

OPINION 6 SHOWDOWN IN KARNATAKA

WORLD 10 RUSSIAN MISSILES SLAM INTO UKRAINE KILLING 14

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY APRIL 18, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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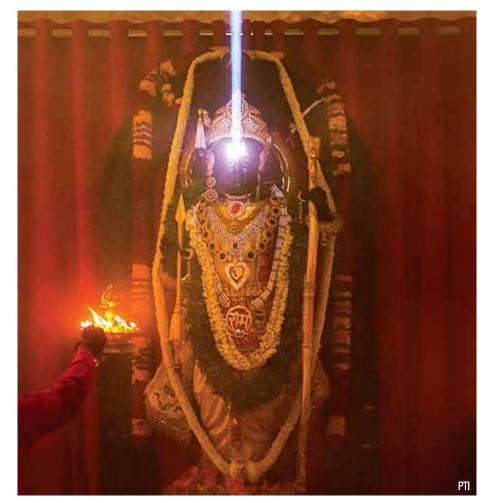
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Surya Tilak for Ram Lalla after five centuries



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

In an unprecedented event, at precisely 11:58 am today, the divine sunlight delicately graced the forehead of Ram Lalla, marking the commencement of the revered Surya Abhishek ritual. Lasting for four celestial minutes, this enchanting spectacle unfolded amidst joyous celebrations in the sacred city of Ayodhya.

"This is an extraordinary moment for all devotees of Lord Ram," exclaimed Pandit Satyendra Das, a prominent priest at the temple. "The Surva abhishek symbolises the divine blessings showered upon the birthplace of Lord Ram after centuries of longing," he said.

The Surya Tilak, an effulgent mark adorning Ram Lalla's forehead, serves as a poignant emblem of Lord Ram's birth and the realisation of a profound spiritual aspiration. According to a senior scientist from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Building (CSIR)-Central Research Institute (CBRI), Roorkee, the planned size of the tilak is 58 mm. The precise duration of the tilak on the forehead center

approximately three to threeand-a-half minutes, with two minutes of full illumination, he noted.

Utilising cutting-edge scientific expertise, a 5.8 centimetre beam of light was directed onto the deity's forehead. To achieve this remarkable phenomenon, a specialised instrument was meticulously crafted. A team of ten esteemed Indian scientists stationed at the Ram Mandir meticulously ensured the success of this auspicious event on Ram Navami.

For approximately 3 to 3.5 minutes, starting just before 12 noon, sunlight was precisely focused onto the statue's forehead using a combination of mirrors and

This tradition of adorning the Ram Lalla idol's forehead with the 'surya tilak' in Ayodhya on Ram Navami will now become an annual ritual," stated Abhay Karandikar, secretary of the Department of Science and Technology. "However, due to the ongoing construction of the temple, adjustments will be required in the design of the optical mechanism responsible for creating the 'surya tilak."

Continued on Page 8

Curtains down on campaign for first phase of LS polls

RAJESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

The campaigning for the first phase of polls covering 102 parliamentary seats of 21 States and Union Territories (UTs), where voting will be held on April 19 ended at 5 pm on Wednesday. Electioneering picked up pace on the final day of campaigning with the parties making last-minute effort to voters. Heatwave conditions and untimely rains with thunder and lightning had hit campaigning. Leading the charge, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi took whirlwind tours of various constituencies in the past few days, addressing rallies and holding roadshows, and asserting that he went to people with hope in 2014, trust in 2019 and guarantee in 2024. Many times he said "Modi's there is guarantee across the country and I am giving the guarantee of fulfilling all these guarantees". Modi held two election rallies in Assam's Nalbari and Tripura's Agartala on Wednesday and launched a scathing attack on the Congress during campaigning in the northeastern States

saying the party had adopted the 'loot' east policy while the BIP turned it into the 'Act East' policy. Continued on Page 8 LOK SABHA ELECTION PHASE 1 SEATS

Andaman and Nicobar Islands Andaman and Nicobar Islands Arunachal Pradesh Arunachal Pradesh East, Arunachal Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Kaziranga, Lakhimpur, Aurangabad, Gaya, Jamui, Nawada Chhattisgarh Jammu and Kashmir Udhampur Chhindwara, Balaghat, Jabalpur, Mandla, Madhya Pradesh Maharashtra Meghalaya Mizoram Nagaland **Puducherry** Sikkim Tamil Nadu

Sidhi, Shahdol Nagpur, Chandrapur, Bhandara-Gondiya Gadchiroli-Chimur, Ramtek Inner Manipur, Outer Manipur Shillong, Tura Nagaland Puducherry Ganganagar, Bikaner, Churu, Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Jaipur Rural, Jaipur, Alwar, Bharatpur, Karauli-Dholpur, Dausa, Nagaur Tiruvallur, Chennai North, Chennai South Chennai Central, Sriperumbudur, Kancheepuram, Arakkonam, Vellore, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Tiruvannamalai, Arani, Viluppuram, Kallakurichi, Salem, Namakkal, Erode, Tiruppur, Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Pollachi, Dindigul, Karur, Tiruchirappalli, Perambalur, Cuddalore, Chidambaram, Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur, Sivaganga Madurai, Theni, Virudhunagar, Ramanathapuram, Thoothukudi, Tenkasi,

Tirunelveli, Kanniyakumari Tehri Garhwal, Garhwal, Almora, Nainital-Udhamsingh Nagar, Haridwar Uttar Pradesh

Uttarakhand

Pilibhit, Saharanpur, Kairana, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Nagina, Moradabad, Coochbehar, Alipurduars, Jalpaiguri

Deluge hits Dubai



Vehicles sit abandoned in floodwater covering a major road in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on Wednesday. Heavy thunderstorms lashed the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday, dumping over a year and a half's worth of rain on the desert city-State of Dubai in the span of hours as it flooded out portions of major highways and its international airport

AP/PTI ■ DUBAI

Heavy thunderstorms lashed the United Arab thunderstorms Emirates on Tuesday, dumping over a year and a half's worth of rain on the desert city-State of Dubai in the span of hours as it flooded out portions of major highways and its

international airport. Meanwhile, the death toll in separate heavy flooding in neighbouring Oman rose to

the sultanate prepared for the The rains began late Monday, soaking the sands and

roadways of Dubai with some

rain, 18 with others still missing as and hail onto

20 millimetres (0.79 inches) of rain, according to meteorological data collected at Dubai International Airport. The storms intensified around 9 am local Tuesday and continued throughout the day, dumping more rain overwhelmed city.

Mamata on collision course with Modi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA

Tn an apparent view to grab Land pull back the steadily alienating minority voters Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee promised Trinamool Wednesday through the Congress manifesto that if her party comes to power as a constituent of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) in the Centre then it would Citizenship the ban Amendment Act (CAA), banish National Register of Citizens (NRC) and put a bar on the Uniform Civil Code

(UCC). Releasing the TMC's election manifesto, senior leader and former Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra quoting from Didi's shapath (promises) said, "If the TMC is voted to power as a part of the INDIA alliance then it will repeal the CAA, abolish the NRC and see to it that UCC does not take place in the entire country.'



TMC leaders Amit Mitra, Derek O'Brien and Chandrima Bhattacharya release the party's election manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections in Kolkata on Wednesday

The Chief Minister too said similar things at an election rally in Assam. Alleging that the BJP had "turned the entire country into a detention camp," she said, "If the INDIA Bloc wins, there will be no NRC, CAA and UCC. We will repeal all discriminatory laws."

She said she had never seen "such a dangerous election in There would be would be no elections" if Prime Minister Modi Narendra returns to power for the third term, she

Back in Kolkata the ten promises christened Didir Sapath by the party, the TMC also held out dangling a whole

Centre and now working full time as a

researcher of Bihar's

society and polity,

told The Pioneer in

revolving around the

general elections in

Bihar.

tete-e-tete

Even residents of the village

of Bihar CM expressed

disenchantment towards the

with Nitish's own decisions. I

warned.

"no range of carrots that ranged democracy left and there from 5 kilogram ration in home delivery mode to ten free LPG cylinders a year for all BPL families. 'This is all about

Didir Sapath ... we will provide 5 kg ration at the doorstep and give 10 gas cylinders free per year," Mitra who was flanked by senior leaders

Chandrima Bhattacharya said, adding his party would also get replaced the Ayushman Bharat at the all-India level to a ₹10 lakh medical insurance scheme. Besides, the students would get a credit card up to Rs 10 lakh for higher studies and the OBCs, SCs and STs would be provided separate higher education scholarships. The elderly too were not left out with a monthly old-age pension of ₹1,000 for those who cross 60 years.

The party also promised a Minimum Support Price for the farmers which would be 50 per cent higher than the average cost of production of the costs. Besides "Didi's Sapath also includes an enhanced wage of ₹400 per day for the job card holders who are enlisted in the 100-days' work scheme," said Mitra, adding the new Government in the Centre aided by the TMC would also decrease diesel and petrol prices by formulating stabilisation mechanism.

On the radar of Bihar's electorate, litmus test for Nitish Kumar

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ PATNA

The Lok Sabha 2024 elections, like all polls, are considered to be as significant as those in the past. However, Bihar's sevenphase elections for its 40 Parliamentary seats this time will not only decide between the NDA and the INDIA Bloc but also seal the fate for the future politics of the longest-serving Chief Minister Nitish Kumar now Chief in his seventies, regardless of his alliances.

While it is a direct contest between the BJP-led NDA and the RJD-led INDIA Bloc, Nitish is on the 'radar' of the people of Bihar, making him the litmus test for his major coalition partner, the BJP, which has long struggled to 'install' their own candidate as head

of the State Government. As per the estimates of several politicians and parties, amidst the poll that people of the State

fervour, it is comprehensible that the BJP and the RJD will have a close finish against each other. The June 4 poll result may highlight any political misstep by the BJP in realigning with JD(U), as its tallest leader's popularity

is waning.
They also said that Nitish would be able save his skin a bit just in the name of the BJP led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Am certain not only Nitish but his party JD(U) too, due severe factionalism pre- and post-Lalan Singh era, is affected. The cadre is facing difficulties in explaining the voters of Bihar due to the lone instance of repeated flip-flops by a sitting Chief Minister in the history of Indian politics. Biharis don't like to be tagged as 'paltu', a more derogatory term than



Usually a hub of political activity during elections, this is the scene outside the Janata Dal (U) head office in Patna on

difficulty in explaining his frequently changing sides.

him going beyond caste and religion, but things are

across the world are facing overwhelmingly voted for ideas for a good last two terms. His last alliance with Tejaswi Yadav's RJD kindled "Nitish Kumar rode over different now. some hope on the Lalu Raj and people "He seems to have run out of employment front. But such

son of their soil due to his several political oscillations. "We were so proud that Nitish was so instrumental in bringing back Bihar to life after years of misrule by Lalu Raj but now we are fed up

can only remember the While the JD(U) Bollywood song Is Mod Se contesting from 16 seats Jaate Hai Kuch Sust Kadam BJP from 17 seats and p e o p l e - o r i e n t e d development seems to have taken a back seat while caste Raste Kuch Tej Kadam Rahein...," said Pradeep Mahto, a villager of Kalyan Bigha near Harnaut in and religion-ridden politics is back if you look at the pattern of ticket distribution," Pushpendra Kumar, former Professor and Nalanda district. chairperson of prestigious
Tata Institute of Social
Sciences (TISS) Patna

According to the Bihar Economic Survey (2023-24) the State has over 88 per cent rural

population and 50 per cent of its workforce engaged

agriculture. The phase 1 polls on April 19 will see elections

Aurangabad, Gaya, Nawada, and Jamui while second phase on April 26 will take place in Kishanganj, Katihar, Purnia, Bhagalpur, and

Banka. With 40 Lok Sabha seats, Bihar is considered to be a hotbed for Indian politics as it is the fourth-highest State

contesting from 16 seats, the BJP from 17 seats and its partner LJP of Ram Vilas Paswan fighting on five seats and former Bihar CM Jitan Ram Majhi's HAM and RLP each running for one seat. The Mahagathbandhan also

part of INDIA Bloc with the Congress as its partner in Bihar, the largest coalition member the RJD has staked for 26 seats while CPI(ML) on three seats, CPI and CPM one each, and the Congress nine seats.

The BJP, JDU, and LJP together formed the NDA, which won 39 of the 40 Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

The third phase May 7 will see polls in Jhanjharpur, Supaul, Araria, Madhepura, and Khagaria, and the fourth will be held in Darbhanga, Ujiarpur, Samastipur, Begusarai, and Munger on May 13.

Continued on Page 8

Ideals of Lord Ram as pertinent today as in Treta Yuga: Yogi

PNS LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Wednesday, said that the timeless ideals of Maryada Purushottam Lord Shri Ram remain as pertinent today as they were in the Treta Yuga.

Describing Lord Ram as the epitome of religion and dignity, Chief Minister Yogi emphasised the enduring relevance of

his teachings.
Following his participation in the 'Kanya puja' ceremony at Gorakhnath temple on Wednesday, Chief Minister Yogi extended warm wishes to the people of Uttar Pradesh for Vasantik Navratri and Shri

Ram Navami. He remarked, "Shri Ram is a divine figure, encapsulating the essence of human excellence. His exemplary principles, spanning across various domains, continue to inspire us all to fulfill our familial, social

and national obligations." Chief Minister Yogi pointed out that during Vasantik Navratri, rituals honouring various forms of Adishakti Maa Bhagwati take place starting from the Pratipada of Shukla Paksha until Navami, when young girls embodying Navdurga are worshipped. "Navratri is a beautiful tradition symbolising our connection with nature and the divine," he remarked. Chief Minister Yogi

being of the world. He highlighted the significance of the Navami of Vasantik Navratri, which also marks the birthday of Lord Shri Ram, who represents dignity and lofty human values.

offered prayers to Adishakti

Maa Bhagwati for the well-

Thousands of years ago, Lord Vishnu, the protector of the universe, descended as the son of Maharaja Dasharatha of Ayodhya to uphold righteousness, truth and justice. Today,

followers of Sanatan Dharma across the globe celebrate the birthday of Lord Shri Ram with great fervour. This year, with great fervour. This year, the festivities of Shri Ram Navami are particularly vibrant and deeply rooted in faith, especially in Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Shri Ram. After a wait of 500 years, the grand temple of Shri Ram Lalla has been constructed, evoking unparalleled joy and devotion during the Shri Ram Janmotsav," he stated.

Chief Minister Yogi urged peo-ple to emulate ideals of Lord Shri Ram and discharge their Shri Ram and discharge their duties towards society and the country, pointing out that it would be the most fitting tribute to the legacy of Lord Ram. Prior to performing 'Kanya puja' and joining the Shri Ram Janmotsav celebrations, Chief Minister

Gorakshpeethadhishwar Yogi Adityanath offered prayers to Maa Siddhidatri, the ninth form of Maa Durga, as per rit-uals in the Gorakhnath temple. Subsequently, he performed 'havan' on the ninth date of Vasantik Navratri. KANYA PUJAN

Chief Minister and Gorakshpeethadheeshwar Yogi Adityanath performed 'Kanya pujan' as per the tradition of Gorakshpeeth on the ninth day of the Vasantik Navratri on Wednesday.

During the 'Kanya pujan' at Nav Bhojanalaya of Gorakhnath temple, the chief minister washed the feet of nine unmarried girls and worshiped them as per the rituals, covering them with chunari, performing aarti, serving them food with devotion, and seeking their blessings by offering them 'dakshina'. The chief minister also performed 'Batuk

puja' on the occasion. During the rituals of the Navami of Vasantik Navratri, CM Yogi also applied tilak of

'roli' (red powder), 'chandan' (sandalwood), and rice grains on the foreheads of the nine girls. He then sought their blessings by offering them 'chunari' and 'dakshina'. He also performed aarti of all the unmarried girls and batuks

After the puja, CM Yogi served fresh food cooked in the temple kitchen to these girls with his own hands. In addition to the girls, the batukas, who had arrived in large numbers, were also offered food, gifts and 'dakshina'. The chief minister ensured that there was no shortage of food in the plates of any girl or boy. He kept guiding the people involved in the temple arrangements regarding

During the puja, head priests of Gorakhnath temple, Yogi Kamal Nath, Dwarika Tiwari, Virendra Singh, Durgesh Bajaj, Vinay Gautam and others were



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath performing kanya pujan in Gorakhpur on Wednesday

Ram Navami celebrated with enthusiasm

PNS LUCKNOW

Ram Navami was celebrated with extra fervour and gaiety at the various temples of the city on Wednesday that drew huge crowds on the occasion Despite the hot weather conditions, the devotees made a beeline for the temples to offer prayers to Lord Ram. Temples organised bhandaras in which puri, chana and halwa was served to the devotees and at several places kanya pujan was also performed.

Anoop Verma from Sandohan temple at Chaupatiya said that the temple premises was choc a block with devotees. "Lord Ram was dressed in Basanti colours and an offering of 'chappan bhog' was made to the deity. We also put a photo of the consecration ceremony of Lord Ram at Ayodhya on the occa-



आवश्यकता है

आवश्यकता है (प्राचार्य एवं सहा0 आचार्यों की) उदय प्रताप सिंह महाविद्यालय अबुलकासिमपुर जी०टी० रोड बाईपास, फतेहपुर उ०प्र० सम्बद्ध- प्रो० राजेन्द्र सिंह (रज्जू भय्या) विश्वविद्यालय

प्रयागराज उ०प्र० स्नातक स्तर पर कला संकाय में हिन्दी साहित्य, अंग्रेजी साहित्य, भुगोल, गृह विज्ञान, इतिहास, राजनीति विज्ञान, समाजशास्त्र, शिक्षाशास्त्र व संस्कृत विषयों में. स्नातक स्तर पर विज्ञान संकाय में रसायन विज्ञान, जन्तु विज्ञान, वनस्पति विज्ञान, भौतिक विज्ञान एवं गणित विषयों में एवं स्नातक स्तर पर वाणिज्य संकाय (बी0 कॉम)। परास्नातक स्तर पर कला संकाय में-हिन्दी, भूगोल एवं गृह विज्ञान। वाणिज्य संकाय के अन्तर्गत गम०कॉम० तथा प्रास्त्रातक स्तर पर विज्ञान संकाय के अन्तर्गत जन्तु विज्ञान, वनस्पति विज्ञान एवं गणित। पद प्राचार्य एक पद व सहा॰ आचार्य स्नातक स्तर पर सभी विषयों में एक-एक पद, परास्नातक स्तर पर सभी विषयों में दो-दो पद। योग्यता सहा० आचार्य के लिए संबंधित विषयों में स्नातक 50 प्रतिशत, परास्नातक स्तर पर 55 प्रतिशत एवं नेट/स्लेट/डी०फिल/पी०एच०डी०। सेवानिवन पाध्यापकों को वरीयता। पाचार्य उपयक्त योग्यता के साथ-साथ पन्द्रह वर्ष का अनुभव। वेतनमान प्राचार्य 30000/- प्रति माह, सहा० आचार्य 25000/- प्रति माह।

नोटः आवेदन पत्र 5 फोटो एवं संलग्नको की छायाप्रति विज्ञापन तिथि के 21 दिनों के अन्दर उदय प्रताप सिंह महाविद्यालय अबुलकासिमपुर, जी०टी० रोड बाईपास. फतेहपुर, उ०प्र० में व्यक्तिगत/डाक से भेजें मो ० - 7457917619, 7457917620,

प्राचार्य/सचिव

आवश्यकता है

आवश्यकता है (प्राचार्य एवं सहा0 आचार्यों की) उज्ज्वल सिंह महाविद्यालय बहादुरपुर खागा. फतेहपर

सम्बद्ध प्रो0 राजेन्द्र सिंह (रज्जु भय्या) विश्वविद्यालय, प्रयागराज उ०प्र० स्नातक स्तर पर कला संकाय में हिन्दी साहित्य अंग्रेजी साहित्य, भूगोल, गृह विज्ञान, इतिहास, राजनीति विज्ञान, समाजशास्त्र, अर्थशास्त्र शिक्षाशास्त्र व संस्कृत विषयों में, स्नातक स्तर पर विज्ञान संकाय में रसायन विज्ञान, जन्त विज्ञान, वनस्पति विज्ञान, भौतिक विज्ञान एवं गणित विषयों में एवं स्नातक स्तर पर वाणिज्य संकाय (बी0कॉम)। परास्नातक स्तर पर कला संकाय में अंग्रेजी साहित्य, भूगोल, इतिहास, गृह विज्ञान, हिन्दी साहित्य, राजनीति विज्ञान एवं समाजशास्त्र। वाणिज्य संकाय के अन्तर्गत एम0कॉम0 तथा परास्त्रातक स्तर पर विज्ञान संकाय के अन्तर्गत-भौतिक विज्ञान, रसायन विज्ञान, जन्तु विज्ञान, वनस्पति विज्ञान एवं गणित। पद प्राचार्य एक पद व सहा० आचार स्नातक स्तर पर सभी विषयों में एक-एक पद, परास्नातक स्तर पर सभी विषयों में दो-दो पद योग्यता सहा0 आचार्य के लिए संबंधित विषये में स्नातक 50 प्रतिशत. परास्नातक स्तर पर 55 प्रतिशत एवं नेट/स्लेट/डी०फिल/पी०एच०डी०। सेवानिवृत्त प्राध्यापकों को वरीयता। प्राचार्य उपयुक्त योग्यता के साथ-साथ पन्द्रह वर्ष का अनुभव। वेतनमान प्राचार्य 30000/- प्रति माह,

सहा० आचार्य २५०००/- प्रति माह। नोट: आवेदन पत्र 5 फोटो एवं संलग्नको की छायाप्रति विज्ञापन तिथि के 21 दिनों के अन्दर उज्ज्वल सिंह महाविद्यालय बहादुरपुर, खागा फतेहपर, उ०प्र० में व्यक्तिगत/डाक से भेजें। मो0. 7457917614, 7457917613



sion," he said. Rakesh Dixit from the Hanuman Mandir at Aliganj said prasad from Ayodhya was distributed at the temple. Anurag Sahu from the Madho temple in Daliganj said that special prayers were offered at

the temple where prasad was distributed Meanwhile, a grand procession of Marvada Purushottam Lord Ram was taken out on the occasion of Ram Navami in Adarsh Vyapar Mandal, com-

Indira Nagar area by the Sri Ram Janmotsav Samiti

The grand procession included live tableaux of boys and girls dressed as various gods and goddesses and witnessed thousands of Ram devotees participating in it. The procession was welcomed by traders and citizens at various places. Sanjay Gupta, patron of Shri Ram Janmotsav Samiti and state president of Uttar Pradesh

mittee president Shashikant Sharma and general secretary Sanjeev Garg said the procession was grander this year and witnessed the participation of a larger number of devotees. The procession started from Indira Nagar A Block in the afternoon and reached its origin point via Lekhraj Market, Ayodhya Road, Marutipuram, Bhootnath Market, Shalimar crossing, Meena Market. Thousands of women, elderly people, devotees, boys, girls, traders and other people participated in the procession. Elephants and horses were also a part of the procession. Meanwhile, Bharatiya Janata

Party members reached out at all the temples of the city on Ram Navami where photographs of Narendra Modi carrying out the consecration ceremony of Ram Lalla at Ayodhya were put up and kanya pujan was performed.

Traffic cops in city to get AC helmets for extreme hot weather condi-

 $F^{
m or}$ all those traffic constables who stand for several hours in the heat, monitoring the traf-fic on the road, here is some good news. The Traffic department in the city is making attempts to provide them with AC (air-conditioned) helmets. Giving this information on Wednesday, DCP (Traffic) Salman Taj said that they were making an effort to procure these helmets. "If we get the budget then we will provide these helmets to the traffic policemen working in the extreme temperatures," he said. He pointed out that the AC helmets keep the temperature five to six degrees less than the surrounding temperature and provide comfort to the head.

"The traffic police have to work on the field most of the time which causes them to fall sick," he added. The DCP said that on the pilot basis these AC helmets were tried in Kanpur. Talking about the total number of traffic policemen on the roads, he said that the sanctioned strength was around 1,500 but the actual number was 1,000 on the roads.
"Looking into the prediction tions we are planning to get a trial done of these helmets and if it turns out to be okay then we will write to the directorate," he said. He said that in view of the ris-

ing temperatures, they had given instructions to the traffic policemen to increase the intake of water. "During the peak hour we recommend them to stand on the crossings and in the non-peak hour they should stay under shade because the movement of the traffic is also less when the temperature is high. We will also be giving them umbrellas; we have procured around 1,000 umbrelas and very soon these will be distributed amongst them. We have procured some thermos bottles in which the water will remain cool and we are going to distribute the bottles amongst them," the DCP said Meanwhile, the DCP said there were 41 black spots in the city where the maximum number

of accidents took place. 'These points have some engineering defects wherein either the road has to be made broad or a barrier has to be installed. Every month the district magistrate holds a meeting where together and the departments concerned are given the recommendation to complete the task. We give recommenda-tions from our side for the work to be completed," he said. He said that signages were also being put in these spots. "We physically visit the spots and find out whether the road engineering works have been completed by the departments concerned or not and inform them regarding the same," he

Regarding traffic snarls in the city, he said that they were identifying crossings in the city and finding out what works had to be completed there to decrease the snarls. "I am visiting those spots and

a list is being made of what needs to be done to improve the traffic flow in these areas. The departments which carry out these road engineering works include the NHAI, PWD and the nagar nigam. The divisional commissioner has told us to identify the issues at these crossings and they will convey it to the department concerned. Right now we are involved in the identification process," he said.

LASSIFIEDS.

NOTICE

I Vivek Srivastava S/o Shri Ram Nihal Lal Srivastava R/o P &T Colony, Aliganj Lucknow, I have changed my daughter's name from Yashi Srivastava To Aashvi Srivastava for all Future

NOTICE

In the co-mark sheet of the affidavit of high school year 2007 roll number 2636182, Km. MANISHA SINGH YADAV has been written. Which is wrong. The correct name is Km. MAMITA KUMARI. This should be recorded in the certificate. While it is correctly recorded in the intermediate certificate. Km. Mamita Kumari daughter of Ramjeet Ram Village- Ismailpur urf malipur District- Ghazipur.

NOTICE

I have to changed my name from Noor Mohammad Ansari to Noor Mohammad S/O KARIM BAKS for future purpose. 14/8 SAFADARGANJ, KANNAUJ.

NOTICE

I have to changed my name SHAHE ALAM ANSARI to SHAHE ALAM S/O NOOR MOHAMMAD for future purpose. 14/8 SAFADARGANJ, KANNAUJ.

NOTICE

Saraswathi Devi, w/o Chandra Kishor Mishra JC-439621 H Sub. (RT) R/o D-26 Hare Krishna Homes, Flat No.301, shyam Nagar, Kanpur, have changed my name to Saraswati Devi and date of birth

of Janabe Fatima's tomb

PNS LUCKNOW

Maulana Fakhre Millat Dr Yasoob Abbas led a massive protest at the Martyrs' Memorial in Lucknow, condemning the demolition of the rauzas (tombs) of Janabe Fatima and other imams by the Saudi government in the Jannatul Baqi cemetery of Madina.

Thousands of people participated in the protest against the destruction of historical and religious sites.

Janabe Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Mohammad Sahib, holds immense reverence in Islamic history. The destruc-

tion of her tomb, along with those of other family members, by Saudi Arabia's ruler Ale Saud 101 years ago, remains a sore point for many Muslims worldwide.

Maulana Yasoob Abbas emphasised the significance of Janabe Fatima's grave, which now lies exposed to the ele-

Demanding action from the Indian government, Maulana Yasoob Abbas urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to exert pressure on the Saudi government for the reconstruction of the demolished tombs and to address the ongoing injustices against Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia. All India Shia Personal Board chairman, Hujjatul Islam Maulana Saim Mehndi, echoed these sentiments in a letter to the prime minister, highlighting the need to consider the demands of the

minority community.

Notable figures such as
Maulana Sadaf Jaunpuri, S
Hasan Saeed, Shia College principal Dr Mirza Abu Tayyab, Head of sociology department and politician Intezaar Abdi Bobby, among others, lent their support to the cause, underscoring the widespread concern over the

Unemployed man ends life

A former contractual employee of the Uttar Pradesh Secretariat was found hanging at his house in Chinhat on Tuesday night.
The police claimed the man

committed suicide and sent the body for autopsy.
The deceased was jobless at

present and was under financial stress as he had to educate his children and run the fam-

As per reports, the man, identified as Rahul Mishra (32) of Him City Part I in Chinhat, was found hanging from an iron grill in his house with a dupatta tied around his neck. The incident came to light

around 9:30 pm on Tuesday. The man's wife and neighbours brought the body down and rushed Rahul to Ram Manohar Lohia where he was pronounced dead.

Preliminary investigation revealed that Rahul was jobless for the last several months and he had become addicted to **DUPED:** A man was duped of over Rs 5.5 lakh by cyber fraudsters in Chinhat.

Reports said the man, identified as Anant Kumar Srivastava of Shiv Shanti Enclave in Chinhat, got a call from an unidentified caller who offered him an online job in which his work was to click the links and give ratings to the hotels and other items.

Anant fell into the trap of the caller and he agreed to work. He was initially given some money for completing the task of rating and then he was lured to join a group which the caller named as telegram app. "The fraudsters lured me to deposit hefty sums in the name of investment promising heavy returns and I transferred Rs 5.57 lakh to different bank account numbers they provided me. They later refused to refund the money and my profit also," he alleged.
Police registered a case and

have started an investigation. THEFT: Thieves made off with Rs 30,000 in cash and ornaments worth several lakh rupees from a house in Jankipuram on Tuesday night. Reports said the house owner. Santosh Singh of Rasoolpur Kayastha locality, along with his family left the house for some work after locking the doors

and the main gate.
"On Wednesday, the thieves burgled the house and decamped with cash and ornament." Sentence of the control ments," Santosh said. Police are investigating

the matter after registering a

YOUTH KILLS SELF: In a bizarre incident reported from Bareilly district, a 25-year-old Hindu youth committed suicide by consuming poison after his father converted to Islam. The deceased has been

identified as Shri Krishna. Reports say that a cleric used to visit the victim's house and he brainwashed his father to convert to Islam.

The incident was reported from the Baradari police station area where Shri Krishna's father, Harishankar, works in a bank and resides with his fam-

Protest against demolition Survey company duped, police register complaint

Owner of a firm assigned the task of survey of properties of municipal corporations in Lucknow, Ghaziabad and Allahabad in 2018, was duped of over Rs 1.24 crore after he completed the survey work. The victim, Kailash Kumar Dixit, who is owner of Quick Research and Sales Promotion at Rashmi Khand, got his case registered on Wednesday only after a court directed the Hazratganj police to register a case and investigate the matter. Those named in the case were identified as Neeraj Singh Rana, Gaurav Sakhuja, Vinod Sharma, Vikas Suryan and company's MD Srirama, all of camp office Covid Command Centre, New Market Near Lalbagh Girls' College. Dixit alleges that the accused

company has its office in New Delhi. "I got the work tender

and was promised to be paid Rs 32 per survey for one lakh properties of the municipal corporations in the initial phase. Later the company's officials expressed satisfaction with my work and my firm conducted the survey of 4.95 lakh properties in Lucknow, 12,000 in Prayagraj and a huge number of properties in Ghaziabad. For the work I recruited a workforce, opened offices fully equipped with modern gadgets and comput-ers and thus invested a huge sum. I pooled the money from my acquaintances and from my friends in business. I hoped to get back the money and I was confident that I would pay back the money I had borrowed. In June 2023, the accused company paid Rs 89 lakh only and payment of the remaining amount was stopped. Our firm got the work

from the above said persons done while going to fields along with the revenue inspectors of the municipal corporations," he alleged.

Dixit said he contacted the company officials to remind them of the arrears but in vain. "On September 13, 2023, I

reached the accused company's camp office at Covid Command Centre in Lalbagh and met Neeraj Singh Rana and Vikas Suryan. Both of them asked me to talk to Gaurav Sakhuja and Vinod Sharma who asked me to forget the money. They threatened to get me framed in some criminal case if I insisted on the money. They said their MD Srraman had good connections and they would get me killed," the victim alleged.

Dixit said he was forced to move the court when the police took no action on his com-

Man hangs self after attempt to kill wife

n a fit of rage, a man attempt-Led to kill his wife by hanging her at the office of a property dealer in Sarojininagar and then ended his life fearing action by the police, on Tuesday night. The family of the deceased

came to know about his death in the morning after they got a call from the KGMU Trauma Centre. As per reports, Nitin

Vishwakarma (38) of Sikanderpur village worked as a broker at the office of property dealer Rajesh Rawat in Sarojininagar and lived at the office premises with his wife

Poonam and their children. Nitin had a difference with his father over marrying Poonam and so he was staying separately from his parents.

Nitin and Poonam had a fight in the office premises and in a fit of rage, Nitin attempted to kill Poonam by strangling her with her dupatta. When she fell unconscious due to the assault, Nitin thought she had died and hanged himself from the ceil-

ing. On Wednesday morning, another employee, Atul, came to the office and found the shutters down. When Atul went inside, he found Nitin hanging from the ceiling of the office and Poonam lying on the

One of their children had marks of bruises around her throat also.

The local police took both to the community health centre where doctors pronounced Nitin dead. Poonam is under-

going treatment at KGMU. Preliminary investigation revealed that Poonam had her second marriage with Nitin. Police said Poonam's first husband and his father had also

committed suicide. The sources said Poonam was exerting pressure on Nitin to get some land registered in her name and the couple used to fight over this issue. Police registered a case.

Campaign ends for eight LS seats going to vote in UP's first phase

lection campaign in eight Lok Sabha constituencies going to polls in the first phase of election on April 19, ended on Wednesday evening. In Uttar Pradesh, the most crucial political state which sends 80 members to Lok Sabha, elections will be held in seven phases.

In the first phase, polling will take place in eight constituencies primarily in western UP -Saharanpur, Kairana, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Nagina, Moradabad, Rampur and Pilibhit. This region of the

state, which has a sizable Muslim population, has historically been a challenge for the Bharatiya Janata Party. Of the eight constituencies

going to polls on April 19, the BJP had secured victories in just three in 2019 -Muzaffarnagar, Pilibhit and Kairana. The Samajwadi Party had won Moradabad and Rampur while the Bahujan Samai Party had bagged Saharanpur, Bijnor and Nagina. The SP and BSP had contested the 2019 general elections in alliance, but the alliance collapsed soon after the election. The BJP had later

wrested the SP stronghold Rampur in the bypoll held in June 2022.

The Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), a mega grouping of opposition parties, was almost conspicuous by its absence during the campaign as Akhilesh Yadav was the only campaigner. He addressed only one meeting in Muzaffarnagar and a press conference in Ghaziabad on Wednesday. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was the only Congress leader to campaign in Saharanpur on Wednesday. Bahujan Samaj Party president

Mayawati and her nephew Akash Anand also addressed election meetings in Muzaffarnagar and Bijnor in support of their party candi-

One of the most interesting contests in the first phase elec-tions will be in Pilibhit, where the Bharatiya Janata Party has denied ticket to its sitting Member of Parliament Varun Gandhi and fielded UP PWD Minister Jitin Prasada, once a close aide of Rahul Gandhi. The replacement of the candidate caused a fair amount of buzz in Pilibhit as the Samajwadi Party made it an

issue. BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UP chief Minister Yogi Adityanath have campaigned aggressively for Prasada in Pilibhit.

Prasada is being challenged by SP's Bhagwat Saran Gangwar and Anis Ahmed Khan of the

Rampur is another constituencv to watch out for since it was once a stronghold of jailed SP leader Mohammad Azam Khan. The jailed leader wanted SP chief Akhilesh Yadav to contest from Rampur. Yadav, however, turned down the offer and much to the chagrin of

Azam Khan gave the ticket to Maulana Mohibullah Nadvi, a cleric of a mosque in Delhi. Muzaffarnagar, known for its intricate caste dynamics and latent communal divide ever since the worst ever communal violence in the district in 2013, is also witnessing a three-cor-nered electoral battle, with Union Minister Sanjeev Balyan locked in close contest against SP's Harindra Malik and BSP candidate Dara Singh Prajapati. The electoral contest in Kairana will also be closely watched where the once-dominant issue of "exodus" seems to have

dwindled. Moreover, SP's tri-

umph in Kairana in the 2022 assembly election has prompted a re-evaluation of strategy by the BIP.

Saharanpur is also a key battleground constituency, known as the 'serial number one seat' in UP. Prime Minister Narendra Modi campaigned in Saharanpur to canvass support for the BJP candidate and CM Yogi Adityanath held a roadshow there. Over the years, Saharanpur has oscillated between the SP, BJP and BSP. BJP's Lakhanpal won this Lok Sabha seat in 2014 but in 2019 BSP candidate Haji Fazlur Rehman wrested the seat from

polls, Imran Masood, the Congress leader who made controversial remarks against PM Modi, has returned to the grand old party after stints with SP and BSP. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has aggressively campaigned in both Saharanpur and Kairana Lok Sabha constituencies.

Unlike previous elections, no controversial statements have been made by political leaders during the campaigning this time. All political parties have so far avoided communal statements, which were common in

People will reject Rahul, Akhilesh once again: UP BJP chief

PNS LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Bharatiya Janata Party president Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary criticised the alliance between Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav, stating that it had failed in Uttar Pradesh previously and would face rejection from the people once again.

The electorate could distinguish between power hungry politicians and those genuinely dedicated to serving their interests," Chaudhary said in a statement here on Wednesday. Reacting to the joint press conference of Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav in Ghaziabad on Wednesday, Chaudhary pointed out that the rhetoric of these politicians tural reforms, Chaudhary challenged the effectiveness of

lacked substance, with promises outweighing actual implementation.

He highlighted the discrepancy between their claims and their actions, suggesting that their entry into national politics was driven solely by ambition rather than a commitment to addressing the issues facing the nation.

Furthermore, he questioned the credibility of the Congress party's promises to eradicate poverty and provide financial support to women, noting that those who had their own accounts frozen could not be trusted to manage the finances of others.

Turning to the issue of agricul-



Congress-led state governments in delivering on their pledges, citing instances of corruption and maladministra-

Contrasting the BJP's approach, he lauded Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's track record of fulfilling promises and providing a stable leadership that had propelled the country towards unprecedented development.

He expressed confidence in Modi's leadership and reiterated the commitment of the BJP to continue on the path of

Chaudhary asserted that the BJP's strength lay in its alliance with the people, who had unwavering trust in Prime Minister Modi's leadership. He projected optimism for the BJP's electoral prospects, both in Uttar Pradesh and across the nation, reaffirming their determination to surpass previous electoral achievements.

Admn working on layout of counting venue

PNS LUCKNOW

The Lucknow district administration is working on the layout plan of the counting venue at Ramabai grounds in Lucknow district for the Lok Sabha elections.

A district administration official said once the proposal was made it would be submitted to the Election Commission

He said that the Ramabai grounds would be the venue for receiving of the EVMs brought by the polling parties on May 20 and for counting of votes on June 4.

'The strong room has to be prepared in accordance with the number of polling stations in the district. For example, the largest number of polling stations are at Sarojininagar numbering at 582 hence an equally big strong room has to be

He further said that the forms used during the polling process were being checked currently. "There are 34-35 forms which have to be filled by the presiding officer during the various processes of elections. We are working on how these can be simplified and are going into micro details. We are also working on the materials which have to be given to the polling parties at the time of dispersal. All these formats will be given in the form of a booklet," he said. He said that the first training of polling personnel would be conducted in two shifts at Jai Narain (KKC)

College on April 29. 'Training has been arranged in 40 rooms of the college. The personnel who will be on duty in Lucknow East assembly segment will have to conduct two elections, one assembly by-

Ramabai grounds would be the venue for receiving of the EVMs brought by the polling parties on May 20 and for counting of votes on June 4.

election and one Lok Sabha poll for which the personnel will be trained separately. The master trainers will train the personnel through PPT on smart boards for which smart boards are being installed in all the rooms of KKC Inter College," he said.

He said that for the convenience of all the personnel, WhatsApp groups would also be created assembly-wise and sector magistrate-wise so that information/problems could be resolved immediately.

"After the third randomisation (which happens 48 hours before the departure of the polling party), the details of the polling personnel present at the polling centre, booth, polling party and the sector magistrate will be made available to the polling personnel through SMS," he said.

He further informed that internal arrangements of the polling booth should not be visible to

"It would be ensured that all the connections of EVM, CU, PU and VVPAT are properly connected or not. After the mock poll, it should be ensured that no slip of the mock poll is left in the VVPAT. After this, the VVPAT machine will be sealed and voting will be started," he

People want a change: Priyanka

'NDA will get just 180 seats if EVMs not tampered'

PNS LUCKNOW

Tndian National Congress Igeneral secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on Wednesday, attacked the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance government at the Centre, saying that if the country conducts fair elections without any tampering of electronic voting machines (EVMs), then the ruling alliance will not secure more than 180 seats.

The Congress leader questioned the basis of BIP's claim of securing more than 400 seats. Talking to a news agency during her roadshow in Saharanpur, Priyanka said, "On what basis are they saying that they will get 400, are they astrologers? Either they have done something from before (polling) and they know that they will secure more than 400 seats, Otherwise, how can they say that they will get 400 seats?... If today in this country, the elections are conducted in such a way in which there... is no tampering of EVMs, then I can say with full confidence that they will not gain more than 180 seats; in fact, they will win less than 180

Interestingly, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's brother Rahul Gandhi

with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav claimed that the NDA would get just 150

said that she viewed the election from the people's point of view and stressed that the polls should be conducted based on the issues of the people. "I am saying this everywhere to the people, that this election should be the election of the people. It should be conducted on the issues of the people," she said. Attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP leaders, Priyanka alleged that the BIP is not talking about unemployment and inflation. "They are not talking about the issues of unemployment and inflation. They are not talking about the real issues faced by farmers and the women. All the conversations are happening only to divert the people's mind," she

Claiming that people want change, the Congress leader asserted that people have not seen any development in their lives for the past 10 years and PM Modi has got disconnected with the people.
"People want change. They

don't want this type of politics... In the past 10 years, there has not been any development in during a joint press conference the life of any common man, or

woman... They are not getting iobs; inflation is not coming down... It is the time of festivals. Today is Ram Navami. People Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also don't have money to buy anything... He (Modi) doesn't talk about unemployment and inflation. I feel the people around him are not telling

him about this... He is disconnected from people," she said. Expressing her views on the electoral bond scheme, Priyanka questioned PM Modi for calling it a transparent sys-"Yesterday, he (PM Modi) said that because of the electoral

bond system, the whole system has turned transparent... Now, the Supreme Court is saying to bring out the lists of donors and make it transparent... After the list was unveiled, we got to know that the company who is working for Rs 180 crore is donating Rs 1,100... the ones who were raided gave you a donation and now the case has been closed. Then how is this fight against corruption? Nobody is more corrupt than them. They made the system of corruption and now when they are caught, they are saying it is a transparent list," Priyanka

Earlier, taking to her official X handle, the Congress general secretary tweeted, "I am overwhelmed by the love of the people of Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh. This enthusiasm, this zeal and this passion is a sign of the coming change. People who are disappointed with unemployment and inflation are now beginning to see hope for change. This enthusiasm is a reflection of that hope. The departure of BIP, which has done injustice to the people, is certain. India will unite, India will win."

Meanwhile, Privanka Vadra, on the last day of campaigning for the first phase poll on Wednesday, held a roadshow in support of INDIA bloc and Congress candidate Imran Masood in Saharanpur Lok

Sabha constituency.
Priyanka attacked the BJP and said, "Those who are in power today are not worshippers of Mata Shakti and truth, they are worshippers of 'power'. They will stoop to any level for power. For power, they will topple governments, buy MLAs and give the country's wealth to the country's wealth to the rich. This is not the tradition of our country."

Priyanka Vadra's roadshow started from Gol Kothi situated on Chilkana Road from where it reached Ranghdo Bridge via Raiwala, JBS Inter College, Lakdi Bazaar and Kamboh bridge.

UP govt arranges air ambulances, choppers for polls

PNS LUCKNOW

Tn a proactive measure to deal with emergen-Cies during the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the Uttar Pradesh government has made arrangements for deployment of air ambulances and helicopters across all the seven phases of the polls as it unfolds in the state. The air ambulances and helicopters will be strategically stationed across various locations in the state corresponding to the election phases and facilitate provision of assistance during

The UP government has already procured the nces and helicopters a private aviation company headquartered in

Gurugram, Haryana. The aerial resources will not only stand ready to offer swift assistance during crises but also facilitate the transportation of medical supplies and the deployment of paramilitary and police forces as needed.

This initiative underscores the government's commitment to ensuring the safety and smooth conduct of the elections, slated to occur in seven sequential phases across Uttar Pradesh.

As a crucial part of safety measures, air ambulances and helicopters will be strategically stationed at various locations during each phase of the elections.

phase of the elections. In the initial phase scheduled for April 19, focusing on the western region of Uttar Pradesh, helicopters will be stationed in Moradabad on April 18 and 19 and an air ambulance in Bareilly on April 19.

Will abide by party decision on Amethi, says Rahul Gandhi

PTI GHAZIABAD

mid intense speculation over Amid intense speculation over whether he would contest the Lok Sabha polls from Uttar Pradesh's Amethi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday said he will follow "whatever order" he gets from his

Gandhi made the remarks at a joint press conference here with Samaiwadi arty (SP) chief Akhilesh Yaday. Asked whether he would contest from Amethi besides Wayanad, Gandhi said, "On Amethi, the party will decide. Whatever order I get, I will abide by

"In our party, these decisions are taken in the CEC (Central Election Committee) meeting," he stressed. Polling will be held in Wayanad on April 26 while Amethi goes to polls on May

There is speculation that besides his declared seat of Wayanad in Kerala, Gandhi might also contest the Lok Sabha polls from Amethi, a seat he represented for three straight terms earlier, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra from Rae Bareli, a seat that was previously held by her mother Sonia Gandhi. Both seats are considered bastions of the

Congress have demanded that the two scions of the family contest from there. Gandhi won the Amethi seat in three consecutive Lok Sabha elections from 2004. BJP leader Smriti Irani wrested the seat in 2019.

Gandhi, who contested from both Amethi and Wayanad in 2019, had won the elections from Wayanad. He has been renominated by the Congress

from the constituency.
The Congress has forged an alliance with the SP in Uttar Pradesh and is contesting 17 Lok Sabha seats in the state. The Lok Sabha polls are scheduled to be held in seven phases starting April 19. The counting of votes will be taken Gandhi family and the local units of the up on June 4.

Tiger threat casts shadow over Pilibhit, dampens electoral spirit

BISWAJEET BANERJEE

In the serene stretches of Pilibhit district, a menacing spectre looms large, instilling fear among locals and disrupting the democratic fervour as citizens hesitate to tread the paths, wary of lurking tiger threats that cast a pall over the electoral process.

Tragedy struck on April 8 when a tiger claimed the life of farmer, Bhole Ram, near Puraini Deep Nagar village, sending shockwaves through the community. Outraged, villagers demanded both protection, and compensation for the bereaved family.

The next day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a rally in Puranpur area, espousing the cause of Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Jitin Prasada and expressing intentions to showcase the splendor of the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve. However, this proclamation fell on deaf ears among the villagers, gripped by fear. Paras Rai, a denizen of Jamunia

encapsulated the prevailing dread, remarking, "Our lives hang in the balance. We never know when a tiger might emerge from the fields, making us or our children its prey." Situated on the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve boundary, the village remains on edge.

Residents have beseeched the authorities for extensive combing operations following a spate of tiger attacks, with the preda-

village and kin of Bhole Ram, tor prowling the outskirts, preying on livestock and instilling terror.

The omnipresent threat of tigers has left the populace apprehensive, dissuading many from exercising their voting rights. A villager, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "The spectre of encountering a tiger en route to the polling station has deterred me. I cannot jeopardise my safety for the sake of voting." The fear reverberates across

Pilibhit, with heightened tiger activity in Kalinagar tehsil and reports of sightings in villages like Mathna Jabti, Banskheda and Puraini Deep Nagar, leading to tragic human casualties. Even Pandhari and surrounding villages, approximately 12 kilometres from the city centre, are

not immune. In a bold act of defiance, residents of Pandhari village raised banners threatening to boycott

the Lok Sabha election unless

Such sentiments resonate in neighboring villages, reflecting

the angst of the populace.
Samajwadi Party candidate
Bhagwat Saran Gangwar visited Bhole Ram's family, pledging
support and raising the issue
during a political rally, echoing sentiments shared by party president Akhilesh Yadav.

District Forest Officer Manish District Forest Officer Manish Singh acknowledged the chal-lenges posed by the tiger reserve's proximity to human settlements, emphasising the government's responsibility to safeguard residents. Efforts are underway to increase patrols and implement deterrent measures, although Singh noted instances where villagers provoke tiger attacks.

Assuring residents, Singh stated, "We are diligently working to address concerns and ensure safety. However, as Pilibhit grapples with tiger terror, the electoral process hangs in the balance, with authorities under pressure to assuage fears and restore confidence ahead of polling day.

Nadvi seeks to emulate Maulana Azad's feat

A sserting he does not consider himself an alternative to senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan in his stronghold Rampur,

party candidate Imam Mohibullah Nadvi says he wants the emulate the feat of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who was elected an MP from this seat in 1952.

Voting for the Rampur seat will be held in the first phase of elec-tions on April 19.

Khan is still regarded as an influential leader of Rampur. He is currently lodged in Sitapur jail following his con-viction in a fake birth certificate case. The SP did not give ticket to any of his family members or representatives and instead nominated Nadvi, a political greenhorn and the imam of Parliament Street mosque in

"I have not come here as an alternative to Azam Khan saheb or anyone else. I have come to serve the people. If

given a chance, I will work for the people earnestly," Nadvi said in an interview to PTI. Nadvi, who referred to Khan as his 'elder brother' in public ral-

lies, said people should make him the winner so that the latter can be brought out of jail as soon as possible.
Asked what motivated him to enter the poll fray, Nadvi invoked Azad saying he (Azad) became the MP from Rampur while being

an imam.

"Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was a religious scholar but entered politics and in the year 1952 became an MP from Rampur. Not only this, he also scaled heights in politics and governance."

Speaking about the issues he have been highlighting, Nadvi stressed, "Poverty and illiteracv are issues in Rampur. We have to uplift the weaker sections. We want to bring brotherhood by ending the growing communal atmosphere in the country. We want it to begin from Rampur and this message

When asked whether Rampur has not been developed as much as it should have been during the last four decades, he said, "Every public representa-tive tries in his own way to develop his area. Here Congress, SP and BJP have had their representatives and everyone must have tried their best. But a lot of development work took place in Rampur and Uttar Pradesh under the Samajwadi Party's rule." A resident of Swar area of

Rampur, Nadvi belongs to the Turk community which has about 1.5 lakh voters in the constituency.

He is campaigning on his own to establish his foothold and claims he is getting public support. There are approximately 17 lakh voters in Rampur Lok Sabha constituency, out of which about 43 per cent are

Muslims. Rampur has five assembly constituencies, out of which Bilaspur, Rampur Sadar and Milak seats are held by the BJP and Swar Tanda seat is held by BJP's ally Apna Dal (Sonelal). Chamraua seat is with the SP.

Religious fervour marks Ram Navami celebrations in city of Lord Shiva

 R^{am} Navami festival was celebrated with full traditional gaiety and religious fervour in this city of Lord Shiva here on Wednesday amidst the singing of lines from Ramchairtmanas, 'Bhay Pragat Kripala Dindayala Kaushalya Hitkari..., Apart from celebrations of the festival at several temples, including Tulsi Manas Mandir and Shri Ram Janaki temple (Teliana), a grand tableau was decorated at unique Ram Ramapati Bank (Tripura Bhairavi Ghat near Dashashwamedh). Besides, hundreds of devotees watched a live telecast of Ram Navani programme held at Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir in Ayodhya on a big LED set at Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham. The function held at Ram Ramapati Bank was unique as in this 'bank' the devotees deposit 'Ramnaam' and in case of crisis, they can also seek loans of these 'Ramnaam'. Right from the morning, the devotees reached there to celebrate the festival by opening their new accounts in this unique 97



Kanya Puja being held on occasion of Ram Navami at Kinaram Ashram in Varanasi

years old bank. Nearly 2,000 crore Ramnaams have been deposited there. Besides, the festival was celebrated with great pomp at Shri Ram Janaki temple and throughout the day, the singers presented 'bha-jans' there amidst the beats of the drums and other traditional instruments. In his discourses, Mahant Ramdas said Lord Rama incarnated on the land for the benefit of Brahmins, cows, deities and saints. The 'aarti' of Shri Ram Darbar was performed in the afternoon. The rush of devotees was witnessed at Tulsi Manas Mandir,

Sankatmochan and many other temples. Besides the activists of Namami Gange offered 'shramdaan' to make the Ganga clean at Ramghat. On Ram Navami, they appealed to the people to keep the river clean and pollution free. Regional convenor of Namami Gange Rajesh Shukla said most of the life of Lord Rama passed living close to nature. Meanwhile hundreds of devotees thronged the Baba Kinaram Ashram at Ravindrapuri Colony on the auspicious occasion of Chaitra . Navami here on Wednesdav when Peethadhishwar Baba

Siddhartha Gautam Ram worshipped nine Kanya (girls) and a Bhairav. He also offered meals to the girls who were in the form of various incarnations of Goddess Durga and sought their blessings. At several places, such Kanya pujan programmes were also held on Ashtami a day ago.
Besides, hundreds of devo-

tees thronged Mahalaxmi Gauri at Laxmi Kund on the last and auspicious occasion of Navami (ninth day) of Vasantik Navratri. A good number of devotees also reached the old temple of Mata Siddhidatri at Siddhanta Gali near Golghar. Besides, a huge crowd of devo-tees reached the famous Durga Mandir at Durga Kund as usual. This religious city has separate temples of all the nine Devis and nine Gauris where the devotees offer prayers on different days of Shardiya and Vasantik Navratra respectively. A large number of devotees also went to Vindhyachal in Mirzapur district while a rush of devotees was also seen at the old Durga Mandir (Ramnagar) and Sheetla Mata temple

World Haemophilia Day observed

A public awareness pro-gramme was organised on the occasion of World Haemophilia Day at Central Hospital in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Wednesday. Inaugurating it Principal Chief Medical Officer (PCMO) Dr Devesh Kumar said the theme of this year's World Haemophilia Day is 'Equitable access for all: Recognising all bleeding disorders'. "This is a serious disease but despite this there is a lack of awareness about it among the people. All such diseases should be diagnosed at the right time and appropriate Advisor and Abhishek Kumar, as well as all the doctors and

PCOM NER AK Satpathy inspecting the Banaras station on Wednesday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI

Principal Chief Operations Manager (PCOM) of North

Eastern Railway (NER) Anup Kumar Satpathy conducted a

window trailing inspection of

the Gorakhpur-Banaras section

on Wednesday with the aim of

ensuring fast and safe operations of trains on this route.

During the inspection, Senior Divisional Commercial

Manager (SDCM) Sheikh

Rehman, Senior Divisional

Operations Manager (SDOM)

Ajay Pratap Singh and other senior officers were also pre-

sent. Satpathy gave necessary instructions to the officers for

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE VARANASI



treatment should be provided

detailed information was given about the symptoms, causes and types of this disorder by Dr Minhaj Ahmed, Senior Divisional Medical Officer, BLW. The function was also attended by Dr Subhashish Dan, Senior Regional Medical

Window trailing inspection conducted

safe and secure rail movement

in the changing weather and

temperature fluctuations. He

also directed the concerned

officers to increase patrolling of

railway tracks and maintain the

inspection, the PCOM checked the safety of the track,

rail ballast, caution order and

track fittings of the section.

After inspection, he reached

the Banaras railway station

and inspected the station pan-

els, buildings, platforms, pas-

senger sheds, foot over bridges,

food and vending stalls, waiting

rooms, circulating areas, entry and exit routes, cleanliness and

earned him the first position in

the US, which is a matter of

IMS-BHU research scholar

achieves new milestone

During the window trailing

visibility of signals.

mative sessions led by medical professionals were held at the Centre of Excellence for Adolescent Development at IMS-BHU. Prof LP Meena from the General Medicine covered a comprehensive session covering the causes, symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of haemophilia. Prof Meena's presentation shed light on the genetic basis of haemophilia, emphasising early diagnosis and effective management strategies. Participants gained valuable insights into this rare bleeding disorder, enhancing their understanding of its com-

maintenance etc. He inspected

the security related relay room,

IPS room, points crossing, key

transfer, maintenance register,

cancellation counter and regis-

ter etc and directed the con-

cerned personnek to strictly fol-

a review meeting with the Varanasi divisional officers and

chief traffic and commercial inspectors at the Divisional

Office, Lahartara. In the meet-

ing, he discussed all aspects related to the operation of

trains passing through the divi-

sion and the divisional officers

informed the details through

power point presentation.

After this, the PCOM held

low the security rules.

plexities. Dr Mamta, a leading expert from the Gynaecology department, addressed the impact of haemophilia and emphasised the importance of pre-genetic counseling in preventing its occurrence. Her session highlighted the role of proactive measures in family planning to mitigate the risk of haemophilia transmission.

The event fostered dialogue and collaboration among Rashmi, Shreya, Shivangi, Priti, ed actively to facilitate awareness and proactive measures.

taken out

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE PRAYAGRAJ

Ram Navami was celebrated with great religious fervour in Sangam city here on Wednesday. On the occasion, a 'shobha yatra' was also taken out from Ram Mandir Johnstanganj which after passing through different parts of the city terminated at Zero road and devotees since morning lined up outside the temples of Alopi Devi, Kalyani and Lalita

Apart from the daily 'shringaar', 'havan' and 'poornaahuti' were also performed in different temples where visitors gathered in large numbers.

The festival of Ram Navami is the celebration of birthday of the Hindu God, Shri Ram who was the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu and born in Ayodha. Rama Navami is celebrated on the ninth day of Hindu month of Chaitra. It marks the end of nine-day-long festival called Chaitra Navratri or Vasanta

On this auspicious day devotees observe fasting, visit temples to offer special prayers, take out religious processions and the special readings of Ramayana are also held, said a prominent priest Pandit Kailash Tripathi. Explaining the importance of fasting he said a Ram devotee kept a strict fast on the occasion because the Ram Navami vrata is considered to be one of the five most important ones in the ancient times. Meanwhile, the members of Akhil Bhartiya Samajik Samarsata Abhiyan celebrated Ramnavmi at a temple located at High Court with great gaiety and enthusiasm.

CYCLIST KILLED IN ROAD MISHAP: A 28-yearold cyclist was killed after being crushed by a tractor driver near Lotad village under Kaundhiyara police station area here on Wednesday. After the accident the tractor driver managed to escape from the spot. The cyclist was identified as Radhika Prasad.

'Shobha yatra' 3 killed in road accident

Three persons, including two women, died and more than 20 people seriously injured when a pickup loader carrying them to Baradevi temple suddenly overturned on the highway in Sanigwa under the Chakeri police station area on Wednesday afternoon. Around 25 people of Manapur under Hathgaon police staiton, Fatehpur, were going to Baradevi temple in Saket Nagar of Kanpur. The injured were sent to the Kashiram Hospital from where due to their serious condition, six of them were referred to the LLR (Hallet) hospital. The deceased included Kamlesh alias Ganga Devi (45), wife of Jaglal of Guri

(60) and Dadi (50), wife of Rajaram of Manapur, Hathgaon, Fatehpur.

DCP (East) Shravan Kumar Singh said due to high speed of the pickup the driver lost control over the vehicle. The incident took place due to negligence of the driver. Around 20 people were injured and sent to the hospital. Those who sustained head injury were sent to the LLR (Hallet) hospital. Arrangements have been made for their better treatment were made. Police force along with an ACP has been deployed in the hospital, he said.

Meanwhile a youth was killed when an uncontrolled tractor-trolley overturned on him in a pit in Tikwapur village

on Wednesday morning. As he had sustained serious injury, villagers sent him to the Ghatampur CHC where he was declared dead by the doctors. Saurabh Nishad (20) of Maunkhat village, Sajeti, was the only brother among his four sisters. He was the bread earner of th family. The kin said when after loading tent house material on the tractor-trolley he had left for Tikwapur village. On the way the uncontrolled trolley suddenly overturned in the pit crushing Saurabh under it. The police sent the body for an autopsy and probed the issue. SO Sajeti Brij Mohan said on receipt of complaint, further action will be initiated in the

Fire in electronic goods shop

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

An electronic goods shop caught fire in Shivrajpur police station area late on Tuesday night. It soon spread to the upper floor of the shop as a result of which some people present there got trapped in



it. The fire brigade immediately rushed to the spot and rescued them with the help of a ladder. Many fire tenders reached the spot which took over two hours to control the fire. Goods worth lakhs of rupees were gutted in the fire. The incident took place around midnight. As a result electronic goods worth lakhs of rupees were gutted. The fire spread up to the upper floor of the shop. Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Deepak Sharma said on receipt of information from the mini control room the fire tender from Bilhaur fire station was immediately sent to the spot. Later, on the demand of the of CCTV footage.

firefighters five other fire tenders were sent. The firefighters rescued the people caught on

the upper floor of the shop with the help of a ladder. Shop owner said goods worth lakhs

of rupees were gutted in the

ROBBED: A woman was robbed of her purse containing jewellery and cash by masked miscreants in Maharajpur police area on Tuesday afternoon. Apart from jewellery worth around Rs 6 lakh, the purse also contained Rs 8,000 cash. Amit Kumar Shukla of Atwa, Maharajpur, is a grocery shop owner. He said the marriage of his cousin brother-inlaw of Mavaiya (Chakeri) was fixed for April 18. To attend the marriage ceremony, his brother-in-law Golu was going to Mavaiya (Chakeri) with wife Mona Pandey on bike on Tuesday afternoon. Around 2 pm, when they reached the area between JK Dhaba and Mahindra showroom, bikeborne miscreants looted the purse from Mona and escaped. Golu chased the miscreants up to Naubasta but failed to catch them. Maharajpur inspector Surendra Singh said a probe in the matter was on with the help

Youth kills wife

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Ayouth killed his wife by slitting her throat in Panki Katra on Wednesday. After killing her, he informed his landlord about the incident and said that he was now going to commit suicide. The police rushed to the spot and started a probe. Shiva of Puri Amilia under Unchahar police station, Rae Bareili, had married Gunjan in an Arya Samaj temple on February 13 and was living in a house on rent in Panki Katra. On Wednesday Shiva informed his landlord about her killing on phone. Shiva also said that he would also commit suicide in his village. The police rushed to the spot and found body of Gunjan in the room. Kalyanpur ACP TV Singh said Shiva had confessed the killing of his wife to his landlord. A probe was on in the matter and raids were on to nail the assailant, he said.

TOURNAMENT: In the two-day first progressive open table tennis tournament organised by the Haryana Table Tennis Association in Gurugram, players of The Sportz Hub Kanpur won three medals, including a gold and two silver, in U-15 and U-17 categories.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI oara-medical staff.



to the patients,"he said.

In this programme,

Earlier, on Tuesday infor-Health

healthcare professionals Naveen Pandey, Neha and interns from BHU Rohit, Ravi, Man Mohan, Yugal, Saumya, Nandini, Shubham participat-

Mystery shrouds death of 2 cops

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

M ystery shrouds the death of a two constables — a male and a female – posted in the city. They were found dead in Minhajpur area under of Shahganj police station here late on Tuesday night.

The 27-year-old ma stable of 2019 batch was found hanging while that of the 25-year-old female constable of 2020 batch was found lying on the bed. The door was locked from inside. After preliminary investigation, the incident is suspected to be a case of suicide or murder followed by suicide. No suicide note was found.

On information, ACP Kotwali Manoj Singh and after some time DCP Deepak Bhukar reached the spot. The door was opened by cutting the grill of the window. When the police officers reached inside, they found the female constable lying dead on the bed. After some time, Police Commissioner Ramit Sharma also reached there. Forensic team was also called to the spot. After investigation both the bodies were sent to the mortuary. Police Commissioner Ramit Sharma said prima facie it appears that the male constable committed suicide. It is not known how the female constable died. The cause of death will be clear only in the post mortem report. No suicide note has been found from the spot. The family members have been informed. The police officials said that the post-mortem report has not been received and something can be said only after receiving it. BODY FOUND: The body

of a one-and-a-half-year-old girl, Ranjana, who was sleeping on a cot with her mother, Rani, wife of Musahar, a resident of Mandar village, was found in the bushes 200 metres away in Mandar village under Handia police station area early on Wednesday morning. As soon as the information was received, the police officers reached the spot. The forensic team also reached there and collected evidence. The body mortem examination. Even after a long investigation, the reasons for the incident could marks were found on the girl's body. The police have sent the body for the post-mortem so that the cause of the death could be clearly ascertained and registered a case in this regard.

to drive advancements in healthcare Partnership PIONEER NEWS SERVICE KANPUR The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK)

and Blockchain For Impact (BFI) on Tuesday announced a strategic partnership under the BFI-Biome Virtual Network Programme to nurture innovations and driving advancements in healthcare in India. As part of this collaboration, BFI will support IIT Kanpur in promoting entrepreneurial initiatives through the Startup Incubation & Innovation Centre (SIIC), IIT Kanpur.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed at IIT Kanpur by Prof Kantesh Balani, Dean of Resources and Alumni (DoRA), IIT Kanpur and Dr Gaurav Singh, CEO BFI in the presence of Prof Ankush Sharma, Professor-in-Charge, SIIC, IIT-K and Prof Amitabha Bandyopadhyay, Co Professor-in-Charge, SIIC, IIT-K, Dr

Satya Prakash Dash, Senior Advisor, BFI and Dr Pooja Agrawal, Programme Director, BFI. As part of this programme, BFI has pledged to allocate over \$150,000 USD across three years to develop programmes

strengths, the partnership aims to develop impactful solutions that address critical gaps in India's healthcare landscape.

Prof Kantesh Balani, DoRA, IIT Kanpur, shared his excitement about the collabo-



specifically tailored to healthcare-focused startups at IIT Kanpur's Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC). This collaboration leverages IIT Kanpur's established leadership in fostering entrepreneurship and BFI's commitment to advancing biomedical research. By combining these

ration, saying, "I am very optimistic about the partnership between IIT Kanpur and BFI. This MoU will help us share knowledge, support startups effectively and improve our capacity building efforts."

Dr Gaurav Singh, CEO of BFI, expressed his delight about the partnership, stating,

"Meeting the IIT Kanpur incubatees was incredibly inspiring. Their boundless energy and unwavering dedication to healthcare innovation are truly awe-inspiring. IIT Kanpur's exceptional support for these entrepreneurs aligns perfectly with our shared mission of accelerating impactful solutions in biomedical research. Through diverse initiatives in biomedical research and innovation, district full-stack partnerships and process-driven funding programmes, we are actively addressing critical gaps in India's healthcare landscape."

This partnership between IIT-K and BFI signifies a significant step forward in advancing healthcare innovation in India. By bringing together diverse expertise and resources, this collaboration holds immense promise for improving public health and ensuring equitable and accessible health-

New Manauri station inspected

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Director (Operations (OP) & Business Development (BD)), DFCCIL (Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd) Shobhit Bhatnagar inspected the Prayagraj East unit from New Karchana to New Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Station along with General Manager, North Central Railway (NCR) during his two day inspection programme of EDFC. Apart from this, he also inspected the New Manauri Station of Prayagraj (West) during his inspection programme here Wednesday.

He envisioned digitisation of the station master room and providing world class system in the room for safe, smooth and fast movement of trains on DFC Railways. He examined all the functions available on the video panel of the station master along with



ply. He also checked the availability of signalling devices for opening of relay hut room, release of crank handle key etc. He also checked the emergency counters, safety devices showing all indications available on the station master's video panel and availability of auxiliary transformer supplies. He took stock of operations showing indications of opening

relay hut room, crank handle key etc. During the inspection he emphasised that there should be goods sheds at all the stations of the Dedicated Freight Corridor which will attract more cargo businesses and will prove to be a boon in helping small businesses and farmers to transport their material in shorter period. Moving from construction phase to operation phase in

DFCCIL, the visit focussed more on construction of GCT terminals and facilitating privately owned sidings built by customers at their own cost for railway cargo services at the premises of its plant or manufacturing unit. Centralisation, production units to link customer functions with the railway system, etc were discussed.

He informed that the land available in New Manauri can be converted for Gati Shakti Cargo Terminal (GCT), which will provide better connectivity to vendors of food grains, fertilizers, cement and parcel services in Kaushambi, Prayagraj Western region and indirectly will be helpful for the local people. It is also envisaged to increase parcel traffic and military traffic due to good road connectivity with Prayagraj air base. In this regard, instructions were given to all stakeholders concerned to take the matter forward expeditiously.

ecture on textual analysis organised.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Faculty of Commerce, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) organised a lecture of Prof RP Srivastava of University of Kansas, USA on Tuesday on Text-mining and Textual Analysis: A New Paradigm of Business Research. The pro-

gramme started with the welcome address by Prof HK Singh, Dean, Faculty of Commerce. Apart from welcoming the guest, he emphasised that there had been a paradigm shift in the accounting domain, due to which the use of computerised accounting has now become necessary.

Prof Srivastava talked in detail about textual analysis. He emphasised on various techniques and metrics for textual analysis such as readability index, similarity metrics, tone of a document, tone depression, year to year word variation, risk assessment models, etc. He also highlighted various

areas in which research could be done in the accounting domain. The lecture ended with vote of thanks by Prof D Sahu. Dr Meenakshi A Singh, convener, conducted the programme. The other faculty members present were Dr LB Jaiswal, Dr CK Roy, Dr Rakhi and Dr Anchal Singh.

AMaurya, a PhD research scholar from the Department of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery (CTVS) at the Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) achieved a new milestone with his presentation of the Retrograde Autologous Filtration (RAF) technique developed by him at the 62nd AmSECT (American Society of Extracorporeal Technology) International Conference held in New Orleans, Louisiana, United States of America

recently. The participants from various countries took part in this conference and Akhalesh was the only participant from India. His research work, conducted under the supervision of Prof Sanjay Kumar (supervisor) and Assistant Professor Rajeshwar Yadav (co-supervisor) in the CTVS department,

great pride for India. Akhalesh's khalesh Sureshchand aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of RAF in patients undergoing Cardiopulmonary Bypass Surgery in the CTVS department. Akhalesh is one of the participants who represented India for the first time on the American International platform in Perfusion Sciences. He won the prestigious research project and presentation award at this conference. His work in Perfusion Sciences determines that during cardiac surgery, patients will require minimal blood and patients can be protected from infection reactions. This capability is possible through the exploration of Hemofilter in the Cardiopulmonary Bypass circuit. This experiment will reduce the burden on blood banks providing significant benefits to society.

EXCELS: In the recently published 2024 QS World

University Rankings, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IAS-BHU) achieved a global rank of 301-350 and second position within the country in the esteemed list of top institutions for agriculture and forestry. Director Prof SVS Raju said the Institute of Agricultural Sciences is taking forward its good agricultural practices initiatives through strategic collaboration with both public and private entities. Student Advisor Dr Amitav Rakshit said that the institute has maintained its second position for the second consecutive time. He said that in recent times new initiatives have been taken on life skills and wellness for the students of the institute. Additionally, the institute is taking forward its farmer centric efforts by the upcoming projects of the institute partnering with the central and state governments, said Prof UP Singh, Dean of the Faculty.

has been sent for the postnot be ascertained. No injury

Government determined to free country of Maoists: Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

nion Home Minister Amit Shah has reaffirmed government's commitment to making Chattisgarh and entire country, "completely free of Maoists," He also labeled them "the

development, peace, and enemy (the) bright future of youth". Shah's comments come a day after Chhattisgarh security forces killed 29 Maoists, including a senior rebel leader — Shankar Rao, on whom there was a bounty of Rs 25 lakh — in a gunfight in Kanker district.

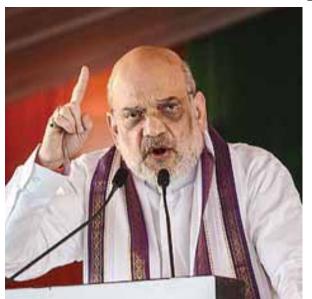
The Home Minister also congratulated the joint District Reserve Guard and Border Security Force team, which suffered three non-

fatal injuries. He said the Modi government is determined to free the country from the scourge. Shah said due to the offensive policy of the government and the efforts of security forces, Maoism has been confined to a small area now and soon Chhattisgarh and the entire

country will be completely

Maoist-free.

"Today, a large number of Naxalites have been killed in the operation of security forces in Chhattisgarh. I congratulate all the security personnel who made this operation successful with their bravery and wish for the speedy recovery of the brave policemen who have been injured," Shah wrote on 'X' in Hindi.



Apart from the 29 rebels also recovered a huge including Ak-47 and INSAS killed, the DRG-BSF team quantity of weapons, rifles, as well as .303

Narendra Modi government will eliminate Naxals from the country in a very short period of time, Union Home Minister Amit Shah asserted Wednesday, according to PTI from Ahmedabad.

The central government has been conducting incessant operations against terrorism and Naxals, he said in a statement, a day after security forces gunned down 29 Maoists in Chhattisgarh. "I can say with conviction that operations against Naxals will continue in the times to come, and under the leadership of Modi, we will uproot Naxalism from our nation in a very short period of time," Shah said. The home minister said

since the formation of a BJP

government in Chhattisgarh

eliminated, more than 125 arrested and more than 150 have surrendered. Shah said a large number of camps of security forces

three months ago, more than

80 Naxals have been

have been set up in Maoistaffected areas since 2014. Since 2019, as many as 250 such camps have been set up, ending the security vacuum, he said. Since the start of 2024, as

many as 79 Naxalites have been killed in separate gunbattles with security forces in the Bastar region, a Maoist stronghold.

The violence in Kanker comes days before the Lok Sabha election begins; the Bastar seat will vote in the first phase on Friday, while Kanker will vote in the second round on

independent media are being

"systematically attacked", she

Shrinate cited how multiple

social media accounts of

farmer leaders, associations



Modi greets people on Ram Navami

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people on the occasion of Ram Navami on Wednesday and said Ayodhya is in incomparable bliss as this is the first time the festival is being celebrated there after the consecration of the Ram temple.

He also watched online the ceremony at the Ram temple in Ayodhya following his Lok Sabha poll rally in Nalbari in Assam.

Assail. In a post on X, the Prime Minister said, "After my Nalbari rally, I watched the Surya Tilak on Ram Lalla. Like crores of Indians, this is a very emotional moment for me. The grand Ram Navami in Ayodhya is historic. May this Surya Tilak bring energy to our lives and may it inspire our nation to scale new heights of glory."

Greeting people, the prime minister said "The first Ram Navami after the Pran Pratishtha in Ayodhya is a generational milestone. weaving together centuries of devotion with a new era of hope and progress. This is a day crores of Indians waited for," Modi said in a series of posts on X. This is the fruit of the hardwork and sacrifices

made by the people of the

country over many years, he said.

Ram Navami celebrates the birth of Lord Ram and the temple was recently consecrated at the place where he was born in Ayodhya.

Modi said, "May the blessings of Prabhu Shri Ram always remain upon us and guide paths towards righteousness and peace, illuminating our lives with

wisdom and courage." He said he feels overwhelmed and grateful on this occasion as he along with a large number of people in the country witnessed the consecration ceremony in Ayodhya. Modi said the memories of that moment continue to pulsate within

him with the same energy. Lord Ram is deeply embedded in the hearts of Indians. Ram Navami is also a time to remember and respect those saints and devotees who dedicated their lives to the construction of the temple in Ayodhya, Modi said.

"I am confident that Maryada Purushottam Bhagwan Kam's life and ideals will become a strong basis for constructing Viksit Bharat'. His blessings will provide new energy to the resolve of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat," the prime minister

Modi pays tribute to former PM Chandrashekhar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

 $\begin{array}{cccc} P^{\text{rime}} & \text{Minister} & \text{Narendra} \\ \text{Modi on Wednesday paid} \\ \text{tribute} & \text{to} & \text{former} & \text{Prime} \end{array}$ Minister Chandrashekhar on his birth anniversary, lauding him as an exemplary leader who rose from the grassroots and made rich contributions to national progress. In a post on X, Modi said, "He

is remembered for his emphasis on serving the poor and downtrodden. He was also at the forefront of resisting the Emergency and safeguarding our democratic ideals." Born in the Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh in 1927, Chandra Shekhar was a stalwart socialist leader who briefly headed a minority government. His son Neeraj Shekhar is a BJP MP and is

Congress questions EC order to delete bonds post from X PIONEER NEWS SERVICE IN IT 'X' fails to remove the four department were described.

Congress The Congress on Wednesday questioned the Election Commission's move to get a post on electoral bonds scheme deleted from social media platform X and post makes the government "extremely uncomfortable".

The opposition party's remarks came after the social media platform X said the Election Commission (EC) ordered it to take down select posts of YSR Congress, AAP, N Chandrababu Naidu and Samrat Choudhary for violation of the model code of conduct.

April 2 and April 3 and a raised the issue of electoral follow-up email was sent by the poll panel on April 10 in which it cited a violation of "One does not understand but

posts reported to it. Congress spokesperson and

social media party's department head Supriya Shrinate said the Election Commission had asked platform X, formerly known as Twitter, to delete some said the issue raised in the posts, one of which was about electoral bonds.

She said it is incumbent upon the poll watchdog to ensure that free and fair elections happen and that whenever an issue which makes the someone breaches the model code of conduct, they are hauled up, including those N Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister religious references and crass and vulgar statements.

"So that is why it is very surprising that the EC chose The orders were issued on to get a tweet deleted which

obviously electoral bonds is



government extremely uncomfortable," Shrinate told reporters at the headquarters here.

She claimed Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried his best to give an explanation on the electoral bonds issue and "not iust sounded defensive but stopped making sense".

"Those donating to the BJP

department were donating so social media platforms and this was an extortion racket independent media are being that was happening and the country now knows about it," she claimed.

Rahul Gandhi's Citing remarks at a press conference earlier in the day, Shrinate alleged that the prime minister is a "champion of corruption" as he was "breeding graft through the electoral bonds scheme".

"I do want to raise that there is a pattern as far as social media platforms are concerned. This government is very uncomfortable with social media platforms, digital platforms and YouTube channels because it has been able to convert large sections of mainstream media into cheerleaders of the government that do not ask it about jobs, price rise, justice

and independent journalists were all "restricted" during the farmers' movement. "I would like to say that social

alleged.

media platforms are being curbed at a time when IT rules of 2021 are under contention across courts in India," she said. The government of the day must do some soul-searching about "suppressing these voices", Shrinate added.

On Tuesday, social media platform 'X' said the Election Commission has issued takedown orders requiring the microblogging site to act on posts containing political that? were the ones winning the big "One does not understand but obviously electoral bonds is by ED and Income Tax There is a pattern of how and candidates for office. speech shared from elected politicians, political parties

storage devices.

for Uzbekistan's defence

IT lab was initially made Defence during the Defence Ministers' meeting in September 2018, and the project gained momentum with the approval in 2019, funded through the Ministry of External Affairs' Aid to lab is expected to enrich the Eurasia initiative, the army

The request to establish an

It has been learnt that the bids exceeded the envisaged budget of Rs 6.5 crore. As a result, Rs 8.5 crore was allotted for the project. An Indian company won the contract and made the lab fully operational well in

academy but also a bridge "reinforcing the expanding partnership" between the two nations, promising a future of cooperation in defence and technology, a source said. The establishment of the IT

training resources available to the Uzbek armed forces and foster a deeper understanding and cooperation between India and Uzbekistan in the years

The defence ministry on Monday described the Army chief's visit to Uzbekistan as a "significant" laptops, alongside essential peripherals such as printers, cameras, scanners, and technological advancement" CZZDEKISTAM as a significant step" in bolstering defence cooperation between the two countries.

the "voluntary code of ethics" contesting from the Ballia. **Indian fishing boat involved** in diesel smuggling seized

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ **NEW DELHI**

Indian Coast Guard(ICG)has apprehended an Indian fishing boat allegedly involved in smuggling of diesel and carrying unauthorised amount currency totaling about Rs 11, 46,000.

The boat was brought to Mumbai on Wednesday for

said Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (West) launched an operation based on tip off from customs and apprehended an Indian fishing boat 83 nautical miles northwest off of Wednesday.

Mumbai on Monday. The operation involved a sustained search during challenging night conditions amidst considerable fishing and merchant traffic covering an area of 200 square miles

offshore

reas of

Maharashtra coast. In a seamlessly coordinated operation which involved search by 02 ICG Fast further investigation. Patrol Vessel (FPVs) and Giving details here, officials one Interceptor Boat, the Patrol Vessel (FPVs) and suspected boat was finally located and boarded on Monday night.
The vessel was brought to

Mumbai anchorage in the early

including

developme

Pande inaugurates cybersecurity lab in Uzbekistan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

rmy Chief General Army Chief on Pande on Pande a Wednesday inaugurated a state-of-the-art cybersecurity lab at the zbek Academy of Armed Forces during his ongoing visit to Uzbekistan, sources The development signifies a

milestone in defence cooperation between the two nations, following a commitment made during the Defence Ministers' meeting in September 2018, Indian Army sources said. Pande is visiting Uzbekistan from April 15-18 to explore

new avenues of bilateral military collaboration. He is scheduled to hold

wide-ranging talks with the top military brass of the Central Asian nation besides IT visiting a number of defence laboratory facility that also establishments, the defence boasts a cutting-edge ministry had earlier said in a statement. In a significant step toward strengthening bilateral ties between India and Uzbekistan, the Army chief inaugurated a high-tech IT laboratory at the Uzbek Academy of Armed Forces, sources said.

The laboratory is equipped with state-of-the-art technology, including nine rooms that house two lecture halls, a cutting-edge cybersecurity lab, a hardware programming lab, an object-



oriented programming lab, a metworking devices, and an web programming lab, a assortment of computing server room, a multimedia equipment comprising a room, and a virtual reality room, they said.

Additional facilities include videoconferencing terminals, interactive panels,

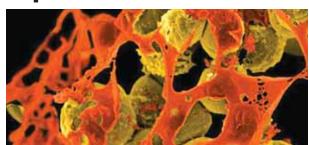
equipment comprising a large number of high-end PCs, workstations and

time, they said.

sources added.

to come, they said.

Amid scare of antimicrobial resistance experts call for surveillance of pathogens



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

In view of the escalating threat of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in India, microbiologists have called for Unified Data Systems and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) for surveillance of the pathogens. "AMR is a global threat that requires people who have historically not worked together to cooperate and work towards a common goal..." said Prof. Anurag Agrawal, Dean, Biosciences at Trivedi School of Biosciences, Ashoka University at a workshop titled, "Environmental Surveillance of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR): Strategies and

Implications." The workshop which was held recently also saw key involvement of organizations such as the Indian Council of Medical

Research (ICMR), World Health Organisation (WHO), National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), and partners of Alliance for Pathogen Surveillance and Innovation (APSI), among others. They underscored the seriousness of the issue and the need for collaborative efforts to address it effectively. "The APSI consortium is a

unique initiative involving public and private academia, public and private hospitals, R&D labs, and government departments trying to address the AMR problem in four different regions of the country," said Prof. LS Shashidhara, Director of the NCBS about the consortium. It is working with a vision that the data generated and the outcome of its efforts will provide additional evidence to frame public health policies and strategies at the national and state levels, he

During a panel discussion, integrating surveillance data into healthcare and into healthcare and environmental systems emerged as a crucial recommendation for better decision-making and policy development. Addressing challenges in real-time AMR surveillance, like data sharing and operator training, was a and operator training, was a key focus. Additionally, there was an emphasis on digital to empower systems stakeholders, especially research labs, by ensuring smooth data generation and proper credit allocation.

The emphasis on integrating surveillance data into healthcare and environmental systems, along with the use of digital systems for smooth data generation and analysis, reflects a forward-thinking approach to addressing the challenges of AMR challenges of AMR surveillance, said a statement

from the organiser.
Some of the prominent attendees were - Dr Kamini walia, Senior Scientist at ICMR; Dr Anuj Sharma, NPO - Technical focal point for AMR, Labs and IPC, WHO; Dr Rakesh Mishra, Director, Tata Institute of Genetics Society; Dr (Brig.) Rakesh Kumar Gupta, Director, Government Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS), among others.

Testing, evaluation hub for sonar systems SPACE launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

As tate-of-the-art Submersible Platform for Acoustic Characterisation and Evaluation (SPACE) was inaugurated by Secretary, Department of Defence (R&D) and Chairman Defence Research and D e v e l o p m e n t Organisation(DRDO) Dr Samir V Kamat Underwater Acoustic Research Facility, Kulamavu in Idukki, Kerala on Wednesday, defence ministry said here.

The SPACE, set up by the Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory of DRDO, has been designed as a premier testing and evaluation hub for sonar systems destined for Indian Navy onboard various platforms including ships, submarines

helicopters.
The SPACE marks a milestone in naval technology advancement. It will consist of two distinct assemblages - a platform which floats on the water lowered to any depth up to m o d e r 100 m using winch systems. scientific instrumentation.



completion operations, the submersible platform can be winched up and docked with the floating platform.

The SPACE will mainly be utilised for evaluation of complete sonar system, allowing for quick deployment and easy recovery of scientific packages such as sensors and transducers. It will be suitable for survey, sampling, and data collection of air, surface, surface, and a submersible mid-water, and reservoir platform which can be floor parameters using floor parameters using

Parties climate concerns in manifestos hollow amid no concrete steps: Experts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

A midst the looming specter of climate change, political parties such as BJP Congress acknowledging the severity of the crisis and integrating it into their manifestoes as a commitment to addressing it through policy action and international cooperation. However, experts are not impressed.

They caution that while these commitments are a step in the right direction, they may fall short of meaningful action if not accompanied by concrete and substantive measures.

The BJP, which released its 69-page election manifesto recently, has dedicated three pages to environment and climate issues under the section Modi Ki Guarantee for Sustainable Bharat, coming a long way from just a paragraph on environment in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections. The word climate change did not even figure in the 1999 and 2004 manifestos of the BJP, currently the world's largest political party. The Congress has allotted two pages for environment, climate, disaster

management, and water and sanitation-related issues in its 2024 election manifesto. A review of its previous Lok



Sabha election manifestos shows a strong emphasis on climate change and environmental sustainability issues.

A 2022 study by the Centre for Policy Research noted that the Congress has consistently emphasized climate change

and environmental sustainability over the last three elections and has discussed specific steps for environmental protection, like green budgeting and the greation of an independent creation of an independent authority to work on it.

According to the study, while the BJP dedicates about 11 per cent of its manifesto to environmental issues, leftleaning parties generally highlight water conservation, dedicating around 12 per cent of their content to environmental protection and sustainability.

Key commitments in the BJP's latest manifesto include achieving net-zero emissions by 2070, transitioning to non-

fossil fuel energy sources, improving river health, achieving national air quality standards in 60 cities, expanding tree cover, and boosting disaster resilience. The Congress has proposed setting up a fund for a green transition and achieving the net-zero goal. However, critics highlight

that some promises made in these manifestos might be symbolic rather substantive.

"There have been several cases where the government's approach to issues like forest and wildlife conservation, where policies and actions may not align with the stated commitments to address climate change. For instance, while there may be pledges to protect forests and wildlife habitats in manifestos, actual policies or actions may prioritize economic interests over environmental conservation," said a climate change expert.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION—

SC votes for EVMs

The apex court has summarily rejected the idea of reverting to ballot papers for registering votes

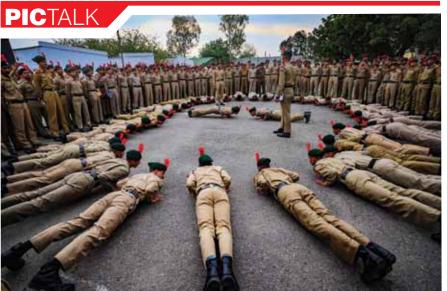
neneral elections would be held through Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) as the Supreme Court has voiced its disapproval of criticism directed towards them; it has summarily dismissed the idea of reverting to ballot papers. This statement comes amid debates regarding the reliability of EVMs. Many Opposition leaders have publicly expressed scepticism regarding the accuracy of EVM results, citing concerns of tampering and the potential undermining of the democratic process. The Supreme Court's stance underscores the need for a pragmatic approach towards electoral reforms, balancing concerns of transparency and efficiency in democratic practices. The use of EVMs in elections has been a subject of contention since its introduction in India in the 1990s by the Congress Government. While proponents argue for its efficiency, accuracy and ability to streamline the voting process, critics raise concerns over potential vulnerabilities to tampering, hacking and manipulation. These concerns have fuelled



calls for a return to traditional paper ballots, perceived by some as a more secure and transparent method of voting. However, the Supreme Court's recent remarks shed light on the practical challenges associated with such a regression. The transition from paper ballots to EVMs was a significant leap forward in the electoral process. Reverting to paper ballots would not only be a step back in terms of technology but also pose logistical challenges in managing large-scale elections in a country as populous as India.

The Supreme Court is right in its stand as replacing EVMs with paper ballots will be a humongous exercise. However, there is a middle ground called VVPAT

— the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT). A tangible link between electronic voting and the traditional paper ballot system, it provides voters with the opportunity to verify their vote by displaying a paper slip containing the chosen candidate's name and symbol. A little tweaking of the system to collect paper slips with the candidate's name the voter voted for and counted along with the electronic votes would go a long way in making the system transparent. Critics of EVMs have often pointed to instances of alleged tampering and discrepancies in election results. While these concerns merit attention, it is essential to distinguish between genuine issues and unsubstantiated claims driven by political agendas. The integrity of the electoral process is paramount, and any allegations of malpractice should be thoroughly investigated and addressed. Perception plays a crucial role in shaping the legitimacy of election outcomes, and measures to strengthen transparency and accountability are essential. Rather than advocating for a wholesale rejection of technological advancements, the focus should be on enhancing the security, transparency and accountability of the electoral process. Making VVPAT counting and matching mandatory would indeed go a long way in clearing the doubts about the EVMs.



National Cadet Corps perform a drill during their 10-day summer season camp at Nagrota, in Jammu

Showdown in Karnataka



As Karnataka braces for the Lok Sabha elections, the political arena is set for a fierce clash between the Congress and the BJP-JD(S) alliance

he Lok Sabha elections are coming up in Karnataka and will be held in 28 constituencies on April 26 and May 7. The Congress party and the BJP-JD(S) alliance will compete to win voters' support. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited the State multiple times to campaign for BJP candidates. BJP has the support of former chief minister Yediyurappa, who is widespread among the Lingayat community and is a significant vote bank in the State. These elections are crucial for Karnataka's future and mark a pivotal moment in its his-

Karnataka has been a stronghold of Congress for many years. It supported Prime Minister Indira Gandhi even after the Emergency, is a testament to its political significance. This historical significance is evident from the victories of Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, who both won seats in Karnataka for the Congress party.

These elections are not just a contest but a high-stakes battle between Congress, BJP and the Bharatiya Janata Party-Janata Dal (Secular) alliance. They symbolise the BJP's re-entry into Karnataka's political landscape. The election could shift policy priorities and governance style, potentially impacting various sectors of the State's economy and society. The results will have significant consequences for people's lives, making their participation and understanding of the

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) seeks to emerge victorious in the upcoming Karnataka elections to solidify its regional dominance in the South, enhance its standing in national politics and extend its sphere of influence in southern India. In contrast, the Indian National Congress is committed to protecting its Government in the State. At the same time, the [anata Dal (Secular) [ID(S)] endeavours to survive in a highly competitive political climate. In essence, JD(S) is striving to attain political longevity.

The BJP's campaign in Karnataka centres around PM Modi's achievements and Congress's fail-



ures. It targets two influential communities, the Lingayats and Vokkaligas, who are crucial to its electoral strategy. The Lingayats, being a dominant community in the State, have traditionally supported

In contrast, the Vokkaligas, another influential community, has been a JD (S) stronghold. Winning over these communities is crucial for the BJP's electoral success. The BJP faces some local conflicts. For the first time since 2014, the party has had an open rebellion. The reason for this is the BJP-JDS alliance,

which has yet to be well received. The Congress, too, has its rebel candidates. Congress is targeting SCs, STs and Muslims in Karnataka. The Congress Government implemented five essential poll guarantees promised last year, which included free bus rides for women, increased funding for education and job creation. These promises were designed to address specific concerns of the region's voters and reflect the party's commitment to social welfare and economic development. Three pre-poll surveys by Edina, News 18 and India

Today Group predict con-



THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED FIVE ESSENTIAL POLL **GUARANTEES** PROMISED LAST YEAR, WHICH INCLUDED FREE BUS RIDES FOR WOMEN, INCREASED FUNDING FOR EDUCATION AND JOB CREATION

flicting results for Karnataka's upcoming elections. Edina predicts Congress will win 17 seats and the BJP-JDS alliance will bag 11. News 18 forecasts NDA will win 25 seats, Congress only 3. India Today Group predicts NDA will win 24 seats with a 53 per cent vote share. The INDIA alliance, a regional party alliance, is expected to secure only four seats with a 42 per cent vote share. These surveys provide a snapshot of the current

political landscape. They can help readers gauge the potential outcomes of the election. There is a significant shift from the 2019 polls when Congress and JD(S) were allies. The BJP aims to secure the Vokkaliga vote in Old Mysore and tilt the election in their favour. The Vokkaligas, a dominant community in the Old Mysore region, have traditionally supported the JD (S). The BJP's strategy to caste-based outreach, promises of development and highlighting the failures of the JD (S) Government. If successful, this strategy could significantly impact the election outcome and the State's political landscape.

THE EDITO

The power of young citizens

The BJP has fielded a top cardiologist, a member of the Mysuru royal family and an ex-chief Minister among its candidates. It has also fielded some new faces. The Congress has many ministers' relatives and these candidates can impact the result.

Since the BJP formed its first Government in 2008, the 'toppling game has been ongoing. Money and positions often play a significant role in luring legislators to shift loyalties, adding another layer of complexity to the State's political landscape. Both parties are willing to spend money.

The upcoming election in the State poses a decision for voters. They must choose between supporting the Congress party they previously elected in the Assembly polls or the BJP, which had held power earlier. While some may prefer the Congress, the BJP still has a loyal followwin over this community ing. Suppose the voters choose involves a combination of to reject the BJP. In that case, it'll signify that the politica party's access to the South has been closed, at least temporarily and the return of Congress is on the right track.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

The new age of quantum technology



BIJU **DHARMAPALAN**

The scientific community celebrated April 14 as World Quantum Day to raise awareness of quantum science's impact across diverse fields

he world of science is on the cusp of a transformative era driven by the burgeoning field of quantum technology. Quantum science is founded on several key principles that underpin the behaviour of particles and systems at the quantum

The term "quantum scale" refers to the realm of physics that deals with phenomena occurring at very small scales, typically at the level of atoms, subatomic particles and fundamental particles. It encompasses the principles of quantum mechanics, which govern the behaviour of particles and systems at these tiny dimensions. At the heart of quantum technology lies the principles of quantum mechanics, a branch of physics that describes the behaviour of particles at the smallest scales. Quantum mechanics introduces uncertainty and the notion of superposition, where particles can exist in multiple States simultaneously. Furthermore, entanglement, another fundamental quantum phenomenon, links the properties of particles regardless of distance, enabling instantaneous

communication between them. These counterintuitive phenomena, once relegated to the realm of theory, are now being harnessed to create groundbreaking technologies with the potential to revolutionise numerous fields. India

has a long and rich history in quantum science. Pioneering work by Satyendra Nath Bose on quantum statistics laid the groundwork for many modern quantum technologies, including Bose-Einstein condensation, quantum superconductivity and quantum information theory.

Over the past few decades, advancements in quantum science have surged, laying the groundwork for a new era characterised by unparalleled computational power, secure communication and transformative applications across various sectors. One of the most captivating applications of quantum mechanics is the

development of quantum in critical areas like financial computers. These machines leverage the power of superposition to perform calculations exponentially faster than traditional computers. By manipulating qubits (quantum bits) that can be 0, 1, or both simultaneously, quantum computers can explore a vast array of possibilities concurrently. This unparalleled processing power holds immense promise for drug discovery, where simulating complex molecules can accelerate the development of lifesaving medications.

Another revolutionary application of quantum technology is in secure communication. Quantum key distribution (QKD) utilises the principles of quantum mechanics to establish secure cryptographic keys between parties. By encoding information into the quantum States of particles and leveraging entanglement properties, QKD ensures that any attempt to intercept or eavesdrop on the communication would disturb the quantum State, thereby alerting the parties involved.

Quantum cryptography safeguards sensitive information

transactions, national security communications and protecting intellectual property. By exploiting the extreme sensitivity of quantum systems to minute changes, scientists are developing sensors capable of detecting the subtlest variations in magnetic fields, gravity and temperature. This has profound implications for medical imaging, where ultra-high-resolution MRIs can provide detailed analyses of tissues and organs, aiding in early disease detection and personalised medicine. In navigation, quantum sensors can lead to more precise GPS and navigation systems, which are crucial for autonomous vehicles and various scientific endeavours. The Government of India, under the Department of Science and Technology, has initiated the National Quantum Mission (NQM), which aims to harness the transformative potential of quantum technology to address national challenges and foster innovation. (The writer is an adjunct

faculty at the National *Institute of Advanced* Studies; views are personal)

MEDICAL SUPPLIES SCANDAL Madam — Apropos the news article,

'Delhi Government's Vigilance Department Exposes Kejriwal", published on April 16, this is my response. Recent revelations concerning irregularities in medical procurement by the AAP-led Delhi Government raise serious concerns. The findings of the Vigilance Department indicate a pattern of favouritism towards specific individuals and companies during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in significant losses for the Government. The involvement of high-ranking officials, including the Health Minister's OSD RN Das, in managing tenders to benefit par-

ticular entities is troubling.
The exploitation of the pandemic crisis to swindle funds from the public exchequer is deplorable. The notice's assertion that procurement procedures were blatantly ignored, coupled with allegations of cartelisation among suppliers, paints a grim picture of corruption within the health department. The revelation that certain companies, allegedly linked to influential individuals, secured lucrative contracts further deepens suspicions of foul play. While the AAP-led Delhi Government dismisses the allegations as baseless, the call for accountability is paramount. Swift and transparent investigations are necessary to restore public trust and ensure such egregious malpractices are rooted out effective-

Vishwajeet Aparta | Jaipur

NATO'S EVOLVING CHALLENGES Madam — Apropos the news article, "Challenges galore for NATO@75", published on April 16, this is my response. NATO, an alliance born in the aftermath of World War II, faces a multitude of challenges as it marks its 75th anniversary. Criticism from within Europe, coupled with the rise of right-wing nationalism, underscores the need for NATO to adapt. Its traditional focus on military might must now contend with non-traditional threats like cyber warfare and terrorism.



propos the news article. "A call to vote responsibly beyond party lines", published on April 16, this is my response. India's youthful population wields immense power through their vote, a power intrinsically tied to responsibility. As we step into adulthood, we're not just celebrating a milestone but embracing a civic duty to shape the nation's

scrutiny due to perceptions of American hegemony and its military interventions worldwide. The proposed aid package to Ukraine highlights NATO's role in geopolitical tensions, particularly concerning Russia. However, India's rejection of a US offer to join NATO signals a broader reluctance among nations to align too closely with Western military alliances. As NATÓ faces an uncertain future, navigating the complexities of global power dynamics will require strategic reforms and a renewed commitment to its founding principles of security and cooperation.

Aryan Kant | Sonipat

MENTAL IMPACT OF NUTRITION

Madam — Apropos the news article, "Mangoes are nature's antidepressants", published on April 15, this is my response. Poor nutrition doesn't just affect our bodies—it deeply impacts our mental wellbeing too. In an insightful exploration by Rajdeep Joshi, the link between nutrition and mental health is emphasised, with a focus on the often overlooked benefits of Moreover, NATO's credibility is under mango consumption. Nutrition is the

future. The call is clear: transcend party lines and scrutinise progress objectively. Our nation's trajectory demands introspection—are we advancing equitably? Are policies benefiting all

strata of society? The electoral process is our mechanism for accountability, a tool to measure leadership against promises made. Infrastructure, industry, healthcare, education-these sectors reflect our collective welfare. As citizens, we must assess policies impartially, ensuring transparency and inclusivity. Our vote signifies unity, transcending divisive lines for the greater good Informed decision-making isn't just a privilege but a necessity. Our diverse nation thrives when every voice is heard and every concern addressed. Let's harness the power of our vote to pave the path towards a stronger, more inclu-

Keerti Punia | Chandigarh

cornerstone of good health and its deficiency is intertwined with mental health issues like depression and anxiety. While various factors contribute to depression, nutritional imbalances are often sidelined. Key vitamins and minerals play pivotal roles in managing psychological wellbeing, influencing optimal brain function and stress levels.

Mangoes emerge as natural mood enhancers, packed with serotonin-boosting tryptophan and vital minerals like potassium and magnesium. Incorporating mangoes into our diet not only promotes physical health but also aids in relieving nervous tension and improving mood. The recipe provided, a nutritious mango salad, offers a delicious way to harness the mental wellness benefits of mangoes, blending their goodness with other wholesome ingredients. It's a flavorful reminder that what we eat profoundly impacts not just our bodies, but our minds too.

Jitu Majumdaar | Kolkata

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FIRST COLUMN

SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE

To return to a life of harmony with nature, we need to realise our spiritual identity



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

few centuries ago no one worried about climate change, because there was no reason to do so. But as humans extracted more from Anature and dumped an increasing amount of waste, including highly toxic substances, on it, the ecological balance began to get disrupted. This process has accelerated over the centuries and brought us to the present situation where, according to some experts, the entire human race faces extinction shortly.

Climate change and global warming are sometimes thought of as things that will happen in the future. But scientists are finding increasing evidence that the planet is changing now - and that people must take a large share of the blame for this phenomenon. They further explain that excessive carbon emissions through industrial and vehicular pollution, use of CFCs and plundering of forests and natural resources have depleted the ozone layer. This has trapped more and more solar radiation inside the earth's atmosphere. As a result, the earth is heating up which has begun to trigger a chain of natural upheavals like floods, earthquakes, tsunamis and landslides in recent times.

To prevent such an eventuality, humans need to work on themselves. Man does not need to master nature. The human soul is the master of all that is material. It is when the soul begins to identify itself with the body that it comes under the influence of matter and vices. In the Golden and Silver Ages, when all human souls had self-awareness and divine qualities, nature was their obedient servant. The elements of nature made life pleasant in that era, which is remembered in religious texts as par-



Because the divine beings of that world were free of vices, they never exploited or despoiled nature. Instead of having to be environment-friendly, they had a truly friendly environment. They were friends not only to their fellow beings but also to all matter. This State of affairs continued till the beginning of the Copper Age when the souls forgot who they were and began to come under the influence of the body and the vices. They then began to exploit natural resources, gradually harming the environment. In return, nature too ceased to obey souls who had lost mastery over themselves. As the influence of the vices grew, so did the plunder of nature and what was once a harmonious relationship turned more into one between an exploiter and the exploited.

The Prime Minister of India in his speech at the UN said "We can achieve the same level of development, prosperity and well-being without necessarily going down the path of reckless consumption. It doesn't mean that economies will suffer; it will mean that our economies will take on a different character. For us in India, respect for nature is an integral part of spiritualism. We treat nature's bounties as sacred. Yoga is an invaluable gift of our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; and a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change.

Now, if we wish to go back from the brink and return to a life of harmony with nature, we need to realise our spiritual identity and values. Such awareness will make us naturally eco-friendly and send out a positive energy that will bring the elements of nature into harmony with us again. If a critical mass of humans begin to live with this spiritual awareness, nature will by itself become our friend and humanity will look at a golden instead of a doubtful future.

> (The writer is a spiritual educator and a popular columnist; views are personal)

The roots of Wahhabi extremism



HASAN KHURSHID

The world reels under the grip of Wahhabi terrorism, orchestrated by Saudi rulers with Zionist affiliations, masquerading behind a façade of Islam



oday entire world is gripped in the clutches of Wahhabi ter-rorism spearheaded by Zionist Saudi rulers, wearing the cloak of pseudo-Islam, who are hiding their faith in Judaism. All terrorist organisations, such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Lashkar e Taiyaba, Lashkar e Jhangvi, etc; follow the ideology of Wahhabism, a newly created cult of Saudi rulers, the pseudo-Muslims.
The activities of this cult can be best

explained through the words of renowned British historian Charles Allen, who in his book, God's Terrorists The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad, writes, Wahhabi is a guiding ideology behind modern Islamist terrorism. In the 18th century, a violently intolerant re-interpretation of Islam took root in the Arabian desert. Its followers became known after their founder (Sheikh Muhammad Najdi ibn Abd-al Wahhab), as Wahhabi. The creed was then exported to India and its north-west frontier

Afghanistan.' Sheikh Najdi was born in 1702, in the desert of Najd, a rocky plateau of the Arabian Peninsula. About Najd, Charles Allen writes, "Indeed for many Arabs, Najd had only negative associations. There was a popular saying that 'Nothing good never came out of Najd' and it was related in the Hadith that the Prophet had three times been called upon to ask God to bless Najd and had three times been called upon to ask God to bless Najd and had three times refused, answering on the third occasion, 'Earthquakes and dissension are there and there shall arise the horn of Satan.' In the years following the ministry of Al-Wahhab, there were many who argued that this prophecy had been confirmed." In 1744, Najdi ibn Wahhab, sidelining the preaching of true Islam by Prophet Mohammed, created a new version of



PSEUDO-ISLAM. HOWEVER, WHEN AGAINST HIS IDEOLOGY, NAJDI WAS SHREWD ENOUGH TO FIND A PATRON IN MUHAMMED-IBN-SAUD, A BEDOUIN TRIBAL CHIEF, WHO MADE USE OF HIS NEW VITRIOLIC VERSION OF ISLAM FOR

POLITICAL

CONSOLIDATION

WAHHABISM IS **NOTHING BUT** MOUNTED Islam is not the original religion of Saudi Arab rulers. Sheikh Najdi, also belonging to Jewish

Aziz took over as Emir (temporeplacing conventional weaponterritory and as Allen says, "He issued every holy warrior a 'firman' or written order addressed to gate-keeper of heaven, requir-

Islam called Wahhabism. His ideology is enshrined in Kitab-al Tawhid (book of unity), which prescribes the forceful conversion of Muslims and non-Muslims to his Salafi or Wahhabi ideology, wherein he manifestly says, "Follow my ideology, else get ready to be killed." His ideology was strongly opposed by Muslim masses, including his father and

So, Wahhabism is nothing but pseudo-Islam. However, when the opposition mounted against his ideology, Najdi was shrewd enough to find a patron in Muhammed-ibn-Saud, a Bedouin OPPOSITION tribal chief, who made use of his new vitriolic version of Islam for political consolidation. Ibn Saud belonged to the Jewish tribe of Anza Ben Wael.

> ancestry, not only made an alliance with Ibn Saud but also got his daughter married to Ibn Saud's son Abd-al-Aziz ibn Saud. Thereafter, the faith was of Sheikh Najdi and the sword was of Ibn Saud. A dynastic government was established as a result of this partnership, which is continuing in the name of Saudi Arabia. In 1766, Muhammed ibn Saud was killed and his son Abd-alral leader). He introduced firearms in the holy war or jihad, ry. He accelerated his attacks in a spectacular bid to extend his

ing him to be admitted forth-with should he die on battle." Since then it has been the common schismatic, fraudulent practice of terror operators to misguide and exploit the youth for recruit-ment with the promise of par-

The history of Wahhabism has been written with the blood of innocent people. On June 2, 1792, Sheikh Muhammad Najdiibn-Abd-al Wahhab died, leaving his 24 wives and 18 children and his son-in-law Abd-al-Aziz speeded up his violent actions and conversions. In 1802, he attacked Karbala in Iraq, dese-Imam Husain, Lieutenant Francis Warden wrote, "They pillaged the whole of it and plundered the tomb of Hazrat Imam Husain, slaying in the course of the day, with circumstances of peculiar cruelty, killing about 5,000 of the inhabitants. A huge amount of booty was seized."

In 1803, Abd-al-Aziz ibn Saud obtained a visit permit from the Shareef of Mecca on the pretext of performing Hajj; whereupon his Wahhabi fighters laid waste in Islam's holiest shrine (Ka'aba), like the accursed Yazid had desecrated it in 682 AD. According to T.E Ravenshaw, author of A Memorandum on the Sect of Wahhabis, "They robbed the splendid tombs of the Mahomedan saints, who were interred there; and their fanatical zeal did not even spare the Prophet's Mosque (in Medina) which they robbed of the immense treasures and costly furniture to which each Mahomedan Prince of Europe,

Asia and Africa had contributed his share."

In 1804, a Wahhabi gang again crossed the great desert in the Hijaz and destroyed tombs of the Prophet's family members at Jannat-ul-Baqi, the ancient century of Medina and even despoiled the grave of Prophet Mohammed. In 1925, Wahhabis demolished the holy shrines of Hazrat Fatima Zehra, daughter of Prophet Mohammed and his grandsons, as well as the birthplace of Prophet Mohammad. În India, the 500-year-old Babri

Masjid in Ayodhya was demolished on December 6, 1992, by a crating the holy shrine of Hazrat radical Hindu mob led by Sangh Parivar leaders. Intellectuals across the globe, irrespective of caste, creed, religion or region, condemned the demolition. Muslims across the world protested. Several lives were lost. In its landmark judgement of 2019, the Supreme Court held that the demolition was illegal and directed the authorities to allot an alternative plot for a mosque as compensation.

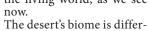
On the other hand, the more heinous crime of multiple demolitions of holy shrines, relics and heritage sites together with massacres took place in Saudi Arabia at the behest of Saudi Arab's Wahhabi/Salafi rulers of Zionist ancestry, on 8th Shawwal 1344 Hijri (1925 A.D), but surprisingly no Muslim of any sect reacts or protests against the pseudo-Muslim Saudi rulers. Is it because those perpetrators are Muslim for name sake?

(The writer is a legal journalist and author. The views expressed are personal)

Temperature soars as our ignorance threatens Earth's future

The relentless rise in global temperatures paints a stark portrait of humanity's disregard for the environment, echoing a dire warning for the planet's future

he temperature in the world is increasing day by day, due to the ignorance and carelessness of the people. The problem of rising temperatures is seen all over the world. The world's Climate changes day by day. The rising temperature is a bell of danger for the living world. If we are not aware, then we will not be able to deal with the problems of the future. All living beings need water, air and heat to survive. The changes in the quality and quantity of water and air will give birth to uncountable problems. When the atmosphere or the climate changes the changes are also seen in the living world, as we see

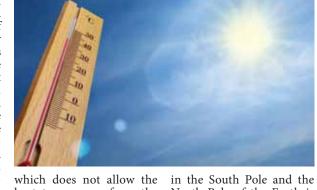




ent from Iceland's biome. In don't account for how much Australia we can see its national animal kangaroo, In Iceland we can see polar bears and penguins. Fruits, vegetables, flowers and forests also differ due to climate change. When the temperature of the earth is increasing, it poses a big threat to everyone. We don't know whether we will get the same fruits and vegetables tomorrow that we get now. Today the animals, birds or insects that we see all around us will they extinct or survive we don't know.

We don't have any information about living beings, how many species of them have already extinct every year is not known doubt they enrich our lives. We

our lives have been affected since they disappeared. If our outer is affected then our inner is also affected. It is worth considering. We are destroying our environment because of our greed. Inhumanity is seen in humans today. There are two reasons behind the increase in global temperature, one is man-made and the other one is natural. Man-made causes are deforestation, cutting of trees, use of vehicles and excessive use of fossil fuels. Natural causes where earthquakes, Storms, forest fires, gas accidents coal burning etc. The main cause of global warming is the greenhouse effect. A greenhouse is a glass house for keeping trees,



heat to go away from the glass house.

It is used to save the trees. The greenhouse effect is seen in the increase of carbon dioxide and methane gas. When the temperature increases by one degree, it greatly affects our environment. The ice accumulated

North Pole of the Earth is starting to melt. The glaciers in the Himalayas of India are also starting to melt and the water from these glaciers is causing floods in the rivers coming out of the glaciers. Nowadays days Shiv ling in Amarnath is melting within is a description of the flood in few days. In the future, as or the pralaya where the Amarnath is melting within

the heat increases, the rivers will cause flood and they will join the sea with the flood water. Many intellectuals of the world are concerned about the increase in global temperature. The solution to these problems is only by planting trees The only way we can save our planet is by plantation and forest protection. Trees give us oxygen and reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere. So planting trees is only one solution to the problem. The tree planting program

should be carried out regularly. When the Seawater rises it enters nearby cities and villages. In the fourth chapter of the twelfth skanda of the Bhagavatam, there

matter of Prithibi becomes hot and causes a flood or pralaya. It is also said that the rays of the sun will destroy the living world. How to save the living world should be the main subject of our course of studies in educational institutions. As long as the world is standing at the door of destruction we should not count the numbers of profit and loss but the message of collective development and collective happiness and peace should be spread. The intellectual people of India always sent messages of peace and goodwill to the world. Today let India be the guide of the world to protect the planet.

(The writer is a columnist, poet and social worker; views are personal)

Azad backs out of LS race from Anantnag

In a sudden turn of events, Chairman of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) Ghulam Nabi Azad Wednesday backed out of the Lok Sabha race from the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat. DPAP Treasurer Taj Mohiuddin addressing a press conference in Srinagar announced on April 2, 2024, that the core committee of the party has decided to field Ghulam Nabi Azad from the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat.

In his place, the party has decided to field Advocate Mohd Saleem Parray, a member of the District Development Council in Anantnag, to give a tough fight to the National Conference candidate Mian Altaf Ahmad and PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti. Bharatiya Janta Party is yet to announce its candidate for the seat as well. Briefing media persons in Srinagar DPAP provincial president



Kashmir, Mohammad Amin Bhat said Ghulam Nabi Azad will not contest the Anantnag Rajouri Lok Sabha seat. The party has decided to field Advocate Mohd Saleem Parray. DPAP leader also clarified Azad has decided to withdraw his candidature from the seat for some valid reasons. "He informed the party leadership about the same during a meeting of the core committee" Bhat added.

On a day DPAP candidate from the Udhampur-Doda Lok Sabha seat GM Saroori filed his nomination papers in Kathua Azad had dropped clear hints that he may not file his nomination papers.

Ghulam Nabi Azad and Omar Abdullah were trading charges against each other during the campaign meetings in the Chenab Valley region Azad even labelled Omar a "tourist to Jammu and Kashmir." Hitting back Omar accused Azad of dividing the

secular vote to help a BJP

candidate in a close fight on

the Udhampur-Doda Lok

through an objectionable statement. Uploading a news video clip of the objectionable statement

T N RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

In a fresh war of words between the leaders of the

feuding factions of the

Nationalist Congress Party

(NCP), Sharad Pawar's grand

nephew Rohit Pawar has taken

on deputy chief minister Aiit

Pawar for allegedly warning voters on the basis of government development "funds" given

Within days after the NCP

(Ajit Pawar) targeted Sharad

Pawar over his reported

comment suggesting Ajit Pawar's wife and its candidate

from Baramati as an "outsider",

Rohit Pawar of the rival NCP

(Sharad Pawar) took to micro-

blogging site "X" to draw the

Commission of India (ECI) for

alleged violation of Model

Code of Code by Ajit Pawar

Election

to the people.

made by Ajit Pawar at an election rally at Indapur which is part of Baramati Lok Sabha constituency on his "X" handle, Rohit said: "What is Ajitdada talking? Is talking about funds available with his friends or government development funds? Since the people are not supporting him, he is issuing threats of funds. This is nothing but violation of the Model Code of Conduct. ECI should

Pawar vs Pawar: Sharad's

grand nephew attacks Ajit

Ajitdada's statement". The video clip showed Ajit Pawar saying: "We are giving you funds. Press the button on EVM machines. Otherwise we will have to take action".

take serious cognisance of

A full-fledged Pawar family battle is being waged in Baramati Lok Sabha constituency where Sharad Pawar's daughter and threetime MP Supriya Sule and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar – is taking on each other in Baramati constituency.

While Supriya represents the Sharad Pawar-led NCP which is one of the constituent of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), Sunetra has been fielded by the NCP (Ajit Pawar) which is one of the parties in the BJP-led ruling MahaYuti.

Lok Sabha Baramati constituency has been represented by the Sharad Pawar family for nearly four decades now. While Sharad Pawar was a two-time MP and his nephew Ajit Pawar represented Baramati for one term, sitting MP Supriya Supe has been a three-term Lok Sabha member from Baramati. Sharad Pawar's writ would run in Baramati for nearly four decades. However, political equations changed Maharashtra's prestigious Lok Sabha constituency after his nephew Ajit Pawar rebelled against Sr Pawar, walked out of the NCP with a sizeable number of supporters.

Maharashtra Congress moves EC, alleges MCC violations by Gadkari

T N RAGHUNATHA Mumbai

The Maharashtra Congress has demanded cancellation of the nomination of the ruling BJP candidate from Nagpur Lok Sabha constituency Nitin Gadkari for allegedly violating Model Code of Conduct by using Lord Shri Ram's posters to influence voters. In a letter written to State Chief Election Officer (CEO) on Tuesday, Maharashtra Congress chief spokesperson Atul Londe alleged that Mr Gadkari had "utilised" posters featuring Lord Shree Ram in an attempt to influence voters on religious grounds, thereby violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). "Such tactics are not only unethical but also deeply divisive, aiming to polarize voters along religious lines," he stated.

"..the said posters have been used to spread hatred against the Congress party, indicating a clear violation of the MCC's provisions against spreading animosity based on political



affiliations," Londe stated.

"In light of the serious infraction, I urge you to take immediate and decisive action, including the cancellation of Mr. Nitin Gadkari's candidature and the imposition of appropriate penalties on the BJP," Londe wrote in his complaint lodged with the State CEO.

In a statement separately, Londe charged that the Election Commission of India (ECI) "is not taking any action against the ruling BJP" even when its leaders flouted all the rules. "The government machinery has become a puppet of the BJP. from the responsibility," it

Congress, INLD yet to announce candidates for Gurugram seat

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Jannayak Janta Party have fielded their candidates from the Gurugram candidate for the Gurugram seat, while the Opposition parties Congress and Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) are yet to finalize their candidates. Rao Inderjeet Singh will fight from the BJP seat while Haryanvi Singer Rahul Yadav alias Fazzailpuria will fight on the JJP seat. The Gurugram seat comprises nine Assembly segments including Bawal, Rewari, Pataudi, Badshahpur, Gurugram, Sohna, Nuh, Jhirka Ferozepur Punahana.

The constituency is a general seat and not reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The BJP, the Congress and the INLD are the main parties in the constituency.

Rao Inderjit Singh represented the constituency three times in a row in 2009, 2014 and 2019. Political observers said that the

advantage of the early announcement of the candidate.

The Congress should not delay in announcing the party seat, which is set to be a direct contest," said an expert.

The Congress and INLD have a good presence in the segment and the potential to influence the outcome of the election," it added.

Meanwhile, the Congress sources said suggestions are undergoing within the central party leadership, which held a meeting in Delhi recently to finalize their candidates.

The sources revealed that the party leadership discussed the weaknesses and strengths of all the candidates in the meeting. Likewise, The INLD seems to be taking a longer time to finalise its nominee.

As per data from the Election Commission, there are 25,21,332 voters in the Gurugram constituency at present. In the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections, BJP leader Rao

BJP has already taken Inderjit Singh won the seat advantage of the early with a margin of 3,86,256 votes.

He was polled 8,81,546 votes. He defeated Congress Congress candidate Captain Ajay Singh who got 4,95,290 votes. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) candidate Chaudhary Rais Ahmad stood third with 26,756 votes in constituency.

Apart from this, a BJP candidate from Gurugram Lok Sabha seat, Rao Inderjit Singh said that the public mood ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections is in favour of BJP. He said that there is massive support among the farmers and the working class Rao made this statement while

inaugurating his Lok Sabha election office in Sector-15 in Gurugram on Wednesday. "BJP's aim is the development of every section. There has been tremendous development in every sector in the last 10 years under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi," Singh

Only Modi can ensure strong, prosperous Bharat in third term: Fadnavis

PTI ■ GONDIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi should be elected for a third term for a strong and prosperous Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Tuesday as he targeted the opposition over the alleged lack of coordination with the analogy of a train.

Addressing a poll rally, the senior BJP leader said the people have only two choices in this election- either to elect Modi for development or the alliance led by Rahul Gandhi. "Modiji is the power engine of our Mahayuti alliance. There is ample space for people to board this 'Vikas ki train' of Modiji with coaches of Shiv Sena, NCP, RPI and others. Other alliance doesn't have coaches and anv claim (constituents) themselves to be engines but

they lack coordination," he



He said it is up to the people to elect the right government and give a third term to Modi for a strong and prosperous

Bhandara-Gondiya constituency goes to poll in the first phase on April 19. The BJP has fielded sitting MP Sunil Mendhe from this

constituency.
"Modiji is working on the agenda of the welfare of the poor, keeping in mind the interest of all sections of the society. He has dreamt of women's empowerment and there will be 33 per cent representation for women in the state assembly and also in parliament after 2026.

Jai Shri Ram fills air in TMC Ram Navami celebrations

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

 $F^{\text{rom announcing a holiday}}_{\text{on the occasion of Ram}}$ Navami to donning the saffron and staging rallies a la the BJP down the streets of Bengal to chanting Jai Shri Ram slogans the TrinamoolCongress on Wednesday did everything that was required to do two days before the first round of general elections. Two-time MP and TMC's Ghatal candidate Deb was

seen shouting Jai Jai Sri Ram slogans donning saffron attire and leading a massive saffron crowd. When asked whether he had lost faith in Mamata Banerjee's alternative call of Jai Bangla, Deb who is also a Bengali superstar said, "Ram belongs to all and I will not have to take permission from anyone to celebrate the festival of my own God," adding how Baneriee's Government all religions. respected

the

Bengal

holiday on Wednesday on the occasion of Ram Navami. At Howrah Bengal minister Arup Roy, and TMC MP Prasun Banerjee too were seen competing --- rather leaving the BJP behind --- in celebrating the festival insofar as its din and bustle was concerned. Cut to Jadavpur Sayoni

Ghosh the Bangla actor and

TMC candidate too jumped

into the fray celebrating the Lord's birthday with gusto even as her followers wearing saffron attires thronged the streets apparently making it difficult for the right-wingers to distinguish between the two. At Suri in Birbhum too sitting outgoing TMC MP and candidate Shatabdi Roy

their screams of Jai Sri Ram filled the air. Incidentally, Ram Navami had been one of minor

festivals in Bengal with

hit the streets with her own

clan of Ram Bhakts even as

Government had declared a people celebrating it indoors save in the areas where the majority of residents are from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

Not to live far behind the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and other similar saffron groups took out long processions carrying weapons in many places. BJP men were seen dancing with andspears at Balurghat and Rampurhat where the BJP has fielded State party president Sukanta Majumdar and just-retired

IPS officer Debashis Dhar. Senior saffron leader Dilip Ghosh and Suvendu Adhikari celebrated the

festival leading long processions at Durgapur and New Town in Kolkata. When asked to comment on the TMC's taking part in the Ram Navami in a big way, Adhikari said, "there is a

difference between a Bhakti (reverence) and Bhoy (fear) ... what they are doing is out of fear."

On the radar of Bihar's...

Sitamarhi, Madhubani, Saran and Hajipur will go to polls in fifth phase on May 17 the sixth phase will be held in Valmiki Nagar, Paschim Champaran,

Purvi Champaran, Sheohar, Vaishali, Gopalganj, Siwan, and Maharajganj would on May 25. The final phase would see elections in Nalanda, Patna Sahib, Pataliputra, Arrah, Buxar, Sasaram, Karakat, and

BJP attacks Mamata over post linking Ram Navami with disharmony

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

From page 1

The BJP on Wednesday accused West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of linking Ram Navami festival with disharmony, claiming that her comments reflect INDIA

Home Minister Amit Shah,

Defence Minister Rajnath

Singh and several of their

Cabinet colleagues, leaders of the Congress such as Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, and other parties also

canvassed for their candidates. Rahul and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav addressed a joint Press

conference in Ghaziabad on

Wednesday, predicting a loss

for BJP in the Lok Sabha polls.

The Opposition leaders, in

turn, have attacked the

Government over electoral

bonds, alleged misuse of

agencies, inflation and

unemployment among other

issues. The BJP has come out all

guns blazing at the INDIA Bloc

over corruption, dynasty

politics and insulting the

Eight Union Ministers - Nitin

Sarbanada Sonowal, Sanjeev

Baliyan, Jitendra Singh,

Bhupendra Yadav, Arjun Ram

Meghwal and L Murugan, two

former Chief Ministers - Biplab

Kumar Deb (Tripura) and

Nabam Tuki (Arunachal

Soundararajan (Telangana) are

among those in fray. Some

high-profile seats going to polls include Chennai South, Coimbatore, Nagpur,

The first phase will witness a

among

Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Jamui.

and

Kiren

Rijiju,

former Tamilisai

Constitution and Hinduism.

Gadkari,

Pradesh),

Governor

contest

candidates.

for the country's culture. and development for all".
Seizing on her post, BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu

she is linking the festival to conference for the claim that disturbance or disharmony. the INDIA bloc will sweep themselves lack the courage Sabha seats in the national

He also took a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Akhilesh Yadav

Uttar Pradesh in the Lok Sabha polls.

Earlier

Yadav had said "winds of change" are blowing from western Uttar Pradesh and INDIA bloc will have a "clean sweep from Ghaziabad to

announce candidature from Uttar Pradesh but are giving assurances to others, Trivedi

"Everybody knows that 'aayega to Modi hi'," he said, claiming that the BJP-led Sabha, he said.

Sabha seats in the national

elections. While Rahul Gandhi left Uttar Pradesh after losing the poll from Amethi in 2019, her mother Sonia Gandhi, Lok Sabha MP from Raebareli, has gone to Rajya

Surya Tilak for Ram Lalla...

From page 1

The event elicited jubilation across the nation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared in a social media post, "After my Nalbari rally, I witnessed the Surya Tilak on Ram Lalla. Like millions of Indians, this is a deeply emotional moment for me. The grand Ram Navami celebration in Ayodhya is historic. May this Surya Tilak infuse our lives with energy and inspire our nation to scale new heights of glory."

Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath remarked, "Today, Ayodhya shines with divine grace. May this historic moment herald an era of peace, unity, and prosperity for all."

As Vedic chants echoed through the air and the city basked in the golden glow of this celestial occurrence, devotees from far and wide Ram, standing tall at his divine birthplace. The significance of this event resonated deeply with the residents of Ayodhya, who have awaited the construction of the temple at Lord Ram's birthplace for over five centuries. "To witness the April 19 due to the expected sunlight adorning Ram Lalla's crowd.

forehead is nothing short of a miracle," remarked Anjali Verma, a resident of Ayodhya. "It reaffirms our faith and strengthens our connection to Lord Ram," said Verma. In nearby Kanak Bhawan,

women of Ayodhya sang auspicious songs, Śauhar - celebrating the divine moment of birth of Lord Ram.

Meticulous Planning for Rituals: The festivities commenced with Mangala Aarti at 3:30 am on Wednesday, coinciding with Brahma Muhurta. Following this, rituals such as Abhishek, Shringar, and Darshan were seamlessly conducted. Shringar Aarti was held at 5 am, followed by darshan and worship rituals. In preparation for the large gathering, arrangements have been made for prasad distribution post the Shayan Aarti, conveniently located at the temple exit. Pilgrims are revelled in the fulfillment of a cherished dream - a temple dedicated to the revered Lord advised to securely deposit mobile phones, footwear, and other prohibited items before entering the temple premises. Champat Rai further stated that passes for various services, including Sugam Darshan, VIP Darshan, Mangala Aarti, Shringar Aarti, and Shayan Aarti, will not be issued until

bloc leaders' insulting mindset maintain peace implies that over their joint press

Greeting the people on Ram Navami, Banerjee had in a post on X appealed to maintain peace, prosperity Trivedi said her appeal to

In 2019, the UPA had won 45

of these 102 seats and the NDA

41. Six of these seats have been

redrawn as part of the

Polling will be held in all seats of Tamil Nadu (39), Uttarakhand (5), Arunachal

Pradesh (2), Meghalaya (2),

Andaman and Nicobar Islands (1), Mizoram (1), Nagaland (1),

Puducherry (1), Sikkim (1) and

Besides, there will be voting in

12 seats in Rajasthan, 8 in Uttar

Pradesh, 6 in Madhya Pradesh,

5 seats each in Assam and

Maharashtra, 4 in Bihar, 3 in

West Bengal, 2 in Manipur, and

one seat each in Tripura,

Jammu and Kashmir and

In the BJPs 'South-push', Tamil

Nadu BJP president K Annamalai is set to take the

ballot test in Tamil Nadu's

Coimbatore where he is pitted

against DMK leader and

former Coimbatore Mayor

Ganapathy P Rajkumar and

The BJP's decision to field Annamalai prompted the DMK to put up a candidate after 10 years, which would otherwise be left to the Left portion of the decision of the character of the deleter of

parties, owing to the cluster of

textile industries and its

proximity to Kerala. In fact, the

textile industry is what makes

Coimbatore a hope for the BJP.

The seat is more important to

the BJP as it was one of the

party's earliest Lok Sabha seats

delimitation exercise.

Lakshadweep (1).

Chhattisgarh.

AIADMK's

in the State.

Ramachandran.

"This is totally an insult of the festival of Ram Navami," the BJP MP told reporters.

Curtains down on campaign for first phase of LS polls Sarbanada Sonowal, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, is seeking a return to the Lok Sabha from Dibrugarh in Assam. Sonowal, a Rajya Sabha member, was

> Tamilisai Soundararajan, who recently resigned as Governor of Telangana and Lt Governor of Puducherry to return to active politics, is contesting from Chennai South Lok Sabha constituency. Daughter of veteran Congress

leader Kumari Ananthan, Soundararajan had contested 2019 Lok Sabha elections against DMK's Kanimozhi, but lost by a huge margin in Thoothukudi.

Union Road and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari is seeking a hat-trick of wins from the Nagpur seat. In 2014, he had defeated seven-time MP Vilas Muttemwar by a margin of 2.84 lakh votes and retained the seat in 2019 by defeating current Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole by 2.16 lakh

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju is contesting from the Arunachal West seat.

52-year-old has represented the constituency thrice since 2004. Rijiju's main rival is former Chief Minister and present president of Arunachal Pradesh Congress Nabam Tuki.

The hilly Wayanad seat of Kerala, seen as a safe bet for the Congress scion Rahul, might not be that safe after all. The seat which he won by a margin of 4.3 lakh in the 2019 Lok fielded from Dibrugarh after Union Minister of State for Sabha polls, this time would face the Communist Party's Annie Raja and the BJP's Kerala Petroleum and Natural Gas, chief K Surendran, among Rameswar Teli, was not given a

> Muzaffarnagar, known for its intricate caste dynamics, is witnessing a three-cornered electoral battle, with Union Minister Sanjeev Baliyan locked in competition against Samajwadi Party's Harindra Malik and BSP candidate Dara Singh Prajapati. Jitendra Singh, a two-time parliamentarian and a junior Minister in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet, is aiming for a hat-

> trick in Udhampur. Bhupendra Yadav, Union Minister and Rajya Sabha member who replaced sitting MP Balak Nath, is in a contest with sitting Congress MLA Lalit Yadav, who belongs to Matsya region of Alwar district in Rajasthan and enjoys the support of the

community. Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal is pitted against former Congress Minister Govind Ram Meghwl from Bikaner parliamentary seat in Rajasthan.

The Nilgiris Lok Sabha constituency in Tamil Nadu is witnessing one of the keenly watched battles between A Raja, the incumbent DMK MP,

and former Telecom Minister, and L Murugan of the BJP, who is the Union Minister of State for Fisheries. This will be the first time that Murugan, who was elected to the Rajya Sabha from Madhya Pradesh, is contesting from here.

Sivaganga MP Karti Chidambaram is aiming for a re-election from a seat his father won seven times, competing against BJP's T Devanathan Yadav and AIADMK's Xavier Dass. This time, Kanimozhi is seeking reelection from the seat. NDA ally Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) has fielded SDR Vijayaseelan and AIADMK has fielded R Sivasami Velumani from the constituency.

Nakul Nath, son of Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, is seeking re-election Chhindwara. The seat has remained firmly with Kamal Nath, who has won the seat nine times since 1980.

In the 2019 polls, the BJP bagged 28 seats out of the State's 29, but missed out on picking Chhindwara, where Nakul beat the BJP's candidate by 37,536 votes to emerge as the lone Congress MP in the State.

Of the two Lok Sabha constituencies in Tripura, the seat of West Tripura that votes in the first phase on April 19 will see a high-voltage clash between former Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb and state Congress president Ashish

Having won Lok Sabha elections twice since 2014 from Kaliabor constituency in Assam, Gaurav Gogoi, Congress' deputy leader in Lok Sabha and son of former Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, finds himself as the new candidate in neighbouring Jorhat, where BJP's Topon Kumar Gogoi won

in 2019.

Gaurav Gogoi's shift to Jorhat came after the impact of delimitation exercise in his 2019 constituency, Kaliabor. Manipur Law and Education Minister Basanta Kumar Singh is the BJP's nominee for the inner Manipur constituency and is pitted against JNÚ Professor and Congress candidate Bimal Akoijam. Singh, who belongs to the Meiti community, is the son of Thounaojam Ćhaoba Singh who served as the Union Minister of State for sports, youth affairs, culture and food processing in the NDA Government-led by Atal Bihari

The BJP stronghold of Churu, in northern Rajasthan, is readying for an interesting match between BJP candidate Devendra Jhajharia, a twotime Paralympic gold medallist javelin thrower, and Rahul Kaswan from the Congress.

Kaswan is a turncoat who has made the fight for Churu interesting. The two-time left the BJP only in March after he was denied a ticket by the

Congress adopted loot east policy, BJP turned it into Act East policy: Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday slammed the Congress, saying the party had adopted the 'loot' east policy while the BJP had turned it into the 'Act

East' policy.
Addressing a rally here, the Prime Minister said Tripura has witnessed pioneering transformations under the BJP government. Modi said

the birth celebrations of Lord Ram is being held in his own temple in Ayodhya after 500 years.
"The Congress had adopted

the 'loot' east policy while the BJP has turned it into the Act East policy," Modi told an election rally in the Tripura capital.

Modi said his government has decided to construct three crore new houses in India for the poor. "Tripura's people are going to benefit a great deal from it," he added.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated by Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, BJP candidate and former Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb and others during a public meeting ahead of the Lok Sabha elections in Agartala on Wednesday

"After a long wait of 500 years, Ram Lalla is finally in a grand temple in Ayodhya instead of a tent," he added.

The Prime Minister said his government is focusing on enhancing connectivity in the Northeast.

Modi said Rs 3,000 crore will be spent for the facelift of highways in the state.

"Earlier, mobile towers didn't work properly in the state, but now work is on to improve 5G connectivity. It is the Modi government which has reduced mobile bills to around Rs 400-Rs 500 per month. Had the Congress been in power, your mobile bills would have been Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000," he

Taking a dig at the Congress and the CPI(M), the PM said, "The Congress Yuvraj, who is critical over the use of investigative agencies, is now demanding the arrest of Kerala Chief Minister on corruption

JMM leader apologies for making derogatory statement against PM



PTI ■ RANCHI

Senior Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Nazrul Islam on Wednesday apologised for making a derogatory statement against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that his remark was not intended to hurt anvone.

His apology came a day after the state BJP demanded Islam's arrest for the comment that the prime minister "would be buried 400-foot below" in the election, instead of winning 400 seats.

"During a political speech, I was speaking against the prime minister's claim of winning 400 seats. I intended to say that they (BJP-led NDA) would not get 400 seats and they will be out of power," Islam said in a video statement. The JMM central committee

member said, "I am an educated person and a professor. I cannot speak such words against the prime minister. But if, for some reason, my words have accidentally hurt anyone, I sincerely apologise."

He made the remarks against Modi at a public meeting in Sahibganj on Sunday.

The BJP's Sahibganj unit lodged a complaint with the police against Islam on Wednesday.

The JMM said that the party

does not support such remarks by any leader.

within church grounds, educational

institutions were turning into

centres of Communist workers,

people were living in fear and those in power in the state were sleeping

He said that the BJP does politics not to form government, but for nation-

building.

The BJP leader urged the people of Kerala to oust the UDF and LDF from the state if they wanted the

He alleged both fronts show a "dual

character" of fighting with each other in Kerala, but outside it they

'They have harmed Kerala," he

situation to improve.

are campaigning together.

peacefully.

alleged.

Modi and CM Vijayan one and the same: Congress

PTI KANNUR (KERALA)

The political ripples created by the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi are yet to die down in Kerala, with the Congress on Wednesday alleging that the BJP leader and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan were trying to convince people that they were not similar.

But the people of the state are well aware that they are one and the same, the Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly, V D Satheesan, told reporters here in Panur near Kannur. Hitting hard at CM Vijayan, the leader said that for the past one month, he had been constantly criticising the Congress and senior leader Rahul Gandhi without uttering a word against Modi.

Satheesan alleged that the CM was humble and careful even while replying to Modi's allega-tions against the state government during his recent election rallies in Kerala.

"Both the PM and the CM are now speaking to convince the people that they are not the same. But the people of the state know very well that they are one and the same," he said. Vijayan is trying to please the BJP by making allegations against Rahul Gandhi and the Congress, Satheesan alleged. The LoP claimed that there is a wave in favour of the Congress and the UDF in the state and in favour of the INDIA bloc at the national level. He further said the CPI (M) and the BJP won't win even a single seat in Kerala and exuded confidence that the UDF could win all 20 Lok Sabha seg-

ments in the state. Satheesan's statements came in the wake of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address at two election rallies in Kerala on Monday and the replies given by CM Vijavan to the allegations he raised against the CPI (M)-led LDF government. On Tuesday, Vijayan countered all the charges raised by the PM and urged him to self-introspect about the development index of BJP-ruled

Rajnath seeks Congress stand on CPI(M) manifesto

PTI ■ KASARAGOD (KERALA)

 $Senior BJP \ leader \ Rajnath \ Singh \\ on \ Wednesday \ questioned \ the \\ intention \ behind \ the \ CPI(M)'s \ poll$ manifesto promise to dismantle nuclear weapons in the country and demanded to know the stand of the Congress on this issue.

Singh alleged talk of dismantling India's nuclear weapons amounted to playing with national security and that there was a "deep-rooted conspiracy to weaken the country". He accused the Left and the Congress, both allies in the anti-BJP INDIA bloc, of apparently trying to weaken the country.

Speaking at a public meeting in Kasaragod Lok Sabha seat seeking votes for BJP candidate M L Ashwini, Singh demanded that the Congress should clarify its stand on the CPI(M)'s promise in the manifesto to dismantle nuclear weapons as it was the Indira Gandhi government which kicked off the country's nuclear programme in

He said India worked hard to become one of the 11 nuclear power

nations in the world and dismantling its nuclear weapons will weaken the country whose neighbours Pakistan and China are nuclear powers.

The CPI(M) in its manifesto has said there will be "complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons.

During his speech, he also said whoever in India has opposed Lord Ram has faced downfall, which is what has happened to the Congress and CPI(M).

Singh alleged that both the parties, which are allies in the INDIA bloc, do not understand the importance of Lord Ram or the festival of Ram Navami.

"Lord Ram and Indian culture unite the country from the south to the north. Lord Ram is our God and our cultural icon. But the Congress and the CPI(M) do not understand that. They have created hurdles in celebration of Ram Navami.

We all know that, in our nation's history, whosoever has ever opposed Lord Ram faced downfall in the



country. That is what has happened to Congress and the CPI(M)," he alleged.

Singh claimed that the Congress was opposed to the building the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and "today look at its condition in the country." The Left parties are there only in a

few pockets in India," he added. He also claimed there was no difference in words and deeds of the BIP which was the most credible and trustworthy political party in the However, the words and deeds of the Congress and Communist parties were different and therefore, it resulted in a "crisis of credibility" in Indian politics, Singh claimed.

He said this crisis was taken as a challenge by the BJP which has followed through on its poll promises made in the past.

Singh said the NDA government has followed through with its past promises to abrogate Article 370, do away with triple talaq and build the Ram Temple during its 10-year rule. He said that if the BJP is voted to power again, then all of Modi's guarantees — of India becoming a top world economy, welfare of farmers, making huge strides in the space sector and the development of the nation — would be fulfilled.

"We are also committed to implementing the Uniform Civil Code in the next five years," he asserted.

asserted.

Singh also raked up the Karuvannur Cooperative bank scam and the allegations of receipt of monthly payments by Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan's daughter and her firm from a private company, to attack the Left government and promised an unbiased probe into both matters. The BJP leader also reached out to rubber farmers and the Christian

community in the state. He said the UDF and LDF will not do anything to resolve the problems being faced by rubber farmers in the

state "Only the BJP will be able to help the

rubber farmers," he said. Singh alleged that the law and order situation was in shambles in the state as a Christian priest was attacked

Singh also said that both the Congress and the Left have a backward and outdated thinking, while the people of Kerala are forward-thinking and progressive. Singh also expressed confidence that

the BJP will win seats in double digits from Kerala in the Lok Sabha polls. The Lok Sabha elections will be held

in Kerala on April 26 and the results

absence of Azam Khan

PTI ■ RAMPUR (UP)

A subdued atmosphere atmosphere the dispersion atmosphere atmosphe election campaign in Rampur, which has over close to five decades become used to electrifying speeches by Azam Khan, a Samajwadi Party leader who has been removed from the fray because of his imprisonment. After almost five decades, Lok Sabha elections are going to be held in the complete absence of Rampur's 'Khan,' who held the sway over its voters all these years.

Famous for its cultural and historical heritage, Rampur was the political stronghold of the Nawabs in the early decades after Independence. After that, the political rise of Azam Khan in the 80s eclipsed all his rivals ever since.

Khan, who had a stronghold on the politics of Rampur from 1978 to 2022, is currently serving seven years of imprisonment in the case of a fake birth certificate of his son Abdullah Azam.

Sardar Manmohan Singh, who runs a medicine business in Rampur Sadar area, said, This time the enthusiasm of election is missing in Rampur. The biggest reason for this is that a charismatic leader like Azam Khan is in iail. We remember Khan Saheb's electrifying speeches." SP has fielded Imam Mohibullah Nadvi, a cleric of a mosque located on Parliament Street in Delhi, as its candidate.

An SP leader supporting Khan said the party decision made little sense to him and he would have preferred the party fielded someone close

to Khan.
"I do not understand why party president Akhilesh Yadav chose Mohibullah Nadvi as the candidate. When Akhilesh ji met Khan Saheb in jail last month, I thought



that a representative of Khan Saheb would be given the ticket from Rampur. I could not understand what happened after that," the person said.

Khan's absence has sent his supporters, somewhat, in a mood of apathy. Many have distanced themselves from Nadvi's election campaign. Khan's close aide Asim Raja had filed nomination calling himself a SP candidate despite the party giving ticket to Mohibullah Nadvi. His nomination was rejected after scrutiny.

Khan has been an MLA from Rampur Sadar seat 10 times and an MP from Rampur Lok Sabha seat once.

He reached the Assembly for the first time in June 1980 from Rampur on Janata Party (Secular) ticket. He was elected MP from

Rampur seat in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. He last won an MLA election in 2022 from Rampur Sadar, but had to vacate the seat

after being sentenced by the court. The void he left behind has undermined any talk about issues such as inflation or

unemployment. Faizan, a businessman from Suar area under the Rampur

defeating Modi or making him win. Generally, the Muslim community here votes for Azam Khan's cycle (SP's election symbol). But this time the handle of the cycle is in the hands of someone else. I Don't know what will happen this time."
Madan Lal, who runs a paan shop in Suar, said, "Inflation and unemployment are not an issue for the people here. They are the same today as they were before. Any leader, be it BJP or SP, never comes

even to peep after winning the election." Vedram, a native of Donkri Tanda village of Chamraua assembly, said, "Along with the Muslims here, Hindus have also been voting for Azam Khan. There is no way of telling where the voters will go this time."

BJP has fielded Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi, its sitting MP from Rampur, who defeated SP's Asim Raja in a byelection in 2022.

Lodhi said Rampur got freedom from the clutches of Azam Khan and is now moving on the path of development.

He said he is determined for the progress of Rampur Lok Sabha constituency, which has been deprived of Lok Sabha constituency, said, development for decades. "The issue here is only about SP's Nadvi, who has been fielded under a pact with the opposition's Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), is confident of his victory.

Nadvi, a resident of Swar in the district, says he has got a chance to make it his political workplace after a long time. Nadvi claimed that being the candidate of INDIA bloc, he is getting the support of SP, as well as Congress, voters and he is hopeful that with everyone's support he will

Other major candidates contesting from the seat are Bahujan Samaj Party's Zeeshan Khan and senior advocate Mahmood Pracha, an Independent candidate, who has challenged the use of electronic voting machines in the court.

There are approximately 17.31 lakh voters in Rampur

Lok Sabha constituency. According to the latest figures, about 50.10 per cent of these are Muslims and 49.90 per cent are non-Muslims. Sheikh, Ansari and Pasmanda Muslims constitute 27 per cent of the Muslim

Apart from this, Turks are 9.5 per cent, Pathans are nine per cent and others are 4.5 per

Among Hindu voters, Dalit and Saini voters constitute nine per cent each, Lodhs eight per cent, Thakurs five per cent, Yadavs and per cent, Yadavs and Brahmins four per cent each, Sikhs three percent and Jains and Christians a total of 0.5 per cent.

Voting for Rampur seat will be held in the first phase of Lok Sabha elections on April

Rampur Lok Sabha constituency has five assembly constituencies, out of which Bilaspur, Rampur Sadar and Milak seats are held by BJP and Suar Tanda seat is held by BJP's ally Apna Dal (Sonelal).

ds for elections People of State will not believe Modi poll promises: Kerala CM Vijayan

PTI ■ PALAKKAD (KERALA)

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday said that the people of the state won't believe the heap of promises showered upon them by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the recent election rallies. He accused the BIP government at the

Centre of implementing RSS' agenda in the country and also hit out at the Congress for remaining silent on the controversial CAA in its manifesto. "People may be cheated once, but not repeatedly," he said while addressing an election meeting in Pattambi in Palakkad. 'Narendra Modi came here (to Kerala)

and showered several promises. But will any person ever believe this? They may be cheated once, but not repeatedly," Vijayan The Left veteran said the Modi government had come to power for the first time in 2014 following the discontent and anti-incumbency prevailing in the country against the then Congress-led

UPA II government. "Modi and the BJP had then showered several promises before the people of the country who were unhappy under the UPA rule," he alleged.



charged.
But the BJP had continued to implement

Congress's financial policies, and the people of the country realised it, he added. Vijayan accused the BJP government of implementing the RSS agenda in the country and said the CAA was part of this.

However, the Left parties clearly said in their election manifesto that the CAA wouldn't be implemented in the country.

As the people had been fed up with the UPA rule, they believed the promises of BJP and voted it to power, the CM further

The Left veteran also charged that the saffron party's attempt was to turn India into a religious nation.

Criticising the Congress party over the CAA, he alleged that it was maintaining silence about the controversial law in its election manifesto.

Minorities not with us a myth spread by Congress: BJP leader

 $\label{eq:bounds} B^{\text{JP's}}_{\text{Ashish Sood has claimed}} \\ \text{the opposition Congress is}$ spreading a myth that members of the minority community are not supporting

the saffron party. The BJP government has implemented all policies and schemes without any discrimination, Sood told PTI

on Tuesday.

"A myth is being spread that members of the minority community are not with the BJP. The Congress has continued with this myth for the appeasement of minorities. When the BJP was formed, we



started with a policy of appeasement to none and

justice to all," he said. "You show me ten people in any district, who claim that they faced discrimination by

the government because they Congress are "nothing but belong to the minority desperation to save itself from belong to the minority community," he said.

The BJP government has implemented all the schemes without any discrimination, Sood asserted.

"You will not find any minority community member who will say that they were entitled for a scheme but did not receive its benefits," he said.

Talking about Goa, Sood said the Congress, which faced difficulties in finalising its candidates, is alleging that BJP nominee Pallavi Dempo (from South Goa Lok Sabha seat) was selected by denying ticket to the local party cadres.

the evident defeat in the Lok Sabha election," he said. The aim of the BJP is not only to win the election but to create

a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed

nation), he said.

"We, in the BJP, are mad (committed) to serve our country, die for our country. Our cadre does not look at who is given the ticket. The cadre is concentrating on how 'Viksit Bharat' will be created, how our borders will remain secure, how the strength of our flag is increased. National security, national integration are the major causes for us to Such allegations by the work for the party," Sood said.

Israel 'making decision to act' as Iran vows to respond

AP JERUSALEM

British Foreign Secretary
David Cameron said
Wednesday that Israel "is making a decision to act" in response to Iran's missile and drone attack over the weekend, while Iran warned that even the "tiniest" invasion of its territory would bring a "massive and harsh" response.

srael has vowed to respond to Iran's unprecedented attack without saying when or how, leaving the region bracing for further escalation after months of unrest linked to the ongoing war in Gaza. Israel's closest allies, including the United States and the United Kingdom — which helped it repel the Iranian attack — are trying to limit any further escalation.

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi meanwhile warned Israel against any retaliation as he addressed an annual army parade, which had been relocated to a barracks from its usual route and was not carried live on state TV — possibly because of fears that it could be targeted.



Palestinians search for survivors after an Israeli airstrike on a residential building of the abo al Hanood family after an Israeli airstrike in Rafah refugee camp, southern

In remarks carried by Iran's official IRNA news agency, Raisi said Saturday's attack was a limited one, and that if Iran had wanted to carry out a bigger attack, "nothing would remain from the Zionist regime."

Adding to the already high tensions, a rocket attack by Lebanon's Hezbollah on a northern Israeli border town on Wednesday wounded 13 people, four of them seriously, according to the Israeli rescue service

Magen David Adom. The Iranbacked militant group said it was a response to the killing of a number of its fighters, including a commander, in Israeli strikes on Lebanon the day

Both Cameron and Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock were in Israel on separate visits to meet with top offi-cials on Wednesday. The two European countries, which are among Israel's closest allies, have urged restraint.

Cameron said "it's clear the Israelis are making a decision to act" against Iran, but he hoped they would do so "in a way that is smart as well as tough and also does as little as possible to escalate this conflict." He spoke after meeting with Israel's President Isaac Herzog, whose office is mainly ceremonial. Cameron said the main aim of his visit was to refocus attention on the ongoing war in Gaza and the need for a cease-fire and the release of hostages held by

Baerbock said Germany stands "in full solidarity with Israel" but

called on it to exercise restraint. called on it to exercise restraint.
"Everyone must now act prudently and responsibly. I'm not talking about giving in. I'm talking about prudent restraint, which is nothing less than strength," she told reporters.
"Because Israel has already shown strength with its defensive victory at the weekend."

The ministers said they would The ministers said they would push for further international sanctions on Iran.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he met with both ministers and thanked them for their countries' sup-

They have all sorts of suggestions and advice. I appreciate that. But I want to be clear: Our decisions we will make ourselves, and the state of Israel will do whatever it needs to defend itself," Netanyahu said in a statement. Iran launched hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel over the weekend in response to an apparent Israeli strike on Iran's embassy compound in Syria on April 1 that killed 12 people, including two

Sunak tells Netanyahu to exercise restraint in wake of Iran attack

 $B^{\text{ritish Prime Minister Rishi}}_{\text{Sunak has called on his}}$ Israeli counterpart BenjaminNetanyahu to exercise restraint and let "calm heads" prevail in the wake of Iran's missile attacks as his Foreign Secretary David Cameron landed in Tel Aviv for talks on Wednesday.On a phone call, Sunak reiterated the UK's

"steadfast support" for regional stability and told the Israeli leader that Iran had miscalculated its move, being isolated on the global stage as a result. Netanyahu is said to have thanked Britain for its "rapid and robust" support in the face of Iran's unprecedented direct attack on Israel on Saturday. "The Prime Minister [Sunak] said Iran had badly miscalculated and was increasingly

isolated on the global stage, with the G7 coordinating a diplomatic response," Downing Street said in a read-out of the call on Tuesday evening.

"He stressed that significant escalation was in no one's interest and would only deepen insecurity in the Middle East. This was a moment for calm heads to prevail," the statement said.

On the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza, Sunak told Netanyahu that he remained gravely concerned about the deepening humanitarian crisis.
"The UK wanted to see a massive step change in aid access to flood Gaza with vital supplies, including Israel opening up new aid routes as quickly as possible. The Prime Minister said it was deeply dis-appointing that Hamas blocked a deal at the weekend that would have saved Palestinian lives and secured the safe release of hostages," Downing Street added. The call will form the backdrop for Cameron's discussions in Israel, where he is expected to meet Netanyahu and senior Israeli officials and attempt to talk the country out of retaliating to Iran's assault.

The visit will include meetings in the occupied West Bank, after which Cameron will travel to a gathering of Group of Seven (G7) ministers in Italy to discuss further sanctions on

The UK has condemned Iran's "reckless and dangerous escalation" in the region and called on all sides to show restraint after Tehran's "barrage of 300 missiles and drones" targeted

With calls for sanctions on Iran, Italy seeks G7 message of restraint as mins meet

AP ■ ROME

 $G^{\text{roup of Seven foreign}}_{\text{ministers are meeting on the Italian resort island of}}$ Capri, with calls for new sanctions against Iran over its attack against Israel and more aid to Ukraine to fight Russia's war topping the agenda. Under Italy's rotating stewardship, the G7 leaders are expected to issue a united call for Israel to exercise restraint after Iran's unprecedented weekend attack involving hundreds of drones, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles fired toward the Jewish

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said he had spoken to his Israeli counterpart, Israel Katz, on Tuesday and urged Israel to not only deescalate any reaction to Iran's attack but to stave off a planned offensive into the southern Gaza city of Rafah. "I reiterated this message and

I believe that on the occasion of the G7 foreign ministers in Capri, tomorrow and Friday morning, a similar message will be sent," Tajani told state-

run RAI. With Israel's war in Gaza in its sixth month, Tehran's attack added a new element of urgency to the three-day meeting of foreign ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock called for new sanctions against Tehran and was making a last-minute visit to Israel before arriving on Capri later Wednesday.

"We will discuss how a further escalation with more and more violence can be prevented," she said. "Because what matters now is to put a stop to Iran without encouraging further escalation." Germany, a staunch ally of Israel, has been among the chorus of European and US leaders urging Israel to de-escalate tensions and not retaliate for Tehran's attack, which was largely repelled thanks to US and allied help. British Foreign Secretary

David Cameron said he would push for "coordinated sanctions against Iran" at the meeting. He argued that Tehran was orchestrating "so much of the malign activity in this region" from Hamas in Gaza, to Hezbollah in southern Lebanon to the Houthi rebels in Yemen who are behind attacks on shipping in the Red

> "They need to be given a clear and unequivocal message by the G-7 and I hope that will happen," Cameron told broadcasters during a visit to Israel. Russia's two-year war in Ukraine is also high on the agenda, with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg invited to the Capri meeting on Thursday as guests. Kuleba is expected to repeat his country's need for essential military support, including artillery, ammunition, and air defense systems to bolster its capacity as Russia pushes along the

Russian missiles slam into Ukraine killing 14

Three Russian missiles slammed into a downtown area of the northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv on Wednesday, hitting an eight-floor apartment building and killing at least 14 people, authorities said.

At least 61 people, including two children, were wounded in the morning attack, Ukrainian emergency services said. Chernihiv lies about 150 kilometres (90 miles) north of the capital, Kyiv, near the border with Russia and Belarus, and has a population of around 250,000 people.

The latest Russian bombardment came as the war stretched

into its third year and approached what could be a critical juncture as a lack of further military support from Ukraine's Western partners increasingly leaves it at the mercy of the Kremlin's bigger

Through the winter months, Russia made no dramatic advance along the 1,000-kilometre (620-mile) front line, focusing instead on attritional

warfare. However, Ukraine's shortage of artillery ammunition, troops and armoured vehicles has allowed the Russians to gradually push for-

ward, military analysts say. A crucial element for Ukraine A crucial element for Ukraine is the holdup in Washington of approval for an aid package that includes roughly USD 60 billion for Ukraine. House Speaker Mike Johnson said Sunday that he would try to move the package of the package age forward this week.

Ukraine's need is now acute, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washingtonbased think tank.

'The Russians are breaking out of positional warfare and beginning to restore maneuver to the

battlefield because of the delays in the provision of U.S. military assistance to Ukraine," the ISW said in an assessment late Tuesday.

"Ukraine cannot hold the present lines now without the rapid resumption of US assistance, particularly air defense and artillery that only the U.S. can provide rapidly and at scale," it said. Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy has pleaded with Western countries to provide his country with more air defense equipment, including more surface-to-air Patriot guided missile systems. He said the Chernihiv strike "would not have happened if

air defense equipment and if the world's determination to counter Russian terror was also sufficient." Zelenskyy told PBS in an inter-view broadcast earlier this week

that Ukraine recently ran out of air defense missiles while it was air detense missiles while it was defending against a major missile and drone attack that destroyed one of Ukraine's largest power plants, part of a recent Russian campaign targeting energy infrastructure.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba repeated Zelenskyy's appeal for more help as he prepared to attend a Group of Seven foreign ministers' meeting in Italy. We need at least seven more

Patriot batteries to protect our cities and economic centers from destruction," Kuleba told German daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung in an interview published Wednesday. "Why is it so difficult to find seven Patriot batteries?'

Ukrainian forces are digging in, building fortifications in anticipation of a major Russian offensive that Kyiv officials say could come as early as next Ukraine is using long-range drone and missile strikes behind Russian lines which are designed to disrupt Moscow's

war machine. Russia's defence ministry said Wednesday that a Ukrainian drone was shot down over the Tatarstan region early Wednesday. That's the same area that was targeted in early April by Ukraine's deepest strike so far inside Russia, about 1,200 kilometres (745 miles) east of Ukraine.

Ukrainian drone developers have been extending the

weapons' range. Another Ukrainian drone was shot down over the Mordovia region, roughly 350 kilometers (220 miles) east of Moscow, the ministry said. That is 700 kilometers (430

miles) from the Ukrainian bor-

About an hour before that Mordovia attack, Russia's civil aviation authority halted flights at airports in two of the country's largest cities, Nizhny Novgorod and Tatarstan's Kazan, because of safety con-

Leaked graft report sparks conntroversy against Muizzu

Male (PTI): Ahead of the par-liamentary polls in the Maldives, the opposition par-ties have demanded a probe and impeachment of President Mohamed Muizzu following the leaked report of his alleged corruption from 2018, a charge dismissed by him.

Elections to the Majlis are to be held on Sunday and the atmosphere has been vitiated by the trading of charges between the main opposition the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and the Muizzu's People's National Congress (PNC).

Local media reports have high-lighted that the political storm started on Monday with an anonymous handle 'Hassan Kurusee' posting on social media X leaked intelligence reports, including documents prepared by the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of the Maldives Monetary Authority and the Maldives Police Service that allegedly linked President Muizzu to corruption. "These reports, dated circa 2018, claim irregularities in money transfers to President Muizzu's personal bank account, highlighting 10 critical red flag indicators of financial misconduct. These indicators suggest involvement with politically exposed persons, embezzlement, structured transactions, and the use of corporate entities to hide fund origins," news portal Maldives Republic (mvrepublic.com) reported. The allegations soon created a political storm with several reactions pouring in on various social media channels. News portals and newspapers, how-ever, tread with caution. The opposition Maldivian opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and People's National Front (PNF) demanded an investigation into the matter. Former Vice President Dr Mohamed Jameel Ahmed urged Muizzu's impeachment following the leaked intelligence reports. Taking to his social media

handle X, Jameel reposted these documents, emphasising the

Suu Kyi moved from prison to house arrest

Myanmar's jailed former leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been moved from prison to house arrest as a health measure due to a heat wave, the military government said as it freed more than 3,000 prisoners under an amnesty to mark this week's traditional New Year holiday.

Suu Kyi, 78, and Win Myint, the 72-year-old former president of her ousted government, were among the elderly and infirm prisoners moved to house arrest because of the severe heat, military spokesperson Maj Gen General Zaw Min Tun told foreign media representatives late Tuesday.

The move has not yet been publicly announced in Myanmar. Suu Kyi's transfer comes as the army has been suffering a string of major defeats at the hands of pro-democracy resistance fighters and their allies in ethnic minority guerrilla forces. The nationwide conflict began after the army ousted the elected government in February 2021, imprisoned Suu Kyi and began suppressing nonviolent protests



that sought a return to democratic rule.

Suu Kyi has been serving a 27year prison term on a variety of criminal convictions in a specially built annex of the main prison in the capital Naypyitaw, where Myanmar's meteorological department said temperatures reached 39 degrees Celsius (102.2 degrees Fahrenheit) on

Tuesday afternoon. Win Myint was serving an eight-year prison sentence in Taungoo in Myanmar's Bago

Suu Kyi's supporters and independent analysts say the charges were fabricated in an attempt to discredit her and legitimize the Party used widespread electoral fraud to win a landslide victory in the 2020 general election, an allegation independent observers found unconvinc-

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, an independent group that monitors casualties and arrests, more than 20,351 people arrested on political charges since the 2021 army takeover are still in detention, most of whom have not received criminal convictions. Suu Kyi's health has reportedly deteriorated in prison. In September last year, reports emerged that she was suffering from symptoms of low blood pressure including dizziness and loss of appetite, but had been denied treatment at qualified facilities outside the prison

Those reports could not be independently confirmed, but her younger son Kim Aris said in interviews that he had heard that his mother has been extremely ill and has been suf-

military's seizure of power. The military had claimed that her was unable to eat. Aris, who military safe house inside an eague for Democracy lives in the UK, urged that army base. Myanmar's military govern-ment be pressured to free his mother and other political pris-

News about Suu Kyi is tightly controlled by the military government, and even her lawyers are banned by a gag order from talking to the media about her cases. Her legal team has faced several hurdles, including being unable to meet with her to receive her instructions since they last saw her in person in December 2022.

Whether the latest move was meant to be temporary was not

announced. Spokesperson Zaw Min Tun did not say where the released prisoners were being moved to in his remarks to US-government funded Voice of America and Britain's BBC, but there was no indication it might be one of her own former homes. The lakeside house where Suu Kyi spent most of her years in house arrest is in legal limbo after a court-ordered auction in March

failed to find a buyer. Before being sent to prison, Suu

Other prisoners were released for the Thingyan New Year hol-iday, state-run MRTV television announced Wednesday, but it wasn't immediately clear how many were pro-democracy activists and political prisoners who were detained for protesting army rule. Aung Myo Kyaw of the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners said the group had heard of 7-10 people released in Yangon and nine from a prison in the central regions of Magway. MRTV said that the head of the ruling military council, Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, had pardoned 3,303 prisoners, including 28 foreigners who will be deported from Myanmar. He also reduced sentences for others. Mass amnesties on the holiday are not unusual in

Myanmar. Myanmar.
Family and friends gathered outside the gates of Insein Prison, in northern Yangon, waiting expectantly and scanning the windows of buses that brought the released detainees

out of the vast complex.

Biden seeking higher tariffs on Chinese steel

AP ■ SCRANTON

President Joe Biden is calling for a tripling of tariffs on steel from China to protect American producers from a flood of cheap imports, an announcement he planned to roll out on Wednesday in an address to steelworkers in the battleground state of Pennsylvania.

The move reflects the intersection of Biden's international trade policy with his efforts to court voters in a state that is likely to play a pivotal role in deciding November's election. The White House insists, how-

ever, that it is more about shielding American manufacturing from unfair trade practices overseas than firing up a union audience.

In addition to boosting steel tariffs, Biden also will seek to triple levies on Chinese aluminum. The current rate is 7.5 per cent for both metals. The administration also promised to pursue anti-dumping investigations against countries and importers that try to saturate existing markets with Chinese steel, and said it was working with Mexico to ensure that Chinese companies can't circumvent the tariffs by shipping steel there for subsequent export to the US.

The president understands we must invest in American manufacturing. But we also have to protect those investments and those workers from unfair exports associated with China's industrial overcapacity," White House National Economic Adviser Lael Brainard said on a

call with reporters. Biden was set to announce that he is asking the US Trade Representative to consider tripling the tariffs during a visit to United Steelworkers union headquarters in Pittsburgh. The president is on a three-day Pennsylvania swing that began in Scranton on Tuesday and will include a visit to Philadelphia on Thursday. The administration says China is distorting markets



and eroding competition by unfairly flooding the market with below-market-cost steel. "China's policy-driven overca-pacity poses a serious risk to the future of the American steel and aluminum industry," Brainard said. Referencing China's economic downturn, she added that Beijing "cannot export its way to recovery".

"China is simply too big to play by its own rules," Brainard said. Higher tariffs can carry major economic risks. Steel and aluminum could become more expensive, possibly increasing the costs of cars, construction materials and other key goods for US consumers. Inflation has already been a

drag on Biden's political fortunes, and his turn toward protectionism echoes the playbook of his predecessor and opponent in this fall's election, Donald Trump. The former president imposed broader tariffs on Chinese goods

during his administration, and has threatened to increase levies on Chinese goods unless they trade on his preferred terms as he campaigns for a second term. An outside analysis by the consultancy Oxford Economics has suggested that implementing the tariffs Trump has proposed could hurt the overall US economy. Senior Biden administration officials said that, unlike the Trump administration, they were seeking a "strategic and bal-anced" approach to new tariff rates. China produces around half of the world's steel, and is already making far more than its domestic market needs.

'IS detainees in Syria subjected to widespread abuse' sentatives of the local adminis-

Amnesty International said on Wednesday it has documented widespread abuses, including torture and deprivation of medical care, in deten-tion facilities holding thousands of suspected Islamic State members and their relatives in

northeast Syria.

The centers and camps hold about 56,000 people — the majority of them children and teens — and are run by local authorities affiliated with the US-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces. The SDF and its allies, including US-led coalition forces, defeated the Islamic State group in Syria in 2019, ending its self-proclaimed Islamic "caliphate" that had ruled over a large swath of territory straddling Iraq and Syria. What to do with the suspected IS fighters and their families has become an intractable issue.



Many countries whose citizens travelled to Syria to join IS have been reluctant to repatriate them, as have local communities in Syria.

'People held in this system are facing large-scale violations of their rights, some of which amount to war crimes," Nicolette Waldman, Amnesty's senior crisis advisor, told journalists.

The United States is also

responsible for the alleged violations because it played a key role in establishing and mainrole in establishing and maintaining the detention system, providing hundreds of millions of dollars to the SDF and affiliated forces and regularly interrogating detainees, Waldman said.

The human rights group interviewed 126 people accused of IS affiliation currently or formerly detained, along with repre-

The Amnesty report said the vast majority of detainees are being held "indefinitely, without charge or trial, in violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law," while those who have been tried were, in many cases, convicted on the basis of confessions extracted under torture. The alleged abuses include "beating, stress positions, drowning, electric shocks and gender-based violence," including a male detainee who said he and others had been sodomized with broomsticks by guards, the report said. Detainees were also deprived of food, water and medical care and subjected to extreme cold and heat in overcrowded cells,

tration and aid workers.

suffocation, it said. The report added that many of the approximately 14,500

with some allegedly dying of

women and 30,000 children held had been victims of human trafficking, including women who were forced to marry IS fighters and minors who were forcibly recruited by the group, and that local authorities had failed to set up a "mechanism to identify trafficking victims" and protect them. The report also criticised the

practice of forcibly separating adolescent boys — some as young as 11 or 12 — from their mothers and placing them in rehabilitation centers indefi-

Amnesty called on local authorities, the US government and other allies to bring the detention system into compliance with international law and urged the United Nations to work with them to establish a screening process to release all who are not "reasonably suspected" of having committed a



Manika, Sreeja make group stage exits from ITTF World Cup

Star Indian table tennis player Manika Batra and her compatriot Sreeja Akula exited in the secondagainst China's Wang Manyu and defending champion

Chen Meng respectively at the ITTF World Cup in Galaxy Manika Arena in Macau on finishing Arena in Wednesday. World no. 39 Sreeja lost 1-3 (4-

11 4-11 15-13 2-11) to and world no. 4 Meng of first-round group China and finished second in matches on Tuesday.

Manika also made an exit

finishing second after losing 0-4 (6-11 4-11 9-11 4-11) against world no. 2 Manyu of China. Both the Indian players had round group stage after losing reigning Olympic champion earlier won their respective

each of the men's and women's singles competition.

Group stage matches consists of four games, with the ratio of wins and losses determining the final rankings that will further help them to book a berth for the knockout rounds. In our weekly schedule.

Every practice, drill will count from now on: Harmanpreet

PTI NEW DELHI

Tndian men's hockey team Acaptain Harmanpreet Singh on Wednesday said with 100 days left for the Paris Olympics, every day, every practice and every drill will count towards building momentum to shine at the biggest sporting stage.
Last edition's bronze medallist

India are currently placed sixth in the world, but Harmanpreet said they are hungry to improve upon their Tokyo result in Paris.

The star drag-flicker's comments came following India's dismal show in the recent tour of Australia, where they were whitewashed 0-5 by the hosts.

'We just returned from the intense Australia tour. After a short break, we will hit the grind again. With only 100 days to go until the Paris Olympics, the excitement in the team is growing," Harmanpreet said in a Hockey India release.

"The unity of our team continues to grow, fuelled by our shared goal to clinch the gold medal. Craig Fulton, our chief coach, keeps us on track "Every day counts, every practice, every drill — it's all about building towards that moment on the Olympic stage. "The All in all, we're hungry, we're

India qualified for the Paris Olympics by winning gold medal in last year's Hangzhou

focused, and we're ready to

shine," he added.

Asian Games. India vice-captain Hardik

Singh said the need of the hour of the 100 remaining days to is to iron out the grey areas make sure that our pursuit for before the Paris Games. the gold medal at the Olympics

is successful," he added. Australia highlighted the areas that we In Paris Olympics, India are clubbed alongside defending need to improve, and upon our return to camp, we aim to make sure that we iron out any champions Belgium, Australia, Argentina, New Zealand and remaining issues well in time for the Paris 2024 Olympics," Ireland in Pool B.

India will play their opener against New Zealand on July 27.

"We will give our best on each

AP ■ AUSTIN (TEXAS)

new American team with ties to Anew American comments, a new television deal in the United States and upcoming American

ownership.
MotoGP, global motorcycle racing's wersion of Formula 1, looks primed for a bid to copy F1's explosive growth in recent years and bring a new group of fans - notably from the US - to the thrills of two-wheeled speed.

"It has what Americans really crave or demand out of their sports: A combination of physical ability and danger," said Bobby Epstein, president of the Texas race-track Circuit of the Americas, which hosts MotoGP's only race in the US. Liberty Media's purchase of Spainbased Dorna and the commercial rights to MotoGP by the end of the year has fueled speculation of what might come for a racing series anchored largely in Europe.

Formula 1 to the maximum peak we've ever seen." said Italy's

Francesco Bagnaia, the 2022 and

Liberty took over Formula 1 in 2017 and has overseen its rise in popularity, with an expanded calendar, new races in Las Vegas and Miami, and the slick Netflix

Liberty has yet to reveal specific plans for MotoGP. But, President

MotoGP already has two key elements for growing its American audience: Trackhouse Racing's move into the series this season and its potential crossover appeal to NASCAR fans; and a broadcast deal with TNT Sports to carry every "They know what to do, they raise sprint race and grand prix live

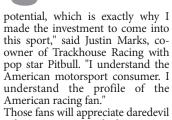
2023 MotoGP champion with Ducati. "It will be a great opportunity for MotoGP."

docu-series "Drive to Survive."

and Chief Executive Greg Maffei called the series "a great sporting spectacle that we can expand to a wider global audience. The business has significant upside, and we intend to grow the sport for MotoGP fans, teams, commercial partners and our shareholders."

across the network's platforms.

"I see a tremendous amount



riders racing at speeds that can top 200 mph (321 kph), and short races that typically finish in under an hour, Marks said. Trackhouse is already trying to lure its NASCAR fans into giving

MotoGP a look. Trackhouse NASCAR drivers Ross Chastain and Daniel Suarez were in

the MotoGP paddock at the Grand Prix of the Americas last week before their race on Sunday. Earlier in the week, Trackhouse MotoGP riders Miguel Oliveira and Raul Fernandez visited the team's NASCAR headquarters in North

Carolina. All of it was crosspromoted across team social media accounts. "It's our one time to race on

American soil I spent a lot of time

talking to fans who walked up and shook my hand and just said, Thanks for doing what you are doing and investing in motorcycle racing," Marks said.

American fans will look for an American rider. They won't find one - vet.

No American has held a full-time ride in MotoGP since 2015. No



dominates development at all levels. Of the 22 riders this season, 16 are from Spain, including Fernandez, or Italy.

Oliveira is Portuguese. Ioe Roberts, who raOnlyfans American Racing team, is the only American rider at the Moto2 level.

he said.

"An American rider at the top level of GP competing for wins is the absolute best-case scenario. It's just going to get take a while to get there. Hopefully, Trackhouse can help curate that American talent," Marks said.

The Liberty takeover announcement noted that Dorna would remain an "independently run company" that will remain based in Madrid. Carlos Ezpeleta, Dorna's chief sporting officer, last week downplayed the prospect of major changes in the immediate future. The series had already added F1-style sprint races and expanded its calendar to 22 races.

"Liberty does not think that the sport needs fixing, and we agree with that," Ezpeleta said.

MotoGP had three races in the US in 2013. By 2016, it was down to one. The Circuit of the Americas has hosted the series for a decade. Race sites are mostly set through

Epstein said adding a new US race too soon would only dilute attendance at his race and a new one. Marks would like to see MotoGP follow the F1 model of expanding into new American markets with international appeal and flavour, such as Southern California or Miami. Marks chose Los Angeles as the site to unveil the Trackhouse team and liveries back in January.

Friends Vince Chu, 59, and Russ Smith, 69, of Las Vegas made their first trip to the race in Austin last week. They were decked out in Ducati gear as they roamed the "Ducati Island" fan zone.

Both said they hope MotoGP will draw new fans and welcomed the idea of more races, particularly on the West Coast. But, they also had a message for Liberty and any idea about expansion: MotoGP fans expect their series to remain affordable.

"I'm a Formula 1 fan, I'm from Las Vegas, and I couldn't go to the race in Vegas. (Cost) was outrageous," Chu said



Former world champion runner Jeruto faces doping case

Former steeplechase world champion Norah Jeruto faces a doping case hearing in Iune, five weeks before the Paris Olympics open.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport said Wednesday it will hear an appeal by World Athletics on June 17 against a ruling last year that cleared the 2022 world champion of suspected blood doping.
Jeruto had argued that ulcers

and a bout of COVID-19 could explain her blood test results in 2020 and 2021 which were later judged to be irregular. She did not test positive for a banned substance.

The Kenya-born Jeruto competed for Kazakhstan when she won gold in the 3,000-meter steeplechase at the worlds in Eugene, Oregon, but could not defend her title last year as she was suspended

during an investigation. The Athletics Integrity Unit implicated the 28-year-old at Stade de France.

AP ■ LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND) Jeruto in banned blood transfusions and taking the endurance-boosting hormone EPO.

An independent tribunal judging the case said a COVID-19 infection in late 2020 raised "sufficient doubt on this part of the case that it would be unfair to convict (Jeruto).'

An expert witness said internal bleeding from Jeruto's ulcers could explain why some of her samples indicated she had lost blood, and there was no evidence she received any transfusions.

Jeruto became an African champion while representing Kenya and won on the top-tier Diamond League circuit in 2021. She missed the Tokyo Olympics that year while her change of allegiance to Kazakhstan was processed. An urgent CAS verdict is likely the before women's steeplechase is raced at the Paris Olympics on August 6-8

Tn Paris' outskirts, a bright-

Leyed young girl is eager for the Olympic and Paralympic Games to end. That's because the swimming club where 10-year-old Lyla Kebbi trains will inherit an Ólympic pool. It will be dismantled after the Games and trucked from the Olympic race venue in Paris' high-rise business district to Sevran, a Paris-area town with less glitter and wealth. There, the pieces will be bolted back together and - voila! - Kebbi and her swim team will have a new Olympic-sized pool to splash around in.

"It's incredible !" she says. "I hope it's going to bring us luck," adds her mother, Nora. In 100 days as of Wednesday, the Paris Olympics will kick off with a wildly ambitious waterborne opening ceremony. But the first Games in a century in France's capital won't be judged for spectacle alone. Another yardstick will their impact on disadvantaged Paris suburbs,

away from the city-center landmarks that are hosting much of the action.

By promising socially positive and also less polluting and less wasteful Olympics, the city synonymous with romance is also setting itself the high bar of making future Games generally more desirable. Critics question their value for

a world grappling with climate warming and other emergencies. Potential host cities became so Games-averse that Paris and Los Angeles were the only remaining candidates in 2017 when the International Olympic Committee selected them for 2024 and 2028, respectively.
After scandals and the \$13 billion cost of the pandemicdelayed Tokyo Games in 2021, unfulfilled promises of beneficial change for host Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi tarnished by Russian doping and President Vladimir Putin's subsequent land grabs in Ukraine, the Switzerland-based IOC has mountains of

skepticism to dispel. Virtuous Summer Games in Paris could help the long-term survival of the IOC's megaevent.

BENEFITS



Bondy.

BEYOND CENTRAL PARIS The idea that the July 26-Aug. 11 Games and Aug. 28-Sept. 8 Paralympics should benefit disadvantaged communities in the Seine-Saint-Denis region northeast of Paris was built from the outset into the city's plans.

Seine-Saint-Denis is mainland France's poorest region.
Thanks to generations of immigration, it also is vibrantly diverse, counting 130 nationalities and more than 170 languages spoken by its 1.6 million inhabitants. For Seine-Saint-Denis kids facing racial discrimination and other barriers, sports are sometimes a route out. World Cup winner Kylian Mbappé honed his silky

soccer skills as a boy in the Seine-Saint-Denis town of

Once heavily industrialized, Seine-Saint-Denis became grim and scary in parts after many jobs were lost. Rioting rocked its streets in 2005 and again last year. Members of an Islamic extremist cell that killed 130 people in the French capital in 2015 hid after the carnage in an apartment in the town of Saint-Denis and were killed in a shootout with heavily armed SWAT teams. That drama unfolded just a 15minute walk from the Olympic stadium that will host track and field and rugby and the closing ceremonies. Concretely, the Games will

Sheetal claims silver in competition with

sports infrastructure in Seine-Saint-Denis, although critics say the investment still isn't enough to catch it up with better equipped, more prosperous regions.

Seine-Saint-Denis got the new Olympic village that will become housing and offices when the 10,500 Olympians and 4,400 Paralympians have left. It also is home to the Games' only purpose-built competition venue, an aquatics center for diving, water polo and artistic swimming events. Other competition venues already existed, previously planned or will be

temporary.
"We really were driven by the ambition of sobriety and above all not to build sports facilities that aren't needed and which will have no reason to exist after the Games," Marie Barsacq, the organizing committee's legacy director, said in an interview.

The hand-me-down 50-meter pool for Sevran will be a significant upgrade. The Seine-Saint-Denis town of 51,000 people was whacked by factory

leave a legacy of new and closures in the 1990s. Its refurbished sports existing 25-meter pool is existing 25-meter pool is nearly 50 years old. Seine-Saint-Denis

Other towns are also getting new or renovated pools - particularly welcome for the region's children, because only half of them can swim. "The ambition for these

Olympic Games ... Is that they benefit everyone and for the longest time possible," said Sevran Mayor Stéphane Blanchet. The Olympics, Blanchet said, can't "carry on just passing though and then moving on without thinking about tomorrow."

PARIS' COSTS COMPARE FAVORABLYA Close to 9 billion euros (\$9.7 billion), more than half from sponsors, ticket sales and other nonpublic funding, Paris' expenses so far are less than for the last three Summer Games in Tokyo, Rio and London in 2012. Including policing and transport costs, the portion of the bill for French taxpayers is likely to be around 3 billion euros (\$3.25 billon), France's body for auditing public funds said in its most recent study in

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Asian Para Games gold-winner Asheetal Devi grabbed a silver in the Khelo India NTPC National Ranking archery meet, finishing second behind Haryana's Ekta Rani, who is able-bodied and a junior world champion.

In the competition held at the DDA Yamuna Sports Complex, the 17-year-old Sheetal competed with able-bodied junior archers and lost 138-140 to Ekta in the individual compound event final.

Sheetal, who was bestowed the Arjuna award earlier this year for her two gold and a silver medal winning performance in the Hangzhou Asian Para Games, was born with a rare condition called phocomelia which makes her the

able bodied at Khelo India National meet first and the only international para-archery champion without

Sheetal believes her performance in

the Khelo India event will help her

prepare for the challenges ahead. This result will help me more going ahead in the international platforms and the Olympics," Sheetal was quoted as saying in a media release from the Sports Authority of India. Her coach Abhilasha said the competition was much-needed for

the teenager before the Paralympics.

"Taking part in the national ranking



tournament, alongside able-bodied competitors, is giving training and competition exposure which is much-needed prior to the Olympics," said the archer's coach Abhilasha.

"We have to go abroad for exposure but we are getting the same experience here itself. Domesticlevel tournaments like these are helping the cause," Abhilasha added. On her part, Ekta said she felt inspired by Sheetal's presence in the

competition.
"I have faced-off with Sheetal

previously so I had the match experience against her. We faced off in Patiala last December as well. It feels good to play against her because she is an armless archer and it gives a lot of motivation as well," Ekta said.

Ekta bagged the prize money of Rs 50,000 whereas Sheetal received Rs 40,000.

The tournament was conducted in three categories — senior, junior and sub-junior in recurve and compound. Eighty-seven archers competed in this event.

Punjab Kings, Mumbai Indians desperate to resurrect IPL campaign

Punjab Kings and Mumbai Indians will be desperate to resurrect their faltering campaigns in the Indian Premier League when the two bottom-rung teams face-off here on Thursday.

Only a few decimal points separate the two teams after six matches each with Punjab's marginally better Net Run Rate of -0.218 keeping them at the seventh spot in the IPL points table, one above Mumbai Indians (-0.234).

Both Punjab and Mumbai have lost four matches each and are coming off defeats in their respective last outings, which mean pressure will be high on both the camps to get their act together.

For Punjab, the challenge of getting the best out of their top order has compounded with regular skipper Dhawan being sidelined for 'seven to 10 days' due to a shoulder injury. The only bright spot for PBKS this season has been resolute

displays from their unsung

Indian players Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma, who both bat lower in the order and have had to make up for the shortcomings at the top more than once.

The form of Prabhsimran Singh - 119 runs in six matches at 19.83 - is a concern and the same can be said for India wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma. With selection for the World Cup squad on the horizon, Jitesh, who has managed a mere 106 runs in six outings at 17.66, would be

under the pump too.
PBKS will have to find more support for their overseas bowling duo of Sam Curran (126 runs and 8 wickets) and Kagiso Rabada (9). The Indian pair of Arshdeep Singh (9) and Harshal Patel (7) have both been easy targets for batters. Mumbai Indians would know

collective effort on a consistent basis is the need of the hour. Two wins at home against Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru did end

they have enough firepower in

the camp to turn the tide but a



their three-match losing run, but a loss to Chennai Super Kings despite Rohit Sharma's century meant the five-time winners have forced them to go back to the drawing board. It starts with Hardik Pandya's form and role in the side. The all-rounder has looked to share responsibility in bowling department but his economy rate of 12 is alarming. On the same parameter, Gerald Coetzee (9) and uncapped Akash Madhwal (4) have given away more than 10 runs an

With the bat, Pandya has not provided any consolidation while batting first or finished matches in the latter half.

At the same time, Pandya has

faced hostile environments at various stadiums in all the games he has played so far this season, something that could have an adverse impact on a

Rohit and Ishan Kishan's form thus become crucial for Mumbai Indians, for whom Survakumar Yaday produced mixed results.

Punjab Kings: Shikhar Dhawan (c), Matthew Short, Prabhsimran Singh, Jitesh Sharma, Sikandar Raza, Rishi Dhawan, Liam Livingstone, Atharva Taide, Arshdeep Singh, Nathan Ellis, Sam Curran, Kagiso Rabada, Harpreet Brar, Rahul Chahar, Harpreet Bhatia, Vidwath Kaverappa, Shivam Singh, Harshal Patel, Chris Woakes, Ashutosh Sharma, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, Shashank Singh, Tanay Thyagarajan, Prince Choudhary, Rilee Rossouw.

Mumbai Indians: Hardik

Pandya (c), Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Dewald Brevis, Jasprit Bumrah, Pivush Chawla, Gerald Coetzee, Tim David, Shreyas Gopal, Ishan Kishan (wk), Anshul Kamboj, Kumar Kartikeya, Akash Madhwal, Kwena Maphaka, Mohammad Nabi, Shams Mulani, Naman Dhir, Shivalik Sharma, Romario Shepherd. Arjun Tendulkar, Nuwan Thushara, Tilak Varma, Harvik Desai, Nehal Wadhera,

Luke Wood.

PITALS HUMBLE GT BY SIX WICK

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Delhi Capitals notched up a six-wicket win over Gujarat Titans in a low-scoring game after Rishabh Pant's bowlers stood up for their ilk and restored a modicum of sanity and equilibrium in the Indian Premier

equilibrium in the Indian Premier League here on Wednesday. Opting to field first, the Capitals rolled over Gujarat Titans for 89 in 17.3 overs, the bowlers finally having a say after being blasted all over the park in the last few matches of the lucrative league. Mukesh Kumar was the most successful bowler for DC with figures of 3/14 while there were figures of 3/14, while there were

two wickets apiece for Ishant Sharma (2/8) and Tristan Stubbs (2/11).

As far as GT batting is concerned, only Rashid Khan put up a semblance of resistance with a 24-

ball 31. Chasing 90, DC completed the formality in just 8.5 overs to register their third win and give their run rate a boost.

What also stood out on the day was Pant's leadership and his work behind the stumps. The flamboyant keeper-batter was sharp and agile while wearing the big gloves and performed a quick stumping besides pulling off an incredible catch diving full stretch.

With the T20 World Cup around the corner, Pant's dexterity behind the stumps is a very good sign for Indian cricket.

Indian cricket.

Pant (16 off 11 balls) was also in Sai Sudharsan (12) walked in early and got into the groove with back-

the middle when the winning runs were hit.

Invited to bat first, skipper Shubman Gill (8) timed to perfection an overpitched Khaleel Ahmed delivery for GT's first

scoring shot of the innings.

Ishant Sharma served up a freebie to Gill, and the ball got the treatment it deserved as the opener found the gap on the off-

Ishant, the seasoned campaigner, struck in the very next ball though with Gill chipping a fuller-length ball straight to Prithyi Shaw at cover on a pitch that is being used for the first time this season and has been described as a "100 percent black-soil" surface.

to-back fours, including an exquisite boundary through extra cover.

DC captain Rishabh Pant then introduced Mukesh Kumar in place of Ishant, and the bowler responded in the fifth ball of his first over as Wriddhiman Saha (2) got a thick inside edge and the middle and off stumps were disturbed.

Playing the match in place of the injured David Warner, Sumit Kumar then produced a brilliant piece of fielding and ran out Sudharsan with a direct throw at the non-striker's end, a diving effort from the batter failing to save him as the ball hit the base of the stumps.

The Capitals were on song, and their skipper led by example as he

dived to pull off an excellent catch off Ishant to send back the dangerous David Miller (2), leaving the home team reeling at

leaving the home team reeling at 30/4 in five overs.

Ishant opened up Miller with one that angled into the left-hander, but the umpires didn't seem interested despite a loud appeal.

However, Pant decided to review after being persuaded by Ishant and Fraser-McGurk at slip. It was the right call, as UltraEdge showed Miller got a clear edge.

More trouble awaited the Titans as Pant pulled off a fine stumping off Tristan Stubbs to bring about Abhinav Manohar's downfall, forcing the home team to send super sub Shahrukh Khan into the middle.

The move did not work as

Shahrukh was dismissed in the very next ball after Pant somehow managed another stumping despite not gathering the ball cleanly.

Then, left-arm spinner Axar Patel rapped Rahul Tewatia on the pads and the umpire raised his finger after a confident appeal by the bowler. Tewatia reviewed, but the decision stayed as GT lost their seventh wicket with just 66 runs on the board in the 12th over.

Khaleel came back to dismiss Mohit Sharma, before Rashid Khan hoicked Kuldeep over long-off for the innings' first and only

Mukesh Kumar, however, ended Rashid's resistance after the allrounder went for an upper cut off a short ball outside off.

wickets we lost. Rovman



lyer fined ₹12 lakh for first slow over rate offence (Powell) hit a couple of sixes and that's when we felt like we were in the game. Some luck also, they also played really well. The quality of spin they had, they

PTI ■ KOLKATA

L∕olkata Knight Riders been fined Rs 12 lakh for maintaining a slow over-rate during their IPL game against Rajasthan Royals here. KKR lost to Royals by two

Ios Buttler smashing an unbeaten 107 off 60 balls. "As it was his team's first offence of the season under

wickets here on Tuesday with

the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Iyer was fined Rs 12 lakhs," said the IPL in a release.

It was the Royals' sixth win in seven matches while KKR suffered their second loss in six games.

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Jos Buttler has seen "crazy things" happen in the IPL and he drew inspiration from the likes of Virat Kohli and Mahendra Singh Dhoni to single-handedly pull off the highest run chase in the tournament's history here.

Buttler smashed an unbeaten 107 off 60 balls as Rajasthan Royals came back from the dead to beat Kolkata Knight Riders by two wickets on Tuesday night. Fittingly, Buttler hit the winning runs.

The Englishman was struggling to even walk towards the end but didn't give up. Chasing a record 224, Royals were 121 for six in the 13th over.

"Keep believing, that was the real key today. I was struggling a bit for rhythm. At times you feel frustrated or you are questioning yourself. I tell myself it's okay,

Guys like Kohli, Dhoni keep believing and that is what I tried to do: Buttler

keep going, you'll get your rhythm back and try to stay calm. "There's been plenty of times throughout the IPL, you've seen crazy things happen. Guys like Dhoni and Kohli, the way they stay till the end and keep believing and I tried to do the same," Buttler said at the postmatch presentation. Both Dhoni and Kohli have

played some exhilarating knocks in the ongoing tournament even though the latter has not found enough support from his team and has mostly ended up on the wrong side of the results so far. Buttler also credited head coach Kumar Sangakkara for building



his self-belief.

"That's something Sanagakkara has told me a lot - there's always a breaking point. The worse thing you can do is to not fight and give your wicket away.

"He (Sangakkara) just tells me to stay there and at some point, the momentum will change. That's been a big part of my play over the last few years." He termed Tuesday's knock as his best IPL innings. "I would think so (best IPL innings). Very satisfying." RR skipper Sanju Samson said Buttler is a special player and when he is on song, no target is safe. "Very happy with the win. We were wondering like the bowled really well. This ground 'Jos (Buttler) did what he does for us in the last 6-7 years, so happy for him. It (Buttler's knock) should go right on top. Being an opener, if he gets in, no runs are unchaseable. He does something special," he said. KKR skipper Shreyas Iyer said

it was a bitter pill to swallow for his team. "I would second that actually (bitter pill to swallow), emotions were a roller coaster, certainly didn't think we will get into this situation. "It's a funny game at the end of the day, he (Jos Buttler) was striking the ball cleanly and timing them so well, have to take it on the chin and move on," Iyer added.

> selection committee would like to follow the process of easing them in via bilateral cricket instead of

IMPACT PLAYER RULE IS HURTING TEAM SELECTION: A former international player, who is also a broadcaster, gave an interesting insight.

above the other two in terms of bowling skills, his repeated

omissions from important squads

leaves a big question mark about his

inclusion showpiece in June.

'The 'Impact Player' rule, which is basically a glorified '12-a-side' cricket contest has been good for IPL viewership but detrimental for Indian cricket. It has killed the concept of all-rounder and hence a half-fit Hardik Pandya also has premium value because he can

"Think about it, if there was no Impact Player rule, could MS Dhoni (not Ruturaj Gaikwad) as CSK 'skipper' afford to not bowl Dube? Selectors don't know about Dube's

is no longer in contention despite being a good finisher, who also used to be a handy leg-break bowler. He doesn't bowl now as he is an 'Impact Player'. Who is it hurting? The national team," he pointed out.

NEW CROP OF T20 PLAYERS:

putting them to test in a high-stakes World T20 game.

There are two white-ball series against Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka and these young men would be in line for their India debuts at that time. Nitish Reddy, who is a seam bowling all-rounder and was part of India Emerging side that toured Sri Lanka last year, could also follow

the same path.

It will be interesting to see if BCCI makes arrangements for the likes of Mayank Yadav, Harshit Rana or Akash Madhwal to be taken as net bowlers, which will also give them

good exposure. The probable 20 (15+5 stand bys) in contention:

Specialist Batters (6): Rohit Sĥarma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rinku Singh

All-Rounders (4): Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Shivam Dube,

Axar Patel.

Pant, KL Rahul and Sanju Samson. Pacers(4): Jasprit Bumrah,

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The national selection committee is unlikely to blood any rookie IPL performer during the upcoming T20 World Cup in the Americas but a couple of tried-andtested faces might have to brace up for disappointment when the squad is finalised by the end of this month.

With the ICC making it mandatory to announce the provisional 15member squad by May 1 cut-off date, Ajit Agarkar and his colleagues have some straightforward choices to make if every member of the team is fit.

"There would not be any experimentation or left-field selections. All those who have played for India and have done well consistently in T20 Internationals and the IPL will be rewarded," a BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

It is understood that one among Shubman Gill and Yashasvi Jaiswal might miss out but in case both proven performers are selected in the final 15, then only one among two finishers — Kolkata Knight Riders' Rinku Singh and Chennai Super Kings' Shivam Dube — will get the nod.

The other close call could be for the second wicketkeeper's slot where



Sanju Samson has competition from Jitesh Sharma, KL Rahul and Ishan Kishan.

Rahul and Kishan bat at the top of the order, and they haven't tried batting in the middle order in this IPL so far, which makes it difficult

for the selectors to analyse their impact down the order. Although Hardik Pandya's bowling fitness remains a concern, there is no immediate doubt on his

selection. Much like him, Virat

Kohli's inclusion is also a formality.

The other automatic selections are skipper Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, Ravindra Jadeja, Rishabh Pant, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammed Siraj and Kuldeep Yadav. These 10 names, if fit, will definitely be on the

and Rinku from the 15. The reserve spinner's slot could also be a three-way battle between Axar Patel, a handy batter apart from being an accurate left-arm spinner, Yuzvendra Chahal, who is yet to play a single T20 World Cup match in his nine-year international career, and Ravi Bishnoi, who plays

flight across the Atlantic.

workload management.

few low IPL scores.

order.

It is understood that Siraj is being

rested by RCB as he has been playing constantly and needed

In the choice between Gill and

Jaiswal, the former has scored more

runs but in case of Jaiswal, who has been a big find for Indian cricket, the selection committee might not give up easily on him merely for a

Also, being the only left-hander in

inside the top four is a novelty and in a largely unidimensional top

However, if Gill piles up enough runs, it will be a difficult choice

unless the selectors accommodate

both and drop one among Shivam

for Lucknow Super Giants. While Chahal is head and shoulders bowl," he stated.

bowling form. 'Similarly, a guy like Rahul Tewatia

The likes of Riyan Parag, Mayank Yadav, Abhishek Sharma, and Harshit Rana have all performed well but it is understood that the Specialist Spinners (3): Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Ravi Bishnoi. Wicketkeeper-batter (3): Rishabh

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