italy, defeating Turkey and Estonia to

leading side in the category.

The trio of reigning U-18 and senior champion Aditi Swami, Asian Games goldmedallist Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Parneet Kaur dropped just 10 points through the two matches to confirm their superiority.

The Indian men's team created a major upset confirm their status as the defeating Korea by just two

points at 235-233. Tied at even after two ends, the Indians grabbed a point after the third and finished with a 59 to secure the final spot. "Our coordination was good today and we read the wind well," said Abhishek after the semifinal nerve-wracking contest against the Koreans.

"The semifinals are always

prepared to shoot well and happy to make it to gold," he

An elated Priyansh said after the match against Korea that he was thrilled to be competing against the strong opponents, who he had so far

seen only on social media. "We played alongside players that we used to watch on YouTube," said Priyansh, who trains with Abhishek in Delhi. We could have shot even better," he added.

added.

The Indian women's team defeated Estonia 235-230 and attributed Aditi the performance to the process the side has been following for long.

'We maintained our shooting process and it worked well, said Aditi.

"I hope we can repeat the success of the World Cup in Paris last year where both the Bangkok with a 8.37m jump Indian men and women won (Olympic entry standard tight matches. We were the team gold medals." 8.27m).

injured knee that ruled him out of the Paris Olympics in July-August.

The 25-year-old, who is a silver medallist at the Asian and Commonwealth Games, underwent the surgery in Doha.

"The surgery was successful under Dr. Bruno Olory at the Aspetar Hospital, Doha. Thank you everyone for all your love and blessings during this tough phase. 18 hours post surgery and I am already walking," wrote Sreeshankar on Instagram.

Dr Olory is a French orthopaedic surgeon. Sreeshankar had injured his

moving on. That's what I will left knee while training in do. My journey to a comeback Palakkad earlier this month. began the minute I injured He had made the cut for the Paris Olympics as early as July 2023 when he secured a silver at the Asian Championship in

my knee. "The road is going to be long, difficult and will take a lot out of me," Sreeshankar had stated while announcing his withdrawal from

In June last year, Sreeshankar

had become only the third

Indian to finish in the top

three in a Diamond League

Meeting with a third-place

"Life writes strange scripts, and some times there is

courage in accepting it and

finish.

Olympics.

Olympic bound boxer Preeti to spearhead India's challenge

PTI NEW DELHI

Paris Olympic-bound boxer Preeti Pawar will spearhead a 50-member Indian team at the ASBC Asian U22 & Youth Boxing Championship, starting April 27 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The 20-year-old Asian Games bronze medallist, who has secured a Paris Olympic quota in the 54kg weight class, will have the company of former youth world champion and 2022 Asian elite boxing championship gold medallist Alfiya Pathan (81kg) in the U-22 category.

Reigning youth world champions Devika Ghorpade (52kg) and Vishvanath Suresh (48kg), and senior national champions Prachi (63kg), Akash Gorkha (60kg) and Jugnoo (86kg) are also part of the U-22 squad announced by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) on Wednesday. Both U-22 Both

competitions will see the participation of 25 Indian boxers see the each as the men's and women's sections will have 13 and 12 categories respectively.

The players have been selected based on their strong performances in the trials conducted by the BFI at the Army Institute of Sports Pune from April 6 to 10 for the U-22 category and at the NCOE Rohtak from April 12-15 for the youth category.

The boxers were selected from across the country through highly competitive trials. The tournament is a significant opportunity for these young boxers to demonstrate their skills and gain invaluable international exposure in one of Asia's most prestigious tournaments," said BFI Secretary General Hemanta Kalita.

The reigning junior world and Youth champions Nisha (52kg) and



Akansha (70kg) will lead the country's challenge in the youth women's section along with the Asian youth champion Nikita Chand (60kg).

The youth men's section, on the other hand, will see the participation of the junior world championships silver medallists Jatin (57kg), Sahil (80kg) and Hemant Sangwan (86kg).

The prestigious tournament will have 400-plus boxers from more than 24 countries fighting for the medals across 25 weight categories.

SQUAD

Youth

Youth Men: Brijesh Tamta (48kg), Aryan (51kg), Jitesh (54kg), Jatin (57kg), Sagar Jakhar (60kg), Yashwardhan Singh (63.5kg), Sumit (67kg), Priyanshu (71kg), Rahul Kundu (75kg), Sahil (80kg), Hemant Sangwan (86kg), Aryan (92kg), Lakshay Rathi (+92kg).

Chand (60kg), Shrushti Sathe (63kg), Parthavi Grewal (66kg), Akansha Phalaswal (70kg), Rudrika (75kg), Khushi Pooniya

U 22 Men: Vishvanath Suresh (48kg), Jadumani Singh M (51kg), Ashish (54kg), Nikhil (57kg), Akash Gorkha (60kg), Ajay Kumar (63.5kg), Preet Malik (67kg), Ankush (71kg), Kunal (75kg), Dhruv Singh (80kg), Jugnoo (86kg), Yuvraj (92kg), Rhythm (+92kg). Women: Guddi (48kg),

Guddi (48kg) Women: Tammana (50kg), Devika Ghorpade (52kg), Preeti (54kg), Poonam (57kg), Priyanka (60kg), Prachi (63kg), Kajal Devi A (66kg), Saneh (70kg), Muskan (75kg), Alfiya Pathan (81kg), Ritika (81+kg).

Women: Annu (48kg), Laxmi (50kg), Nisha (52kg), Tamanna (54kg), Yatri Patel (57kg), Nikita

(81kg), Nirjhara Bana (+81kg).

U 22



sports 12



Rampant Sunrisers Hyderabad eye another run fest against bottom placed RCB

PTI 📕 HYDERABAD

unrisers Hyderabad will Slook to unleash their brute batting power on Ubatting 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 newfound 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. He was a victim of a And it won't be surprising if 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 Overall, SRH's season. 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

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Fat du Plessis (c), Glenn Maxwell, Virat Kohli, Raiat Datidar

Rajat Patidar, Anuj Rawat (wk), Dinesh Karthik (wk), Suyash Prabhudessai, Will Jacks, Mahipal Lomror, Karn Sharma, Manoj Bhandage, Mayank Dagar, Vijaykumar Ăkash Vyshak, 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, Т Natarajan, Anmolpreet Singh, Mayank Markande, Upendra Singh Yadav (wk), Umran Malik, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Shahbaz Ahmed, Travis Head, Jaydev Unadkat, Akash Singh, Jhathavedh Subramanyan

Stoinis eager to play for Australia despite missing **CA central contract**

totals in excess of 200.

an

produce

impossible.



PTI CHENNA

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

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

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

PTI CHENNA

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. Stonis, 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 toporder 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 inform Shivam Dube.

extend white hall 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 which contract 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

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.

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

 $R^{afael\ Nadal\ will\ play\ in\ the}_{Madrid\ Open\ despite\ not\ being\ fully\ fit\ and\ didn't\ seem\ too}$ 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

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 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 14time champion.

The 22-time Grand Slam winner is a record five-time champion in involved," Nadal said. "I don't 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, than it 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

hennai Super Kings are not Clooking 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 at back end of IPL: Fleming US

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, game changer as he with an unbeaten 124 off 63 all-rounder in the Big Bash LSG sending Marcus Stoinis to singlehandedly pulled off a balls . Fleming, who has League for Melbourne Stars,

number three proved to be a memorable win for his team worked alongside the Aussie

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

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

"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

Chennai (Super Kings).

"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

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

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

LUCKY TO BEEN EXPERIENCE undiminished.

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

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."

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

opener. "He's got power, but he's also

then he just controlled the innings.

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