OPINION 6

THE MARGINALISATION OF

DISABLED IN POLITICS

WORLD 9

RAJAPAKSA REJECTS ALLEGATIONS

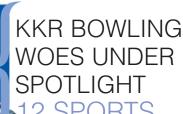
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DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR

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EC questions Modi, Rahul's poll conduct

¬aking cognisance for the first time of a model L code conduct violation complaint against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Election Commission has issued notice to BJP national president JP Nadda and sought his response by April 29. The commission has also served a notice to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, asking him to respond to the complaints filed by the BJP against him and the main Opposition party's senior Raĥul Gandhi regarding their remarks. Both the BJP and the Congress had raised allegations of causing hatred and division based on religion, caste, community, or language.

This is the first time that notices were issued to party presidents for violation of model code of conduct by star campaigners, this election. Notably, this marks a departure from the past, where notices of alleged MCC violations were served directly to the candidate or star campaigner concerned.

Even during the ongoing campaign for the Lok Sabha election 2024, all MCC notices served by the EC have been issued directly to party leaders, including Dilip Ghosh of the BJP, Congress leaders Randeep Surjewala and Supriva Shrinate, and AAP leader Atishi. The EC notices to the two-party presidents did not directly name either Modi,



BJP supporters during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election campaign rally for Lok Sabha polls, in Agra, on Thursday PTI

Rahul or Kharge, but the representations received by it were attached to the respective letters and they contained details of allegations against the three leaders.

In the notice sent to Nadda, the EC sought his response by Monday to the complaints filed by the Congress, CPI, CPI (ML) and civil society groups regarding the remarks made by Modi on April 21 in Banswara 21 where he dubbed Muslims as infiltrators and alleged that the party will redistribute country's among resources

community.

MODEL CODE CONDUCT

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) of ECI is a set of guidelines issued to regulate political parties and candidates prior to elections. The rules range from issues related to speeches, polling day, polling booths, portfolios, the content of election manifestos, processions, and general conduct, so that free and fair elections are conducted.

"Political parties or candidates can be criticised based only on their work record and no caste and communal sentiments can be used to lure voters. Mosques, Churches, Temples or any other places of worship should not be used for election campaigns"

 MCC evolved as part of the ECI's drive to ensure free and fair elections and was the result of a consensus among major political parties. It has no statutory backing which means anybody breaching the



MCC can't be proceeded against under any clause of the Code. Everything is voluntary. The EC uses moral sanction or censure for its enforcement"

•I urge parties to refrain from nersonal attacks and foul language. No-go areas in speeches are defined to maintain civility. Let us not cross lines in our rivalry. We have issued an advisory for the political parties. they are encouraged to foster a political discourse that inspires

IN HIGHLIGHTS FORMAT ADVISORY ISSUED BY ELECTION COMMISSION (MARCH 16, 2024)

- which inspire rather than divide ■ Issue-based campaigning
- No caste or religious appeals
- No criticism of any aspect of
- Pattern of past MCC violations to prepare grounds for civilised campaigning in the general elections
- To refrain from unverified and misleading ads
- No masquerading of advertisements as news Restraint on social media posts
- vilifying tivals Responsibility on start

rather than divides," Chief Election Commissioner Raiiv Kumar, who requested political parties to decorum during maintain campaigning, while announcing General Elections 2024 on March 16, 2024

- CEC also advised political parties against hate speeches, caste or religious appeals, criticism of any aspect of private life, masquerading of advertisements as news and social media posts vilifying or insulting rivals. Wherever there will be a case of
- violation against anvone, however renowned the politician may be, we will not sit back. We will take action. Earlier, we used to morally censor but now we will take action." CEC Raiiv Kumar, March 16,2024 while responding to a media query about allegations of bias in dealing with

Stage set for Phase II LS polls

A mid heat waves in most parts of the country, voters will have to brave the searing heat when they step out to exercise their franchise in the second phase of the Lok Sabha elections on Friday.

Second phase of Lok Sabha polls will be a litmus test of sorts for the Narendra Modi Government as over 8.08 crore people are set to cast their vote.

The key issues facing the BJP are whether it will be able to end its electoral drought in Kerala. Will a spike in political temperature following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's sharp attack on the Congress boost turnout?

Will controversy over heritance bill work in favour of BJP? Will controversy over Muslim being given reservation in SCs, STs and OBCs quota help BJP's voters? Will voting in Manipur violence free? Will the

consecration of Ram Temple have an impact on voting trends on BJP's southern sojourn? These are some of the questions weighing on people's minds as 88 Lok Sabha seats go to the polls on Friday. After Friday's phase, polling will be over in Kerala, Rajasthan, and Tripura.

As many as 1,202 candidates, including prominent faces such as Congress

Shashi Tharoor and Union minister Chandrasekhar from Thiruvanthapuram, Ramayan serial actor Arun Govil from Meerut, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's brother DK resh (Cong) from Bengaluru Rural Lok Suresh constituency, Sabha former Karnataka chief minister Kumaraswamy

leader Rahul Gandhi from Wayanad,

STARS CONSTITUENCY **CANDIDATES** Rahul Gandhi Congress Wayanad K Surendran BJP CPI Congress Thiruvanthanuran Sashi Tharoor Raieev BJP Chandrashekhai DK Suresh Congress Dr C N Manjunath BJP Jodhpur Karan Singh Congress Uchiyarda Gaiendra Singh BJP Sekhawat BJP Arun Govil Meerut Sunita Verma SP Devvrat Kumar BSP Tyagi Dr Mahesh Gautam Budh BJP Sharma Mahendra Nagar SP BSP Rajendra Singh Solanki BJP Hema Malini Congress Mukesh Dhangar Beema Bharti RJD Santosh Kumar NDA Kushwaha Pappu Yaday Independent

from Mandya will try their electoral luck in the second phase while BJP's OM Birla from Kota, Hema Malini from Mathura, and Gajendra Singh Sekhawat from Jodhpur seeking a hat-trick of wins from their respective constituencies.

RAHUL DATTA NEW DELHI

After observing less enthusiasm in the first phase of polls in some of the North East constituencies, the Election Commission. local administration and political parties in the fray have coordinated for an encouraging second phase of the sensitive areas Manipur and including Tripura will witness polling. Parts of Manipur saw violence in the first phase of polling on April 19 as

miscreants fired at polling booth in the State causing panic and disturbances. Voting Electronic Machines (EVMs) were vandalised and coercion and intimidation allegations were

The state has leveled. witnessed unrest for the last few months. A key bridge on National Highway 2 connecting the State capital Imphal cities

neighbouring Assam Nagaland was damaged in multiple bomb attacks by insurgents on The sabotage Wednesday. had stranded over 150 trucks on the highway. The security forces carried

out a combing operation in villages near the damaged bridge in the Kuki-Zo-

dominated district. In the foothills of neighbouring Sekmai, some 22 km from Kangpokpi, gunfights had been going on between armed groups for the past two days

The attack on the bridge also comes two days before voting in the remaining seats of Outer Manipur reserved Lok Friday. Several constituencies nearly one-year-old ethnic violence between the Kuki-Zo tribes and the valleydominant Meiteis. Moreover

arms ammunition were recovered on Wednesday in a joint operation of the Indian Army and Manipur Police in the violence-hit state's Imphal East district.

In Manipur, tensions between the Kuki-Zo tribes Meiteis have been lingering for 11 months since clashes broke out between the communities over cataclysmic

disagreements on land, resources, political representation, and affirmative action policies. Meanwhile, all necessary

measures have been taken to ensure free, fair and peaceful elections in the Tripura East parliamentary constituency that will go to polls in the second and final phase on

eyes on North East Kerala ready for election battle

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN KOCHI

the countdown for As the countries Lok Sabha election from Kerala is in full progress, candidates and party managers spent the penultimate day devising new strategies to ensure maximum heir kitties and to embarrass the rivals. Though the day was peaceful as no untoward incidents getting reported from anywhere in the

the Election Commission seized deadly weapons like iron rods, machetes, knives and swords from the campaign vehicle of K Radhakrishnan, the CPI(M) candidate contesting from Alathur early Thursday morning. But Radhakrishnan, Minister Dinaravi Vijayan's government, claimed that they were gadgets for removing the flex boards and posters which have been put State, the inspection wing of up as part of campaigning.

Muraleedharan, Congress candidate Thrissur said his party could organise public meetings in support of Hamas soldiers fighting against Israel. "We do not have a military of our own and whatever military is there is under the command of Prime Minister Modi. Had we been ruling India, situation would have

different." been said Muraleedharan who has taken a vow that he would not allow the BIP candidates anywhere in the State to come to the third place. Shobha Surendran, the

BJP candidate at Alappuzha, made a on Thursday that a $prominent \dot{\ } CPI(M)$

contesting from Kannur

declared that E P leader was in touch with to jump fence. Jayarajan was BJP leadership to upset over the CPI(M) crossover to the Hindutva leadership ignoring his claims

party but he called off the move following death threats from the Marxists. Though she master for the post. refused to divulge the name of the "leader", K Sudhakaran, the Congress candidate

Jayarajan, the LDF ho is cut up with CPI(M) leadership was the one who was about

to the post of Kerala secretary and electing M V Govindan, a lower primary school drill

Elsewhere in the State, pollsters and observers took stock of the intensity of the campaign and most of them were unanimous in their view author and former senior editor of Mathrubhumi said that the Congress-led UDF has a discernible advantage.

Electoral showdown in North Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

second phase polling on Friday.

polling the Election Commission of India has deployed 272 companies of Central forces out of which 111 would be posted at Raiganj, once a Congress stronghold sending the then Union Minister PR Dasmunshi to Parliament. Usually considered to be a violence-

prone district, Raiganj has 418 sensitive booths most of which are around Goalpokhar, Chakulia and Dalkhola bordering Bihar. The area witnessed massive violence in last year's panchayat elections when two persons were killed in political clashes BJP has fielded Kartick Paul replacing former



Union Minister and sitting MP Debashree Chowdhury - who has been shifted to Kolkata South seat — from Raiganj. Paul is facing Trinamool Congress' Krishna Kalyani — who has a dubious record of shuttling between the TMC and the BJP — and comparatively stronger Congress candidate Ali Imran Ramz backed by the Left. A former MLA Ramz joined the Congress from his old party Forward Bloc. There are twenty candidates including one woman in Raiganj.

Congress, BJP clash in Karnataka

 $T^{
m he}$ fates of 47 candidates, including two sitting BJP MPs — Sukanta Majumdar the president, his Darjeeling counterpart Raju Bista - will be decided even as three North Bengal constituencies of Darjeeling, Balurghat and Raiganj go to In order to conduct free, fair and peaceful

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 Γ he Congress and BJP will lock horns on the electoral battleground again for the 14 Lok Sabha seats in Karnataka that go to polls on Friday. It's going to be a straight fight between the ruling Congress and the BJP-JD(S) combine unlike the Assembly elections in May last year which witnessed a triangular contest among the three parties.

The State has a total of Sabha Lok constituencies. The second phase of polling in the remaining 14 seats is on May seven. A total of 247 candidates — 226 men and 21 women — are in the fray for the first phase in most of the

southern and coastal districts. More than 2.88 crore voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in 30,602 polling stations where polling will take place between 7 am to 6 pm. While the Congress is contesting in all 14 seats, BJP has fielded nominees in 11 and its alliance JD(S) partner which joined the

National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in three — Hassan, Mandya and Kolar. Besides the three, the segments where elections will

be held on Friday are: Udupi-Chikmagalur, Dakshina Chitradurga, Kannada, Tumkur, Mysore, Chamarajanagar, Bangalore

Rural, Bangalore North, Bangalore Central, Bangalore South and Chikkballapur. Having scored a thumping victory in the Assembly elections, the Congress now appears determined

to put up a strong show. Karnataka is the most important State for the BJP in south India as it's only here that it had held power in the past. In fact, out of the total

30,602 polling stations in the first phase, 19,701 will be webcast, and 1,370 covered via CCTVs. Chikkaballapur has a maximum number of 29 candidates, followed by 24 in Bangalore Central, and Dakshina Kannada has the least number — nine.

Akhilesh Yadav enters LS poll arena

BISWAJEET BANERJEE LUCKNOW

After a prolonged period of speculation and internal discord, Samajwadi Party (SP) President Akhilesh Yadav has taken a decisive step by filing his nomination from the parliamentary Kannaui constituency. This move signifies a concerted effort to reclaim the political stronghold lost to the BJP in the previous driven election, primarily by intense pressure from party workers and local leaders

dissatisfied with the initial

candidate, Tej Pratap Yadav, due to his perceived lack of



Yadav himself was prompted by a series of events that underscored the growing unrest within the party regarding the choice of candidate for the pivotal Kannauj constituency. Initially, Tej Pratap Yadav, scion of the SP legacy as the

grandson of Mulayam Singh Yadav and nephew of

Akhilesh, was nominated for the seat on April 22. However, his scheduled visit to Kannauj on April 23 was abruptly cancelled amidst internal opposition, signalling discord within the party ranks. Concerns were raised over Tej Pratap's lack of familiarity with the local populace, which could potentially weaken the party's position in the region. The workers then requested Akhilesh to contest the

Local journalist Sateyndra Yadav, highlight the deep rooted connection between the workers in Kannauj and Akhilesh, viewing him as their natural leader.

election.

Delhi LG in the dock PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Kerala Legislative

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/ **NEW DELHI**

Ahead of the second phase of voting on Friday, the Congress on Thursday asked the Election Commission to take action against Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena for visiting various Church leaders in Kerala ahead of the Lok Sabha election, in what the party called a "violation of the Model Code of Conduct". West Recently, Bengal Recently, West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose had called off his proposed visit to Cooch Benar heeding

the advice of the EC.

Leader of the Opposition in

Assembly VD Satheesan VD Satheesan claimed that

Saxena, who is on a two-day visit to Kerala, requested an audience with the heads of the Malabar Church, Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, Cardinal George Allencherry and others. He also met bishops of the Believers' Church. The Believers' Church, which is a Pentecostal church, has come out in support of the BJP.

Satheesan on Thursday urged the EC to take action against the LG for allegedly visiting heads of churches in the southern State. He claimed that the LG is

Investigation (CBI) has not yet disclosed the identity of into allegations of crimes

CBI files first FIR in Sandeshkhali case

PTI NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered the first case in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali related to the land grab and sexual assault allegations against five influential people there, officials said on Thursday. The case pertains to a land dispute where women of the victim's family had to allegedly face sexual assault from influential people in the area, they said. The Central Bureau of

The Calcutta High Court on April 10 had ordered a courtmonitored CBI investigation

the five accused and the victims.

which a large number of complaints were received. The agency had dispatched a team to Sandeshkhali to ascertain allegations and proceed with the registration of cases where allegations could be prima facie verified.

against women and land

grabbing in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali, saying an "impartial inquiry" was required in the interest of

justice and fair play. The CBI had circulated an

email ID for people to make

complaints in such cases in

encroachment from Rispana riverbed

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Municipal Corporation ■ of Dehradun (MCD) is gearing up to remove encroachments on the riverbed of the Rispana river in Dehradun on a massive scale on the orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT). The corporation will constitute a task force consisting of the officials from the departments concerned to identify all the encroachments that were established after March 11, 2016, the Dehradun municipal commissioner Gaurav Kumar said. He told The Pioneer that the corporation will also coordinate with the Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited (UPCL) to seek information about those slum dwellers which got electricity connections after March 16. "After the task force identifies all encroachments on the river



bed of the Rispana river, the corporation will send them notice as per the legal procedure to demolish their establishment on the encroached land and evacuate the space. Those who have issues with the notice can go to court and appeal against it. After the given time ends, the MCD will demolish all identified en-

croachments on the river bed of the Rispana river," he said. He also informed that there is a hearing in NGT regarding the same case in a week. If the NGT directs to remove all the encroachments immediately, the corporation will act accordingly. We are bound to follow orders," he said.

MCD gears up to remove | Rawat orders officials to register FIR against those responsible for forest fires

PNS DEHRADUN

In view of several for-est fire incidents in recent weeks, the Kumaon commissioner Deepak Rawat directed the Forest department to regis-ter FIRs against ter FIRs against mischievous elements behind the fire incidents. He interacted with the chief conservator of forest (CCF) of the Kumaon division PK Patro via video conferencing and discussed the recent forest fires in several districts of the

He also directed Patro make suitable arrangements at the ground level to ensure the forest department and authorities concerned can act immediately after getting information about the forest fire. He said that many areas of Kumaon are vulnerable to forest fires and the department must ensure the minimum response time to fire inci-



Rawat directed the CCF to nominate officers in the department at the local level for quick response and to make people aware of forest fire prevention methods. Besides this, sufficient numbers of fire watchers should also be deployed in the vulnerable areas so that it can be controlled in future. The department must ensure that

Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/ Guarantor/

guards deployed in respective areas are present and active there and not being negligent

He directed that if anyone is found intentionally involved in setting fire to forests, then the strictest action should be taken against them. Informing the com-

missioner about the department's arrangements to prevent forest fires, Patro said that the divisional forest officers have been instructed to deploy fire watchers at their level in case of shortage. Besides this, the department has also provided a new vehicle for each forest range.

Patro told Rawat that the department needs PRD personnel and home guards along with the support of locals to prevent and tackle forest fires. Responding to this, the commissioner said

that PRD and home guards will be deployed soon at the district level. In the areas susceptible to fire, local people will be deployed seasonally by the village development officer to extinguish the fire. The fire service will also be deployed in case a fire spreads around the main road, he added.

THE PIONEER **PUBLIC NOTICE**

I, Army No-15348372N HAV SATPAL, H/o SEENA PAWAR (existing name), F/o SILKY PANWAR (existing name), VILL.-KAIMLA, POST - KAIMLA, TEH-GHARAUNDA, DIST- KARNAL, HARYANA-132114, in my Army record my wife's incorrect name SEENA PAWAR and daughter's name SILKY PANWAR have been recorded, their correct names are SEENA PANWAR and SILKY.

I, MONI DEVI (existing name) W/o Army No- 15343155N, CHM YADUVEER SINGH, VILL- KYOTI, POST- MADHOGANJ, TEH-BILGRAM, DIST- HARDOI, UTTAR PRADESH 241302, declare that in my husband's Army record, my incorrect name MONI DEVI has been recorded whereas as per Aadhar No.234869519495 correct name is MONI VERMA.

में Army No. 2700011L HAV SATISH KUMAR आधार कार्ड और PAN CARD में मेरी पत्नी का नाम SULOCHNA, DOB-10.11.1981 है जोकि सही है। और मेरे Army के part II order में SULOCHANA, DOB-12.11.1981 ਵੇ जोकि गलत है।

मै JCNO-773111M SUB PRAMOD SINGH मेरी पत्नी का नाम अधार कार्ड और PAN CARD में SARITA SINGH ORDER में SARITA DEVI है जोकि गलत दर्ज है सही नाम SARITASINGH है।

PUBLIC NOTICE

Nainital DM bans construction works due to drinking water scarcity

onsidering the consistent decline in the water level of water resources like rivers, canals and ponds in the Nainital district, the district magistrate Vandana Singh on Thursday ordered a ban on the pre-approved construction works for which water connection was sought from the Jal Sansthan. She also directed the department to restrict new water connections to ensure sufficient water for public consumption. The DM also said that washing of vehicles at service centres will be banned with immediate effect and only dry wash will be allowed. The use of big pumps to carry large amounts of water will also remain prohibited. She directed Jal Sansthan to disconnect the water connection of establishments of those who fail to comply with the order and take strict action. Singh said that the use of drinking water will also be re-stricted for irrigation, washing

and other similar purposes The officials concerned must take strict action against incidents like water overflowing from tanks, dripping from the rooftop tanks and other water waste occurrences. The water connections of all the offenders must be disconnected who are found to be wasting water besides taking strict action against them, the DM said. She also ordered the officials concerned to work on stopping leakages in the main distribution pipelines to prevent water waste. If the administration finds any leakage in any drinking water pipeline, the officer concerned will be held responsible and action will be taken against them as per the rules. These are critical times and the district administration seeks the cooperation of the people and departments concerned to ensure the water crisis does not escalate across the district, she added.

Fire Service personnel rescue dog stranded on mountainside

PNS UTTARKASHI

The Fire Service per- ■ sonnel in Uttarkashi came as saviours for a dog stranded on a mountainside on the banks of the Bhagirathi river. The Fire Service received informa-



tion about a dog stuck on the mountainside on the bank of the river below the Joshiyara motor bridge near Tambakhani on Thursday morning. The personnel acted

promptly and rescued the stranded canine with the help of the members of Bhagirathi Outdoors Association, Joshiyara. The dog was picked up by the rescuers from the mountainside and taken ashore on a boat by the personnel. The prompt action of the Fire Service personnel and volunteers has elicited appreciation from the

Army and volunteers start clearing snow off Hemkund route

PNS JOSHIMATH

With the weather clearing, the army person-

nel have started clearing snow from the path to Hemkund Sahib-Lokpal Mandir. The 35member team of the army is clearing snow and cutting glaciers on the route to the pilgrimage centres in

this high altitude area of Chamoli district. The army team and volunteers of the Gurudwara are staying at Ghanghariya and walking about three kilometres daily on the route to clear the snow.Senior manager of the Gurudwara, Sewa Singh informed that the army personnel along with Sewadars of the Gurudwara have



started clearing the snow from the route. The portals of Hemkund Sahib Gurudwar and Lokpal Mandir are slated to be reopened to the devotees on May 25, for which the authorities have stepped up the prepara-

Thunderstorms and rain forecast, no relief from summer heat in plains

PNS DEHRADUN

Even as the summer temperatures remain high in the State, especially the plains, rainy weather is forecast today. The State meteorological centre has issued a yellow warning (Watch) regarding the possibility of thunderstorms accompanied with lightning and gusty wind (30-40 kmph) likely to occur at isolated places in Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag, Chamoli, Bageshwar, Dehradun and Pithoragarh districts of Uttarakhand and gusty wind (30-40 kmph) likely to occur at isolated places in Haridwar, Pauri and Udham Singh Nagar district. Further, very light to light rain/thunderstorms are likely to occur at isolated places in Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag, Chamoli, Bageshwar, Dehradun and Chamoli, Pithoragarh districts of Uttarakhand. Apart from this, dry weather is likely to prevail in the remaining

Friday.

Provisional State capital Dehradun is forecast to witness a mainly clear to partly cloudy sky with thunder cloud development likely to occur towards evening/night. Surface winds are likely to be strong and gusty dur-ing the day time while the maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be about 37 degrees Celsius and 20 degrees Celsius respectively Dehradun today.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded on Thursday were 35.6 degrees Celsius and 18.5 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 37 degrees Celsius and 15 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 25.6 degrees Celsius and 8.9 degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 25.5 degrees Celsius and 11.4 degrees Celsius in New Tehri.

districts of the State on उत्तराखण्ड पावर कॉरपोरेशन लि:

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड (केन्द्रीय), 18-ई.सी. रोड, देहरादून - 248001 निविदा तिथि विस्तार सूचना

एतद्द्वारा इस कार्यालय द्वारा पूर्व में आमंत्रित निविदा सं० EDD(C)-33/2023-24 जिसके खुलने की तिथि 25.04.2024 थी अपरिहार्य कारणों से तिथि विस्तार की जाती है। दि० 29.04.2024 तक निविदा क्रय की जा सकती है जो कि दि॰ 30.04.2024 को समय 16:00 बजे खोली जायेगी अन्य नियम व शर्ते यथावत् रहेंगी। अधिशासी अभियंता

पत्रांक : 1885/वि०वि०ख०(के०)/दे०दून/Advt. दिनांक : 25.04.2024 विद्युत वितरण खण्ड (केन्द्रीय) विद्युत सम्बन्धी शिकायतों के लिए उपभोक्ता निःशुष्क टोल फ्री नं० 1800-4190-405 पर शिकायत दर्ज करा सकते हैं। "राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचायें" कारपोरेट आईण्डीण संख्या U40109UR2001SGC025867

🖎 Karnataka Bank Ltd. 🚳

Asset Recovery Management Branch 8-B. First Floor, Rajender Park Pusa Road, New Delhi -110 060

Phone: 011-40591567 (Ext-240) E-Mail: delhiarm@ktkbank.com Website: www.karnatakabank.com CIN: L85110KA1924PLC001128

SALE NOTICE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY 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 proviso to rule 9(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to public in general and in particular to Borrower (s) and Guaranto (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged /charged to the secured Creditor, the Symbolic Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Karnataka Bank Ltd, the Secured Creditor on 29.11.2022, will be sold on "As is Where is" "As is What is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 29.05.2024, for recovery of Rs. 9,51,146.88 [Rupees Nine Lakh Fifty One Thousand One Hundred Forty Six and Paisa Eighty Eight Only] under Term Loan A/c No.6677001600009101 along with future interest from 14.04.2024, plus cost, due to the Karnataka Bank Ltd, Roorkee Branch, Plot No.622, Malviya Chowk, Dehradun Road, Roorkee-247667, the Secured creditor from (1) Mr. Praveen Tyagi, S/o Raj Kumar, addressed at: House No.588/1, Arya Vihal Colony, Ganeshpur, Haridwar, Roorkee-247667 (2) Mrs. Gulshan W/o Mr. Praveer Tyagi, addressed at: House No.588/1, Arya Vihar Colony, Ganeshpur, Haridwar Roorkee-247667 being borrowers/guarantors/co-obligants.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:

All that part and parcel of Residential Property having plot of land measuring 1102 sq.ft. i.e

102.416 sq.mtrs. Belonging to Khasra No.28/1/1 situated in Ganeshpur (within limits of Nagar Nigam Roorkee) Pargana & Tehsil- Roorkee, Distt- Haridwar, Belonging to Boundaries: East : Way 16 feet Wide, West : Land of Smt. Vedwati, North : Way 15

eet Wide. South: House of Praveen Reserve Price / Upset Price below which the property may not be sold Rs.30,75,000.00 (Rupees Thirty Lakhs Seventy Five Thousand only) Earnest money to be deposited/tendered: Rs.3,75,000.00 (Rupees Three Lakhs

Seventy Five Thousand Only) The borrower's / mortgagor's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) or Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured asset) (This Notice shall also serve as Notice under Sub Rule (1) of Rule (9) of Security

nterest Enforcement Rules-2002 to the Borrower/Guarantors) For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to link in Karnataka Bank's Website ie., www.karnatakabank.com under the head "Mega E-Auction on 29.05.2024" The E-auction will be conducted through portal https://bankauctions.in/ on 29.05.2024 from 11:30 A.M to 12:30 P.M with unlimited extension of 05 minutes. The intending bidde is required to register their name at https://bankauctions.in/ and get the user Id and password free of cost and get online training on E-auction (tentatively on 28.05.2024) from M/s.4closure, 605A, 6th Floor, Maitrivanam, Ameerpet, Hyderabad-500038, Contact No.040-23836405, Mobile: 8142000809, E-mail: info@bankauctions.in.

Date: 25.04.2024 Sd/- For Karnataka Bank Ltd Chief Manager & Authorised Officer Place : Roorkee

PUBLIC NOTICE

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

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA) A notice was issued to them under Section 13 (2) of Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice

Property Address of Secured Asset/

No.	Number) & Address	of Secured Asset/ Asset to be Enforced	Sent/ Outsta- nding as on Date of Notice	Date
1.	evansh Aggarwal/ Punam Aggarwal/ ronesh Kumar (TBHWR00006274113) 64/3 Laksar Haridwar 64/3 Near Shiv andir, Shivpuri Laksar Uttarakhand aridwar- 247663 Plot No G-11, Khasra No 345/2, Situated At Ganpatidham Colony, Phase3, Village Jamalpur Kalan, Pragna Jwalapuri, Tehsil & District Haridwar, Uttarakhand- 249408		02/03/2024 Rs. 42,19,404/-	04/12/ 2023
2.	Ratish Chandra/ Tripti Bhardwaj (LBHDI00005193785) & Vikas Nagar, Phase 2, Bithoria No.1 Near Union Bank, Haldwani Uttarakhand Nainital - 263141			14/12/ 2023
3.	Pankaj Kumar Tyagi/ Soniya Tyagi (LBDEH00005934420) & Gali No.11, Krishna Nagar Salempur Rajputan, Roorkee Haridwar - Uttarakhand Haridwar - 247667	House No. 128, On Ground Floor, M.I.G. Lohiyapuram, Mdda Colony, Dehradun Uttarakhand- 248001	19/03/2024 Rs. 23,09,010/-	07/01/ 2024
4.	Abhishek Puri/ Deeksha Arya (LBRUD00006692949) & House No.53, Kaushalya Garden Jaynagar No.05, Tehsil Rudrapur Uttarakhand Udham Singh- 263153	Plot No.53, (Vacant On The Spot) Gata No.208 K Min, Situated At Village Jaynagar (Kaushalya Garden Awasiya Colony) Tehsil Rudrapur, District Udham Singh Uttarakhand- 263153	19/03/2024 Rs. 56,313/-	01/01/ 2024
5.	Abhishek Puri/ Deeksha Arya,/ Sandeep Kumar Tiwari (TBRUD00006675809) A House No.53, Kaushalya Garden aynagar No.05, Tehsil Rudrapur Uttarakhand Udham Singh - 263153		19/03/2024 Rs. 12,04,749/-	01/01/ 2024
6.	Anchal Gupta/ Vipul Gupta (TBDEH00006263605) & W/o Vipul Gupta R/o 442/3, Post Office Selaqui Uttarakhand Dehradun - 248197	richal Gupta/ Vipul Gupta TBDEH00006263605) & Property Situated At Khata & Khatoni No. 143, (According To Fasii Year 1394 V/o Vipul Gupta R/o 442/3, Post Office Selaqui Uttarakhand Village Central Hope Town, Nigam		06/01/ 2024
7.	nchal Gupta/ Vipul Gupta .BDEH00006286079) & Property Situated At Khata & Khatoni No. 143, (According To Fasli Year 1394 To 1399), Khasra No. 122/6 Minjumla, Village Central Hope Town, Nigam Road Selaqui, Pargana Pachwadoon, Tehsil Vikasnagar, District Dehradun, Uttarakhand- 248197		30/03/2024 Rs. 1,50,080/-	06/01/ 2024
8.	Dawar Mujtawa Sayyed/ Shobia Saeed Naqvi (LBRUD00004975304) & Villege Bhood Maholiya Anshik Near Digvijay School Sitarganj Road Uttarakhand Udham Singh Nagar - 262308	Property Situated At Khasra No. 147 Minjumla, Khata No 72, Fasali Year 1419 To 1424, Village Maholiya, Tehsil Khatima, Rudrapur, District Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand- 263153	30/03/2024 Rs. 25,46,178/-	04/01/ 2024
9.	Dawar Mujtawa Sayyed/ Shobia Saeed Naqvi (LBRUD00005342891) & Villege Bhood Maholiya Anshik Near Digvijay School Sitarganj Road Uttarakhand Udham Singh Nagar - 262308	Property Situated At Khasra No. 147 Minjumla, Khata No 72, Fasali Year 1419 To 1424, Village Maholiya, Tehsil Khatima, Rudrapur, District Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand- 263153	30/03/2024 Rs. 1,29,093/-	04/01/ 2024
	Hasina Begum/ Mursaleen/ Al Mursaeen Traders (LBSAH00002305333) & House No14/437, Dholi Khal Opp. Unchi Masjid, Uttar Pradesh Saharanpur- 247001	asina Begum/ Mursaleen/ Al Mursaeen aders (LBSAH00002305333) & buse No14/437, Dholi Khal Opp. nchi Masjid, Uttar Pradesh		03/01/ 2024
11.	Ajay Kumar Singh/ Pushplata Devi (TBHWR00006763829) & Paharpur Kalan, Garatholi Ghazipur, Deokali, Uttar Pradesh Ghazipur - 233306	Residential House On Plot No.57, Khasra No.16/5ma, Situated At Saidham Colony, Village Dadupur, Govindpur (outer Border Municipal Corporation Haridwar) Pargana Roorkee Tehsil And District Haridwar Uttarakhand- 249402	26/03/2024 Rs. 8,42,521/-	06/01/ 2024
	Pradeep Kumar Saini/ Sarita Saini (LBHWR00006025784) & S/o Yashpal Singh Quarter No. 133, Type 2, Sector 04, Bhel Ranipur Range, Haridwar Bhel, Uttrakhand Haridwar - 249403	Plot No. 6, Khasra No. 1727, Situated At Salempur Mahdood 2, Pargana Roorkee Tehsil And, Distt. Haridwar Uttrakhand- 249403	26/03/2024 Rs. 8,10,606/-	11/01/ 2024
13.	Pradeep Kumar Saini/ Sarita Saini (LBHWR00005171589) & S/o Yashpal Singh Quarter No. 133, Type 2, Sector 04, Bhel Ranipur Range, Haridwar Bhel, Uttrakhand Haridwar- 249403	Plot No. 6, Khasra No. 1727, Situated At Salempur Mahdood 2, Pargana Roorkee Tehsil And, Distt. Haridwar Uttrakhand- 249403	26/03/2024 Rs. 18,26,968/-	11/01/ 2024
	Rajneesh Kumar/ Ved Prakash (LBHWR00004353525) & Khasra No.1472, Plot No.329, Siddhart Enclave Colony Roshnabad Haridwar Green, Uttarakhand Haridwar - 249402	Plot No.329, Khasra No.1472, Situated At Village Anneki Hetampur, Pargana- roorkee, Outer Limits Municipal Corporatioon, Tehsil And District Haridwar Uttarakhand- 249407	27/03/2024 Rs. 7,77,003/-	09/12/ 2023
	Rajneesh Kumar/ Ved Prakash (LBHWR00004366455) & Khasra No.1472, Plot No.329, Siddhart Enclave Colony Roshnabad Haridwar Green, Uttarakhand Haridwar- 249402	Plot No.329, Khasra No.1472, Situated At Village Anneki Hetampur, Pargana- roorkee, Outer Limits Municipal Corporatioon, Tehsil And District Haridwar Uttarakhand- 249407	27/03/2024 Rs. 5,85,356/-	09/12/ 2023
	Kamleshwar./ Sidheshwar Singh/ Baljati Devi (LBROK00002382637) & C/o Chandraveer Nautiyal, Lane 2, Doon University Road Ajabpur Kalan Ganga Enclave Uttarakhand Dehradun- 248001	House No-816, Ward No-7, Circular Road, South Civil Lines, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh- 251001	23/03/2024 Rs. 6,82,784/-	04/12/ 2023
17.	Kamleshwar./ Sidheshwar Singh/ Baljati Devi (LBDEH00003914443) & C/o Chandraveer Nautiyal, Lane 2, Doon University Road Ajabpur Kalan Ganga	House No-816, Ward No-7, Circular Road, South Civil Lines, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh- 251001	23/03/2024 Rs. 1,63,266/-	04/12/ 2023

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors as applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice else further steps will be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date: April 26, 2024 Authorized Office Place : Dehradun ICICI Bank Limited

दर्ज है। जबकि मेरे ARMY के PART II

My land Khasra No. 2545 min, area 18587 sq.m., situated in Mouza Atanbag (under sq.m., situated in Mouza Atanbag (under Nagar Panchayat area, Herbertpur), Pargana Pachhadun, Tehsil Vikasnagar, District Dehradun is occupied by the sole owner or occupant. Original sale deed dated 16.08.2012 of land Khasra No. 2545 min, area 185.87 sqm, situated in Mauza Atanbag Pargana Pachhadun, Tehsil Vikasnagar, District Dehradun, which is duly registered in the office of Sub-Registrar II Vikasnagar, District Dehradun, Book No. 1, Volume 31, Page 393 to 410 at serial number 3360 on 16.08.2012, which was executed by Mohan Singh Panwar son of executed by Mohan Singh Panwar son of Mangal Singh, resident of village Haripur, Herbertpur, Vikasnagar, District Dehradun, Uttarakhand in favour of Naresh Panwar son of Santram Panwar resident of village Doctorgani, Vikasnagar, District Dehradun, Uttarakhand on 16.08.2012. The said original sale deed has been lost somewhere. If anyone has any objection, he should contact my advocate Naveen Kumar Gupta on mobile number 9837052326. Rajveer Singh Rana son of Kripal Singh Rana resident of Bhankoli, Purola, Uttarkashi Uttarakhand.

PUBLIC NOTICE A Sale deed dated 31.12.2012 of

Bhumidhari land Account No 768 (crop year 1416-1421) Old Khasra No 906 Min (New Khasra No 1205) Area 187. 67 square feet or 17.46 Dehrakhas Pargana Central Doon District Dehradun executed by Mr Naresh S/o. Shri Janaki Prasad resident of House No. 13, Signal Mandi, Pathri Bagh,Dehradun in favour of Rizwan, S/o Shri Inam, address: Singhal Mandi, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, which is duly registered in Sub Registrar Office in Book No. 1, Volume 4915, Page 109 to 124 No. 285 dated 10.01.2013. The original sale deed of the above land is lost somewhere in Clock Tower area in Dehradun.

Naveen Bagwari Advocate Chamber No. 7, Block-7, New Builing, CJM Court Compound Dehradun (Uttarakhand) Mob:

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given by Smt. Kusum Singhal W/o Late Sh. Mahendra Swaroop Singhal R/o 404/365, Old Dalanwala, Dehradun to public at large that After the death of my Son Late Sh. Mayank Singhal S/o Sh. Mahendra Swaroop Singhal his legal heirs are namely 1.Smt. Geetika Singhal W/o Late Mayank Singhal, 2.Prerna Singhal, 3. Charu Singhal both D/o Late Mayank Singhal other than Wife & 2 daughters no other legal heirs were of Late Sh. Mayank Singhal. That if any person have any information regarding the same or any objection than kindly within 7 days from the publication of this notice and intimate to the contact numbers & address mentioned

(SHAMMI TANDON, ADVOCATE) Contact: 9897006975

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given by Sh. Shriram S/o Late Sh. Amar Chand to public at large that I am the owner of All that property bearing Municipal no. 177 (New Municipal no. 313/177) Lakhibagh, Dehradun, measuring 622.02 Sq.mtrs., having covered area 50 Sq.mtrs...purchase vide sale deed dated Sq.mtrs..purchase vide sale deed dated 02.05.2011, bearing document no. 3086 from Sh. Raj Kumar & others. Previously the property was purchased by M/S Krishan Gopal Sardari Lal a partnership firm through its partners 1.5h. Krishan Gopal, 2.Sardari Lal, 3.Sh. Tilak Raj all S/o Sh. Bindra Ban, 4.Sh. Satya Pal S/o Sh. Krishan Gopal, the partnership firm was dissolved & later on in 2011 the property was sold by all the legal heirs of the partners to me That if any person finds any dispute for the said dissolution of partnership firm & the legal heirs of the partners inform within 7 days from the publication of this notice and the publication of this notice and intimate to the contact numbers & address mentioned herein below".

(SHAMMI TANDON, ADVOCATE)

Contact: 9897006975

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 9045057787, 8909212518 Email: pioneerdoon@gmail.com

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University Road Ajabpur Kalan Ganga

Enclave Uttarakhand Dehradun- 248001

Uttarakhand the Gangotri for UCC in the country: CM

PNS DEHRADUN

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has said that Uniform Civil Code (UCC) has been implemented in Uttarakhand and he believes that every State of the country should take its benefit.

In an interview, the CM said on Thursday that an attempt was made to spread confusion on the subject of UCC. He said

gies. On one hand there is PM Modi who is working to make India advanced and on the other hand there is a coalition of parties whose primary objective is to save their own families. The people should decide what they want. The country has moved forward on the path of development, he said.

Launching into an attack on



Assembly election of 2022 that it will implement UCC in the State and the people gave their mandate to the party. He said that Uttarakhand has become

The CM said that the Lok Sabha election of 2024 is an election between two ideolo- action.

that the BJP had promised the people of Uttarakhand in the said that the history of the Congress is replete with scams. Dhami said that everyone knows who has foisted emergency on the country so when Rahul Gandhi talks about dica Gangotri on UCC and the entire country will benefit from it. tatorship everyone laughs. He said that the action against encroachment in Uttarakhand was done as per the law but those engaging in politics of appearement find flaws in the

Char Dham Yatra expected to be undertaken by record breaking number of pilgrims this year: Maharaj

PNS DEHRADUN

With nearly 15 lakh people registering for the Char Dham Yatra, the Tourism and Culture minister Satpal Maharaj said that compared to the number of people under-taking the Char Dham Yatra is expected to be considerably higher than in the previous ing at present too from 7 AM year. He said that the manner to 10 PM, he added. "A in which a large number of people are registering for the pilgrimage and bookings in guest houses of the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN) on the Yatra route are consisstart of the Yatra, it is most likely that the pilgrimage this year will be undertaken by more than the 56.31 lakh people who undertook the Char Dham Yatra last year.

Maharaj said that since February 22 till date, pilgrims have booked GMVN guest houses on the Yatra route amounting to more than Rs eight crore and this figure is consistently rising. He said that registration for Char Dham pilgrims started on 2,49,864 have registered for Yamunotri, 5,12,976 for Hemkund Sahib. A total of route.

14,89,441 have registered for the Char Dham and Hemkund Sahib so far. The Tourism minister further informed that a State level control room will be established in Dehradun during the Char Dham Yatra. The control room is functiontoken/slot system has been introduced so that the pilgrims do not have to wait for long in queues to pay obeisance to the deity. An inspection of the proposed sites for tently rising even before the this will be conducted by officials of the agency concerned along with the officials of the Tourism department, police and district administration. With the implementation of this system, the pilgrims will not have to wait for more than one hour in queue," he said. Maharaj further said that special focus will be laid on sanitation during the Yatra period. At present there are 147 temporary toilets with 1,584 seats facilitated through Sulabh International on the Yatra circuit. In addition to these, more April 15. So far, 2,73,691 have toilets are open on the routes registered to visit Gangotri, including 82 seat steel-frame toilets on the Gangotri and Yamunotri routes, 251 seats in Kedarnath and 4,299,49 for Rudraprayag district, 60 seats Badrinath. In addition to this, I Chamoli district and 80 seats 22,961 have registered to visit on the Hemkund Sahib/Lokpal

Identify black spots on **Char Dham routes: ADG**

PNS DEHRADUN

The additional director gen- that roads get blocked due to leral of police (Crime, Law Dham routes that are extremely vulnerable to accidents and landslides during monsoon on mountainous routes, the ADG

and Order) AP Anshuman due to which devotees and directed the officials to identi- travellers get stuck on the fy all black spots on Char routes for many days. The offify such places in their install warning boards at such respective areas if possible sites. Considering frequent and make alternative arrangements to deal with such situations by coordialso directed the officials to nating with the depart-



identify such vulnerable places ahead of the commencement of the Char Dham Yatra and make arrangements accordingly. He stated this in a meeting held with senior police officials of the State on Thursday for the safe completion of the Char Dham Yatra. He said

severe landslides during rain cials concerned should identi-

> ments concerned. Anshuman said that temporary parking arrangements should be made at all possible places if there is no extra space in the designated parking spaces. In case of severe traffic jams, vehicles

should be diverted and parked at such places where there is safe and sufficient space. Besides this, all officials concerned must utilise the budget allocated for Chardham Yatra timely as per departmental rules, he

CM Dhami holds public meetings, road shows in Telangana

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

addressed public meetings in support of BJP candidates in Telangana on Thursday. The CM took part in the nomination rallies of BJP candidates from Nizamabad Arvind Dharampuri and Warangal Aruri Ramesh on the day.

Addressing a public meeting in Nizamabad, the CM said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is moving on the path of becoming a world leader. In his address, the CM attacked the Congress and BRS by referring to them as corrupt. He said that both these parties promote dynastical politics and engage in politics of appeasement. Dhami said that both Uttarakhand and Telangana are Devbhoomis and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has special affec-

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami tion for both the States. He said that in Uttarakhand pilgrims from all parts of the Uttarakhand pilgrims from all parts of the country come to visit Char Dhams similarly Télangana is Indrapuri and land of Shiva. He said that the huge turnout of people in the public meeting despite sweltering heat shows that BJP winning the Nizamabad seat with a huge margin.

> He said that under the leadership of PM Modi, India has become the fifth largest economy of the World. Dhami said that prior to 2014, the armed forces had to wait for the orders of the Union government to respond to the bullets fired at the enemies on the border but now our soldiers are responding with bullets with bombs.

" It is the new India of Prime Minister Narendra Modi where no one can dare to cast an evil eye on our country," he said.

Congress gears up for urban local bodies election

PNS DEHRADUN

A fter the end of voting for the Lok Sabha elections in the State, the Uttarakhand Congress has started gearing up for the elections of urban local bodies. On Thursday the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Karan Mahara held a meeting with the senior leaders, ex-councillors and councillor candidates of the Congress party for the upcoming elections of Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD). Addressing the meeting Mahara said that the local bodies are the nurseries of democracy. He said that the threat to democracy under the BJP rule can be tackled by the elections in these bodies. Mahara said that the people have understood the character of ruling BJP in the elections of the Mayor of Chandigarh. He said that the Congress party has remained vocal for the problems of the people of the Dehradun city area. The workers consistently raised issues such as dengue, irregularities in the MCD and Smart City works. Mahara said that the party should be strengthened in the local bodies which will make the

party strong at national and State level.

The candidate of Congress for Tehri LS constituency Jot Singh Gunsola thanked the party workers for the wholehearted support in the elections. He said that the people are angry at the functioning of the government and the Congress party can convert this anger into votes by working with enthusiasm and coordina-

The Mahanagar Congress president Jaswinder Singh Gogi assured the PCC president that the Congress organisation of Dehradun is ready for the municipal elections.

Former cabinet minister Hira Singh Bisht, Vice president Suryakant Dhasmana, Godavri Thapli, Navin Joshi, Mahendra Negi and oth-

Godiyal looking for excuses for impending defeat: Chauhan

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party has stated that the Congress candidate from Garhwal Lok Sabha constituency, Ganesh Godiyal is casting doubts at the security of electronic voting

machine strong rooms to find an excuse for his impending defeat. The BJP State media incharge Manveer Singh Chauhan said that the Congress first doubting the EVM technology then the Election Commission of India and now doubting the central security forces shows that the party does not trust constitutional institutions. This is the reason why the people do not trust the Congress, he said.

Interacting with the media at the BJP State office here on Thursday, Chauhan said, "The Congress candidate from Garhwal constituency is well aware that after the notification, the entire election process and important administrative works are under the purview of the Election Commission of India. This system is also in place when it comes to storing the EVMs and securing the strong room they are stored in.

The central security forces secure these strong rooms and the ECI monitors this. As per the rules of the model code of conduct,

the representatives of all the the past and also emerged candidates can remain present outside the strong room. Godiyal is fully aware of this rule applicable across the nation, especially as he has contested an election in

victorious under the same system. However, he is now looking for excuses as he fears a defeat in Garhwal constituency," Chauhan

🖎 Karnataka Bank Ltd. 🔯

Asset Recovery Management Branch 8-B, First Floor, Rajender Park, Pusa Road, New Delhi -110 060

Phone: 011-40591567 (Ext-240) E-Mail: delhiarm@ktkbank.com Website: www.karnatakabank.com CIN: L85110KA1924PLC001128

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 read with proviso to rule 9(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to public in general and in particular to Borrower (s) and Guaranto

SALE NOTICE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged /charged to the secure Creditor, the Symbolic Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Karnataka Bank Ltd, the Secured Creditor on 29.11.2022, will be sold on "As is Where is" "As is What is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 29.05.2024, for recovery of Rs.31,92,231.43 [Rupees Thirty One Lakh Ninety Two Thousand Two Hundred Thirty One and Forty Three Paisa Only] under OD A/c No. 6677000100014301 along with future interest from 01.04.2024, plus cost, due to the Karnataka Bank Ltd, Roorkee Branch, Plot No.622, Malviya Chowk, Dehradun Road, Roorkee-247667, the Secure creditor from (1) Mrs. Gulshan, W/o Mr. Praveen Tyagi, addressed at House No.588/1 Arya Vihar Colony, Ganeshpur, Haridwar, Roorkee-247667 (2) Mr. Praveen Tyagi, S/o Mr Raj Kumar Tyagi addressed at: House No.588/1, Arya Vihar Colony, Ganeshpur ridwar, Roorkee-247667 being borrowers/ guarantors/ co – obligants DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY:

All that part and parcel of Residential Property having total area of 820 sq.ft. I.e.76.208 square meter and having total covered area of 910 square feet i.e. 84.57 square mete belonging to Khasra No.12M, situated in Village Ganeshpur, Roorkee (within limits of Nagar Nigam Roorkee) Tehsil Roorkee, Dist. Haridwar, **Belonging to Mrs.Gulshan**.

Boundaries : East : Road 13'-0" , West : Road 13'-0", North : Property of Seller South: Property of Seller's Reserve Price / Upset Price below which the property may not be sold

Rs.36,20,000.00 (Rupees Thirty Six Lakhs Twenty Thousand only) Earnest money to be deposited / tendered: Rs.3,62,000.00 (Rupees Three Lakhs Sixty

Two Thousand Only) (The borrower's / mortgagor's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured asset)

(This Notice shall also serve as Notice under Sub Rule (1) of Rule (9) of Security Interest Enforcement Rules-2002 to the Borrower/Guarantors) For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to link in Karnataka Bank' Website ie., www.karnatakabank.com under the head "Mega E-Auction on 29.05.2024" The E-auction will be conducted through portal https://bankauctions.in/ on 29.05.2024 from 11:30 A.M to 12:30 P.M with unlimited extension of 05 minutes. The intending bidder is required to register their name at https://bankauctions.in/ and get the user Id and password free of cost and get online training on E-auction (tentatively on 28.05.2024) from

No.040-23836405, Mobile: 8142000809, E-mail: info@bankauctions.in. Date: 25.04.2024 Sd/- For Karnataka Bank Ltd Chief Manager & Authorised Officer Place : Roorkee

M/s.4closure, 605A, 6th Floor, Maitrivanam, Ameerpet, Hyderabad-500038, Contact

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.								
S N	r. Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch				
1	. Afzal Ahmad/ Anjum./ Khursheed Alam/ LBRUD00006239169/ LBRUD00006225669	Property At Ward No.3, Islam Nagar, Khet No.403 Min, Kasva And Thana, Tehsil Sitarganj, Dist. Udham Singh Nagar, Rudrapur, Uttarakhand Rudrapur 263153/ April 23, 2024	November 22, 2023 Rs. 15,37,379/-	Rudrapur/ Sittarganj				

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 26, 2024 Authorized Officer Place: Rudrapur & Sittarganj



CANDID NOTES

Gajendra Singh Negi

Problem of plenty

M otivated by the mantra of 'Congress Mukt Bharat', BJP engineered a large-scale defection in Congress party in Uttarakhand ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. The campaign resulted in 15,000 new recruits in the saffron party which included former cabinet ministers, an incumbent MLA and many other senior leaders. However, the idea of strengthening the party from these turncoats seems to have backfired as the dedicated workers and leaders of the saffron party have openly started voicing their dissent against these new entrants. In Tehri, the former minister Dinesh Dhanai and MLA Kishore Upadhyaya have entered into a bitter turf war and the BJP old- timers in the district have started opposing both these leaders who are new entrants in the party. A similar situation is visible in Badrinath where Rajendra Bhandari resigned from Congress and membership of assembly to don saffron colour. Dissent is also simmering in the rank and file of BJP in Lansdowne, Pauri, Yamkeshwar, Chaubattakhal, Ranikhet and other areas. It will be interesting to watch how BJP leadership manages to bring this dissent into check that has ruined its image as a party with difference.

Godiyal effect

 ${f P}$ lagued by a plethora of defections, Congress party appeared down and out in Uttarakhand at the start of Lok Sabha election campaign. A sense of despondency appeared looming over the grand old party which prompted stalwarts such as Harish Rawat, Pritam Singh and Yashpal Arya to steer clear of the electoral battle. These leaders successfully resisted the pressure of the party brass to enter into the electoral fray as they found the environment not conducive for them. However, things started changing as the campaign pitch started sharpening in the State and reports of a gallant fight being put up by Ganesh Godiyal in the saffron citadel of Garhwal galvanised the rank and file of the grand old party. Raking up local issues such as Agnipath scheme, Ankita Bhandari murder case and rising unemployment, Godiyal took the fight right into BJP's camp. The Garhwal effect boosted the morale of the Congress candidates in other constituencies of the State to such an extent that by the end of polling, the party was now fancying its chances in two to three constituencies of the State. The senior leaders are now reportedly rueing their decision to opt out of the electoral battle of LS 2024.

Harak's homework?

With ED on a hot pursuit of the money trail in the illegal felling of trees in Pakhro range of Corbett Tiger Reserve, harried Harak Singh Rawat prudently decided not to campaign for the candidates of his present party Congress in the Lok Sabha elections. Apart from this gesture of reconciliation with the party in power, Harak's daughter-in-law, Anukriti Gusain who had contested the 2022 Vidhan Sabha election from Lansdowne on Congress ticket resigned from the party and after the polling ended, joined the saffron bandwagon. Harak is now terming Gusain's decision to join BJP as her own and opined that there can be difference of opinion in a family. Those versed with the style of functioning of the maverick leader who had lived up to his reputation as an adept party hopper, point out that Harak probably is waiting for the outcome of the LS elections 2024 to take his next big step.



DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, DEHRADUN Government of India, Ministry of Finance, Deptt. of Financial Services 2[™] Floor, Paras Tower. Mazra, Saharanpur Road, Dehradun, UK-248171 BEFORE THE RECOVERY OFFICER-II, DRT, DEHRADUN

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE Public at large is hereby informed that under mentioned property will be sold by E-auction sale on 18.06.2024 ir the under mentioned case for recovery of amount outstanding on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "AS IS WHATEVER BASIS" & prospective bidders may apply for auction till 14.06.2024 up to 4.00 P.M.

7117				
Title of the Case & R.C. No.	Amount Recoverable			
Alloys & Ors.TRC No. 626/2018	Rs. 116,72,83,461 plus interest @ 12% p.a. from the filling of the OA i.e. 20.01.2014 and & other charges as per R.C. Drawn in O.A. No. 74/2014			
Date of Auction: 18.06.2024	Last Date for Bids: 14.06.2024 upto 04.00 P.M.			

Date of Auction: 18.06.2024			Last Date for Bids: 14.06.2024 upto 04.00 P.M.	
Lot No.	Reserve Price	EMD amount	Bid Increase amount	Time of Auction
ı	Rs. 12.27 Crores	Rs. 1.23 Crores	Rs. 25.00 Lacs	11:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M.
II	Rs. 90.00 Lacs	Rs. 9.00 Lacs	Rs. 5.00 Lacs	11:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M.
III	Rs. 1.52 Crores	Rs. 15.20 Lacs	Rs. 8.00 Lacs	11:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M.
IV	Rs. 29.00 Lacs	Rs. 2.90 Lacs	Rs. 2.00 Lacs	11:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M.
V	Rs. 1.35 Crores	Rs. 13.50 Lacs	Rs. 7.00 Lacs	11:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M.

such extended time of auction.)

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTIES TO BE SOLD:

LOT NO.I-All that Factory Land & Building of M/s Rana Alloys, situated at Village Gangnauli, Pargana manglour, Tehsil Laksar, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, measuring total land area of 50850 sq.mtrs. comprising (i)Khata No. 185, Khasra No. 266, measuring land area 32470 sq.mtr. (ii) Khasra No. 262, measuring 6300 sq.mtr. & (iii) Khasra No. 263, measuring

LOT NO.II- Industrial Plot having Khasra no. 2088, admeasuring area 626 sq.yards or 523.33 sq.mtr., situated at Vill. Suzru The.& Distt. Muzaffarnagar. Bounded and Butted as under: East- Others Land, West- G.T. Road, North- Seller's Land & South- 15' Wide Road.

LOT NO.III- Industrial Plot having Khasra no. 1355, admeasuring area 620.60 sq.mtr., situated at Vill. VahalnaTeh.& Distt. Muzaffarnagar. Bounded and Butted as under:North-Property of Iqbal Ahmad Etc., South-Road 25 Ft wide., East-Plot of Sh. Sahjad Etc., & West-Meerut Road.

LOT NO.IV- Agricultural Plot having Khasra no. 1625/0.709, admeasuring area 0.170 hectare, situated at Vill.Suzru Teh.& Distt. Muzaffarnagar.

LOT NO.V- Constructed Industrial Plot having Khasra no. 1547 & 1548, admeasuring area 1170 sq.mtr.,situated a Mohalla Kungad Patti Vill.Suzru Teh.& Distt. Muzaffarnagar. Bounded and Butted as under: North- Road 35 Ft Wide South-House of Kamruzama Rana Etc., East-Property of Kamruzama Rana Etc., West-Chak Road 11 Ft. Wide. TERMS & CONDITIONS: 1. The auction will be conducted by way of e-auction and bidding shall take place

hrough "Online Electronic Bidding" through the website https://drt.auctiontiger.net. of M/s E-Procure Technologies Ltd. (Auction Tiger) on 18.06.2024 between 11:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M. with extension of 5 minute: duration after 12:00 P.M. if required.

. The Properties shall not be sold below the reserve price fixed here under:

(a) The interested bidders are required to deposit EMD along with documents PAN Card, Identity Proof, Address Proof etc., and in the case of company, copy of resolution passed by the Board Members of the Company or any othe documents claiming representation/attorney of the company also, latest by 14.06.2024 before 4:00 PM in the office of the Recovery Officer, DRT, Dehradun and thereafter they shall be eligible to participate in the eauction to be held from 11:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M. on 18.06.2024. In case, bid is placed in the last 5 minutes of the closing time of the auction, the closing time will automatically get extended for 5 minutes. (b) The EMD shall be deposited by way of demand draft only favouring "Recovery Officer, Debts Recovery

ribunal, Dehradun", in the office of the Recovery officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal, Second Floor, Paras Tower, Saharanpur Road, Dehradun. (c) The relevant details for participation in the process of the e-auction are furnished hereunder for the information o

the prospective bidders/participants & general Public. Name of the service provider: e-procurement technologies ltd.

Portal of service provider https://drt.auctiontiger.net

+91-79-68136880/881/837/842, 09265562821, 09265562818, 09265562819 support@auctiontiger.net Email ID of Service provider Portal of e-auction https://drt.auctiontiger.net

For further detail contact: Office of The Recovery Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal, Dehradun contact No. 0135-2974077 and for property inspection contact. 3. The amount by which the biddings are to be increased shall be as mentioned above in the event of any dispute

arising as to the amount of bid, or as to the bidder, the lot shall at once be again put up to auction 4. The unsuccessful bidder shall take EMD directly from the Office of Recovery Officer, DRT, Dehradun Immediately

n closure of the e-auction sale proceeds. 5. The successful/highest bidder shall have to prepare Demand Draft/Pay Order for 25% of the bid/sale amount after adjusting the EMD, favouring "Recovery Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal Dehradun or through NEFT/RTGS to

Current Account No. 7360878086, Indian Bank, ISBT Dehradun Branch, Dehradun, IFSC Code-IDIB000D557 by next bank working day i.e., by 04:00 PM with this Tribunal failing which the EMD shall be forfeited.

6. The successful/highest bidder shall deposit through Demand Draft/Pay Order favouring "Recovery Officer, DRT Dehradun" or through RTGS to Current Account No. 7360878086, Indian Bank, ISBT Dehradun Branch Dehradun IFSC Code- IDIB000D557", the balance 75% of the sale proceed before the Recovery Officer, DRT

Dehradun on or before 15th day from the date of auction of the property, exclusive of such day or if the 15th day be Sunday or other holiday, then on the first office day after the 15th day along with poundage @ 2% up to Rs. 1,000/and @ 1% on the excess of such gross amount over Rs. 1,000/- in favour of Registrar, DRT, Dehradun. (In case o deposit of balance amount of 75% through post, the same should reach the Recovery Officer as above). In case of default of payment within the prescribed period, the property shall be re-sold, after the issue of fresh

Proclamation of Sale. The deposit, after defraying the expenses of the sale, may, if the undersigned thinks fit be forfeited to the Government and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property of to any part of the sum

8. The highest bidder shall be declared to be the purchaser provided that the amount bid by him is not less than the reserve price. It shall be in the discretion of the undersigned to decline/acceptance of the highest bid when the price offered appears so clearly inadequate as to make it inadvisable to do so.

9. The property shall remain open for inspection by prospective bidder on any bank working day after 03:00 P.M. The Facilitation Officer, Shri Shivam Julka, Senior Manager, Punjab National Bank, Circle Sastra, Haridwar Uttarakhand-will make necessary arrangement for inspection by the prospective bidders

10. The property is being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "AS IS WHATEVER" BASIS. The outstanding dues if any, of any authority on the property/properties shall be borne by the auction purchaser/purchasers a part from bid amount. 11. There is no updated details of revenue/encumbrance or claim against the properties in the knowledge o

undersigned at this stage. However, prospective bidders are advised to make their own due diligence w.r.t. due electricity/water/house tax bills or any other encumbrance etc., in their own interest, before deposit of EMD. The successful bidder shall bear charge/fee for conveyance, registration free, stamp duty, etc.

13. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offer(s) or adjourn/postpone the sale without assigning any reason thereof subject to the provisions of the Second Schedule to the Income Tax Act, 1961.

14. The sale shall be subject to confirmation by Recovery Officer-II, Debts Recovery Tribunal, Dehradun which can be cancelled for any reason or without assigning any reason.

15. The Recovery Officer is empowered to add any part or take out any part of the property from the auctio 16. The particulars specified in the annexed schedule have been stated to be correct to the information of the undersigned but the undersigned shall not be answerable for any error, mis-statement or omission in this

Recovery Officer-II,

Secretary over quota to Muslims

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) would be summoning the Karnataka chief secretary over the "blanket reservation" given to the Muslim community in the State, chairperson Hansraj Ahir said on Thursday The NCBC has criticised the Karnataka Government's decision to categorise the entire Muslim community as a backward caste for reservation purposes saying such blanket categorisation undermines the principles of social justice.

All castes/communities of Muslim religion in Karnataka are considered socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and are categorised as Muslim Caste sepa-



rately under Category IIB in the State List of Backward Classes," NCBC chairperson Ahir said. "This classification enables them to receive reservation in educational institution admissions and in appointments to posts and vacancies in the services of the State, as per Articles 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution of India," he said. The NCBC has emphasised that while there are indeed underprivileged and historically marginalised sections within the Muslim community, treating the entire religion as backward overlooks the diversity and complexities within Muslim society.

Ahir said the response received from the state government on the matter has not been satisfactory and he would be summoning the Karnataka chief secretary to give an explanation over the move.

According to the data submit-

ted by the Karnataka Backward Classes Welfare Department, all castes and communities within the Muslim religion have been enlisted as socially and educationally backward classes under Category IIB in the State List of Backward Classes The commission, during a field visit last year, examined Karnataka's reservation policy for OBCs in educational institutions and government jobs. While Karnataka provides 32 per cent reservation to backward classes in local body elections, including Muslims, the NCBC stressed the need for a nuanced approach that accounts for the diversity within these communities. According to the 2011 Census, Muslims constitute 12.92 per cent of the population in

NCBC to summon Karnataka Chief US report on rights violations in Manipur deeply biased: MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $I_{a\ US\ State\ Department}^{ndia\ on\ Thursday\ described}$ report citing alleged incidents of human rights violations including in Manipur as "deeply biased" and said it reflects a poor understanding of India and it attach no value to it.

This reaction by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)came in response to the annual report of the State Department which highlighted instances of human rights abuses in Manipur following the outbreak of ethnic con-

"This report is deeply biased and reflects a poor understanding of India," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal

"We attach no value to it and



said at his weekly media briefing. The report also mentioned the raids by Indian tax authorities on the office of Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

The India section of the report said local human rights organisations, minority political parties and affected communities criticised the country's government for the delayed action to stop violence and provide humanitarian assistance in Manipur.

According to the report, there were a number of press and civil society reports of representatives of political parties using disinformation tactics against civil society organisations, religious

minorities, such as Sikhs and Muslims, and the political opposition, sometimes depicting them as security threats. Referring to the tax raids on BBC offices, the report said although tax authorities described the searches as motivated by irregularities in the BBC's tax payments and ownership structure, officials also searched and seized equipment from journalists who were not involved in the organisation's financial processes.
"The government invoked

emergency powers to ban screening of the documentary, forced media companies to remove links to the video, and detained student protesters who organised viewing parties," the State Department alleged, referring to a BBC documentary on the 2002 Gujarat riots, the screening of

Kharge seeks time from Modi to explain him Congress Nyay Patra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

ongress chief Mallikariun CKharge on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and sought time from him to explain in person the party's "Nyay Patra". In his two-page letter, he told the Prime Minister that he is being misinformed by his advisors about things that are not even written in the "Nyay Patra"-the Congress manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections.

The letter comes after the prime minister attacked the Congress over its manifesto, alleging that the party aims to "redistribute the wealth" of people and give it away to "infiltrators". Modi also accused the Congress of snatching women's "mangalsu-

In his letter, Kharge said the Congress' 'Nyay Patra' aims at providing "nyay (justice)" to the youngsters, women, farm-



ers, labourers and marginalised people across all castes and communities. "It has become your habit to seize on a few words taken out of context and create a communal divide. You are lowering the dignity of the chair by speaking in this manner. You are being misinformed by your advisors about things that are not even written in our manifesto. I would be more than happy to meet you in person to explain our 'Nyay Patra' so that, as Prime Minister of the country, you don't make any state-

ments that are false," he added.

The Congress chief also said he

is neither shocked nor surprised by the language used by the prime minister in his recent speeches. "It was expected that you and other leaders from your party would start speaking in this manner after you saw the dismal performance of the BJP in the first phase of the elections," Kharge said in the

The Congress has been talking about the deprived poor and their rights ("nyay"), he said and added, "We are aware that you and your government do not have any concern for the oor and dispossessed."

'Your 'suit-boot ki sarkar' works for the corporates whose taxes you reduced while the salaried class pays higher taxes. The poor pay GST even on food and salt and the rich corporate claim GST refunds. That is why, when we talk of inequality between the rich and the poor, you are purposely equating it with Hindu and Muslim," Kharge claimed.

Ten Indians working with Russian Army have returned to India: MEA

Ten Indian nationals working as support staff with the Russian military have been released and have returned to India, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday. Giving this information here

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said New Delhi has been pressing Russia to ensure the return of all other citizens serving in similar positions in the Russian military.

Ten such individuals have come back to India and they have been released and they have returned home," Jaiswal said at his weekly media brief-

After two Indians, working as support staff with the Russian military lost their lives, India last month called on its nationals to not risk their lives by taking up such jobs. Jaiswal said the Indian side is



of all Indians serving with the Russian military at various levels, including with the foreign ministry, defence ministry and several other organisations in 'We are committed to bring

back all the people who so far have got in touch with us and want to be released and repatriated and return back home,"

We have been assured by the Russian side that the other Indians who are there, they'll also be released and will return home. We are working out On the case of an Indian

national from Jammu and Kashmir serving in the Russian military and whose relatives were allegedly asked by Indian officials to get in touch with Russian authorities to ensure his release, Jaiswal said Indian officials are in touch with Russian authorities over it. We remain committed to bring him back as well, he said.

There were reports that said around 200 Indian nationals were recruited since last year to work as support with the

Modi knows polls have slipped out of his hands, says Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday claimed the difference between his party's guarantees and 'Modi Ki Guar

antee' is clear and added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi knows that the elections have "slipped out of his hands". In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said the Congress guarantees a "government of Indians." Listing some promises made by the Congress, Rahul Gandhi said women will get Rs 8,500 per month, youth will get a job that pays Rs 1 lakh per year, recruitment will be carried out for 30 lakh vacancies and legal MSP will be provided to farm-

"Modi's guarantee: Adanis' government - The country's wealth in the pockets of billionaires; donation business extortion gang; Constitution and democracy are over; farmers facing a paucity of finances; the difference is clear!" the former Congress chief said. 'Congress will create crores of millionaires in India and Modi

Addressing a rally in Amravati, Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday had claimed that ten years of the Modi government saw only 22-25 persons becoming billionaires on the back of a Rs 16 lakh crore loan waiver, but if the INDIA bloc comes to power, it will make

crores of people "lakhpatis".

i knows that the election has slipped out of his hands," he

112 AFMC graduates of 58th batch commissioned into Armed forces: Officials

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

total of 112 medical grad-Auates of the 58th batch of the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune, have been commissioned into the armed forces, officials on Thursday said. Of these 112 cadets commis-

sioned into the Armed Forces Medical Services, 87 are Gentlemen Cadets and 25 are Lady Cadets. 81 of them were commissioned into the Army, 10 commissioned into the Navy and 14 commissioned into the Indian Air Force, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

"In a spectacular ceremony one hundred and twelve medical graduates of the 58th batch of the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune, were commissioned into the Indian Armed Forces on April 25 at Capt Devashish Sharma, Kirti Chakra Parade Ground, AFMC," the ministry said.



The chief guest at the ceremony was Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS) and Senior Colonel Commandant, Army Medical Corps, Lt General Daljit Singh.

The DGAFMS reviewed the Commissioning parade that was commanded by medical cadet (now Lieutenant) Sushil Kumar Singh, the statement

Congratulating the newly commissioned officers, Lt Gen Singh exhorted them to serve the country and the armed forces with utmost dedication and wished them a bright and prosperous

Modi pays tributes to Parkash Singh Badal on his death anniversary



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday paid tribute to former Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal on his first death anniversary, saying his indelible spirit and boundless dedication to service are greatly remembered.

'Remembering the great Parkash Singh Badal Sahab on his first Punya Tithi. His indelible spirit and boundless dedication to service are greatly remembered," Modi said in a post on X, sharing an article he had written on the stalwart Akali Dal leader after his passing last year. Badal, a widely respected leader, died at the age of 95 in 2023.

Project Cheetah poised to expand to Gandhisagar PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

s Cheetah pugmarks As Chectan Pagara turing beyond the boundaries of their first home. Kuno Pradesh, attention now shifts to the nearby Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary in the State, where the ambitious Project Cheetah is poised to expand. Plans are afoot to release five to eight felines into a fenced area for breeding and conservation efforts later this year.

This was shared by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a pivotal statutory body entrusted with overseeing the protection and preservation of big cats in the country, in its recent post on social media X, former known as Twitter.

Five to eight cheetahs will be released into a fenced area in the new areas of Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary in the State also known as Healthland of India possibly in the second half of the year with a focus on the breeding of animals, the NTCA posted



on the social media platform. Gandhi Sagar is about a sixhour drive from Kuno. It is spread across 368 square kilometres and has an additional 2,500 sq km area surrounding it. The official informed that a South African delegation reached India on Tuesday to review preparations at Gandhisagar for the introduction of cheetahs and the progress of the project in the Kuno National Park. "Officials from South Africa

visited the Gandhisagar

strengthened in the wake of

"new challenges" of cyber-

crime to reach the culprit

fast, the NHRC chief added.

He emphasised on increased

systematic coordination

Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh, and were apprised of preparations to receive cheetahs under the ambitious Project Cheetah. Valuable insights were shared while visiting the bomas, control room, and upcoming veterinary facilities," read the post. It further shared that on Wednesday, the South African delegation met Indian officials in New Delhi, and discussions focused on strengthening collaboration between the two countries in species

conservation, especially Project Cheetah which was kicked off in November 2022. According to a document released by the Union Environment Ministry earlier this year, the long-term drew criticism over the aniulation of cheetahs in the Kuno-Gandhisagar landscape (area around 9,000 square km) of 60-70 individuals after restorative measures, prey availability, and scientific management are ensured. The current action plan, following the broad framework

of the earlier action plan for the introduction of cheetahs in India, has been modified and formulated based on the experiences learned from Kuno suited for the site-specific requirements of Gandhisagar in consonance with the overarching guidelines of IUCN on reintroductions and conservation translocations (2013), the document read.

Project Cheetah aims to reintroduce the only large carnivore species that went extinct in independent India. The first batch of eight cheetahs was introduced in India in September 2022, and the second batch of 12 cheetahs was flown in from South Africa last February.

The much-vaunted cheetah conservation project initially the birth of 12 cubs this year so far, officials claim that the project is on the right track. Namibian cheetah Aasha gave birth to three cubs in January. Jwala, another female cheetah from Namibia, also gave birth to three cubs in the same month. She had delivered four cubs last year but only one of them survived. With South African cheetah Gamini giving birth to six cubs in March, the total number of cheetahs, including cubs, in Kuno is now 26. Since last March, seven adult cheetahs, including Shaurya,

The seven adult cheetahs -three females and four males that died include Sasha, Uday, Daksha, Tejas, Suraj, Dhatri, and Shaurya. The first six fatalities occurred in a six-

month period between March

and August 2023.

have died due to various rea-

Forensic labs need to be augmented for expeditious tests: NHRC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

The number of technolog-I ically advanced forensic laboratories in India needs to be "augmented for expeditious examination", the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) said on Wednesday.

Chairperson, NHRC, Justice (retd) Arun Kumar Mishra, during a core group meeting here also said that investigation and forensics examination should be part of the process and "not independent" of each other. "The observation followed after a core group meeting of the NHRC on criminal justice system reforms," the rights

panel said in a statement. The focus was on finding ways to address delay in forensic reports, areas of improvement in the prosecution sys-



language used in organs of criminal justice system.

During the discussions, it was emphasised that public prosecutors play a very important role at the trial stage and therefore, it is necessary to

of public prosecutors to ensure transparency and merit in their appointment, the

statement said. A training academy should also be set up for them with a research and analysis wing.

They also need to be supported with proper office infrastructure, it said, adding that the witness examination should be the "prerogative of the public prosecutor and not of the judges".

The meeting, in hybrid mode, was chaired by the NHRC chairperson in the presence of core group members, experts, academicians, representatives of civil society organisations and senior officers of the Commission.

Justice Mishra said forensic examination in the criminal iustice system plays a critical role. Delay in forensic examination results in delayed justice, he was quoted as saying in the statement. The number of technologi-

cally advanced forensic labo-

ratories needs to be aug-

mented for expeditious exam-

ination, he said. The digital

forensics also needs to be

system for speedy trial ensuring that any innocent person doesn't suffer, the NHRC chief Justice Mishra also said that public prosecutors need to be given exposure to forensics and the concept of trial.

He said language is a barrier for the common man in understanding legalese in judgments as most of these are delivered in English, which is difficult to understand for many people.

communicate unique identity PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ **NEW DELHI**

The Indian Historical Record Commission among public prosecutors, forensic teams and the police. For this, their training in the (IHRC) has adopted a new logo and motto to visually legal provisions, the concept of trial and the importance of communicate the "unique identity" and ethos it repreforensics is necessary for sents, officials on Thursday reforms in the criminal justice said. The new logo has been selected by the government through an online competition hosted on MyGov portal from May 12 to June 12 last

year, they said. The entry for logo and motto submitted by Shaurya Pratap Singh (Delhi) was selected for logo as well as motto of the IHRC, the Ministry of Culture

said in a statement. "In order to visually communicate the unique identity of IHRC and the ethos that it



IHRC adopts new logo to

represents, an online competition was launched in 2023 on MyGov portal to invite the designs for logo and motto, and in response a total 436 entries were received," the statement said.

"The pages in the shape of lotus petals represent IHRC as the resilient nodal institution for maintaining historical records. The Sarnath pillar in the middle represents

the colour theme reinforces the organisation's mission of preserving, studying and honouring India's historical records," the statement said. Set up in 1919, the Historical Record Commission (IHRC), an apex advisory body on archival matters and headed by the Union Minister of Culture, acts as an all-India forum of creators, custodians and users of records to advise the government of India on the management of records and their use for historical research. The National Archives of India in New Delhi is the Secretariat of Indian Historical Records Committee (later re-designated Indian Historical Records Commission).



Stage set for BJP, Congress poll battle Rajiv scrapped inheritance tax to save Indira's in Jammu Reasi Lok Sabha seat

fter witnessing a close Acontest Udhampur-Doda Lok Sabha seat the stage is now set for another interesting poll battle between the Bharativa Janta Party and the Congress party on the Jammu-Řeasi Lok Sabha seat in the second phase of polling on Friday. Minister

Working President of the Congress in Jammu and Kashmir Raman Bhalla is challenging two-time sitting MP Jugal Kishore Sharma of BJP. Ankur Sharma of Ekam Sanatan Bharat Dal is also in the fray to test the political waters ahead of the maiden Assembly polls in the Union

Territory. In 2019, Jugal Kishore won the seat by a margin of over 3 lakh votes defeating his opponent Raman Bhalla. BJP candidate Jugal Kishore is hopeful of scoring a hat-trick riding high on the pro-Modi support base across Jammu, Samba and Reasi districts while the Congress candidate Raman Bhalla is hoping to encash on the anti-BJP sentiment in the backdrop of Abrogation of Article 370.

of employment opportunities for the youth,



districts were removed and

attached to the Anantnag-

Rajouri Lok Sabha seat during

the marathon exercise. "Similarly, the whole of Reasi

district has been removed

from Udhampur constituency

and allocated to Jammu. Post

with the highest number of 23

percent Scheduled Caste

The Election Commission

authorities are geared up to

in the second phase on April

The first phase of polling on

Jammu

Delimitation,

votes.

residents Jammu and Samba districts, sense of insecurity regarding land, and resources are the other key factors around which the Congress party ran its campaign to woo the electorate. The National Conference cadre has also helped the INDIA alliance emerged as the constituency candidate to give a tough challenge to the sitting BJP

Delimitation, the Post Jammu-Reasi Lok Sabha seat has witnessed significant boost the total poll percentage changes. For the first time after the 1967 polls, the Rajouri and Poonch districts opportunities for the youth, will not be part of the Jammu the Udhampur-Doda Lok unattended grievances of the Lok Sabha seat as the frontier Sabha seat recorded a poll

percentage of 68.2 percent. In 2019, Jammu Lok Sabha seat had recorded a turnout of over 72 percent. Around 17.80 lakh voters are

expected to seal the fate of 22 candidates in the fray across 2416 polling stations spread across 4 districts of Jammu Samba, Reasi and Rajouri (83-Kalakote-Sunderbani).

9,21,095 male and 8,59,712 female voters besides 28 third-gender voters have been enrolled in the voters list.

According to the office of the Returning Officer, special arrangements have been made to facilitate around 10498 Persons with Diability 10498 Persons with Disability and 666 persons above the age of 100 years. At least 62 polling stations have been set up along the International border in Jammu and Samba districts. The polling parties were dispatched on Thursday to far-flung areas. Around 1454 polling stations

in phase 2 will have CCTV cameras for the live webcasting to control rooms established CEO/district offices.

In the entire Union Territory the date announcement of the election till date material/cash of around Rs 28.497 crore has been seized by various enforcement departments.

its MPs in the remaining four

constituencies would try to

Bihar's only parliamentary

constituency where Muslims

are in majority, Kishanganj, is

heading for yet another three-

cornered contest between Congress MP Mohd Javed,

JD(U) runner up of 2019

Mujahid Alam and Akhtarul Iman of the AIMIM, who had

made a splash five years ago by

garnering close to three lakh

retain their turf.

wealth from going to Government, says Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said then-PM Rajiv Gandhi abolished the inheritance tax after his mother Indira Gandhi's death in 1984 to save her wealth from going to the government, and alleged the Congress now wants to bring back the levy.

high-decibel the canvassing for Lok Sabha political sent temperatures soaring, the BJP's star campaigner doubled down on his wealth redistribution inheritance tax charge at the Congress and vowed to protect people's from what he called the rival party's plans to loot them.

Addressing a rally in Madhya Pradesh's Morena, where voting will take place on May 7, Modi escalated his attack on the grand old party and accused it of "cutting off the country's hands" by accepting Partition on the basis of religion. Modi said then-PM Rajiv Gandhi abolished the inheritance tax, a levy imposed on inherited movable and immovable assets, in 1985 after his mother Indira Gandhi's death to save her wealth from going to the government.

open about the sins the Congress has committed. I want to put forth an interesting fact. When sister Indira Gandhi passed away, there was a law by virtue of which half of the wealth used to go to the government. There were talks then that

Indiraji willed her wealth in

her son Rajiv Gandhi's name,"

Modi told the gathering.

"To save the money going to the government, the then-PM Rajiv Gandhi abolished the inheritance tax," the BJP stalwart opined. If the main opposition party comes to power, it will snatch more than half of people's earnings through inheritance tax, the PM warned voters, latching onto controversial remarks on the issue made by US-based senior Congress leader Sam

Pitroda. A day after MP Rahul Gandhi's remark that those who call themselves "deshbhakt" (patriots) are scared of a caste census, Modi said the Congress wants to confiscate people's jewellery and small savings by conducting an X-ray of their properties and valuables. An adviser to the opposition party's 'shehzada' (referring to Rahul Gandhi) has now suggested imposition of an to the government. inheritance tax, he said, "Listen with your ears wide seizing on Pitroda's remarks.

The Congress wants to bring back the inheritance tax now that after its four generations have reaped the benefit of the wealth passed on to them, he said. But the BJP will not allow such designs to succeed, the PM assured the crowd. 'The wealth that you have accumulated by working hard and enduring hardships will be looted from you once a Congress-led government is

"Modi with his 56-inch chest is standing as a wall between you and the Congress' plan to loot you. That is why Congress leaders and the opposition abuse me so much," the PM said.

formed," he said.

He accused the Congress of accepting Partition of the country on religious lines. "Instead of unshackling the hands of 'Maa Bharti', the Congress cut off her hands Modi alleged. The Congress wants to snatch

reservation of SCs/STs/OBCs for the sake of its Muslim vote-bank and was bent on grabbing power with religious appeasement, the PM said. "The Congress says Muslims have the first right on the country's resources, while I say the poor have the first right on them," Modi emphasised. Describing himself as 'kaamdar' (working class) and Rahul Gandhi as 'naamdar' (dynast), the PM said, "Nowadays, the shehzada (prince) of the Congress is enjoying abusing Modi. We are there to listen to the abuses from the 'naamdaars' but I will continue serving the people and 'Maa Bharti.'

For years, the Congress did not allow the 'One Rank One Pension' scheme for armed forces personnel, but "we did it (implemented the scheme)", the PM noted.

The Congress has been hatching a conspiracy to deprive tribals and backward classes of their rights, the BJP stalwart said. "Will you ensure a total washout of those snatching the rights of backward classes?" he asked the gathering, calling for a defeat of the Congress in the

Stage set for phase II of LS polls in Assam, 61 in fray

ssam is all set to witness a Atriangular and a direct contest for the second of the three-phased polls in five constituencies to decide the fate of 61 candidates in the frav on Friday. Polling will begin at 7 am and

end at 5 pm in the five constituencies - Karimganj, Silchar (SC), Diphu (ST), Nagaon and Darrang-Udalguri.

The prominent candidates in the fray are sitting MPs Pradyut Bordoloi of Congress from Nagaon, BJP's Dilip Saikia and Kripanath Malla from Darrang-Udalguri and Karimganj, respectively, and Assam minister Parimal Suklabaidya of BJP from Silchar (SĆ), among others.

38.95 lakh male, 38.61 lakh female and 179 third gender are eligible to exercise their franchise across 9,133 polling stations.

Polling will be held amid tight security, with 60 companies of security forces deployed across the five constituencies. The BJP and the Congress are contesting in all five seats, the AIUDF in two and the Trinamool Congress in one. In this phase, only two women candidates are in the

constituency, Karimganj bordering Bangladesh, has the highest number of 24 candidates, with independents, while Diphu (ST) is the lowest with five



candidates in the fray. In Karimganj, a triangular contest is on the cards among In Darrang-Udalguri, 11 Choudhury of Congress and AIUDF's Sahibul Alam

Choudhury. Eight candidates are in the fray in Silchar, and the contest is likely to be triangular Assam minister between Parimal Suklabaidya of BJP, Surya Kanta Sarkar of Congress and Radheyshyam Trinamool Biswas of

Congress. Five contestants are in the fray in Diphu (ST), and the contest is likely to be between BJP's Amarsing Tisso and Joyram

Engleng of Congress. A total of 13 candidates are in the fray in Nagaon, and the contest is set to be triangular between sitting Congress MP Prodyut Bordoloi, BJP's

Suresh Bora and AIUDF's Aminul Islam.

sitting BJP MP Kripanath candidates are contesting, with the contest direct between sitting BJP MP Dilip Saikia and Congress candidate Madhab The Bodo Rajbongshi. Peoples' Front candidate
Durga Das Boro is also expected to put up a good

> Assam Chief Electoral Officer Anurag Goel said all arrangements have been completed for conducting the polls in a free, fair and

> peaceful manner. In the first phase of polls held on April 19, 78.25 per cent of the electorate exercised their franchise to decide the fate of 35 candidates for the Kaziranga, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Sonitpur and Lakhimpur constituencies.

PTI ■ GUMLA

 $F_{\text{Congress}}^{\text{ormer}}$

CCongress president Sukhdev Bhagat on Thursday

filed his nomination for the

Jharkhand



maximum spotlight alias Pappu Yadav, who is appears to be on Purnea, where altogether seven candidates are in the fray, the lowest for the five seats.

An intense three-cornered battle is being witnessed in the Lok Sabha constituency where ID(U) MP Santosh Kushwaha Anwar, who has won the seat aims at a hat-trick, but will face a stiff challenge from three- Congress to which he returned

contesting as an Independent, and RJD's Bima Bharti, an MLA who recently crossed over from the chief minister's

In neighbouring Katihar, former Union minister Tariq many times, on tickets of the time former MP Rajesh Ranjan a few years ago as also the NCP

member, is trying to wrest the constituency from JD(U)'s Dulal Chandra Goswami, to whom he had lost by a thin margin last time.

Another keenly watched constituency is Bhagalpur, which the Congress is contesting for the first time in over two decades. Party MLA Ajeet Sharma, who has been springing a surprise in the last couple of assembly polls by winning the eponymous Vidhan Sabha seat, is posing a tough challenge to JD(U) MP Ajay Mandal.

In Banka, JD(U) MP Giridhari

Yadav is locked in yet another straight contest with RJD's Jay Prakash Narvan Yadav, from whom he had wrested the seat five years ago.

Among the 50 candidates in the fray for the second phase, only three are women, with RJD's Bima Bharti in Purnea

contesting on a major party's

The total number of voters for the five seats is 93.96 lakh. including 45.15 lakh women and 306 belonging to the third Young voters form more than

with 13.77 lakh in the age group of 18-19 years and another 20.86 lakh aged between 20 and 29 years. Special arrangements will be in

one-third of the electorate,

place for 89,743 persons with disabilities and 79,085 voters aged over 85 years.

More than 150 companies of paramilitary forces will assist the local police in ensuring free

and fair polls, officials said. The elections will take place at a time when the state is reeling under an intense heatwave, with the mercury shooting past the 40-degrees Celsius

mark in most parts.

Tripura BJP vice president accuses ally Tipra Motha chief of spreading hatred among tribals

PTI ■ AGARTALA

A head of the second phase of the Lok Sabha elections, Tripura BJP vice president Patal Kanya Jamatia accused the saffron party's alliance partner Tipra Motha Pradyot Kishore Debbarma of Manikya "spreading hatred" among tribals in the state.

She also alleged that the Tipra Motha was "cheating tribals in the name of politics" and

said indigenous people would not support the regional party if he did not apologise. Jamatia's comment comes two days before the polling for the Tripura East Lok Sabha seat on Friday, where Debbarma's sister Kriti Devi Debbarman is contesing as a BJP nominee.

"Pradvot has started spreading hatred not only among tribals and non-tribal people but also those belonging to various tribes such as Tripuri, Jamatia, and Reang," the BJP leader said on Wednesday night.

The Tipra Motha did not react to Jamatia's remarks but the BJP disapproved the statement of the party's state vice president.

After signing an agreement with the Centre and the state government, the Motha, which won 13 of the 60 assembly seats last year, joined the BJP-led coalition government in March.

Woman Collector meets people in buses, shops, urges them to vote on election day in Kerala



PTI ■ KOTTAYAM (KERALA)

Kottayam District Collector V Vigneshwari, who is also the District Election Officer for the Kottayam parliamentary constituency, pursued a distinctive mission on Thursday, rallying support increased participation in the next day's polls in Kerala.

Tomorrow (Friday) is our voting day. Don't forget to come and cast your votes," Vigneshwari appealed to passengers in a bus parked at a private bus stand Nagampadam here Thursday.

Curious passengers stood up as the 2015-batch IAS officer boarded the bus, making an appeal for their participation in the poll process

They respectfully nodded positively, accepting a card pinned with a candy provided by the collector. "Children, please tell your parents to cast their votes," she told children sitting on seats in the bus filled to capacity with

passengers. What is in it (the card)?," she asked the children after giving it to them, and told them, 'Tell father, mother, and friends to vote for the person they want as their MP." She

then proceeded towards the shops in the bus stand, making similar appeals. "Have you reached voting age?," she asked a group of girl students waiting for their bus. When they answered "yes," she said, "So, please don't forget to vote tomorrow. You all are the backbone of our democracy. You may be first-time voters. Please cast your votes." Later, talking to reporters, Vigneshwari said, "This is the festival of democracy, and we are inviting all to participate in it. So, all of us should cast our votes, spending an hour of our time.

She added: "All votes are valuable. That is why we are individually impressing upon them the value of their votes, she said. A district information officer said the administration district implemented the programme, whereby the district collector would urge voters to exercise franchise,

20 Lok Sabha seats are vying

collaboration with the Private Bus Owners Association. A total of 194 contestants in

for voters' support as Kerala goes to the polls on Friday, after over a month-long fierce campaign by the CPI(M)-led ruling LDF, Congress-headed UDF, and the BJP-led NDA.

Preparations complete for second phase polling in Manipur

Arrangements are complete for the smooth conduct of elections to the Manipur Outer Lok Sabha seat, encompassing 13 assembly segments, where over 4.7 lakh voters will decide the fate of four candidates on Friday.

In the first phase, 15 assembly segments of Outer Manipur along with 32 assembly segments of Inner Manipur had gone to the polls on April

Candidates in the fray for this phase are Naga People's Front candidate K Timothy Zimik, Congress' Alfred Kanngam Arthur and independents S Kho John and Alyson Abonmai. The BJP hasn't fielded any candidate and is supporting its ally, the NPF. Of the 13 assembly segments going to polls, ten are predominantly Nagainhabited areas.

highest number of voters in Outer Manipur (142,843), will see voting across 288 polling stations. Ukhrul district.

Lohardaga Lok Sabha seat and claimed that he would predominantly inhabited by the Tangkhul Naga community, has 93,869 voters spread across two assembly segments. The district has set up 141 polling stations and four special booths for internally displaced people.

Jiribam district, bordering Assam's Silchar and the only non-ST assembly seat in Phase-2, has 30,809 voters and 41 polling stations. Notably, two polling stations,

waterways. Tengnoupal district, which border with Myanmar and witnessed multiple incidents of conflict last year, has 42,731 voters and 74 polling stations.

Babukhal and Boroikhal, are

accessible only through

Senapati district, with the

win the elections by a margin of 1 lakh votes. The Congress is fighting the Lohardaga as per its seat-sharing agreement with the JMM. However, JMM's Bishnupur MLA Chamra Linda filed nomination papers as an Independent candidate for the seat on Wednesday. "Chamra Linda is like my younger brother. It was an impulsive decision by him.

> Bhagat told PTI. He said Linda should understand that the coalition was fighting for tribal identity and to save democracy and the Constitution.

There is time and I think he

will use discretion and support the INDIA bloc,"



Jharkhand: Congress Sukhdev

files nomination from Lohardaga

for every community in India, but there is no column for tribal religion, which is Sarna, in the Census. A resolution was passed by the Jharkhand assembly for the Sarna code but it is stuck with the central government," Bhagat said.

"Now, the BJP wants to abolish the tribal customary law by bringing the Uniform Civil Code. So, it is important for all to root out the BJP

he added. Bhagat alleged the BJP

government works for corporate and not the people. There is no price rise, unemployment and women security in the dictionary of the BJP government. On the other hand, Rahul Gandhi is concerned about every section of the society," he

claimed.

constituency will go to the polls on May 13 along with Singhbum, Khunti and Palamu.

withdrawal He was defeated by BJP's nominations is April 29.

fielded Rajya Sabha MP Samir Oraon, who filed his nomination on Wednesday. "My victory is certain and hopefully, I will win by a margin of more than 1 lakh votes," the Congress leader said. After Bhagat filed the nomination papers, he attended a public meeting at the Town Hall in Gumla. The rally was addressed by Chief Minister Champai Soren,

Sudarshan Bhagat by

narrow margin of 10,363 votes in the 2019 Lok Sabha

polls. This time, the BJP has

Rajesh Thakur and the party's in-charge for Jharkhand Ghulam Ahmad Mir. The Lohardaga Lok Sabha

The nomination process for the four seats concluded on Thursday, and the last date for www.dailypioneer.com

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Patrimonial dispute

It may be time to debate a tax on inheritance in India, but it will not be a walk in the park

The informal proposal in the Congress quarters of an inheritance tax has garnered attention and curiosity across India. While the party has distanced itself from these remarks, originally made by Indian Overseas Congress chairperson Sam Pitroda, the Statement has given another stick to the BJP to beat the Congress with. As to the viability of implementing a tax system akin to America's, delving into the issue requires a comprehensive examination of various factors, including economic, social and political. The US has long embraced the concept of taxing inheritance, albeit with its own complexities and controversies. The rationale behind such a tax is multilayered. One, it aims to address wealth inequality by ensuring that accumulated wealth is not perpetually passed down generations without contributing to public good. Two, it serves as a source of revenue for the Government, aiding in funding public services and initiatives. However, the implementation of an inheritance



tax in India would face unique challenges. One of the primary concerns is the prevalence of informal economies and undocumented wealth, which could potentially evade taxation. Additionally, India's cultural and social fabric places a significant emphasis on familial ties and inheritance practices, making the introduction of such a tax a sensitive issue. Moreover, the Indian taxation system already comprises various levies, including income tax, capital gains tax and wealth tax (though repealed in 2015), which may complicate the addition of an inheritance tax. There are also concerns about the practicality of administering such a tax, given the diverse nature

of assets and prevailing inheritance structures. However, proponents argue that implementing an inheritance tax could serve as a tool for promoting economic mobility and reducing wealth concentration among a select few. By imposing a tax on large inheritances, the Government could potentially redistribute wealth more equitably and generate revenue to fund social welfare programmes. To effectively assess the feasibility of an inheritance tax in India, policymakers would need to engage in extensive consultations with stakeholders, including economists, tax experts, legal professionals and the public. Additionally, careful consideration has to be given to designing a tax framework that minimises loopholes and ensures compliance while addressing concerns related to family businesses, agricultural land and other sensitive assets. Any decision to introduce an inheritance tax should be accompanied by measures to enhance tax transparency, improve enforcement mechanisms and bolster efforts to combat tax evasion and avoidance. In conclusion, while the idea of taxing inheritance in India draws parallels with the US model, its implementation would necessitate a nuanced approach tailored to the nation's unique socio-economic context.



The marginalisation of disabled in politics -



Despite 2.68 crore persons with disabilities, the divyang community struggles to find representation in mainstream politics

n the vast landscape of Indian democracy, where diversity should thrive, the voices and needs of individuals with disabilities often echo in silence. Despite India accounting for 2.68 crore persons with disabilities, making up 2.28 per cent of the population as per Census 2011, the disabled community has been unable to find its place in mainstream politics. With the Lok Sabha General Elections 2024 looming large and around the corner, a stark reality emerges: out of the 543 seats, not even one is occupied by a person with a disability. This absence speaks volumes, reflecting a systemic failure to acknowledge the rights and contributions of over 2.68 crore disabled individuals.

As the countdown to the elections intensifies, this leads us to critical questions. Why do the demands of persons with disabilities find little or no place in the manifestos of the political parties? Why do the exit polls overlook this significant demographic, pushing them to the sidelines of the demographic discourse? Can we truly celebrate the biggest festival of democracy with one of the significant sections of the population lagging behind?

A vicious cycle of exclusion persists when it comes to the political representation of persons with disabilities. Political parties often overlook people with disabilities, considering them a marginalised group who do not vote and are "incompetent" and 'incapable" of creating any electoral impact. Professor Anita Ghai poignantly observes this disparity as "to be disabled is to be disabled by society.'

Too often, persons with disabilities are portrayed solely as objects of inspiration, highlighting their perceived 'achievements" in crawling, reaching a polling booth and overcoming all the adversities. While these stories may momentarily touch hearts, they uitimately reinforce stereotypes, further excluding the disabled community from active participation in the electoral process. Moreover, the physical barriers toral infrastructure.

encountered at the polling stations compound the challenges faced by disabled voters, stripping away their dignity and agency. Lack of accessibility of polling stations and booths, absence of information, as well as inadequate capacity building of staff to support persons with disabilities, often make it difficult for disabled people to exercise their political rights.

For instance, during the Karnataka Assembly Elections held in 2023, when Anitha (38) arrived at the polling center, having traveled 20 km on her threewheeled mobility bike, she was unable to make her way to the polling booth. There were no wheelchairs stocked at the facility. She says "The ramp was too narrow and could only accommodate a two-wheeler. It could not fit my three-wheeled assisted bike. The only person to ask for help was the security guard, who shrugged it off and told me to 'manage' like the other voters with disabilities, who were forced to crawl up the ramp, to the booth to cast their vote. Anitha's experience serves as a reminder of the systemic neglect that plagues our elec-



AS WE MARK 75 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE. THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO **PARTICIPATE** IN THE CIVIL AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS OF THE STATE MUST BE RESPECTED AND

The challenges multiply for those with lesser known and lesser visible disabilities, such as those with blood disorders and intellectual and developmental disability. For example, the absence of sign language interpreters during political campaigns renders crucial information inaccessible, further alienating persons with speech and hearing impairments. In a democratic process that is built on inclusivity and fairness, these barriers erode the dignity of its disabled citizens, which it promised to uphold.

Further, the lack of concrete and official data exacerbates the situation. Without accurate statistics on the number of disabled voters who cast their votes and their representation in positions of power, policy formulation becomes a shot in the dark. The reliance on outdated figures, such as considering only 7 kinds of disabilities as against 21 as per the amended Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD) 2016, further compounds the problem. This dearth of information results in a lack of targeted policies and inadequate budget allocations for economy. persons with disabilities.

formation. The need is for persons with disabilities to be considered a part of the mainstream discourse around development. It is time to shift from a tokenistic approach to disability towards a more rights-based approach. Significantly, we need to move away from the traditional approach of treating disabled persons as mere beneficiaries and recipients of pensions and assistive devices.

As we mark 75 years of independence, the fundamental rights of persons with disability to participate in the civil and political systems of the State must be respected and honoured. This necessitates that persons with disabilities hold a seat at the table, with them being key stakeholders in designing and developing all policies and programs developed for them. Integration of the needs of the disabled community across all facets of governance is the need of the hour. I believe that it is only then that we can truly realise the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' and propel India towards its aspiration of a \$ 5 trillion

(The writer is Program Yet, amidst these challenges Officer-Advocacy, NCPEDP; views are personal)



THE EDITOR

abroad and fail back home?

Emphasis on fostering creativity, innovation and risk-taking is pivotal for the nation to become a global hub for knowledge creation

ndians have undeniably left a lasting impression Lacross various global arenas, spanning technology, entrepreneurship, academia and healthcare. However, a perplexing paradox persists - why do Îndians excel overseas while encountering unique obstacles within their homeland? This compelling question warrants immediate attention and a thorough exploration of the multifaceted challenges at hand.

Deciphering the Enigma: **Indian Excellence Abroad** and Domestic Hurdles

The disparity between Indian achievements on the international stage and the hurdles faced domestically primarily stems from deficiencies in the public education system. The insightful narrative of "Why Indians Succeed Everywhere Except in India," as presented by EW, adeptly dissects this paradox, attributing it to the lamentable State of public

that holds true. The Interplay **Education**, **Governance** ity - a significant portion of

education - an observation



Development

Why do Indians excel

The nexus between the quality of education and the overall health of political, socio-economic and law and order systems is profound. A robust education system forms the cornerstone for an informed citizenry, competent leadership and a flourishing economy. Recognising education as a catalyst for effective governance and economic prosperity, it is imperative to prioritise education within national development strategies.

Challenges in Primary and

Secondary Education The current State of primary and secondary education reflects the trajectory of our nation's future. ASER of surveys reveal a stark real-**Economic** our youth lacks even basic challenges the convention-

skills expected at their grade levels. This systemic failure jeopardises the very foundation of our future, necessitating a discerning response to address underlying issues.

Higher Education: Quality and Employability Crisis Graduation should ideally open doors to a world of opportunities. However, India grapples with the challenge of higher education - the mismatch between degrees and employability. It is crucial to question whether higher education institutions adequately prepare graduates for the dynamic job market, reflecting the systemic chal-lenges faced by graduates and the subsequent brain drain.

Brain Drain The Predicament: Retaining **India's Brightest Minds**

While India boasts exporting talent worldwide, there's a sobering reality - a loss of intellectual capital that could otherwise fuel national growth. Understanding the migration patterns of Indian graduates to foreign shores

al narrative of brain drain. Yet, it's vital to acknowledge the diaspora's positive contributions as a bridge between India and the global economy.

A Call to Action for Change

Viewing the emigration of skilled individuals as a loss for India underscores the urgency for comprehensive strategies to reverse brain drain, attract exceptional talent back home and invest in research and develop-

A paradigm shift in higher education is imperative, emphasising creativity, innovation and risk-taking to foster a globally competitive India. Restoring the spirit of private enterprise and nurturing a dynamic academic and industrial environment is crucial for

sustained growth. As we navigate the complexities of reform, the vision outlined in this analysis serves as a beacon toward a more prosperous, innovative and globally competitive India. (The author is a Managing

Director, FIIB; views are personal)

DISRESPECT BY HIGH COMMAND

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Churn in Congress over Delhi candidates", published on April 25, this is my response. The recent resignation of Raj Kumar Chauhan, a stalwart in Delhi politics and a prominent Dalit leader, from the Congress party highlights a deepening discontent within its ranks. Chauhan's departure, fuelled by allegations of disrespect from the party high command, sheds light on internal rifts over ticket distribution and outsider nominations.

The incident underscores a broader issue of party unity and inclusivity, especially ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls. The rejection of 'outsider' candidates and the clash between grassroots leaders and central leadership reflect a disconnect that could harm the party's electoral prospects. Chauhan's decadeslong dedication to the Congress, coupled with his grievances, poses a significant challenge to the party's leadership. His departure, along with the protests against nominations like Udit Raj's, signals a need for introspection and reconciliation within the Delhi Congress. Ultimately, the party must address these grievances transparently to uphold its integrity and regain the trust of its members and con-

Ayesha Singh | Jaipur

CORRUPTION, A PERVASIVE REALITY

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Determining the limits of corruption, the Indian way", published on April 25, this is my response. Corruption, an omnipresent spectre, haunts every facet of Indian society, transcending the boundaries of public and private sectors. While Governmental and political malfeasance often grab the headlines, corruption manifests in myriad forms, from petty bribery to workplace coercion. The notion that only monetary exchanges define corruption overlooks systemic injustices and abuses of power. The oath-bound duty of public officials to

India's democracy dilemma

lies an opportunity for trans-



propos the news article, "The democra-Atic status of India under scanner", published on April 25, this is my response. The V-Dem Institute's report labeling India as an "electoral autocracy" raises eyebrows, suggesting a skewed perspective on its democratic landscape. While global indices like the EIU Democracy Index provide a framework,

and apathy, fostering a culture where exploitation thrives unchecked. Despite legislative efforts, corruption

persists unabated, prompting introspection on the efficacy of legal remedies. Is corruption an indelible part of our collective psyche, entrenched beyond legislative constraints? The normalisation of corrupt practices challenges societal morality, blurring the lines between acceptance and condemnation. As scandals unveil the deep-seated roots of corruption, it beckons a reevaluation of societal norms and ethical compasses. The lament of a disillusioned officer underscores a sobering reality: corruption knows no bounds, yet its normalisation is a limit we dare not accept.

Nikhil Desai | Pune

NAVIGATING WORKPLACE DYNAMICS Madam — Apropos the news article, 'Nurture workplace safety and inclusivity", published on April 25, this is my response. The modern workplace is a dynamic ecosystem, mirroring Maslow's serve the populace is marred by arrogance hierarchy of needs, where foundational

their methodology and accuracy have been questioned. Civil liberties, a cornerstone of democracy, show a worrying decline in India, impacting its global rankings and sovereignty. The World Happiness Report highlights India's struggle, exacerbated by the pandemic. influencing its happiness index.

Moreover, the RSF's Press Freedom Index depicts a concerning picture, placing India unfavorably alongside Pakistan and Afghanistan. The methodology critique underscores the importance of robust research methodologies. As India faces scrutiny, it's imperative to introspect and perhaps develop indigenous indices aligned with its realities. Decolonising the democracy index could offer a more accurate reflection of India's democratic journey amidst global assess-

Anand Rajan | Chennai

elements must be addressed before reaching higher goals. With a diverse workforce spanning multiple generations, including X-Gens to Generation Alpha, it's imperative to adapt policies and practices accordingly. Pay parity, safe workplaces and respectful environments are crucial pillars, alongside diversity and inclusion initiatives. Flexibility, accessibility and appreciation further enhance employee well-being and engagement.

Training and development programs ensure continuous growth and inclusivity. By prioritising accessibility and accommodation, organisations demonstrate their commitment to equality. In this evolving landscape, fostering a culture of support and appreciation is key to nurturing talent and achieving collective success. As we navigate these workplace dynamics, it's essential to embrace change and prioritise the well-being of all employees.

Pooja Menon | Kochi

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FIRST COLUMN

THE ESSENCE OF **CONSCIOUSNESS**

It is awareness of the environment, thoughts, feelings and sensations



RAVI VALLURI

e are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves. What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday, and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow, the Enlightened One,

In our lexicon today subjects and topics like physics, metaphysics, an elevated State, consciousness, life coaches and mind, apart from iconic names of Stephen Hawking, Jim Holt, and Carl Sagan among others are all bandied quite recklessly without deep study. This is perhaps done under pressure to keep up with Jones or to display our awareness about certain issues of topical interests without proper research.

Recently my jaw dropped when confronted with some basic facts and facets of our universe. Through my elementary study of physics and geography, I was aware that we live on Planet Earth, which is an integral part of a Solar System; though I was in the dark and not fully aware that each star in the galaxy has its own solar systems like ours. I was certainly an ignoramus on these riveting concepts. Apparently, several of these stars and their respective solar systems do not exist anymore and have disappeared forever in the sands of time or are perhaps gravitating towards a black hole. It dawned on me as to how ignorant I was despite my readings on the subject.

So how does this lead us to the quintessential term of consciousness? Simply put consciousness is a State when humans are aware of and responsive to their environment. This is inclusive of both prevailing internal and external conditions. An individual blessed with an efficacious and robust thought process becomes aware and responsive to various occurrences which are taking place both within and without.



Consciousness is an individual's State of awareness of their environment, thoughts, feelings, or sensations; and in order to experience consciousness, one must be both awake and aware. Arjuna, the ace archer slumped and his fabled Gandiva fell to the ground as his mind was gripped with doubts and fear as the spectre of battling his cousins, his Gurus and above all the patriarch Bhishma coloured the mind and Sisyphean thought process engulfed his persona.

This was when Lord Krishna unleashed his Vishwarup Darshan and rendered the song celestial Bhagavad Gita which revealed his true self and raised the consciousness in Arjuna who took up the cudgels once again. King Janaka the father of Sita was a Jnani Purush. He was a highly knowledgeable and enlightened person and was referred to as a Raj Rishi. One day in his court he fell asleep and dreamt that Mithila his kingdom was stricken by severe and dreaded drought conditions.

The suzerain visualised an eagle swooping down and plucking a piece of bread/chappati from the hands of an impoverished peasant. This shocked the king and he woke up from a State of slumber to receive sage Ashtavakra who was to reveal the gospel of truth, which is popularly referred to as Ashtavakra Gita. Janaka then realised his true self and the consciousness was ignited. Buddha for years continued with his spiritual practices and was perennially haunted by Mara (evil/fiendish forces) while cogitating, until on one full moon night pristine truth dawned on him and he went into deep silence.

Consciousness in Buddhism refers to life force, mind and discernment. Consciousness is the State when the human mind is verily awakened and assumes the form of a pure and pristine child brimming with enthusiasm, joy and curiosity. This is an experiential State of mind and con-

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Neglect spurs industry exodus in Punjab



The Punjab Government has not only lacked an industrial policy for a long time, but there has been a continuous deterioration in the infrastructure required for industries

fter independence till the year 2011-12, Punjab was considered to be one of the rich and prosperous States of India. In the year 2000-01, the per capita income of Punjab was not only the highest in the country, but it was also 9 per cent more than the second richest State, namely, Haryana. But in the year 2012-13, the per capita income of Punjab slipped to the second position and today Punjab has reached the 10th position in terms of per capita income among the States with a population of more than I crore and the 19th position among all the States, and has now become the second slowest growing States in the

In the year 2011-12, when Punjab's per capita income was the highest in the country, the share of agriculture was 24 per cent, that of industries 28.4 per cent and that of services 47.6 per cent. But by the year 2022-23, the share of agriculture had increased to 28.94 per cent, while the share of industries and services was reduced to 25.51 per cent and 45.91 per cent respectively. It can be assumed that the industry and service sector have shrunk in Punjab. While talking about its neighbouring State Haryana, the share of industries in GDP in Haryana has increased from 25.90 per cent to 28 per cent between the years 2011-12 and 2021-22. The share of industries in Gujarat has increased from 36 per cent to 43 per cent during the same period, and in Tamil Nadu

from 27.9 per cent to 33 per cent. It can be understood that during this period, deindustrialisation has taken place in Punjab. Although Punjab is famous in the world for its population migrating to dif-ferent parts of the world, since the begin-ning, after independence, a large number of Punjabi people migrated to the USA, Canada, Europe and many other countries. Punjab benefited a lot from these migrant Punjabis. The money sent to Punjab by the migrant Punjabis from abroad was greatly beneficial for the development of agriculture and industries. A wave of industrial development was seen in Punjab for a long time.

But for quite some time now it has been observed that not only has the industrial development of Punjab come to a halt, but a large number of industries have now started migrating out of Punjab. Industries of Punjab have now started shifting to its neighbouring States like Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kajasthan etc. as well as to distant States like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat etc. Punjab was especially known for its engineering industry, but many engineering companies have now shifted to the user States of their products. On the other hand, Jalandhar was considered a big centre for sports products, and many sports industries there, have now shifted to Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. It is being observed that textile and garment industries have shifted to Madhya Pradesh, the bicycle industry to Chennai and China, knitwear industry to Africa, Southeast Asia and Madhya Pradesh.

Anti-industry policies of Punjab Government

The agriculture sector in Punjab has been considered very important from an economic point of view. It is worth noting that although only 28.94 per cent of the total GDP in Punjab comes from agriculture, more than 65 per cent of its population depends directly on agriculture. A sad part of Indian democracy is its populist policies. In Punjab, these populist policies have





PUNJABIS ARE GOOD ENTREPRENEURS, WHICH MAKES PUNJAB EXCEL IN INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT. BUT TODAY, **PUNJAB IS** LAGGING BEHIND IN COMPETITION WITH THOSE STATES WHERE LOGISTICS COSTS ARE LOW AND WHERE THERE HAS BEEN **SIGNIFICANT** PROGRESS IN

nomic development of Punjab. Punjab, that is, the region of five rivers, has been very rich in terms of water. However in Punjab, due to the ease of groundwater extraction, a large number of tube wells were installed. To please farmers, the Punjab Government started the scheme of giving free electricity for agriculture. In such a situation, excessive exploitation of water started. Due to this, many districts of Punjab have now become dark zones, that is, where the availability of groundwater has depleted

However, the Punjab Government's policy of giving free electricity to agriculture has not only affected the availability of groundwater but has also affected the industries there. The Punjab Government has put most of the burden of free electricity for agriculture on industries and businesses. Due to this electricity has become very expensive for industries, causing a huge disadvantage to the Punjab industry vis a vis their counterparts elsewhere. This has seriously affected the viability of industries. They have no option left but to move out of Punjab to other States and even to foreign countries. Environmental laws in Punjab are such that it is almost impossible to comply with them. In such a situation, industries have no choice but to shut down their units or move to other States. Not only this, industries and businesses in Punjab also have to pay high water cess, due to which industries have to face losses.

Conditions becoming difficult

States like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh etc. is infrastructure development and other facilities, which leads to a reduction in their logistics cost. It is well known that Punjabis are good entrepreneurs, which made Punjab excel in industrial and commercial development. But today Punjab is lagging behind in competition with those States where logistics cost is low and where there has been significant progress in infrastructure. It is worth noting that the condition of infrastructure in Punjab has become much worse in recent years.

Not only this, the implementation Due to the lack of backward linkof the GST system has also affected the industries of Punjab. Earlier, indirect taxes were levied at a low rate by the Punjab Government, but after the implementation of the GST system, the possibility of State-specific fiscal incentives is very limited, due to which the competitive power of the industries of Punjab has now become much lower than other States.

Obstacles for new and old industries

If someone wants to set up a new industry in Punjab, then not only environmental but also other types of clearances are highly difficult. Not only this, allotment of land for industries is also very difficult and is also plagued by corruption.

The financial sector in Punjab has also been seriously affected, because most of the agricultural loans of Punjab have turned bad and due to this, NPAs in Punjab are also very

Not only this, the continuously dete-

Punjab is wreaking havoc on the industries.

high logistics cost of exports are

Half-hearted efforts The distance from the sea and the

also one of the reasons why Punjab's industries have to send goods through a long route. Earlier, goods could be sent through Pakistan, but now since that route is closed, goods can be sent overseas only through Mumbai port. To deal with this situation, an air cargo facility was started in Amritsar, but there was a lack of complementary efforts. ages of air cargo with industries, only 20 per cent of the air cargo facility is being used presently. While other State Governments are offering various incentives to

attract industries, the Punjab Government has not only lacked an industrial policy for a long time but there has been a continuous deterioration in the infrastructure required for industries. There is also a lack of research and development activities.

Due to the lack of industrial development, Punjab is continuously lagging behind economically, but the biggest concern is that the Punjab administration has no thought or policy initiatives on this subject. In such a situation, if this trend is not stopped, Punjab can lag far behind in economic development, which will be neither good for Punjab nor for the country.

(The writer is a professor at PGDAV College, Ûniversity of Delhi, views are personal)

Bihar's educational reforms cock a snook at private players

INFRASTRUCTURE

Bihar Government's bold education initiatives combat global capital's influence on marginalised, writes Keyoor Pathak

Government on countless fronts in the last few decades cannot be dismissed. and an exclusive example of the failure can be perceived in the law made without any proper preparation and study against liquor. Apart from this, there are many issues where the Government has demonstrated its substantial weakness such as rural migration, agriculture et cetera. However, there are some steps taken by the Government that must be appreciated without any political prejudices, this is the initiative on the subject of education in the State. Today, when the market is bent on taking over education completely in almost the entire India, the effort of the State to patronise education on such a

→ he failure of the Bihar large scale can be considered a very bold step. In a way, this is a counter by the State to global capital. When the educational institutions are coming out of the hands of the Government and going into the hands of the corporates, the work done by the Bihar Government on the education system is in a way like the return of the welfare State. Such efforts must be made on health services too. However, in recent years, its big beginning can be seen in Delhi where it was claimed that Government school education has been taken to a presshould not be denied. But through education reforms in Bihar, the State is again visible in its public-concerning role, albeit partially, only in a few Government schools have have accepted that children

subjects. Bihar is one of the poorest States in the country, and social and economic inequality is also at its peak. Then in such a situation, the model of economic development of putting education in the open market will push marginalised people even further to the margins. It has always been a crying

question of how much space will be left for the rights of education of the marginalised sections while in most of the private schools are functioning like money making industries. And it should be understood that private schools do tigious level, and this claim not flourish because of their quality, rather the failure of the Government schools gives them an opportunity to spread their footing. Unfortunately,



been continuously neglected by the State for decades. And all this did not happen spontaneously, rather there was a well-planned conspiracy of the Global Capital behind it that firstly let the Government schools be destroyed and then the private schools would automatically get legitimacy. In a way, the society has given up all its expectations from Government schools, they

schools. Consequently, social psychology developed which did not take the availability of quality education as a serious question. If it had been taken, there would have been pressure on the Governments and they would have worked on the facilities and quality education in the Government schools, but this rarely happened. The Bihar Government again made Government schools a part of the election manifestos of political parties. We saw some of the work that the Government has done to improve the education system. For example, there was a severe shortage of teachers in schools for a long time, to fulfil teachers were recruited on a large scale. The appointment of

have no future in Government enough to show the seriousness of the Government's vision on education. Undoubtedly a large part of the budget would have been spent on this. If we talk about infrastructure, the schools of Bihar had turned into ruins. It was difficult to say which building would collapse and when. Children were often forced to sit in the open field or in the veranda. But to fix all these things the Government allocated a huge amount. Allotment of the books, dresses and bags and water bottles for children along with other materials not only attracts them towards schools but also reduces the financial burden for the parents, especially for those who are barely able to earn their living by doing more than one lakh teachers is farm labour. For urban elites

these things might be futile but for the rural people this is not affordable by their own

We all had seen children carrying books in their hands or in dusted polythene or in torn cloth (jhola), but now they had beautiful bags in their hands and instead of torn half-naked clothes on their bodies, uniforms were shining on them. It was well known fact how little attention they paid to the children.

The Government has strictly forced the teachers to be responsible for their duties towards children, which was not an easy task, years of Government negligence had made them indolent. Some other small and big efforts can be seen there to control the deep-rooted corruption in the

education system. A pertinent aspect which perhaps sought for more attention that is 'Mid-Day Meal'. This should be allowed to continue in a smoother manner and at the local level merely, any interference by any external agency is likely to lead to many other complications. Amidst all these achievements, the biggest problem visible is, how to continue this reform in the future, because there still seems to be a lack of proper mechanism for this; and in the absence of a mechanism all efforts and achievement may be proven futile. (The author is Post-Doctorate

from CSD, Hyderabad and Assistant Professor in Department of Sociology, University of Allahabad; views are personal)

Colleges nationwide turn to police to quell pro-Palestine protests

With graduations looming, student protesters doubled down early Thursday on their discontent of the Israel-Hamas war on campuses across the country as universities, including ones in California and Texas, have become quick to call in the police to end the demonstrations and make arrests. While grappling with growing protests from coast to coast, schools have the added pressure of May commencement ceremonies. At Columbia University in New York, students defiantly erected an encampment where many are set to graduate in front of families in just a few weeks.

Columbia continued to negotiate with students after several failed attempts — and over 100 arrests — to clear the encampment, but several universities ousted demonstrators Wednesday, swiftly turning to law enforcement when protests bubbled up on their campuses. Police peacefully arrested student protesters at the University of Southern California, hours

of Texas at Austin aggressively detained dozens in the latest clashes between law enforcement and those protesting the Israel-Hamas war on campuses nationwide.

Tensions were already high at USC after the university cancelled a planned commencement speech by the school's valedictorian, who publicly supports Palestine, citing safety concerns. After scuffles with police early Wednesday, a few dozen demonstrators standing in a circle with locked arms were detained one by one without incident later in the evening. Officers encircled the dwindling group sitting in defiance of an earlier warning to disperse or be arrested. Beyond the police line, hundreds of onlookers watched as helicopters buzzed overhead. The school closed the campus. Hours earlier in Texas, hundreds of local and state police

including some on horseback and holding batons bulldozed into protesters, at one point sending some tumbling into the street. Officers

crowd and made 34 arrests at the behest of the university and Texas Governor Gregg Abbott, according to the state Department of Public Safety.

A photographer covering the demonstration for Fox 7 Austin was in the push-and-pull when an officer yanked him backward to the ground, video shows. The station confirmed that the photographer was arrested. A longtime Texas journalist was knocked down in the mayhem and could be seen bleeding before police helped him to emergency medical staff.

Dane Urquhart, a third-year Texas student, called the police presence and arrests an "overreaction," adding that the protest "would have stayed peaceful" if the officers had not turned out in force. 'Because of all the arrests, I

think a lot more (demonstrations) are going to happen," Urguhart said. Police left after hours of efforts

to control the crowd, and about 300 demonstrators moved back in to sit on the grass and chant under the school's iconic clock

In a statement Wednesday night, the university's president, Jay Hartzell, said: "Our rules matter, and they will be enforced. Our University will not be occupied."

North of USC, students at California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, were barricaded inside a building for a third day, and the school shut down campus through the weekend and made classes virtual. Harvard University in Massachusetts had sought to stay ahead of protests this week by limiting access to Harvard Yard and requiring permission for tents and tables. That didn't stop protesters from setting up a camp with 14 tents Wednesday following a rally against the university's sus-pension of the Harvard Undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee.

Students protesting the Israel-Hamas war are demanding schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies enabling its monthslong

'282 mn faced acute hunger in 2023, with the worst famine in Gaza'

United Nations (AP): Nearly 282 million people in 59 countries suffered from acute hunger in 2023, with war-torn Gaza as the territory with the largest number of people fac-

ing famine, according to the Global Report on Food Crises released on Wednesday.

The UN report said 24 million more people faced an acute lack of food than in 2022 due to the sharp deteri-2022, due to the sharp deterioration in food security, especially in the Gaza Strip and Sudan. The number of nations with food crises that are monitored has also been expanded.

Máximo Torero, chief economist for the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, said 705,000 people in five countries are at Phase 5, the highest level, on a scale of hunger determined by international experts — the highest number since the global report

began in 2016 and quadruple the number that year.Over 80 per cent of those facing imminent famine — 577,000 people were in Gaza, he said. South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Somalia and Mali each host many thousands also facing catastrophic

According to the report's future outlook, around 1.1 million people in Gaza, where the Israel-Hamas war is now in its seventh month, and 79,000 in South Sudan are projected to be in Phase 5 and facing famine by July. It said conflict will also continue to drive food insecurity in Haiti, where gangs control large portions of the capital. Additionally, while the El Nino phenomenon peaked in early 2024, "its full impact on food security - including flooding and poor rain in parts of east Africa and drought in southern Africa, especially

fest throughout the year."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the report "a roll call of human failings," and that "in a world of plenty, children are starving to death.""The conflicts erupting over the past 12 months compound a dire global situation," he wrote in the report's foreword. Guterres highlighted the conflict in the Gaza Strip, as the enclave holds the highest number of people facing catastrophic hunger. There is also the year-old conflict in Sudan, which has created the world's largest internal displacement crisis "with atrocious impacts on hunger and nutrition," he added. According to the report, over 36 million people in 39 countries and territories are facing an acute hunger emergency, a step below the famine

level in Phase 4, with more than a third in Sudan and Afghanistan. It's an increase of a million people from 2022, the report said. Arif Husain, the UN World Food Program's chief economist, said every year since 2016 the numbers of people acutely food insecure have gone up, and they are now more than double the numbers before the COVID-19 pandemic. While the report looks at 59 countries, he said the target is to get data from 73 countries where there are people who are acutely food insecure. Secretary-General Guterres called for an urgent response to the report's findings that addresses the underlying causes of acute hunger and malnutrition while transforming the systems that supply food. Funding is also not keeping pace with the needs, he

Ship attacked off Yemen coast amid accelerating Houthi rebel campaign

A ship traveling in the Gulf of Aden came under attack Thursday, officials said, the latest assault likely carried out by Yemen's Houthi rebels over Israel's ongoing war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The attack comes after the U.S. military said early Thursday an allied warship shot down a Houthi missile targeting a vessel the day before near the same area. The Houthis claimed that Wednesday assault, which comes after a period of relatively few rebel attacks on shipping in the region over Israel's ongoing war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. In Thursday's attack, a ship was targeted just over 15 miles (25 kilometers) southwest of Aden, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said. There was no other immediate information about the attack, which also was reported by the private security firm Ambrey

The Houthis did not immedi-

it typically takes them hours to acknowledge an assault.

The Houthis have launched more than 50 attacks on shipping, seized one vessel and sank another since November, according to the U.S. Maritime Administration. Houthi attacks have dropped in recent weeks as the rebels have been targeted by a U.S.-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 U.S.-led campaign against them and firing off drones and missiles steadily in the last months. However, Wednesday's attack was the first one by rebels in some time. An explo-sion struck some 130 kilometers (80 miles) southeast of Djibouti in the Gulf of Aden, the UKMTO said. Early Thursday, the U.S. military's Central Command said the explosion came from a coali-

tion warship shooting down the missile likely targeting the MV Yorktown, a U.S-flagged, owned and operated vessel with 18 U.S. and four Greek crew members.

There were no injuries or damage reported by Ú.S., coalition or commercial ships, Central Command said.

Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, a Houthi military spokesman, claimed the attack but insisted without evidence that the missile hit the Yorktown. Saree also claimed the Houthis targeted another ship in the Indian Ocean, without providing proof. The Houthis have made repeated claims that turned out to not be true during their yearslong war in Yemen. The Houthis have said they will continue their attacks until Israel ends its war in Gaza, which has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians there. The war began after Hamasled militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 others

Blinken discusses trade practices in Shanghai meetings

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken raised what the US describes as unfair Chinese trade practices during his first full day of meetings in China on Thursday with local govern-ment officials in the financial hub of Shanghai.

Blinken met with the city's top official, Communist Party Secretary Chen Jining, and "raised concerns about (Chinese) trade policies and non-market economic practices," the State Department said in a statement.

It said he stressed that the United States seeks healthy economic competition with China and "a level playing field for US workers and firms operating in

"The two sides reaffirmed the importance of ties between the people of the United States and (China), including the expansion of exchanges between students, scholars, and business," it said.

China's multibillion-dollar trade surplus with the US along with accusations of intellectual property theft and other prac-



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, center, U.S. Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns, right, and Scott Walker, second left Consul General at the U.S Consulate General in Shanghai, visit a waterfront area called The Bund on Thursday.

tices seen as discriminating against US businesses in China have long been a source of fric-

Trump to attend hush money trial in NY

China, for its part, has

objected strongly to US accusations of human rights abuses and Washington's support for Taiwan, the self-governing island that

Beijing considers its own terri-

tory and warns could be annexed

Asked about Blinken's comments, Chinese Foreign Ministry

ducted economic and trade cooperation in accordance with market principles, firmly sup-ported the multilateral trading system, and fully complied with the rules of the World Trade

Organization (WTO)."

"We hope the US will also earnestly respect the principle of fair competition, abide by the WTO rules, and work with China to create favorable conditions for the sound and stable development of China-US economic and trade relations," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing. Blinken also spoke with students and business leaders before flying to Beijing for what are expected to be contentious talks with national officials, including Foreign Minister Wang Yi and President Xi Jinping.Blinken arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday short-ly before US President Joe Biden signed a USD 95 billion foreign aid package that has several elements likely to anger Beijing, including USD 8 billion to counter China's growing aggressiveness toward Taiwan and in the South China Sea.

Frigate has destroyed drone launched from Yemen's Houthi-held areas: EU officer While SC hears his immunity case in DC

Nicosia (AP): A top European He said that it's the first time that Union military officer said that a frigate that's part of an EU miliary mission in the Red Sea to protect merchant shipping destroyed a drone launched from an area in Yemen controlled by Houthi rebels on Thursday morning. Austrian Gen. Robert Brieger, who is chair of the EU's military committee, said that it would be crucial for the bloc to "conserve resources" over the long haul because the threat posed by Houthi attacks "will not disappear" due to its connection to the Israel-Hamas war.

"The task given to the military is simply to protect merchant ships and to show the public that the European Union is not willing to accept a terrorist organization will interrupt the freedom of movement at sea," Brieger said. Brieger said that he's asking EU members to provide the necessary resources to the EU mission dubbed Aspides Greek for "shields."

the EU has launched a naval operation in a hostile environment that's twice the size of the 27-nation bloc, calling it a "litmus test" that the bloc will pass

successfully. The commander of an EU naval mission in the Red Sea, Greek Rear Adm. Vasilios Gryparis, wants to significantly increase its size to better defend against possible attacks by Houthi rebels based in Yemen. Nineteen of the 27 EU nations are involved in the mission, but only four frigates are patrolling an area twice the size of the bloc. The EU mission was established in February to defend civilian vessels and doesn't take part in any military strikes. The southern part of the Red Sea is deemed a high-risk zone. Iran-backed Houthi rebels, which control much of Yemen's north and west, launched a campaign of drone and missile attacks on shipping in the Red Sea in

president. Jurors will hear more witness Biden.

reluctant Donald Trump

Awill be back in a New York City courtroom Thursday as his hush money trial resumes at the same time that the U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments in Washington over whether he should be immune from prosecution for actions he took during his time as

testimony from a veteran tabloid publisher, and Trump faces a looming decision over whether he violated a gag order imposed by the judge. But he had asked to skip out on his criminal trial for the day so he could sit in on the high court's special session, where the justices will weigh whether he can be prosecuted over his efforts to reverse his 2020 election loss to President Joe

That request was denied by New York state Supreme Court

overseeing the trial on the hush money scheme that was meant to prevent harmful stories about Trump from surfacing in the final days of the 2016 campaign.

"Arguing before the Supreme Court is a big deal, and I can certainly appreciate why your client would want to be there, but a trial in New York Supreme Court ... is also a big deal," Merchan told Trump's lawyer Todd Blanche last week when he nixed the idea.

Though 200 miles apart — and entirely separate cases — the proceedings Thursday were jumbled together in one big legal and political puzzle that has implications not just for the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, but for the American presidency writ large. In both instances, Trump is

trying to get himself out of legal jeopardy as he makes another bid for the White

Judge Juan Merchan, who is House. But the outcome of the first witness, David Pecker, then-candidate Trump that he Supreme Court case will have lasting implications for future presidents, because the justices will be answering the neverbefore-asked question of "whether and if so to what extent does a former president enjoy presidential immunity from criminal prosecution for conduct alleged to involve official acts during his tenure in

> The high court's decision may not impact the New York City case, which hinges mostly on Trump's conduct as a presidential candidate in 2016 — not as a president. He faces 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in connection with hush money payments meant to stifle embarrassing stories from surfacing. It is the first of

four criminal cases against Trump to go before a jury. The New York trial resumes after a scheduled day off with more testimony from the Manhattan District Attorney's

former publisher of the National Enquirer and a longtime friend of Trump's who pledged to be his "eyes and ears" during his 2016 presidential campaign.

In testimony earlier this week, Pecker explained how he and the tabloid parlayed rumormongering into splashy stories that smeared Trump's opponents and, just as crucially, leveraged his connections to suppress seamy stories about Trump, including a porn actor's claim of an extramarital sexual encounter years ear-

Pecker traced the origins of their relationship to a 1980s meeting at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, and said the friendship bloomed alongside the success of the real estate developer's TV show "The Apprentice" and the program's subsequent celebrity version. Pecker recounted how he promised

Taiwan's president-elect appoints new ministers

would help suppress harmful stories and even arranged to purchase the silence of a door-

"I made the decision to purchase the story because of the potential embarrassment it had to the campaign and to Mr. Trump," Pecker said of the doorman's story that his publication later determined wasn't true. Judge Merchan may also decide whether or not to hold Trump in contempt and fine him for violating a gag order that barred the GOP leader from making public statements about witnesses. jurors and others connected to the case. Some of Trump's recent online posts in question included one describing prosecution witnesses Michael Cohen, his former attorney, and Stormy Daniels, the porn actress, as "sleaze bags" and another repeating a false claim that liberal activists had tried to infiltrate the jury.

Ariel Henry resigns as Haiti PM

Port-au-Prince (Haiti) (AP): Ariel Henry resigned Thursday

as prime of Haiti, leaving the way clear for a new government be

formed in the Caribbean country, which has been wrecked by gang violence. Henry presented his resignation in a letter signed in Los Angeles, dated April 24, and released on Thursday by his office on the same day a council tasked with choosing a new prime minister and Cabinet for Haiti was due to be sworn in.

The council would be installed more than a month after Caribbean leaders announced its creation following an emergency meeting to tackle Haiti's spiralling crisis.

Australia and New Zealand Both Lin and Koo are members of the Democratic

Progressive Party, with which

China has cut contacts over its

refusal to acknowledge Beijing's claim of sovereignty

Lai handily won the presiden-

tial election in January,

although the main opposition Nationalist Party that backs

eventual unification with

China took a one-vote major-

Taiwan has a mixture of pres-

idential and parliamentary

ity in the legislature.

over the island.

More than 100 inmates break free from Nigerian prison

AP ■ ABUJA

 $M^{
m ore\,than\,100\,inmates\,have}_{
m escaped\,from\,a\,prison\,in}$ Nigeria near the capital city of Abuja after overnight heavy rains destroyed parts of the facility, a prison official said Thursday, as security agencies searched for the fleeing prison

The downpour, which lasted for several hours on Wednesday night, destroyed the perimeter fence of the medium-security prison in the neighbouring town of Suleja, in Niger state, "giving way to the escape of a total of 118 inmates from the facility," according to Adamu Duza, a prisons spokesman.

The prison service and other agencies have managed to recapture 10 of the escaped



to find the rest, Duza said. There are fears that they could find their way into the vast forests that connect Suleja town and neighbouring states, some of which are known hideouts

for criminal gangs. In addition to being over-crowded with 70% of the inmates still awaiting trial, most prisons in Nigeria are old, having been built during the colonial era before the West



The structures are rarely renovated, which has made it easier for inmates to escape during past jailbreaks. Thousands of inmates have escaped from prisons during such jailbreaks, including Abuja where nearly 900 inmates broke free in 2022. The authorities are making efforts to rebuild the structures and modernise the ageing

facilities, Duza said.

Taiwan's president-elect has appointed new foreign and

defence ministers to join his incoming administration as the island faces continuing military threats and diplomatic isolation from China. Lai Ching-te, who assumes

the presidency on May 20, announced Thursday that current Presidential Secretary General Lin Chia-lung will take over as foreign minister He said Wellington Koo will head the Defence Ministry at a time when Taiwan is upgrading its defences against China with new ships, submarines, warplanes, missile systems and other land-based defences Along with stepping up its threat to annex Taiwan by

In this photo released by the Taiwan Presidential Office, U.S. Democratic force, China has whittled down the number of Taiwan's Congressman Dan Kildee, left, meets with Taiwan President-elect and Vice President Lai Ching-te in Taipei, Taiwan on Tuesday formal diplomatic allies to

just 12, while excluding it from the United Nations and most other international organisations. Koo, a lawyer, has headed the

National Security Council under current President Tsai Ing-wen, who is leaving office as mandated after two fouryear terms. He will be replaced in the high-profile role by current Foreign Minister Joseph

Taiwan has a long-embedded tradition of civilians serving as defence minister, in contrast to China's practice of appointing top generals who have taken an increasingly bellicose attitude toward Taiwan, the US and in asserting China's territorial claims in the South China and East China seas. Lin previously served as mayor of Taiwan's largest city,

systems with much power also invested in local city and county governments. The formula emerged after

Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists relocated their government to the former Japanese colony of Taiwan in 1949 as Mao Zedong's Communists seized Taichung, and was put in charge of Taiwan's economic power on the mainland after outreach to Southeast Asia, a decades-long civil war.

US secretly sent long-range missiles to war-torn Ukraine

Biden says China, Iran, N Korea helping Russia

he US has secretly delivered I long-range ballistic missiles to Ukraine to be used against Russian forces, the Pentagon has confirmed, while President Joe Biden alleged that China, Iran and North Korea were supplying weapons and technology to Moscow to boost its military

President Biden secretly approved the transfer of the long-range ATACMS missiles in February for use inside Ukrainian territory. The ATACMS missiles were then quietly included in the USD 300 million aid package announced on March 12 and ultimately delivered to Ukraine earlier this month, according to Pentagon spokesman Lt Col Garron Garn said on Wednesday.

"It was not announced that we are providing Ukraine with this new capability at the time to maintain operational security for Ukraine at their request," Garn said, deferring questions about their use to Ukraine's military

The US previously supplied Ukraine with a mid-range version of the Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) but had been reluctant to send anything more powerful, partly over concerns about compromising US military readiness. The ballistic missiles have a range of up to 300 kilometres, nearly doubling the striking distance of Ukraine's missiles. President Biden directed his team to take this step following Russia's procurement and use of North Korean ballistic missiles against Ukraine, according to US media outlets.

Ukrainian officials have been urging the US for the longrange missiles to target deeper behind Russian lines. American officials have previously resisted, citing supply issues and concerns about further provoking Russia if they are deployed. Speaking from the White House on Wednesday after signing into law a USD 61 billion aid package providing crucial military assistance to Ukraine, Biden said it was a "good day for America, a good day for Ukraine and a good day

Ukraine bid to replenish forces

Ukraine worked on Thursday to get muchneeded new supplies of weapons and ammunition from a huge US aid package to its eastern front line, where Russia was pressing forward with its efforts to take ground from outnumbered and outgunned troops

Ukraine is also seeking to reverse the drain of potential soldiers from the country, announcing that men of conscription age will no longer be able to renew their passports from outside the country.

The Cabinet of Ministers said Wednesday that men between 18 and 60 who are deemed fit for military service will only be able to renew their passports inside Ukraine

Millions of Ukrainians have fled the country since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, mostly to neighbouring European countries. The European Union's statistics agency, Eurostat, says 4.3 million Ukrainians are living in EU countries, 860,000 of them men 18 years of age or older. The defence minister of Poland, home to one of the

for world peace."

Over two years, Russia has been responsible for a brutal campaign against Ukraine, he said. "(Russian President Vladimir) Putin's friends keeping him well supplied. Iran sent him drones. North Korea has sent him ballistic missiles and artillery shells. China is providing components and knowhow to boost Russia's defence production," Biden said.

Biden on Wednesday signed the National Security Supplemental 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.

'With all this support, Russia has ramped up its airstrikes against Ukrainian cities and critical infrastructure, rained down munitions on brave

biggest Ukrainian diasporas, line for Kyiv's armed forces in said the country was ready to their more than two-year war help "in ensuring that those who are subject to compulsory military service go to Ukraine," though he did not specify how. Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz

said "Ukrainian citizens have obligations towards the state. But Ukrainian opposition lawmaker Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze, who heads the Parliamentary Committee for Ukraine's European Integration, said denying military-age men access to con-sular services could lead to 'well-founded" legal challenges

Human Rights. "I think that these actions will only push an enormous number of Ukrainians to look for different ways to obtain citizenship from other countries,

at the European Court of

Russia's population of almost 150 million dwarfs Ukraine's 38 million, and Moscow can draw on a much bigger army. Earlier this month, Ukraine lowered the conscription age from 27 to 25 in an effort to bolster the size of the military. The US is sending \$61 billion in new US military aid, a life-

lifting equipment to Ukraine

for air defence munitions

artillery, rocket systems and armoured vehicles. "This pack-

age is literally an investment

not only in Ukraine's security

but in Europe's security, in our own security," Biden said.

Secretary of State Antony

Blinken also announced a new

package of weapons and equipment for Ukraine. "This pack-

USD 1 billion, includes urgent-

ly needed capabilities, includ-

ing air defence missiles, muni-

ge, which is valued at up to

tions for HIMARS, artillery Ukrainians defending their homeland. And now, America rounds, armoured vehicles is going to send Ukraine the precision aerial munitions. supplies they need to keep anti-armour weapons, and them in the fight," Biden said small arms, equipment and on the aid package which was spare parts to help Ukraine passed by Congress after defend its territory and protect months of negotiations and its people," he said. We are sending a powerful debate. Hours later, the United States started shipping and air-

message today about the power of American leadership as we support Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression. The United States will continue to work with the coalition of more than 50 countries we have assembled to provide critical support for Ukraine's forces," Blinken said in a statement.

their more than two-year war

with Russia. President Joe

Biden signed into law the aid

Zelenskyy has said "the key

now is speed" in getting the

supplies into place. Ukrainian

forces have run desperately

short of artillery ammunition

and air defence missiles during

six months in which the US aid

was held up by wrangling in

Congress. That has allowed the

Kremlin's forces to inch for-

ward in parts of eastern

Ukraine in what has largely

Ukraine's general staff said

Thursday that the situation at

the front remained "difficult".

Six people were injured in the

Cherkasy region of central

Ukraine on Thursday after a

"high speed target" struck a critical infrastructure object, Regional Governor Ihor

Taburets said on social media.

He said a rescue operation was

underway. Ukraine's Air Force warned of a "high speed aeri-al object" flying towards

Cherkasy region around 6:30

am local time. It did not iden-

tify the type of object or say

whether it was intercepted.

become a war of attrition.

Volodymyr

package on Wednesday.

President

The Pentagon said this package will surge munitions, weapons and equipment forward to support Ukraine's ability to defend its frontlines, protect its cities and counter Russia's continued

Drops of toilet cleaner mixed in Bushra's food: Spokesperson

Tailed former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi was reportedly given at least two to three drops of "toilet cleaner" mixed in an Iftar meal, her spokesperson said on

The cleaner was allegedly mixed with her food on Shab-e-Barat on February 24. "We found out that two or three drops of toilet cleaner were added to Bushra Bibi's Iftar meal," the spokesperson of Bushra Bibi, Mashal Yousafzai, was quoted as saying by the Geo news. She claimed that after consuming the meal, her health deteriorated and it was getting worse every day.

Khan, 71, the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, has many times claimed that Bushra Bibi, 49, was given food mixed with toilet cleaner. The spokesperson said before her arrest, she did not have any problems, including blood pressure and diabetes.

"Since her arrest, Bushra Bibi's health has deteriorated, some-

said expressing her apprehension. 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. The Bani Gala residence has been converted into a sub-jail for the former prime minister's wife.

Yousafzai, also the advisor to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister, questioned why Bushra's medical tests were not conducted when the court had been directing the authorities for three weeks. She also wondered who was preventing the authorities from conducting the medical tests.

'The court has directed (authorities) to conduct her endoscopy and blood test. Endoscopy revealed ulceration and inflammation in the stomach," said Yousafzai. She said despite the orders of the court, they did not let the former first lady get her blood tested. She said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) also asked that the blood test

Hospital and be cross-checked at the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital. She said, "The blood test could reveal whether the element of

Yousafzai said a couple of days ago, Bushra had pain in her chest and left arm. The jail doctor did an ECG and it was not normal, she claimed.

poison was present in her blood

The jail doctor said that she would go and inform the jail administration so that the doctors from the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) could come and conduct her check-up, she said.

"The jail doctor went to inform the administration at 12 pm and came out at 5 pm. While the PIMS doctor came at 11 pm in the night, due to us raising our voice," she said, adding that after 11 pm, Bushra had had another ECG.

She said there was a difference between the imprisonment of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and Punjab Chief

Minister Maryam Nawaz as Bushra was a housewife and not a politician. "Bushra Bibi is targeted because she is the wife of the PTI founder," she said.

Last week, a comprehensive medical evaluation of Bushra Bibi was performed under the observation of Khan's family physician. 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. The hospital sources stated that Bushra Bibi also underwent, ultrasound, echo, and ECG tests, while during the check-up, Khan's physician, Dr Asim Yousuf, was also present.

The doctors, according to the sources, cleared all the medical reports of the former first lady. The hospital sources said that Khan's wife only had a minor gastric issue.

Court bars Imran, wife from speaking on state institutions

PTI ISLAMABAD

court in Pakistan on A Thursday barred jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi from issuing provocative statements against state institutions, including the army, and officials. During the hearing of a petition seeking a fair trial, Judge Basir Javed Rana of the Accountability Court in Islamabad also said the media should limit its reporting to court proceedings and not report statements of the accused.

According to the order, Khan, the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party made provocative political statements against senior officials of state institutions, including the army, the judiciary and the army chief, newspaper The Express Tribune reported.

The order said that such statements disrupt judicial decorum and also obstruct judicial functions such as the dispensation of justice and further stated that

during the jail trial of the PTI founder, the media will limit its reporting to court proceedings and not report statements of the accused.

In its order, the court also instructed the prosecution, the accused and their defence counsels not to make political or inflammatory statements which may disrupt the decorum of the court, the newspa per said. Media was also ordered to

refrain from publishing political and inflammatory narratives targeting state institutions and officials and was asked to adhere to PEMRA guidelines prohibiting discussing ongoing The former prime minister

ging marred the by-polls in Punjab, accusing the Punjab Police of indulging in rigging. 'Democracy hinges on the supremacy of law and the conduct of free and fair elections, vet what we witnessed was jungle law. The interference of the

police in the Punjab by-elec-

Rajapaksa rejects allegations on Easter attack probe

asserted that premeditated rig-

tions is deeply concerning," Khan said during a media interaction at Rawalpindi's Adiala Iail Khan highlighted that the

recent by-polls were also conducted in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, where the PTIbacked Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) is ruling, affirming that no instances of rigging transpired in the province.

There exists no semblance of democracy in the nation presently. The rigging was a pre-emptive move, driven by fear of the events that unfolded on February 8. The postponement of the [general] elections from October to February was a deliberate tactic to suppress the PTI. Even our petition in the Supreme Court remained unheard, as it awaited the demise of the PTI," he elaborated. Khan lamented that myriad tactics were deployed ahead of the general elections to besmirch the reputation of the PTI, resulting in the conversion of a majority vote into a

Min rejects claims Imran was forced for a 'deal'

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has rejected the claims made by Imran Khan's close aide Barrister Gohar Khan that the jailed former premier was being pressured to accept a "deal", according to a media report on Thursday. 'There is no truth in claims of pressuring Imran Khan to come to the negotiating table," Asif said in an interview published in Independent Urdu on Wednesday and reported by the Dawn newspaper on Thursday Speaking to reporters outside the Parliament House on Tuesday Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTÍ Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan replied in the negative when asked if he had said there was pressure being exerted for a deal" with Imran Khan: "No, I have not given any such statements". However, Gohar later said: "Another thing we (PTI) are saying is that the way Khan sahib is being kept in jail, the way [Bushra] Bibi has been [jailed], these are all [forms of] pressure that Khan sahib somehow agrees

French president outlines his vision for Europe

AP PARIS

French President Emmanuel Macron warned Thursday that Europe could die if it fails to build its own robust defense as Russia's war in Ukraine rages on, or if it fails to undertake massive trade and economic reforms to compete with China and the US.

Macron urged Europeans to become more ambitious in a fast-changing world to face the challenges of war, fierce trade competition, energy scarcity, climate change and increasing authoritarianism. In a nearly two-hour speech at the Paris's Sorbonne University, Macron said the Continent is divided and "too slow and lacks ambition" at a time when the 27-member European Union needs to become a superpower, defend its own

borders and speak with one voice if it wants to survive and thrive. "Our Europe today is mortal," Macron said. "It can die and that depends solely on our choices," he added. He called on people to make those choices now because, "it's today that Europe is between war and

Russia's aggression in Ukraine, now in its third year, is an existential threat and Europe is not armed enough to defend itself when "confronted by a power like Russia that has no inhibitions, no limits," Macron said. Our ability to ensure our security is at stake," Macron said. "Russia mustn't be allowed to win." France has been a firm supporter of Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression, and Macron has often clashed with other Western leaders as he has insisted that Europe must stand

by the country at any cost. Last month, the French president alarmed European leaders by saying that sending Western troops into Ukraine to shore up its defenses shouldn't be ruled out. Referring to trade practices of China and the US, Macron said "the two world powers have decided not to respect the rules of global trade" by shoring up protections and subsides while Europe's industry remains open and is stuck in overregulation. "Let's do the same, we are in competition, Macron said. Thursday's speech comes ahead of pivotal European Parliament elections. Macron, an avid advocate of a united and assertive Europe, also rallied support for his centrist Renaissance party ahead of the June 6-9 vote as far-right parties lead the moderate coalitions in the polls.

Cri Lanka's former president carried out the suicide bomb-Thursday categorically rejected the allegations levelled against

him by the head of the country's Catholic church Cardinal Malcom Ranjith on the investigations into the deadly Easter Sunday terror attacks in 2019. As many as 270 people, including 11 Indians, were killed on April 21, 2019, when nine suicide bombers belonging to the local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTI) linked to ISIS carried out a series of blasts that tore through three Catholic churches and as many luxury hotels in Sri Lanka. In the statement, Rajapaksa, 74, said the Easter Sunday attacks were perpetrated by a group of Islamic

extremists. The highest investigative arm of the then government - the CID - had for several months before the attacks, been investigating

individuals and groups that the terrorists before they struck", news portal dailymirror.lk reported.

The public should take good note of the fact that Cardinal Ranjith "either glosses over the responsibility of, or expressly absolves the two parties mentioned above while continuing to relentlessly attack and criticise me over the Easter Sunday suicide bombings", he said.

Rajapaksa is a former politician and military officer, who served as the President of Sri Lanka from November 2019 until his resignation in July 2022 due to months of public anger against the government as the country faced unprecedented economic turmoil.

The former president noted that at a recent media conference, Cardinal Ranjith alleged that the day after the report of the Presidential Commission of



Inquiry on the Easter Sunday attacks was handed over to the former president, he had spoken to him over the phone and said that he had difficulties in implementing the recommendations in that report as it would entail the arrest of individuals and even the banning of organisations that were supportive of him.

În response, Rajapaksa said, "I categorically state that I did the recommendations of the Presidential Commission could not be implemented because that would entail the arrest of people and even the banning of organisations allied with me." "It is a well-known fact that the Muslim community in general did not vote for me or support my candidacy at the Presidential election, so I cannot possibly have had any allies

in any organisation that would need to be banned over complicity in the Easter Sunday attacks," he said. On Cardinal Ranjith's allegations that he had delayed giving him a copy of the first volume of the Presidential Commission report and that he

ing volumes, Rajapaksa denied the charges. "The report of the Presidential Commission was handed over

had not given him the remain-

the phone after the Presidential Having studied it myself and Commission report was sub- referred it to the Attorney the Speaker of Parliament on February 23, 2021, and by March 1, 2021 copies had been given to the Venerable Mahanayaka Theras, the Cardinal and the Catholic Bishops. There was no delay in handing over the report to the Cardinal," he said.

Rajapaksa also rebutted the allegations that he had transferred the CID officers investigating the Easter Sunday attacks and even imprisoned one such senior officer to sabotage the investigation.

Noting that the Cardinal has accused him of not having brought the perpetrators of the Easter Sunday bombings to justice, Rajapaksa said criminals have to be brought to justice not by politicians but by the police, the Attorney General's Department and the Courts system working together.

3rd man detained in Russia's major bribery case

AP MOSCOW

third man has been Adetained in a bribery case involving a Russian deputy defense minister, Moscow's court service said on Thursday. It said businessman Alexander Fomin is suspected of paying bribes to Deputy Defense Minister Timur Ivanov, who was detained on Wednesday, as well as Ivanov's associate, Sergei Borodin. All of the men are to remain in custody until at least June 23.

Ivanov, an ally of Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, was jailed pending an investigation and trial on charges of bribery, court officials said in a statement. He was in charge of military construction projects and was previously accused of living a lavish lifestyle in anti-corrup-

tion investigations conducted by the team of late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. Moscow's court service said Fomin and Borodin contributed to Ivanov receiving a "particularly large bribe" — an offense punishable by up to 15 years in

Ivanov, 48, was sanctioned by both the United States and European Union in 2022 after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

According to a court statement, investigators told the judge that Ivanov conspired with third parties to receive a bribe in the form of unspecified property services "during contracting and subcontracting work for the needs of the Ministry of Defense.

Ivanov's lawyer, Murad Musayev, told the state news agency Tass on Wednesday that his client is accused of "taking a bribe in the form of free construction and repair work on supposedly his personal properties," and in turn providing "assistance to companies that were contractors for the Defense

Another lawyer, Denis Baluyev, was quoted by state news agency RIA Novosti as saying nalists.

Wednesday that Ivanov maintains his innocence.

According to the Defense Ministry's website, Ivanov was appointed in 2016 by a presidential decree. He oversaw property management, housing and medical support for the military, as well as construction

RIÁ Novosti quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying that Shoigu and President Vladimir Putin were informed of Ivanov's arrest, which comes as Moscow's war in Ukraine grinds through its third year. Independent Russian news out-

lets reported Wednesday that the bribery charges were intended to hide more serious charges of treason and avoid scandal, citing two unidentified sources close to the Federal Security Service, or FSB.

Peskov dismissed the suggestion and described the reports as speculation. "There are a lot of rumors. We need to rely on official information," he told jour-

Musayev, Ivanov's lawyer, also denied any other charges, telling RIA Novosti Ivanov faced only bribery allegations.

Before his arrest, Ivanov was seen attending a meeting with Shoigu and other top military brass. The move against Ivanov came nearly a month after Putin called on the FSB to "keep up a systemic anti-corruption effort" and pay special attention to state defense procurement.

Russian media reported that Ivanov oversaw some of the construction in Mariupol, a Ukrainian port city that was devastated by bombardment and occupied by Russian forces early in the war.

construction sites and newly erected buildings.

Zvezda, the official TV channel of the Russian military, reported in summer 2022 that the ministry was building an entire residential block in Mariupol and showed Ivanov inspecting

That same year, the team of opposition leader Navalny alleged Ivanov and his family had been enjoying luxurious trips abroad, lavish parties and owned elite real estate. The activists also alleged that Ivanov's wife, Svetlana, divorced him in 2022 to avoid sanctions and continued living a lavish lifestyle.

The prosecution of high-level officials for corruption remains relatively rare in Russia.

In April 2023, former Deputy Culture Minister Olga Yarilova was arrested and charged with embezzling more than 200 million rubles (USD 2.2 million) Yarilova, who held her post from 2018 to 2022, is on trial and facing a possible seven-year jail term.

clans. Ulyukayev, now 68, was granted early release from

prison in May 2022.

Former Economics Minister Alexei Ulyukayev received an eight-year prison sentence in 2017 for accepting a USD 2 milsince last October. lion bribe from one of Putin's top associates. The high-profile trial was widely seen as part of infighting between Kremlin

China launches 3-member crew to its space station experiments, and popularise

AP ■ JIUQUAN

hina launched a three-mem-Ober crew to its orbiting space station on Thursday as part of its ambitious programme that aims to put astronauts on the moon by 2030.

The Shenzhou-18 spacecraft lifted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre on the edge of the Gobi Desert in northwestern China atop a Long March 2-F rocket at 8:59 pm (1259 GMT).

The spacecraft's three-member crew will relieve the Shenzhou-17 team, which has been staffing China's Tiangong space station

The China Manned Space Agency, or CMSA, held a sendoff ceremony — complete with flag-waving children and patri-

otic music — for the Shenzhou-

18 crew earlier on Thursday, as

the three astronauts prepared to

enter the spacecraft. The trio is made of Commander Ye Guangfu, 43, a veteran astronaut who took part in the Shenzhou-13 mission in 2021, and fighter pilots Li Cong, 34, and Li Guangsu, 36, who are spaceflight rookies.

They are expected to reach the space station about six-and-ahalf hours after liftoff.

China built its own space station after being excluded from the International Space Station, largely because of US concerns over the Chinese military's involvement in the program. This year, the Chinese station is slated for two cargo spacecraft missions and two manned

spaceflight missions. The Shenzhou-18 crew will spend about six months on the space station. They will conduct scientific tests, install space debris protection equipment on the station, carry out payload

deputy director of the CMSA. Lin also said China was working toward eventually offering access to its space station to foreign astronauts and space tourists. "We will accelerate the research and promotion of the participation of foreign astronauts and space tourists on flights on China's space station," he said in a press conference Wednesday. The country is planning a mission to bring back samples from Mars around 2030 and three lunar probe missions over the next four years. It also wants to put astronauts on the moon by 2030. China conducted its first crewed space mission in 2003, becoming the third country after the former Soviet Union and the US to put a person into space using its own

science education, among other

things, according to Lin Xiqiang,

Markets extend gains

Rising for the fifth straight equity Assion, equity benchmark Sensex rallied nearly 500 points to reclaim the 74,000 mark while the Nifty closed above the 22,550 level on Thursday, driven by heavy buying in banking, financial and metal stocks.

Recovering after a sell-off in early trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 486.50 points or 0.66 per cent to settle at 74,339.44. During the day, it surged 718.31 points or 0.97

per cent to 74,571.25. The NSE Nifty advanced 167.95 points or 0.75 per cent to 22,570.35.

From the Sensex basket, Axis Bank jumped 6 per cent after the company reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 7,599 crore during the March 2024 quarter.

State Bank of India, NTPC, Nestle, Sun Pharma, JSW Steel, ITC, Mahindra & and HCL Technologies were among



the other major gainers. Mahindra Bank tanked 10.85 per cent after the RBI barred the company from onboarding customers online and issuing credit

Cracking down on repeated non-compliance with IT RBI norms, the

Wednesday barred Kotak

onboarding new customers

through its online and

Mahindra

Bank

mobile banking channels and issuing fresh credit cards with immediate effect after the regulator found "serious deficiencies" in the lender's IT risk management. Hindustan Unilever, Titan

Bajaj Finance, Maruti and Asian Paints were the other laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo settled lower while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the positive territory. European markets were trading on a mixed note. Wall Street ended on a mixed note on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.06 per cent to USD 88.07 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,511.74 on Wednesday according to exchange data. The BSE benchmark rose 114.49 points or 0.16 per cent to settle at 73,852.94 on Wednesday. The NSE Nifty advanced 34.40 points or 0.15 per cent to 22,402.40.

Qualcomm sees India as a

"crucial" hub for talent, but

also an opportunity "to do more". Qualcomm opened its

first India office in 1996 in

Resilient economy, price stability to support India promising growth story: FinMin report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $R^{\text{esilient growth, price stability and}}_{\text{steady external sector outlook}}$ continue to support India's promising economic performance amid uncertain global conditions, a Finance Ministry report said on Thursday.

Overall, India continues to be the fastestgrowing major economy, with positive assessments of the growth outlook for the current financial year for India by international organisations and the RBI, the Monthly Economic Review for March said.

The IMF, in its April 2024 World Economic Outlook (WEO), has revised upwards its estimate of India's real GDP growth for FY24 to 7.8 per cent from 6.7 per cent in its January 2024 update and 6.3 per cent in its October 2023 WEO. The report said the global economic

growth landscape is seeing a gradual resurgence, marked by fading fears of recession and rebounding growth in major economies. Geopolitical tensions remain a concern,

notwithstanding developments, risk perceptions have softened, offering a potential upside for



Talking about global economic growth recovery, the report said it is underway in major economies, although disparities

While the leading indicators signal increased economic activity and geopolitical tensions have eased slightly, recent conflicts continue to pose risks. Despite the global challenges, India stands out with its strong economic performance, highlighting broad-based growth across sectors and asserting its pivotal role in supporting the global growth trajectory," it said.

Global slowdown led to a moderation in India's merchandise exports and imports, it said adding that the slowing of trade has resulted in the merchandise trade deficit narrowing in FY2023-24, as exports have shown a smaller

contraction than imports. However, the non-petroleum and nongems & jewellery merchandise exports have shown resilience with a sustained uptick in the last few months, growing at 3 per cent in FY24.

Services exports expanded at the fastest pace in FY24, supported by rising software exports and business services exports.

Owing to these developments, it said, India's current account deficit improved in the first nine months of 2023-24 compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

India's capital inflows saw a significant turnaround in 2023-24, and its foreign exchange reserves reached an all-time high in March 2024, sufficient to cover 11 months of projected imports and more than 100 per cent of total external

Al offers remarkable opportunity for India: Qualcomm India

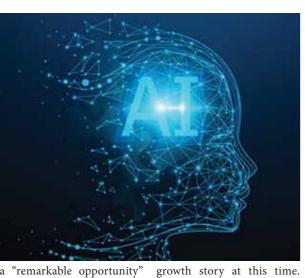
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PTI NEW DEI HI

India, with its growth engines roaring, is the "place to be", Qualcomm India President Savi Soin has said, adding that the country has a "remarkable opportunity" with hybrid Artificia Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The San Diego, Californiaheadquartered chip designer is working with OEMs as well as operators in India to help entry-level smartphone that would push new frontiers in affordability. "India is the place to be... Lool at every sector, there is growth in every sector in India and that is just to serve the Indian consumers... You can imagine what is happening in phones with what OEMs are doing here... Not just build for India market but also for exports, Soin said in an interview to

The India growth story is compelling, and the country with its strength and scale has



"remarkable opportunity" with hybrid AI

Hybrid AI is device and cloud working together, splitting AI computation as needed, to offer enhanced experiences optimum use

"I wouldn't want to be in any place else but India in terms of wheelers," he said.

Delhi, and its eering development engineering development centres in Bengaluru and Hyderabad came up in 2004. The company's engineering presence in the country has

now expanded to include Bengaluru, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Noida, with offices in Gurgaon, and Mumbai. The development centres operate as a part of Qualcomm's global research and development engine. In fact, India is the largest base

outside of San Diego for Qualcomm's research and development. development and R&D teams work very closely with Qualcomm's headquarters to customise solutions and applications for India across mobile, Internet of Things (IoT), auto, and connectivity. The Bangalore Development

Centre is host to a 5G Innovation lab, which has supported several Indian customers and startups on 5G solutions and development journeys

"...We are working with all the two-wheeler OEMs in India and been able to provide them digital transformation... The experience they are looking for, in terms of connected platforms on two-wheelers and doing the similar thing for digital cockpit in fourwheelers..

"We are also looking at what we can do it in terms of consumer devices, be PC or phones. We are super excited about what India has to offer," Soin said.

Describing Reliance Jio as a strategic partner for Qualcomm, Soin said, "We have been working with them on fixed wireless and on their initial 4G devices as well".

"Lot of initiatives we have undergoing with Jio, they are very strategic partners for us. We are proving tech know how and expertise... While we bring these technologies there is a lot of innovations that Jio is bringing to us as well. This is a two-way partnership," he elaborated.

The company is lining up a new chipset that would enable the launch of 5G smartphone, in the price point of sub-USD 100. Qualcomm is working with all operators in India to help bring an entry-level 5G smartphone and believes that technology should available to the masses.

Soin said the company is working not just with one but multiple partners to ensure its success, and reach.

We are enabling all OEMs, that we work with, to bring these devices into India. We will be working with all the operators in India and channels partners to bring these devices at affordable prices that India has not seen before. That is what we are most excited about," he said.

India services exports grow 11.4 per cent in 2023: UNCTAD report PTI ■ NEW DELHI "The main driver of the YoY

India's services exports jumped 11.4 per cent to USD 345 billion in 2023 despite global economic uncertainties, while China's shipments from the sector contracted by 10.1 per cent to USD 381 billion, according to a UNCTAD report.

Sectors that contribute to India's services export growth include travel, transport, medical and hospitality.

With an 8.9 per cent annual rise in current dollar value terms, the world services exports surpassed USD 7.9 trillion in 2023, a quarterly bulletin of UNCTAD said. The leading exporters among

developing economies India, include Singapore, Turkiye, Thailand, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia, it added.

services imports, India's however, dipped marginally by 0.4 per cent to USD 248 billion last year.

(year-on-year) rise of services exports in Q4 2023 was the ample growth of international travel receipts. In the post-COVID-19 recovery, travel receipts increased by 70 per cent in Asia (YoY)," the report

Commenting on India's

services exports, an industry expert said that the export of IT and IT-enabled services and travel is going strong. Business services engineering, architecture, legal and accounting services

research management consulting services stand to benefit from leveraging the opportunities presented by the government initiatives.

India's service exports have historically been concentrated in North America and Europe, but there is also significant potential for growth in emerging markets, such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Ministry working on infrastructure needs to achieve \$1 trillion goods exports target by 2030: Official

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce ministry I has initiated an exercise identify required infrastructure needs, potential sectors, and clusters which would help the country achieve the USD 1 trillion merchandise exports target by 2030, a senior government official said on Thursday.

Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce Anant Swarup said that the Asian Development Bank has been requested to conduct a study in this regard.

If the country is targeting USD 1 trillion of exports by 2030, there is a likelihood of about USD 1.5 trillion of imports, so "do we have enough capacity" to cater to USD 2.5 trillion of EXIM (export and import) trade, he said. So that is the target on which the department is working, he said.

"The ADB is doing a study for us because what is more important is from where the USD 1 trillion of exports is going to come from; which are those sectors and clusters



from where this USD 1 trillion of exports is going to come from. That is very critical for us.

Because unless we know about the clusters, and ports or airports from where this USD 1 trillion of exports and USD 1.5 trillion of imports is going to happen, we would not be able to do a baseline study to identify the gaps which exist and then enhance infrastructure

capabilities," Swarup said. He was speaking at a CII conference on resilient export logistics for trade and connectivity.

India's merchandise exports dipped by 3.11 per cent to milion tonnes of USD 437 billion in 2023-24. movement in the ports.

Imports too dipped to USD fiscal.

India has an amazing

opportunity with hybrid AI to

be able to do on-device AI and

show the world possible use

cases on these devices, PCs,

cars,

has

remarkable

two-

opportunity...

phones,

He also said that the government is also focusing on ways to push India's integration into the global supply chains (GVCs) as at present about 70 per cent of the global trade is happening through these chains.

For this, there is a need to increase manufacturing. He added that generally exports and imports move in tandem. China's exports stood at about USD 3.5 trillion and imports are at USD 3.2 trillion.

Speaking at the event, Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi said that further infrastructure push is required at ports and airports to increase India's exports. Saranagi said that to handle USD 2.5 trillion of exports and imports, India needs to create a lot of infrastructure.

As per rough calculations, "we need to create an infrastructure which will support an additional 2,000 million tonnes of goods

HUDCO celebrates its 54th Foundation Day

Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO), a Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), celebrated its 54th Foundation Day on Thursday. The Navratna CPSE has been adding more efforts for the creation of sustainable and resilient infrastructure in line with Government of India Vision of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047

The Public Financial Institution celebrated their Foundation Day at India Habitat Centre and the celebrations were graced by the board of Directors of HUDCO including Sanjay Kulshrestha, Chairman & Managing Director, M Nagaraj, Director of Corporate Planning, Kuldip Narayan, Corporate Director and more senior members.

HUDCO with its mandate of providing long term financial assistance to Housing and Urban Infrastructure sectors has operated through its Pan-India network of 21 Regional Offices, 11 Development Offices and a Corporate Office



and Research and Training Institute (HSMI) in Delhi. The CPSE also released many Hindi and English publications namely Shelter biannual publication on policy issues, Darpan - an inhouse magazine, Johar and more. For many years HUDCO has

supported the Government development of Affordable Schemes Housing Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG) segments and social infrastructure projects all over the country. HUDCO is also one of the Central Nodal Agency for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).

ITC plans to open more hotels overseas: CMD Puri

PTI ■ COLOMBO

▼ndia's diversified entity ITC **⊥**plans to open more hotels overseas with neighbouring countries and the Middle East as primary target markets after opening of its first international property here, company Chairman and Managing Director Sanjiv Puri said on Thursday.

The company's arm ITC Hotels, which had opened 22 new properties in the last 24 months, plans to add another 70 hotels in the next five years in India as part of expansion plans in the hospitality sector. Besides the hotels business, the company will look for opportunities to expand the presence of FMCG and other verticals in new overseas markets as well.

"We are open to exploring opportunities that come about. I think we have strong credentials in hospitality which we can take outside India now. Very clearly at the moment the focus is on proximal markets, be it for hospitality, be it for FMCG..., Puri said here at a press conference after the opening of the 352-room luxury here. He said as the company explores and understands a place for a particular business, it may look at it as a market for other verticals as well. Citing the example of Nepal, Puri said,"We started with other businesses and are now looking at hospitality (there). Here (in Sri Lanka) we have started with hospitality...As we explore and understand the place, we will look at possibilities in some of our other sectors as well."

On overseas expansion of the hospitality business, while the company's focus is more on 'proximal markets', said,"We are open to it if there are some interesting opportunities beyond it. We will certainly be interested in pursuing that."
When asked if ITC is looking

at the Middle East as a market for the hospitality business, he said it is a vibrant economy right now with terrific growth plans and "if opportunity comes our way then we will certainly explore

SRM IST hosts Conference on Occupational Therapy



KATTANKULATHUR: In his presidential address at the inauguration of the National Conference on Autism, 2024, Wednesday, Dr P Sathyanarayanan, Chancellor (Academics), SRM Institute of Science and Technology, said SRM College of Occupational Therapy, since its inception in 1996, had provided treatment to more than 5,000 people through the occupational therapy programme. He said that people with

autism had to travel to different places to have access services and avail treatment from doctors and therapists. With a view to providing all such services under a single roof, they had established the occupational therapy centre at SRM IST in Kattankulathur.

Tech Mahindra Q4 net profit tanks 41 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IT services company Tech Mahindra on Thursday reported about 41 per cent yearon-year fall in its consolidated net profit to Rs 661 crore for the quarter ended March 2024. The net profit in the year-ago period was Rs 1,117.7 crore.

dropped by 6.2 per cent to Rs 12,871 crore. During the full fiscal FY24, the consolidated net profit tanked 51.2 per cent year-on-year to Rs 2,358 crore.

For Q4FY24, the Tech Mahindra's revenue

translated to a decline of 2.4 per cent over the previous fiscal.

The revenue during FY24 at Rs 51,996 crore,

Tech Mahindra CEO Mohit Joshi said, "As we step into FY25, we look forward to improvement in clients spending, which fuels

our optimism for a better revenue performance ahead." He said that FY24 posed its fair share of

challenges for the IT services sector. ...Yet, amidst the global economic uncertainties, we continue to observe a notable push towards digital adoption," Joshi

The company's total headcount stood at 1,45,455 in Q4FY24, down 795 on a sequential

The board recommended final dividend of Rs 28 per equity share (face value of Rs 5 each) for the financial year ended March 31, 2024. The Final Dividend, if approved, will be paid on or before, August 9, 2024.

This dividend is in addition to interim residential real estate sector dividend of Rs 12 per equity share paid by the company in November, 2023. with an overall HSI of 149. Magicbricks said the HSI is

Indian housing market outlook bullish: Report PTI ■ NEW DELHI onsumers sentiments in

CIndia's housing market remain positive despite a rise in prices, according to realty portal Magicbricks.

On Thursday, Magicbricks released a report 'Housing Sentiment Index' based on the survey of over 4,500 customers across 11 cities. inflationary "Despite the Housing pressures,

Sentiment Index (HSI) across India remains robust with strong buyer confidence," it said in a statement. The survey revealed a positive market outlook for the Indian



derived from an online survey capturing the responses of 4,500 high intent homebuyers across the top 11 cities of India, spanning various income brackets and budget preferences.

The HSI score ranges from 0 to 200, with 100 representing optimistic

neutrality. Indicating an expectation of market stability in the short to medium term. A score of 200 reflects a bullish sentiment while a score of 0 indicated a bearish sentiment. Currently, the pan-India HSI stands at 149, signalling the outlook

prospective homebuyers," the report said. Ahmedabad emerged as the frontrunner with the highest

HSI of 163, closely followed by Kolkata (160), Gurugram (157), and Hyderabad (156), propelled by enhanced infrastructure and upcoming new real estate projects.

'The current scenario of India's real estate sector reflects the most promising conditions witnessed in the past decade, instilling confidence among homebuyers and investors nationwide. Its also noteworthy that the demand is consistently surpassing available supply, showing

encouraging signs of swift

absorption when

inventory enters the market," Sudhir Pai, CEO of Magicbricks, said. The report also identified that

mid-age professionals (24-35 age group) demonstrated the highest HSI (154). Furthermore, consumers with an annual income of Rs 10-20 lakh displayed strongest aspirations for home buying, with HSI of 156.

According to the statement, Magicbricks has monthly website traffic exceeding 2 crore and an active base of over 15 lakh property listings. It has become a full stack service provider for all real estate needs, with services, including home loans, interiors, movers and packers, and expert advice.

vivacity

PRESERVING A RICH LEGACY FOR A GLORIOUS FUTURE

World Dance Day is not just a celebration but a promise for the future, a future where Indian classical dance continues to inspire, says SAKSHI PRIYA

enowned Bharatanatyam dancer, vocalist, and Padma Shri awardee, Geeta Chandran, is a bridge between tradition and contemporary sensibilities. Leading the esteemed Natya Vriksha organisation, her dedication to Indian classical dance extends far captivating performances. Led by the visionary Chandran, her organisation took centrestage in Delhi for World Dance Day, offering a stunning display last week on April 20th and 21st at the India International Centre, co-hosted by the Ministry of Culture. Chandran's talent for blending tradition with contemporary flair

was on full display, captivating attendees from all walks of life. The heart of the celebration beat with the youthful energy of the Young Dancers' Festival, promising a bright future for Indian classical

The opening was a soulful Bharatanatyam performance by Vaishnavi Srinivasan and Nivedha Harish, disciples of Guru Smt Roja Their Kannan. dance, choreographed by Guru Adyar K Lakshmanan, set a magical tone for

the evening. Divya Goswami, a disciple of the late Guru Shri Munnalal Shukla, followed with her mesmerising Kathak performance.

Beyond technical skill, the event offered a glimpse into Indian culture through the expressive movements of young artists. Each gesture was filled with passion, captivating the audience, continues to enthrall audiences for

showcasing Chandran's instinct to generations to come, with young artists platform, Natya Vriksha not only celebrated established artists but also empowered emerging dancers, providing them a space to shine.

Bharatanatyam The performances were a visual feast, with elaborate costumes, jewellery, and makeup enhancing the storytelling. The audience responded with thunderous applause, appreciating the dedication and skill of the

dancers.

Vriksha extends far beyond the stage. Her organisation serves as a nurturing ground for budding artists. They create a sense of community and collaboration within the Indian classical dance scene, encouraging a sense of shared passion and heritage. Chandran's unwavering commitment to preserving this rich cultural heritage is evident not only in her captivating performances but also in her dedication to empower the next

Chandran's vision for Natya

World Dance Day, under her watchful eye, was more than just a celebration; it was a promise for a vibrant future. A future where Indian classical dance

generation of dancers.

identify exceptional talent. On this carrying the torch forward, with their unique interpretations to keep this

ancient art form alive. promise of preserving tradition while embracing innovation, ensuring that the rich tapestry of Indian classical dance continues to inspire and mesmerize. Natya Vriksha's efforts continue to flourish and

> around the world. Geeta Chandran's Natya Vriksha supports new artists, creating a community within the Indian classical dance scene. dedication to preserving this cultural heritage is in performances and her focus on empowering

captivate audiences

the next generation. World Dance Day is not just a celebration but a promise for the future. It's a future where Indian classical dance continues to inspire, with young artists adding their own styles and keeping the art form alive. It's about preserving while

tradition embracing new ideas, ensuring that Indian classical dance remains captivating and inspiring. Photo: Pankaj Kumar

Voices of women compels us to participate in a world where incredible women artists are striving for a more inclusive and vibrant art world, writes SAKSHI PRIYA

magine a space where each wall whispers a story, a world that is painted not on spatial maps but on timeless canvases. This is the essence of the 'Voices of Women,' an art exhibition recently presented by Art Garde in a vibrant celebration of contemporary art by women artists. It was a testament to the flourishing creativity of these artists, each with a unique voice yearning to be heard. It was indeed a captivating display curated by Teesta Bhandare, where we were invited into the vibrant world of young and contemporary

Showcasing a diverse range of artwork, this exhibition, held earlier this month, showcased the talent and creativity of emerging and mid-career artists from across India. It was a testament to the increasing presence and influence of women on the art scene. While equal representation between men and women artists is still a work in progress, platforms like this disparity and providing underscore their creativity. Each stroke, each hue, whispered a story untold, drawing the one's attention to a world where art is not just seen but felt, where every canvas is a portal to a

soulful journey. Clearly, the exhibition was a testament to the evolving role of women in the art world, a world where their voices resonate with increasing clarity and power. The show also shed light on the growing trend of women collectors, who are now collecting more art than men, further emphasising the importance of platforms like this in promoting women artists.

Each piece of art in the exhibition narrates a unique and compelling story, the diverse perspectives of women artists brought together in perfect symphony.

Neha Luthra's paintings, such as "Dol ka bar and



Sambhar Lakes,' painted in oil, depict her emotional connection to the places she has been to and experienced. Her artwork is the essence of these locations, conveying their beauty and ecological significance. Patel's works, Astha

including 'Treepies Dancing Around Falling Bauhineas, 'Celocias' and a Wild Avian,' and 'Butterscotch Light and Wild Fields,' are inspired by her environment and daily experiences. Her paintings often feature Bohemian and flowers illuminated by moonlight, creating a sense of magic Voices of Women' play a and tranquility. One of the crucial role in addressing paintings represents a place near Vadodara, in Gujarat, a space for women to which highlights the everchanging landscape and the constant presence of jungle babblers. These paintings evoke a sense of wonder and appreciation for the beauty

nature has in store. Tanushree Sarkar's works explore themes of emotional intimacy and human connection. Her painting, 'Skin is Red - Half Women Half Dream,' done in oil, portrays bold and intimate moments, inviting us viewers to reflect on the complexity of human relationships. Another one, Whirlwind depicts two figures intertwining with each other and nature, symbolizing harmony and the building of a shared future. Sarkar's art challenges conventional notions of beauty and encourages viewers to embrace their own unique bodies and identities.

'The Power of Braille' by Vijaya Chauhan, inspired by her experiences with visually



artist's courageous exploration of the Braille text. This thoughtprovoking work challenges societal norms, highlighting alternative notions of sight and communication. By using Braille as a point of departure, Chauhan demonstrates the beauty and power of alternative forms of expression, reminding us that sight is not the only way experience understand the world.

Voices of Women' had more to it than mere aesthetics. It contained a powerful challenge to stereotypes perpetuated of yore, when a female artist was confined to the realm of the decorative. Here, even as Tanushree Sarkar explores themes of body consciousness and sexuality Vijaya Chauhan's works redefine our very perspective on what sight symbolises.

The exhibition did not simply present diverse representations of women artists, it also broke the stereotypes and shackles on the art women create. It was a platform for young collectors to discover and acquire art that resonates with the common onlooker, making art accessible and meaningful to a wider audience.

Malavika Rajnarayan, Ekta Singha, Maitreyi Desai, and Sareena Khemka, among others also scripted their unique perspectives on their canvas, enriching the exhibition with some exceptional artwork. The exhibition brought forth and celebrated the creativity and resilience of women artists, challenging traditional notions of art and beauty. In a conversation with a

Curator Teesta Bhandare highlighted the importance diversity representation, stating that the exhibition aims to show the wide range of styles and themes women artists can explore. She emphasized the challenge of educating people about the value of art as a cultural investment, urging visitors to see art as an integral part

Creative submission to the senses

BY SAKSHI PRIYA

very artist has an impressive narrative to tell, recently brought forth in an exhibition, 'Evoke, Ignite, Awaken, Stir,' by the Art Exchange Project which featured not only professional artists but also individuals from diverse backgrounds who pursue art as a passion. In a world growing distant from art, it is difficult to track the journey of each artist and the challenges faced.

Appreciation from people and sparse turnouts at art shows pose an ongoing challenge for artists. However, art encapsulates the ability to shine through this opacity. Curated by Aarti Patel, the exhibition featured 16 artists from Delhi, Haryana, and Rajasthan, each art piece a pouring out of the artist's inner core. The show provided a platform to the uninitiated to step on the canvas and chart their individual journeys of seeking meaning in every piece of art. The exercise was truly exhilarating for every artist showcased.

Sixteen artists, each with their own unique story, some well-known, others only starting out, all sharing the common love and passion for creativity. Artist Ritu Chopra's work left a lasting memory on the onlooker. an artist whose works resonate with her felt physical experiences. Chopra relentlessly pursued new forms highlighting the freshness of a raw artist. Her love for trees, for example, is evident in her series where the tree symbolises the real sage, the silent spectators to life, emitting knowledge Chopra's and enlightenment. paintings have ensured that her spirit



lives on, much after life, a poignant reminder that artists never die, their work an immortal and vibrant legacy for generations to come.

Kavita Lomror's cityscapes, using reflective glass, are abuzz with the energy of city life, a sharp contrast to Chopra's serene landscapes. While Lomror captures the rush, complexity, and rhythm of urban life, Indraneel Ghose's photographs serve as a magic window to his winter wonderland, an escape from the searing heat of Delhi, a world of frosty mornings and misty landscapes

Madhav Bhardwaj, views art as a medium to express the depth of human emotions, his personal release inviting the outsider to connect with one's inner self. Bhardwaj's hope is that his paintings evoke serenity and ease, and inspire others to remain undefeated, as a beacon of hope. His





series, 'A Stroll with Blooms,' is all about an all-encompassing positivity Reena Chopras work is a testimony to the free-flowing forms in life that speak of a journey and a destination that no one knows about. Life is a river that we float on and the sooner

Delving into a turbulent period of Indian history, *Razakar* brings a complex narrative to life.

portraying characters from a dark chapter in Indian history

we realise we have no control and surrender to the flow, the better the journey will be.

Sushil Thakur's 'The Matrix' series was truly stunning. Artist Harsh Jalendra's oil paintings, like 'Falling' and 'Bitter Sweet,' were incredibly realistic, almost in motion. A fusion of intertwined styles, his work was a walk through dreams and reality, through a colourful spectrum of emotions. 'The Change of Perspective' truly altered the way art is perceived. Artists Khushboo Kalyanwala and Sarka Chandra explored the cyclical movement of celestial bodies. Sujata Khanna, Tushar Nath, and Winnie Singh, contributed uniquely to the exhibition, creating a magical experience for all.

The overall display of creativity was mesmerizing for people who invest their time in art.

Aarti Uppal Singla, the artist and Curator who made it all happen, spoke of a community reborn. Here, art was not just for a privileged few; it was for everyone. Her dream to ignite the creative spark even in silent onlookers contains the power to bring people together. Evoke was not just another art show. It was a journey where tired eyes rediscovered the joy of colour, where doubts melted away in the face of imagination, when strangers became soulmates, all on an artistic discovery creating an invisible bond. Exhibitions like these are a vibrant testimony to the human spirit and its unending search for beauty, a celebration of the transformative power of art that can evoke, ignite, awaken, and stir long after the final curtain are down.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar

Raj Arjun, what was the biggest challenge in portraying your character in Razakar?

very character gives me a → challenge, and every what is exciting in this journey. I am in this field because I am always bored by monotonous routines, and I need challenges in my life. If you don't get challenges, you get bored, so I need challenges in my characters. That's why the excitement was there from the moment I was offered the role of Kasim Rizvi. He has a lot of complexity; he is a brutal man, Hitler-like, and a tough character. I thought I could justify it because of my thought process,

Razakar deals with a dark period in Indian history. Did portraying a character from that time impact you in any way? It does impact you for each and every character, whatever you

A Journey through Darkness

can sometimes bring you down

In a conversation with SAKSHI PRIYA, the film's cast sheds light on their experiences play. If it is intense and requires you to be deeply in the role, it does leave an impression on you. It is not impossible to get out of that, but it gives you pain and trauma. It is hard to get involved in another character afterward, as it is hard to come out. Then, we fight with the emptiness of our own space because for a long process, we involve ourselves in a and that's how I started. particular character, and then there is nothing after that. Neither are we actors nor that character at that particular time. So, you feel totally empty. This takes you on a



very intense. He is so brutal, he is thinking of his own Islamic state, of actors in portraying such and everything, and then, cut, the process is over. Now, that mindset months, and now there is nothing. You are not allowed to go beyond that. You start thinking about how you will move to the next character. That always gives you pain, but at the same time, there is happiness also. The mixed emotions are what we have to deal with. That's why we are actors,

and that's why we are artists. debate surrounding historical

because a particular character is portrayals in movies. How do you feel about the responsibility events accurately?

For every role I am offered, if I you are left with for the last five have been called, I feel that without them giving me the responsibility, I take it upon myself because I feel if they have called me, they know I am a good actor, and I have to serve the purpose. I have to justify the role with my honesty and my craft, by not showing that I am overacting. They have to see the character, not Raj Arjun the actor. That is my forte. People call me that because I start looking like the character. So,

much that I get involved with my production house, my people, director, makeup artist, as a family member. I will go beyond everything because for me, my film, my character, and my story are my God.

How did working alongside your fellow cast members enhance your understanding of

the film's themes? They are so lovable, and they are great. If you see love outside and around you, you will find love. If you throw hatred through your eyes, you will find hatred. In the work zone, I don't find anybody who is jealous of me or not giving me good vibes because I am so engrossed in my work that I don't have time to look up and see what others are thinking. If I start thinking about others, it would be a criminal waste of my time, and I don't believe in that kind of thinking. Sometimes, when you

of their cultural identity. I do feel the responsibility so talk to actors, when you do the scene, you get the energy. Over here, as I said, if you are good, everybody is good. In any case, they all work here, so we will all be good people, good energy around. That's why commercially, where this project will reach, I am not worried about that. That should be my concern because I am a part of this film, and I should think that my producer should benefit. But it is not in my hands. But what can I do? I can just support this film. That's why all this good energy works together, and here is a good product out of that good energy Photo: Pankaj Kuma

KKR bowling woes under spotlight vs shaky Punjab Kings

itchell Starc will be desperate to justify his USD 3 million price tag as Kolkata Knight Riders bowling unit try to find ways to be less profligate when it is pitted against a perennially under-achieving Punjab Kings in an IPL match here on Saturday.

KKR is currently second in the 10-team table with 10 points, four behind table toppers Rajasthan Royals (14 points) and the team's success is largely due to the batting efforts from

the top-order.
In Punjab Kings, they meet a side that has been inconsistent and despite two good finds in Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma, they haven't exactly done well during key moments and like every other year, they are all but out of play-off contention.

Sunil Narine (286 @176.54 SR) and Phil Salt (249 @169.38 SR) have been phenomenal at the Andre Russell (155 @184.52), skipper Shreyas Iyer (190 @126.66) have all been

among the runs. Even Rinku Singh, who has just faced 67 balls in 7 games has a strikerate of close to 160.

Save captain Iyer, all the specialist batters have scored at a strike-rate northwards of 150 and that has been instrumental in the Shah Rukh Khan coowned team posting four 200plus totals in their seven games

Only Venkatesh Iyer's poor form has stuck out like a sore thumb and Nitish Rana's finger fracture has not only robbed KKR of a master player of spinners but also a very handy off-break bowler.

However the same can't be said about the bowling unit where Narine with his immaculate line and length is the only person, who has been able to maintain an economy rate of just above 7.10 which is brilliant in times when 'Impact

Player' is in vogue. The Trinidadian has also started leaking runs and the way Rajat Patidar took him on, hitting him for two sixes in one over, will definitely inspire the of Ashutosh and



Shashank — the two in-form

batters of PBKS. But it is Starc, whose underwhelming performance (6 wickets at ER 11.48) is the worst among the specialist bowler. At an all-time high price tag of Rs 24.75 crore (USD 3 million), Starc must be feeling the heat but to be fair to him, some of the tracks, including the one at the Eden

Gardens have been perfect belters where length balls are soaring into the stands.

Compared to Starc, uncapped India pacers Harshit Rana (ER 9.25, 9 wickets) and Vaibhav Arora (9.57, 7 wickets) have been more impressive but they have also got hit at times. Against a side like Kings with some power-hitters at the

back-end,

from the bowling unit. Starc has looked unidimensional, relying more on pace and has been reluctant to bowl the slower ones as the batters have negotiated him easily especially in the death overs. For KKR to go all the way, Starc will have to get his mojo back and play a lead role in the bowling department, for the

performance will be warranted

Chakravarthy to dominate in the middle overs.

This is one area PBKS would like to exploit as they would look to return to winning ways. While KKR top-order has done the bulk of their scoring, it's the opposite in case of Punjab Kings who have struggled to get it going from the outset.

The likes of Prabhsimran Singh, Liam Livingstone, Rilee Rossouw and Jonny Bairstow have failed to get into the act. It's their uncapped duo of Ashustosh and Shashank who have salvaged the team from precarious situations with their astonishing powerhitting.
They would hope that their

regular skipper Shikhar Dhawan who is nursing a shoulder injury makes a comeback, after sitting out of their last three matches.

Dhawan was seen knocking in two phases and also playing a football match during their training after reaching here on Wednesday as his inclusion would definitely be a boost to their sagging morale.



All rounder role is in danger: Axar Patel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Axar Patel, who is a very capable batter besides being a quality left-arm spinner, feels the "all-rounder's role is in danger" because of the 'Impact Player' rule, making him the latest cricketer to give a thumbs down to the IPL innovation that has polarised opinions. that has polarised opinions. Promoted to No.3, Axar made

a counter-attacking 43-ball 66 and along with skipper Rishabh Pant, lifted Delhi Capitals from 44/3 to 224/4 in their Indian Premier League match against Gujarat Titans here on Wednesday.

Later, he picked up one wicket as DC successfully defended their total to win by four runs. Sharing his thoughts on the Impact Player rule, Axar said, "As an all-rounder, I feel that an all-rounder's role is in danger with the Impact Player rule. Every team is looking to play either a pure batter or a pure bowler as the Impact overs," Axar said.

are not being used." "With the Impact Player, every team goes into the match thinking they have six batters or bowlers, depending on if This also creates a lot of

Player, and the all-rounders

confusion sometimes," Axar told 'JioCinema'. The rule has also been

criticised by the likes of Indian captain Rohit Sharma and several former players as well.

Liverpool Premier League title

Introduced in 2023, the 'Impact Player' rule allows teams to substitute players during innings, sparking debate and scrutiny in the current season. Axar, who sees himself as an all-rounder, had earlier said that because of the rule, the value of an all-rounder has

gone down. Thanks to Axar and Pant's brisk 113-run association, DC

put up a total that helped them register their season's fourth

"I didn't know beforehand that would bat at No. 3. When our batting came, they told me that they were thinking I should go at No. 3 because three spinners were playing. First, they asked Rishabh and then we discussed, and I said that I'll

Rishabh also wanted to go, but then I told him that they'll use spinners later as well, and he should go at No. 4 because he can handle the middle-

On his bowling, Axar said, "I am not doing anything new. I am just adding variations to the pace. I wasn't confident about bowling my slow ball earlier, but I have found that batter being right or lefthanded.

The pace variations are making a big difference now. With the high-scoring games

Rishabh Pant looks hungry, he is in very good form: DC batting coach Amre

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The swashbuckling Rishabh Pant has showed with his scintillating knock against Gujarat Titans that he is ready to roar in the upcoming T20 World Cup, feels Delhi Capitals' batting coach Pravin Amre. A month after returning to

competitive cricket after recovering from the multiple injuries sustained during a horrific car accident in December 2022, Pant virtually sealed his spot as India's first choice wicketkeeper for the T20 World Cup with an unbeaten 88 off 43 balls in DC's four-run win over GT in an IPL match here on Wednesday.

Skipper Pant and Axar Patel (66 off 43) forged a brisk 113-run stand off 68 balls to power DC to 224/4 after they were reeling at 44/3 in their mustwin game.

week camp in Vizag, he came there, he prepared himself very well. I remember when he came for the Vizag camp, he came straight to the ground from the airport.

"He was $\bar{\text{hungry}}$ and made sure



everyday he is going to utilise. It is all about his hard work, which is paying him," Amre said at the post-match press conference.

"And obviously a couple of good knocks gave him the confidence and today we saw a special knock. Finishing was important, and we saw how Rishabh single-handedly got bowler (Mohit Sharma), and that really says that he is in good form."

Amre also praised Axar, who made the opportunity count after being promoted to the No.3 spot.









It is Rahul vs Sanju and Avesh vs Bishnoi and Axar Kuldeep, the other Indian

better

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

K Rahul is believed to be slightly ahead of Sanju Samson in the race for second wicketkeeper's slot even as Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya's indifferent batting form remains a worry for the national selection panel which is expected to announce the 15-member squad for the T20 World Cup in Americas by the end of this month. The other bone of contention

in drafting the final squad could be the choice of an extra

It remains to be seen whether an extra pace bowler in Avesh Khan will be accommodated or whether the choice would be between Lucknow Super leg-spinner Bishnoi and Delhi Capitals all-Patel rounder Axar considering the low and slow tracks in the West Indies.

It is understood that skipper Rohit Sharma is likely to have a meeting with chairman of

selectors Ajit Agarkar to discuss the outline of the team. With the ICC setting a May 1 deadline for the announcement of 15-member

squads, the BCCI is expected to reveal the names anytime between the end of this week or the beginning of next week. Pandya has so far bowled 17 overs out of a possible 32 in eight games for MI.

As a designated finisher, he has hit only seven sixes in these games, which is below par by every measure. The freebat-swing flowing

completely missing in the 150 odd runs that he has scored in the tournament so far at a strike-rate of 142. However, Pandya can be called

a 'TINA' option (There Is No Alternativ Shivam Dube, who is also expected to board the New York bound flight, isn't bowling either.

Also in terms of skill and pace, Dube the bowler isn't anywhere close to Pandya but his current batting form (22 sixes in eight games) can't be ignored either.

RAHUL VS SANJU: It can be safely concluded that Rishabh Pant, who is now third among the top run-getters in the competition with 342 at a strike rate of 161, has sealed his place as the team's No. 1 keeper-batter and also as a designated finisher.

The fight is pretty intense for the second keeper's slot and despite KL Rahul (302 at 141 SR) not batting in the middleorder, his range of strokes might just help him pip Samson (314 at SR 152).

Samson might again have to be content with being a stand-by inclusion like last year's 50 over World Cup. **BISHNOI**

AXAR: The five bowlers, who have all but sealed their places are Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Mohammed Siraj, Singh, Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep However save Bumrah and

bowlers haven't been in great form during IPL and hence the choice of an extra bowler becomes very important. It will be a three-way fight between Rajasthan Royals' pacer Avesh, Delhi Capitals

left-arm spin bowling allrounder Axar and Lucknow Super Giants leg-spinner Bishnoi. Avesh, who has improved a lot as far as his death bowling is

concerned, has eight wickets from as many matches with an economy rate of 9.41 while Bishnoi has only taken five wickets but on flat tracks, his economy of 8.47 can be considered impressive. Axar, who has seven scalps

from nine games but is 7, would be a brilliant choice too taking the conditions into consideration.

Add to it, his batting prowess, scoring runs at a strike of 132, and also the fact that he is a very good all-round fielder.

we're seeing, it's important to have the right attitude."

OTHER SPORTS

Archery World Cup: Recurve men team in final

PTI ■ SHANGHAI

The Indian trio of Tarundeep Rai, Dhiraj Bommadevara and Pravin Jadhav set up a gold medal clash with Olympic champions Korea after storming into the men's team recurve final of the Archery World Cup Stage 1 here on Thursday.

It came a day after India were assured of at least two medals in the compound competition after both the men's and women's teams made the finals.

The Indian recurve team, qualified behind which reigning world and Olympic champions South Korea, sailed past Italy 5-1 (55-54, 55-55, 56-55) in the last-four stage. India will be up against the South Korea's Tokyo Olympics gold medal-winning trio of Kim Woojin, Lee Woo Seok and Kim Je Deok in the final

and Kim Je Deok in the final slated for Sunday.
The top-seeded Korean trio defeated their Chinese Taipei rivals Tan Chih-Chun, Lin Zih-Siang and Tai Yu-Hsuan in straight sets 6-0 (57-50, 58-56, 58-54). In the compound event, former world youth champion Priyansh and reigning Asian Games gold-medallist Jyothi Surekha Vennam advanced to

their respective individual

semi-finals to also remain in

the hunt for a medal. Having got a first round bye in season-opening tournament, the secondseeded men's recurve team overcame a first set deficit to



beat 15th seeded Indonesia 5-3 (55-56, 54-54, 55-51, 55-53) in

their tricky opening clash. They were back to their best against seventh-seeded Spain as they began by dropping just one point (59 out of 60) before cruising to a 5-1 (59-54, 56-55, 55-55) win to make the semifinals.

The Indian women's team of

Kumari, Deepika Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur, which got the sixth rank in the qualifiers, managed a belowpar show and lost a 3-1 lead to go down to Mexico in its

opening clash. Having got a bye in the first round, the Indian women's team enjoyed a 3-1 lead in the second set. But their scores

were below-par and they eventually lost 3-5 (50-50, 55-49, 51-54, 52-54).

Later, World Cup gold-medallist Jyothi, who is seeded second, downed teammate Avneet Kaur 143-142 in a tight finish to make the semis in teh compound competition.

Youngster Avneet gave her experienced teammate a tough fight when she bounced back from being two points behind to level 86-all at the end of third end.

She then produced two 10s including one X in the central ring to snatch a 115-114 lead, but only to falter in the final,

hitting the 8-ring.

Jyothi sealed it by two X and a nine. Jyothi will face Meeri-Martia Paas of Estonia in the semifinal on Saturday.

Hopefully, it will work out well."

The history-making teen was swamped by fans as he returned

to an enthusiastic reception

Jurgen Klopp's hopes of a dream send-off were left in tatters after a 2-0 loss at Everton dealt a major blow to Liverpool's Premier League title bid on Wednesday.

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Goals from Jarrad Branthwaite and Dominic Calvert-Lewin at Goodison Park meant Klopp tasted a bitter defeat in his last Merseyside derby before standing down at the end of the season.

"I can only apologize for today to the people. We should have done better and we didn't and that's why we lost," Klopp said. The loss keeps Liverpool three points behind league leader Arsenal in second place and one ahead of defending champion Manchester City, which is in third and has two games in hand on both of its rivals. Klopp had spoken last week of needing perfection to win his second title at the club. But this was the latest setback for his team, which has lost two of its last three games in the league. While the result hurt Liverpool's title chances, it delivered a boost to Everton's survival bid, with the win moving Sean Dyche's team eight points above the relegation zone. That fact seemed to be of less concern to the home fans, who were too busy reveling in the damage caused to Liverpool's season. "You lost the league at Goodison Park," they chanted



as the final whistle approached and the majority of the 39,000 crowd remained inside the stadium to drink in the atmosphere as the players celebrated on the field

"I'm very disappointed. We let it happen exactly the game that Everton wanted," Klopp said. Klopp had dominated this fixture since taking over at Anfield in 2015, winning nine of the past 16 derbies before Wednesday's match.

Statistics showed Everton won 75% of all duels in the opening half hour, a league record for any top flight team this season. After just six minutes, Liverpool was grateful for VAR as it escaped an early penalty when Alisson brought down Calvert-Lewin in the box and referee Andrew Madley pointed to the spot. The decision was overturned because of an offside in the

build up. That pressure was made to

lead in in the 27th. Liverpool's defenders repeatedly failed to clear the danger from a free kick and Branthwaite's shot squirmed through the hands of Alisson and off the post before crossing the line. Again there was an agonizing wait for a VAR check, but on this occasion there was no reprieve for Liverpool. Luis Diaz had the chance to level before the break, but was

count when Everton took the

denied by the legs of Jordan Pickford from close range. Liverpool came out with more intent for the second half without forcing Pickford into serious action conceding a second goal. Again the visitors failed to deal

with a set piece when Dwight McNeil swung a deep corner to the far post and Calvert-Lewin rose unmarked to head home. Liverpool came close to pulling one back in the 69th, but Diaz's effort came back off the post.

PTI CHENNAI

Indian chess prodigy D Gukesh on Thursday thanked the legendary Viswanathan Anand for playing a huge role in shaping his career, saying "I wouldn't have been close to what I am now if it wasn't for

The 17-year-old Grandmaster scripted history on Monday by winning the Candidates Chess Tournament in Toronto to become the youngest ever challenger to the world title, beating a record created by the legendary Garry Kasparov 40 years

The triumph paved the way for Gukesh's clash against reigning world champion Ding Liren of

I will not have been close to what I am now if it was not for Vishy: Gukesh before Gukesh, Anand was the

China later this year. "Vishy sir has been a huge inspiration for me and I have heavily benefitted from his academy. I am truly grateful to him and wouldn't have been close to what I am now if it wasn't for him," Gukesh said at a press conference a few hours after his arrival here to a rousing reception from fans and schoolmates. Gukesh has trained at the Westbridge-Anand Chess Academy which came into exis-

tence in 2020. Incidentally,



speaking about his much-anticipated clash against Liren, Gukesh said, "The biggest challenge against Ding would be how I prepare myself and being in the right state of mind since it will be a big match.
"There are a lot of expectations and a lot at stake. I have full belief in myself and will be going

him. "I am happy to see what the victory meant to the country. I was delighted to see young kids full of energy and rooting for me the moment I landed in Chennai. It's truly special and

belief in myself and will be going in with the same strategy. Gukesh to Toronto.

early this morning. Hundreds of students from the Velammal Vidyalaya, the school where Gukesh studies, lined up at the airport at least one hour before his flight landed to greet

means a lot to me," he said. His mother Padma, who is a microbiologist, was at the airport to receive him. His father Rajinikanth had travelled with